Comparative Leadership in Non-Democracies

Introduction

The Peruvian author and politician Mario Vargas Llosa deemed Mexico, prior to 2000, "the Perfect Dictatorship." The country earned this "honor" in large part because it had mastered leadership turnover within the framework of an authoritarian political system.[1] The ability to seamlessly transfer power helped the Mexican single-party dictatorship achieve one of the longest periods of relative domestic tranquility compared to many of its authoritarian peers. In contrast to Mexico, Ugandans have experienced five different political regimes—either military or personalist dictatorships—since independence in 1966. None of these regimes had accepted institutional mechanisms to allow a peaceful transfer of power, leading to frequent coups d'état. Given this uncertain institutional setting, Ugandan elites had no recourse short of force to remove their unwanted leaders. As such, when a leader overstayed his welcome, other elites resorted to extraconstitutional means, overthrowing not only the leader but the regime as well. The chaos that ensues around leadership succession in countries where no established mechanism for the transfer of power exists can destabilize economic markets, increase citizen insecurity, and even tempt predatory neighbors who see an opportunity in the leadership vacuum.

As of 2009, about one third of the world's countries were governed by some form of dictatorship.[2] Some of these countries, such as China, Iran, and Vietnam, have a huge number of inhabitants; therefore, an even larger percentage of the world's population lives under authoritarian rule.[3] Despite the pervasiveness of dictatorships—which constituted an even larger segment of the

[1] The incumbent Mexican president toward the end of his six-year term selected the ruling party's candidate for president. Given that presidential elections were neither free nor fair, the appointing of this candidate inherently served as the selection of the subsequent present. People referred to this process as the "dedazo," which essentially means being pointed to with the finger, as it became institutionalized.

[2] This figure is tabulated using Geddes, Wright and Frantz's (2012) definition and coding of dictatorships. It includes those countries with populations of one million or more.

[3] This study uses the terms dictatorial and authoritarian interchangeably.

world's countries prior to the Third Wave of democratization—we have only a thin understanding of the internal politics of these regimes. Compared to our understanding of democracies, we simply know far less about how dictatorships function. The opaqueness surrounding authoritarian governance—especially compared to the transparency required in democratic political systems—has impeded our ability to learn about the workings of dictatorships. Because dictatorships frequently restrict media freedoms and limit external access to the inner circle of the regime, scholars remain blinded to the true nature of dictatorships' political processes.[4]

Despite the limitations on information inherent in the study of dictatorships, in recent years an increasing number of scholars have begun to identify and describe general trends with regard to how these regimes function. The literature on authoritarian regimes has established at least one axiom: *dictatorships are not one and the same*.[5] Differences among the regimes lead to systematic variations in the political behavior of their leaders and in the countries' policy choices. Dictatorships have a broad range of internal rules and norms, institutional arrangements and sources of legitimacy[6] that, in turn, affect a wide range of political outcomes, such as the countries' economic performance (Gandhi 2008), the degree of corruption (Golden and Chang 2010), leaders' decisions to go to war (Weeks 2008) and how regimes use foreign aid (Wright 2008).

[4] As an extreme example, the communist dictatorship of Laos (1975 to the present) obscured the internal dynamics of the regime to such a degree that for many years it is nearly impossible to determine who the key party leaders were.

[5] See Bueno de Mesquita et al 2003, Geddes 2003, Lai and Slater 2006 and Gandhi 2008, to name a few. For an extensive review of this literature, see Ezrow and Frantz 2011.

[6] Unlike democracies that rely on procedural legitimacy—principally free, fair and competitive elections—authoritarian regimes do not benefit from such procedures. While some forms of institutional legitimacy exist in authoritarian regimes—e.g. sacred ancestry or primogeniture in monarchies—most authoritarian leaders gain legitimacy based on physical force and their performance. For example, some military regimes in Latin America gained legitimacy from their ability to stabilize the economy and successfully combat subversive forces. Performance legitimacy is particularly fragile because it disappears when performance declines or, in some cases, successful policies can erase the regime's justification for its initial authoritarian intervention. See Thomas M. Magstadt. 2008. *Understanding Politics: Ideas, Institutions and Issues.* Stamford, Conn.: Cenage Learning, p. 136 regarding institutionalized sources of authoritarian legitimacy.

In line with the overarching theme of this handbook, in this chapter we examine how dictatorships differ in terms of *leadership*. Our research not only contributes to the burgeoning research on authoritarian regimes, but also broadens our understanding of political leadership across political systems. We emphasize leadership to distinguish it from regime—a distinction we belabor later in the paper. Though most cross-national empirical studies focus on leadership survival,[7] we chose to emphasize leadership succession, which we show has broad implications for the stability and policy goals of the overall regime. Leadership succession is the process through which power is transferred from one leader to the next. It inevitably entails two steps: (1) unseating the current leader, and (2) selecting and installing a successor. In some dictatorships, few, if any, protocols exist to structure these processes; those that may have been incorporated into a country's constitution exist in name only. In contrast, other dictatorships have institutionalized leadership succession, offering clear guidelines observed by the countries' leadership that guide transfers of power.[8]

We argue that two types of dictatorships—military regimes and personalist regimes—generally lack processes guiding the turnover of leaders.[9] Because of their absence, transfers of power from one leader to the next rarely follow constitutional guidelines. Single-party regimes and monarchic regimes, on the other hand, have institutionalized rules for the turnover of leadership. As a result, leadership transitions in the latter types of regimes generally adhere to constitutional (or other) established guidelines. Our empirical research supports our argument: transfers of power are more

[7] See, for example, Haber 2006, Gandhi and Przeworski 2007, Gandhi 2008, Magaloni 2008, Svolik 2009, and Frantz and Ezrow 2011.

