

## **On Tyranny: The Political and Economic Characteristics of the Authoritarian Regime**

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Over the centuries of human history, many different types of government have emerged to control or guide their people. This variety has led to continual debates over which type has the most legitimacy for its citizens. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, developed nations generally advocate for versions of representative democracy while many less-developed nations tend to accept variants of authoritarian tyranny. A tyranny is a peculiar type of government that can take a religious, military, ethnic, royal, one-party, or multi-party form (Geddes 1999; Hadenius and Teorell 2007); it can even exist in democracies as tyranny of the majority (Mill 1859; Tocqueville 1969). Regardless of the form any particular tyranny takes, though, tyranny as a political system remains largely undefined.

Although a few authors have examined tyranny partly within their other works, they rarely have investigated tyranny as their primary focus (Locke 1988; Montesquieu 1894; Plato 1968; Tocqueville 1969). Others have fully discussed very particular types of tyranny, like constitutional dictatorships or totalitarianism, but have qualified the tyrannical powers to very specific situations or crises (Arendt 2007; Schmitt 1921). More recently, some scholars have begun to distinguish among different categories of authoritarian regimes or have investigated the use of various political devices like elections, legislatures, and political parties in these regimes (Diamond 2002; Gandhi and Przeworski 2007; Geddes 2006; Hadenius and Teorell 2007; Levitsky and Way 2002; Linz and Stepan 1996; Schedler 2006). Yet even these studies have not

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provided a full sense of tyranny in more comprehensive terms, leaving the essence of tyranny imperfectly understood.

Hence this article examines the elements of tyranny and tyrants more completely. It proceeds with the idea that most tyrannies have similar overall structures and use many of the same behaviors, even though it recognizes that all tyrannies can differ from one another in some respects due to diverse cultures, leaders, past governmental experiences, etc. The article argues, though, that extreme selfishness in the form of excessive self-love characterizes tyrannies and tyrants above all else; such selfishness indeed is more ubiquitous in tyrannies than in other types of government. The implication is that tyrants will pursue their own political and economic good as their primary goals, and therefore rarely will seek to attain the good of others unless it subsequently benefits the tyrants. As tyrants take over, they remove the remnants of the former government by consolidating governmental authority into one institution. Often this requires tyrants to eliminate or marginalize opponents and repress the people. Tyrannies thus do not act as legitimate governments because they forbid their subject-citizens from having liberty, influence, and satisfaction politically or socially. This article contributes to the literature on authoritarianism by going beyond previous studies to present a more encompassing view of how tyrants and their tyrannies work.

### **A Definition of Tyranny**

Although Plato established an authoritarian regime with his Republic (1968), Aristotle in *The Politics* devoted considerable attention to exploring different types of government, including tyranny. Aristotle argued that tyranny could come in one of three forms, each with a different degree of governmental authority vested in the tyrant and each with the tyrant possessing different motivations for ruling (1986, 1295a). First, a tyranny emerged when the people elected

a monarch and gave that monarch the absolute authority to act within the rule of law; this type of tyranny is distinct from the other two forms in that these tyrants could not violate the law no matter how much they desired to do so. The law thus could restrict the actions of the monarch to ensure governance for the common welfare (1986, 1279a). Such a government today might be considered a constitutional absolute monarchy but would be extremely rare.

Second, a tyranny existed when the people elected the monarch and granted that monarch absolute authority but did so without the rule of law as a binding agent. These monarchs/tyrants differed from those in Aristotle's first type of tyranny in that they faced no prohibitions on their actions and could act "despotically according to their own will" (1986, 1295a). Unlike the first type, these tyrants could ignore the common welfare. This second type therefore came closer to a true tyranny, although one where the next ruler still would have to gain the approval of the people to hold the office. The current equivalent might be a non-hereditary elected authoritarian regime such as in Venezuela (Arcaya 2007) or Russia (Blank 2007; Rosefielde and Hlouskova 2007).

Third, a full tyranny arose when one person ruled through coercion and, unlike Aristotle's first and second forms of tyrant, did not gain the position through an election. Instead, this third variant of tyrant forcefully grabbed the authority to rule through a variety of ways, including coup, rebellion, or conquest. These tyrants would act despotically as well, specifically to seek personal advantage and their own pleasure rather than the good of others (1986, 1295a). These tyrants could do anything they desired for as long as they maintained control of the tyranny, including designating their own successor without having to defer to the people. As with the second type of tyrant, nothing could prevent these tyrants from acting as they saw fit, especially the rule of law. The tyrants' commands indeed were law, made explicitly to benefit the tyrants

over all others. Linz regards this type a “sultanistic” authoritarian regime (1975, 36); however Aristotle’s third definition applies to most forms of authoritarianism existing today.

While Aristotle’s concept of tyranny generally focuses on one-person rule, or the autocracy, tyranny in practice is not so limited. Tyrannies can consist of one-person rule, as with Stalin’s Soviet Union (Kenez 2006; Wilde 2009) or Mugabe’s Zimbabwe (Cross 2007a; Dugger 2008). Yet tyrannies also can involve rule by a small group, cabal, or council that shares in the governmental authority, as with the military Junta in Burma/Myanmar (Aung 2007). Such groups still govern by coercive force to benefit themselves and meet their own needs, but members do so in conjunction with one another. Even Aristotle might not reject such an expanded definition, as he later stated in *The Politics*: “...if anyone assumes the government, either by force or fraud, this is a tyranny” (1986, 1313a). Hence none of Aristotle’s three types of tyranny are truly restricted to one-person rule.

