How Dictatorships Work

This accessible volume shines a light on how autocracy really works by providing basic facts about how post–World War II dictatorships achieve, retain, and lose power. The authors present an evidence-based portrait of key features of the authoritarian landscape with newly collected data on about 200 dictatorial regimes. They examine the central political processes that shape the policy choices of dictatorships and how they compel reaction from policy makers in the rest of the world. Importantly, this book explains how some dictators concentrate great power in their own hands at the expense of other members of the dictatorial elite. Dictators who can monopolize decision-making in their countries cause much of the erratic, warlike behavior that disturbs the rest of the world. By providing a picture of the central processes common to dictatorships, this book puts the experience of specific countries in perspective, leading to an informed understanding of events and the likely outcome of foreign responses to autocracies.

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How Dictatorships Work

Power, Personalization, and Collapse

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To our (ten) children:
Dylan
Danielle
Darcy
Demetria
Lee
Luca
Enzo
Rania
Luciana
Felix
who help us keep it all in perspective
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>xv</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Introduction**  
   - Implementing Our Definition of Regime  
   - The Groups That Initiate Dictatorships  
   - Conflict and Bargaining within the Seizure Group  
   - Plan of the Book  
   - Appendix: Coding Rules for Authoritarian Regimes  
   - #1 Introduction  
   - #2 Autocratic Seizures of Power  
   - #3 What Do We Know about Coups?  

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## Part I: Initiation

2. **Autocratic Seizures of Power**  
   - Who Do Dictatorial Seizure Groups Oust?  
   - How Dictatorships Begin  
   - Before the Seizure of Power  
   - The Morning after a Seizure of Power  
   - Post-Seizure Organization  
   - Conclusion  
   - #2 Autocratic Seizures of Power  

3. **What Do We Know about Coups?**  
   - Coups for Various Purposes  
   - Preconditions Associated with Regime-Change Coups  
   - Inequality and Coups  
   - Conclusion  
   - #3 What Do We Know about Coups?
## PART II ELITE CONSOLIDATION

4  Power Concentration: The Effect of Elite Factionalism on Personalization  
   - Elite Bargaining in Dictatorships  
   - Handing Power to a Leader  
   - Bargaining over the Distribution of Resources and Power  
   - Characteristics That Influence the Credibility of Threats to Oust the Dictator  
   - Measuring Personalism  
   - Patterns of Personalism  
   - The Effect of Factionalism on the Personalization of Power  
   - Conclusion  

5  Dictatorial Survival Strategies in Challenging Conditions: Factionalized Armed Supporters and Party Creation  
   - The Strategic Context  
   - The Interaction of Dispersed Arms and Factionalism  
   - The Strategic Creation of New Political Actors  
   - Evidence That Post-Seizure Party Creation Aims to Counterbalance Factionalized Armed Supporters  
   - Post-Seizure Party Creation and Dictatorial Survival  
   - The Effect of Post-Seizure Party Creation on the Likelihood of Coups  
   - Conclusion  

## PART III RULING SOCIETY: IMPLEMENTATION AND INFORMATION GATHERING

6  Why Parties and Elections in Dictatorships?  
   - Implementation, Monitoring, and Information Gathering  
   - Elite Competition and Institutions That Engage Citizens  
   - Parties  
   - Dictatorial Legislatures  
   - Elections  
   - Conclusion  

7  Double-Edged Swords: Specialized Institutions for Monitoring and Coercion  
   - Internal Security Agencies  
   - The Army: Bulwark of the Regime or Incubator of Plots?  
   - The Relationship between Counterbalancing and Interference  
   - Conclusion  

## PART IV DICTATORIAL SURVIVAL AND BREAKDOWN

8  Why Dictatorships Fall  
   - How Dictatorships End  
   - Individual Support and Opposition  

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# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter/Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Effect of Crisis on Decisions to Oppose the Dictatorship</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Crisis and Breakdown</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Concentration and Regime Survival</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Changes and Regime Breakdown</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dictator’s Future and the Likelihood of Democratization</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Effect of Personalization on Prospects for Democracy</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9 Conclusion and Policy Implications                                           218

References                                                                   237

Index                                                                        253
Figures

3.1 Regime-initiating coups against incumbent dictatorships  page 49
3.2 Coups against incumbent democracies  53
3.3 Causes of coups in dictatorships, by coup type  55
4.1 Frequency of events that end dictatorships  72
4.2 Illustration of personalism scores  83
4.3 The first dictator’s advantage in personalizing power  87
4.4 Personalizing power after the first three years  88
4.5 United versus factionalized seizure groups  91
5.1 Post-seizure party creation and the rotation of dictatorial leadership  109
5.2 Post-seizure party creation and military marginalization  110
5.3 Post-seizure party creation before the leader’s election  111
5.4 Post-seizure party creation, age, and rank of first dictator  112
5.5 Effect of age, rank, and previous regime on post-seizure party creation  113
5.6 Post-seizure party creation over time  114
5.7 Parties and regime survival  118
5.8 Coups in dictatorships with post-seizure parties or no parties  119
5.9 Post-seizure party creation and coup risk  121
5.10 Post-seizure party creation and reshuffling versus regime-change coups  123
6.1 Foreign aid and the election of dictators  139
6.2 The electoral spending cycle in dictatorships  146
6.3 Dictatorial elections and health outcomes  148
7.1 Paramilitary forces and interference in the army  171
7.2 Loyalist paramilitary forces and interference  172
8.1 How autocratic regimes end  179
8.2 Semi-competitive elections and coup attempts in dictatorships  180
### List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>Economic crisis, party networks, and authoritarian breakdown</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>The effect of personalism on authoritarian breakdown</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>The effects of personalism in dictatorships with different leadership</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>configurations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>Probability that dictator exit coincides with regime collapse</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>Effect of personalism on capacity to handle succession</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>Personalism and post-death regime survival</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>Personalism and democratization</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.10</td>
<td>Personalism, military rule, and democratization</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tables

2.1 Proportion of dictatorships begun by different kinds of seizures of power

2.2 Proportion of dictatorships begun by different kinds of seizure groups

3.1 Area under the ROC for models of regime-change coups in dictatorships
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