
Elites, Single Parties and Political Decision-making in Fascist-era Dictatorships

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Italian Fascism and German National-Socialism were both attempts to create a charismatic leadership and ‘totalitarian tension’ that was, in one form or another, also present in other dictatorships of the period.¹ After taking power, both National-Socialism and Fascism became powerful instruments of a ‘new order’, agents of a ‘parallel administration’, and promoters of innumerable tensions within these dictatorial political systems. 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 and the state apparatus in the process.² These tensions were responsible for the emergence of new centres of political decision-making that on the one hand led to the concentration of power in the hands of Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler, but also removed it from the government and the ministerial elite, who were often increasingly subordinated to the single party and its ‘parallel administration’.

This article seeks to ascertain the locus of political decision-making authority, the composition and the recruitment channels of the dictatorships’ ministerial elites during the fascist era. It will do so by examining three fundamental areas. The first of these is charisma and political decision-making, that is, an examination of the characteristics of the relationships that existed between the dictators and their ministerial elites by studying the composition and structure of these elites, as well as the methods used in their recruitment and the role of the single parties in the political system and in the governmental selection process. Particular attention will

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¹ Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995); Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Pinter, 1991); Roger Eatwell, *Fascismo: Verso un modello generale* (Rome: Antonio Pellicani Editore, 1999).

² Samuel P. Huntington and Clement H. Moore, eds., *Authoritarian Politics in Modern Societies: The dynamics of established one-party systems* (New York: Basic Books, 1970); Roger Brooker, *Twentieth-Century Dictatorships: The Ideological One-Party States* (London: Macmillan, 1995).

be paid to the relationships between the single parties, the dictators, and the state in the selection and political composition of the governing elites, and to the impact of this relationship on the relocation of political decision-making power and the imposition of control over civil society in each regime.

Whilst 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.³ The analysis of their impact will be subordinated to an examination of the charismatic power of the dictators – that is to say, the Weberian type of legitimacy that the leader adopted in his relations with both the state and civil society. As M. Rainer Lepsius has noted, ‘it may be difficult to distinguish between the idolisation of a leader and being considered charismatic’; however, the aspects that are analysed below relate essentially to the extent of the ‘de-institutionalisation of norms’ and the bypassing of bureaucratic authoritarianism by the leader and his followers.⁴ The second aspect, and one that complements the first, is related to the degree and extent of political and governmental decision-making that was concentrated in the hands of the dictator: the problem that some analysts of Nazism have characterised as the ‘strong dictator/weak dictator’ tension.⁵

Awareness of the interaction between the single party, the government, the state apparatus and civil society appears fundamental if we are to achieve an understanding of the different ways in which the various dictatorships of the fascist era functioned. The party and its ancillary organisations were not simply parallel institutions: they attempted to gain control of the bureaucracy and select the governing elite – forcing some dictatorships towards an unstable equilibrium in the process, even while they were the central agents for the creation and maintenance of the leader’s charismatic authority. This article will focus on an analysis of the gradations of these tensions, that may be illustrated by the eventual emergence of a weaker or stronger ‘dualism of power’ that appears to be the determining factor in explanations for the typological and classificatory variations used to qualify those dictatorships that have been historically associated with fascism and which have been variously defined as ‘authoritarian’ and ‘totalitarian’, or as ‘authoritarian’ and ‘fascist’.⁶ It is in this perspective that we will study four dictatorships that have each

³ See Jean Blondel, *Political Leadership: Towards a general analysis* (London: Sage, 1987); Fred I. Greenstein, *Personality and Politics: Problems of Evidence, Inference, and Conceptualization* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987); Aaron Wildavsky, ‘A Cultural Theory of Leadership’, in Bryan D. Jones, eds., *Leadership and Politics: New Perspectives in Political Science* (Lawrence, KA: University Press of Kansas, 1989), 87–113.

⁴ See M. Rainer Lepsius, ‘Charismatic Leadership: Max Weber’s Model and Its Applicability to the Rule of Hitler’, in Carl F. Graunmann and Serge Moscovici, eds., *Changing Conceptions of Leadership* (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1986), 55; and Ann Ruth Willner, *The Spellbinders: Charismatic Political Leadership* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

⁵ Hans Mommsen, *From Weimar to Auschwitz* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 163–188.

⁶ Juan J. Linz, *Authoritarian and Totalitarian Regimes* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2000); and *idem*, ‘Fascism, breakdown of democracy: authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. Coincidences and distinctions’, mimeograph, 2001. For a general overview see Roger Griffin, ‘The Primacy of Culture: The Current Growth (or Manufacture) of Consensus within Fascist Studies’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 37, 1 (January 2002).

been associated with European fascism: Portuguese Salazarism, Spanish Francoism, Italian Fascism and German National-Socialism.⁷

Power and political decision-making during Salazarism

Portugal's Estado Novo (New State), led by António de Oliveira Salazar, a young university professor with links to the Catholic Centre Party who had become Minister of Finance in 1928, was consolidated in the 1930s out of a military dictatorship that had been implanted in 1926.⁸ The regime's single party, which had been created by the Interior Ministry, was weak and was initially controlled by the administration, over which Salazar's rule was complete.⁹ Benefiting from a new constitution – the product of a compromise between corporatism and liberalism that had been approved by popular plebiscite in 1933 – Salazar created the single party, the União Nacional (UN – National Union), from above, ensuring that it remained weak and elitist from its very foundation in 1930. The UN was not given any predominant role over either the government or the administration, its position being simply one of political control, as a tool for the selection of members of the Chamber of Deputies and of the local administration, and to provide some legitimacy in the 'non-competitive elections' that were regularly held.¹⁰

Salazar could not be considered a charismatic leader in the strict Weberian sense. The confusion that exists between the personalisation of power or the emergence of a leadership cult as developed by the propaganda apparatus that is inherent to the majority of the twentieth-century dictatorships and charisma is large, and has at times characterised analyses of Salazarism. However, Salazar was, above all, a master whose manipulation of a perverted rational-legal legitimacy meant that he had little need to seek recourse to a charismatic style that could rise above bureaucratic and governmental mediation between himself and the 'Nation'. Moreover, the military origins of his regime ensured that his position was linked to that of the president of the republic, General Antonio de Fragoso Carmona, who had been formally legitimated in direct elections and who retained the authority to dismiss Salazar.

His extensive centralisation of decision-making clearly justifies the use of the expression 'strong dictator' in any characterisation of the power exercised by Salazar. The historical structure of Portuguese society and its political and administrative systems were to help Salazar: a small country, a centralist administration, a

⁷ As both Iberian dictatorships continued long after the end of the fascist era, this article will consider these regimes from their creation during the 1930s to the end of the Second World War in 1945.

⁸ António Costa Pinto, *Salazar's Dictatorship and European Fascism: Problems of Interpretation* (New York: SSM-Columbia University Press, 1995). See also Manuel Lucena, 'Salazar', in António Barreto and Maria Filomena Mónica, eds., *Dicionário de História de Portugal-Suplemento*, Vol. 9 (Oporto: Figueirinhas, 2000), 283–368.

⁹ Manuel Braga da Cruz, *O Partido e o Estado no Salazarismo* (Lisbon: Presença, 1988).

¹⁰ See Philippe C. Schmitter, *Portugal: do Autoritarismo à Democracia* (Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 1999), 71–102.

top-heavy state apparatus and a weak civil society, a very small qualified social and administrative elite, with extremely limited access to a highly elitist university system.¹¹ However, his traditionalist Catholicism and his juridical and financial education, associated with a style of state management that was very much his own, distinguished Salazar from the other dictators of this period.

Cold and distant from his ministers and supporters and having cultivated a reduced circle of 'political counsellors', Salazar stamped his own style on the management of government and politics. The main characteristic of this style was an almost obsessive concern for the minutiae of all areas of government. Whilst many of the other dictators concentrated on areas of central importance to their own person – generally foreign policy, internal security and the armed forces – Salazar additionally retained control of the more 'technical' portfolios, at least during the period in question.