Aristotle’s first definition of tyranny only has limited applicability to more contemporary authoritarian regimes; therefore this article will focus fully on his second and third types of tyranny. These two forms are related in that both have the tyrants possessing despotic authority and seeking only their own good or gratification. The two types therefore tend to have many similarities with one another in terms of how the tyrants act as leaders and how the tyrants structure their government; the two types differ mostly on how the tyrants come to rule. As a result, each type exists as just a different version of despotism and both therefore can be considered true tyrannies. Hence this article initially defines tyranny as a form of government where rulers have despotic authority to act and use that authority for their own advantage.

Most current authoritarian regimes also come under this overall definition of tyranny regardless of which of Aristotle’s two types they embody the most; the rulers of these regimes do

act despotically and attempt to gain their own good first and foremost (Arcaya 2007; Ahsan 2007; BBC News 2005; Beichelt 2004; Cross 2007a; Kagan 2008b; Karon 2008; Najjar 2008; Sevier 2008; Tripp 2004; Trueman 2009). Essentially Aristotle's notion of despotic tyranny still applies to the more contemporary sense of authoritarianism discussed by different scholars; the implication is that those in power regardless of number have enough authority to both structure the government or society as they see fit and create personal policies or laws to benefit themselves (Loewenstein 1935; Spitz 1965, 258). Hence an authoritarian regime is a tyranny and a tyranny is an authoritarian regime. Since the concepts of tyranny and tyrants have been common to most eras since the Greeks, including the American founding, this article will mostly use the term tyranny rather than the more popular authoritarianism as a way to link past theories with present regimes.

Overall, then, the defining characteristic of any tyranny is the tyrant's pursuit of authority over others and personal pleasure above all else. This turn toward their own individual good occurs because tyrants more than other type of leader embody the cardinal vice of self-love. While they also can fall prey to any number of other vices, most of these vices initially arise from self-love as well. Self-love can come from biology, the desire for the self to not only endure but do well for itself or make itself more comfortable (Cicero 1999, 63). It further arises because all people really know are themselves—their fears, desires, and concerns. People thus attach more importance to themselves and their needs than the needs of others. "It never rests, or fixes any where from home, and, if for a little while it dwell upon some other thing, 'tis only as bees do, when they light upon flowers, with a design to draw all the virtue there is to their own advantage" (La Rochefoucauld 1991, 23-24). Self-love makes everyone the center of their own universe, giving them an exaggerated sense of their own importance. It encourages individuals

to evaluate every action in terms of what good those actions can bring to them personally rather than to others or the country. Basically it makes them seek excessive self-indulgence rather than moderation or public spiritedness (Aristotle 1986, 1289b; Jefferson 1993, 583).

Although leaders and politicians from many different types of government can exhibit such self-love, tyrants particularly exemplify the vice of self-love because they do act primarily out of excessive self-interest and tend to be self-absorbed (Aristotle 1986, 1295a; Fox 1783; Locke 1988, 398-399; Plato 1968, 573a-575a). They take control out of self-love to rule from self-love, meeting their every basic need and fulfilling their every desire. These tyrants focus on their own ego-centric concerns above all else, as seen in many recent tyrannies (Arcaya 2007; Ahsan 2007; Aung 2007; Beichelt 2004; Bridge 2008; Butt 1998; Cross 2007a; Kagan 2008a; Link and Kurlantzick 2009; Najjar 2008; Pepinsky 2007; Rasuli 2003; Tangri and Mwenda 2008). Such tyrants differ from other leaders who also act out of self-love in that the tyrants take their self-love to an extreme.

Tyrants want to rule over the entire political system so that they can act however their self-love dictates; other leaders, though, generally are not so controlled by their self-love because they either exercise greater levels of personal restraint or face structural checks on their ability to act as they please. Essentially, they do not or cannot act out of self-love too excessively even though tyrants can and will do so. For example, U.S. presidents may want to benefit themselves above all others in the country but they often recognize that such actions are inappropriate and unwise, especially with other institutions keeping a careful watch on those presidents and intervening when necessary to stop them (Madison [1787] 1987c). Tyrants, though, specifically seek to eliminate any restraint on their self-love so that they can act for their own pleasure and advantages, even to the extent of removing all personal and structural obstacles to their rule.

Their own self-love thus governs not only the tyrants but the entire political system as well (Loewenstein 1935). The control they possess over their country then allows them to express their self-love fully in their laws/commands and actions.

Hence unlike other types of leaders, tyrants seldom feel obligations to others or to the community; they are so completely self-involved that they turn away from these others to pursue their own good. Tyrants thus tend to do whatever they want without truly caring how they might harm other elites or the people. As Aristotle argued, a tyrant “has no regard to the common good, except for his own advantage; his only object is pleasure” (1986, 1311a). This pursuit of their own good so dominates the tyrants’ perspectives that they restructure the entire country to meet their own needs first and foremost, developing an exploitative relationship with others (Aristotle 1986, 1286b; Plato 1968, 566e-567a; Xenophon 2008, I-II). Even when tyrants argue that they took over to create order or reduce corruption, they mostly use those claims as justifications for acting on their own private wants, as did Lukashenko in Belarus (Usov 2008, 91), Museveni in Uganda (Tripp 2004, 8-9), and the last three leaders of Egypt (Najjar 2008). Self-love therefore orients tyrants away from others and towards themselves, making them less public citizens and more private individuals with authority over everyone else.

