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Non-Democratic Regimes

Theory, Government and Politics

Paul Brooker

of highly personal rule, the initial principal–agent relationship between ruling organisation and regime leader may be actually reversed, with the organisation now only an agent of the personal ruler. Although this organisation–individual, principal–agent approach to personal rule lacked the depth and breadth of Jackson and Rosberg's theory, it enabled him to include an assessment of (the degree of) personal rule in his analysis of one-party states.

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The Emergence of Military Dictatorships

The military dictatorship has been the most common form of dictatorship in modern times. Between the end of the Second World War and the onset of the 1970s–90s wave of democratisation, the military had 'intervened in approximately two-thirds of the more than one hundred non-Western states', and in the later 1970s 'controlled the government in about one-third of these countries' (Nordlinger, 1977: 6). It is not surprising, therefore, that many attempts have been made to explain or analyse why and how military dictatorships emerge. Yet the framework developed by Finer in the early 1960s still offers the most comprehensive approach to analysing the military intervention in politics which results in the emergence of military regimes.

Finer argued that the military's intervention in politics, such as when a military coup overthrows the civilian government, is best explained by examining both subjective and objective factors – what he termed the *disposition* and the *opportunity* to intervene in politics (1976 [1962]: 74). He presented the relationship between disposition and opportunity as a 'calculus of intervention'. This calculus does not resemble the differential or integral calculus of mathematics, but rather is a form of political calculation (in the sense of a 'calculating' politician) which may be very similar to the calculations of officers contemplating a military coup. The calculus of intervention is derived by combining the two variables, disposition and opportunity,

to produce four possible combinations and four inferences about the likelihood and fate of military intervention. Finer's four inferences were:

1. no intervention because there is neither disposition nor opportunity;
2. intervention because there is both disposition and opportunity;
3. 'on the whole' no intervention because there is no disposition although there is an opportunity; and
4. unsuccessful intervention because although there is disposition, there is no opportunity (*ibid.*: 74–5).

The calculus of intervention can also be used to analyse past coups to determine why and how they were attempted and succeeded (or failed). It therefore offers a framework for analysing the emergence of past or present military regimes as well as for assessing the likelihood that a new military regime will emerge in any particular country.

A similar approach to Finer's was adopted many years later by Nordlinger, who based his analysis of military coups on the 'dual' question of 'why' and 'when' do the military intervene in politics (1977: 63–4). He differed from Finer in including only motives, not motives and mood, in the 'why' part of this dual question, but Finer's framework would lose little if its disposition aspect was simplified by excluding mood and concentrating on motives. Moreover, his calculus of intervention would then replicate the forensic formula for determining who committed a crime ('the accused had the motive and the opportunity to commit the crime') even if in the case of military intervention, the question or issue is not 'whodunit' but rather (1) what is the likelihood that a suspect *will* actually commit the crime, or (2) why and how was the crime committed?

The forensic analogy is striking and has such useful implications as highlighting the question of whether to include another element commonly added to the forensic formula – the question of what *means* were or will be employed to perpetrate the crime. As will be seen in a later section of the chapter, there is good reason to include a separate heading of 'means' to incorporate important features noted by Janowitz and by Finer himself. The resulting motive/means/opportunity framework

TABLE 3.1

The (Finer-based) calculus of military intervention/usurpation

Motive	*Means*	*Opportunity*
1. National interest 2. Corporate self-interest 3. Individual self-interest 4. Social (especially ethnic or class) self-interest	1. Coup method (seizure of power) 2. Coup-threat method (seizure of power)	1. Civilian government's lack of legitimacy (Finer and Nordlinger) 2. Civilian government dependent on military 3. Civilian government discredited – e.g. corruption, economic failings (O'Kane)
Inhibiting motives	*Capacity-reducing factors*	*Negative factors (reducing opportunity)*
1. Belief in civil supremacy (national interest?) 2. Fear of coup failure (corporate and individual self-interest) 3. Fear of politicisation of military (corporate self-interest) 4. Fear of repeat of past failures of military rule (corporate self-interest and national interest)	Various factors weaken internal cohesion = factional instead of corporate coups and less credible coup threat (Janowitz)	1. Civilian government has legitimacy (Finer and Nordlinger) 2. Obstacles (O'Kane) (a) absence of previous coups (b) newly independent state (c) presence of foreign troops 3. Operational obstacles (Decalo) e.g. elite or paramilitary units

for analysing military intervention provides a comprehensive check-list that takes all factors into account. Moreover, the framework readily allows two or more theories/explanations of intervention to be used in combination and in an integrated and coherent fashion. This feature also enables any detailed description of the framework and calculus to readily supplement and even replace Finer's ideas and examples with those of other theorists and researchers (see Table 3.1).

However, before beginning such a detailed exposition of this framework and calculus of intervention, it is best to narrow the focus to include only those forms of military intervention that lead to the emergence of clear-cut military dictatorships. For Finer defined military 'intervention' quite widely, as being 'the constrained substitution' of the military's policies *and/or* persons 'for those of the recognized civilian authorities' (*ibid.*: 20). And the constrained substitution of only the military's *policies*, not military persons, for those of the recognised civilian government may involve situations of indirect rule by the military from behind the scenes (see Chapter 2).

This is far from the popular image of military dictatorship as a uniformed General residing in the presidential palace and ruling by decree – in fact it does not fit any common conception of a military regime. The problem of how to categorise such less-than-military dictatorships will be discussed more fully at the end of the chapter. Until then, the problem will be avoided by narrowing the focus of the calculus of intervention and concentrating upon the form of intervention from which emerges (direct) rule by military men – the seizure of public offices and powers by the military.

Motive

Finer pointed out that the military, or rather the officer corps that leads it into politics as well as into battle, is affected by a variety and often a varying *mixture* of motives for seizing power (1976: 52). This is no different from the standard assumption that civilian politicians have 'a multiplicity of motivations (some altruistic, others crassly self-serving) in their quest for political power' (Decalo, 1990: 7). The principal types of motives that Finer identified were:

1. the self-proclaimed 'manifest destiny of the soldiers';
2. the national interest;
3. the sectional interest, which in turn includes class interest, particularist interests (regional, ethnic and religious), and corporate self-interest; and
4. individual self-interest (1976, ch. 4 and p. 230).

As he acknowledged, this is only a convenient check-list which can be reduced or expanded according to whether it is thought too elaborate and complicated or too economical and not sufficiently systematic. It can therefore be restructured and reduced to four main types of motive: national interest, corporate self-interest, social self-interest (notably class, ethnic or religious), and individual self-interest. These motives can be derived from four aspects of the officers' world-view – those of citizen, soldier, member of a social group, and individual.

The citizen's concern for the national interest is often depicted both inside and outside the military as being particularly evident within the officer corps. But, as was described earlier (see Chapter 2), Finer argued that the military's view of its political duties as custodian of the national interest may take the form of either an arbitrating/vetoing role or a more ambitious role as the ruler of the country and implementor of a sometimes comprehensive policy programme (*ibid.*: 31).

Moreover, the second, ruler type of military 'have no uniform notion of what constitutes the "national interest"' (*ibid.*: 33). For example, although the military are conventionally perceived as having a right-wing conception of the national interest, some ruler-type military regimes have displayed leftist tendencies. Several purportedly Marxist–Leninist military regimes arose in Africa in the 1960s–70s, such as in Ethiopia and Somalia, while the Burmese military regime pursued in 1962–88 a 'Burmese way to socialism' that was no less radical than the socialist practices of most Marxist–Leninist military regimes. Moreover, three other military regimes, Kemal Ataturk's in Turkey, Nasser's in Egypt and Velasco's in Peru, have been classified as examples of 'revolutions from above', which 'destroy the economic and political base of the aristocracy or upper class' by means of an alliance with a rising capitalist or landed class rather than by mobilising the working class and the peasantry (Trimberger, 1978: 3, 10).

The national interest is not the real or primary motivation of many coups, and is often used to disguise one or more self-interested motives. Individual self-interest may motivate not only the military's leaders, but also the officer corps collectively in the sense of a desire for better pay, easier promotion, and even opportunities for attractive jobs in civilian organisations (Finer, 1976: 50–1). But here the motive of individual self-interest begins

to merge into that of *corporate self-interest*, as for example when new promotion or career opportunities are opened up by an expansion or technological development of the military that meets the professional aspirations of the officer corps.

The distinction between the corporate and the individual form of self-interest can be drawn in terms of the officers' professional role as soldiers as distinct from their personal aspirations as individuals (see Exhibit 3.1). The *self*-interestedness of the corporate motive may not be apparent to the officer corps because their concerns will be framed, even privately, in terms of national security or other national interests. Cuts in the military budget or a lack of (what are viewed by officers as) 'necessary' increases in military expenditure can readily be denounced in these national-interest terms, especially as the military has a remarkable ability to discern real or potential threats to the nation. Like other professions, military officers also have a corporate self-interested desire to protect professional autonomy and monopoly (*ibid.*: 41). But the crucial aspects of autonomy are the military's control over appointments and over disciplinary matters; decisions in these areas must conform to internal professional criteria and not be influenced by political or other extraneous factors.

