Durable Authoritarianism as a Self-Enforcing Coalition[*]

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Abstract

Research on authoritarian politics has made exciting progress in the past decade. Yet current theoretical research has neglected much of the interesting everyday politics of authoritarian rule, consigning this to the realm of case studies by country experts. In this paper, we present a new theory of authoritarian politics based on self-enforcing political coalitions. We demonstrate that a simple model drawn from recent advances in the study of coalitional bargaining yields powerful new tools for understanding authoritarian rule. By placing political coalitions rather than institutions or class conflict at the heart of the study of authoritarianism, the model makes a wealth of predictions about regime survival, public policy, and institutions that do not follow from the existing literature. We illustrate these predictions with the experiences of authoritarian regimes in Argentina, Chile, Malaysia, Mexico, Indonesia, Paraguay, South Korea, the Soviet Union, the United Arab Emirates, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The theory and the cases suggest that greater nuance is possible in the study of modern authoritarianism, but promise a much more complete understanding of the intricate politics of authoritarian rule than that made possible by existing theories.

1. Introduction

The basic puzzle of authoritarian rule is how any small group of citizens could exert rule over a much larger population without that population's consent. The stability of single-party rule in China, the return to authoritarian tactics of control in Russia and Pakistan, and the persistence of dictatorship in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa all indicate that authoritarianism is a relevant modern phenomenon. The origins, dynamics, and breakdown of non-democratic political systems have captured the interest of political scientists for over a century, and few areas of research are as normatively important as the study of how a powerful few can prevent their citizens from successfully demanding political representation.

Throughout most of the twentieth century, the most theoretically sophisticated body of research on authoritarianism was the literature on communism.[1] Aside from this literature, theoretical study of authoritarianism was largely typological, using case studies to distinguish among authoritarian regimes as totalitarian, bureaucratic, patrimonial, or any number of other

types.[2] But since the fall of the Soviet Union, and motivated by the persistence of authoritarianism in the modern world, the theoretical literature on authoritarian rule has made great strides. In contrast to the typological focus of the previous literature, current research probes the microfoundations of authoritarianism, advancing causal accounts for political outcomes. Yet for all of its progress, the current literature remains balkanized between disparate camps, each wedded to models of authoritarianism that appear increasingly divorced from the everyday experiences of real regimes.

These modern studies of authoritarianism have focused largely on two families of explanations for authoritarian politics: level, change, or distribution of income; and political institutions. The first group of studies is rationalist and materialist. Resources allow the strong to lord over the weak, or empower the weak to challenge the strong.[3] Models begin with an assumption of class conflict between two (or sometimes three) groups, and investigate the circumstances under which powerful elites will be forced to extend political representation to the masses. Institutionalists adopt a different tack, focusing on authoritarian institutions that constrain political activism.[4] They find that quasi-democratic political institutions such as elections, legislatures, and parties promote regime durability and shape authoritarian politics. The two literatures rarely communicate with one another, and in fact, their motivating assumptions conflict.[5] Materialists theories openly assume that institutions are ineffectual in authoritarian regimes, while institutionalists argue that a wealth of cases demonstrate that they are. To institutionalists, the rationalist perspective is too reductive, failing to study the organizational bases of authoritarian rule and the substantial efforts that authoritarian regimes devote to structuring their parties and managing their elections. Rationalists, in response, consider the institutionalist argument too opaque—having assumed a solution to the problem of

conflict between the powerful and the excluded—and note countless examples of authoritarian rulers who manipulate institutions to their own end. For rationalists, this is evidence that authoritarian institutions are too malleable to be consequential, for no forward-thinking citizen would ever trust them.

The gaping disconnect in the theoretical literature between materialists and institutionalists has received scant attention. We argue in this paper that this disconnect reveals a fundamental weakness in both, requiring a more sophisticated theoretical understanding of authoritarian rule that can encompass the strengths of each. To this end, we outline a simple and general alternative to both class-based and institutionalist approaches to authoritarian rule, proposing a theory of authoritarianism as a self-enforcing coalition. Self-enforcing coalitions are coalitions which are strong enough to prevail against external challengers, yet wherein no members have an incentive to defect. Such coalitions give regime supporters an incentive to perpetuate a mutually beneficial status quo, and can credibly punish internal defectors as well as external challengers. As we show, such a model of authoritarianism is simple to understand, but has powerful implications. Self-enforcing coalitions retain the rigor of rationalist theories by seeking the conditions under which a minority of rulers may exert control over a majority of subjects. At the same time, they capture the power of authoritarian institutions by specifying their functions as tools wielded by ruling coalitions to retain power.

Beyond simply bridging two disparate schools of thought, though, self-enforcing coalitions capture the features of authoritarian rule left out of existing theories. Patronage, public policy, ethnic favoritism, cooption, cross-class alliances, institutions, and other aspects of authoritarian rule emerge as mechanisms through which regimes incentivize supporters, punish defectors, and deter challengers. These "everyday politics" of authoritarian rule are core features

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of the theory, not nuisances to a grander project. Moreover, our theory endogenizes authoritarian institutions, offering an account of their disparate origins and substantive functions across regimes. Authoritarian regimes create formal political institutions for the specific purpose of supporting existing coalitions. The reason that authoritarian institutions are often so amenable to manipulation by the holders of power is that authoritarian institutions are tools of regimes, not constraints on rulers. Additionally, our theory requires no assumptions about the nature of political conflict across societies. Motivated by historical experience, we instead allow multiple cleavages to exist within any given society. We may interpret one such cleavage as wealth or class, but other cleavages may capture differences among sectors, factors, regions, ethnic groups, religions, ideological factions, or any other politically salient cleavage. Embracing rather than ignoring the complexity of the political coalitions that undergird authoritarian regimes, we provide a natural framework for incorporating preferences into authoritarian rule.

By querying how an authoritarian regime's mechanisms of rule can be self-enforcing, this paper shows that the literature on self-enforcing democracy has a broader scope than previously realized.[6] The question of how disparate elites can form coalitions to rule over their citizens is no less puzzling. To tackle this question, we employ insights from contract theory, which explores both how cooperation can arise absent well-defined property rights,[7] and the economics of violence, which considers how actors strategically invest in appropriation and defense.[8] In authoritarian regimes, where property rights do not exist absent the fiat of the ruling regime, exchanges and institutions must be self-enforcing to facilitate stable patterns of rule and accumulation.