Consequently this article further defines tyranny as a regime where tyrants act out of self-love and selfishness to take despotic control of the political system to benefit themselves, exercise political power, and attain other more individualistic goals relevant to each particular tyrant. Not all tyrannies then will act identically or will have the same institutions or processes; they nevertheless will have many similar structures, organizations, and actions because they all have in common the same basic foundation and their tyrants have the same selfish motivation to rule; they also can learn lessons from one another and history that can teach them how best to

organize their tyranny in analogous ways. Even though Kilpatrick seems to have accepted some variants of tyranny as valid (1982), the selfishness embedded within it prevents any tyranny from having legitimacy as a government. Tyrants do not work for the welfare of their people, they will repress rather than bargain, and they have a greater willingness to go to extremes to ensure their survival (Wintrobe 1990); there are no good tyrannies.

Too often these days people confuse tyrant with dictator. They are not the same thing. Although early political scientists like von Fritz (1941), Sherman (1934), and Spencer (1927) correctly distinguished between tyrant and dictator, many current scholars conflate the two terms. The political science literature as a whole often uses “dictatorships” when they really mean tyrannies (Acemoglu et al 2008; Boix and Svobik 2009; Gandhi and Przeworski 2006; Geddes 2006; Magaloni 2007a, 2007b; Olson 1993; Wintrobe 1990, etc.). The tyrant is the autocrat or despot, the one person or small group with almost complete authority over the entire country for as long as that tyrant can hold on to that authority (Aristotle 1986, 1245a). The Dictator is a Roman *constitutional* office used only in times of great emergency and only for a limited amount of time (Schmitt 1921; Scullard 1980, 80; Spencer 1927, 538), what Linz regards as an “interim government” (2002).

The Roman Dictator is the excellent citizen who responds to the Senate's request for help during a crisis that the normal constitutional offices cannot handle. The deliberation ordinarily used by the government to make policy temporarily gives way to martial law and leadership, where the Dictator's (oral) word replaces (written) law (Spencer 1927, 539). The Dictator dictates solutions to problems and in doing so temporarily suspends the constitution, but nevertheless does not act despotically (Arato 2002, 489). Dictators are reluctant leaders, returning to the status of an ordinary citizen when the crisis is over even if offered a more

permanent position. They do not seek the office but accept it out of necessity to protect and serve the republic. The Roman epitome of the Dictator is Cincinnatus with the American version widely regarded as George Washington.

Tyrants, though, are not reluctant leaders; instead they actively seek the office to impose their own will as despots (Aristotle 1986, 1295a; Machiavelli 1985). They frequently operate under martial law but do so purposefully and permanently; they use it to retain authority and diminish the possibility of threats to their position. Musharraf attempted to further consolidate his authority by detaining all officials who failed to take an oath to his new government (Ahsan 2007) while Mubarak in Egypt has operated under martial law since 1981 (Brownlee 2007). Tyrants therefore must create the impression that the country faces a constant set of never-ending crises, true or not, that justify their position and authority (Arato 2002, 494; Hoover 1952; Madison [1787] 1986b). For example, Iran's leadership constantly uses both foreign and domestic "emergencies" as a pretext for keeping themselves in power (CNN 2009; MSNBC 2010a; MSNBC 2009b; Zakaria 2009).

The two terms of tyrant and dictator have merged, especially in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. This is understandable since for a short time period the Dictator does have near absolute authority to act. At times, a tyranny even can come from the corruption of the office of Dictator, as with the Julians in Rome (Scullard 1982, 143). Overall, though, tyrants are the complete opposite of dictators in almost every way. They might share analogous degrees of authority but all similarity ends there. Yet much too often political science and other disciplines abound with researchers using "dictator" or "dictatorship" even though such use is incorrect. To understand tyranny properly, though, it is necessary to use appropriate terms.

### **Literature Review**

The political science literature on tyranny often falls within one of two main areas of investigation. In the first area, many researchers spend a considerable amount of time categorizing tyrannies into different types of authoritarianism, although there is significant disagreement among them about exactly how to do so. Arato (2002), Arendt (2007), and Linz (1975) make an initial distinction between totalitarian states and authoritarian regimes, where totalitarian governments have a far greater reach and presence throughout the country than do authoritarian governments. Wintrobe (1990) makes an even simpler classification by discussing how totalitarian states and “tinpot” regimes differ, with the totalitarian seeking complete political and social control over the entire country and the tinpot only wanting to benefit economically from ruling. Linz later combines efforts with Stepan (1996) and Chehabi (1998) to include the new categories of post-totalitarianism and sultanism as a way to further refine different types of tyrannical regimes.

However Geddes (1999) divides authoritarianism into four different categories that include personalist (akin to sultanist), military, single-party regimes, and hybrids of the three; Przeworski et al (2000) add multi-party regimes to these new classifications. Acemoglu et al (2008) and Huntington (1968) investigate primarily the military “dictatorship,” where members of the military either directly control the government or offer their full support to a tyrant lacking a military background.

Other researchers focus their attention on the “hybrid regimes” that have a mixture of authoritarianism and democracy, with Levitsky and Way (2002) exploring dimensions of “competitive authoritarianism” and Schedler (2002, 2006) examining “electoral authoritarianism.” Diamond (2002) distinguishes among three types of hybrid regimes by labeling them as “competitive authoritarian,” “hegemonic electoral authoritarian,” and

ambiguous; he compares them to politically closed regimes where electoral competition does not exist at all. Yet Snyder (2006) argues that the category of closed regime does not differentiate enough among a wide variety of regime types and thus has little explanatory significance.