Nordlinger went even further than Finer in emphasising the military's corporate interests, declaring that 'the great majority of coups are partly, primarily, or entirely motivated by the defense or enhancement of the military's corporate interests' (1977: 78). However, Thompson's research into coup-makers' grievances did not support this emphasis on the corporate-interest motive. As Thompson (1980) soon pointed out, he had identified corporate-interest grievances as being present (often along with other grievances) in less than half of the 1946–70 coups. He also noted that there was a lack of circumstantial evidence indicating a corporate-interest motive for military seizures of power; evidence was emerging that military governments actually did not seem to be more committed to the military's corporate welfare, in terms of size and expenditure, than were non-military governments!

In a later survey of 1970s research into this issue, Zuk and Thompson (1982) discovered that, although there had been at least 11 cases of cross-national research into the issue of whether there is a 'relationship between military governments and their

Exhibit 3.1 Old and New Military Professionalism

The distinguishing characteristic of the modern military officer corps is its professionalism, in the sense of being a profession such as medicine or law (Huntington, 1967 [1957]: 7, 10). Like any other profession, the military officer's has the characteristics of (1) expertise, (2) social responsibility, and (3) corporateness, in the sense of its members forming a corporate body distinct from 'laymen'. The military officer's professional expertise is the 'management of violence', specifically the 'direction, operation, and control of a human organization whose primary function is the application of violence' (*ibid.*: 11). The social responsibility of the officer's profession is the 'military security' of society, but in practice this responsibility is primarily owed to the state (*ibid.*: 15–16). Yet, although the officer is therefore the servant of the state, he or she is 'the servant only of the legitimately constituted authorities of the state', which in practice means those authorities whom the officers deem to have the legal right to command the military (*ibid.*: 77–8). Huntington also argued that with the professionalisation of the officer corps had come the opportunity for a new, 'objective' form of civilian control of the military, because professionalising the military renders it 'politically sterile and neutral' (*ibid.*: 84).

However, Stepan's theory (1973) of the 'new professionalism' argued that in some countries the officer corps had developed a new interpretation of its professional expertise and responsibility – focused on the internal rather than military security of society – that could motivate the military to intervene in politics for professional reasons. For by the late 1950s and early 1960s, some Third World armies were turning their attention to devising political as well as military strategies to prevent as well as combat the internal, revolutionary warfare which had proved so successful in China, Vietnam, Algeria and Cuba. In both Brazil and Peru, military officers 'politicised' by academic study of the political/social conditions conducive to revolutionary movements came to the conclusion that their civilian governments were unwilling or unable to implement the social and economic changes needed for national development and internal security. Therefore the military coups in Brazil in 1964 and Peru in 1968 were 'one of the logical consequences of the "new" professionalism' (Stepan, 1973: 48), even though the resulting military regimes differed markedly in the specific policies that they introduced to deal with their society's particular internal-security-threatening problems. (For a critique see Markoff and Baretta, 1985.)

military spending propensities', the results had been contradictory or inconclusive. Their own seemingly definitive cross-national statistical study of the 1967–76 period 'found no support for the hypothesis that military coups accelerate the growth rate of military expenditures', but found 'some evidence' that military takeovers *may* have played 'a minor role' in retarding a decline in the proportional size of military budgets that was occurring in all types of regime during these years (1982: 71).

Nevertheless, the military clearly has strong corporate concerns that may overshadow its *social* self-interested motives for seizing power. By social self-interest is meant the officers' concern for the interests of the particular social group to which they belong – be it class, ethnic or religious. But the military's highly corporate nature, socially as well as professionally, means that the officers are likely to be more detached from their role as members of a wider social group – from class, ethnic or religious loyalties – than are any other professional group.

Therefore Finer contended that the class origins or status of the officer corps are usually less important than the 'narrower corporate interests' that arise from the 'selective induction, professional training and social code, along with the organizational and often the social self-sufficiency of the military establishment' (1976: 234). He argued that the seemingly class-motivated anti-leftist coups that sprang up in Latin America in the 1960s and early 1970s were at least partially prompted by the officer corps's corporate fear for its own survival if there were a communist takeover like that in Cuba (*ibid.*: 236–7).

But Finer acknowledged the importance of ethnic forms of social self-interest. He introduced the new category of an ethnic motive for coups in the 1976 edition of his work, and pointed out that the Nigerian coups of 1966 and many other African coups had strong ethnic overtones (*ibid.*: 230). The Nigerian cases were particularly significant because they had led to the attempted secession by Eastern-Nigeria/Biafra and one of the most costly civil wars in history (Luckham, 1971).

Motives Inhibiting the Seizure of Power

The military may also have motives for *not* seizing power, and Finer examined various motives that could *inhibit* the military from intervention in politics (1976: 26–7). He contended that

the military's belief in the principle of civil supremacy was a truly effective restraint on its intervention in politics. But he acknowledged that more self-interested motives could also inhibit military intervention, and identified several factors that could deter intervention by raising self-interested fears of the consequences of failure. There is the corporate and individual fear that if the coup fails, not only will the individual officers face drastic retribution but also the military as an organisation may face serious repercussions, as when a failed coup in Costa Rica in 1948 led to the army's being replaced by a police force. There is also the corporate fear that if only part of the military attempts a coup, fighting may break out between pro- and anti-coup sections of the military.

Finally, even a successful coup may endanger some of the military's corporate interests, as when a resulting politicisation of the military seriously undermines its corporate cohesion and military effectiveness. For the politicised military may become more like a political party than a highly centralised and disciplined fighting organisation. The many coups that have been launched by groups of middle-ranking officers are evidence of how 'politics' undermines the military's centralised and disciplined structure. Perhaps even more striking evidence of the dangers of politicisation is the fact that the majority of attempted coups in the 1940s–70s were actually aimed at military governments, and in the 'vast majority' of successful cases involved the replacement of one military government by another (Nordlinger, 1977: 140).

An extreme example of the 'partyfying' of the military arose in Syria in 1961 when the army's officer corps responded to potentially violent political conflicts among its members by convening a Military Congress. Comprising representatives of all the military regions and major units, the Congress discussed and voted on such weighty political matters as whether to restore civilian rule and whether to attempt another unification of Syria with Egypt (Rabinovich, 1972: 32–3).

To the fear of politicisation can often be added a more general concern that a new bout of military rule will only lead to a repeat of past failures – with all their negative effects upon the military and the nation. Many South American officers, for instance, have preferred to dissociate themselves from the legacy of 1960s–80s military rule. For the 'incompetence, self-aggrandizement, and repression' that the military displayed while

in office led to a decline in 'military stature, unity and self-confidence', and to armies so anxious to protect themselves from the effects of holding public office that they were practising 'coup avoidance' (Pion-Berlin, 1992: 86).

Considering the number and significance of the possible motives inhibiting the military from seizing power, any assessment of whether there is a motive to stage a coup is clearly no simple matter! Indeed, the assessment of motive bears some resemblance to preparing a balance sheet of motives, some favouring and some inhibiting, in order to determine whether 'on balance' there is motivation for the military to seize power.

Means

An important step in the further development of Finer's calculus of intervention and overall framework is the inclusion of the separate factor or variable of *means* of intervention. Though it could be included under the heading of opportunity, the means factor deserves separate consideration as a variable of comparable significance to motive and opportunity. Without the means of doing so, the military could not intervene in politics. Means can be viewed again from a forensic perspective as including (1) the *modus operandi* or 'method', and (2) the capacity to use that method.

Although the coup is the obvious method of the military's seizing power (see Exhibit 3.2 examples), Finer emphasised that it is not the only method available to the military. In particular, the military may be able to achieve the same effect as a coup by simply *threatening* to stage a coup – what Finer terms 'blackmail' – to remove a government from power (1976: 134–8). Such threats may be largely implicit. The 1966 'disguised coup' in Indonesia (which saw the President confer sweeping governmental powers upon army commander General Suharto) involved the deployment of soldiers outside the presidential palace – and the military has always maintained that it did not exert any pressure on the President (Crouch, 1978: ch. 7). Finer even identified two different methods of carrying out a coup. He adopted the Latin American distinction between the *golpe de estado*, aimed at the head of state, and the *cuatelazo*, the 'barracks coup', in which a single barracks or unit revolts against

Exhibit 3.2 The Military Coup in Action

The 1952 factional coup in Egypt was aimed at the corrupt and incompetent monarchical regime and carried out by the secret 'Free Officers' movement of middle-ranking and junior officers within the army and air force (Stephens, 1971: 103–8). The movement's executive committee, headed by Major Nasser, led the military units that carried out the coup on the night of 22 July. The factional nature of the coup was displayed by the priority given to securing control of the military as a whole by seizing its general headquarters and the senior commanders who were meeting there on that evening. The coup forces also seized control of other key points in the capital city, such as government buildings, the radio station and telephone exchanges. In addition to putting tanks in the streets and having warplanes swoop low over the city, the coup-makers made their presence felt the following morning by a radio-broadcast proclamation justifying their actions. The prime minister quickly resigned, the royal palaces were later surrounded and seized by coup forces, and the King formally abdicated on 26 July.