We define authoritarian regimes as all political regimes that are not democratic. Democratic political systems hold competitive popular elections that are unpredictable and

irreversible—incumbent governments subject themselves to elections in which (nearly) all adult citizens are empowered to vote, in which they are uncertain if they will prevail, and after which they will relinquish power in the event that they lose.[9] This mixes together regimes of many different types, including some that have regular multiparty elections that the regime has no intention of losing (Malaysia, Mexico under the PRI); some that restrict the franchise to a small subset of the population (South Africa under apartheid); some with only one organized party (communist regimes in China and Cuba); some led by military juntas or military dictators, with or without a dominant party (Burma since 1962, Chile under Pinochet, Zaire under Mobutu, Liberia under Doe, Egypt under Mubarak); and some with no elections for the executive (Saudi Arabia) or no elections at all (Brunei Darussalam). It also includes very wealthy and peaceful countries (Singapore) along with devastatingly poor and war-torn ones (Sierra Leone). What these regimes all share is that *authority to rule is not allocated through competitive elections*. Self-enforcing coalitions offer a tool to capture the common logic of political organization in these widely varying systems of rule.

We stress that our working definition implies no necessary overlap between the social basis of a ruling authority and the form that its political regime takes. We specifically reject the claim that any coalition including "the poor" or "the weak," who may include more than half of the population, is by definition democratic.[10] The logic behind this definitional elision is that since national income distributions are left-skewed, any coalition that includes the poor would always adopt democratic institutions, for that coalition would always prevail in a democratic election (in these models, simply a vote over tax policy). The rich prefer not extend the franchise, for the policies that the poor implement will be more redistributive than they prefer.[11] Yet we know that authoritarian regimes including the poor often do not extend the franchise. In

Malaysia, Malays (who form a majority of the country's population, and who are notably poorer than ethnic Chinese Malaysians) support a dominant party that works assiduously to avoid subjecting itself to actual political competition. During the period of PRI rule in Mexico, a period which analysts agree was not democratic, political leaders forged tight alliances with labor unions. Many believe that Hugo Chavez, whose popularity among Venezuela's poor is undeniable, has moved from democratic rule to authoritarian control. Other examples in contemporary politics and throughout history abound.

The argument in this paper unfolds in four sections. We begin with several expository examples that show that in societies with political cleavages other than simply wealth, a range of self-enforcing ruling coalitions exist that may or may not include the wealthiest groups in society, and which may or may not be "minimum winning."[12] These examples draw on new axiomatic models of coalitional bargaining, but require no formal mathematics or advanced symbolic logic to understand.[13]

We then show how the coalitional model illuminates a range of issues central to the politics of authoritarian rule. We discuss the effects of economic shocks on regime survival, the creation of public policy (where this approach allows for a much richer understanding of social and economic policies), and the formation and substantive uses of authoritarian institutions. We then turn to leftist coalitions under authoritarian rule, which remain puzzling for existing theories. We show that it is very easy to construct self-enforcing authoritarian coalitions that include the poorest group in society, but which prefer to allocate power based on endowments of resources rather than through elections, where power is allocated according to population. Throughout these discussions, we illustrate with examples from real authoritarian regimes. We

conclude by discussing possible objections to our approach, and the agenda for inquiry which our theory suggests.

2. Self-Enforcing Authoritarianism

To illustrate the concept of self-enforcement in authoritarian regimes, we begin by considering a society with at least two groups that compete over the authority to rule. The groups are indexed by letters (A, B, C, ...). In their struggle, groups bring to bear their endowments of resources (r_A, r_B, r_C, ...). Groups can form coalitions in order to rule. Their ability to rule depends on their ability to defeat other coalitions, which in turn depends on their endowments of resources. A coalition of groups can defeat all other groups when the sum of its resources is greater than that of its opponents.

The definition of self-enforcement here is borrowed from axiomatic models of coalitional bargaining. In this context, self-enforcement simply means that given a coalition, none of its members should be able to secede to form a "sub-coalition" that (1) defeats the remainder of the original and (2) from which no "sub-sub-coalition" can subsequently form.[14] If no such sub-coalition exists, then that coalition is self-enforcing. A self-enforcing coalition is accordingly a coalition from which no sub-coalitions are self-enforcing. This intuitively describes the problem of authoritarian rule, with groups in power and potential challengers always fearing defection from within and challenges from without, and this fear constraining the strategic formation of alliances to challenge authority. In the simplest possible society, there are just two groups, A and B. With differential resources $r_A > r_B$, A has the greater endowment of resources, and hence will form a coalition of size one that defeats B. A unity coalition of both A and B is not self-enforcing because there is a sub-coalition (A) that can defeat the remainder (B).

So far, the example reproduces in a straightforward manner the logic behind class-based analyses of authoritarian rule. The resource allocation r has a natural interpretation as the amount of population, guns, capital, etc. that a group can invest in conflict with other groups. It will later be helpful to conceive of r as a function of population and coercive technology (guns) that a group possesses ($r = p + \alpha g$, where p is an endowment of population, g is an endowment of guns, and α weights the value of guns versus population). Standard models of authoritarian rule assume that $p_A < p_B$, so that in an election B (the poor) would prevail over A (the rich), but that either g or α is large enough that r_A is still greater than r_B, allowing A to prevail over B.

Yet the classic analyses of the origins and breakdowns of authoritarianism reject a simple interpretation of authoritarianism as class conflict, outlining much richer cleavage structures than "the rich" versus "the poor." Many note fundamental differences between the interests of urban labor and agricultural peasantry.[15] Others distinguish an aspiring bourgeoisie from wealthy landowners.[16] Still others note basic cleavages within the rich based on the specificity of their capital assets.[17] Yet another set of arguments points to other cleavages—often ideological—among ruling elites that drive the breakdown of regimes.[18] Finally, there is a rich literature on ethnic cleavages and authoritarian rule in Africa,[19] Asia,[20] and elsewhere. Each of these studies presents evidence of politics in authoritarian regimes following ethnic, religious, or ideological cleavages, which may either overlay or cut across disparities in wealth.

Rather than ignoring these alternative cleavage structures, our strategy is to incorporate them into our model. We can represent these additional cleavages naturally in this framework by increasing the number of groups in society. The differences between the groups represent the cleavages in a society, with n groups having $n - 1$ cleavages.[21] Generally, a society with three exogenously defined groups A, B, and C is itself the self-enforcing coalition so long as the most

powerful group has resources that do not exceed those of the other two. To see why, fix

$r_A = 5, r_B = 6,$ and $r_C = 7.$ Here, A-B, B-C, and A-C are not self-enforcing coalitions, for the

more powerful group each coalition could create a new sub-coalition that defeats the less

powerful.[22] With $r_C = 12,$ C is the sole self-enforcing coalition. The types of self-enforcing

coalitions that emerge, therefore, depend on the initial allocation of resources within society.

