

**ANTÓNIO COSTA PINTO**

**Edited by**



# **RULING ELITES AND DECISION-MAKING IN FASCIST-ERA DICTATORSHIPS**

**SOCIAL SCIENCE MONOGRAPHS**



**António Costa Pinto**

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AND DECISION-MAKING  
IN FASCIST-ERA  
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## Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
<i>List of Tables and Figures</i>	xi
Introduction: Political elites and decision-making in fascist-era dictatorships <i>António Costa Pinto</i>	xv
1. Mussolini, charisma and decision-making <i>Didier Musiedlak</i>	i
2. Political elite and decision-making in Mussolini's Italy <i>Goffredo Adinolfi</i>	19
3. Ministers and centres of power in Nazi Germany <i>Ana Mónica Fonseca</i>	55
4. Nazi propaganda decision-making: the hybrid of 'modernity' and 'neo-feudalism' in Nazi wartime propaganda <i>Aristotle Kallis</i>	83
5. The 'empire of the professor': Salazar's ministerial elite, 1932–44 <i>Nuno Estêvão Ferreira, Rita Almeida de Carvalho, António Costa Pinto</i>	119

6. Political decision-making in the Portuguese New State (1933–9): The dictator, the council of ministers and the inner-circle <i>Filipa Raimundo, Nuno Estêvão Ferreira, Rita Almeida de Carvalho</i>	137
7. Executive, single party and ministers in Franco's regime, 1936–45 <i>Miguel Jerez Mir</i>	165
8. Single party, cabinet and political decision-making in fascist era dictatorships: Comparative perspectives <i>António Costa Pinto</i>	215
<i>Contributors</i>	253
<i>Index</i>	257

## Single party, cabinet and political decision-making in fascist era dictatorships: comparative perspectives

*António Costa Pinto*

A comparative analysis of the institutions, elites and political decision-making in the right-wing dictatorships of inter-war Europe highlights some of the characteristics that were to dominate 20th-century dictatorships. While Italian Fascism and German National Socialism provided powerful institutional and political inspiration for other regimes, their types of leadership, institutions and operating methods already encapsulated the dominant models of the 20th-century dictatorship: personalised leadership, the single or dominant party and the ‘technico-consultative’ political institutions.

The fascist regimes were the first ideological one-party dictatorships that were situated on the right of the European political spectrum, and their development, alongside the consolidation of the first communist dictatorship, decisively marked the typologies of dictatorial regimes elaborated during the 1950s (Brooker 2009). While Friedrich and Brzezinski recognised that the single party played a more modest role within the fascist regimes than it did within communist regimes, part of the classificatory debate over European fascism continued to insist, eventually excessively on this point, and the theories of totalitarianism ‘deformed’ their role, often without any empirical support (Friedrich and Brzezinski 1956). On the other hand, many historians examining the ideology and political activities of the fascist parties viewed the transformation of these parties as institutions of power within the new dictatorships, with some simplistic analysis that stressed the con-

traditions between the revolutionary nature of the 'movement' phase (prior to taking power) and the 'regime' phase (De Felice 1975).

In the transitions to authoritarianism that occurred during the 1920s and 1930s there is no strict correlation between the abrupt and violent ruptures with democracy in Portugal and Spain and the 'legal' assumption of power in Germany and Italy, with the extent of the break from the liberal institutions following the consolidation of their respective dictatorial regimes. Salazar, who arrived in power after a coup d'état, and Franco, whose ascension was the result of a civil war, both had much greater room for manoeuvre than either Mussolini or Hitler who both achieved their positions through 'legal' routes and with the support of a conservative right that was less inclined towards radical adventures (Linz and Stepan 1978; Linz 2000; Berg-Schlosser and Mitchell 2000). The type of transition does not seem to explain the extent of the rupture with the liberal institutions and the innovation of the new institutions created by the subsequent dictatorships. Rather than in the nature of the transition, the differences between the regimes lay in the role of the party and in its relationship with the leader who dominated the transitional process.

The dictatorships associated with fascism during the first half of the 20th century were personalised dictatorships (Payne 1996; Griffin 1991). It is interesting to see that even those regimes that were institutionalised following military coups, and which passed through a phase of military dictatorship, gave birth to personalist regimes and more or less successful attempts to create single or dominant parties (Fischer 2006).<sup>1</sup> In the majority of these cases, the inherent dilemma in the transformation of the single party as the dictatorship's 'ruling institution' into the leader's 'instrument of rule' are somewhat different than it was for the socialist dictatorships (Pinto, Eatwell and Larsen 2007).

Some authors speak of the degeneration of the party as a ruling organisation into an 'agent of the personal ruler' in the case of the communist parties in power (Brooker 1995: 9–10). In the dictatorships

<sup>1</sup> The military played a central role in Portugal in 1926, and then in Spain, where a failed military coup led to a civil war.



associated with fascism the single party was not the regime's 'ruling institution'—it was one of many. It is only in the paradigmatic cases of Italy and Germany that this question was raised and resolved during the regimes' institutionalisation phase. In the cases of Franco's Spain and Salazar's Portugal, the single parties were created from above as 'instruments of rule' for the leader. In the dictatorships of central and Eastern Europe, such as Austria and Romania, and also Marshall Petain's Vichy France, some fascist movements emerged either as rivals to or unstable partners in the single or dominant party, and often as inhibitors to their formation, making the institutionalisation of the regimes more difficult for the dictatorial candidates. The boundaries of these regimes were fluid, demonstrating fascism's amazing ability to permeate the authoritarian right during the 1920s and 1930s. The most paradigmatic case was, without doubt, that of early Francoism, although Salazarism in Portugal also emulated some aspects of Italian Fascism.

Italian Fascism and German National Socialism represented attempts to create a new set of political and para-state institutions that were in one form or another present in other dictatorships of the period. After taking power, both the National Socialist and Fascist parties became powerful instruments of a new order, agents of a 'parallel administration': transformed into single parties they flourished as breeding-grounds for a new political elite and as agents for a new mediation between the state and civil society, creating tensions between the single party, the government and the state apparatus in the process. These tensions were also a consequence of the emergence of new centres of political decision making that transferred power from the government and the ministerial elite and concentrated it into the hands of Mussolini and Hitler (Pinto 2002).

While taking power was only possible with the support of other conservative and authoritarian groups, the nature of the leadership and its relationship with the party was an important variable. As some historians have observed, a crucial element is 'to what extent the fascist component emancipated itself from the initial predominance of its traditional conservative sponsors and to what degree it departed—once in power—from conventional forms and objectives of policy-

making towards a more radical direction' (Kallis 2000: 1996–7). This tension may be illustrated by the eventual emergence of a weaker or stronger 'dualism of power' that appears to be the determining factor for the typological and classificatory variations used to qualify those dictatorships historically associated with fascism and which have been defined variously as 'authoritarian' and 'totalitarian', or as 'authoritarian' and 'fascist' (Linz 2003).