The 1973 corporate coup in Chile was aimed at democratically elected President Allende and his leftist supporters (Sigmund, 1977: 239–53). The heads of the three armed services (and, later, the head of the national police) had actually agreed in writing to stage the coup on 11 September. Early that morning the navy took over the port city of Valparaiso, while in the capital city the army shut down radio stations, broadcast a proclamation justifying the coup, and by mid-morning had deployed tanks in front of the presidential palace. The siege of the palace and incumbent President included a rocket attack by the air force's planes. President Allende refused the offer of safe passage into exile and committed suicide before the presidential palace was surrendered early in the afternoon. The new, self-declared government was a military junta declared to be the Supreme Command of the Nation, exercising legislative power by means of numbered decree-laws, which had already decreed a 'state of siege' allowing summary arrest and detention. By mid-afternoon thousands of civilians were being rounded up and indeed several thousand died in the coup and its immediate aftermath. That night the four-man junta, comprising army commander Pinochet and the heads of the navy, air force and national police, appeared on television to justify their action and describe their policies.

the government in the expectation that other units will join it in a march on the capital or in other forms of pressure that will topple the government (Finer, 1976: 139–42).

A more important distinction between types of coup (see Exhibit 3.2) is that between:

1. the 'corporate' coup, in which the military acts as a unified, corporate body; and
2. the 'factional' coup, in which only a part of the military attempts to stage a coup. Often a factional coup is aimed at the military's corporate/professional leaders – its highest-ranking, commanding officers – as well as against the civilian government.

Therefore another difference between these types of coup is that while the corporate coup is led by generals, the factional coup is usually led by such middle-ranking officers as colonels and majors.

But the difference between the corporate and factional types of coup is more a matter of capacity than method. Although a united military is 'virtually certain to succeed' in staging a (corporate) coup, the great majority of attempted coups – some 80 per cent – have not been corporate and less than half of them have succeeded (Nordlinger, 1977: 101–2). In recent times the odds against a non-corporate, factional coup succeeding have become even worse. In 1990–92 less than a third of the 38 attempted coups (mostly factional) were successful (Kebschull, 1994). The factional coup is inherently less likely to be successful than the corporate coup because it may run into opposition from other sections of the military or lack the force and credibility to overcome civilian opposition. Moreover, any attempt at 'blackmailing' a government with the threat of a coup would have little credibility unless it appeared likely that the blackmailers could deliver a corporate coup. Therefore, the factional coup is not so much a different method of seizing power as a case of a divided military using the coup method at much less than full capacity and thereby running a much greater risk that the method will fail.

In fact the non-corporate, factional coup is a sign of weakness in a key and distinctive aspect of the military's capacity to seize power – its highly centralised and disciplined organisational

structure. In his analysis of the political strengths of the military, Finer emphasised not only its possession of highly lethal weapons but also its organisational capacity to use those weapons to carry out a particular mission – its centralised command, hierarchy of ranks/posts, strict discipline and emotional solidarity (1976: 10, 5–8). Janowitz's (1964) pioneering work on the political role of the military in 'new nations' explicitly argued that a reason for the military's greater capacity than civilian groups to intervene (unconstitutionally) in politics is its distinctive organisational format (*ibid.*: 27–8, 31–2). He emphasised the importance of the military's control over the 'instruments of violence' but also pointed to the military's organisational unity and internal cohesion as another characteristic of its distinctive organisational format.

Moreover, Janowitz identified the factional coup as a symptom of weaknesses in a military's internal social cohesion which reduce its capacity to intervene effectively in politics. While one of the political expressions of a socially cohesive military is intervention directed by its senior commanders, a lack of internal social cohesion leads to coups being attempted by only a part of the military – by 'a powerful faction acting without the "legitimate" authority of the top commander' (*ibid.*: 68). The internal social cohesion of the officer corps can be weakened by differences in the officers' social background, such as their ethnic or religious background, and also by differences in career experiences, particularly those associated with intergenerational differences between younger and older officers (*ibid.*: 70–1).

Later, Finer pointed to two other important threats to the military's internal social cohesion – organisational divisions and political differences (1976: 226). Different branches or services (army, navy and air force), and even particular units or garrisons, may develop a separate solidarity that reduces the overall cohesion of the military. Secondly, the military may be infected by political divisions within civilian society, and see its own cohesion undermined by differences in officers' ideological, party or factional loyalties.

Therefore, just as there are motives which inhibit the military from seeking power, so there are also factors that reduce the military's capacity to seize power – reducing its capability to the level of only factional rather than corporate coups. The success or failure of factional coups comes down to such

operational factors as the tactics or techniques used and to relatively contingent factors, including simply good or bad luck (Kebschull, 1994). In addition to Nordlinger's analysis of coup-making techniques (1977: 102–6), there are specialised works devoted to analysing the preparation and implementation of coups, such as Luttwak's (1968) classic handbook, and Farcau's (1994) more recent, Latin-American-focused book. But these issues go well beyond any general investigation of the military's capacity to successfully stage or threaten a coup.

Such an assessment of the military's means of seizing power is clearly an important part of a comprehensive 'calculus' of the likelihood of successful military intervention or of the reasons for an earlier success or failure. However, the assessment of the military's opportunity to intervene is an even more important 'objective' aspect of this calculus and the motive/means/opportunity framework for analysing seizures of power.

Opportunity

Finer and several other analysts of military rule have identified a range of factors that affect the opportunity for the military to seize power. Some of them are actually 'negative' opportunity factors in the sense of reducing rather than increasing the opportunity to seize power (just as internal divisions reduce the military's capacity to seize power). Other opportunity factors have both a positive and a negative aspect depending upon their strength or the particular situation.

The Legitimacy Factor

Finer's theory of political culture identified a legitimacy factor which has both negative and positive aspects for the prospects of a military seizure of power (1976: 79–80). On the one hand, societies with a mature or developed political culture could be expected to reject or resist any claims that military rule was legitimate and to strongly resist military intervention in politics – clearly reducing the opportunity for any intervention. On the other hand, legitimation of military rule is possible or simply unimportant in societies with lower levels of political culture and they would not strongly resist military intervention – clearly *increasing* the opportunity for the military to seize power.

The legitimacy opportunity factor was also identified by Nordlinger, and he, too, saw it as having negative as well as positive aspects for the military's prospects of seizing power. For he emphasised that civilian moral condemnation of illegitimate military intervention in politics is expressed in direct action, such as 'mass protests, general strikes, riots, sporadic violence, and possibly armed resistance', and that the prospect of having to deal with this active resistance *deters* the military from intervening in politics (1977: 94–5). On the other hand, the level of resistance to military intervention is likely to be proportional to the degree of legitimacy enjoyed by the civilian government. Therefore, the 'absence or loss of governmental legitimacy' by the civilian authorities substantially *increases* – more than any other factor – the military's opportunity to seize power (*ibid.*: 93).

Nordlinger also argued that the legitimacy of a government can be eroded by failures in its performance. Such 'performance failures' (see Exhibit 5.1) as illegal actions, economic downturns and disorder and violence can therefore be seen as indirectly increasing the opportunity to seize power (*ibid.*: 64, 85–92). But his most significant difference from Finer's approach was his extension of the legitimacy factor to cover the military as well as civilian society. By pointing out that some or most officers would refuse to support a coup attempt against a legitimate government, he highlighted the effect of legitimacy upon the motive and capacity as well as the opportunity for military intervention (*ibid.*: 95).

Political and Operational Factors

In addition to his theory of political culture and the legitimacy factor, Finer identified a very opportune political situation for military intervention. He contended that the opportunity for the military to intervene is maximised when both (1) the civilian authorities are abnormally dependent upon the military, and (2) the military's popularity is enhanced while that of the civilian authorities is depressed (1976: 64). The civilian authorities' dependence on the military is most likely to occur when they are having to use the military for internal security

purposes, either because of violence between rival political forces or because of strong opposition from the masses to the rule of the political elite or dominant social class (*ibid.*: 64–6, 69). As for the military's enhanced popularity, this arises largely from the civilian authorities being discredited by inefficiency, corruption or political intrigue – in such circumstances the military may even be seen as a 'deliverer' by the civilian population (*ibid.*: 72–3).

