

THE NATURE OF FASCISM
REVISITED

ANTÓNIO COSTA PINTO

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For my son Filipe

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6 | Ruling elites, political institutions, and decision-making in fascist-era dictatorships: Comparative perspectives

A comparative analysis of the institutions, elites, and political decision-making in the right-wing dictatorships of interwar 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: personalized leadership, the single or dominant party, and the technico-consultative political institutions.¹

The fascist regimes were the first ideological one-party dictatorships 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.² While Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski recognized that the single-party played a more modest role within fascist than within communist regimes, part of the classificatory debate over European fascism continued to insist – eventually excessively – on this point, and theories of totalitarianism deformed their role, often without any empirical support.³ On the other hand, many historians examining the ideology and political activities of the fascist parties viewed their transformation as institutions of power within the new dictatorships with some simplistic analyses, stressing the contradictions

- 1 A. C. Pinto, ed., *Ruling elites and decision-making in fascist-era dictatorships*, New York, 2009.
- 2 P. Brooker, *Non-democratic regimes*, London, 2009.
- 3 C. J. Friedrich and Z. K. Brzezinski, *Totalitarian dictatorship and autocracy*, New York, 1956.

between the revolutionary nature of the movement phase (prior to taking power) and the regime phase.⁴

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, or 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 maneuver than either Mussolini or Hitler, who both obtained their positions through 'legal' routes and with the support of a conservative right less inclined towards radical adventures.⁵ 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 personalized dictatorships.⁶ It is interesting to see that even those regimes that were institutionalized 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.⁷ 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 is somewhat different than it was for the socialist dictatorships.⁸

Some authors speak of the degeneration of the party as a ruler organization into an agent of the personal ruler in the case of the communist

4 Renzo de Felice in M. Leeden, ed., *Intervista sul fascismo*, Bari, 1975.

5 J. J. Linz and A. Stepan, eds, *The breakdown of democratic regimes*, Baltimore, MD, 1978; J. J. Linz, *Authoritarian and totalitarian regimes*, Boulder, CO, 2000; D. Berg-Schlosser and J. Mitchell, eds, *The conditions of democracy in Europe, 1919–1939*, London, 2000.

6 S. G. Payne, *A history of fascism*, Madison, WI, 1996; R. Griffin, *The nature of fascism*, London, 1991.

7 The military played a central role in Portugal in 1926, and then in Spain, where a failed military coup led to a civil war. See also J. B. Fischer, *Balkan strongmen: Dictators and authoritarian rulers of south-east Europe*, London, 2006.

8 A. C. Pinto, R. Eatwell and S. U. Larsen, eds, *Charisma and fascism in interwar Europe*, London, 2007.

parties in power.⁹ In the dictatorships 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' institutionalization 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 Pétain'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 institutionalization 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 Party 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 centers of political decision-making that transferred power from the government and the ministerial elite and concentrated it into the hands of Mussolini and Hitler.¹⁰

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.'¹¹ This tension

9 P. Brooker, *Twentieth-century dictatorships: The ideological one-party states*, New York, 1995.

10 A. C. Pinto, 'Elites, single parties and political decision-making in fascist-era dictatorships', *Contemporary European History* 11, no 3, 2002, pp. 429–54.

11 A. Kallis, 'The "regime-model" of fascism: A typology', *European History Quarterly* 30, no 1, 2000, pp. 77–104.

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, which have been defined variously as authoritarian and totalitarian, or as authoritarian and fascist.¹²

The interaction between the single party, the government, the state apparatus, and civil society appears fundamental if we are to obtain an understanding of the different ways in which the various dictatorships of the fascist era functioned. The party and its ancillary organizations 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 functioning 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.¹³ 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 favored (or not) dualism in the nature of power and decision-making: or in other words, of the extent of the de-institutionalization of norms and the bypassing of bureaucratic authoritarianism (here expressed by the dictator-cabinet-state apparatus axis) by the leader and his followers.¹⁴

This chapter analyses the relationship between the single-parties and the political decision-making institutions within four dictatorships associated with fascism, focusing on the relationship between the dictators, the single-parties, the cabinet, and the governing elites, while also seeking to identify the locus of decision-making power and the main institutional veto players.¹⁵

12 J. J. Linz, *Fascismo, autoritarismo, totalitarismo*, Rome, 2003.

13 J. Blondel, *Political leadership: Towards a general analysis*, London, 2007; F. I. Greenstein, *Personality and politics: Problems of evidence, inference, and conceptualization*, Princeton, NJ, 1987.