Some of these more stylistic traits were affirmed from the very beginning, when Salazar took over the Ministry of Finance during the military dictatorship – particularly with respect to matters relating to the budget and the State's finances. Once he had become prime minister, his attentive gaze extended into practically every piece of legislation, going far beyond those necessary for control that were common in other dictatorial political systems. Despite surrounding himself with competent ministers, Salazar refused to allow them anything but the smallest margin for autonomous decision-making. On the other hand, the amount of information to which he had access was impressive, extending far beyond that appropriate to the ministerial level.

The history of relations between Salazar and his ministers during the period in question is one of the concentration of decision-making power in the person of the dictator and of the reduction of the independence of both the ministers and of the president of the republic.¹² One of the first symptoms of this process was the rapid elimination of collegiality within the Council of Ministers, and a drastic reduction in the number of meetings of this body, particularly from 1933 onwards.

The main characteristic of the concentration of power in his person is reflected in Salazar's formal accumulation of the most important ministerial portfolios, or at least the accumulation of those portfolios that Salazar himself considered most important. Salazar was Minister of Finance from 1928 to 1940, added to which he accumulated the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1936 to 1947, and also, in order to secure his control over the military, the Ministry of War, which he headed from 1936 to 1944.¹³

¹¹ See Hermínio Martins, *Classe, Status e Poder* (Lisbon: ICS, 1998), 105–12; António Costa Pinto and Pedro Tavares de Almeida, 'On Liberalism and Civil Society in Portugal', in Nancy Bermeo and P. Nord, eds., *Civil Society before Democracy* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 3–21.

¹² António Costa Pinto, 'O Império do Professor: Salazar e a elite ministerial do Estado Novo, 1933–1945', *Análise Social*, 157 (Winter 2001), 1055–76; see also Pedro Tavares de Almeida, António Costa Pinto and Nancy Bermeo, eds., *Who Governs Southern Europe? Regime Change and Ministerial Recruitment, 1870s–2000* (London: Frank Cass, forthcoming, 2002).

¹³ See Telmo Faria, *Debaixo de Fogo. Salazar e as Forças Armadas, 1933–41* (Lisbon: Cosmos, 2001).

The second trait of his style of government was the progressive diminution of the Council of Ministers, whose authority was undermined through Salazar's preference for meetings with individual ministers.¹⁴ From the mid-1930s, meetings of the Council of Ministers had become symbolic affairs, held only when there were major external or domestic policy issues that required demonstrations of a united front for the nation, or when there was a major reshuffle of ministerial portfolios. In some cases, these meetings were held in the presence of the president in order to emphasise their purely symbolic nature. Salazar was also to abandon the previously normal practice of collective dismissal: from 1936, he began to replace up to one-third of the Council of Ministers every three to four years.

Another characteristic of his relationship with his ministers was that of emphasising the 'technical' nature of their function. The truly political areas of the regime were not, in general, accorded ministerial rank, with such matters being dealt with by Salazar directly. This was the case, for example, with António Ferro's National Propaganda Secretariat (Secretariado de Propaganda Nacional – SPN), which was entirely dependent on the prime minister. Another such body was the Under-Secretariat of State for Corporations and Social Welfare (Sub-secretaria de Estado das Corporações e Previdência Social – SECPS), which was not elevated to ministerial status until 1945. Salazar's official position was that despite 'politics, as a human art [being] forever necessary as long as mankind exists; government . . . will increasingly be a scientific and technical function'.¹⁵

As a political regime, however, it is important to stress that the locus of power and of political decision-making was always situated with the dictator and with the government, as it was through these that the great majority of decisions passed. As we will see below, in several of the dictatorial regimes both the government and its administration were to some extent subjected to interference from a single party that had become an influential organisation. This did not happen in Portugal, where a centrally controlled public administration was instead the main instrument of dictatorial political power. When the Estado Novo created such organisations as the paramilitary youth movement, Mocidade Portuguesa (Portuguese Youth – MP), and the anti-Communist militia, the Legião Portuguesa (Portuguese Legion – LP), these were controlled by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of the Interior respectively, upon which they remained dependent for the duration of the regime. The same was also true of Salazar's political police, the Polícia de Vigilância e de Defesa do Estado (State Vigilance and Defence Police – PVDE), which was responsible to the Ministry of the Interior.¹⁶

¹⁴ Franco Nogueira, *Salazar*, Vol. II (Coimbra: Atlântida, n.d.), 186.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, *Salazar*, Vol. III (Coimbra, Atlântida, 1978), 290.

¹⁶ Simon Kuin, 'Mocidade Portuguesa nos Anos Trinta: a instauração de uma organização paramilitar de juventude', *Análise Social*, 122 (1993), 555–88; Anne Cova and António Costa Pinto, 'Femmes et Salazarisme', in Christine Fauré, ed., *Encyclopédie politique et historique des femmes* (Paris: PUF, 1997), 685–99; Luís Nuno Rodrigues, *A Legião Portuguesa: A Milícia do Estado Novo, 1936–1944*, (Lisbon: Estampa, 1996).

The ministerial elite

The main characteristics of the Estado Novo's governing elite was that they belonged to a small and exclusive political and bureaucratic class that almost completely dominated the senior ranks of the armed forces, the senior administration, and the universities – within which the legal profession was strongly represented.

Having been formed out of a military dictatorship, the most significant changes introduced by the Salazarist regime were concerned mainly with reducing the military component. While the military retained a significant presence within the ministerial elite, amounting to 28 per cent, mainly in the military and colonial portfolios, there was an unprecedented increase in the involvement of university professors, who came to hold around 40 per cent of all ministerial portfolios. A third group, that of the liberal professionals (e.g., lawyers, journalists, and so on), also maintained an important presence, with 20 per cent of the ministerial positions. It is also instructive to note the overwhelming presence of ministers who had had professional experience within public administration – almost 78 per cent of the ministers had previously been civil servants in one form or another. Ministerial turnover also declined significantly, from sixty-five ministers between 1926 and 1933 to only twenty-eight between 1933 and 1945.

The number of university professors and, specifically, of professors of law, obviously merits particular attention. It is important to note that this trait of the Salazar regime was not particular to the period being analysed here, but that it was a structural feature of the Estado Novo's political elite for most of the regime's existence.

The predominance of law graduates within the administrative and bureaucratic elite was a characteristic of continental Europe that had been inherited from the past.¹⁷ Although there are no statistics available for the 1930s, it is probable that law graduates accounted for the majority of senior public administrators during that time. The Portuguese case from the 1930s onwards presents us with a clear illustration of Ralf Dahrendorf's thesis that 'the true continental equivalent of Britain's public schools as a means to achieve power is the study of law'.¹⁸

The law faculties of both Coimbra and Lisbon universities were already the main educators of the Portuguese political and bureaucratic elite, and their equivalent status to the French *Grands Ecoles* was reinforced throughout this period.¹⁹ Although there were some continuities inherited from the liberal First Republic (1910–26), with Salazar a section of the law professors were transformed into a super-elite, spread throughout the leading sections of the economic, bureaucratic and political worlds. It is also important to emphasise that we are talking about an

¹⁷ See John A. Armstrong, *The European Administrative Elite* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973).

¹⁸ Cited in Martins, *Classe, Status e Poder*, 111.

¹⁹ For more about the *Grands Ecoles* and their role in the formation of the French elites see Ezra N. Suleiman, *Elites in French Society: The politics of survival* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).

extremely small and closed universe in which, during the 1930s, there were many university professors from outside the legal field who were also government ministers.