Hadenius and Teorell (2007) offer their own categories of authoritarianism, drawing on and sometimes rejecting previous work to suggest these regimes can be hereditary, military, or electoral authoritarian. They then divide the electoral/competitive authoritarian regime into the subcategories of one-party, limited multi-party, and no-party. Yet Geddes argues that the concept of competitive authoritarianism has little meaning because it exists only when reasonably secure tyrants in fairly stable authoritarian regimes believe they can risk such competition (2006, 6). As a whole, then, the literature divides tyranny up into totalitarian, post-totalitarian, tinpot, military, hereditary, and hybrid/electoral/competitive authoritarianism with its subtypes of single-party, limited multi-party, full multi-party, and no-party with very few scholars agreeing to classify tyranny the same way.

Many researchers further argue that personalism/sultanism should be a major category distinct to itself (Linz and Stepan 1996; Snyder 2006), where the personalist tyranny is generally run by one person who attempts to force the political system to abide by that person's needs and desires. In this sense, the personalist tyrant most closely resembles Aristotle's third type of tyrant and is often contrasted with the other categories of contemporary authoritarian regimes. Yet Hadenius and Teorell (2007) and Magaloni (2007b) recognize that this move to make personalism a separate regime has little value since all tyrannies are personalist/sultanist to differing degrees. Geddes (1999) and Hadenius and Teorell (2007) additionally find that personalism in the tyrant has a positive effect on stability, allowing a tyranny to endure longer. All tyrants therefore have an incentive to become more personalist, although some are more successful than others due to

innate abilities, the tyranny's structure, and the extent of loyalty or support from followers.

Tyrannies thus can range from very personalist to limited personalist. Personalism, then, is a critical component that all tyrannies share in common, making it less its own distinct category and more a dimension of tyranny that impacts the very survival of the regimes.

Yet the lack of agreement on how to truly classify tyrannies hinders the investigations into how these tyrannies work. Every researcher draws upon their favorite or even their own classifications with some accepting Linz (1975, 2000), Diamond (2002), or Geddes (1999) and others using Hadenius and Teorell (2007) or Gandhi and Przeworski (2006, 2007). As a result, there is no collaborative approach to studying tyranny even as those categories reveal little about what these regimes all have in common. This article therefore in part seeks to help scholars start from the same understanding so they can go beyond basic descriptive categories to discover different aspects of tyrannies as governments.

The second area of investigation in the literature focuses almost entirely on the varying amounts of democracy a tyranny might tolerate. It also explores how tyrants then can benefit themselves by manipulating the democratic processes and institutions allowed within the tyranny. This area takes a page from Huntington, who argued the form of government mattered less than the "degree of government" (1968, 1). Most researchers thus examine the devices of elections, legislatures, and political parties. Each of these institutions allows differing degrees of governance/control by tyrants, depending on how much these devices might restrict the tyrants' actions or force tyrants to share their authority to rule.

In general, more of the research concentrates on elections than on the other two areas. Diamond (2005), Epstein et al (2006), Geddes (2006), Howard and Roessler (2006), Hyde and Marinov (2009), Levitsky and Way (2002), Magaloni (2007a), Pepinsky (2007), Schedler (2002,

2006), and many others not only investigate why tyrants will allow elections to occur, but also how those tyrants subsequently attempt to influence these elections to produce their desired outcome. In a similar vein, other researchers seek to discover why tyrants might allow legislatures to exist, especially when these legislatures give opponents of the regime the opportunity to have their say or gain some influence (Boix and Svobik 2009; Gandhi and Przeworski 2007; Levitsky and Way 2002; Magaloni 2007b; Wright 2008). They also explore how these legislatures often do not act as true representative or legislative bodies. Recently, a few researchers have examined political parties beyond using them to help classify a regime as a one-party or multi-party tyranny. Geddes (2006), Magaloni (2007b), and Smith (2005) briefly discuss how parties can restrain tyrants from completely acting as they wish and can foster some potential opposition to the tyrants by allowing other elites to have a place in the tyranny.

While these various studies can help reveal how some important components of tyranny work, often they examine their topic too specifically. They seldom take into account how other institutions of a tyranny, like a secret police or militia or bureaucracy, can affect the outcome of elections, the workings of the legislature, and the ability of parties to provide true opposition. These studies additionally rarely address such factors as loyalty or fear, instead focusing on cooperation and bargaining. Loyalty and fear, though, can strongly influence the actions of subordinates or the people. Thus loyal followers frequently vote for tyrants regardless of any opposition figures, as in Russia (Illarionov 2009, 70). Furthermore, the fear of the secret police might reduce election turnout by the opposition while the fear of being punished can encourage people to cast the “correct” vote for the tyrant, as happens in Malaysia and Turkmenistan (Pepinsky 2007, 137, 156). Tyrannies often utilize all of these dynamics and more to keep the

system more stable and allow the tyrants to continue their rule. To truly understand tyranny as a whole, then, it becomes necessary to investigate these features as they act on one another.

### **The Rise of a Tyrant**

It is often said that every person has the potential to become a tyrant given the right circumstances and the full authority to act without consequences (Montesquieu 1894, XXVIII; Plato 1968, 572b). While some people can behave as tyrants in their own households, rarely do they have the ability or the authority necessary to rule an entire country. Yet tyrants occasionally do emerge to gain control of their political system, sometimes creating that government initially and other times taking over an already established government. These tyrants frequently differ in their origins but try to transform political systems into tyranny in similar ways.