14 M. R. Lepsius, 'The model of charismatic leadership and its applicability to the rule of Adolf Hitler', in Pinto, Eatwell, and Larsen, *Charisma and fascism*, pp. 37–52.

15 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 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, the actions of which during the initial phase of Mussolini's regime could threaten the compromises essential for its institutionalization.

The Italian case is an example of the seizure of power by a united political elite, the base of which was a Fascist party transformed into the primary motor for the dictatorship's institutionalization. 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.'¹⁶

Securing political control of the senate was a slow and complex process that involved the PNF infiltrating its way into the institution and encircling the royalist conservative elite.¹⁷ 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.¹⁸ When what remained of the liberal legacy was eliminated during the latter half of the 1930s and when under Achille Starace the PNF proposed the conquest of civil

16 D. Musiedlak, 'Mussolini, charisma and decision-making', in Pinto, *Ruling elites*, pp. 1–16.

17 D. Musiedlak, *Lo stato fascista e la sua classe politica, 1922–1945*, Bologna, 2003.

18 P. Milza, *Mussolini*, Paris, 1999.

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.¹⁹ This represented the zenith of a movement several historians of fascism suggest signals the passage from an authoritarian to a totalitarian fascism. Tendencies of both had coexisted during the consolidation of Mussolini's dictatorship.²⁰ 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.²¹

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.²²

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.²³ However, throughout the 1930s the PNF, which was by then under Starace's leadership and had been imbued with a

19 E. Gentile, *The sacralization of politics in Fascist Italy*, Cambridge, 1996.

20 E. Gentile, *La via italiana al totalitarismo: Il partito e lo stato nel regime fascista*, Rome, 1995.

21 A. Lyttelton, 'La dittatura fascista', in G. Sabbatucci and V. Vidotto, eds, *Storia d'Italia: Guerra e fascismo, 1914–1943*, vol. 4, 1998. See also H. A. Steiner, *Government in Fascist Italy*, New York, 1938.

22 Gentile, *La via italiana*.

23 *Ibid.*, pp. 168–98.

structure that was more ‘disciplined [both] horizontally and vertically’, became a powerful machine used both to shape civil society and promote the ideological socialization of the Duce leadership cult.

Mussolini was the ruler of an often unstable balance between party, government, and administration, and reserved political decision-making power to his person while subordinating both the party and the governmental elite to his sole authority. Lupo illustrated this well when he wrote, ‘the group of leaders that emerged from the Fascist mobilization 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.’²⁴ 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-fascistized’, such as the council of state, were also to act as legislative filters.²⁵

The significant reduction in the number of meetings by both the Grand Council and the council of ministers from the mid-1930s 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.’²⁶ However, this was the domain 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.²⁷

At the meeting of the Grand Council at which Mussolini was removed from office, Grandi accused him of having a personalist management style that bureaucratized and stifled the party and paralyzed the regime.²⁸ This first accusation was not far from the truth, while the second only served to

24 S. Lupo, *Le fascisme italien: La politique dans un régime totalitaire*, Paris, 2003.

25 G. Melis, ‘Le istituzioni italiane negli anni trenta’, in G. Melis, ed., *Lo stato negli anni trenta: Istituzioni e regimi fascisti in Europa*, Bologna, 2008, pp. 91–107.

26 G. Adinolfi, ‘Political elite and decision-making in Mussolini’s Italy’, in Pinto, *Ruling elites*, pp. 17–52.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 49.

28 P. H. Lewis, *Latin fascist elites: The Mussolini, Franco, and Salazar regimes*, Westport, CT, 2002, p. 51.

highlight the progressive reduction of the Grand Council's once significant political decision-making authority.