A far richer set of self-enforcing coalitions emerges when we allow additional groups to

exist. Imagine a society with four exogenously defined groups, with $r_A = 5, r_B = 6, r_C = 7,$ and

$r_D = 15.$ In such a society, a coalition between all four members is not self-enforcing, for a sub-

coalition of A-B-C could defeat D. A coalition of B-C-D is not self-enforcing, for D would then

form another sub-coalition that defeats B-C. The same holds for any three-group coalition that

includes D. For the same reason, any two-group coalition that includes D is not self-enforcing,

and no other two-group coalition could defeat D. D alone is not a self-enforcing coalition, for A-

B-C would defeat it. But A-B-C is self-enforcing, as A-B-C together will defeat D, but any

subset of A-B, B-C, A-C, or a singleton is not self-enforcing. The self-enforcing coalition in this

four-group society thus eliminates the group with the greatest amount of resources.

This result depends on the initial allocation of resources, and need not be the outcome in

either the four-group case or in any case. Imagine an initial distribution of resources such that

$r_A = 5, r_B = 6, r_C = 12,$ and $r_D = 15.$ Here, a coalition of B-C-D is self-enforcing, for no sub-

coalition B-C, C-D, or B-D is self-enforcing. This same logic also rules out any two-group

coalition as self-enforcing. A-B-C is not self-enforcing in this example, for C would defeat A-B.

If $r_C = 10$, by contrast, it is easy to show using the above logic that we obtain two self-enforcing

coalitions (A-B-C and B-C-D). We therefore find that with slightly different allocations of

resources, the self-enforcing ruling coalition in a society may include or exclude either the richest or poorest groups in society.

We can also imagine a society wherein the center is a self-enforcing coalition against the rich and the poor, such as a society with $n = 5$ groups and $r_A = 1, r_B = 5, r_C = 6, r_D = 7,$ and $r_E = 15$. In this society, no singleton coalition can defeat any others, and all two-group coalitions either cannot defeat the remainders (i.e. A-B) or are not self-enforcing (i.e. D-E). Three-group coalitions A-B-C, A-B-D, and A-C-D do not have enough resources to defeat the remaining two, and three-group coalitions C-D-E, B-D-E, B-C-E, A-B-E, A-C-E, and A-D-E are not self-enforcing. The self-enforcing three-group coalition that remains is B-C-D, which can defeat A-E. Four-group coalitions such as A-B-C-D and B-C-D-E are not self-enforcing, for a self-enforcing sub-coalition of B-C-D exists in either; coalitions such as A-B-D-E are not self-enforcing because E is a self-enforcing sub-coalition of any such coalition. Thus the only self-enforcing coalition that remains, B-C-D, excludes both the weakest and the strongest group in the society.

Left absent in these examples is exchange. Why do powerful groups who are not part of the self-enforcing governing coalition not offer just enough of their resources to another group to wean it off of the self-enforcing coalition? So in our earlier four-group society where $r_A = 5, r_B = 6, r_C = 7,$ and $r_D = 15,$ why does D not offer 4 units of resources to C, creating a society where $r_A = 5, r_B = 6, r_C = 11,$ and $r_D = 11$? The self-enforcing coalition now is C-D, [23] and the share of authority allocated to both C ($\frac{1}{2}$) and D ($\frac{1}{2}$) is superior to the authority allocated in the other coalition ($\frac{7}{18}$ and 0, respectively).

The answer is to recall that in the absence of secure institutions, D cannot credibly commit to its offer. That is, D would like to make it, and C would like to accept it, but D cannot

credibly commit not to defeat C rather than fulfilling its promise. In a coalition C-D, D would prefer to defeat C rather than extending it a portion of its resources—C-D is not *ex ante* a self-enforcing coalition. This discourages C from forming a coalition with D, even though both C and D would prefer to form that coalition rather than the alternative. This assumption that such commitments are not credible is natural given the environment of authoritarian rule without well-secured property rights.[24]

To summarize our approach, the problem that groups face when allocating authority is that other, stronger groups can defeat them, giving weaker groups an incentive to form coalitions with other groups to deter such challenges. The problem of the coalition, in turn, is that its own members may have incentives to break with the coalition once it has formed, so every coalition must rest on its members' own incentives to perpetuate it. Groups therefore will only join coalitions when they know that no member of that coalition has an incentive to defect, and they only join coalitions that they know can prevail against other members of society. Such coalitions are self-enforcing. When there are only two groups in society, the self-enforcing coalition is of the powerful against the weak, as in standard models of authoritarian rule as class conflict. When there are more than two groups in society, there exist much richer possibilities for self-enforcing authoritarian coalitions. They can include or exclude the weakest and the strongest groups in society, and they can take various sizes, from single-group coalitions to all-encompassing coalitions.

This view of authoritarian rule differs starkly from recent formal models of authoritarianism—often developed to analyze problems such as revolt or democratization[25]—for which the cleavage driving political conflict is wealth. Some researchers have suggested that capitalists (labor) may actually support (oppose) democratization, conditional on their

dependence of the state, but still insist on conceptualizing political conflict as purely defined by class.[26] Our approach recognizes the importance of class, but also allows other political cleavages to have powerful roles in shaping authoritarian rule. This observation will be obvious to most country specialists, and familiar to any citizen of an authoritarian regime, but has no place in existing theories.

The coalitional theory also differs in that heterogeneous ruling elites (or ruling masses) do not remain in power merely by writ of their superior endowments of resources, or through a commitment technology ("institutions") that binds different groups to one another. Rather, a heterogeneous ruling coalition also must be able to police itself against the potential squabbles that will exist within it. Landowners and industrialists may unite against peasants and workers, but their ability together to expropriate the poor is only part of the story.[27] The other critical part of authoritarian politics is that coalition's ability to self-enforce, as landowners and industrialists fear one another as a result of the same rapacity that makes them band together against the poor to expropriate from them.

3. Applications and Examples

With this approach in hand, we now turn to the real-world problems of authoritarian governance. Our approach suggests a natural interpretation of several aspects of authoritarian regime maintenance left opaque in current work. These include the effects of economic change on regime survival, the origins of authoritarian institutions and their substantive forms, and the substance of public policy in authoritarian regimes. In general, shocks to the number of groups usually upset the self-enforcing coalition, while shocks to the size of groups' endowments may or may not.[28] We can accordingly interpret much of authoritarian politics as the politics of

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maintaining particular distributions of resources, preventing certain groups from merging, and strategically encouraging the further subdivision of groups outside of the coalition.