Very few of Salazar's ministers had been active in politics during the First Republic, and virtually 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. Whilst the dual affiliation of 'Catholic and monarchist' was shared by some members of the elite, the fundamental issue – particularly in relation to the military dictatorship – was the steady reduction within the ministerial elite of those who had been affiliated to the conservative–republican parties, and the corresponding increase in those whose roots were in the monarchist camp, and particularly those who had been influenced during their youth by the Action Française inspired royalist movement, Integralismo Lusitano (Lusitanian Integralism – IL). Those whose connections were with Catholicism also saw their numbers slightly increase. A large number had no previous affiliation, and only a small and infamous minority had come through Rolão Preto's fascist Nacional Sindicalismo (National Syndicalism – NS) following its prohibition in 1934.²⁰ The remainder may be identified by their connections to conservative ideas associated with the more pragmatic and inorganic 'interest'-based right wing.²¹

The use of the classifications 'military', 'politician' and 'technician' allows 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, particularly when such access is to the central location of political power.²²

Given the conjunction of a political elite with extremely strong technical competences, with some of the institutions, the armed forces for example, that contained some politicised officers, as well as participants in the regime's political organisations, in parliament and as militia leaders in the LP, Salazarism presents us with some complex boundary cases. Nevertheless, despite the Portuguese example confirming the tendency towards a greater presence of 'politicians' in the institutionalisation and consolidation phases of dictatorships, followed by a process of 'routinisation' that strengthened the technical–administrative elements, the governing elite during the 1930s was more one of 'technicians' (40 per cent) than of

²⁰ António Costa Pinto, *The Blue Shirts: Portuguese fascism and the New State* (New York: SSM–Columbia University Press, 2000).

²¹ Pedro Aires Oliveira, *Armindo Monteiro: Uma biografia política* (Lisbon, Bertrand, 2000), 56.

²² Harold D. Lasswell and Daniel Lerner, eds., *World Revolutionary Elites: Studies in Coercive Ideological Movements* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1965). In the classifications used here, the following distinctions are used: military – those ministers who, prior to their nomination, had spent most of their professional life as officers in the armed forces; politicians – those who were activists and leaders of official regime organisations or, previously, of other political organisations prior to taking office; technicians – those ministers who had previously been professional administrators or specialists, and who had not been active in the regime's political organisations or who had not been actively involved in politics prior to becoming government ministers.

'politicians' (31 per cent).²³ These results, when complemented with an analysis of other indicators of the ministerial elite's *cursus honorum*, clearly indicate the reduced presence of the truly political institutions of the regime as a central element for access to the government. It should be noted, however, that even the 'politicians' were tightly woven into the university elite.

Routes to Governmental power

What can a study of the political functions performed by the Salazarist ministerial elite prior to their appointment tell us about the main routes to power? Only two of the twenty-eight ministers during this period exercised any leadership functions within either the MP or the LP, neither of which were, in any event, political institutions with privileged access to the government. The same also applies to those who came from local administration; the four former Civil Governors or the six former municipal mayors. It should also be noted that some of these twelve were officers in the armed forces, and that the civil governorships that were occupied by military officers were a legacy of the military dictatorship that was not ended until the end of the 1930s.

Of greater significance was the number of deputies and those who had occupied leading positions within the UN, of which there were a total of ten. Whilst being a leader, or even a member, of the single party was never considered a pre-requisite for entry into the government, it was almost certainly perceived to be a good thing. We should also note that these ministers accumulated senior positions within the public administration and the university system. Participation in the single party was, therefore 'quite helpful [especially when] combined with other qualifications: [such as] a brilliant academic or civil service career, and identification with other groups . . . such as religio-political interest groups'.²⁴

We should also note that very quickly progression via a state under-secretariat and secretariat came to be considered a privileged path for future ministers and that this was a route to office followed by a sizeable proportion of the ministerial elite of this time. Similarly, whilst the coalition that initially overthrew the liberal republic included a significant number of different 'political families', some of which were excluded from the construction of Salazarism, it remains difficult, if we are to attribute to them the habitual minimalist structural connotations, to consider them as actors in the dictatorship's decision-making process. Using this minimal definition we can say that of the formal and informal political pressure groups within the dictatorship that were recognised as 'tendencies', two important and often inter-linked 'families' emerged: the Catholics and the monarchists.²⁵ The role of these

²³ Paul Lewis reaches a similar conclusion for the period 1932–47. See 'Salazar's Ministerial Elite, 1932–1968', *Journal of Politics*, 40 (August 1978), 622–47.

²⁴ Juan J. Linz, 'An Authoritarian Regime: Spain', in Stanley G. Payne, ed., *Politics and Society in Twentieth Century Spain* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1976), 184.

²⁵ Manuel Braga da Cruz, *Monárquicos e Republicanos sob o Estado Novo* (Lisbon: Dom Quixote, 1987).

two 'families' in the composition of the Portuguese governmental elite is much less clear than was the case in Spain, however, where Franco was much better conditioned than Salazar to think in terms of the balance between these 'families' within the regime.

Portugal's single party, being kept organisationally weak and dependent, was never an important element in either the political decision-making process or in the selection of the ministerial elite. Several organisations, such as the militia (LP), the youth organisation (MP) and the political police (PVDE), were kept entirely dependent on the ministers. The National Propaganda Secretariat (SPN) 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 Federação Nacional de Alegria no Trabalho (National Federation for Happiness at Work – FNAT), a modest Portuguese version of Mussolini's Dopolavoro and Hitler's Deutsche Arbeitsfront (DAF), was dependent upon the Under-Secretary of State for Corporations.²⁶ The party's main function was to select the local and the parliamentary elites, and it remained small and devoid of mobilisational organisations.²⁷

In sum, not only was there no tension between Salazar's UN and the state, but neither the dictatorial system nor the political decision-making and implementation processes were ever threatened by the existence of autonomous political institutions directly subordinated to the dictator.

Francoism, 1939–45

Whilst the two Iberian dictatorships eventually converged as forms of authoritarianism throughout their long duration, their markedly different origins were evident during the period being studied.²⁸

The main characteristic of Francoism was its radical break with the Second Republic. The product of a protracted and bloody civil war in which there were a greater number of political purges and executions than during the overthrow of any other democratic regimes following the First World War, Francoism as a political system rejected the fundamentals of the liberal legacy and was inspired by fascism to a much greater degree than was Salazarism.²⁹ General Francisco Franco was creating

²⁶ José Carlos Valente, *Estado Novo e Alegria no Trabalho: Uma História Política da FNAT (1935–1958)* (Lisbon: Colibri, 1999).

²⁷ See the articles by Rita Carvalho, Tiago Fernandes and J. M. Tavares Castilho in *Penélope*, 24 (October 2001), 7–84.

²⁸ See Stanley G. Payne, *The Franco Regime, 1936–1975* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987); Javier Tusell, *La Dictadura de Franco* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1988); Manuel Pérez Ledesma, 'Una Ditadura 'Por la Gracia de Dios'', *História Social*, 20 (Otoño 1994), 73–193; José Luis García Delgado, ed., *Franquismo: El juicio de la historia* (Madrid: Ediciones Temas de Hoy, 2000).

²⁹ The debate 'fascism–authoritarianism' has, during the past decade, lost its ideological content in both Portugal and in Spain. Curiously, however, it was recently raised once again in an article that, unfortunately, mixed good analyses of conservative interpretations that were clearly sympathetic to the interwar Iberian and Latin American dictatorships with erroneous references to works by Juan J. Linz, Phillippe C. Schmitter and others. See Ido Oren, 'Uncritical Portrayals of Fascist Italy and of Iberic-Latin

the embryo of his future political system within those areas that had been occupied by his Nationalists, a system that was marked by a reactionary and militaristic coalition of Catholics, monarchists and fascists.³⁰ It is also true that during the early years, the construction of Franco's regime was greatly influenced by developments in the Second World War.

In order to create his single party, the Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional-Sindicalista (FET-JONS), which was based around the small Spanish fascist movement, Franco forced the fascist Falange's integration with the Catholics and the monarchists, setting in motion his ambition to create a regime that was closer to fascism from the very beginning.³¹ During the civil war, the Falange lent Franco the support of their political militants and their ideology as well as their modest fascist militia in the hope that their imposed 'unification' would then ensure for them 'a genuinely fascist role in the implementation of a mobilised society'.³² The fascists, however, saw their position weaken as a result of their inclusion into a single party that also incorporated several other 'political families'. The Francoist single party was a heterogeneous union that maintained several identities, particularly at the intermediate levels.³³ 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 the Portuguese Estado Novo, even though the tentative outlines of its proposed totalitarianism were to be rapidly eliminated as the defeat of 'German Europe' became more predictable.