Despite having been transformed into a centralized 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.²⁹ 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 – particularly those involving youth, women, and the working classes – were subjected to many different transfers. The PNF took control of the popular mass organizations, even although these organizations were initially dependent upon the ministries.³⁰ The national recreation club (OND – Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro, a cultural organization 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 organization.³¹

A similar event took place in relation to the youth organizations: originally voluntary organizations 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, the Italian Fascist Youth (GIL – Gioventù Italiana del Littorio). The monopoly over the political socialization of youth was not only a source of tension between the PNF and the state, it also involved the Catholic Church, which saw its independent Catholic Action youth organizations alternately tolerated and dissolved.³²

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 women's organizations, from the Fascist Women's Section (FF – Fasci Femminili) to Rural Housewives (MR – Massaie

29 Gentile, *La via italiana al totalitarismo*, p. 183; M. Palla, 'Lo stato-partito', in M. Palla, ed., *Lo stato fascista*, Milan, 2001, p. 17.

30 It is interesting to see that a great deal of recent empirical research confirms much of the pioneering working hypotheses on the PNF in power originally posited by D. L. Germino in 1959.

31 V. de Grazia, *The culture of consent: Mass organization of leisure in Fascist Italy*, Cambridge, 1981, pp. 33–59.

32 T. H. Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight: Political socialization of youth in Fascist Italy, 1922–1943*, Chapel Hill, NC, 1985.

Rurali), in which – and after many hesitations – the party invested heavily throughout the 1930s.³³

Despite the lack of success that met its attempts to fascistize the bureaucracy, 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.³⁴ 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 centers 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.³⁵

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.³⁶

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, but the single party was transformed into the only route into government and controlled civil society through its parallel political organization, 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 indecisive ministers and left a shadow over direct relations between Il Duce and the senior bureaucracy.

33 V. de Grazia, *How Fascism ruled women: Italy, 1922–1945*, Berkeley, CA, 1993, pp. 234–71; P. Willson, *Peasant women and politics in Fascist Italy*, London, 2002.

34 G. Melis, 'La burocrazia', in A. del Boca, M. Legnani and M. G. Rossi, eds, *Il regime Fascista*, Bari, 1995, p. 264.

35 P. Pombeni, *Demagogia e tirannide: Uno studio sulla forma-partito del fascismo*, Bologna, 1984, p. 256.

36 J.-Y. Dormagen, *Logiques du fascisme: L'état totalitaire en Italie*, Paris, 2007.

Hitler and the deinstitutionalization of the Nazi dictatorship

The Nazi dictatorship was much closer to the model of charismatic leadership and the Nazi Party (NSDAP – Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei), and militias like the Schutzstaffel (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 centers, all of which were mediated individually by Hitler.³⁷ 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 revised some of the interpretations that have bequeathed us an image of forced coherence where there was little coherence.³⁸ It is also clear the Second World War acted as a catalyst, driving events that under other 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.³⁹ 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 Sturmabteilungen (SA) – 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 his rise to absolute power at the head of a system in which the 'coexistence [of] and conflict [between] uncoordinated authorities very often undermined solidarity and uniformity in the exercise of power.'⁴⁰ 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 there would be no real or formal limits to his authority.⁴¹ Despite this concentration of power, Hitler's style of rule led him to immerse himself in such matters as the military and the strategic defense

37 E. Fraenkel, *The dual state*, New York, 1942.

38 Friedrich and Brzezinski, *Totalitarian dictatorship*.

39 I. Kershaw, *Hitler*, vol. 1, 1889–1936: *Hubris*, London, 1998; *Hitler*, vol. 2, 1936–1945: *Nemesis*, London, 2000.

40 M. Broszat, *The Hitler state: The foundation and development of the internal structure of the Third Reich*, London, 1981, p. 351.

41 H. Mommsen, *From Weimar to Auschwitz*, Princeton, NJ, 1991, pp. 163–88.

and expansion of the Third Reich, and to underestimate the command and control dimension of the administration and of day-to-day domestic politics.