Some tyrants have a military background, using it to accrue enough popular or military support to attain leadership positions, as did Armas in Guatemala (Acemoglu et al 2008, 5), Musharraf in Pakistan (Blumenthal 2007; Karon 2008), and Pinochet in Chile (Hadenius and Teorell 2007, 146). Other tyrants begin as political leaders who have the backing of the people or even select elites; these potential tyrants use this support to push through their own agendas and increase their control over the government, such as with Hitler (O'Shaughnessy 2008; Payne 1995) or Saddam Hussein (CNN 2006; Rasuli 2003). Tyrants even can begin as relative unknowns, emerging out of obscurity to grab the authority to make decisions for everyone else; this especially can happen in countries where the line of succession is vague, such as with Oman which lacks a clearly identified heir apparent and whose next ruler therefore will be any one of the many relatives of its leader Qaboos (Sevier 2008). Accordingly tyrants can come from all aspects of life, including from within the political system or without. They can be rich or poor, noble or common, military or nonmilitary, or sometimes even naturalized citizens or conquerors

(Machiavelli 1985). No matter the individual origins of particular tyrants, though, they all act out of extreme self-love to attain their positions. Such self-love can have two different features, with either one of them or both encouraging tyrants to take over the political system.

First, excessive self-love can directly motivate tyrants to take control so that they can achieve their own personal self-interested goals; they aspire to create or remake the political system in the way they believe is most fit for them, which can range widely from tyrant to tyrant. Some like the feeling of being in charge, knowing that their every selfish whim will be met and that they can decide how everyone else lives, as with Idi Amin in Uganda (Tripp 2004, 4), Mogae in Botswana (Good and Taylor 2007, 276), and Mussolini in Italy (Loewenstein 1935, 591; Sherman 1929, 145). Some want to feel safe, although they ironically tend to lose that feeling of safety once they become the tyrant (Plato 1968, 566b, 579b). Others want to direct the course of their nation, even though that usually means the good of the tyrant becomes the good of the nation rather than the reverse, as with Putin's Russia (Kagan 2008b), Musharraf's Pakistan (Karon 2008), Lukashenko's Belarus (Usov 2008), and Egypt in recent decades (Najjar 2008). A few want to have absolute liberty, the ability to do whatever they desire without suffering serious repercussions politically, criminally, or socially (Aristotle 1986, 1313a; Lenin 1994). Hussein in Iraq (Rasuli 2003) and Mugabe in Zimbabwe (Cross 2007a) embody these types of tyrants and reflect the extremes that self-love can produce. They too, though, end up losing that complete liberty as they become the tyrant and find that their position constrains their actions.

Many of these tyrants therefore want to rule in order to benefit themselves in particular self-centered ways, as do other types of leaders. Yet unlike these other leaders, tyrants seldom desire to help others in the country as well; instead they fully focus on their own imperative need for dominance and advantages (Aristotle 1986, 1295a; Snyder 2006; Spitz 1965, 259), as seen in

Belarus (Usov 2008, 91), Iraq (Rasuli 2003), and Uganda (Tripp 2004, 4). Such tyrants do not just want to take charge to create order, although that does tend to matter to some of them. They also want the position for what it can give to them – authority, visibility, pleasure, and control (Aristotle 1986, 1313b; Linz and Chehabi 1998; Locke 1988, 398-405), as seen with Chavez in Venezuela (Arcaya 2007). Often tyrants with this type of motivation have an overwhelming lust for power; they give in to the baser part of human nature as they revel in their self-love or seek power for power's sake (Kagan 2008b; Lenin 1994; Loewenstein 1935, 572; Plato 1968, 566a-569c, 587c). In the end, their self-love directs them to work for themselves rather than create a better system of government. Their position as tyrant thus allows them to change the political system to attain their own self-aggrandizement and gain an ever-increasing number of privileges even as they consider everything and everyone else as less important.

Second, self-love can lead other tyrants to take over when they see chaos in an area without government or corruption in an already existing government. That self-love motivates them to solve these problems but in ways that will force the political system to fully express the tyrants' beliefs. These potential tyrants often start by arguing that they have the proper vision to provide stability to the system or to make everything "honorable" once again, as with Hitler's rise to Chancellor (Payne 1995) and the ascension of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia (Sevier 2008). For some, their initial actions actually can stem from good intentions to provide order or eliminate actual corruption, but even these prospective tyrants can become tainted by their pursuit of more authority. As Edmund Burke argued, "Many of the greatest tyrants on the records of history have begun their reigns in the fairest manner. But the truth is, this unnatural power corrupts both the heart and the understanding" (2009). The would-be tyrants eventually decide that they no longer want to work within the system to convince others of the rightness of

their beliefs and then have those beliefs enacted into legitimate law. These tyrants instead just want to force the country to accept their beliefs.

Herein lies an important difference between tyrants and the leaders found in aristocracies and democracies. Although any of these governing figures can act out of self-love, the tyrants' extreme self-love guides them to subvert or overthrow the political system while the other leaders' restrained self-love directs them to make legitimate and positive changes. Tyrants prefer not to make changes through proper channels; they instead want to command others to act according to their beliefs, as seen in Putin's Russia (Beichelt 2004; Blank 2007).

The prospective tyrants' own fall into corruption often starts with the assumption that *only* they have the correct sense of what to do to solve their country's problems. They then assert that they must take control of the political system to restore what they "know" is right, as did Hitler in Germany (Payne 1995) and Nasser in Egypt (Najjar 2008). These tyrants do not recognize their own hubris, which emerges out of their self-love and impacts the rest of their actions. Such hubris makes these actions less honorable because they come from arrogance. To suggest that the tyrants are the sole ones in the entire country with the correct approach to its problems is arrogant indeed, exacerbated by their move of taking over so that only their ideals would have preeminence, as with Lukashenko of Belarus (Beichelt 2008; Usov 2008).