[8] We consider succession institutionalized even if leaders only can be replaced if they voluntarily step down from power or die in office, so long as procedures exist that determine who will succeed them in either of these circumstances.

[9] We rely on the classification of dictatorships developed by Barbara Geddes (1999, 2003) and used by many others.

likely to occur in an institutionalized[10] fashion in single-party and monarchic dictatorships than in military and personalist dictatorships.

We show that institutionalized leadership turnover—paradoxically—protects leaders from falling from power early on in their tenures. When dictators first assume power they are particularly vulnerable to ousters. Before new leaders manage to consolidate their political control, rival elites perceive them as easy targets. However, some political systems protect young leadership during this vulnerable phase by offering established protocols for succession. These protocols establish incentives for rival elites to either (1) go through official channels to unseat leaders or (2) wait until the leader's designated term is complete for their turn to rule. Both of these paths effectively draw out the process for removing the leader from power, diminishing the likelihood that rival elites will forcibly remove a leader from office early in his tenure. Our evidence shows that monarchic and single-party dictators fell from power less frequently than military and personalist dictators during their first two years in power. The risk of early departure nearly doubled in the latter two types of dictatorships compared to the two former types. Only 15.4 percent of monarchic leaders and 17.5 percent of single-party leaders did not survive until their third year in power, whereas 29.6 percent of personalist dictators and 36.6 percent of military leaders exited office prior to their third year.

We conclude by suggesting that insulating leaders from overthrow during their early days in office may have positive economic consequences for dictatorships. During episodes of leadership transitions, elites scramble to determine who will replace the departing leader. This process deepens existing factions, provokes elite conflicts, and—ultimately—creates an environment of political instability. With regime actors devoting their attention to the power struggle (instead of attending to economic policy making) and foreign investors and donors withdrawing their resources in fear of

[10] When we refer to institutionalized leadership transfers we reference those executive turnovers that either follow protocol delineated in the country's constitution or that follow a set of informal rules or norms that have become customary in that country and have been widely respected by subsequent governments.

uncertain markets, the economy may bear the brunt of the political volatility.[11] Indeed, the evidence indicates that economies grow substantially less in years when a leadership transfer occurs than in years when they do not. The economy falters to an even greater degree when leaders fall from power early in their tenures.

We begin the chapter by discussing what we mean by leadership in dictatorships. Next, we discuss the typology of dictatorships that we employ here. We then present our arguments about leadership succession across dictatorships, followed by a detailed description of the evidence we found to support these arguments. We discuss some implications of institutionalized leadership succession on the economic health of the country. We conclude by summarizing our key findings and suggesting future research.

Leadership in Authoritarian Regimes

In authoritarian regimes, the leader—or dictator—tops the political pyramid. Almost always dictators hold the most power in the regime; though a leader's power relative to other regime actors can vary markedly from one regime to the next. Dictators are omnipotent in some regimes, facing few challenges to their rule, while in other regimes additional actors—individuals or governing bodies—either share or battle the leader for political power.

Before moving forward we must clarify that, as in democracies, in dictatorships the *leader* is not synonymous with the *regime;* a leader may fall while the regime persists (Frantz and Ezrow 2011). We define a regime as a "set of formal and informal rules and procedures for selecting national leaders and policies" (Geddes 2003: 70). Even in regimes where an individual holds the lion's share of the power, *intra*-regime leadership transitions can and do occur. Francois Duvalier, the Haitian dictator from 1957-1971, exerted total control over the country; his son, Jean-Claude Duvalier, succeeded him upon his death, extending the *regime* through 1986. In this year, an uprising overthrew the

[11] Alesina et. al (1996) and Alesina and Perotti (1996), for example, find that political instability decreases economic growth.

younger Duvalier ending both his *leadership tenure* and the *regime*. Though the fall of the dictator may elicit the fall of the regime, conflating these two concepts frequently leads to misunderstandings of both leadership and regime dynamics.

Many scholars have argued that remaining in power embodies the primary goal of leaders—whether they are democratic or authoritarian. This fundamental desire to hold onto office manifests itself in a leader's policy choices; political decisions reflect leaders' aspiration to maintain power. In democracies, leaders serve their constituents—the masses—who in turn can vote the leader out of power through regular competitive elections.[12] In authoritarian regimes, the leader's "constituency" often shrinks from the masses to a group of elites, who may have the capacity to sustain or threaten a dictator's tenure in office. Multiple studies have shown that the elite group supporting a dictator represents the greatest threat to his survival (Bueno de Mesquita et al 2003, Svolik 2009, Frantz and Ezrow 2011). One study demonstrated that nearly 80 percent of the time government insiders were responsible for a dictator's demise (Svolik 2007). This statistic makes clear that we must understand elite behavior in order to fully understand the political choices dictators make.

In addition to the threat of being overthrown by their elite supporters, dictators also face the threat of being ousted by the masses. Though mass-led overthrows occur less often than do elite-driven leadership transitions, the occurrence of bottom-up revolts indicates that authoritarian leaders cannot ignore widespread grievances. Perhaps more importantly, popular discontent puts pressure on other regime elites. These elite insiders must maintain the backing of at least some segments of the populace to ensure not only the regime's survival but also their own survival. When mass-led

[12] In parliamentary democracies, the people cannot directly vote the leader out of power, but they control the tenure of the members of parliament who determine the prime minister's fate.

movements manage to bring down authoritarian leaders, they frequently take down the regime with him.[13]

Even though mass-led revolts manage to topple regimes on occasion, the masses rarely control leadership selection in dictatorships.[14] Political elites generally determine who will become the authoritarian leader. Plus, when a dictator falls from power, a member of the elite class usually assumes power in his place. Elite-replacement of former dictators remains the norm for intra-regime leadership transitions. While elites play a pivotal role in the selection and survival of authoritarian leaders, the institutional context also can influence leadership selection and survival. In the section that follows we present these institutional arrangements and discuss how they affect leadership transitions in authoritarian regimes.