The interaction between the single party, the government, the state apparatus and civil society appears fundamental if we are to achieve an understanding of the different ways in which the various dictatorships of the fascist era functioned. The party and its ancillary organisations were not merely parallel institutions, they were also central agents for the creation and maintenance of the leader's authority and legitimacy. While their impact on the operation of the political system may be difficult to assess, the personality of the leader is of particular importance within dictatorial regimes because, while not underestimating the role of the institutions, this is central for the definition of the respective style of rule (Blondel 1987; Greenstein 1987). For this very reason the type of leader-single-party axis appears to be the fundamental element of explanation for the diminution (or not) of the government, and of an opening that favoured (or not) 'dualism' in the nature of power and decision making: or in other words, of the extent of the 'de-institutionalisation of norms' and the bypassing of bureaucratic authoritarianism (here expressed by the dictator-cabinet-state apparatus axis) by the leader and his followers (Lepsius 2007: 55).

This chapter analyses the relationship between the single parties and the political decision-making institutions within those dictatorships associated with fascism, focusing on the relationship between the dictators, the single parties, the cabinet and the governing elites. We also want to identify the locus of decision-making power and the main institutional veto players.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> As both Iberian dictatorships continued long after the end of the fascist era, this chapter will consider these regimes from their creation during the 1930s to the end of the Second World War in 1945.

### **Single party, cabinet and political decision-making: Locating power in fascist-era dictatorships**

#### *The political engineering of Italian Fascism in power*

While Mussolini conquered power as leader of the National Fascist Party (PNF—Partito Nazionale Fascista), the subsequent dismantling of the democratic regime was slow, and the reduced social and political influence of the party and/or the political will of Mussolini made him to accept compromises with the king, the armed forces and with other institutions, such as the Catholic church. The consolidation of the dictatorship had to involve the imposition of a greater degree of discipline within the party, whose actions during the initial phase of Mussolini's regime could threaten the compromises essential for its institutionalisation.

The Italian case is an example of the seizure of power by a 'united political elite' whose base was a fascist party transformed into the primary motor for the dictatorship's institutionalisation; however for several years Mussolini had to work with a parliament, and until the end of his regime he had also to work with a senate. Securing political control of the parliament was not easy during the 1920s, and the entire legislative process had to pass through both it and, until the end of the regime, the king. Musiedlak notes that 'the powerful Fascist leader of Italy had to behave as the classical prime minister of a liberal system ... appealing for votes and fearing abstention' (Musiedlak 2009). Securing political control of the senate was a slow and complex process that involved the Fascist Party infiltrating its way into the institution and encircling the royalist conservative elite (Musiedlak 2003). Nevertheless, while he needed the party to control institutions and strengthen his personal power, Mussolini remained suspicious of some of its sections. Unlike Hitler, Mussolini did not view the party as an 'army of followers': he feared its autonomy could threaten his authority. The ambition of the single party to control society also collided with the state bureaucracy, so much so that it was not until the 1930s that Mussolini allowed the PNF to extend its control over the state apparatus.

Mussolini did at times use the party to abandon his concessions to bureaucratic-legal legitimacy. Although he lacked the opportunity to eliminate the diarchy he inherited, he never abolished the monarchy (Milza 1999). When what remained of the liberal legacy was eliminated during the latter half of the 1930s, and when under Starace the PNF proposed the conquest of civil society, Mussolini's attempts to enhance his personal and charismatic authority through the party, state and propaganda apparatus culminated in the creation of the cult of Il Duce (Gentile 1996). This represented the zenith of a movement that several historians of fascism have suggested signals the passage from an authoritarian to a totalitarian fascism, of which tendencies of both had coexisted during the consolidation of Mussolini's dictatorship (Gentile 1995: 136–40).

In 1926, the PNF became the *de facto* single party. The 1928 transformation of the Fascist Grand Council—the PNF's supreme body since 1923—into a state institution under Mussolini's leadership marked the fusion of the party and the state at the very peak of the fascist political system without subordinating the former to the latter. As one student of Italian fascism has noted, 'the Fascist Grand Council retained a political importance that was greater than that of the cabinet... In this aspect, however, the theoretical supremacy of the state over the party cannot be interpreted as the subordination of the party's organs to those of the government' (Lyttelton 1998: 174; Steiner 1938: 65). The main reforms of the Italian political system began with the Fascist Grand Council, although this body, even while technically more important than the council of ministers, was formally a consultative body that met only infrequently after the consolidation of Fascism. One of the last reforms was the creation in 1938 of the Fascist corporatist chamber, of which the leaders of the PNF became automatic members. The Grand Council consequently lost its right to draw up the list of deputies with the abolition of the liberal parliament. The secretary of the PNF, who was also the secretary of the Grand Council and a government minister, was to become the second most important figure of Italian Fascism (Gentile 1995: 167).

During the first years of his regime, Mussolini was afraid the party's radicalism and indiscipline would compromise the consolidation of Fascist power. Purges, the closure of the party to new members and limiting its access to both the state and to the government were all characteristics of the dictatorship during the 1920s (Gentile 1995: 168–198). However, throughout the 1930s the PNF, which was by then under Starace's leadership and had been imbued with a structure that was more 'disciplined [both] horizontally and vertically', became a powerful machine used both to shape civil society and promote the ideological socialisation of the Duce leadership cult.

Mussolini was the ruler of an often unstable balance between the party, the government and the administration, and reserved political decision-making power to his person while subordinating both the party and the governmental elite to his sole authority. Lupo illustrates this well when he wrote, 'the group of leaders that emerged from the Fascist mobilisation took important steps towards the conquest of power on a path that was blocked to them by both conservative resistance and by jealousy and paranoia of Il Duce that quickly transformed into tyranny' (2003: 13). From this perspective, Mussolini accumulated a large part of the political decision-making power to his own person. His cabinet was undoubtedly formally devalued in relation to the Grand Council; however, the relationship between Mussolini (who often took direct responsibility for up to six ministries) and his ministers was still a determining element of political decision-making, while the council of ministers survived as an institution. Some other institutions inherited from the liberal regime that remained largely un-'Fascistised', such as the council of state, were also to act as legislative filters (Melis 2008).

From the mid-1930s, the significant reduction in the number of meetings by both the Grand Council and the council of ministers was indicative of the increasing concentration of power to Mussolini's person. The Grand Council did not meet at all between 1939 and 1943, 'without affecting the regime's ability to function' (Adinolfi 2009: 29); however, this was the reservoir of the fascist ruling elite that dismissed Mussolini in 1943, and while the council of ministers also

held significantly fewer meetings, at least decisions made there were ratified (Adinolfi 2009: 49). At the meeting of the Grand Council at which Mussolini was removed from office, Grandi accused him of having a personalist management style that bureaucratised and stifled the party and paralysed the regime (Lewis 2002: 51). This first accusation was not far from the truth, while the second only served to highlight the progressive reduction of the Council's once significant political decision-making authority.