In terms of legitimacy, Francoism was much closer to the charismatic model, even although it included a strong religious aspect that was practically absent in the Italian example, and completely non-existent in Hitler's Germany. Franco's concessions to Spain's liberal past were very few and far between, and the dictator did not have to deal with either a president or a king, subordinate or not, and nor did he have to pervert a parliament, as had both Salazar and Mussolini. As Stanley Payne noted, in 1939 the Spanish dictator 'was the European ruler who, both formally and theoretically, retained the most absolute and uncontrolled power'.³⁴

Some of Franco's personal characteristics and his relationship with the institutions that were the bases of his victory were to influence the nature of the new political

Dictatorships in American Political Science', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 42, 1 (January 2000), 87–118.

³⁰ For more on this early period see Antonio Cazorla Sánchez, *Las Políticas de la Victoria: La consolidación del Nuevo Estado franquista (1938–1953)* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2000).

³¹ For more on the Falange see Stanley G. Payne, *Fascism in Spain, 1923–1977* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000).

³² Ricardo Chueca, *El Fascismo en los comienzos del régimen de Franco: Un estudio sobre la FET-JONS* (Madrid: CIS, 1983), 401.

³³ Juan J. Linz, 'From Falange to Movimiento-Organización: The Spanish Single Party and the Franco Regime, 1936–1968', in Huntington and Moore, *Authoritarian Politics*, 128–203. For an illustration of this diversity see Glicerio Sánchez Recio, *Los Quadros Políticos Intermedios del Régimen Franquista, 1936–1959* (Alicante: Instituto de Cultura 'Juan Gil-Albert', 1996). For more on the local level, see Angela Cenaro Lagunas, *Cruzados y Camisas Azules: Los orígenes del franquismo en Aragón, 1936–1945* (Zaragoza: Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza, 1997).

³⁴ Payne, *Fascism in Spain*, 487.

system. Franco was an average general with very few political ideas beyond the values of order, anti-communism, traditionalist Catholicism and an obsession with the 'liberal-Masonic conspiracy'.³⁵ Franco's relationship with the FET-JONS was also more utilitarian than ideological – he was not the original party leader and neither was the party to be a determining factor in his taking 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 powers during the Second World War, his intellectual background and his professional career make it difficult to position him as a fascist leader once he was in power.

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

Franco's Ministerial Elite, 1939–45

As a dictator, Franco's managerial style differed from that of Salazar in that he was less concerned with the minutiae of daily government.³⁶ A military officer who had no desire to become bogged down in the day-to-day affairs of government, Franco concentrated his attentions on the armed forces, domestic security and foreign policy. In the remaining areas of government, the dictator practised 'a transfer of power to his ministers', although they remained subordinate to him.³⁷ With respect to the more technical areas of governance, Franco's interventions were even fewer, particularly following the consolidation of the regime, as he adopted the more pragmatic attitude of result management.³⁸

Members of Franco's ministerial elite were relatively young in political terms, and although a substantial number of them had been members of conservative and fascist organisations during the Second Republic, the new regime's break from its predecessor was almost total.³⁹ The socioprofessional status of Franco's ministers also points towards a significant degree of social exclusiveness and the near hegemony of civil servants. There is also an important predomination of legal professionals,

³⁵ Paul Preston, *Franco: A biography* (London: HarperCollins, 1993); Juan Pablo Fusi, *Franco: A biography* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1987).

³⁶ Amando de Miguel, *Sociología del Franquismo: Análisis ideológica de los Ministros del Régimen* (Barcelona: Editorial Euros, 1975); Francisco Campuzano, *L'Élite Franquiste et la Sortie de la Dictature* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997); Mariano Baena del Alcázar, *Elites y Conjuntos de Poder en España (1939–1992): Un estudio cuantitativo sobre Parlamento, Gobierno y Administración y gran empresa* (Madrid: Tecnos, 1999).

³⁷ Carlos R. Alba, 'The Organization of Authoritarian Leadership: Franco Spain', in Richard Rose and Ezra N. Suleiman, eds., *President and Prime Ministers* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 1980), 267.

³⁸ Fusi, *Franco*, 43–4.

³⁹ C. Viver Pi-Sunyer, *El Personal Político de Franco (1936–1945): Contribución empírica a una teoría del régimen franquista* (Barcelona: Editorial Vicens-Vives, 1978), 191.

making up 54 per cent of the total, with the university elite also being present in significant numbers, although not on the same scale as in Portugal.⁴⁰ Another divergence from the Portuguese dictatorship can be found in relation to ministers who were officers in the armed forces. Whilst the military presence within the Portuguese regime had not completely disappeared with the consolidation of Salazarism, where it continued within institutions such as the Censor, the political police and the militia, the Spanish regime continued to count on a large number of military officers, both in the single party and in the governing elite, where they occupied almost 43 per cent of all ministries.⁴¹

By classifying Franco's ministers as 'politicians', 'technicians' and 'military' we are presented with a significant swing towards the 'politicians', who accounted for more than 40 per cent of all ministers during this period, with the remainder fairly evenly split between 'technicians' and 'military'.⁴² This preponderance of 'politicians' suggests that the single party had an important presence within the political system and, in particular, in the composition of the ministerial elite.

Paths to government

The elevation of the secretary of FET-JONS to ministerial rank was an immediate indication that this represented a formal means of access to the government: the co-option of FET-JON's leaders into the ministerial and state elite was significant. During the period in question, FET-JONS was the principal recruiting ground for the government. According to one of the most exhaustive studies of this theme, 'before occupying a ministerial post during the first decade of the Franco regime, [the candidate] had occupied six positions within FET'.⁴³ The second main means of access, and the only route that did not necessitate 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'.⁴⁴

However, it is possible to detect the existence of some 'political families' (Falangists, Catholics and monarchists) within the single party. Until 1944, the Falange, with 66 per cent of the leadership positions under their control, dominated the party. The Catholics were the second largest 'family', followed by the military.⁴⁵ During this period, the number of leaders whose origins were within the Falange or the military outnumbered those of the Catholics.⁴⁶

Despite being subordinate, FET-JONS was initially integrated into certain administrative bodies within the state apparatus, for example, by uniting the position

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 117.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁴² Paul H. Lewis, 'The Spanish Ministerial Elite, 1938–1969', *Comparative Politics*, 5, 1 (1972), 95.

⁴³ Pi-Sunyer, *El Personal Político*, 193.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 197.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 163–4.

⁴⁶ Miguel Jerez Mir, *Elites Políticas y Centros de Extracción en España, 1938–1957* (Madrid: CIS, 1982), 409.

of civil governor with that of a party regional secretary. One important struggle that was immediately lost was the attempt to retain an independent militia, which, as in Portugal, was placed under military control. The party did, however, control a considerable collection of ancillary organisations, such as the Frente de Juventudes (Youth Front), the Sindicato Español Universitario (Spanish University Syndicate), the Sección Feminina (Female Section), the Organización Sindical (Syndical Organisation) and the Spanish equivalent of the Italian Dopolavoro, the Organización Sindical de la Educación y Descanso (Education and Recreation Syndical Organisation). More importantly, the party retained responsibility for propaganda within the regime.⁴⁷ The intertwining of the party with the state notwithstanding, the coincidence of ministerial charges with the same sector within the party, and some of the resultant tensions, are worthy of more attention.

The party's national education delegate was responsible for the various youth organisations, and as the occupant of this post was also always the Minister of Education, this minister in effect, led these organisations.⁴⁸ Propaganda, which in 1938 was the responsibility of an under-secretary of state within the 'National' government, was transferred to the single party until 1945, when it became a government responsibility once more. During Serrano Suñer's short spell as the leading party notable, he was also the party's propaganda delegate, and when he was appointed Interior Minister he took the party's propaganda specialists with him, further blurring the boundaries and increasing the confusion as to where the party ended and the state began.⁴⁹ The syndical apparatus was, without doubt, 'an area of power reserved to the Falangists', but they were regulated by the Ministry of Labour. It was in this area that some of the Falangists experimented with the language of social demagoguery in a way that created tensions with the government and which were to lead to some dismissals.⁵⁰

Whilst never promoting the conquest of the State, '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.⁵¹ Despite FET-JONS's origins in the enforced unification of several heterogeneous movements, the Falange managed to exert their supremacy, and ensured their position as the dominant force within the new Francoist political elite. Tensions between the party and the state were infrequent and largely episodic. The government's domination was almost total, and the position of the party and of its Falangist core rapidly diminished after 1945.