3.1. Resource Shocks and Economic Performance

Countless studies have probed the link between economic conditions (level of economic development, change in economic development, income distribution) and regime outcomes (regime type and regime survival). The mechanisms through which economic conditions influence regime outcomes are many, including affecting the opportunity costs of rebellion to changing citizens' tastes for democracy to increasing social complexity. In our approach to authoritarian governance, the effect of economic conditions on regime outcomes must flow either through the resources that groups possess, or the number groups within society. Development that does not change the distribution of resources among groups does not lead to regime change, and development that does may either reinforce authoritarian coalitions or undermine them.

We can see this by returning to the numerical examples above. For now, to simplify our task of exploring how economic conditions influence regime outcomes, assume that economic shocks are exogenous and simply change the endowments of resources that groups possess. With the five-group with $r_A = 1, r_B = 5, r_C = 6, r_D = 7$, and $r_E = 15$, the self-enforcing ruling coalition is B-C-D. It is easy to see that doubling each group's endowment has no impact on the coalition. But an exogenous increase in wealth that disproportionately favors the weakest groups does. Say now that $r_A = 10, r_B = 11, r_C = 12, r_D = 13$, and $r_E = 15$. Now, the self-enforcing coalition is A-B-C, includes the weakest and excludes the most powerful groups. Alternatively, an exogenous increase in the wealth that disproportionately favors the powerful benefits the powerful. With $r_A = 3, r_B = 7, r_C = 8, r_D = 9$, and $r_E = 30$, E is now the self-enforcing coalition.

Economic development's effects on an authoritarian regime accordingly depend on the nature of the coalition in power as well as its distributional impact on the groups in society.

South Korea's democratic transition is a customary example of an authoritarian regime that transitioned to democracy under relatively good economic conditions. While the military regime had fostered development, development did not make the military regime immune to widespread opposition mobilization. Economic growth over the previous decades not only rewarded the industrial and financial backers of the military regime, it also strengthened Korea's middle and working classes. As the fruits of economic development spread to these groups outside of the regime's support coalition, civil society flourished, and heretofore divided and excluded groups (students, unions, the church, and others) forged alliances that made them collectively able to challenge the existing military regime.[29] Of course, such alliances could have been forged previously, but only in a context where economic development had strengthened the positions of excluded groups could they successfully challenge the regime. In South Korea, then, good economic performance *decreased* the stability of an authoritarian regime by increasing the resources of groups outside of ruling coalition.

By contrast, the United Arab Emirates exemplifies the many authoritarian regimes that have prospered the presence of high revenues from oil exports. Resource rents—along with a thriving private sector—sponsor economic growth in the UAE, but resource rents are channeled into the hands of the ruling elite. Such rents allow this elite not only to reward its own members and to distribute patronage throughout society, but also to invest in the type of security apparatus that strengthens its hand against societal opponents. In the United Arab Emirates, then, good economic performance (unequally distributed, and benefiting a powerful incumbent clique)

increases the stability of authoritarian regimes by further increasing the resources of the ruling coalition against the rest of society.[30]

By precisely the same logic, economic contractions do not necessarily lead to the collapse of authoritarian regimes. Their effect depends on the distribution of economic hardship across society, and on the type of ruling coalition in place before the crisis. Zimbabwe's current regime under Robert Mugabe is a particular challenge to the common intuition that dramatic economic meltdowns promote regime collapses. Despite sustained economic distress since at least 1995, the regime remains intact, able to marshal its resources to repress popular opposition movements. For while black Zimbabweans united to reject the racist regime of Ian Smith in 1980 and bring Mugabe to power, the struggle against Smith was fought primarily in the countryside, and post-independence development policies have neglected labor at the expense of rural agrarian elites.[31] Current opposition movements emerge primarily from urban constituencies, backed by groups such as trade unions and students,[32] while Mugabe's Zimbabwean African National Union-Patriotic Front consistently outperforms opposition parties in rural precincts. Recent efforts to reclaim farmland from white Zimbabweans are another sop to poorer rural constituents. Whereas high inflation is devastating in urban areas, rural citizens long dependent on subsistence farming have largely escaped its effects.[33] This pronounced, cross-class urban-rural cleavage in Zimbabwe—and the disproportionate hardship placed on groups outside of the ruling coalition—does not upset the relative power of groups in society, and hence keeps the regime from crumbling.

These examples show how viewing authoritarianism as a self-enforcing coalition makes possible a range of predictions about the effects of the level, change, and distribution of resources on regime outcomes. The key is the distribution of these changes across societies

given the initial character of the authoritarian regime. By extension, the effects of economic crises on regime outcomes depend on how crises' impacts are distributed across groups in society. A terms-of-trade shock is likely to have a different impact than an inflationary crisis, a petroleum crisis, or a famine. Even if each has the same cumulative impact on gross domestic product, the distribution of hardship across groups differs.

These examples focus on how economic change affects the resources that groups possess. An older literature on the effect of economic literature on authoritarian regime survival, though, approaches the effect of development (or "modernization") on democratization from a sociological perspective, arguing that economic development itself creates new social cleavages, prompting for instance the rise of the middle class, a new social group which did not previously exist.[34] We can see this quite simply by returning to the model of authoritarianism as class conflict, a two-group society where $r_A = 5$ and $r_B = 10$. Economic development that doubles each group's endowment does not change the self-enforcing coalition (B), but development does if it creates a new "middle class" group, AB, from members of both A and B. If the society now has three groups, where $r_A = 9, r_{AB} = 13, r_B = 18$, the self-enforcing coalition is now A-AB-B. One interpretation of the South Korea's democratization is not that development empowered the Korean middle class (as above), but that development itself *created* a middle class whose political identity was distinct from wealthy Korean business groups and the military.

3.2. Institutions

Institutions and organization under authoritarian rule have heretofore played no role in the discussion, even as we noted that current institutionalist research has emphasized their importance for authoritarian rule. Authoritarian regimes do exist and that they are consequential, but they emerge endogenously from coalitional arrangements as tools for monitoring them. Note

the prediction here: the mechanisms through with institutions affect regime survival or regime

behavior under authoritarian rule are not symbolic legitimation of ruling elites,

"anaesthetization" of the masses,[35] or constriction of confiscatory tyrants, but rather the policing

of existing coalitions. Institutions are tools of durable regimes, not determinants of them. This

approach can explain variation among authoritarian institutions, and offers a principled account

of their origins. It also comports with recent findings that the founding moments of authoritarian

institutions are critical for understanding their downstream impact on regime survival.[36]

How do institutions monitor the coalitions at the basis of authoritarian rule? The

institutionalist literature has recognized that they regularize and publicize cooperation for

regimes with multiple groups in the ruling coalition. They allow negotiation between the regime

and other groups in society takes place without threatening the regime's authority to rule, and

during crises allow clients to ensure that any short-term costs they bear will be rewarded by long-

term rewards.[37] Our approach differs, though, in that institutions are no more than "good

offices" that lower transactions costs. Groups do not trust institutions *qua* institutions, nor do

they trust agreements reached within institutions more than agreements reached outside of them.