As in the other dictatorships analyzed here, the Nazi cabinet was quickly transformed into a bureaucratic body totally subservient to Hitler. However, 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.⁴²

In 1937, with Hans Heinrich Lammers at the head of the Reich Chancellery, ministerial access to Hitler became more difficult as he deliberately reduced the cabinet's status.⁴³ 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 noted:

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.⁴⁴

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-state structures with parallel powers. While the ministerial elite was more politically homogeneous, the initial pressure from several Nazi ministers to create a centralized 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 centers of power began to emerge within a structure that was in a tense and unstable balance:

The single party monopoly, the centralized governmental dictatorship, and the absolutism of the Führer... undermined the unity of the government and the monopoly of government by the Reich cabinet.⁴⁵

42 Broszat, *Hitler state*, p. 280.

43 E. N. Peterson, *The limits of Hitler's power*, Princeton, NJ, 1969, pp. 26–33.

44 Kershaw, *Hitler*, Vol. 2, p. 227.

45 Broszat, *Hitler state*, pp. 262–4.

Special authorities under Hitler's direct control soon developed alongside the ministries at the same time as several political and police organizations, 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 organizations such as the German Road System, the Labor Service, and others, of which the most important were those that 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.'⁴⁶ Frick's interior ministry was thus emasculated of any practical authority over the police, just as the position of the minister of labor was also partially weakened with the independence of the German Labor Front (DAF – Deutsche Arbeitsfront).⁴⁷

If the Nazification of the administration was at times more superficial than real, the creation of those organizations 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 legitimizing 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 conveying total power to his person. The NSDAP, even while experiencing internal crises, created a parallel structure, multiplying and upsetting the spheres of decision-making power in several areas of national and regional authority. The existence of a large

46 Ibid., p. 272.

47 Peterson, *The limits of Hitler's power*, p. 77; N. Frei, *L'état hitlérien et la société allemande, 1933–1945*, Paris, 1994, p. 171.

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.⁴⁸ 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 in 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.⁴⁹ Not only did Bormann's office of 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.⁵⁰

The Nazi Party in power was transformed into a complex organization, and many studies have pointed out that the leaders of the party 'became stuck mid-way through their journey toward the creation of a truly innovative, even revolutionary elite.'⁵¹ While the formal rigidity of many of the typologies labeling National Socialism as an example of where the party commands the state cannot be verified, it was in Nazi Germany that the single-party obtained its greatest autonomy and was 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 being examined.

Portugal's New State: The primacy of bureaucratic authoritarianism

The Portuguese New State, which was institutionalized 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,

48 M. H. Kater, *The Nazi Party: A social profile of member and leaders, 1919–1945*, Cambridge, 1983, p. 238.

49 J. Caplan, *Government without administration: State and civil service in Weimar and Nazi Germany*, Oxford, 1998, pp. 131–88.

50 D. Orlow, *The history of the Nazi Party: 1933–1945*, Pittsburgh, PA, 1973.

51 Kater, *Nazi Party*, p. 33.

General Óscar Carmona, whose position was legitimized 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 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 final 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, and it was in that capacity 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 ministerial post.

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 the framework of limited pluralism within the dictatorship. Curiously, the first institution to be created was the National Union (UN – União Nacional) in 1930, a single-party formed by the government within the interior ministry that served to legitimate the elimination of those political 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 Movement (MNS – Movimento Nacional-Sindicalista) – a movement that had challenged Salazar before being banned in 1934. It was also during the final days of the military dictatorship that the republican opposition made several serious and violent attempts to overthrow it.

Once appointed prime minister, Salazar set about the task of legitimating the regime through the promulgation of a new constitution. The resulting constitution of 1933 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 effectively eliminated. Formally, the UN never became a single-party, although it functioned as such after 1934.

As president of the UN, Salazar had final say in 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 from the UN leadership, often personally selecting candidates for the list.⁵²

52 J. M. T. Castilho, *Os deputados da Assembleia Nacional, 1934–1974*, Lisbon, 2009, pp. 213–30; R. Carvalho, *A Assembleia Nacional no pós-guerra, 1945–1949*, Oporto, 2002.

The president, to whom the prime minister was responsible, was elected by universal male suffrage. 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 recognized the single party's activity had 'progressively diminished to near-vanishing point.'⁵³ Its internal structure was weak and it lacked the propaganda, socio-professional, and cultural departments of other single parties. However, it did strengthen Salazar's authority, limit pressure groups, and the political families, and integrate them into the regime, while also keeping reins on the president.

Students of the New State have emphasized the impact the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War had on the nature of the regime. In response to the 'red threat' from Spain, Salazarism developed a new political discourse and symbolism, and set up two militia organizations. These steps have often been interpreted as the fascistization of the regime, although the single-party was not a part of the new dynamics.