Types of Dictatorships

Authoritarian leaders—regardless of the institutional arrangement in which they operate—typically share the objective of remaining in office as long as possible. However, the domestic environment can affect leaders' ability to achieve this goal. Institutional arrangements in dictatorships are no more homogenous than they are in democracies. In recent years, students of authoritarian rule have emphasized this point and developed various typologies to categorize them.[15] In this study, we Barbara Geddes' typology (1999, 2003), which classifies regimes as military, single-party or personalist.[16] We include monarchies in our typology to keep in line with more recent work on authoritarian regimes.[17] These categorizations capture who maintains political control: the

[13] Using Svolik and Akcinaroglu's (2007) codings of authoritarian leader failures and modes of exits and Geddes, Wright and Frantz's (2012) coding of authoritarian regime failures, the data indicate that nearly 70 percent of the time mass-led revolts ousting dictators also topple corresponding regimes.
[14] Though elections for leadership positions are quite common in dictatorships, they are rarely free and fair.
[15] See Ezrow and Frantz (2011) for a review of these typologies.
[16] We exclude theocracies due to their rarity, which makes it difficult to generalize their nature.
[17] Though Geddes' original typology excludes monarchic dictatorships, these regimes are included in the Geddes, Wright and Frantz (2012) update of this data set. When we categorize leaders by regime type or refer to regimes generally we rely on the Geddes, Wright and Frantz (2012) data throughout the paper.

military, a single political party, the royal family or none of the previous establishments. Particular features unique to each regime type can have important consequences for how leadership is organized and, more importantly for the topic at hand, how (and if) leadership passes from one individual to another within the same regime. Before analyzing intra-regime leadership transitions, we first expound upon the four types of dictatorship.[18]

Single-party dictatorships

When a single political party monopolizes government, controls policy making and manipulates political appointments it is denominated a single-party dictatorship. Some single-party regimes may permit other parties to legally operate and compete in elections, but in these regimes the rules and norms favor the hegemonic party to such a degree as to render the party system non-competitive. In single-party dictatorships, elites emerge from the party apparatus.

Single-party dictatorships generally develop when a revolutionary party seizes power (Geddes 2004). Upon coming to power, these parties may lose their ideological fervor, particularly if doing so allows the party to strengthen its hold on power. Single-party dictatorships govern in a similar fashion to democratic regimes, in that they hold frequent elections and maintain legislatures to debate policies (at least superficially). Party rules may outline rules for promotion within the party apparatus. The Mexican regime mentioned in the introduction serves as the archetypical one-party state, as do the Communist Party-states of Eastern Europe before 1989.

Monarchic dictatorships

In monarchic dictatorships, a royal family controls leadership selection and determines policy. Leaders of monarchic dictatorships usually inherit the position according to constitutional guidelines or historical norms. In these regimes, members of the royal family comprise the political elites. Unlike ceremonial monarchies, such as the United Kingdom or Sweden, in which the monarch only

[18] See Geddes (2003) and Geddes, Wright and Frantz (2012) for a more in-depth description.

serves a ceremonial role as head of state, in monarchic dictatorships the ruling family holds total political power.

Though scholarship reveals less about the origins of monarchic dictatorships compared to other forms of dictatorship, some evidence indicates that they come into being as a result of the historical legacies of family bloodlines (Ezrow and Frantz 2011). The accepted historical role of the royal family's dynasty lends legitimacy to its rule (essentially, it is that way because it always has been that way). In monarchic dictatorships, family members hold various political posts based on established traditions and/or primogeniture. Power will pass from one generation to the next from within the royal family until the people or some other elite(s) challenge the family's status as legitimate absolute rulers. Examples of monarchic dictatorships are Saudi Arabia (1927 to today), Jordan (1946 to today) and Nepal (1768 to 2008), the latter of which transitioned to democracy in 2008 after King Gyanendra proved unable to suppress a pro-democracy movement.

Military dictatorships

In military dictatorships, the military rules as a professionalized force. In these regimes, not only is the leader of the regime a member of the military, but other high-ranking military personnel comprise the top tier of government officials. Together, these individuals form a *junta,* a governing council that determines policy and controls leadership selection. Members of the junta occasionally come from a single branch of the military, but more often represent various military branches.

Military dictatorships originate most often via military coups (Geddes 2004). While coups may occur within a variety of regimes including democracies, in military dictatorship the military, rather than stepping aside to let civilians rule, opts to stay in power and function as a political body. Military dictatorships typically govern the country in a hierarchical manner similar to how military leaders manage the military itself. The governing junta frequently adheres to military guidelines for determining promotions and respects internal rules and protocols of the military created prior to the

military assuming power. Many countries in Latin America during the 1960s to 1980s typify military dictatorships, including Argentina (1976-1983), Brazil (1964-1985) and Uruguay (1973-1984).

Personalist dictatorships

Personalist dictatorships epitomize the stereotype of dictatorships as "one-man rule." In personalist regimes, all power lies in the hands of a single individual. While a personalist leader may come from the military or be associated with a political party, neither organization constrains the political influence of the leader. In personalist regimes, people who hold political positions serve at the pleasure of the leader who single-handedly dictates policy. While personalist leaders appear omnipotent they must maintain the support of at least a small segment of the population to ensure their own survival. In order to build and sustain this support the leader distributes political perks at his discretion. In most cases, the leader's long-time friends and family members benefit from the leader's "generosity," forming the personalist "clique." The concentration of power in personalist regimes leaves regime actors outside the elite support coalition politically impotent (Geddes 1999, 2003).