This is because existing holders of power in authoritarian regimes can so often assault political

institutions, manipulating them for their own purposes.

Authoritarian institutions have other more pernicious functions, familiar to country

specialists if neglected by the cross-national theoretical literature. This is where our approach

departs more systematically from existing work. First, regimes employ institutions to *ensure* that

commitments among groups that could challenge the ruling coalition are not credible. The

approach predicts that in a populist authoritarian coalition (one that includes the weakest

members of society), a critical political strategy will be to create institutions that prevent the

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most powerful groups in society from allying with the members of the coalition. To see why, recall that in the four-group society of $r_A = 5, r_B = 6, r_C = 7,$ and $r_D = 15,$ both C and D will have an incentive to search for commitment technologies that allow D credibly to commit four units of resources to D. Facing this, A and B each have an incentive to prevent such a technologies from emerging. Substantively, this means that authoritarian regimes will employ institutions to raise barriers to cooperation between enfranchised groups within the coalition and disenfranchised groups outside of it.

Modern Malaysian politics illustrates this problem well. Malaysia's political regime is based on an explicit ethnic coalition that binds poor rural Malays, urban Malay labor, and ascendant Malay entrepreneurs. Excluded from the coalition are vast majority of non-Malays— the large and comparatively wealthier ethnic Chinese minority and the smaller, poorer ethnic Indian minority—who receive but token representation in the governing coalition. The regime is clearly not democratic, as it imprisons dissidents, bans public criticism, restricts press freedoms, commits periodic electoral fraud, and has even suspended parliament in the face of an unwelcome electoral outcome. Political institutions in authoritarian Malaysia, though, are prominent and consequential.

The Malay rich should fear that Malay labor would strike strategic alliances with Chinese and Indian labor. And indeed, Malaysian labor institutions work assiduously to forestall any burgeoning pan-ethnic labor movement that would cleave Malay labor from wealthy Malays.[38] At the same time, redistributive institutions openly favor the Malay masses, and holders of power reiterate that such benefits are conditional on the Malay-dominated coalition's rule. But poor Malays should also fear an alliance between wealthy Malays and wealthy non-Malays. It is precisely for this reason that electoral institutions are critical for regime maintenance in

authoritarian Malaysia. By linking regime continuity to periodic elections, the numerically

dominant Malay masses ensure that wealthy political elites remain faithful to them. The fact that

political institutions so clearly favor the existing Barisan Nasional coalition, moreover, raises the

costs of alternative coalition formation, which emerges periodically when external shocks and

leadership squabbles provoke defections from within the ruling elite.

The same argument that suggests why the weak groups in a coalition create institutions

that prevent the most powerful groups in society outside of the coalition from engaging in

exchange relationships with the members of the coalition, furthermore, suggests an interpretation

of the behavior of strong groups against the weak *within* the coalition. In our four group

coalition of $r_A = 5, r_B = 6, r_C = 7,$ and $r_D = 15,$ for instance, the self-enforcing coalition AB-C

would not be stable in the event that A-B became a single group A*, and the same is the case for

any other two-group sub-coalition within A-B-C. So each group has an incentive to perpetuate

the three groups in society.

Finally, authoritarian institutions will in many cases attempt to divide opposition groups

to prevent them from threatening the ruling coalition. This is the political strategy of divide-and-

rule. Imagine a four-group society with $r_A = 5, r_B = 6, r_C = 7,$ and $r_D = 20.$ The self-enforcing

coalition here is D. Yet if the disenfranchised groups experience exogenous increases in their

resources (say, to $r_A^* = 8$), then the self-enforcing coalition is A-B-C. Facing their growth, D has

an incentive to cultivate further divisions in the opposition to forestall the ability of the

opposition to challenge them. Institutions will hence encourage such divisions, say of A to A1

and A2. Then if similar growth produces $r_{A1}^* = 4$ and $r_{A2}^* = 4$, the self-enforcing coalition

remains D, as A1-A2-B-C is not self-enforcing and neither A1-B-C nor A2-B-C can prevail over

D.

Such an approach can explain the proliferation of ethnic identities under authoritarian rule as a product of elite level strategies of divide-and-rule. For instance, Posner documents how under single-party rule in Zambia, ethnic identities were fragmented along multiple local tribal identities, whereas linguistic groups—a national-level cleavage—are the dominant identity cleavage under multi-party rule.[39] He attributes this to the different incentives for collective identification under democracy and authoritarianism. But we predict that national elites under authoritarian rule should purposively sow divisions among local communities to forestall the formation of mass opposition movements. Indeed, President Kenneth Kaunda consistently and actively promoted ethnic identification in Zambia during one-party rule, both rhetorically and through institutions that reified ethnic identities.[40] This result is not inconsistent with Posner's argument, but speaks to a purposive strategy by an authoritarian ruler that emerges as a natural consequence of his desire to guard his authority over a society with several potential cleavages.

3.3. Public Policy

Authoritarian regimes adopt a wide range of public policies that country specialists interpret as fulfilling some political goals given the favored groups in society, and most do not map onto a simple dimension of wealth. Increasing economic openness can have disproportionate effects based on sector rather than class, and religious policies affect the wealthy and the poor of the same religion. The model of authoritarian rule as class conflict conceives public policy as redistributive taxation, assuming that other economic policies either map onto the same dimension of wealth or are inconsequential. Institutional approaches to authoritarian rule are largely devoid of concrete economic or social policy choices, and instead focus on repression, regime survival, and war. Viewing authoritarian rule as a self-enforcing coalition, public policies have a natural interpretation as fulfilling the interests of the groups

within the coalition. This, of course, is why groups band together to allocate authority. Thinking systematically about coalitions yields several insights into policy choice under authoritarian rule that are beyond the ambit of existing approaches.

To see how coalitions matter for public policy, we can examine several regimes that would be undifferentiable in most approaches to authoritarian regimes. The authoritarian regimes in Chile (under Pinochet), Argentina (under Videla), and Paraguay (under Stroessner) each featured a military dictator and emasculated electoral institutions. All score near the bottom of democracy-authoritarianism rankings. Paraguay and Chile even had comparable levels of economic development, and all three benefited from relatively low land-labor ratios and abundant natural resources. Although Uruguay under Méndez had a slightly different institutional structure, it was also roughly comparable to the other three in its economic profile, and to Chile and Argentina in its ethnic fabric. The four regimes even shared general ideological orientations—variously glossed as a form of neo-conservative developmentalism. With roughly comparable institutions and initial conditions, existing models are hard pressed to explain how the regimes could possibly vary.