What might be viewed as a case of civilian governments being discredited by economic inefficiency was later identified and statistically validated by O'Kane. She used cross-national statistical evidence to support her argument that instability in export prices (in poor countries dependent upon exporting primary products) 'is conducive to coups because it generates problems for both the economy and society that can be directly blamed on the government' (1981: 291–2). However, her statistical test of the relationship between these economic factors and military coups also took into account three 'obstacles' that 'reduced the likely success of a coup', namely:

1. the recent independence of the state;
2. the lack of any previous coups; and
3. the presence of foreign troops (*ibid.*: 294–5).

These obstacles are therefore typical negative opportunity factors, with the first and second being opportunity-reducing political factors, and the third, the presence of foreign troops, being an operational factor that reduces the opportunity for a militarily successful coup.

Various other operational obstacles to coups can also be included as negative opportunity factors. Several were unearthed by Decalo (1989) when examining the military-controlling strategies that had been used by the 16 African states – little more than a quarter of all African countries – which had managed to escape military rule. (These coup-free states were almost equally divided between democracies and one-party states.) Among the negative opportunity factors that he identified were the familiar external ones of foreign (French) military support, and the use of expatriate, foreign officers to hold key posts.

However, two new factors are the use of family members to hold key military posts and of ethnically loyal military recruits.

They can also be found outside the African region, especially in the Middle East, though some South American armies would have viewed such measures as a blow to their professional/corporate integrity and as possible grounds for political intervention! The same could be said of another factor identified by Decalo – using totally (often ethnically) loyal elite or paramilitary units to counterbalance the regular military forces. For he acknowledged that these units often provoke military jealousies that may become a corporate-interest motive for a coup. Therefore, the creation of such units as elite presidential guards needs to be 'properly rationalised and executed, and without simultaneously diminishing the corporate status of the regular armed forces' (Decalo, 1989: 562).

When properly developed and used, though, elite and/or paramilitary units seem to have been quite successful in defeating and deterring coups within Africa, and they have been widely used in other parts of the world. The most famous example is Saddam Hussein's Republican Guard, which was originally an elite presidential guard (recruited from his home-region of Tikrit) and apparently still retains a special loyalty to the President. Even much less powerful units than the Republican Guard can markedly reduce the opportunity for a successful factional coup and make a corporate coup more risky and potentially bloody.

But there is a conceptual ambiguity about the nature and role of elite units that can lead to serious misunderstandings when discussing the political stance of the military in such countries as Iraq. Such elite units as the Republican Guard are military professionals employed by the state and could be classified as being a different branch/service *of* the military rather than an armed force *separate from* the military. Assessments of the political reliability of the Iraqi military might come to quite different conclusions depending upon whether the elite units are regarded as part of or separate from 'the military'. If they are viewed as a part of the military, they should be included as (negative) 'means' rather than 'opportunity' factors – as being an important internal division within the military that markedly reduces its capacity to seize power.

A similar problem can arise when considering the effect of another important obstacle to military seizures of power, namely 'intelligence-gathering units' and 'informal networks of political

spies' (Decalo, 1989: 562). Although these covert controls on the military usually take the form of a political police or other civilian security organ (see Chapter 5), they may also include military intelligence/police units spying on their fellow officers. They are presumably seeking to preempt and deter factional coups but, when the prospect of a corporate coup looms, the question of whether these control units are truly 'in' and 'of' the military becomes more than just an academic problem. The complexities of assessing the opportunity aspect of a military seizure of power only reflect the complexities of the real world of military interventions in politics.

Clearly the opportunity aspect, like the means aspect, of the calculus of military intervention is actually a matter of degree rather than a simple yes/no question. Even the assessment of motive can be seen as a matter of assessing whether, on balance, there is a strong or weak motive for seizing power. So applying the calculus of intervention could involve cases of very strong or very weak motive, means and opportunity, and in between these two extremes there could be many much less straightforward combinations. But at least the range of *outcomes* is apparently only (1) no attempt, (2) a failed attempt, and (3) a successful attempt to seize power.

The Emergence of Less-than-Military Regimes

As was noted at the outset, the focus of this chapter has been upon military interventions in politics that lead to the emergence of what are clearly military dictatorships. These are the military seizures of public office and powers that lead to military men becoming the official governors of their countries. However, there are other forms of intervention and other types of military regime. In fact the various types of 'less-than-military' regime – those which are less than clearly or fully military – are too important a category of dictatorship to be ignored.

From Indirect Military Rule to Military-Supported Regimes

Finer identified types of *indirect* military regime and rule, in which the military intervened from behind the scenes to exercise some control over a civilian government's policies (see

Chapter 2). To maintain this control the military normally uses the discreet methods of threatening a coup or such other forms of 'blackmail' as threatening not to defend the government against its foes (1976: 134–8).

The extreme cases of indirect rule, in which civilian government is only a puppet or agent of the military, could well be classified as military dictatorship. (Often such a regime has arisen from a military seizure of power that has been transformed into indirect rule through a civilian puppet/agent.) Finer categorised such puppet–master rule as an 'indirect-complete' type of military regime, in which complete and continuous control is exercised over the civilian government (*ibid.*: 151, 156–7). To his example of Batista's 1933–40 indirect rule in Cuba could be added Calles's indirect rule in Mexico in the early 1930s, and the much more recent cases of Noriega's rule in Panama in the 1980s and Cedras's rule in Haiti in the lead-up to the 1994 US intervention. This type of indirect rule is not solely a Caribbean and Central American phenomenon, though, nor is it associated only with personalist military rulers. The highly corporate military regime in Uruguay operated behind two successive civilian presidents in the 1970s.

But beyond such cases lies a spectrum of civilian/military regimes with a decreasingly military content. It ranges from what Finer termed 'indirect-limited' military rule, to mild versions of what Nordlinger termed 'moderator' forms of indirect rule, and finally to what Finer termed 'military-supportive' civilian regimes (see Chapter 2). These distinctly less-than-military regimes are often better viewed in relation to democracy or party dictatorship than to military dictatorship. For example, indirect-limited rule (in which the military intervenes only intermittently to exercise control over a limited range of policies) seems more like a flawed democracy than any form of military regime – as more like a less-than-democratic than a less-than-military regime (see Chapter 9).

So, too, do some mild versions of the moderator form of indirect rule. For in such cases as 1950s' Brazil the moderator military intervenes only on rare occasions to remove a civilian government, hand power over to a civilian caretaker government, and allow the voters to choose a new government. The most dramatic case of such intervention occurred in Brazil in 1954 when the democratically elected President Vargas responded

to the military's ultimatum by refusing to resign and instead committing suicide. The military had once before, in 1945, forced him to resign from the presidency and he was not willing to suffer that fate again. But on the previous occasion the Brazilian military had been seeking to hasten the country's democratisation by putting an end to Vargas's military-dependent civilian dictatorship.

The dictatorship established by Vargas in 1937 was an example of the 'military-supportive' *civilian* regime, whose only military feature is that the civilian government is wholly reliant on military support for its survival (see Chapter 2). President Vargas had avoided the constitutional prohibition on his serving a second, successive term in office by dissolving Congress, presenting the country with a new (but never ratified) Constitution, and ruling through state-of-emergency decree powers (Schneider, 1991: ch. 4). The military was 'largely responsible for permitting Vargas to establish this dictatorial regime', whose inception has even been described as a military coup in civilian guise (*ibid.*: 138). Nevertheless, this was not the military's, but Vargas's (personal) dictatorship – he was by no means a puppet or an agent of the military. Finer's example of such a military-supported civilian dictatorship was Marcos's regime in the Philippines. The elected President Marcos 'introduced martial law in 1972 and used it to suspend Congress, arrest opponents, censor the press and then introduce a totally new constitution' (Finer, 1988: 256). The President's attempt to set up this new regime would have been abortive if the military had refused to support him, if only by refusing to administer martial law, but instead Marcos went on to rule the Philippines until 1986.

The Autogolpe or Self-Coup

Both the Marcos and Vargas military-supported regimes were also examples of an unusual form of coup known as the *autogolpe*. This Latin American term, literally a 'self-coup', describes 'a coup launched by the chief executive himself in order to extend his control over the political system in some extra-constitutional way' (Farcau, 1994: 2). The *autogolpe* is usually associated with the creation of a military-supported civilian personalist dictatorship or the extension of a military dictatorship. Only rarely, as in the case of Prime Minister Gandhi's state-of-emergency

rule of India in 1975–77, has such a regime not been based on the public office of president.