Personalist dictatorships usually emerge following seizures of power that involve neither a professionalized military nor a well-organized political party (Geddes 2004). In these scenarios, other members of the seizure group, lacking cohesiveness, cannot resist the leader's grab for power. The leader thus can capitalize on the institutional vacuum and consolidate political control, building his own clique from his most loyal friends and/or family. Examples of personalist dictatorships include Uganda under Idi Amin (1971-1979), the Philippines under Ferdinand Marcos (1972-1986) and Spain under General Francisco Franco (1939-1979).

As noted above, each regime type possesses unique characteristics, though not all regimes within a particular category function in exactly the same way. Additionally, regimes within a particular category do not necessarily embrace a shared ideology. For example military regimes have governed

from both the left and the right of the ideological spectrum. Nevertheless, we believe that regimes that fall in a particular category share more structural and institutional features in common with one another than they do with other types of authoritarian regimes. The variation in institutional configurations across single-party, monarchic, military and personalist dictatorships has profound implications for how politics in each regime type tends to play out. These institutions (or the lack thereof) shape leader-elite relations and determine the nature of competition. In the following section, we examine how regime type affects leadership succession.

Leadership Succession across Dictatorships

In many dictatorships, leadership succession—the transfer of power from one leader to the next—can destabilize the country to a far greater degree than in democracies. Whereas scheduled elections or constitutional mandates determine who will assume the country's leadership in the latter type of regimes, unpredictable elite dynamics guide this process in the former regimes. Leadership succession in dictatorships frequently triggers elite infighting, as competing elite factions contest one another so that their preferred "candidate" may assume the leadership position. We argue that the way in which the practice of leadership succession plays out differs systematically across regimes, and that this systematic difference has real-world implications for policy outcomes.[19] Under some regimes—principally single-party states and monarchic dictatorships—leadership transitions occur relatively seamlessly, while in others—largely military and personalist dictatorships—these transitions of power routinely provoke internal conflict, even civil war. We will expand on this distinction later in the chapter.

Though any process of succession anticipates some instability, volatile leadership turnovers create vulnerable environments for the regime and the political futures of potential ruling elites. Succession disputes can destabilize dictatorships, inciting conflict among elite factions, stoking

[19] It can also differ within regimes, as some transfers of power are inevitably more contentious than others.

violence and, in extreme cases, provoking civil war (Ezrow and Frantz 2011). Should the regime fall, some elites may be able to secure themselves a spot in the subsequent regime, but all elites will not be so fortunate.

As a means of regulating leadership turnover and reducing the risk of internal strife, some authoritarian regimes implement set procedures to determine and guide leadership succession. Several countries' constitutions denote the provisions for leadership turnover, but in many others these provisions remain formally unspecified and over time have developed into norms.[20] Furthermore, some regimes operate under a mix of both constitutionally specified regulations and historical norms. For example, the Mexican constitution called for regular, multi-party elections for the president and limited whoever held that office to a single six-year term. At the same time, the ruling party had established a norm, known as the "dedazo," in which whoever was in office would get to select the party's next "candidate" for the presidency. Regimes like Mexico's, with clear guidelines for leadership turnover, can avoid the chaos and violence that sometimes erupt among elites and their constituencies vying for political control after a leader dies, steps down or is forcibly removed from power. Such guidelines constrain elite competition for the leadership position, lowering the chances of total regime collapse.

While the implementation of rules of succession sanctions the end of a leader's reign, the existence of such rules may actually protect the leader while he is in power. In theory institutionalized succession may cut short a leader's tenure by propagating the terms under which leaders can be replaced. However, these same leaders benefit from the information they gain about their futures once out of office. Constitutionally-mandated leadership turnovers decrease the likelihood that leaders will face punishment upon their departures from power (Debs and Goemans

[20] In addition, some regimes choose to make these rules public, while others keep them private.

2010). Coups d'état—the major alternative to institutionalized leadership turnover—increase the probability that a leader, once deposed, will be subject to exile, imprisonment or execution.[21]

In this chapter, we do not focus on whether these rules exist in written form, but, rather, whether they function in practice. We do so because not everywhere that provisions for succession exist, do those in control consistently adhere to them, a phenomenon not exclusive to dictatorships.[22] In 2009 in Honduras, for example, then-president Manuel Zelaya insisted on holding an unconstitutional referendum to revise the constitution in order to allow re-election. In response, the opposition also turned to unconstitutional measures when the Honduran military stormed the presidential residence to arrest the democratically elected Zelaya, sending him into exile in Costa Rica. In this research we concern ourselves with whether governments respect rules or norms of leadership transition.

In the subsequent section, we elaborate on how leadership succession generally occurs in the four distinct types of dictatorships we highlight. We argue that in military and personalist dictatorships, generally, few rules exist to guide how leaders can be replaced or to specify how to select their successors. In monarchic and single-party dictatorships, by contrast, leadership succession tends to be institutionalized. Readers should view the points we make in the following sections as broad trends within each category of regime type; individual regimes within each category vary in terms of their procedures and practices.

[21] Wright (2008) also argues that rules for succession are important for ensuring that leaders do not steal from the state. He writes that institutionalized leadership turnover gives leaders "a weaker incentive to steal as a form of insurance against being ousted by irregular means" (p. 7).

[22] Coups toppling democratic leaders, for example, can occur as well, often signaling the culmination of democracy. Other leaders, such as President Gbagbo in the Ivory Coast, have refused to leave office after losing competitive elections or have manipulated results in order to remain in office, as was likely the case in Kenya's 2007 presidential elections.