Yet there is a mature literature on Latin American political economy that links coalitional politics to variations in these regimes' economic policies and their responses to economic shocks. Common to all of these approaches is their close attention to the factional supporters of military regimes in explaining policy choice. Frieden, for example, explains different responses to the Latin American debt crises with respect to the different political cleavages in society— classes in countries like Chile versus sectors in several others.[41] Biglaiser explains different patterns of policy adoption under the heading of "neo-conservative economic policy" by investigating the coalitions supporting regimes in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay.[42] Other

cleavages appear between import and export-competing sectors, and between industry, agriculture, and finance.[43] In each study, regimes have complex factional bases that in some cases exclude large portions of the capitalist class. To explain actual public policy in rightist authoritarian regimes, then, applied scholars move beyond class conflict.

Political conflict across ethnic and religious cleavages explains other kinds of public policies under authoritarian rule. New Order Indonesia, despite being the world's most populous Muslim country, remained markedly secular throughout thirty-two years under Soeharto's rule. This remained the case despite no small amount of pressure from Islamists to promote Islam above the many minority religions in Indonesia. The explanation for the failure of this pressure lies in the coalition supporting the New Order, comprised of the Indonesian military (a multiethnic and multireligious body), the bureaucracy, and a wealthy group of non-Muslim business elites. No groups were willing to pursue Islamism as a political platform. Interestingly, the regime's use of institutions to manage Islamism follows the logic outlined above. The regime co-opted many influential members of the Muslim community, creating bodies such as the Indonesian Council of Ulemas and the All-Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals that operated firmly under the hand of the regime's official party organs.[44] The regime also encouraged the growth of mass Muslim organizations so long as they remained apolitical and competed with one another for membership.[45] Each strategy sought to divide and neutralize a potential threat to the incumbent coalition, the former by wedding influential elites to the regime, and the latter by reinforcing competing Islamic identities.

Conceiving of authoritarian rule as a self-enforcing coalition accordingly provides a simple way of integrating preferences into the study of authoritarianism. In a model of authoritarianism as class conflict, few predictions about concrete policy choices are possible,

save for that the rich adopt tax (or tax-equivalent) policies that they like and the poor suffer. Institutions alone offer no insight into most policy choices. Placing coalitions at the center of authoritarian politics enables researchers to make much more sophisticated predictions about the very politics of authoritarianism, the stuff of everyday politics which is excluded from existing theories.

4. Populist Authoritarianism

Voting is the alternative to coalitional bargaining as a method for allocating rule. Yet most models of authoritarian rule and democratization assume quite simply that a coalition of the poor (or with the poor) is democratic, for its numeric superiority will always allow it to prevail in an election. The existence of a number of regimes that very openly embrace the majority of citizens within a country, but still fail to offer them free elections wherein these citizens would supposedly always return them to office, challenges such assumptions.

The approach to authoritarianism as a self-enforcing coalition offers a simple and intuitive explanation. Coalitions that include the poor may not extend the franchise because other members of the coalition realize that they will be defeated in a free election. We can interpret democratization or the extension of the franchise in this model quite easily as the decision to base the allocation of authority not on the basis of resources (*r*), but rather on the basis of population (*p*). The society, though, begins at authoritarianism, so *the decision to extend the franchise must be self-enforcing against the authoritarian allocation of power*. It is easy to construct societies in this regard where a coalition including the poorest and most populous members of society does not extend the franchise. Recall our four-group society where $r_A = 5, r_B = 6, r_C = 7,$ and $r_D = 15.$ The relations hold if we multiply each player's *r* by 1000: A-

B-C is the self-enforcing coalition in this society, so it includes the weakest or poorest member

of society. As above, $r = p + \alpha g$. The following endowments exist, with $\alpha = 4$.

Table 1: *Endowments ($\alpha = 4$) of a Leftist Authoritarian Regime*

Group	p	g	r
A	1000	1000	5000
B	500	1375	6000
C	200	1700	7000
D	100	3725	15000

Here, in an election (which assigns authority based on p, not only would A defeat B-C, it would

defeat B-C-D. Yet A-B-C would never hold such an election, as B and C would fare worse than

under the authoritarian ruling coalition, receiving no authority versus ⅓ and ⁷⁄₁₈ of total authority,

respectively. And A is not a self-enforcing sub-coalition of A-B-C, so it cannot itself adopt

elections. Still, the self-enforcing authoritarian coalition in this society necessarily includes its

poorest group, for B-C is not a self-enforcing coalition against D alone, let alone A-D. So A is a

vital part of the ruling authoritarian coalition A-B-C, a coalition that includes the vast majority of

citizens (almost 95% of them!) and over a half of the society's wealth but does not extend the

franchise. An implication, though, is that the final allocation of power should reflect r rather than

p, in that this coalition that includes the poor will not favor them in proportion to their

population, but rather to their resources.[46]

The existence of such examples may seem to set the bar high for regimes adopting

elections. Indeed, it seems peculiar why any ruling coalition, even a populist one, would extend

the franchise.[47] For a wide variety of examples such as that above, it is indeed the case that

coalitions including the poor will not extend the franchise, for doing so will benefit only a sub-

coalition whose population defeats that of groups with smaller populations but more resources,

who accordingly block elections. Nevertheless, we can also construct examples where elections

do no worse than authoritarian power allocations for the poor. The key is to recognize that the poor can have controlling amounts of r through population rather than through their guns. Say that $r_A = 5000, r_B = 6000, r_C = 7000,$ and $r_D = 20000$, but that the distributions of population and coercive power exist as follows (again, with $\alpha = 4$).

Table 2: *Endowments (α = 4) of a Populist Regime That Can Adopt Elections*

Group	p	g	r
A	40	1240	5000
B	100	1475	6000
C	500	1625	7000
D	2000	4500	20000

It is easy to verify that D is the only self-enforcing coalition in this society. Given this, there is no cost to D for extending elections, for it prevails in a democratic allocation of power just as it does in the authoritarian allocation of power. We can verify that D is the "poorest" group in society even though it has the highest r by examining the ratio of guns to population for each group, which we can interpret as analogous to that group's per capita wealth. This ratio is lowest for D (2¼), and increases steadily for C (3¼), B (14¾), and A (31).