A 1990s example of a civilian *autogolpe* leading to a military-supported regime is provided by elected President Fujimori of Peru. In 1992 he suspended the constitution, dissolved Congress, and introduced a new constitution (ratified by referendum) that removed the prohibition on his being reelected for a second term. Even before his coup, President Fujimori had been preparing a 'marriage of convenience' with the army by exploiting not only some senior officers' individual self-interest in career advancement, but also the army's corporate self-interest in acquiring a free hand to prosecute its counter-insurgency campaign against the leftist Shining Path guerrillas (Obando, 1996). This mutually supportive relationship was confirmed when the military backed his coup and received extensive new powers to prosecute its counter-insurgency war. The key relationship was actually the personal alliance between President Fujimori and his chosen army commander General Hermoza Rios, who stayed in his post even after Fujimori's comfortable victory in the 1995 presidential election reduced the President's dependence on the military.

The military's support for a civilian president's *autogolpe* – and for his resulting dictatorship – could be viewed in similar forensic fashion to the military's seizure of power. For the military seems to be acting as an accomplice ('before and after the fact') in the president's misappropriation of his public office and powers. The misappropriation is evident in the president's misuse of public powers to (1) extend his decree powers and/or remove the law-making powers embodied in the Congress or parliament, and (2) remove the constitutional prohibition on his serving a second term and/or ensure that he will be reelected. But misappropriation is most evident in the improper hold on public office that results from this misuse of powers – he has in practice taken personal possession of the public office of president.

Yet there is too little military involvement and influence to classify such a regime as a military dictatorship. It is no more than a military-supported civilian dictatorship which in these *autogolpe* examples has taken a personalist presidential form. In other circumstances it might well have taken the form of a weak party dictatorship becoming wholly reliant on the military

for its survival – a military-supported party dictatorship rather than military-supported personalist dictatorship.

However, the problem of how to categorise cases of misappropriation arises again when considering the case of an *autogolpe* carried out by a military rather than civilian president. An excellent example was provided by President Park of South Korea in the early 1970s. After seizing power by coup in 1961, he had constructed an elaborate multiparty democratic disguise but eventually he resorted to an *autogolpe*. In 1972 he declared martial law, suspended the constitution, dissolved the National Assembly, and introduced a new constitution that entitled him to appoint a third of the Assembly and to be elected president indirectly instead of by popular vote. Although Park's public office and powers had originally been acquired by military coup, his 'self-coup' was a separate, quite distinct measure – a misappropriation of presidential public office/powers comparable to that perpetrated by Vargas, Marcos and Fujimori.

The calculus of military intervention can be modified to accommodate misappropriations as well as seizures of power. But the main reason for this modification is that it will provide a better basis for making comparisons with the emergence of party dictatorships, which have often arisen through the misappropriation rather than seizure of power. Therefore the notion of 'usurping' power will be used to describe both a seizure or a misappropriation of power, and 'usurpation' will refer to the usurping of public office and powers by either seizure or misappropriation. The motive/means/opportunity framework and calculus of intervention will become the framework and calculus of usurpation. And in this form it will also be able to analyse the emergence of party dictatorships.

4

The Emergence of Party Dictatorships

When compared to the many attempts to analyse and generalise about military intervention in politics, the analysis of when, why and how party dictatorships emerge has received scant attention. The issue is usually covered only in respect to a particular variety of party dictatorship, such as the communist or fascist, rather than the whole type. This lack of interest in analysing the emergence of party-type dictatorships may be due to their apparent rarity when compared to the much more numerous examples of the military type. But when the various categories of party dictatorship are added together, the total number of historical examples of this type of dictatorship is surprisingly high.

The most numerous category appears at first glance to be the communist party dictatorships, those that espouse and seek to implement Marxism–Leninism. At their numerical peak in the 1980s there were no fewer than 23 avowed communist regimes but only 16 of these were classified by Holmes as 'core' examples and, with the possible exception of Cuba, were party rather than military dictatorships (1986: viii). The other ideologically defined category of party dictatorship, the fascist regimes, provides only two examples: the Fascists in Italy and the Nazis in Germany. Similarly, the geographical rather than ideologically defined categories of Latin American and Middle Eastern regimes provide only a few examples. In Latin America there have been the party dictatorships of the PRI in Mexico,

the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and the MNR in Bolivia. In the Middle East, including North Africa, there have been Saddam Hussein's Baathist regime in Iraq, Bourguiba's regime in Tunisia and Ben Bella's short-lived regime in Algeria.

But the geographically defined category of African party dictatorships provides a large number of examples and is in fact the most numerous category. McKown and Kauffman's (1973) estimate covering the 1963–68 period identified 17 examples of one-party states, existing or defunct, in sub-Saharan Africa (1973: 55–6, 55 table 1). Similarly, Finer estimated that at least 20 examples of single-party regimes had been seen in continental Africa in the 1960s (1974: 527). When boosted by a few later examples, such as Zambia and Marxist–Leninist Mozambique, the African one-party states therefore make up the majority of cases of party dictatorship.

A total of more than 30 cases of the emergence of party dictatorship would seem to be more than enough for conceptual analysis and generalisation. However, nearly half of the 16 communist cases were established with the aid of external military forces, namely the occupying forces that the Soviet Union deployed in 1921 in Outer Mongolia, and in 1944–48 in countries formerly held by or allied with Nazi Germany or Imperial Japan. The Soviet forces have been credited with the actual 'installation' of communist regimes in Mongolia, Poland, East Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania and North Korea (Hammond, 1975a). With these regimes, along with Cuba, consigned to the 'awkward cases' (see Exhibit 4.1), only eight examples remain to be included in the total number of party takeovers. Moreover, the Mexican Latin American case of party dictatorship and the Iraqi Middle Eastern case both arose from gradual transformation of a military regime into a party dictatorship and they, too, will have to be examined separately as 'awkward cases'.

Yet even without these cases there would still seem to be a sufficient number of examples available – more than 20 – to develop an analytical framework of similar comprehensiveness to Finer's calculus for analysing the military's intervention in politics and seizure of public offices and powers. Indeed, the obvious place to begin is to seek to apply the same Finer-based framework (the motive/means/opportunity calculus of usurpation) that was used in the previous chapter on the

Exhibit 4.1 'Awkward Cases' of the Emergence of Party Dictatorship

There is a group of seven communist party dictatorships – Mongolia, Poland, East Germany, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and North Korea – which were said to have come to power, not through their parties' efforts, but through having been installed by the Soviet Union's occupying military forces (Hammond, 1975a). Bulgaria may be better categorised with Yugoslavia and Albania rather than as a case of installation, and the Hungarian case has some similarities with events in Czechoslovakia (Swain and Swain, 1993). But this does not detract from the general point that some communist party dictatorships emerged only because the country was under the military occupation of a communist foreign power.

The installed communist dictatorships appear to have followed a rough blueprint aimed at disguising and smoothing their takeover, which may have helped to reduce local and international opposition to their installation (Hammond, 1975b). As manifested in 1944–49, this strategy of 'creeping communism' emphasised camouflage and gradualism that employed (a) 'salami tactics' to eliminate one foe or rival at a time, and (b) the popular-unity Front tactic of forming a coalition Front with other parties and mass organisations that were or would soon become communist-controlled puppets (Hammond, 1975b).

Another group of dictatorships that are difficult to include in the motive–means–opportunity framework are those where a party dictatorship has emerged out of a military regime. In Cuba, the Castro-led guerrilla army that overthrew Batista's dictatorship in 1959 eventually established a military-dominated communist regime that has been gradually transformed into virtually a party dictatorship. The Mexican regime completed the transition as long ago as the 1940s when the military leaders ensured a smooth transition to party dictatorship by the official party that had been created after the 1911–17 Mexican Revolution by leaders of the revolutionary armies and their civilian allies. The Iraqi Baathist regime completed a similar transition in 1979 when the civilian Saddam Hussein formally succeeded to the leadership (see Chapter 6). And in Taiwan the 1970s transition from rule by General Chiang Kai-shek to dictatorship by his official party, the Kuomintang, was accompanied by the beginnings of a gradual transition to democracy (see Chapter 8).

emergence of military dictatorships. It is true that party dictatorships often emerge through misappropriating rather than seizing public office and powers, but as was pointed out at the end of the previous chapter, the concept of *usurping* power refers to both its seizure or misappropriation. Moreover, there are major advantages in applying the same analytical framework (calculus) to the emergence of both types of dictatorship, party as well as military. In particular, it would assist comparisons and contrasts between examples of these two quite different types of modern non-democratic regime.

Motive

The Finer-based check-list of (mixed) motives for military usurpation of power that was developed in the previous chapter is readily applicable to usurpation of public offices and powers by a party. But this check-list

- national interest,
- corporate self-interest,
- social self-interest in various forms, and
- individual self-interest

requires some addition and shifts in emphasis.