Leadership succession in single-party dictatorships

In single-party dictatorships, party elites (often the *central committee* or *politburo*) select one of their own to serve as their leader. Single-party regimes commonly have established rules dictating succession procedures (Geddes 1999). The party's constitution, manifesto or platform customarily spells out the procedures for replacing leaders and selecting their successors. The mechanisms in place for leadership succession frequently take on democratic characteristics internally within the party; elites (and occasionally even lower-level party members) can vote old leaders out and new leaders in to office. In this way, parties in single-party dictatorships function quite similarly to parties in democracies. Some single-party dictatorships even invoke term limits on their leaders, as mentioned earlier in the case of Mexico's "perfect dictatorship." The Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)-led regime strictly enforced a six-year presidential term with no re-election—a rule that continues to exist even after Mexico's democratic transition.

In single-party dictatorships one leader generally transitions smoothly from the next, a process during which "most ordinary cadres just keep their heads down and wait to see who wins" (Geddes 1999, 131). The dominance of the party in government helps to mitigate the types of elite conflicts that would typically arise over transfers of power absent this institution. Hence, single-party dictatorships suffer less uncertainty surrounding succession than do other types of authoritarian regimes, reducing the chance of destabilizing power struggles (Smith 2005).

Leadership succession in monarchic dictatorships

Succession procedures in monarchic dictatorships typically follow institutionalized procedures as they do in single-party states. The specific institution of heredity most often determines who stands next in line to assume power, which the leader usually maintains until death (Anderson 1991).[23] Leaders are chosen from among members of the dynastic family and are usually kings or princes. In

[23] Many monarchies historically did not have fixed rules for succession in place. Because this process often turned violent, many have since institutionalized the process (Herb 1999).

these regimes, nepotism guides the process of succession (Wright 2008). Though some disputes occur within royal families over who leads the line of successors, in the majority of monarchies the family respects the traditional inheritor of power since the regime's legitimacy rests on the idea of sanctified family bloodlines and lineage.

Many monarchies use primogeniture to guide succession, where the ruler's successor is the eldest son in the family or a capable male relative. Though this process strays far from democratic transfers of power, primogeniture does assure certitude in the process by providing a clear framework for how power will be transferred and who should be the recipient. Even monarchies that do not rely on primogeniture still rely on conventional practices to transfer power from one leader to the next (Anderson 1991). In Saudi Arabia, for example, the king appoints the crown prince, but only after consulting with senior family members who must arrive at an internal agreement. The existence of rules for succession in monarchic dictatorships ensures stability for the regime during leadership transitions.

Leadership succession in military dictatorships

Military regimes differ markedly from both single-party and monarchic regimes with regard to norms of succession. Since few countries design their militaries to govern politically, rules rarely exist within the constitution or military apparatus that outline who should assume power in the case that the military intervenes in government.[24] As such, military dictatorships, unlike single-party and monarchic dictatorships, infrequently have institutionalized procedures dictating leadership succession. Military regimes emerge predominantly via a coup d'état, led, in most cases, by a group of high-ranking military leaders known as the military *junta*. Traditionally the junta, which typically is comprised of representatives of the various military branches (e.g. army, navy, air force, etc.), has the responsibility of selecting the leader of the military regime. However, since leading a country does

[24] One of the defining characteristics of civil-military relations in democracies is civilian oversight of the military.

not fall under the military's rubric, it remains formally undeclared which branch's high-ranking military official should outrank the others and thus assume control of the leadership position. Though militaries, themselves, are known for their strict hierarchical structure and clear guidelines for internal promotions, the regimes they lead often lack these stipulations with regard to determining who among the junta members will fill the leadership post, and if and when someone will replace him.

Rare exceptions to this formulation exist. The Argentine military dictatorship (1976-1983), for example, implemented a rotating presidency among junta members, and Brazilian generals served single presidential terms, not unlike the Mexican single-party system.[25] Far more common are regimes with no clearly defined methods for leadership succession. In this unspecified environment, transfers of power from one leader to the next often become both contentious and violent. Absent rules that spell out procedures to remove leaders from power, coups d'état become the norm. As a result, leadership changes in military dictatorships occur far more frequently via coup than in a constitutional manner (Frantz and Ezrow 2011).

Leadership succession in personalist dictatorships

In personalist dictatorships, as in military ones, no institution or formal body exists that potentially can check the power of the leader. Instead, personalist leaders exert near-total control over who will constitute the elite tier (Frantz and Ezrow 2011). The leader's support clique only holds as much power as the leader willingly grants it. Members of the clique owe their positions—and frequently their spoils—to the leader himself and, thus, lack independent political power. While the leader may groom a successor, such as a brother or son, to take over when he dies, personalist regimes lack institutionalized mechanisms for the transfer of power. Unlike monarchies were tradition bestows legitimacy on primogeniture or other rules of succession, personalist regimes'

[25] For elaboration on presidential succession in Brazil, see Thomas Skidmore. 1988. *The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil 1964-85*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

legitimacy relies on the performance and charisma of the leader—a trait not necessarily inherited by relatives. In personalist dictatorships, formal rules rarely exist that (a) specify how leaders can be removed from power or (b) offer mechanisms to enforce a leader's preferred successor, allowing him to accede to power in the case of the leader's departure.

The absence of constitutional provisions for determining and enforcing succession means that the departure of a leader from power, for whatever reason, likely will destabilize and perhaps destroy the regime (Ibid.). Personalist dictatorships rarely survive beyond a single leader's tenure (Geddes 2003) and most collapse along with the leader.

Though intra-regime leadership turnover remains extremely rare in personalist dictatorships, it does occur occasionally. In Nicaragua, for example, the Somoza family ruled from about 1937 to 1979. Anastasio Somoza García became the first of three Somozas to govern Nicaragua. After "winning" the presidency, Somoza García concentrated power in the presidency. Upon his assassination, his eldest son, Luis Somoza Debayle, assumed power. When Luis Somoza Debayle refused to run for re-election, his younger brother, Anastasio Somoza Debayle, as head of the National Guard, took control of the reins of government, eventually being elected president in 1967.[26] By and large, however, intra-regime transfers of power from one leader to the next do not occur in personalist dictatorships and where succession procedures are absent.