Despite having been transformed into a centralised 'party-state' machine (as was the case for other official single parties), 80 per cent of the PNF elite had joined the movement before the March on Rome, and they did not like latecomers (Gentile 1995: 183; Palla 2001: 17). The militia was the first institution to be taken out of the party's control and placed under Mussolini's direct command. The political police was never independent of the state, although several of the mass organisations, particularly those involving youth, women and the working classes, were subjected to many different transfers. The PNF took control of the popular mass organisations, even although these organisations were initially dependent upon the ministries.<sup>3</sup> The National After-Work Agency (OND—Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro, a cultural organisation within the economics ministry), was the object of some rivalry between the ministry of corporations and the PNF before responsibility for it was finally placed with the latter in 1927 when it was the regime's largest mass organisation (De Grazia 1981: 33–59). A similar event took place in relation to the youth organisations: originally voluntary organisations within the PNF, responsibility for them was transferred to the ministry of education in 1929. A few years later, with Starace at its head, the party regained control of them and in 1937 they were amalgamated into a single youth movement, Italian Fascist Youth (GIL—Gioventù Italiana del Littorio). The monopoly over the political socialisation of youth was not only a

<sup>3</sup> It is interesting to note that a great deal of recent empirical research confirms much of the pioneering working hypotheses on the PNF in power originally posited by Dante L. Germino in 1959.

source of tension between the PNF and the state: it also involved the Catholic Church, which saw its independent Catholic Action youth organisations alternately tolerated and dissolved (Koon 1985). The PNF was also involved in the trade unions. During the initial period, the PNF had its own unions over which it maintained indirect control. The complementary nature of the relationship between the state and the party was significant within the womens' organisations, from Fascist Women (FF—Fasci Femminile) to Rural Housewives (MR—Massaie Rurali), in which—and after many hesitations—the party invested heavily throughout the 1930s (De Grazia 1993: 234–71, Willson 2002).

Despite the lack of success with which its attempts to 'Fascistise' the bureaucracy met, political control over access to the civil service was strengthened progressively following the transfer of the Fascist civil service association to the PNF in 1931 and the introduction of obligatory membership of this association in 1937. In 1938, membership of the PNF became a necessary precondition for admission to the state apparatus (Melis 1995: 264). Several other examples can be given to demonstrate the party's increasing influence within the state and of the privileges it could extend to its professional members. Newly appointed judges, whether members of the PNF or not, were obliged to attend courses on fascist culture within the party's political education centres before they could take up their posts, while trainee lawyers were allowed a reduction of their training period, but only if they joined the PNF before they qualified (Pombeni 1984: 256).

We should not forget that alongside the central state apparatus a large para-state sector linked to the coordination of the economy and to the corporatist system was developed, a true 'parallel administration' in which there was greater flexibility in the nominations, but in which the nominees for positions came not only from professional civil servants, but increasingly from within an elite closely associated with the Fascist movement and its leader (Dormagen 2007).

In Italian Fascism, not only did the locus of political decision-making power begin to diverge from the classical dictator-government binomial as a result of the existence of the Grand Council.

The single party was transformed into the only route into government, and controlled civil society through its parallel political organisation, which was at the service of the dictator and his regime and which increasingly interfered in the workings of both the state apparatus and the bureaucracy. The concentration of seven or eight portfolios in Mussolini's hands and the erratic and volatile nature of a ministerial elite that could be (and which was) dismissed at any moment resulted in the appointment of undecisive ministers, but which left a shadow over direct relations between Il Duce and the senior bureaucracy.

*Hitler and the de-institutionalisation of the Nazi dictatorship*

The Nazi dictatorship was much closer to the model of charismatic leadership and the Nazi Party (NSDAP—Nazionalsozial Deutsche Arbeiterpartei), autonomous institutions, and militias like the SS exercised a greater influence over the political system. Both factors make it much more difficult to identify the location of political decision-making within Nazism.

One of the most fruitful interpretations of the Nazi political system is that which defines it as a 'polyocracy'—a political system that consists of several decision-making centres, all of which were mediated individually by Hitler (Fraenkel 1942). Such a system has many tensions—for example, between the party and its bureaucratic apparatus and the local and central administrations—however, we should not exaggerate them, since in many cases they complemented each other. This investigation has variegated some of the interpretations that have bequeathed us an image of forced coherence where before there was little (Friedrich and Brzezinski 1956). It is also clear that the war acted as a catalyst driving events that under different circumstances would probably have followed a different path.

Hitler's dictatorship was in every aspect of its existence closer to a charismatic regime than any other, and this had significant implications for the operation of the Nazi political system (Kershaw 1998; 2000). The Nazi leader was at the head of the most powerful fascist party, and although Hitler had to overcome some opposition from



elements within the NSDAP's militia—the SA (Sturm Abteilungen)—in the immediate aftermath of his rise to power, he soon made the party his 'instrument of rule'. Hitler's style of rule caused a weakening of the authoritarian state's decision-making structure, resulting in Hitler's rise to absolute power at the head of a system in which the 'coexistence [of] and conflict [between] uncoordinated authorities very often undermin[ed] solidarity and uniformity in the exercise of power' (Broszat 1981: 351). Whether as part of a deliberate strategy or merely as a consequence of Hitler's leadership personality, this also provoked a multiplication of ad hoc decisions and ensured that there would be no real or formal limits to his authority (Mommssen 1991: 163–88). Despite this concentration of power, Hitler's style of rule led him to immerse himself in such matters as the military and the strategic defence and expansion of the Third Reich, and to under-estimate the 'command and control' dimension of the administration and of day-to-day domestic politics.

As in the other dictatorships analysed here, the Nazi cabinet was quickly transformed into a bureaucratic body that was totally subservient to Hitler. Even in this compliant condition, the cabinet ceased to exist as a collegiate body and political power within the Nazi regime was simultaneously concentrated in Hitler and dispersed throughout the various autonomous institutions—severely undermining the government. Regular meetings of the cabinet ceased in 1935, with even the symbolic meetings that remained coming to an end just three years later (Broszat 1981: 280). In 1937, with Hans Heinrich Lammers as head of the Reich Chancellery, ministerial access to Hitler became more difficult as he deliberately reduced the cabinet's status (Peterson 1969: 26–33). At the same time, the office of the deputy-Führer, headed by Rudolf Hess and later by Martin Bormann, and which represented the NSDAP, moved closer to Hitler. One important biographer of the German Führer notes that 'Whichever way one viewed it, and remarkable for a complex modern state, there was no government beyond Hitler and whichever individuals he chose to confer with at a particular time. Hitler was the only link of the component parts of the regime' (Kershaw 2000: 227).