For example, the national-interest motive is insufficient to cover those cases where members of a party are motivated by a wider concern or loyalty than their citizenship of a particular country. Several of the ideologies espoused by parties are committed to an international class, race or nation. The most obvious example is the communists' Marxist–Leninist focus on the working class as an international social class and on the international class-loyalty expressed in the notion of 'proletarian internationalism'. The Nazis' focus on the international Aryan race is another famous example; and the Baathists' focus on pan-Arab nationalism is a classic example of international (Arab) nationalism. It is difficult to determine the extent to which these international concerns and loyalties have replaced or subsumed the citizen's concern for the national interests of his/her country. But any comprehensive check-list of motives has to provide for

the possibility that these wider concerns can be one of the motives for a party's attempt to usurp power.

Therefore a new motive will be added to the check-list, that of *ideological interest*, based upon a party member's (possibly) being a 'believer' in an ideology. As well as addressing the issue of international loyalties, adding an ideological motive means that national interest will no longer be the only altruistic motive in the check-list. The altruistic aspect of ideological interest helps to distinguish class- or ethnic-focused ideological motives from the self-interested and parochial motives derived from membership in a *particular society*'s class or ethnic social group.

Like the military, parties usually present their usurpations of power as having been altruistically motivated. And there is some reason to believe that usurping parties may be less influenced by corporate self-interested motives than are officer corps. In fact, it seems more accurate to refer to *organisational* rather than corporate self-interest where parties are concerned, for they are so far removed from the military's corporate nature as a socially segregated and self-sufficient body that it seems a misnomer to describe them as corporate. Members of a non-ruling party are usually not even employed by it, let alone wear its uniform, live in its accommodation and obey its legally enforceable code of discipline. Some parties, notably the fascist and communist parties, do espouse a near-corporate ideal in their emphasis on commitment and discipline, such as with the fascists' party uniform and the communists' use of 'comrade' to describe fellow members. Yet it is unlikely that the role of party member is as significant to a fascist or communist as the role of soldier is to an officer.

Moreover, there seems to be no party equivalent of the manner in which the military's corporate self-interest motive is aroused by threats to its budget, its autonomy, or its professional monopoly. A party might be motivated to seize power because it is threatened with destruction or loss of independence. But it seems more likely that a party threatened with repression would be seeking to open, rather than monopolise, the political arena (unless the party was already motivated, by ideological and/or other motives, to seize power).

Similarly, a party already holding public offices might be motivated to misappropriate them in order to prevent the loss

of party privileges that would result from loss of office. But, again, it seems more likely that significant party privileges would be acquired after, not before, usurpation and that it is the actual acquisition of these privileges which would motivate usurpation. Indeed it is because a party would seem to have so much to gain by becoming the official party that it seems safe to assume that organisational self-interest does often help motivate a party's usurpation of power – even if seldom as an important or strong motive.

The motive of individual self-interest is another case of a shift in emphasis being needed when applying the check-list of motives to parties. But in this case the motive has to be given greater, rather than lesser, emphasis. As the leaders of the party have focused their career ambitions on acquiring public office, they presumably have a greater individual self-interest in usurping public offices than do the leaders of the military, whose career ambitions have been focused on the military ranks and posts they have pursued since adolescence. Furthermore, middle- and lower-ranking party leaders can expect to enjoy greater and more secure political (and often material) rewards if their party usurps public offices/powers and becomes the official, privileged party.

The motive of social self-interest, particularly that of class self-interest, also needs greater emphasis than when the check-list of motives was applied to the military. As party members are much less separated from society than is the corporately organised soldier, they are presumably more affected by their membership of a social group, whether class, ethnic, religious or regional. Such social self-interest is evident in the ideologies or programmes and the social composition of the membership of many parties that have established a dictatorship.

Most commonly it has been a class type of social self-interest, concerned for the interests of the working class and/or peasantry. This motivation has been found in the communist and, to varying degrees, in the Baathist and the Latin American party dictatorships – the Mexican, Bolivian and Nicaraguan. Often the leaders of these parties have *not* been members of the working class or peasantry – by birth, let alone by occupation – and so can hardly be depicted as motivated by social self-interest. The prevalence of middle-class intellectuals in the leadership of communist parties was so great that Kautsky categorised

communism as 'totalitarianism of the intellectuals' (1962: 109, 59–60). But it is not just the senior leaders' motives which are crucial in a party's usurpation of power; so, too, are those of the lower-ranking leaders and the ordinary membership of the party – and in a communist party these are drawn largely from the working class and peasantry.

As for ethnic, religious and regional types of social self-interest, they have been no more prominent as motives for party usurpation than for military seizures of power. There have been several parties in Asia based on these social interests but, with the possible exception of UMNO in Malaysia (see Chapter 9), they have not usurped public office and powers. And few of the many African cases of party usurpation appear to have been motivated by social self-interest. The many African parties which misappropriated power had won their election victories by presenting themselves as mass nationalist parties, and it was their electoral rivals who had tended to resort to parochial ethnic/kinship appeals (Zolberg, 1966: 22).

The Middle East provides many examples of religious-motivated parties, but these Islamic parties seem to be motivated more by altruistic religious belief comparable to ideological belief rather than by self-interested concern for their religious social group. More importantly, only one such party has actually usurped power: the Islamic Republican Party in 1980s Iran. Even the case of the IRP is problematical because this party was basically a vehicle used by politicised clergy to take charge of the purportedly democratic Islamic Republic established after the 1978–79 revolution – and the party was dissolved in 1987 after having served its purpose (Brooker, 1997: 146–8).

Finally, as with the military, there are motives that inhibit parties from usurping power. For example, presumably some political parties believe that democracy is in the national interest and perhaps even have an ideological belief in democracy. Also it is possible that some political parties share the military's concern that usurping power will have serious implications for organisational integrity and effectiveness. (For many parties have discovered that a lack of political competition can eventually have negative side-effects on morale, unity and political persuasiveness.) Certainly most parties share the officer corps's corporate and individual self-interested concern about the consequences of a failed bid to take power – few parties have been

allowed to survive a botched attempt at usurping power. Therefore, as in the case of the military's calculus of intervention/usurpation, a balance-sheet approach must be taken when assessing whether there is motive for usurpation.

Means

Analysing parties' means of usurping power, their methods and capacities, is more complex than analysing the military's means. For parties have used two very different methods to usurp power – the electoral and the revolutionary. The revolution method involves a seizure of power and is comparable to the military's method of staging a coup. But the electoral method involves a misappropriation of power that has been preceded by a legal, electoral acquisition of public office and powers. Assessing whether any particular party has the means to usurp power therefore requires assessing two very different types of capacity: (1) the capacity to stage a revolutionary seizure of power, and (2) the capacity to achieve an electoral misappropriation of power. And this dual assessment must in turn be based on an understanding of the characteristics and historical 'track record' of the two methods.

Electoral Misappropriation of Power

The *electoral* method of usurpation exploits the party's inherent capacity as a misappropriator of power, just as the military's coup method exploits its inherent capacity to seize power. For the party's vote-winning capacity enables it to peacefully accomplish, through success in democratic elections, the first step on the way to misappropriation of power – acquiring a hold on the public offices and powers that it will misappropriate.

Obviously the success of the electoral method requires that a particular party has the capacity for electoral success (and the basic 'opportunity' of operating in a democratic rather than a monarchical or dictatorial environment)! And on occasions electoral success has been insufficient to provide a clear-cut claim to hold the governing public offices, as in the cases of the Nazis in Germany and the communists in Czechoslovakia requiring coalition governments and support from an 'above-

parties' presidential head of state. But the electoral method of usurpation always has the advantage of allowing a party to acquire a hold on public offices and powers in a legal, democratic fashion that disguises and protects its move to establish a dictatorship.

Having acquired a hold on these public offices, the party can then misuse its newly acquired public powers to misappropriate public offices, specifically by ensuring that it will not be defeated in future elections. The misappropriation is therefore similar to that of a president staging an *autogolpe*, but in this case public office is being converted into the party's (not the officeholder's personal) 'property'. Moreover, misappropriation by a party seldom takes the dramatic form of a self-coup; it tends to use a more gradual and less blatant approach. For example, often a party has established a form of one-party state by using more subtle measures than simply the passing of a law prohibiting all other parties.

Yet whatever variations there may be in this stage of the misappropriation, in each case the party has the advantage of employing public powers that have been acquired by legal and democratic means, not by a blatantly illegal and undemocratic coup or threatened coup. Furthermore, the party is able to deploy its established expertise and resources in the field of political persuasion in its attempt to win the people's support for, or at least acquiescence in, this misappropriation of power. Considering the advantages of the electoral method, it is not surprising that this has been the most common way in which party dictatorships have been established.

The great majority of the incidences of electoral misappropriation were associated with the emergence of African party dictatorships. Only one of the many communist party dictatorships, the Czechoslovakian, came to power in this fashion and even this case involved a degree of latent or threatened armed insurrection (Tigrid, 1975). Like the notorious Nazi case of electoral misappropriation, it had been based upon a less than clear-cut election victory that had required the party to use measures not normally associated with the electoral method.