To summarize, personalist and military dictatorships commonly lack formal institutions to establish processes for intra-regime leadership transitions. On the other hand, both single-party and monarchic dictatorships tend to have formalized procedures to determine not only how to remove a leader from office, but also how to determine who should take over upon the leader's departure. As such, we argue that both single-party regimes and monarchies can better withstand the instability inherent in leadership transitions than can military and personalist dictatorships. Lacking such

[26] Though the regime permitted elections, they served a ceremonial rather than practical purpose. Several puppet presidents ruled Nicaragua from 1963 to 1967.

institutionalized procedures, military and personalist leaders become more susceptible to extraconstitutional removal from office, such as coups, rebellions, etc., particularly early in their reign. This instability can lead to nearsighted policy. Theoretically, institutionalized rules and norms for transferring power should protect leaders from early exit, maintain stability, and promote growth-oriented policies. In the following section, we assess whether these theoretical implications hold true empirically.

Methodology & Analysis

To test our argument about regime type and the institutionalization of leadership succession, we look at cases of institutionalized vs. non-institutionalized executive selection across the four regime types described in the previous section. We define institutionalized executive selection as either "regulated" or "designational/transitional" according to the Polity IV Project. We categorized executive selection as non-institutionalized if the Polity IV data coded it as "unregulated."[27] Regulated selection applies to polities that have institutionalized procedures for handling executive succession primarily based on heredity or via competitive elections.[28] Designated selection refers to cases in which the elite *designate* who the subsequent leader will be through non-competitive means. In this category we also include transitional arrangements meant to lead to more regulated power-transfers in the future. Unregulated selection, by contrast, refers to polities absent such regulations or norms. In the latter case, changes in a state's chief executive generally occur through forceful seizures of power instead of by procedural means. If our theory holds true, single-party and monarchic regimes—regimes we expect to have established succession rules—should have more regulated and/or designated leadership transitions, whereas military and personalist regimes—regimes we anticipate lack such rules—should have more unregulated transitions.

[27] We use the XRREG variable to measure this.
[28] See "Dataset Users' Manual," Polity IV Project, http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/p4manualv2009.pdf (accessed August 12, 2011).

H1: Military and personalist regimes experience more non-institutionalized leadership transitions than do single-party and monarchic regimes

H2: Single-party and monarchic regimes experience more institutionalized leadership transitions than do military and personalist regimes.

To select our sample of dictatorships, we use the Geddes (2003) coding of authoritarian regimes and the Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2012) update of this data set. Our sample includes data from 1946 through 2009. Among the authoritarian regimes during this period, we assessed the pervasiveness of non-institutionalized as opposed to institutionalized leadership selection according to regime type, considering military, single-party, monarchic, and personalist dictatorships.[29] With rules to moderate the succession process in place, leadership transfers should occur less frequently by force or other involuntary methods.

In line with our first two hypotheses (H1 & H2), military and personalist dictatorships suffered changes in leadership more frequently through forceful seizures of power, while single-party and monarchic dictatorships more likely underwent leadership changes through "designative" or competitive methods. We find that from 1946 to 2009 military dictatorships were susceptible to non-institutionalized executive selection 40 percent of the time while personalist dictatorships suffered such transitions 25 percent of the time. In stark contrast, during the same period, monarchies and single-party dictatorships succumbed to such forms of executive selection only 2-3 percent of the time.[30]

As an additional test, we look at the frequency with which leadership ousters occurred constitutionally—in a regulated fashion. To do so, we use Svolik and Akcinaroglu's (2007) coding of

[29] Geddes classified many of these regimes as hybrid regimes, meaning they contain characteristics of two or more different regime types. As such, it made it difficult to classify these regimes exclusively in one category. Geddes, Wright and Frantz (2012) suggest a way to incorporate these regimes into the other categories, which we followed here.

[30] These figures are based on country-years, not individual regimes.

authoritarian leader failures and modes of exits.[31] These data include cases of leadership between 1946 and 2002. Svolik and Akcinaroglu define constitutional leader failures as those in which the exit of the leader did *not* occur by coup, revolt or forced departure by public protest, assassination, foreign intervention or civil war. In support of our second hypothesis (H2), we find that from 1946 to 2002, 39 percent of leaders in single-party dictatorships and 23 percent of leaders in monarchic dictatorships fell from power constitutionally; in contrast, only 14 percent of military leaders and 12 percent of personalist leaders departed on constitutional grounds.

Institutionalized rules of leadership succession—present more often in both single-party and monarchic dictatorships than other forms of authoritarian rule—increase the frequency with which leaders depart office according to constitutional guidelines. According to our research constitutional transfers of power occurred nearly twice as often in single-party and monarchic dictatorships than they did in military and personalist dictatorships.

While the individual leaders in single-party and monarchic dictatorships likely appreciate their odds of departing peacefully from office compared to their counterparts in military and personalist regimes, the citizenry in these countries also may benefit from the stability surrounding leadership transitions via lower levels of civil conflict and better economies, which we discuss in the following section.

Implications

Institutionalized leadership turnover, beyond fostering more peaceful leadership transitions, can benefit the leader and the people of the country in several ways. As we show in this section, institutionalized succession rules protect leaders from ouster early on in their terms. The protection provided by these succession rules, in turn, allows leaders to plan for the long-term rather than

[31] Leader failures refer to the end of leaders' time in power, for whatever reason including the constitutionally mandated end of a leader's term in office. For further explanation, see "Dataset Users' Manual," Polity IV Project, http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/p4manualv2009.pdf (accessed August 12, 2011). Whenever we refer to leadership failure, we use these data.

worrying about their daily survival in office. As such they should be more likely to invest in their economies rather than merely in their own fortune. Citizens can benefit from growth-oriented policies via higher income levels and greater stability in employment.