Several organizations, such as the regime's militia the Portuguese Legion (LP – *Legião Portuguesa*), the Portuguese Youth organization (MP – *Mocidade Portuguesa*), and the political police (PVDE – *Polícia de Vigilância e Defesa do Estado*), were kept entirely dependent 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 Foundation for Happiness at Work (FNAT – *Fundação Nacional para a Alegria no Trabalho*), a modest Portuguese version

53 M. B. da Cruz, *O partido e o estado no Salazarismo*, Lisbon, 1980, p. 140.

of Mussolini's OND and Hitler's DAF, was dependent upon the undersecretary of state for corporations.⁵⁴

Salazar's extensive centralization of decision-making authority clearly justifies the use of the expression strong dictator in any characterization of the power exercised by him. 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 apparatuses. However, this never happened in Salazarism, where political control was mainly effected through administrative centralization rather than through the single-party. Not only was there no tension between Salazar's UN and the 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.⁵⁵ The main characteristic of Francoism was its radical break with the Second Spanish 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 regime following the First World War, Francoism as a political system rejected the fundamentals of the liberal legacy and was inspired by Italian Fascism to a much greater degree than was Salazarism.⁵⁶ Franco set about establishing his embryonic political system within those areas that had been occupied by his Nationalists: it was a system marked by a 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

54 J. C. Valente, *Estado Novo e alegria no trabalho: Uma história política da FNAT (1935–1958)*, Lisbon, 1999.

55 S. G. Payne, *The Franco regime, 1936–1975*, Madison, WI, 1987; A. Cazorla-Sánchez, *Las políticas de la victoria: La consolidación del Nuevo Estado franquista (1938–1953)*, Madrid, 2000.

56 J. Tusell, *La dictadura de Franco*, Madrid, 1988; J. Tusell, E. Gentile and G. Di Febo, eds, *Fascismo y franquismo cara a cara*, Madrid, 2004; I. Saz Campos, *Fascismo y franquismo*, Valencia, 2004.

Falange's fusion with the Catholics and the monarchists.⁵⁷ During the civil war, the Falange lent Franco the support of its political militants and its ideology as well as its modest fascist militia in the hope its imposed unification would ensure for it 'a genuinely fascist role in the implementation of a mobilized society.'⁵⁸

However, the fascists saw their position weaken as a result of their inclusion into a single-party that incorporated several political families. The Francoist single-party was a heterogeneous union maintaining several identities, particularly at the intermediate levels.⁵⁹ 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.⁶⁰

Franco's concessions to Spain's liberal past were few and far between: 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 Mussolini had. 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.'⁶¹

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, traditionalist Catholicism, and an obsession with the 'liberal-Masonic conspiracy.'⁶² 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

57 S. G. Payne, *Fascism in Spain, 1923–1977*, Madison, WI, 2000.

58 R. Chueca, *El fascismo en los comienzos del régimen de Franco: Un estudio sobre la FET-JONS*, Madrid, 1983, p. 401.

59 J. J. Linz, 'From falange to movimiento-organización: The Spanish single-party and the Franco regime, 1936–1968', in S. P. Huntington and C. H. Moore, eds, *Authoritarian politics in modern societies: The dynamics of established one-party systems*, New York, 1970, pp. 128–203; G. Sánchez Recio, *Los quadros políticos intermedios del régimen franquista, 1936–1959*, Alicante, 1996.

60 J. M. Thomàs, *La Falange de Franco: El proyecto fascista del régimen*, Barcelona, 2001.

61 Payne, *Fascism in Spain*, p. 487.

62 P. Preston, *Franco: A biography*, London, 1993.

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 organizations 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.⁶³ One important struggle that was immediately lost was the attempt to retain an independent militia: as was the case in Portugal, the militia was placed under military control. However, the party did control a considerable collection of ancillary organizations, 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 Italy's OND, the Education and Recreation Syndical Organisation (OSSED – Organización Sindical de la Educación y Descanso).⁶⁴ More importantly, the party retained responsibility for propaganda within the regime.⁶⁵ The intertwining of party and state notwithstanding, 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 organizations, and as the occupant of this post was also always the minister of education, this minister effectively headed these organizations.⁶⁶ Propaganda, which in 1938 was the responsibility of an undersecretary of state within the Nationalist government, was transferred to the single-party until 1945, when it became a government task once more.