⁴⁷ Juan Sáez Marin, *El Frente de Juventudes: Política de juventud en la España de la posguerra (1937–1960)* (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno, 1988); Miguel A. Ruiz Carnicer, *El Sindicato Español Universitario (SEU), 1939–1965. La socialización política de la juventud universitaria en el franquismo* (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1996); Francisco Sevillano Calero, *Propaganda y Medios de Comunicación en el Franquismo, 1936–1951* (Alicante: Publicaciones de la Universidad de Alicante, 1998).

⁴⁸ Chueca, *El Fascismo*, 401.

⁴⁹ Cazorla Sánchez, *Las Políticas*, 40; Chueca, *El Fascismo*, 287–8.

⁵⁰ Cazorla Sánchez, *Las Políticas*, 112–26; Chueca, *El Fascismo*, 341–8. See also Sebastian Balfour, 'From Warriors to Functionaries: The Falangist Syndical Elite, 1939–1976', in Frances Lannon and Paul Preston, eds., *Elites and Power in Twentieth-Century Spain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 229–48.

⁵¹ Viver Pi-Sunyer, *El Personal Político*, 202.

Mussolini and Italian Fascism

The Italian case occupies an intermediate position in the context of this present study.⁵² Whilst Mussolini took power with the assistance of the National Fascist Party (Partito Nazionale Fascista – PNF), the subsequent dismantling of the democratic regime was slow, and the reduced social and political influence of the party persuaded Mussolini to accept compromises with the king, the armed forces and other institutions, such as the Catholic Church. The consolidation of the dictatorship had to involve the imposition of a greater degree of discipline within the party, whose actions during the initial phase of Mussolini's regime had undermined the compromises that were essential for its institutionalisation, and which had ensured that the tripartite party–dictator–state system remained tense.⁵³ Nevertheless, unlike Spain, where power was taken by a coalition of political forces, the Italian case illustrates the taking of power by a 'united political elite' whose base was a fascist party that was transformed into the primary motor for the institutionalisation of the dictatorship and, from the 1930s, into the main instrument for the 'totalisation' of power.⁵⁴

Mussolini did, at times, use the party to abandon his concessions to bureaucratic–legal legitimacy, although he lacked the courage and the opportunity to eliminate the 'duarchy' that he had inherited: he never abolished the monarchy.⁵⁵ When what remained of the liberal legacy was eliminated during the latter half of the 1930s, and when under Starace the PNF proposed the conquest of civil society, Mussolini's attempts to enhance his personal and charismatic authority through the party, State and cultural machines, culminated in the creation of the 'cult of *Il Duce*'.⁵⁶ This was the culmination of a movement that several historians of fascism have suggested as signalling the passage from an 'authoritarian' to a 'totalitarian' fascism, of which tendencies of both had co-existed during the consolidation of Mussolini's dictatorship.⁵⁷

⁵² The best and most recent synthesis and analysis of the composition of the Fascist national elite is Emilio Gentile's, *Fascismo e Antifascismo. I partiti italiani fra le due guerre* (Florence: Le Monnier, 2000). See also Paolo Farneti, *La Classe Politica Italiana dal Liberalismo alla Democrazia* (Genoa: ECIG, 1989) 81–109.

⁵³ Emilio Gentile, *La Via Italiana al Totalitarismo. Il partito e lo Stato nel regime fascista* (Rome: La Nuova Italia Scientifica, 1995).

⁵⁴ For more on the role of the 'united political elites' during the crises and collapse of democracy, see Mattei Dogan and John Higley, eds., *Elites, Crises and the Origins of Regimes* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 18.

⁵⁵ Pierre Milza, *Mussolini* (Paris: Fayard, 1999).

⁵⁶ Emilio Gentile, *The Sacralization of Politics in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

⁵⁷ Gentile, *La Via Italiana*, 136–40. Gentile, following Giovanni Sartori, prefers to refer to the 'totalitarian experience', which he defines as 'an experiment in political domination undertaken by a revolutionary movement . . . that aspires toward a monopoly of power and that . . . constructs a new state based on a single party-regime, with the chief objective of conquering society'. See 'Fascism and the Italian Road to Totalitarianism', paper presented to the 19th International Congress of Historical Sciences, Oslo, 6–13 August 2000, 3. See also Giovanni Sartori, 'Totalitarianism: Model Mania and Learning from Error', *Theoretical Politics*, 5 (1993), 5–22, and Gentile, 'The Sacralization of Politics: Definitions,

The dictator progressively abolished the formal limits to his power. 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 study 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.'⁵⁸

If the government had ceased to be a collegiate body before Il Duce's all powerful secretariat, the Grand Council – whilst subordinate to the dictator – was transformed into the main focus of union from above between the party and the State.⁵⁹ The Secretary of the PNF, who was also the Secretary of the Grand Council, was to become the second most important figure of Italian Fascism. The abolition of the Chamber of Deputies, the last vestige of liberal representation, led to the creation of the Fascist and Corporate Chamber (Camera dei Fasci e delle Corporazioni) of which the leaders of PNF became automatic members.⁶⁰

The Fascist ministerial elite

The ministerial elite of consolidated Fascism was overwhelmingly 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. 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'.⁶¹ Ministers, under-secretaries, and presidents of both Parliament and Senate: almost all occupants of these positions came from this inner circle. Before they became members of government, the main emblematic figures of Italian Fascism, men such as Dino Grandi, Italo Balbo and Giuseppe Bottai who were PNF *ras* (local bosses) in Bologna, Ferrara and Rome respectively, had all participated in the *squadristi*-led violence of the early 1920s.⁶² Of the few, mainly conservative and monarchist, officers of the armed forces who rose to ministerial rank during Fascism, many of these followed a path similar to that of Emilio de

Interpretations and Reflections on the Question of Secular Religion and Totalitarianism', *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 1, 1 (Summer 2000), 18–55.

⁵⁸ Adrian Lyttelton, 'La Dittatura fascista', in Giovanni Sabbatucci and Vittorio Vidotto, eds., *Storia D'Italia*, Vol. 4, *Guerra e Fascismo, 1914–1943* (Bari: Laterza, 1998), 174; H. Arthur Steiner, *Government in Fascist Italy* (New York and London: MacGraw-Hill, 1938), 65.

⁵⁹ The frequency of Grand Council meetings diminished throughout the 1930s. No meeting of this body was called to approve Italy's declaration of war. *Ibid.*, 174.

⁶⁰ Gentile, *La Via Italiana*, 167, 186.

⁶¹ Milza, *Mussolini*, 521.

⁶² Paolo Nello, *Dino Grandi: La Formazione di un Leader Fascista* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1987); Claudio G. Segre, *Italo Balbo: a Fascist Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Paul Corner, *Fascism in Ferrara* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974).

Bono, who joined the PNF in 1922 and then served in the Fascist militia before achieving a ministerial post.

Besides membership of the Grand Council as a route to ministerial office, other main entry points to a ministerial position until the 1930s were either through the ranks of the PNF or through the provincial federations in which the PNF occupied a dominant position. The corporatist apparatus was another source for recruiting the ministerial elite, and one that came to dominate during the second half of the 1930s: for example, of the twenty-eight presidents of Fascist syndical federations, fourteen were to become under-secretaries of state or ministers.⁶³ The least significant recruiting ground was the civil service, and the very few who came by this route still had to be vetted by the various Fascist organisations that were involved in public administration.

Reshuffling the ministerial elite was common practice; it was rare for any minister to serve more than three years, and there were very few who, like Giuseppe Bottai, who were moved from one ministry to another.⁶⁴ Mussolini tended to take over ministries himself, and at times was responsible for up to six portfolios.⁶⁵ The Duce 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 the state at the same time as he allowed it a substantial degree of latitude in the framing of civil society. Nevertheless, the party-state 'tensions', whether latent or in the open, were almost always resolved in favour of the state, especially within the local administrations.⁶⁶

The view that claims that ministers 'were only technical collaborators with the head of government' was progressively promoted, although this does not mean that an exclusively bureaucratic career had been somehow transformed into a preferential route to ministerial office.⁶⁷ As noted by Emilio Gentile, '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'.⁶⁸ The Fascist party and its parastatal organisations were to remain determining factors in accessing a ministerial career, even when the power of the ministries was limited by the dictator and the single party. The promotion of the secretary of the PNF to the position of Minister without Portfolio in 1937 was a potent symbol of the party's importance.⁶⁹

The relationship between the PNF and its leader passed through several phases after the 1922 March on Rome. During the first years, Mussolini was afraid that the

⁶³ Adrian Lyttelton, 'La Dittatura fascista', 210.