These two numerical examples illustrate a simple explanation for populist or leftist authoritarian regimes. Such regimes continue to incentivize the poor to support the coalition, for the poor receive nothing if they break from the coalition but gain authority in proportion to their resources if they remain part of it. An underappreciated component of the poor's participation in such a coalition, though, is that the poor are not "suckers," they are instrumental for both the self-enforceability of the coalition and its ability to deter challengers. Authoritarian regimes that include the poor can therefore emerge as rational self-enforcing coalitions that do not adopt procedural democracy. This might explain recent findings that democratic institutions do not predict most public policies (aside from torture, human rights abuses, conscription, and the

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like).[48] Authoritarian regimes are not necessarily coalitions of the rich, so predictions based on

models that assume that authoritarian regimes *are* coalitions of the rich overpredict the

differences between the two.

Mexico under the long rule of the PRI follows closely this model of populist

authoritarianism. Since the rule of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940), the PRI cemented an alliance

between Mexican labor and certain factions of Mexican industrial capital in a coalition often

referred to as the "Cárdenas coalition."[49] Mexican presidents openly campaigned on populist

platforms of poverty reduction and growth with redistribution, and successive administrations

embarked on large public works projects and anti-poverty programs while protecting industrial

enterprise. Meanwhile, tight links between industrial capital and politicians persisted, and

regular elections ensured that the PRI could not forsake the Mexican masses. Yet the regime

was not a democracy: the PRI never subjected itself to fair electoral competition between the late

1930s and 1997. Such a political outcome is peculiar given the regime's constituents, unless

there is a compelling reason why both labor and industrial capital would fear electoral

competition. Mexican political history demonstrates, though, that industrial capital feared the

possibility of a more radical alliance of the poor that included the rural peasantry, a group which

languished under the PRI. Meanwhile, unions feared that a rightist electoral coalition linking

industry with big agriculture, business elites in Monterrey, and the financial sector might freeze

labor out of policy making. In these ways, the perceived loser (either industrial capital or labor)

from democratization blocks electoral competition because it fears its consequences.

This approach can also offer an intuitive explanation for economic development leading

to the extension of the franchise in the event, as shown above, that the distribution of such

benefits favors the most populous groups in society, or alternatively, erases fundamental societal

cleavages. Depending on how growth is distributed across society and the existing coalition in power, economic development produces may generate coalitions that extend the franchise (Taiwan) or resist doing so (Singapore).

5. Discussion

Our theory embraces the complex politics of authoritarian regimes, and uses analytic tools derived from theories of coalitional bargaining to outline a general conception of authoritarian politics. While we believe that our ability to capture unexplained aspects of authoritarianism makes a good *prima facie* case for our theory, we can imagine four main objections to this approach. We assume quite simply that no agreements are credible on their own, but rather must be self-enforcing. This assumption is absolutely critical (indeed, proof-generating): if it were the case that coalitions of groups with different endowments could form without the weaker fearing predation, then all coalitions would be minimum winning. Yet this assumption is no different than the motivating assumption of existing formal theories where extending the franchise to the poor is a technology to overcome their inability credibly to commit to future redistribution.[50] It is also an implicit assumption in all other formal treatments of authoritarian rule of surveyed here. If it were not, then powerful groups could always wean off some subset of the disenfranchised population in order to remain in power in the present, and then crush them in the future. Alternatively, the weak could always wean off some subset of the strong, with the same outcome. For all of the reasons that other authors view it desirable to assume that groups can make no such commitments, we make the same assumption.

Our approach also assumes that groups are exogenous. Groups do not arise and fall in this model, but are instead assigned by nature. We explored how existing coalitions would strategically promote the development, merger, or subdivision of groups, but a theory of why

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certain groups are salient *ex ante* remains absent. But this assumption—that the number of salient groups in a society *may be greater than* two—is no less defensible than the assumption that the number of salient groups in society is *strictly* two, the standard assumption to models of authoritarianism as class conflict. In both approaches, groups that exist are exogenous, and in both, the properties of authoritarian rule follow directly from the assumptions. To judge between the two approaches on their assumptions of exogenous groups, we might consider some of the cases where a model of authoritarianism as pure class conflict seems clearly to fail: authoritarian regimes where ethnic politics dominates, such as Malaysia and Fiji. Our strategy is to embrace these differences and explore how ethnicity interacts with wealth to shape authoritarian rule. The response of alternative approaches must be to assert that these cases are degenerate, that they are not actually authoritarian regimes, or that ethnic conflict is some form of imperfect false consciousness.

Moreover, our approach does not provide a simple conception of the politics of authoritarian rule. To understand coalitions, we must understand not only the number of groups and their endowments of resources, but also the distribution and relative worth of guns and population. These data are not easily recoverable in any rigorous fashion across all countries in the world. It is much more tractable, in this regard, simply to assume that authoritarianism is class conflict, so that the only data necessary are wealth and inequality; or to treat institutions as having exogenous causal impacts on political outcomes, in which case we need simply to find public institutions and count them.

Our response is that the great majority of what is interesting about politics in authoritarian regimes is not what goes on in the formal chambers of authority, and that we simply neglect tremendous amount of data when we assume that countries like Chile under

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Pinochet are undifferentiated from Argentina under Videla. These problems of data availability do not have easy solutions, aside from substantive knowledge gained from careful attention to informal coalitions that coexist with threats of coercion. While there may be a case for data availability constraining the types of hypotheses that political scientists test, there is no case for data availability restricting the theories that they entertain.

A final objection is that we are too ambitious in the historical sense. Self-enforcing coalitions may be particularly apt for modern authoritarianism, but Stalinist totalitarianism and "hydraulic civilizations"[51] represent fundamentally different logics of rule. On this point, we partially agree. The type of hierarchical "mono-organizational society" that Rigby describes does not fit neatly into this framework.[52] However, there is no regime like this in the world today—nor has there been anything like true totalitarianism since the death of Mao Zedong in 1976. Likewise, quasi-hierocratic despotism of the type that existed in Pharaonic Egypt; the Incan, Babylonian, and Khmer empires; and dynastic China does not exist today. While self-enforcing coalitions may not explain the extreme institutionalization of hierarchy under Stalin or religious despotism in pre-industrial societies, modern authoritarianism does not mirror these forms. Furthermore, in the wake of Stalin's rule, authors seized upon a variety of society-centered approaches to understanding Soviet politics, from corporatist factionalism to ethnic conflict.[53] Bunce, for instance, shows that beginning with Khrushchev and certainly by Brezhnev, the Stalinist model was hardly relevant.[54] What remained were competing interest groups struggling to hold onto the reigns of state authority, a situation quite amenable to the coalitional theory that we propose. And at the highest levels of authority, we believe that the self-enforcing coalitions will remain useful. If we replace group conflict with conflict among despots and their highest viziers, we can understand factional alignments such as those among

Beria, Malenkov, Zhdanov, and others near the end of Stalin's rule.[55] Such individual factionalism is familiar in other totalitarian and despotic regimes.