Yet hubris and arrogance are not the only considerations relevant to how other would-be tyrants approach corruption in government. Bad intentions mark their actions, where they know they can create good government or help make changes legitimately but prefer to use "corruption" as an excuse to take control and then put their values into operation. These tyrants do not adopt the mistaken perspective that only they can solve the country's problems, but rather act opportunistically as their self-love dictates. They use the country's situations as a way to

grab power so that their own viewpoints will have dominance over all others, as seen in such varied countries as Musharraf's Pakistan (Karon 2008) and Stalin's Soviet Union (Kenez 2006; Wilde 2009). While they might also enjoy the benefits of rule, they primarily take control to have the government express their beliefs as fully as possible.

Those tyrants who promote their own values and principles often can pose far more danger than tyrants who seek personal gain because they tend to be Believers, those who completely devote themselves to their own ideals above almost everything else. Regardless of their initial reasons for establishing the tyranny, they usually have a strong faith in what they are doing and in the correctness of their beliefs. It is this faith that makes them so menacing; it drives them to place tremendous pressure on everyone else to also accept those beliefs or suffer the consequences for not doing so (Kagan 2008b). For example, Hitler truly believed in his ideals, even using violence to ensure their ascendancy (Garcia 2009), as did Mussolini (Spencer 1929) and Lukashenko (Usov 2008) and Idi Amin (Magaloni 2007b). Such fanaticism tends to blind them to their own actions and what they order others to do, or it leads them to not care about what is done so long as their government implements their values. As a result, they either do not see what they do as immoral in the righteous pursuit of their cause or they regard moral considerations as unimportant, as with the Nazi policy to exterminate Jews, Gypsies, and others (Garcia 2009; Payne 1995, 196). Some of these tyrants also can think that they do work for the greater good, but such a good is defined by their own perspectives or needs and might not truly reflect the common good of all, as with Stalin (Kenez 2006; Wilde 2009). These tyrants tend to be driven beyond personal considerations of good and evil by their fanatical beliefs and insistent self-love. They then often cannot understand how others might regard those actions as evil or wrong, occasionally allowing their frustration to make them more vicious.

Tyrants of all types frequently deal harshly with anyone who might offer competing visions for their country. The tyrants do not recognize the validity of these other beliefs because they immediately consider them as wrong or even a subversive threat, requiring the tyrants to crush or marginalize those visions and the people advocating them (Aristotle 1986, 1313a; Dahl 1973, 13; Hlavacek and Holzer 2009, 6; Xenophon 2008, II). For example, Mugabe's tyranny in Zimbabwe often used violence and intimidation to reduce or completely eliminate opposition (Cross 2007b; Dugger 2008). Tyrants rarely allow anyone to offer vibrant alternatives to their rule or beliefs for fear that the people might accept the competing visions and overthrow the tyrants. In the end, only the tyrants' wisdom hold sway; only the tyrants' self-love and viewpoints guide the actions of their government (Madison [1787] 1987b; Loewenstein 1935, 578, 590; Sherman 1934, 433; Spitz 1965, 258; Tullock 1987). Tyrants therefore have a greater motivation and even eagerness to take extreme measures to protect their position. Such zealotry differentiates them from other types of leaders who tend to have better restraint and a willingness to accept differences of opinion as valid.

The need to remain tyrant and marginalize opponents also can encourage tyrants very specifically to create a cult of personality centered on them, one that particularly arises from their own exaggerated sense of self-love and enhances their feelings of self-worth. They use propaganda and other methods, such as official grandiose titles, to foster a belief in the people that the tyrant is the Beloved or Great Leader who should be loved because the tyrant works to help the people. Kim Jong Il and Kim Jong Un (Parry 2009; Global Security 2009), Lukashenko (Usov 2008, 91), Hitler (O'Shaughnessy 2008, 295), Mussolini (Sherman 1934, 431), and many others (Bridge 2008) serve as telling examples.

Although tyrants themselves do much harm to the people, they can create a strong and successful cult of personality by creating a constant barrage of positivity about themselves to the people that can counter any ill-will in the people. The tyrants present their “virtues” and talk up the beneficial actions they have undertaken for the country, such as public works and other deeds (Aristotle 1986, 1305a; McGuire and Olson 1996, 76). They make themselves appear noble and as champions of the people, but willing to take hard positions to get things done. They foster the idea that they are sacrificing their time and effort for the benefit of all, especially when they do little of both, as with Uribe in Columbia (Economist 2009). Tyrants also use their supporters to spread good rumors and positive information about them. Their image appears everywhere, from statues and posters to pamphlets and textbooks, to remind the people of their “greatness” (Bridge 2008), as seen in Iraq (CNN 2002) and the Soviet Union (Kenez 2006). These strategies seek to encourage near-worship of the tyrants, thereby strengthening the cult of personality. As a result, potential opponents face an almost insurmountable challenge in opposing the tyrants, especially since to do so would make these opponents appear unpatriotic or ungrateful.

However, occasionally tyrants accept that it is sometimes necessary to allow the opposition a small voice as long as it does not truly threaten the rule of the tyrants. This minor degree of independence usually comes in the form of a legislature or election, where opposing leaders can appeal to the tyrant or the people for a redress of their grievances or can seek to make changes in the political system as a whole (Boix and Svoboda 2009; Diamond 2005; Gandhi and Przeworski 2006; Levitsky and Way 2002; Schedler 2006). Since each tyranny is different from the others, the prevalence and usefulness of legislatures and elections vary quite widely. Nevertheless, tyrants can influence legislatures and manipulate elections to accomplish three goals that can help them continue their rule.