⁶⁴ Milza, *Mussolini*, 528.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 738.

⁶⁶ For example, of the 115 prefects nominated by Mussolini between 1922 and 1929, only twenty-nine came from within the party. The remaining eighty-six were professional administrators. See Emilio Gentile, *La Via Italiana*, 173.

⁶⁷ Sergio Panunzio: cf. Renzo de Felice, *Mussolini il Duce*, II, *Lo Stato Totalitario, 1936-1940* (Turin: Einaudi, 1981), 59.

⁶⁸ Gentile, *Fascismo e Antifascismo*, 240.

⁶⁹ Steiner, *Government in Fascist Italy*, 65.

radicalism and indiscipline of the party 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.⁷⁰ Throughout the 1930s, however, the PNF, which was by then under Starace's leadership and which had been imbued with a structure that was more 'disciplined [both] horizontally and vertically', became a powerful machine used both to control civil society and to promote the ideological socialisation of the Il Duce leadership cult.⁷¹

Mussolini was the arbitrator of an often unstable equilibrium between the party, the government and the administration, and reserved all political decision-making power to himself whilst also subordinating both the party and the governmental elite to his sole authority. From this perspective, the Italian dictator approximates to the model of the 'strong dictator' who accumulates a large proportion of the political decision-making power to their own person. Mussolini's cabinet was undoubtedly devalued in relation to the Grand Council; however, the relationship between Mussolini (who, as we have seen above, often took direct responsibility for up to six ministries) and his ministers was a determining element of political decision-making.

Despite having been transformed into a heavy – and sometimes clientelistic – machine, the PNF elite always included a large number of fascists (80 per cent of the total) who had joined the movement before the March on Rome.⁷² 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 were never independent of the state, although several of the mass organisations, particularly those involving youth and women and those concerned with the working classes, were subjected to many different transfers.

In this way the PNF gathered control of the popular mass organisations to itself, even although these organisations were initially dependent on the ministries. The Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro (OND), a cultural organisation within the Economics Ministry, was the object of some rivalry between the Ministry of Corporations and the PNF before responsibility for it was finally placed with the latter in 1927, when it was the largest mass organisation within the regime.⁷³ A similar event was to take place in relation to the youth organisations. Initially voluntary organisations within the PNF, in 1929 responsibility for them was transferred to the Ministry of Education. 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 Gioventù Italiana del Littorio. The monopoly over the political socialisation 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

⁷⁰ Gentile, *La Via Italiana*, 168–98.

⁷¹ Paul Brooker, *The Faces of Fraternalism. Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and Imperial Japan* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 155.

⁷² Gentile, *La Via Italiana*, 183.

⁷³ Victoria De Grazia, *The Culture of Consent. Mass organisation of Leisure in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 33–59.

organisations alternately tolerated and dissolved.⁷⁴ The PNF was also involved in the trade unions (syndicates). During the initial period the PNF had its own syndicates over which, since the interference of party organisations was recognised by the corporatist apparatus, it maintained indirect control.⁷⁵ The complementary nature of the relationship between the state and the party was significant within the womens' organisations, from the Fasci Femminile to the Massaie Rurali, in which, and after many hesitations, the party invested heavily throughout the 1930s.⁷⁶

Despite the lack of success of its attempts to 'fascistise' 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.⁷⁷ Several other examples can be given that demonstrate the party's increasing influence within the state and of the privileges it could extend to its professional members. Newly appointed judges, whether members of the PNF or not, were obliged to attend courses on 'fascist culture' within the party's political education centres before they could take up their posts. Trainee lawyers were allowed a reduction of their training period on condition that they joined the PNF before they qualified.⁷⁸

In Italian Fascism, the locus of political decision-making power began to diverge from the classical dictator–government binomial as a result of the existence of the Grand Council. The single party was transformed into the only route into government, and controlled civil society through its parallel political organisation which was at the service of the dictator and his regime.

Hitler and German National Socialism

In the perspective of the factors under examination, it is clear that the German National Socialist dictatorship was positioned at the other extreme of the spectrum. This is so for two main reasons: first, the Nazi dictatorship was much closer than the others to the model of charismatic leadership associated with fascist dictatorships; and second, the Nazi party (Nazionalsozial Deutsche Arbeiterpartei – NSDAP) and

⁷⁴ Tracy H. Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight. Political Socialization of Youth in Fascist Italy, 1922–1943* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1985).

⁷⁵ For examples of the tensions between Rossoni, Cofindustria, Mussolini and the state apparatus, see David D. Roberts, *The Syndicalist Tradition and Italian Fascism* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 274–306, and Franklin Hugh Adler, *Italian Industrialists from Liberalism to Fascism. The Political Development of the Industrial Bourgeoisie, 1906–1934* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 310–43.

⁷⁶ Victoria De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women: Italy, 1922–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 234–71.

⁷⁷ Guido Melis, 'La Burocrazia', in A. del Boca, M. Legnani and M. G. Rossi, eds., *Il Regime Fascista* (Bari: Laterza, 1995), 264. See also Mariuccia Salvati, *Il Regime e gli Impiegati. La nazionalizzazione piccolo-borghese nel ventennio fascista* (Bari: Laterza, 1992).

⁷⁸ Paolo Pombeni, *Demagogia e Tirannide. Uno Studio sulla forma-partito del fascismo* (Bologna, Il Mulino, 1984), 256.

its militias exercised a greater influence over both the political system and civil society. Both factors make it much more difficult to identify the location of political decision-making within Nazism.

The most interesting interpretation of the Nazi political system is that which defines it as a 'polyocracy' – a political system that constructed several decision-making centres, all of which were individually mediated by Hitler. Such a system has many tensions – for example, between the party and its bureaucratic apparatus and between the local and central administrations.⁷⁹ This investigation has varied some of the interpretations that have bequeathed us an image of compulsory coherence where such compulsion was, in fact, relatively rare.⁸⁰ It is also quite clear that the war acted as a catalyst, driving events that under different circumstances would probably have followed another 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.⁸¹ The Nazi leader was at the head of the most powerful fascist party, and although Hitler had to overcome some opposition from elements within the NSDAP's militia, the SA (Sturm Abteilungen – Storm Troopers), in the immediate aftermath of his rise to power, it was this that contributed towards the weakening of the authoritarian state's decision-making structure, and which led to Hitler's rise to absolute power at the top of a system in which the 'coexistence [of] and conflict [between] unco-ordinated authorities very often undermin[ed] solidarity and uniformity in the exercise of power'.⁸² Whether as part of a deliberate strategy or merely as a consequence of Hitler's leadership personality, this also provoked a multiplicity of *ad hoc* decisions and ensured that there would be no real or formal limits to his authority.⁸³ Despite this concentration of power, Hitler's political and ideological beliefs led him to immerse himself in such matters as the military and strategic defence 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 dictatorship analysed here, the Nazi cabinet was quickly transformed into a bureaucratic body that was totally subservient to Hitler. Even in this subservient condition, the cabinet ceased to exist as a collegiate body as political

⁷⁹ As defined in works by Ernst Fraenkel, Franz Neumann, Martin Broszat, Hans Mommsen and Norbert Frei. See Ernst Fraenkel, *The Dual State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1942); Franz Neumann, *Behemoth. The Structure and Practice of National Socialism, 1933–1944* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1942); Martin Broszat, *The Hitler State. The foundation and development of the internal structure of the Third Reich* (London: Longman, 1981); Hans Mommsen, *From Weimar to Auschwitz* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); Norbert Frei, *L'État Hitlérien et la Société Allemande, 1933–1945* (Paris, Seuil, 1994).