The status associated with ministerial rank diminished as both a *de facto* and symbolic position of power within National Socialism with the rapid emergence of various para-statal structures with parallel powers. While the ministerial elite was more politically homogeneous, the initial pressure from several Nazi ministers to create a centralised dictatorship based on the control of the administration led to its swift weakening under pressure from the party, the SS and other parallel institutions—very often with Hitler's support. According to Broszat, in National Socialism three distinct centres of power began to emerge within a structure that was in a tense and unstable balance: 'the single party monopoly, the centralised governmental dictatorship and the absolutism of the Führer ..., undermin[ed] the unity of the government and the monopoly of government by the Reich cabinet' (Broszat 1981: 262–4). Special authorities, which were under Hitler's direct control, soon developed alongside the ministries at the same time as several political and police organisations, some controlled by the NSDAP and others by the SS, began to act independently of the government. These 'leader-retinue-structures' were not only tolerated by Hitler: he actually encouraged them.

Among the former were organisations such as the German Road System, the Labour Service and others, of which the most important were either more overtly political or repressive. The Hitler Youth, which remained under the party's control, was transformed into a Reich Authority independent of the ministry of education, with the objective of becoming a counterweight to both the ministry and the armed forces in political and ideological education. In a complex manner that generated innumerable tensions, the gradual removal of the police from the interior ministry into the hands of Himmler's SS is yet another example. It was transformed into an institution that was at least formally dependent upon the party and the state, but 'which had detached itself from both and had become independent' (Broszat 1981: 272). Frick's interior ministry was thus emasculated of any practical authority over the police, just as the position of the minister of labour was also partially weakened with the independence of the German Labour Front (DAF—*Deutsche Arbeitsfront*) (Peterson

1969: 77; Frei 1994: 171). If the Nazification of the administration was at times more superficial than real, the creation of those organisations that were viewed as parallel administrations represent the most extreme examples of the subversion of an authoritarian concept of government and state within the collection of dictatorships that have been associated with fascism.

Even although it had been subordinated, the appointment of NSDAP leaders to ministerial office was—in much the same way as in the other dictatorships—a symbol of the Nazi Party's victory as it represented the diminution of the government. It is also worth noting that even although it survived as an institution, albeit with much of its legislative authority removed and controlled by the NSDAP, the Reichstag was seldom used as a legitimising institution.

The tensions created by the legality of the NSDAP's rise to power and the rapid development of Hitler's charismatic leadership were resolved by the publication of a series of decrees that conveyed total power to him. The NSDAP, even while experiencing internal crises, created a parallel structure in the process of which they multiplied and upset the spheres of decision-making power in several areas of national and regional authority.

The existence of a large administration of NSDAP functionaries was symbolic of a revolutionary strategy before a controlled bureaucracy, although according to several studies, 'the Nazi leadership always relied on the old elite to maintain the essential functions of government', particularly within German territory, given that the party was more important in the eastern occupied territories (Kater 1983: 238). Nevertheless, the increasing legislative confusion that sought to interpret the leader's will represents the most extreme subversion of the traditional methods of political decision-making of the four dictatorships being studied. The NSDAP, while not achieving its ambition to secure political and ideological control of the administration, did obtain for itself a much stronger position before the government (Caplan 1988: 131–88). Not only did Bormann's office of the deputy-Führer become the most important channel to Hitler, it also secured some political control over the government through, for example,

its power to veto civil service promotions. Simultaneously, the party achieved political and financial autonomy, and developed as a parallel state apparatus (Orlow 1973).

The Nazi Party in power was transformed into a complex organisation, and many studies have pointed out that the leaders of the party 'became stuck midway through their journey toward the creation of a truly innovative, even revolutionary elite' (Kater 1983: 233). While the formal rigidity of many of the typologies that label National Socialism as an example of where 'the party commands the state' cannot be verified, it was in Nazi Germany that the single party not only obtained the greatest autonomy, but was also the leading force in the drive to reduce the importance of the governmental and administrative elites and in the progressive and unstable subversion of 'bureaucratic authoritarianism' in the 'locus' of political power and decision-making. As a single party, the NSDAP represents the strongest 'shadow state' of the cases under study.

*Portugal's New State: The primacy of bureaucratic authoritarianism*

The Portuguese New State, which was institutionalised in 1933, emerged from the military dictatorship that overthrew the liberal First Republic in 1926. António de Oliveira Salazar, a young university professor and Catholic leader, was appointed prime minister in 1932 by the president of the republic, General Óscar Carmona, whose position was legitimised in an election held in 1928. Despite the significance of the fact the president decided not to assume the position of prime minister or to declare himself a dictator, he did appoint military officers to the position of prime minister until 1932.

Salazar played no role in the 1926 coup, nor was he listed as a candidate for dictator during the last years of the parliamentary regime. Salazar's expertise was in finance and his backing by the Catholic Church and the small Catholic party made him a natural candidate for the post of finance minister. It was in this capacity that he joined the cabinet in 1928. His rise in government was made possible by the concessions he was able to demand from the dictatorship as a condition of accepting the post as finance minister.

The New State's political institutions resulted from the often difficult negotiations that took place between Salazar and the military leaders (the majority of whom were conservative republicans) both within the government and within the framework of limited pluralism within the dictatorship. Curiously, the first institution to be created was the National Union (UN—*União Nacional*) in 1930, the single party that was created by the government within the interior ministry, legitimating the elimination of the parties that had survived the First Republic, even those, such as the Catholic Party (PC—*Partido Católico*), that supported the dictatorship. Initially consisting of local conservative republican notables, the UN was soon attracting monarchists, Catholics and even some dissident fascists from Rolão Preto's National Syndicalism (MNS—*Movimento Nacional Sindicalismo*)—a movement that had challenged Salazar before being banned in 1934. It was also during the final days of the dictatorship that the republican opposition made several serious and violent attempts to overthrow it.

Once he was appointed prime minister, Salazar set about the task of legitimating the dictatorship through the promulgation of a new constitution. The 1933 constitution heralded an early compromise with the conservative republicans, but its liberal principals were weak while the corporatist and authoritarian ones were strong. Rights and liberties were formally maintained but were actually eliminated by government regulation. *De jure* freedom of association existed, but parties were eliminated through regulation. Formally the UN never became a single party, although it functioned as such after 1934.

As president of the UN, Salazar had final say concerning the nominations for parliamentary deputies, a task he took great care over during the first phase of the regime. Adopting a methodology that he was to refine, he asked for lists of names and suggestions from his informal group of advisers and the UN leadership, often personally inviting candidates to the list (Castilho 2009: 213–230; Carvalho 2002).

The president, who chose the prime minister, was elected by universal male suffrage, meaning Salazar was answerable to no-one but the president. During the first years of Salazar's rule only the president

and the army posed any constitutional or political threat to his position. While the constitution retained the classic separation of powers the chamber of deputies had few powers and the corporatist chamber had only 'advisory' functions. Before the creation of the corporations, members of the corporatist chamber were chosen by the corporatist council, which consisted of Salazar and the ministers and secretaries of state of the sectors involved.