In contrast, most African party dictatorships had used the electoral method to usurp power and these misappropriations had been based upon massive election victories. During the decolonising 1954 and 1956 elections in Ghana, for example,

Nkrumah's CPP won two-thirds of the seats in the colony's legislative assembly, while the decolonising 1957 elections in Guinea saw Touré's PDG win nearly all the seats in the colonial assembly. With public office securely in the party's hands when the country finally became independent, the misappropriation of power involved only the removal of any democratic form of threat to the party's continued hold on these public offices.

In the African cases, the removal of political competitors often involved the use of the carrot rather than the stick (Carter, 1962; Coleman and Rosberg, 1964: 666–7; Zolberg, 1966: 87). In addition to absorbing other parties there was a willingness to coopt individual opponents – party leaders, members of parliament and even trade-union leaders. Although these coopted individuals and parties may have been motivated by the national interest, there was a self-interested, patronage aspect to their willingness to be coopted. (As will be seen in later chapters, the manipulation of patronage opportunities often directly or indirectly involves a misuse of public powers.) The patronage factor was particularly potent in these Third World countries, where (1) the allocation of scarce public amenities and services was of great social and political significance, and (2) public/state office was the prime source of economic welfare as well as social status.

Nevertheless, the African regimes used the stick as well as the carrot, often in a surprisingly open misuse of public powers. Quite frequently the governing party's monopoly was secured by a law declaring it to be the country's sole party, as in Ghana and Tanzania. It is true that there were a number of cases, as in Guinea and the Ivory Coast, where a *de facto* rather than legal one-party state was preferred, and there were even a few cases of the semi-dictatorship (see Chapter 9) or substantive form of one-party state – in which minority parties have no chance of competing effectively against the official party (Bienen, 1970a: 111–12).

But even when a *de facto* or substantive rather than legal form of one-party state was preferred, public powers were often misused to eliminate or weaken other parties. To prevent the official party's competitors being represented in parliament, most of the former French colonies in sub-Saharan Africa adopted an electoral law which gave *all* the seats to the winning party (Carter, 1962). Another common legal ploy was to ban 'the formation of any organization devoted to ethnic or other forms of "particularistic" propaganda' – a prohibition which could be interpreted to make most opposition groups 'illegal by definition' (Zolberg, 1966: 82). When combined with the use of various forms of (often quite mild) repression against individual political opponents, the result was to secure virtually as strong a hold on public offices as the legally recognised form of one-party state.

However, the electoral method also has several weaknesses:

- First, any particular party seeking to use this method must compete electorally with other parties that are likely to highlight any indication of its dictatorial ambitions.
- Secondly, the state apparatus, and especially the military, may refuse to acquiesce in the party's misappropriation of power.
- Thirdly, the public may refuse to acquiesce in being politically expropriated by the governing party. In fact, doubtless one of the reasons why misappropriation has been attempted so rarely by Western governing parties is because they have anticipated the likely negative reaction of the state apparatus and people to such a move.

Revolutionary Seizure of Power

The party's *revolution* method of usurping power involves the seizure rather than misappropriation of public offices and powers. They are acquired by the party's leading a successful uprising against the regime in power (Calvert, 1990: 2–4). This revolutionary uprising usually takes the form of an armed insurrection (such as a coup or guerrilla war) rather than of crowds of people taking to the streets – and even when relatively nonviolent, it is an illegal process relying on force or the threat of force. A constitutional, electoral or popular gloss may be given to the completion of the revolutionary seizure of power, but this is little different from the military formally adhering to the constitutional proprieties when removing a government by the threat of a coup.

Although a political party is a form of organisation developed specifically for the purpose of acquiring public office, it would seem to have much less capacity than the military for

seizing public offices and powers. A party's power is based not upon the use or threat of military force, but upon the use of political *persuasion* – persuading people to vote for the party's candidates and/or in other ways to identify with the party and assist its activities. Organisationally, the party differs markedly from the military. The modern political party was originally developed as a loosely knit private association of voluntary, dues-paying members engaged (usually as very much a part-time or leisure activity) in legally regulated political competition with other parties.

Nevertheless, the political party has sometimes been organisationally adapted to operate in a non-democratic context and to seize power by leading a revolutionary uprising. In fact the introduction in the early 1900s of the now familiar communist or Leninist notion of a revolutionary vanguard party, with its principles of elitist membership and (democratic) centralism, represented a move towards the selective recruitment and centralised discipline found in professional military organisations. As Holmes has pointed out, the introduction of this new organisational format was initially justified by Lenin as a response to the repressive conditions that his Bolshevik (Communist) Party faced under Russia's Tsarist autocracy (1986: 9). But his party's self-proclaimed role of leader of the proletarian revolution also seemed to require such organisational changes. If the party was to lead a revolutionary uprising rather than use the electoral method being adopted (ultimately unsuccessfully) by Marxist parties in Western Europe, then clearly some features of a normal, democratic party would have to be sacrificed to improve its military-like effectiveness.

The two fascist parties went several steps further than the communists in militarising their organisational format to suit the needs of the revolution method (Brooker, 1995: 28, 41). The formally democratic internal procedures retained by communist parties were replaced by unadorned centralisation, with overall command exercised by an individual leader figure, and there was even an explicitly hierarchical structure of party leaders and sub-leaders. However, the most striking evidence of militarisation was the use of party uniforms, emblems and salutes (though the fascists did not adopt the principle of selective recruitment until after they had usurped power).

The fascists' militarisation of their parties was not in response

to the difficulties of operating in a repressive political environment – they were legal parties operating in a democracy – and was largely due to the violent activities and ambitions of these parties in their founding years in the early 1920s. The Italian Fascists had originated after the First World War as a paramilitary movement, not a party, which used organised violence to smash leftist parties and trade unions. Although the movement was formed into a party (and took part in elections) in 1921, the Fascists came to power the following year through the 'March on Rome' by their militia forces. The Nazi Party, too, was oriented towards a violent seizure of power until the failed attempt at a coup – the failed Munich 'Beer Hall' putsch of 1923 – showed the Nazis that they would have to use a more legal method of acquiring power. And they would go on to show the world a decade later that a militarised party may also be able to successfully use the electoral method – to use persuasion rather than violence to achieve its ambitions.

However, even the use of the revolutionary method is in a sense dependent upon a party's capacity to persuade. In attempting to lead a revolution a party is inspiring as well as organising people to engage in a political activity that is much more dangerous than supporting the party at the ballot box. The party may be seeking support at the barricades or seeking to use its supporters as 'human bullets', in the sense of a sheer mass of people filling the streets and public spaces and forcing its way into public buildings. Or the party may be recruiting and inspiring supporters who will use real bullets and attempt an operation that is very similar to a military coup.

Most party-led revolutions have in fact been the result of party coups and/or civil wars between the party and its opponents. The argument that 'armed force was the determinant of victory in *all* cases in which Communists have not only seized power but have managed to retain it' could be applied to other parties that have sought to use the revolutionary method of establishing dictatorship (Hammond, 1975a: 640). However, the role of armed force can be more psychological and political than military, as in the case of the Italian Fascist Party's successful coup, the March on Rome of October 1922. Initiated by the party's poorly armed and poorly trained militia, the coup has been termed a 'colossal bluff' and 'psychological warfare' aimed at building pressure on the government and King 'to

take a positive initiative to restore order' or to hand over power constitutionally to the Fascists (Lyttelton, 1973: 85–87). Instead of using the army to put down the attempted coup, the government resigned and left the King with the responsibility of appointing the Fascists' leader, Mussolini, to the post of prime minister. Although this constitutional and 'voluntary' aspect to the acquisition of public office would lead to the Fascist usurpation being as much a misappropriation as a seizure, the Fascists' psychologically and politically successful coup was the crucial event in the emergence of the world's first fascist regime.

The amount of armed force used by a party to carry out its coup may be surprisingly small if the targeted government or regime lacks reliable defenders. The classic example is the October 1917 coup in Russia that led to the emergence of the world's first communist regime. The Bolsheviks carried out their coup against the Provisional Government in the capital city, Petrograd, by using worker-militia Red Guards, several thousand Bolshevik-supporting sailors from the naval base, and a small minority of the 245 000-strong Petrograd garrison – the rest of which remained neutral (Pipes, 1991: 478).

A party coup may also be based largely on the armed force contributed by a military faction belonging or allied to the party. An extreme example is the July 1968 coup in Iraq which was carried out largely by the military wing of the Baathist Party and which resulted in a military Baathist regime that was gradually transformed into a civilian, truly-party dictatorship now ruled by Saddam Hussein (see Chapter 6). But the unreliability of military allies was displayed in the Bolivian revolution of 1952. The National Revolutionary Movement (MNR) coup against the country's military rulers was jeopardised when MNR allies in the police and military abandoned the coup; victory was won only after armed workers, particularly miners, came to the aid of the middle-class MNR fighters embroiled in armed combat with army units in the capital and a number of other cities (Malloy, 1971: 111–12).