6. Conclusion

Authoritarianism is by far the most common type of political system throughout world history. Analysts have brought modern tools to bear on the dynamics of authoritarian rule, and with great success, but we argue that the two main theoretical perspectives that this research employs are simply incapable of explaining most of the interesting everyday politics of authoritarianism. Rather than ignoring the intricate politics of coalitional alignments under authoritarianism, we place coalitions at the very heart of authoritarian politics. A simple concept of self-enforceability gives structure to the problem of authoritarian rule. Any ruling coalition must be strong enough to withstand challenges from groups outside of the coalition, and also be secure against defection from groups within the ruling coalition. Based on our theory, we generated a set of alternative predictions that do not follow from existing approaches, and presented evidence that demonstrates the applicability of these predictions to specific problems in the study of authoritarianism.

We see our theory as offering several new avenues for research on authoritarianism. Both in the contemporary world and throughout history, we see a vital need for research on authoritarianism to integrate preferences directly into models of authoritarian rule. When authoritarian regimes create policies, whom do they listen to and why? The voluminous case study literature on policy formation in authoritarian regimes should inform the mainstream of theoretical work, for these cases offer the empirical content to test and refine the theoretical literature on authoritarianism. So long as research focuses only on "big" and easily observable phenomena like war and regime change, our theories will suffer.

We also see room for more nuanced study of authoritarian institutions. Existing studies have established beyond a doubt that institutions are consequential in authoritarian regimes, but we believe that they are important in many more ways than this literature has shown. Our theory suggests that an exciting source of data will be "subaltern" resistance groups to populist authoritarianism—Christian activists in authoritarian South Korea, peasant movements against the PRI, urban resistance to Mugabe. Their experiences will show us just how authoritarian regimes employ their institutional advantages to forestall opposition organization and mobilization. Studying the origins of these institutions, in turn, will reveal how factional alignments influence the substantive forms that these institutions take. Doing this marries the study of institutions with the study of social preferences, two subjects that have long been separated in research on authoritarianism.

A final task for future research is to imbed self-enforcing authoritarian coalitions within a model of economic change. Several interesting properties should follow. First, we may observe "blocking" by existing coalitions that strategically hamstring economic development because they know that the consequence will be a new coalition that does not include them.[56] Second, we may find that expectations of *ex post* distributions of income condition the types of coalitions that emerge *ex ante*. In this case, the endowment r would encompass not just present endowments, but expected future endowments given the types of coalitions that form. Each extension will allow more nuanced study of the rich dynamics of authoritarian rule.

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[1] This literature is far too vast to summarize. Important contributions are Arendt 1968, 305-479;

Fainsod 1953; Rigby 1977.

[2] Friedrich and Brzezinski 1965; Linz 2000; O'Donnell 1973.

[3] Acemoglu and Robinson 2006b; Przeworski et al. 2000; Wintrobe 1998.

[4] Brownlee 2007; Gandhi and Przeworski 2007; Geddes 1999; Smith 2005.

[5] An exception is Gandhi and Przeworski 2006.

[6] Fearon 2006; Przeworski 1991, 2005.

[7] Barzel 2002; Dixit 2004.

[8] Bates 2001; Hirshleifer 2001; Skaperdas 1992.

[9] For related definitions, see Alvarez et al. 1996; Schumpeter 1942/2005.

[10] Chen and Feng 1999, for instance, write that "democracy exists only in contrast to an

autocracy that is defined as a polity whose policy deviates from the preferred position by the

median citizen," p. 13.

[11] Acemoglu and Robinson 2006b.

[12] Riker 1962.

[13] A detailed technical exposition of all concepts discussed here is available in Acemoglu, Egorov, and Sonin 2006 for a general class of political games. Under some very mild assumptions (1) a self-enforcing coalition exists for any society of the type discussed below; (2) that with an additional assumption which we do not explore here, there is a *unique* self-enforcing coalition; and (3) that that unique self-enforcing coalition will emerge from a dynamic bargaining game.

[14] Acemoglu, Egorov, and Sonin 2006.

[15] i.e. Luebbert 1991; Moore 1966.

[16] Moore 1966. See also Llavador and Oxoby 2005; Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens 1992.

[17] Bates and Lien 1985; Boix 2003.

[18] Bratton and Van de Walle 1994; O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986.

[19] Horowitz 1991; Kanyinga 1994; Tripp 2004.

[20] Kiernan 2002; Lawson 1991; Suryadinata 2004.

[21] One could imagine cross-cutting cleavages, but here we use "cleavage" to denote boundaries between groups.

[22] This coalition, moreover, is not minimum winning. A-B is the minimum winning coalition, but the fear of subsequent predation by B prevents A from joining with it.

[23] Assume here a very small fixed cost of coalition formation, so that two equal groups may form a self-enforcing coalition.

[24] The logic is similar to Groseclose and Snyder 1996, where agents' abilities to make offers after coalition formation force coalitions to be "oversized" to deter such offers. For other discussions of how this assumption reflects the reality of authoritarian or institution-free

governance, see Acemoglu 2003; Acemoglu, Egorov, and Sonin 2006; Acemoglu and Robinson 2006b, 133-172; Barzel 2002; Weingast 1997.

[25] See e.g. Lee 2003; Roemer 1985.

[26] Bellin 2000.

[27] Contra Llavador and Oxoby 2005.

[28] Acemoglu, Egorov, and Sonin 2006.

[29] Cotton 1989; Kim 2001.

[30] See e.g. Anderson 1995; Bellin 2004.

[31] Dashwood 1996.

[32] Makumbe 2002.

[33] *New York Times*, May 2, 2006.

[34] Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens 1992.

[35] See e.g. Hermet 1978.

[36] Smith 2005.

[37] Brownlee 2007; Gandhi and Przeworski 2006.

[38] See e.g. Ramasamy 1994.

[39] Posner 2005.

[40] See e.g. Gertzel, Baylies, and Szeftel 1984.

[41] Frieden 1991.

[42] Biglaiser 2002.

[43] Gillespie 1991.

[44] Liddle 1995.

[45] Hefner 1993.

[46] This finding is related to "Gamson's Law" in legislative coalitions, where allocation of cabinet posts follows the relative power of each group in the ruling coalition; Carroll and Cox 2007; Gamson 1961.

[47] Fearon 2006.

[48] Mulligan, Gil, and Sala-i-Martin 2004.

[49] Maxfield 1990.

[50] Acemoglu and Robinson 2000, 2006b.

[51] Wittfogel 1957.

[52] Rigby 1977.

[53] See King 2000, 146-151.

[54] Bunce 1983.

[55] Acemoglu, Egorov, and Sonin 2007, 4-5.

[56] Acemoglu and Robinson 2006a.