Above all else, Salazar was a master whose manipulation of a perverted rational-legal legitimacy meant he had little need to seek recourse in a charismatic style that could rise above bureaucratic and governmental mediation between himself and the nation. Moreover, the military origins of his regime ensured his position was linked to that of President Carmona.

Salazar's single party was established within an authoritarian regime and the impetus for its formation came from the government with assistance from the state apparatus. State dependency marked the life of the party and, once its leaders had been appointed and the national assembly representatives chosen, the UN practically disappeared. In 1938, the dictator himself recognised that the single party's activity had 'progressively diminished to near-vanishing point' (Cruz 1980: 140). Its internal structure was weak and it lacked the propaganda, socio-professional and cultural department of other single parties. However, it did strengthen Salazar's authority, limited pressure groups and the 'political families' and integrated them into the regime, while also keeping a reign on the president.

Students of the New State have emphasised the impact the outbreak of the Spanish civil war had on the nature of the regime. In response to the 'red threat' in Spain, Salazarism developed a new political discourse and symbolism, and set up two militia organisations. These steps have often been interpreted as the 'fascistisation' of the regime, although the single party was not a part of the new dynamics.

Several organisations, such as the Portuguese Legion (LP—*Legião Portuguesa*, the regime's militia), the Portuguese Youth organisation (MP—*Mocidade Portuguesa*) and the political police (PVDE—*Polícia de Vigilância e Defesa do Estado*), were kept entirely depend-

ent on the ministers. The National Propaganda Secretariat (SPN—Secretariado de Propaganda Nacional) was a general directorate within the state apparatus, equipped with its own autonomous leadership that was responsible to Salazar directly rather than to the party. The National Federation for Happiness at Work (FNAT—Federação Nacional de Alegria no Trabalho), a modest Portuguese version of Mussolini's *Dopolavoro* and Hitler's DAF, was dependent upon the under-secretary of state for corporations (Valente 1999).

His extensive centralisation of decision-making authority clearly justifies the use of the expression strong-dictator in any characterisation of the power exercised by Salazar. However, it is important to stress that the locus of power and of political decision-making was always with the dictator and his ministers, as it was through these that the great majority of decisions passed. In several other dictatorships single parties functioned at least as parallel political apparatus; however, this never happened under Salazar where political control was mainly effected through administrative centralisation rather than the single party. Not only was there no tension between Salazar's UN and the axis cabinet-state apparatus, but neither the dictatorial system nor the political decision-making process were ever challenged by the existence of autonomous political institutions directly subordinated to the dictator.

### *Early Francoism and the fascist appeal*

While during their long existence the two Iberian dictatorships eventually converged as forms of authoritarianism, their markedly different origins were clearly evident during the period being studied (Payne 1987; Cazorla-Sanchez 2000).

The main characteristic of Francoism was its radical break with the Second Republic. The product of a protracted and bloody civil war in which there were a greater number of political purges and executions than during the overthrow of any other democratic regimes following the First World War, Francoism as a political system rejected the fundamentals of the liberal legacy and was inspired by Fascism to a much greater degree than was Salazarism (Tusell 1988; Tusell, Gen-

tile and Di Febo 2004; Saz Campos 2004). Franco was establishing his embryonic political system within those areas that had been occupied by the Nationalists: it was a system marked by the reactionary and militaristic coalition of conservative Catholics, monarchists and fascists.

In order to create his single party, FET-JONS (Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional-Sindicalista)—which was based around the small Spanish fascist movement—Franco forced the Falange's fusion with the Catholics and the monarchists (Payne 2000). During the civil war, the Falange lent Franco the support of their political militants and their ideology as well as their modest fascist militia in the hope that their imposed 'unification' would ensure for them 'a genuinely fascist role in the implementation of a mobilised society' (Chueca 1983: 401). However, the fascists saw their position weaken as a result of their inclusion into a single party that incorporated several other 'political families'. The Francoist single party was a heterogeneous union that maintained several identities, particularly at the intermediate levels (Linz 1970: 128–203; Sánchez Recio 1996). Nevertheless, Franco and the victors of the civil war initially outlined the creation of a Spanish new state: one that lacked the palliatives and compromises of its Portuguese peer, even although the tentative outlines of its proposed totalitarian tendencies were to be rapidly eliminated as the defeat of German Europe became more predictable (Thomàs 2001).

Franco's concessions to Spain's liberal past were few and far between, and the dictator did not have to deal with either a president or a king, subordinate or not, and nor did he have to pervert a parliament as had Mussolini. As Stanley Payne noted, in 1939 the Spanish dictator 'was the European ruler who, both formally and theoretically, retained the most absolute and uncontrolled power' (Payne 2000: 487).

Some of Franco's personal characteristics and his relationship with the institutions that constituted the base of his victory were to influence the nature of the new political system. Franco was a conservative military man expressing values of order, anti-communism, tradition-



alist Catholicism and an obsession with the 'liberal-Masonic conspiracy' (Preston 1993). His relationship with FET-JONS was also more utilitarian than ideological—he was not the original party leader and neither was the Falange to be a determining factor in his seizure of power, sensitive as he was to both the armed forces and the Catholic Church (the other powerful institutions involved in founding the new regime). Despite Franco's support for the Axis during the Second World War, his intellectual background and his professional career make it difficult to position him as a fascist leader once he was in power.

Franco placed the single party under his and his government's strict control. Nevertheless, FET-JONS not only managed to create a party apparatus and ancillary organisations that were much more powerful than those enjoyed by its Portuguese counterpart, but its access to both the national government and the local administration was also greater.

Despite being subordinate, FET-JONS was initially integrated into certain administrative bodies within the state apparatus, for example, by uniting the position of civil governors with those of the party's regional secretaries.<sup>4</sup> One important struggle that was immediately lost was the attempt to retain an independent militia, which, as in Portugal, was placed under military control. However, the party did control a considerable collection of ancillary organisations, such as the Youth Front (FJ—Frente de Juventudes), the Spanish University Union (SEU—Sindicato Español Universitario), the Women's Section (SF—Sección Feminina), the Syndical Organisation (OO.SS—Organización Sindical) and the Spanish equivalent of the *Dopolavoro*, the Education and Recreation Syndical Organisation (OSED—Organización Sindical de la Educación y Descanso) (Sáez Marin 1988; Ruiz Carnicer 1996; Molinero 2005). More importantly, the party retained responsibility for propaganda within the regime (Sevillano Calero 1998). The intertwining of party and state not-

<sup>4</sup> For an interesting comparison between the Spanish civil governors and the Italian Fascist prefects see Madrid (2005).

withstanding, the coincidence of ministerial charges with the same section within the party are certainly worthy of greater attention.