Early survival

When a dictator first comes to power, he is most vulnerable. Not yet having solidified his political network or proven himself as an effective ruler, rivals see easy, inviting targets. New dictators have weak defenses against criticism, leaving them susceptible to both external and internal challenges. For this reason, during the first few years of a dictator's tenure, he faces a high probability of being overthrown. In fact, the data indicate that 30 percent of dictators leave office by the end of their second year in power.

Established protocols for succession should protect leaders from this fate by establishing boundaries for elite activity. Institutionalized leadership regulations offer opponents mechanisms to seek the leader's constitutional removal from office as opposed to having to resort coups. Coups pose risks not only for the target but also for the perpetrators. Nearly 45 percent of coup attempts between 1946 and 2009 failed (Powel and Thyne 2011), and the price plotters pay for their treachery can be extremely high, including imprisonment and capital punishment. For example, in 2010, eight men were sentenced to death in The Gambia for allegedly plotting a coup against President Yahya Jammeh.[32] Where institutionalized leadership turnover exists, leaders have some insurance against such plots and dissatisfied elites can rely on official means to unseat leaders rather than take on the high risks of a coup attempt for uncertain rewards. We expect, then, that the probability of an early ouster from office is lower for leaders of regimes *with* institutionalized leadership turnover compared

[32] A previous coup attempt in 2006 garnered 10 former army officers long prison sentences. See "Gambia coup plotters sentenced to death." July 15, 2010. BBC News Africa. http://www.bbc. co.uk/news/world-africa-10650294, accessed on September 9, 2011.

to those *without* such regulations. It follows that leaders of single-party and monarchic regimes face better odds than personalist and military leaders of surviving their first two years in office.

> **H3:** Military and personalist leaders should be less likely to survive their first two years in office than monarchs or single-party dictators.

To test this supposition we look at the frequency with which leaders were toppled during their first two years in power across the four types of dictatorships during the period from 1946 to 2002.[33] In support of our third hypothesis (H3), we find that 37 percent of military dictators and 29 percent of personalist dictators were overthrown during their first two years in office compared to only 18 percent of single-party dictators and 15 percent of monarchic dictators during the same initial period. One out of three leaders in military and personalist dictatorships did not reach his third year as opposed to less than one in five leaders of single-party and monarchic regimes who did not survive his first two years in power.

Institutionalized leadership succession provides leaders with protection during their first years in office, one of the most vulnerable times for a leader. With rules in place to guide the succession process, rivals become less likely to attempt an immediate seizure of power. As a result, leaders under these conditions have greater security when they first assume power than they would under other types of regimes. The empirical record supports this argument: monarchic and single-party dictators survive their first couple of years in power better than their military and personalist colleagues, who rule in environments lacking such protocols and protection. How regimes manage the succession process not only has important implications for the security of authoritarian leaders, but this security also can translate into better public policy.

[33] Interim leadership transitions and leaders dying in office of natural causes do not constitute failures in this analysis.

Investment and Economic Prosperity

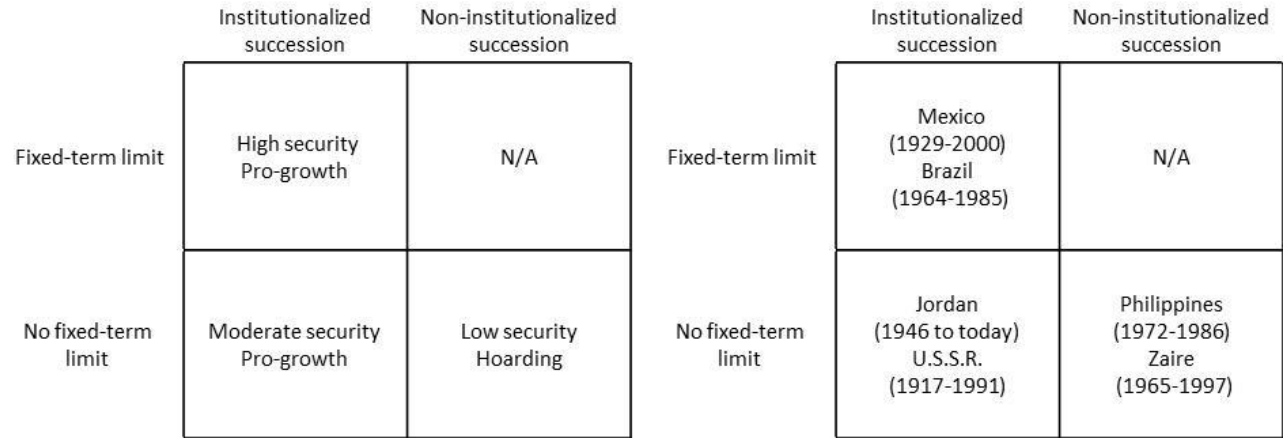
For economies to grow, they must attract large investments. Uncertainty alarms investors. Financial markets fluctuate dangerously under uncertain conditions, scaring away potential investment in dictatorships and democracies alike (Alesina and Perotti 1996, Asteriou and Price 2000, 2005). Leaders, like other investors, have a greater incentive to invest if they know they will be able to reap what they sow. Two factors relating to leadership tenure likely improve a leader's investment outlook, which in turn should translate into greater prosperity for the country. First, a leader with a longer expected tenure period has the incentive to invest in long-term growth policies (Wright 2008). Secondly, leaders who do not fear (or at least fear less) extraconstitutional removals from office, have far less incentive to plunder the economy than do those leaders who wonder if the next day they may be3 overthrown in a coup (Bratton and van de Walle 1994, Wright 2008).