During Ramón Serrano Suñer's short spell as the leading party figure he was also the party's propaganda delegate, and when he was appointed interior

63 For an interesting comparison between the Spanish civil governors and the Italian Fascist prefects see D. A. G. Madrid, 'Le relazioni tra il partito e lo stato: Il prefetto e il Governador civil (1922–1945)', in G. Di Febo and R. Moro, eds, *Fascismo e franchismo: Relazioni, immagini, rappresentazioni*, Soveria Mannelli, 2005, pp. 455–67.

64 J. Sáez Marín, *El Frente de Juventudes: Política de juventud en la España de la posguerra (1937–1960)*, Madrid, 1988; M. A. Ruíz Carnicer, *El Sindicato Español Universitario (SEU), 1939–1965*, Madrid, 1996; C. Molinero, *La captación de las masas: Política social y propaganda en el régimen franquista*, Madrid, 2005.

65 F. Sevillano Calero, *Propaganda y medios de comunicación en el franquismo, 1936–1951*, Alicante, 1998.

66 Chueca, *Fascismo*, p. 401.

minister he took the party's propagandists with him, further blurring the boundaries and increasing the confusion as to where the party ended and the state began.⁶⁷ The syndical apparatus was without doubt an area of power reserved to the Falangists, but it was regulated by the ministry of labor. 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 led to some dismissals.⁶⁸ Generally, at least until 1945, 'the predominance of the Falange elite and military officials was obvious,' particularly at the governmental level.⁶⁹

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 there were 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 6.1). While in the Portuguese New State only a small number of the single party's leaders served in Salazar's governments, in the other three dictatorships the party leaders had a very strong presence in government (Table 6.2).

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.⁷⁰ 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.'⁷¹

Ministers, undersecretaries 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

67 Cazorla-Sánchez, *Consolidación*, p. 40; Chueca, *Fascismo*, pp. 287–8; Molinero, *Capitación*, pp. 73–185.

68 Cazorla-Sánchez, *Consolidación*, pp. 112–263; Chueca, *Fascismo*, pp. 341–8.

69 M. Jerez Mir, *Elites políticas y centros de extracción en España, 1938–1957*, Madrid, 1982.

70 E. Gentile, *Fascismo e antifascismo: I partiti italiani fra le due guerre*, Florence, 2000; Adinolfi, 'Political elite'.

71 Milza, *Mussolini*, p. 521.

Table 6.1: Ministers' occupational background (%)

Occupational categories	Portugal	Spain	Italy	Germany
Military	26.7	41.2	8.0	10.8
<i>Army</i>	20.0	35.3	5.3	5.4
<i>Navy</i>	6.7	5.9	2.7	2.7
<i>Air Force</i>	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	10.8
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

Note: 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, University of Lisbon, 2009.

of Italian Fascism – men such as Dino Grandi, Italo Balbo, and Giuseppe Bottai, who were PNF *ras* (bosses) in Bologna, Ferrara, and Rome, respectively – had all participated in the *squadristi*-led violence of the early-1920s.⁷² 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.⁷³

Other main entry points to a ministerial position before the 1930s were either through the ranks of the PNF or through the provincial federations within which the PNF occupied a dominant position.

72 P. Nello, *Dino Grandi*, Bologna, 2003; C. G. Segre, *Italo Balbo: A Fascist life*, Berkeley, CA, 1990; P. Corner, *Fascism in Ferrara*, Oxford, 1974.

73 F. Fucci, *Emilio de Bono: Il maresciallo fucilato*, Milan, 1989.

Table 6.2: Political offices held by ministers (%)

Political offices	Portugal	Spain	Italy	Germany
None	56.7	14.7	6.6	21.6
Mayor or local councilor	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
<i>Deputy</i>	16.7	26.5	76.0	51.4
<i>Peer or senator</i>	0.0	5.9	6.7	–
Member of corporatist chamber	3.3	8.8	–	–
Secretary or undersecretary 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	48.7
N	30	34	75	37

Note: Occupations immediately before the first ministerial appointment. Multiple coding has been applied when ministers had held different political offices. Percentages do not therefore total 100. N = number of ministers.

Source: ICS database on the fascist elite, University of Lisbon, 2009

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 federations, 14 were to become undersecretaries of state or ministers.⁷⁴ 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 organizations involved in public administration (Table 6.2).