The party's national education delegate was responsible for the various youth organisations, and as the occupant of this post was always the minister of education this minister effectively headed these organisations (Chueca 1983: 401). Propaganda, which in 1938 was the responsibility of an under-secretary of state within the Nationalist government, was transferred to the single party until 1945 when it became a government responsibility once more. During Serrano Suñer's short spell as the leading party figure he was also the party's propaganda delegate, and when he was appointed interior minister he took the party's propaganda specialists with him, further blurring the boundaries and increasing the confusion as to where the party ended and the state began (Cazorla-Sanchez 2000: 40; Chueca 1983: 287–8; Molinero 2005: 73–185). The syndical apparatus was without doubt 'an area of power reserved to the Falangists', but they were regulated by the ministry of labour. It was in this area that some of the Falangists experimented with the language of social demagoguery in a way that created tensions with the government and which were to lead to some dismissals (Cazorla-Sanchez 2000: 112–263; Chueca 1983: 341–8). Generally, at least until 1945, 'the predominance of the Falange elite and military officials was obvious', particularly at the governmental level (Mir 1982).

### **Single parties and the ministerial elites of fascist-era dictatorships**

The main divergence in the characteristics of the ministerial elite of the four dictatorships being examined can be found in their political origins. In both National Socialism and Italian Fascism the hegemony of the PNF's and NSDAP's professional politicians is overwhelming as a condition for obtaining ministerial office. We should note that there was a greater number of full-time politicians in Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy than there were in either Portugal or Spain, where bureaucrats and military officials constituted the larger proportion of both Salazar's and Franco's ministers (Table 8.1). While in

the Portuguese New State only a small number of the single party's leaders served in Salazar's governments (Table 8.2), in the other three dictatorships the party leaders had a very strong presence in government (Table 8.2).

**Table 8.1**  
**Ministers' occupational background (%)\***

Occupational categories	Portugal	Spain	Italy	Germany
Military	26.7	41.2	8.0	10.8
Army	20.0	35.3	5.3	5.4
Navy	6.7	5.9	2.7	2.7
Air Force	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.7
Judge or public prosecutor	3.3	0.0	0.0	13.5
Diplomat	3.3	0.0	5.3	8.1
Senior civil servant	10.0	11.8	2.6	18.9
Middle civil servant	0.0	0.0	1.3	0.0
Officer of state corporatist agencies	0.0	2.9	1.3	10.81
University professor	40.0	2.9	26.6	2.7
Teacher	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0
Employee	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Writer or journalist	0.0	2.9	6.6	2.7
Lawyer	10.0	17.6	6.6	5.4
Doctor	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Engineer	0.0	14.7	3.9	2.7
Manager	0.0	0.0	9.3	0.0
Businessman, industrialist or banker	10.0	2.9	0.0	2.7
Landowner or farmer	6.7	5.9	0.0	0.0
Full-time politician	0.0	0.0	70.7	56.8
Other	3.3	0.0	0.0	2.7
N	30	34	75	37

\* Occupations immediately before the first ministerial appointment. Multiple coding has been applied. Percentages do not, therefore, total 100.

N = Number of ministers.

Source: *ICS database on the fascist elite* (2009).

The ministerial elite of consolidated Italian Fascism was dominated by men who had been fascists from the very earliest days, almost all of whom—with the exception of military officers—were also members of the Fascist Grand Council (Gentile 2000; Adinolfi 2009). According to Pierre Milza, ‘the inner circle of [Fascist] power was made up of about 30–40 people whose names also figure in the list of members of the Grand Council for most of this period’ (Milza 1999: 521). Ministers, under-secretaries and presidents of both parliament and senate: almost all occupants of these positions came from this inner circle. Before they became members of government, the main emblematic figures of Italian Fascism, men such as Dino Grandi, Italo Balbo and Giuseppe Bottai who were PNF *ras* in Bologna, Ferrara and Rome respectively, had all participated in the *squadristi*-led violence of the early-1920s (Nello 2003; Segre 1990; Corner 1974). Of the few—mainly conservative and monarchist—officers of the armed forces who rose to ministerial rank during fascism, many followed a path similar to that of Emilio de Bono, who joined the PNF in 1922 and then served in the Fascist militia before receiving a ministerial post (Fucci 1989).

Other main entry points to a ministerial position until the 1930s were either through the ranks of the PNF or through the provincial federations within which the PNF occupied a dominant position. The corporatist apparatus was another source for ministerial recruitment, and one that came to dominate during the second half of the 1930s: of the 28 presidents of Fascist syndical federations, 14 were to become under-secretaries of state or ministers (Lyttelton 1998: 210). The least important recruiting ground was the civil service, and the few who did come by this route still had to be vetted by the various Fascist organisations involved in public administration (Table 8.2).

Ministerial re-shuffles were common, and it was rare for any minister to serve more than three years. There were very few like Giuseppe Bottai, who was moved from one ministry to the other. Mussolini tended to accumulate ministries to his own person, and at times was responsible for up to six portfolios. He was inclined to place loyal Fascists he could trust in the important interior and foreign ministries, but he remained wary of the PNF’s power, subordinating it to

**Table 8.2**  
**Political offices held by ministers (%)\***

Political offices	Portugal	Spain	Italy	Germany
None	56.7	14.7	6.6	21.6
Mayor or local councillor	16.7	8.8	12.0	16.2
Prefect	3.3	14.7	1.3	0.0
Colonial governor	0.0	8.8	5.3	0.0
Parliamentarian	16.7	32.4	82.7	51.4
Deputy	16.7	26.5	76.0	51.4
Peer or Senator	0.0	5.9	6.7	-
Member of corporatist chamber	3.3	8.8	-	-
Secretary or under-secretary of state	26.7	5.9	41.3	21.6
Member of <i>cabinets ministériels</i>	0.0	-	0.0	3.1
Ministerial director	0.0	5.9	0.0	10.8
Local or national leader of the single party	16.7	62.1	34.7	13.5
Youth movement	0.0	-	1.3	0.0
Militia	3.3	-	10.7	2.7
Para-state corporatist institutions	3.3	0.0	22.7	13.5
Party officers	0.0	0.0	61.3	32.4
N	30	34	75	37

\* Before their first appointment to cabinet. Multiple coding has been applied when ministers had held different political offices.

N= Number of ministers.

Source: *ICS database on the fascist elite* (2009).

his control and limiting its access to the state at the same time as he allowed it a substantial degree of latitude in the framing of civil society. Nevertheless, the party-state tensions—whether latent or in the open—were almost always resolved in favour of the latter, especially within the local administrations.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> For example, of the 115 prefects nominated by Mussolini between 1922 and 1929 only 29 came from within the party, the remaining 86 were professional administrators (Gentile 1995: 173).

The opinion that ministers 'were only technical collaborators with the head of government' was progressively promoted, although, as we have seen, this does not mean an exclusively bureaucratic career had been somehow transformed into a preferential route to ministerial office (De Felice 1981: 89). As Emilio Gentile noted, 'the political faith that had been demonstrated through an active membership of the PNF and by obedience to the party's orders, always prevailed over the principle of technical competence' (Gentile 2000: 240). The PNF and its para-state organisations were to remain determining factors in access to a ministerial career, even when the power of the ministries was limited by the dictator. The promotion of the secretary of the party to the position of minister without portfolio in 1937 was a potent symbol of the party's importance (Steiner 1938: 65).