As has occasionally occurred with partially failed military coups, a partially failed party coup can develop into a civil war. The 1918–20 Civil War in Russia was a result of the failure of the October 1917 coup by the Bolshevik (soon to be renamed Communist) Party to win control of the countryside, where most of the population lived, and of the peripheral regions of

the former Russian Empire, including Siberia, the Caucasus, the Ukraine, Poland, the Baltic states and Finland. Not until 1920 did the communists' Red Army finally destroy the counter-revolutionary 'White' armies. With the conquest of the Caucasus completed in 1921 and eastern Siberia occupied in 1922, the communists ended up by 'recovering' most of the territory of the old Russian Empire; only Poland, Finland and (temporarily) the Baltic states had been 'lost'.

But a party-led revolution may from the outset take the form of a civil war, as in the famous case of the Chinese communists' military defeat of the Kuomintang regime in 1947–49 (see Eastman, 1984: 161–5; Dreyer, 1995: 315–33). By 1947 the communists controlled extensive rural areas in northern China but they were far away from the country's capital city (Nanking) and urbanised heartland. Instead of attempting a revolutionary coup, the communists therefore had to fight their way into the rest of China by defeating the Kuomintang army. They inflicted a series of devastating military defeats upon the Kuomintang by using a burgeoning army organised and equipped in similar fashion to the Kuomintang state's military forces. The party's regular or conventional armed forces (as distinct from guerrilla or militia forces) grew from some 90 000 in 1937 to some 475 000 in mid-1945, had reached nearly two million by 1947 and attained actual numerical parity with the Kuomintang forces in 1948.

A more recent example of party-led revolutionary civil war was the Nicaraguan revolution of 1978–79 that routed the Somoza family's long-standing military regime. The Sandinista movement's fight against the Somoza regime seemed to have suffered a major setback in 1978 when its attempted five-city coup was crushed, but this failure actually increased support for the movement, and the flow of recruits and resources was converted in 1979 into a victorious military campaign using conventional as well as guerrilla forces (Gilbert, 1988: 10–12, 110).

The fundamental *weakness* of the revolutionary method is the difficulty a party has in acquiring either the masses of unarmed people or the units of armed supporters that are needed for an effective attempt at revolution. In a democracy it is difficult to persuade people of the need to go to such extremes, whether it is a mass of people taking to the streets or a smaller number taking up arms. In a non-democratic country the degree of repression makes it more dangerous to inspire people to revolt

and more difficult to organise them. Consequently, unarmed revolutions by the masses tend to be spontaneous, as with the February 1917 revolution in Russia, or to be led by some more-established institution than a party, as with the clergy-led revolution in Iran.

Another, only slightly less fundamental, weakness is the difficulty in overcoming the police and military power of the state. If a government is prepared to use the force available to it, and if the armed forces obey these orders to suppress the attempted revolution, then any successful revolution will usually require a formidable armed force – probably including a conventional as well as guerrilla army. It is not often that a party will be able to deploy armed forces that are more effective than the armed forces of the regime it is seeking to replace. Therefore it is not surprising that so few party dictatorships have been established through the revolution method – and that one of the opportunities for usurpation arises from a weakening of state power.

Opportunity

There is not the space to offer more than a cursory glance at the question of when does an opportunity arise for usurpation of power by a party. However, opportune situations for parties' electoral misappropriation of power and/or for party-led revolution can be identified by looking back at the historical circumstances in which party dictatorships have emerged. Three such opportune situations are:

1. a weakening of the state power of the incumbent regime;
2. a war of liberation; and
3. a process of decolonisation.

A leading theorist of revolution has used historical evidence from the French, Russian and Chinese revolutions to argue that the weakening of the old regime's state power, especially its military power, provided an opportunity for revolution (Skocpol, 1979). She contended that a revolution occurred only after the way had been opened by the disintegration of the old regime's

TABLE 4.1

The calculus of party usurpation of power

Motive	*Means*	*Opportunity*
1. National interest 2. Ideological interest 3. Social (especially class) self-interest 4. Individual self-interest 5. Organisational self-interest	1. Electoral method (*misappropriation* of power) 2. Revolution method (*seizure* of power)	1. Weakening of state power 2. War of liberation 3. Decolonisation
Inhibiting motives		
1. Belief in democracy (national interest or ideological interest) 2. Fear of failure (organisational and individual self-interest)		

administrative machinery and armies (*ibid.*: 47). Therefore the disintegration of the Russian army in the second half of the First World War was 'a necessary cause' of (1) the demise of the Tsarist monarchical regime at the hands of the spontaneous February 1917 revolution, and (2) of the revolutionary seizure of power by the Bolsheviks in October – a 'military coup' which faced 'no immediate military opposition that could not be overcome in brief struggles' (*ibid.*: 94, 213). Similarly, in the case of the Chinese communist revolution against the Kuomintang regime, the 1937–45 war with Japan had had a devastating effect upon the Kuomintang army, seriously weakening its ability to fight the 1947–49 civil war with the communist army (Eastman, 1984: 219).

The communist seizures of power in Russia and China seem, therefore, to be examples of exploiting a state-weakening opportunity provided by the state's military defeats at the hands of a foreign foe. That a war can provide the opportunity for party usurpation of power may seem somewhat paradoxical, but it has long been recognised by practitioners and analysts of politics. 'Almost all Communist takeovers have occurred either

during international wars or in the aftermath of such wars', as they 'undermined the old political, economic and social order' (Hammond, 1975a: 641).

A special case of the opportunity that war provides for party usurpations of power is the 'war of liberation'. An opportunity that can be exploited by either the revolution or the electoral method arises when a party has led a successful war of liberation against either (a) an intransigent colonial power, or (b) a conquering power's occupying military forces. With the foreign forces expelled, there is no state power available to contest a revolutionary seizure of power; and if democratic elections are held, the party which has led the war of liberation is in a strong position not only to win an election victory but also subsequently to misappropriate these public offices and powers. Three communist regimes – Yugoslavia, Albania and North Vietnam – exploited the war-of-liberation opportunity, as did the party dictatorships established in (ex-French) Algeria and (ex-Portuguese) Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau.

The most fruitful opportunity to use the electoral method was provided by decolonisation. Most of the African examples of party dictatorship benefited from this opportunity, as the party which inherited power from the colonial rulers in the 1950s–60s – thanks to its election victory in the transitional period of decolonisation – went on to misappropriate the public offices and powers of the new state. After the Second World War the British and French colonial empires had begun to allow their African subjects to participate in the governing of their territories (and to prepare for eventual self-government) through electing representatives to colonial assemblies and governments. With these colonial and eventually decolonising elections came the development of mass political parties, which seized the opportunity to win the support of a voting public that was still untouched by political parties and partisan loyalties. The first mass parties to be established in each of the African colonial territories were able to exploit the great advantage of being the first political organisation to establish a link with the mass public, with a further advantage arising from the 'bandwagon effect' as the franchise was extended by the colonial rulers to successively wider sections of the public (Zolberg, 1966: 14–15, 19–21).

However, this electoral opportunity was less important than

the party's subsequent opportunity to misappropriate its democratically acquired public offices. For the state apparatus, particularly the military, clearly could have blocked or overturned the party's misappropriation of power, as would be confirmed when eight party dictatorships were overthrown by their armies during the 1960s (Finer, 1974: 527).

There were some *decolonisation*-linked factors, though, which helped to ensure the state's as well as the public's acquiesence in misappropriation of public office. It is commonly argued that the new, elected rulers were able to step into the shoes of the dictatorial colonial rulers, who recognised the electorally victorious parties and party leaders as their legitimate successors (Coleman and Rosberg, 1964: 655, 659). Therefore the public's and the state officials' residual respect for dictatorial colonial authority 'was transferred to the Africans who assumed the roles hitherto filled by Europeans', with a prime minister or president being seen as comparable to a colonial Governor (Zolberg, 1966: 17–18). Furthermore, not only was the counterbalancing influence of democratic institutions, processes and norms both novel and weak but also the new governing parties and leaders enjoyed the prestige of being the founding fathers of their newly independent states (Zolberg, 1966: 90).

The decolonising opportunity to use the electoral method of usurping power may appear to have been a historically unique 'window of opportunity' in the 1950s–70s that would never reoccur. But a similar situation seems to have arisen in Central Asia in the early 1990s as the former republics of the disintegrating Soviet Union became independent states (see Exhibit 8.2 and Chapter 9). The five new states in Central Asia went through a transition that in at least the case of Tajikistan 'bore a resemblance to the decolonization of Western states' empires a generation earlier' (Atkin, 1997: 621).