First, legislatures and elections can nullify any potential threat by an opposition figure or rival; tyrants can use legislatures to co-opt the opposition to make it work for the tyrants rather than against them (Gandhi and Przeworski 2006, 2007). Tyrants also can rig the election to show that rivals “have little hope of defeating the incumbent” (Geddes 2006, 5), as seen in Malaysia (Pepinsky 2007, 136). Legislatures in particular can marginalize the tyrants’ opponents by forcing them to deal with the tedium and procedures of the legislative process so that they will not have the opportunity to directly challenge the tyrant, as happens in Belarus (Usov 2008, 109).

Second, both legislatures and elections allow tyrants to keep track of their opponents so that the tyrants can step in to remove them in a variety of ways should they present too much of a threat (Wright 2008). Legislatures and elections therefore are convenient tools for further observation of the political system, key elites, and populist figures. Third, both devices can act as release valve for the elites and people, reducing their frustrations by giving them the illusion that the tyranny does allow them a say even if it then does not listen to them seriously (Magaloni 2007b). The legitimacy such devices foster makes it more difficult for elites and the people to rebel.

Overall, though, legislatures all too often act only as rubber-stamp institutions in most tyrannies, as seen in Russia (Rosefielde and Hlouskova 2007). Elections also frequently result in an overwhelming victory for tyrants as they manipulate the campaigns and results (Geddes 2006; Schedler 2002, 2006; Zakaria 2009). While these devices offer a nod to the democratic process, it is nominal at best especially considering the overwhelming amount of fear among the people and elites that can disrupt the practice of both institutions. The tyrants’ use of spies, advanced technology, and punishment agencies such as a secret police or party apparatus tend to make the

people more reluctant to vote against the tyranny and produce opposition figures who are less willing to take chances that might lead to their arrest or death (Levitsky and Way 2002; Magaloni 2007b; Snyder 2006). Hence while rarely some legislatures and elections will have meaning and can make changes, in most tyrannies they exist only to enhance the power and survival of the tyrant.

Although tyrants can emerge from anywhere to create many different versions of tyranny, most prospective tyrants use a process called consolidation to take control of the government. It occurs by investing into one entity the authority to make political decisions previously found within multiple institutions. That entity, whether an individual or an institution of government, then gradually takes over the entire political system (Hamilton [1787] 1987b; Madison [1787] 1987a; Rush [1777] 1947). While consolidation can happen in many different ways, the end result is mainly the same. The tyrants gain almost full authority to make policies for the country, as did Hussein in Iraq (Rasuli 2003) and Mogae in Botswana (Good and Taylor 2007, 275). These tyrants thus control most, if not all, of the political system, subsequently changing it to meet personal needs and/or reflect deeply held beliefs.

The process of consolidation often starts once potential tyrants have gained some sort of leadership position within the government or community. These would-be tyrants then desire more authority to make both policy and governmental changes deemed necessary for the proper working of their ideal version of government. Such tyrants have included Castro, Chavez, Hitler, Hussein, Lukashenko, Mugabe, Musharaff, Nasser, Stalin, Uribe, etc. Rarely a few of these tyrants have had the opportunity to create a tyranny from the beginning; in doing so, they often have given themselves near complete authority to act. Most tyrants, though, must deal with different entities all with their own authority and beliefs in an already existing political system,

as with Egypt, Germany (1930s), Iraq, Italy (1920s), Myanmar, Pakistan, Syria, Venezuela, Zimbabwe, etc. These potential tyrants therefore must take one of a variety of actions to consolidate their control over the system, depending upon their individual positions within the community.

One of the easiest ways for tyrants to consolidate authority lies with the military. As long as these budding tyrants can rely on the support of a majority of the troops or just some key officers, they can dissolve the sitting government to put themselves in charge (Huntingdon 1968, Linz 2002, 34-42; Nordlinger 1977; Snyder 2006, 2). These tyrants frequently exploit the personal loyalty of troops to assist them in the eventual takeover, making these soldiers sympathizers to the tyrant's new government (Acemoglu et al 2008; Loewenstein 1935, 583). Musharraf in Pakistan (Ahsan 2007; Karon 2008) and the Myanmar Junta (Aung 2007) serve as compelling examples, among many others. These military tyrants thus consolidate authority upon themselves in one fell swoop, catching others off guard and leaving potential opponents little opportunity to resist.

For this strategy to work, however, tyrants need to prove themselves to the troops as the right leader for the nation; usually they do so through their own military service, as did Pisistratus in Athens (Hooker 1996; McGlew 1993) and the last three Egyptian leaders (Brownlee 2007). This service can give them the opportunity to earn the support of other high level officers or recruit a substantial number of loyal regular troops that will allow for a successful takeover. It also can show their leadership ability and "right" thinking or values, as in Egypt (Sevier 2008). Even tyrants without such a military background can benefit from the support of the military if they can convince the officers and/or soldiers to back them, as did Vargas in Brazil (Acemoglu et al 2008, 5). In either case, depending on the military often requires tyrants to make some

substantial payoffs or other promises to the troops to ensure their continued loyalty, such as with Julius Caesar's promise to give land to his soldiers (Scullard 1982, 145). As long as competing factions within the military do not resist or can be marginalized, the takeover can run fairly quickly and smoothly. It becomes very difficult for civilian office-holders or even former military leaders to counter those who have the backing of the full military, as in El Salvador (Acemoglu et al 2008, 46) and Panama (D'Amato 1990, 517).