⁸⁰ See, for example, Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (New York: Praeger, 1956).

⁸¹ Ian Kershaw, *Hitler*, Vol. 1, 1889–1936: *Hubris*, Vol. 2, 1936–1945: *Nemesis* (London: Allen Lane, 1998, 2000).

⁸² Broszat, *Hitler State*, 351.

⁸³ Mommsen, *Weimar to Auschwitz*, 163–88; Philippe Burrin, *Fascisme, nazisme, autoritarisme* (Paris: Seuil, 2000), 97–115.

power within the Nazi state was simultaneously concentrated in Hitler and dispersed throughout the various Nazi institutions – factors that severely undermined 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.⁸⁴ In 1937, with Hans Heinrich Lammers as head of the Reich Chancellery, ministerial access to Hitler became more difficult as he deliberately reduced the cabinet's status.⁸⁵ At the same time, the Office of the Deputy Führer, headed first by Rudolf Hess and later by Martin Borman, and which represented the NSDAP, moved closer to Hitler.⁸⁶ Even though 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 insofar as it represented the diminution of the government.

The tensions created by the legality of the NSDAP's rise to power and the rapid development of Hitler's charismatic leadership were resolved by the publication of a series of decrees that conveyed total power to him, obliging the ministers to answer only to the dictator.⁸⁷ The NSDAP, even whilst experiencing internal crises, set about assuming control of the existing State apparatus and creating a parallel structure, in the process of which they multiplied and upset the spheres of decision-making power in several areas of national and regional authority.⁸⁸

The existence of a large administration of NSDAP functionaries was symbolic of a revolutionary strategy taking precedence over 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.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, the increasing legislative confusion brought about by the desire to interpret the leader's will represents the most extreme subversion of the traditional methods of political decision-making of the four dictatorships being studied. The NSDAP, whilst not achieving its ambition to secure political and ideological control of the administration, did obtain for itself a much stronger position vis-à-vis the government.⁹⁰ Not only did Bormann's Office of the Deputy Führer become the most important channel to Hitler, but it also obtained 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.

⁸⁴ Broszat, *Hitler State*, 280.

⁸⁵ Edward N. Peterson, *The Limits of Hitler's Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 26–33.

⁸⁶ Dietrich Orlow, *The History of the Nazi Party: 1933–1945* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973).

⁸⁷ Broszat, *Hitler State*, 57–95.

⁸⁸ Jane Caplan, *Government Without Administration. State and Civil Service in Weimar and Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

⁸⁹ Michael H. Kater, *The Nazi Party. A Social Profile of Member and Leaders, 1919–1945* (Cambridge: MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 238.

⁹⁰ Caplan, *Government without Administration*, 131–88.

Hitler's ministers

The Nazi ministerial elite clearly represented a break with the past. Almost 85 per cent of the Nazi regime's ministers were new, with the remainder having been appointed by Von Papen and Schleicher only a few months before the Nazis took office.⁹¹ This in no way means that they had not been politically active during the Weimar Republic, as 55 per cent of Hitler's ministers had been political functionaries within the NSDAP, and 50 per cent of those had been deputies in the Reichstag.⁹²

Politically, the origins of the Nazi regime's ministers were probably the most homogeneous of the four dictatorships being studied. If we disregard the initial coalition period, 'active, official and publicised membership of the Nazi party became a condition *sine qua non*' for access to ministerial office.⁹³ More than this, however, 63 per cent of Hitler's ministers were already members or leaders of the NSDAP or its allies within the *Völkische bloc*.⁹⁴ Only 24 per cent had no party affiliation prior to 1933.

The crises that hit the Weimar Republic during its final years were marked by the return of some members of the conservative elites whom the NSDAP was able, at least in part, to attract. However, whilst many of this 'Bismarkian' group were to remain in 'subordinate' positions, they nonetheless constituted 27.3 per cent of the total ministerial elite, and were almost all were military officers.⁹⁵ In terms of social class, the remaining 73 per cent were of middle-class origin. An important detail is expressed in the fact that 48.5 per cent of these had previously been civil servants, demonstrating the influence of the bureaucracy in a body that, we should remember, had itself been turned into a bureaucratic institution. We should note, however, that this percentage is smaller than in either the Portuguese, Spanish or Italian dictatorships, and also that only 70 per cent of the Nazi ministerial elite – including the military officers – had university degrees, a figure that is also smaller than in the other dictatorships.

Although the ministerial elite came from the NSDAP, there were significant differences in the paths followed. Once nominated, many of the ministers were to create tensions between themselves and the party's institutions, increasing feelings of mutual mistrust either as a result of party interference in the ministries, or because of some of the ministers had only recently joined the party, giving the impression that they had done so for opportunistic reasons. Hans Heinrich Lammers, who was responsible for co-ordinating the ministries, was viewed with mistrust, despite his being an important role within the state. The Minister of Agriculture, Walther

⁹¹ Maxwell E. Knight, *The German Executive, 1890–1933* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1971), 12.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 15.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 33. See also Ronald Smelser and Rainer Zitelmann, *The Nazi Elite* (London: Macmillan, 1994).

Darré, was also a latecomer to the party, although he was more 'ideological',⁹⁶ whereas Wilhelm Frick, for example, was an early member of the party. However, such distinctions were to become increasingly irrelevant as such criteria were often no more than 'positional' – that is, they were used in defence of ministerial authority before agencies that were either autonomous or linked to party institutions.

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 parastatal structures with parallel powers. Whilst the ministerial elite was more politically homogeneous, the initial pressure from several Nazi ministers to create a centralised dictatorship based on the control of the administration led to its swift dissolution under pressure from the party, the Schutz Staffen (SS) and other parallel institutions – very often with Hitler's support. Within National Socialism, according to M. Broszat, three distinct centres of power began to emerge within a structure that was in a tense and unstable balance: 'the single party monopoly, the centralised governmental dictatorship and the absolutism of the Führer . . . undermin[ed] the unity of the government and the monopoly of government by the Reich cabinet'.⁹⁷ Special authorities, which were under Hitler's direct control, soon developed alongside the ministries at the same time as several political and police organisations, some of which were controlled by the NSDAP and others by the SS, began to act independently of the government.

Amongst the former were organisations such as the 'German Road System', the 'Labour Service' and others, of which the most important were either more overtly political or repressive. The Hitler Youth, which remained under the party's control, was transformed into a Reich authority that was completely 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.⁹⁸ 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, while the latter was transformed into an institution that was at least formally dependent on the Party and on the state, but 'which had detached itself from both and had become independent'.⁹⁹ Frick's Interior Ministry was thus emasculated and denied any practical authority over the police, just as the position of the Minister of Labour was also partially weakened with the independence of the DAF.¹⁰⁰ If the Nazification of the administration was at times more superficial than real, the creation of those organisations that were viewed as parallel administrations represent the most extreme examples of the subversion of an authoritarian concept of

⁹⁶ Anna Bramwell, *Blood and Soil. Walther Darré and Hitler's Green Party* (Bourne End: Kensal Press, 1985).

⁹⁷ Broszat, *Hitler State*, 262, 264.

⁹⁸ For more on the relationship between the NSDAP, Hitler and the military elite see Klaus-Jürgen Müller, *The army, politics and society in Germany, 1933–45* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 16–53.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 272.

¹⁰⁰ Peterson, *Limits of Hitler's Power*, 35–7, 77; Frei, *L'Etat Hitlérien*, 171.

government and state within the collection of dictatorships that have been associated with fascism.¹⁰¹

The German case is situated at the opposite end of the spectrum in terms of both the subordination of the ministerial elite and the means of access to a career that was almost exclusively determined by one's position as a leader of the NSDAP. The Nazi party was transformed into a very complex organisation, and many studies have pointed out that the leaders of the party 'became stuck midway through their journey toward the creation of a truly innovative, even revolutionary elite'.¹⁰² Whilst the formal rigidity of many of the typologies that label National Socialism as an example of where 'the party commands the state' cannot be verified, it was in Nazi Germany that the single party not only obtained the greatest autonomy, but it was also the leading force in the drive to reduce the importance of the governmental and administrative elites and in the progressive and unstable 'duality' of political power.