The political origins of the Nazi regime's ministers were probably the most homogeneous of the four dictatorships. If we disregard the initial coalition period, we see that 'active, official and publicised membership of the Nazi Party became a condition *sine qua non*' for access to ministerial office (Knight 1971: 21). No fewer than 90 per cent of Hitler's ministers were NSDAP leaders, and 78 per cent of these had been party members prior to Hitler taking power (Fonseca 2009: 69). However, more impressive is the 56.8 per cent of Hitler's ministers who had been political officials within the NSDAP (Table 8.1). The usual examples were Hitler, Goebbels and Hess; however, ministers such as Rust at the ministry of science and education had been party officials before the regime took power (Fonseca 2009: 68). Although it was not until 1937 that Hitler established the rule according to which all ministers must also be party members, the NSDAP professionals had soon established their hegemony within the government.

Although the ministerial elite came from the NSDAP, there were significant differences in the paths followed. Once nominated, many of the ministers were to create tensions between themselves and the party's institutions, increasing feelings of mutual mistrust either as a result of party interference in the ministries, or by the impression that some of the ministers had only recently joined the party for op-

portunistic reasons. Hans Heinrich Lammers, who was responsible for co-ordinating the ministries, was viewed with mistrust, despite the importance of his role within the state. The minister of agriculture, Walther Darré, was also a late-comer to the party, although he was more 'ideological' (Bramwell 1985). Wilhelm Frick was an early member of the party, but these distinctions were to become increasingly irrelevant as such criteria were often no more than 'positional'—that is, they were used in defence of ministerial authority before agencies that were either autonomous or linked to party institutions.

With efforts to create a centralised dictatorship, such as that attempted by Frick, being blocked by Hitler, there followed a succession of conflicts between ministers and the parallel structures, even when the minister also occupied the equivalent department within the party, as Goebbels did. Secondary ministers very soon lost their access to Hitler and enjoyed more autonomy as a result. There was a great deal of stability in Hitler's ministries and very limited mobility between portfolios; however, the large majority of his ministers lost access to Hitler with the result that their power within the overall political system and authority to make decisions was greatly diminished. The rise in the number of ministers without portfolio, often to represent the party, was a form of compensation for those who had lost their ministerial portfolio, and was symbolic of their lack of function. Nevertheless, despite the frequent conflicts between the NSDAP and ministerial structures, the party was not a centralised political actor; rather, it was a collection of several autonomous institutions that came together to fulfil their para-state duty.

The main characteristics of the Estado Novo's governing elite was that it belonged to a small and exclusive political and bureaucratic group of men who almost completely dominated the senior ranks of the armed forces, the senior administration and the universities—within which the legal profession was strongly represented (Table 8.1).

Very few of Salazar's ministers had been active in politics during the First Republic, and almost none had occupied any position within the republican regime. Because of their youth some had only

become involved in politics after the 1926 coup, and almost all were ideologically and politically affiliated to Catholic conservatism and monarchism. While the dual affiliation of ‘Catholic and monarchist’ was shared by some members of the elite, the fundamental issue—particularly in relation to the military dictatorship—was the steady reduction within the ministerial elite of those who had been affiliated to the conservative-republican parties, and the corresponding increase in those whose roots were in the monarchist camp, and particularly those who had been influenced during their youth by the Action Française-inspired royalist movement, Lusitanian Integralism (IL—*Integralismo Lusitano*). Those whose connections were with Catholicism also saw their numbers increase slightly. A large number had no previous affiliation, and only a small minority had come from Preto’s MSN following its prohibition in 1934 (Pinto 2000). The remainder may be identified by their connections to conservative ideas associated with the more pragmatic and inorganic ‘interest’ based right-wing (Oliveira 2000: 56).

The use of the classifications ‘military’, ‘politician’ and ‘technician’ allow us to illustrate an important comparative dimension in the study of authoritarian elites, and to know their sources of recruitment and the extent of the more ‘political’ institutions’ access to the government.<sup>6</sup>

Given the conjunction of a technically competent political elite with institutions—such as an armed service containing several politicised officers, as well as participants in the regime’s political organisations, in parliament and as militia leaders in the LP—Salazarism presents us with some complex boundary cases. Nevertheless, despite

<sup>6</sup> In the classifications adopted here, the following distinctions are used: military—those ministers who prior to their nomination had spent the majority of their professional life as officers in the armed forces; politicians—those who were activists and leaders of official regime organisations or, previously, of other political organisations prior to taking office; technicians—those ministers who had previously been professional administrators or specialists, and who had not been active in the regime’s political organisations or who had been actively involved in politics prior to becoming ministers.



the Portuguese example confirming the tendency towards a greater presence of 'politicians' in the institutionalisation and consolidation phases of dictatorships, followed by a process of routinisation that strengthened the technical-administrative elements, the governing elite during the 1930s was more one of technicians (40 per cent) than it was one of politicians (31 per cent).<sup>7</sup> These results, when complemented with an analysis of other indicators of the ministerial elite's *cursus honorum*, clearly indicate the diminished presence of the truly political institutions of the regime as a central element for access to the government. However, it should be noted that even the 'politicians' were tightly woven into the university elite.

As a dictator, Franco's managerial style differed from that of Salazar: the Spanish dictator was much less concerned with the minutiae of day-to-day government (Miguel 1975; Preston 1993). A military officer with no desire to become bogged down in the day-to-day affairs of government, Franco concentrated his attentions on the armed forces, domestic security and foreign policy. In the remaining areas of government, the dictator practised 'a transfer of power to his ministers', although they remained subordinate to him (Alba 1980: 267). With respect to the more technical areas of governance, particularly following the consolidation of the regime, Franco's interventions were even fewer as he adopted the more pragmatic attitude of result management (Fusi 1987: 43–4).

Franco's ministerial elite was relatively young in political terms, and although a substantial number had been members of conservative and fascist organisations during the Second Republic, the regime's break from its predecessor was almost total (Pi-Suner 1978: 191). The socio-professional composition of Franco's ministers also points towards a significant degree of social exclusiveness and the near hegemony of civil servants. A significant number of ministers were involved in the legal profession, with the university elite also being present in significant numbers—although not on the same scale as in Portugal

<sup>7</sup> Paul Lewis reaches a similar conclusion for the period 1932 to 1947 (Lewis 2002; Almeida, Pinto and Bermeo 2003).

(Pi-Suner 1978: 117). Another divergence from the Portuguese dictatorship can be found in respect of ministers who were officers in the armed forces. While the military presence within the Portuguese regime had not completely disappeared with the consolidation of Salazarism—where it continued within institutions such as the censor, the political police and the militia—the Spanish regime continued to count on a large number of military officers both in the single party and in the governing elite, with 41.2 per cent of all ministers having a military background (Table 8.1).