Ministerial reshuffles were common, and it was rare for any person to serve more than three years. There were very few like Guiseppe 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 his control and limiting its access to him while simultaneously allowing it a substantial degree of freedom in the framing of civil society. Nevertheless, the party-state tensions – whether latent or open

74 Lyttelton, 'Dittatura fascista', p. 210.

– were almost always resolved in favor of the latter, especially within the local administrations.⁷⁵

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 somehow been transformed into a preferential route to ministerial office.⁷⁶ 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.’⁷⁷

The PNF and its para-state organizations 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.⁷⁸

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 publicized membership of the Nazi Party became a condition sine qua non’ for access to ministerial office.⁷⁹ 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.⁸⁰

However, more impressive is the 56.8 per cent of Hitler’s ministers who had been political officials within the NSDAP (Table 6.1). 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.⁸¹ Despite the fact that it was not until 1937 that Hitler established the rule that all ministers must also be party members, the NSDAP professionals had soon established their hegemony within the government.

Although the ministerial elite came from within the NSDAP, there were significant differences in the paths followed. Once nominated, many of the

75 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. See Gentile, *La via italiana*, p. 173.

76 R. de Felice, *Mussolini il Duce: Lo stato totalit ario, 1936–1940*, vol. 2, Turin, 1981, p. 89.

77 Gentile, *Fascismo e antifascismo*, p. 240.

78 H. A. Steiner, *Government in Fascist Italy*, New York, 1938, p. 65.

79 M. E. Knight, *The German executive, 1890–1933*, New York, 1971, p. 21.

80 A. M. Fonseca, ‘Ministers and centres of power in Nazi Germany’, in Pinto, *Ruling elites*, p. 69.

81 *Ibid.*, p. 68.

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 some of the ministers had only recently joined the party for opportunistic reasons. Hans Heinrich Lammers, who was responsible for coordinating the ministries, was viewed with mistrust, despite the importance of his role within the state. The minister of agriculture, Walther Darré, was also a latecomer to the party, although he was more ideological.⁸² 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 defense of ministerial authority before agencies that were either autonomous or linked to party institutions.

With efforts to create a centralized 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 him, with the result their power within the overall political system and their authority to make decisions 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 position, and was symbolic of their lack of function. Nevertheless, despite the frequent conflicts between the NSDAP and ministerial structures, the party was not a centralized 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 Portuguese New State'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 6.1). 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

82 A. Bramwell, *Blood and soil: Walther Darré and Hitler's 'Green Party'*, Bourne End, 1985.

military dictatorship – was the steady reduction within the ministerial elite of those who had been affiliated to the conservative-republican parties, and a 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 MNS following its prohibition in 1934.⁸³ The remainder may be identified by their connections to conservative ideas associated with the more pragmatic and inorganic 'interest'-based right-wing.⁸⁴

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.⁸⁵ Given the conjunction of a technically competent political elite with institutions – such as an armed service containing several politicized officers, as well as participants in the regime's political organizations, in parliament, and as militia leaders in the LP – Salazarism presents us with some complex boundary cases. Nevertheless, despite the Portuguese example confirming the tendency towards the greater presence of politicians in the institutionalization and consolidation phases of dictatorships, followed by a process of routinization 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).⁸⁶

These results, when compared 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

83 A. C. Pinto, *The Blue Shirts: Portuguese fascism and the New State*, New York, 2000.

84 P. A. Oliveira, *Armindo Monteiro: Uma biografia política*, Lisbon, 2000, p. 56.

85 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; and technicians – those ministers who had previously been professional administrators or specialists, and who had not been active in the regime's political organisations or actively involved in politics prior to becoming ministers.

86 Paul Lewis reaches a similar conclusion for the period 1932–1947. See Lewis, *Latin fascist elites*; P. T. de Almeida, A. C. Pinto and N. Bermeo, eds, *Who governs Southern Europe? Regime change and ministerial recruitment, 1850–2000*, London, 2003.