In addition, a small set of authoritarian regimes limit a leader's term in office, as was the case in Mexico's perfect dictatorship. In such cases, elite rivals should prefer to vie for the leadership position *after* the leader's term ends rather than face the unknown odds associated with plotting a coup. Fixed-terms have various characteristics that encourage the leader to focus on policy. First, limited terms make the early ouster of leaders even less likely, allowing these leaders to focus on policy. Also, knowing they cannot serve indefinitely, term-limited leaders do not need to buy the favor of their support clique in order to sustain their reign. Unlike deposed leaders whose future out of office remains uncertain, leaders who merely reach the end of their term can return to party leadership or retire peacefully and therefore can spend their time in office addressing policy concerns.

When leaders leave office constitutionally and are less likely to be jailed, exiled or killed, they likely will benefit from the economic strength of the country even after their departure from power. On the other hand, leaders who foresee such a fate at the end of their reign may have little regard

for the country's long-term economic health, preferring to enjoy the spoils of office while they can or to build a secret nest egg for their retirement in exile (Wright 2008). Therefore, we argue that countries with institutionalized leadership turnover provide incentive for long-term growth-oriented policies. Those with a term limits in place also remove the uncertainty around leadership transitions that can deter investment. In Figure 1 below, we illustrate these relationships.

Figure 1



Uncertainty regarding leadership transitions impedes growth. As such, regimes with institutionalized executive selection and with term limits should experience greater long-term growth rates than regimes where leaders frequently exit office by coup or mass rebellion. Those regimes with fixed-term limits should surpass those without such limits.

H4: Countries with institutionalized executive turnover should experience better growth than countries with non-institutionalized executive turnover.

H5: When leaders fall from power, economic growth should decline.

H6: Dictators who leave office due to term limits should experience higher growth rates when they leave office than do dictators who leave office for other reasons.

In order to test these hypotheses we use data on regime type, economic growth[34] and leader failure to assess the relationship between leadership succession rules and economic policy. We find

[34] We use the 2010 World Development Indicators measure of GDP/capita annual growth as our measure of economic growth. We drop two observations for Myanmar because they showed growth of greater than 2000

some support for our fourth hypothesis (H4) that the institutionalization of leadership turnovers should promote growth; from 1960 to 2002, economies in countries with non-institutionalized executive turnover (i.e. unregulated) grew at 1.27 percent, whereas those leaders with institutionalized executive turnover—either regulated or designated—experienced a slightly higher average growth rate of 1.69 percent.

The data indicate that economies do suffer from the uncertainty around leadership transitions in dictatorships, as we anticipated in our fifth hypothesis (H5). In the years in which dictators fell from power, growth rates averaged -2.0 percent; in all other years during dictatorships, growth rates averaged 1.6 percent. Additionally, when dictators fell early in their tenure, it further exacerbated the outlook for economic prosperity. In the years of dictator failures, growth rates averaged -4.0 percent when dictators departed during their first two years in office compared to averaging -1.0 percent when dictators departed after three or more years in office.

Fixed-term limits mediated the uncertainty around leadership transitions, allowing those leaders subjected to such limits to promote growth-oriented policies. In the years in which leaders left office, economies grew by an average of 2.50 percent when leaders departed because they had completed their term compared to a deplorable average growth rate of -2.46 percent when leaders left office for other reasons, backing our sixth hypothesis (H6).

While in this chapter we do not parse out the direction of causality between growth rates and modes of leadership failure, the preliminary findings support the idea that the institutionalization of executive succession allows leaders to focus on good economic policy. The data indicate that it does so by giving leaders both insurance against early overthrows and a secured retirement in their home country.

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percent, which seemed implausible, and even if true was such an outlier that it significantly distorted our findings.

Conclusion

In this paper we show that institutions shape incentives for leaders in dictatorships just as they do in democracies. In particular, we demonstrated that leaders tend to survive their first years in power more frequently in countries that constitutionally mandate leadership turnover or establish norms for designating a leader than in countries with unregulated executive selection. The former conditions can persuade elites who have their eye on power to use institutionalized means to remove the leader from power rather than trying to sack him through a potentially violent coup. In addition, where leaders are limited to a fixed term in office, patience reigns among those elites hoping to replace the leader. Potential replacement candidates prefer to wait out the leader's term rather than seek to overthrow him. We confirmed that single-party leaders and monarchic dictators survive their first two years in office at a higher rate than military leaders and personalist dictators because single-party and monarchic regimes institutionalize leadership turnover more often than other authoritarian regimes.

The protection offered from institutionalized executive selection and from term limits extends the time horizon of the leader. Others have shown (e.g. Wright 2008) and we confirm in this chapter that leaders with longer time horizons—particularly those who do not fear that their leadership will end in exile, imprisonment or murder—pursue better economic policy and promote higher average growth rates. While any leadership transition can cause uncertainty that affects economic markets, institutionalized executive selection tempers that insecurity.

Beyond encouraging leaders to seek pro-growth economic policies, the institutionalization of executive selection in dictatorships potentially affects many other policy areas. One could imagine that a leader who expects to remain in power for a fixed term might also promote better education and health policy in hopes of improving his country's international standing. When leaders do not fear for their immediate survival, they also might take a more peaceful approach to foreign policy

because they would not want to introduce external threats to their survival. The institutionalization versus non-institutionalization of leadership transitions in authoritarian regimes evokes a bevy of real-world implications. We have presented just a handful of the possible effects here. Future research will reveal to what extent the presence of these institutions shapes authoritarian leaders behavior and whether or not it accounts for variation in actual policy outcomes.

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