Conclusions

In the transitions to authoritarianism that occurred during the 1920s and 1930s, there are no strict correlations existing between the violent ruptures with democracy in Portugal and Spain and the 'legal' assumption of power in Germany and Italy with respect to their radicalisation following the consolidation of their respective dictatorial regimes. Salazar, who arrived in power after a *coup d'état*, and Franco, whose ascension was the result of a civil war, both had much greater room for manoeuvre than either Mussolini or Hitler, both of whom achieved their position through 'legal' routes and with the support of a radical right that was less inclined towards charismatic and totalitarian adventures.¹⁰³ The differences between them lay above all in the party and in the leader that dominated the transitional process rather than in the nature of the transition.

Whilst the taking of 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 the fundamental variable. As numerous historians have observed, the 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/objectives of policy-making towards a more radical direction.'¹⁰⁴ The leader–party axis, even

¹⁰¹ Broszat, *Hitler State*, 153–4.

¹⁰² Kater, *Nazi Party*, 233.

¹⁰³ See Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, eds., *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978); Dirk Berg-Schlosser and Jeremy Mitchell, eds., *The Conditions of Democracy in Europe, 1919–1939* (London: Macmillan, 2000); Thomas Ertman, 'Democracy and Dictatorship in Inter-war Western Europe Revisited', *World Politics*, 50 (April 1998), 475–505; Nancy Bermeo, *Getting Mad or Going Mad? Citizens, Scarcity and the Breakdown of Democracy in Inter-war Europe*, Research Monograph Series 10 (Irvine, CA: University of California at Irvine, 1997).

¹⁰⁴ Aristotle A. Kallis, 'The "regime-model" of Fascism: a Typology', *European History Quarterly*, 30, 1 (2000), 96–7. See also Carl Levy, 'Fascism, National Socialism and Conservatives in Europe, 1914–1945: Issues for Comparativists', *Contemporary European History*, 8, 1 (1999), 97–126.

when tense, appears to be for this very reason the fundamental element of radicalisation, of the diminution of the government, and of an opening that favoured 'dualism'.

The boundaries of these regimes were fluid, demonstrating fascism's amazing ability to permeate the authoritarian right during the 1920s and 1930s, and to adapt its institutions, models and ideological components. The most paradigmatic case was, without doubt, that of Francoism during the 1940s, although Salazarism also emulated some aspects of Italian Fascism. 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 the business elites), was, therefore, fundamental.¹⁰⁵

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 mentioned the dictator–government having superiority over the party. Within Francoism, Italian Fascism and Nazism, the presence of the party secretaries in the government indicated both the increased legitimacy of the party and its precedence over the government and their pretensions to superiority, or at the very least, their equality with the 'technico-bureaucratic' and governmental components of the regime. Their presence also underlined the parties' pretensions to be an exclusive route to membership of the ministerial elite and the more senior positions within the state.

In relation to the recruitment methods and the political composition of the ministerial elites within the four regimes, the differences are clear, only the NSDAP and the PNF emerging as the sole source of recruitment for the government. As monocratic regimes, the dictatorships have been characterised as being 'by a selectorate of one' – the dictator, whose patronage powers remained significant.¹⁰⁶ What is worth noting, however, is that the governing elites were chosen from the reservoir of Fascist and Nazi leaders, with few concessions being made to other avenues for promotion following the consolidation of the respective regimes, thereby providing both the PNF and the NSDAP with the legitimacy they required. Under Franco, although FET-JONS was to remain the dominant element, it was much more sensitive to the other 'political families', particularly the armed forces and the Church. Salazarism occupied a different point on the spectrum, with a single party that had only a very weak fascist component and which had limited influence as a means of access to the government – albeit this was its main political function – an influence, moreover, that was to decline as political positions assumed more importance. 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

¹⁰⁵ Robert O. Paxton, 'The Five Stages of Fascism', *The Journal of Modern History*, 70 (March 1998), 18.

¹⁰⁶ Robert D. Putnam, *The Comparative Study of Political Elites* (Eaglewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1976), 52–53.

of support often have difficulties creating a party to legitimate their regimes.¹⁰⁷ Salazar created a party, but he only gave it very limited functions. The Portuguese case thus appears to confirm Juan Linz's theory that when the single party is weak, the possibility of becoming part of the governmental elite is limited 'without belonging to one of the senior branches of the administration' or to one of the interest organisations, since the party is only a complementary guarantee.¹⁰⁸

The dependence of the mobilisational political organisations, of the party or of the government and the ministries, constitutes yet another extremely interesting indicator as it highlights the important 'tensions' that existed within the dictatorships associated with fascism. In the case of the militias, their direct dependence on the German, Italian and Spanish dictators disguised a wide variety of situations. Once again, Salazarism made the LP dependent on the Ministry of the Interior and ensured that it was always led by elements of the armed forces. It was only under Nazism that the SS achieved significant autonomy from both the state apparatus and the armed forces. With respect to the organisations dedicated to mass socialisation, that is the various youth, worker and *dopolavoro* and womens' organisations, the tension between the government and the party was an important factor within Francoism, Fascism and Nazism, with the party winning important battles, although, as we have noted above, with significant variations.

The balance set out above leads, therefore, to a degree of caution and, above all, to a critique of the typological rigidity that is based in party-state relations. The Portuguese case seems to be situated on one point of the spectrum. Not only was the government the locus of power – obtaining for itself fundamental political decision-making authority – 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 dominance was much more fragile than was Hitler's over the NSDAP. Nevertheless, the PNF remained a central socialising agent of the regime and succeeded in becoming an important actor 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 autonomous politico-administrative organisations is visible. However, more than the domination of the party over the state, what is being dealt with is, above all, a radicalisation scale that is characterised by the diminution of the government, by the construction of parallel mass organisations and by the limited relocation of political decision-making power. This relocation is also fundamental for the approximation of the more charismatic leadership of Hitler and Mussolini,

¹⁰⁷ Clement H. Moore, 'The Single Party as a source of Legitimacy', in Huntington and Moore, *Authoritarian Politics*, 51.

¹⁰⁸ Juan J. Linz, see Viver Pi-Sunyer, *El Personal Politico*, 69. This is, moreover, the generic tendency for all political systems, in fact 'when the parties and the private sector are weak, public and semi-public organisations become natural sources of recruitment'. Cf. Jean Blondel, *Government Ministers in the Contemporary World* (London: Sage, 1985), 62.

even if this was more limited in the latter's case.¹⁰⁹ It therefore appears evident 'that there is a correlation here between the position of the fascist component in the leadership structure . . . the personal legitimacy of the leader and the policy-making character of the regime itself'.¹¹⁰

The most appropriate explanatory hypothesis for the variations in the composition of the ministerial elites, their importance in the political decision-making process and the means of access to ministerial office within those dictatorships that have been associated with fascism is, therefore, the presence or absence of an independent fascist party during the period of transition to a dictatorial regime and, once the regime is institutionalised, the role of the fascists in the single party. The greater and more exclusive the role of the party, 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 of the cabinet in the political decision-making process.

The central argument of this article is that the nature of the relationships between the dictator and his followers, which in this case are the fascist parties that were transformed into single parties, was the central element that subverted the 'locus' of political decision-making within the dictatorships that have been associated with fascism. Regardless of the differing stages of economic and political development within the four cases being analysed, these dictatorships implanted themselves during the first wave of democratisation that swept Europe during the first decade of the twentieth century, and in countries with legal-bureaucratic systems that had been consolidated during the nineteenth century. The differing mixture of bureaucratic and charismatic rule illustrates the differences that existed between the four dictatorships.

The opening of an autonomous political space for the praxis of the political institutions associated with the single parties and the militias – which were highly ideological bodies that cut across the modern state's sphere of jurisdiction – and their direct dependence on the dictators is, perhaps, the only shared aspect of the political systems that many historians define as 'fascist regimes'. In almost every other respect, there is very little to differentiate these regimes from any other of the twentieth century's right-wing dictatorships.

¹⁰⁹ See Burrin, *Fascisme*, 11–47.

¹¹⁰ Kallis, 'The "regime-model"', 89.