By classifying Franco's ministers as 'politicians', 'technicians' and 'military' we are presented with a significant swing towards the 'politicians', who accounted for more than 40 per cent of all ministers during this period, with the remainder fairly evenly split between 'technicians' and 'military' (Lewis 2002: 119). This preponderance of politicians suggests the single party had an important presence within the political system and in particular in the composition of the ministerial elite.

The promotion of the secretary of FET-JONS to ministerial rank was an immediate indication that this represented a formal means of access to the government: the co-option of FET-JONS' leaders into the ministerial and state elite was significant. During the period in question, FET-JONS was the principal recruiting ground for the government (Mir 2009). As one student of the Franco elite notes 'before occupying a ministerial post during the first decade of the Franco regime, [the candidate] had occupied six positions within FET' (Pi-Suner 1978: 193). The second main means of access, and the only route that did not require promotion through the single-party (although it did not preclude it), was through the military. A third possible route was through the bureaucracy, although it was 'rare for anyone to become a minister as a result of an administrative career' (Pi-Suner 1978: 197).

When we analyse the 'political families' (Falangists, Catholics and monarchists) within the single party we see that up until 1944 the Falange had 66 per cent of the leadership positions under its control, dominating the party. The Catholics were the second largest 'family',

followed by the military (Pi-Suner 1978: 163–4). During this period, the number of leaders whose origins were within the Falange or the military outnumbered those of the Catholics (Mir 1982; Pi-Suner 1978: 202).

As Pi-Suner notes, ‘The existence of a single party that was quite clearly subordinate was a notable counterweight’ to other means of access to the government during this period (1978: 202). Despite FET-JONS’ origins in the enforced unification of several heterogeneous movements, the Falange managed to exert its supremacy and ensured its position as the dominant force within the new Francoist political elite. Tensions between the party and the state were infrequent and largely episodic, and the domination of the dictator–government axis was almost total (Cazorla-Sánchez 2004).

## Conclusions

As monocratic regimes, dictatorships have been characterised as being ‘the selectorate of one’: the dictator, whose patronage powers remained significant (Putnam 1976: 52–3). However, the different approaches towards the resolution of what Robert Paxton has called the ‘four-way struggle for dominance’ (between the leader, his party, the regular state functionaries and institutions like the church, the army and elite interest groups), depends fundamentally on the dictator–single party axis (1998: 18).

The promotion of secretaries of the single parties to ministerial positions was an expression of the parties’ symbolic value as well as an important element of political control. Only Salazarism made no mention of any superiority in the relationship between the dictator–government before the party. Within Francoism, Italian Fascism and Nazism, the presence of these party secretaries signified both their increased legitimacy before the government and their pretensions of superiority, or at the very least their equality with their ‘technico-bureaucratic’ institutions and governmental components. Their presence also underlined the parties’ pretensions to be an exclusive route to ministerial office and to other senior positions within the state apparatus; however, the single party’s ability to become an institution

capable of vetoing and subverting bureaucratic authoritarianism can be found at the roots of their diversity.

With respect to the recruitment methods and political composition of the ministerial elite within the four regimes the differences are clear. The NSDAP and the PNF emerge as the only source of recruitment to the government in Germany and Italy, respectively. In each country the governing elite was chosen from a reservoir of Fascist and Nazi leaders, with few concessions being made to other avenues for promotion following the consolidation of the respective regimes. This provided the PNF and the NSDAP with the legitimacy they required. Under Franco, FET-JONS remained the dominant element, although it was much more sensitive to the other institutions, particularly the armed forces and the Church.

Salazarism, which had a single party with limited influence and access to the government—despite that being its main political function—is the dictatorship that most closely resembles ‘bureaucratic authoritarianism’. As Clement Moore notes, ‘The party cannot establish its legitimacy, it would seem, unless it acquires some autonomy as an instrument for recruiting top political leaders. Thus, dictators who attain power through other bases of support often have difficulties creating a party to legitimate their regimes’ (Moore 1970: 51). Salazar created a party, but he gave it very limited functions. The Portuguese case appears thus to confirm Juan Linz’s assertion that when the single party is weak the opportunities to becoming a member of the governing elite are limited ‘without belonging to one of the senior branches of the administration’ or to one of the interest organisations, since the party is only a complementary guarantee (Pi-Sunyer 1978: 69). Moreover, this is the generic tendency for all political systems: in fact, ‘when the parties and the private sector are weak, public and semi-public organisations become natural sources of recruitment’ (Blondel 1985: 62).

The dependence of the mobilisational political organisations, of the party or of the government and the ministries, constitutes yet another extremely interesting indicator as it highlights the important tensions existing within the dictatorships associated with fascism.

In the case of the militias, their direct dependence on the German, Italian and Spanish dictators disguises a wide variety of situations. Once again, Salazarism made the LP dependent on the ministry of the interior and ensured it was always headed by a member of the armed forces. It was only under Nazism that the SS achieved significant autonomy from both the state apparatus and the armed forces. With respect to the organisations dedicated to mass socialisation—the various youth, worker, *Dopolavoro* and womens' organisations—the tension between the government and the party was an important factor within Francoism, Fascism and Nazism, with the party winning important battles—although, as we have noted above, with significant variations.

The balance made above leads us to a critique of the typological rigidity that is based in party-state relations. In the dictatorships analysed here, the single party was never transformed into a dominant institution within the new regimes—not even in Nazi Germany. In the Portuguese case, not only was the government the locus of power—taking political decision-making authority for itself—but the single party had less influence either as a means of access to the government or as an instrument for controlling civil society. Mussolini was very distrustful of the PNF for the simple reason that his leadership over it was much more fragile than Hitler's was over the NSDAP. Nevertheless, in Fascist Italy the Grand Council and the the PNF succeeded in becoming important actors in the relocation of the government's political decision-making authority—something that did not happen in either Franco's Spain or Salazar's Portugal. It is only in Nazi Germany that the most important relocation of decision-making power to the axis leader and autonomous-politico-administrative organisations is visible. However, more than the domination of the party over the state, what is being seen is a radicalisation scale characterised by the diminution of the government by the construction of parallel organisations and by the limited relocation of political decision-making power. In the German case, the party did not have any centralised decision-making structures 'and lacked a leading body which could replace the cabinet' (Gorlizki and Mommsen 2009: 55) that was al-

ways blocked by Hitler who was subject to very few institutional constraints.

The most appropriate explanatory hypothesis for the variations in the composition of the ministerial elite, its importance in the political decision-making process and as a means of access to ministerial office within the dictatorships associated with fascism is the presence or absence of an independent fascist party during the period of transition to a dictatorial regime and, once the regime is institutionalised, within the single party. The greater and more exclusive the role of the dictator-party axis, the lesser is that of the ministerial elite in the political decision-making process. Also resulting from this is the reduction in the importance of the large administrative corps in the composition of the elite and the cabinet in the political decision-making process.

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