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 Caudillo was much less concerned with the minutiae of day-to-day government.⁸⁷ 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 he practiced a transfer of power to his ministers, although they remained subordinate to him.⁸⁸ 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.⁸⁹

Franco's ministerial elite was relatively young in political terms, and although a substantial number had been members of conservative and fascist organizations during the Second Republic, the regime's break from its predecessor was almost total.⁹⁰

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 large numbers – although not on the same scale as in Portugal.⁹¹ 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 censorship, 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 6.1).

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

87 A. de Miguel, *Sociología del franquismo: Análisis ideológico de los ministros del régimen*, Barcelona, 1975; Preston, *Franco*.

88 C. R. Alba, 'The organization of authoritarian leadership: Franco's Spain', in R. Rose and E. N. Suleiman, eds, *Presidents and prime ministers*, Washington, DC, 1980, p. 267.

89 J. Fusi, *Franco: A biography*, London, 1987, pp. 43–4.

90 C. Viver Pi-Sunyer, *El personal político de Franco (1936–1945): Contribución empírica a una teoría del régimen franquista*, Barcelona, 1978, p. 191.

91 *Ibid.*, p. 117.

the remainder fairly evenly split between technicians and military.⁹² 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-optation 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.⁹³ 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.'⁹⁴ 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.'⁹⁵ When we analyze the political families (Falangists, Catholics, and monarchists) within the single-party, we see that 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.⁹⁶ During this period, the number of leaders whose origins were within the Falange or the military outnumbered those of the Catholics.⁹⁷ 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.⁹⁸

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

92 Lewis, *Latin fascist elites*, p. 119.

93 M. Jerez Mir, 'Executive, single-party and ministers in Franco's regime, 1936–45', in A. C. Pinto, *Ruling elites*, pp. 164–211.

94 V. Pi-Suner, *Personal político de Franco*, p.193.

95 *Ibid.*, p. 197.

96 *Ibid.*, pp. 163–4

97 Jerez Mir, *Elites políticas*; Viver Pi-Suner, *Personal político de Franco*, p. 202.

98 Viver Pi-Suner, *Personal político de Franco*, p. 202.

episodic, and the domination of the dictator-government axis was almost total.⁹⁹

Conclusions

As monocratic regimes, dictatorships have been characterized as being 'a sectorate of one:' the dictator, whose patronage powers remained significant.¹⁰⁰ 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.¹⁰¹

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. NSDAP and PNF emerge as the only source of recruitment to the government in Germany and Italy, respectively. In each country, the governing elite is 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

99 A. Cazorla-Sánchez, 'Family matters: Ministerial elites and the articulation of the Francoist dictatorship', *Portuguese Journal of Social Science* 3, no 2, 2004, pp. 73–89.

100 R. D. Putnam, *The comparative study of political elites*, Eaglewood Cliffs, NJ, 1976, pp. 52–3.

101 R. O. Paxton, 'The five stages of fascism', *The Journal of Modern History* 70, no 1, 1998, p. 18.

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.¹⁰²

Salazar created a party, but he gave it very limited functions. The Portuguese case appears thus to confirm Juan J. Linz’s assertion that when the single-party is weak the opportunities to become 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 organizations, since the party is only a complementary guarantee.¹⁰³ 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 organizations become natural sources of recruitment.’¹⁰⁴

The dependence of the mobilizing political organizations, 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 organizations dedicated to mass socialization – the various youth, worker, OND, and women’s organizations – 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 based in party-state relations. In the dictatorships analyzed 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

102 C. H. Moore, ‘The single party as a source of legitimacy’, in S. Huntington and C. Moore, eds, *Authoritarian politics*, New York, 1970, p. 51.

103 V. Pi-Sunyer, *Personal político de Franco*, p. 69.

104 J. Blondel, *Government ministers in the contemporary world*, London, 1985, p. 62.

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 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 organizations is visible. However, more than the domination of the party over the state, what is being seen is a radicalization scale characterized by the diminution of the government through the construction of parallel organizations and by the limited relocation of political decision-making power. In the German case, the party did not have any centralized decision-making structures and lacked a leading body that could replace the cabinet, which was always blocked by Hitler, who was subject to very few institutional constraints.¹⁰⁵

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 institutionalized, 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.

105 Y. Gorlizki and H. Mommsen, 'The political (dis)orders of Stalinism and National Socialism', in M. Geyer and S. Fitzpatrick, eds, *Beyond totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism compared*, New York, 2009, p. 55.