Those potential tyrants without a military background and who cannot immediately rely on the support of troops can face a more difficult process of consolidation. Some can inherit their position from a parent or other relatives but then must justify their rule, as with Kim Jong Il and soon Kim Jong Un (Parry 2009; Global Security 2009), Assad of Syria (Hadenius and Teorell 2007, 146), and the Saudi family ascension (Abir 2005). Other tyrants, though, must first have a relatively high position in the government that they can use as a springboard for their power-grab. They then must invent reasons to take more authority to act, whether to protect the country more fully or restructure a poor economy or a variety of other reasons (Hoover 1952; Linz 2002). For example, Hitler used the burning of the Reichstag to gain significant popular support and governmental powers (Jasper 2009; Payne 1995, 174-175). As others in the government and community are persuaded or intimidated to give up their own authority, the potential tyrants can consolidate that authority to become dominant over the government.

Other potential tyrants can begin as demagogues, coming either from the community or from within the government. The demagogue is the charismatic leader, the one who uses charm or passion to persuade multitudes to follow where the demagogue leads (Aristotle 1986, 1292a, 1310b, 1304b; Linz and Chehabi 1998, 17). In this sense, the demagogue is seductive, and many worry that demagogues might be too seductive (Hamilton [1787] 1987a). Demagogues use their

innate abilities and personality to create a mass of supporters who blindly back the demagogues out of emotion rather than reason, as did Dionysius of Syracuse (Aristotle 1986, 1305a) and Chavez in Venezuela (Arcaya 2007). These demagogues can gain control of the government, either through legitimate means like elections (Hitler, Chavez) or illegitimate ways such as coups or staged revolutions (Castro, Idi Amin, Mubarak, Museveni, Musharraf, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, among many others). It is the people, though, who give these tyrants the critical support they need to take over the government and remain in power. Demagogues then can use this public support to pressure other institutions so that they too fall in line, thereby giving their powers and authority to the demagogues so that these potential tyrants can fully consolidate the government's authority to act.

Demagogues often pose a greater threat to the political system than other types of tyrants. They sell themselves as one of the people, working to help the people or acting as the savior of the people (Loewenstein 1935, 682; Spencer 1927, 541). They can convince the people that only the demagogues protect them and that the other leaders or institutions of government have hurt them or will do so, all the while seeking personal benefits or even further elevation in the political system (Aristotle 1986, 1305a, 1310b; *The Essex Result* [1778] 1966; *Federal Farmer* #8 [1788] 1981). Such demagogues engage in all of the activities other tyrants do, but hide the actions behind the veil of populism. Since they act with the support of the people, they tend to have more power than other types of leaders.

Using propaganda or “crises” as the tools of further consolidation, tyrants of all types sell the need for them to take charge to the people or other important leaders and institutions (Plato 1968, 566d-567d). If successful, prospective tyrants can enhance their base of support, giving them even more authority to act. The new authority to make decisions in additional arenas of

government then encourages the tyrants to assert themselves even more forcefully over areas they have yet to control. The whole process creates a cascade, where gaining some authority justifies grabbing more and more authority until the newly-minted tyrants have most or all authority to make decisions for the government and society. Eventually these emergent tyrants have enough authority invested within themselves that they can disregard the remaining governmental entities by eliminating their positions, dismissing entire institutions, or relegating others to rubber-stamping roles. Such events occurred in Nazi Germany (Payne 1995, 17), Pakistan (Ahsan 2007), Russia (McFaul and Stoner-Weiss 2008), Uganda (Tripp 2004), and many other countries. At this point, the consolidation process has ended and tyranny has begun.

This transfer of authority can happen for many reasons, from the perception that the one entity can do a better job governing in specific policy areas to blatant usurpation of authority by the prospective tyrant to the other institutions simply not wanting the authority to act any longer in particular areas. For example, Venezuela's legislature has given significant authority and flexibility to Chavez to enact his programs as he desires, even to the extent of filling Venezuela's Supreme Court with pro-Chavez justices (MSNBC 2009e). Hence the advantage of dividing the authority and powers of government is lost as the multiple institutions no longer guard against the abuses of the one institution. Eventually the government consolidates into a tyranny (*The Essex Result* [1788] 1966; Roberts and Stratton 2008).

Importantly, tyrants frequently gain control over the government because the people or other political leaders do not step up to stop the consolidation process. Initially these entities might believe they are powerless to stop a rising tyrant or that they do not have the authority to reverse any changes made by the tyrant (Sharp 2003); they might even think the country would be better off with the tyrant (Collier 2009; Roberts and Stratton 2008). Some also might be too scared to

oppose the emerging tyranny, especially if the prospective tyrant had managed to already destroy other opponents or rivals, as seen in Mussolini's rise to power (Sherman 1934, 432).

Once tyrants have enough initial authority to act, though, the consolidation cascade can begin, making it increasingly more difficult to stop the emerging tyranny as it progresses. As the tyrants take control over more of the political system, most vestiges of the former government are incorporated into one institution in an attempt to consolidate more authority. For example, Qaboos of Oman possesses all executive authority including defense, finance, foreign affairs, etc. (Sevier 2008). Tyrants then will remove all of the potential and immediate opposition they safely can, including other political leaders or institutions (Aristotle 1986, 1311a; Collier 2009). Hitler eliminated many once he became Fuhrer of the NDA and then Chancellor of Germany (Garcia 2009; Payne 1995, 176-177), Hussein killed thousands when he fully took over (Butt 1998), opposition leader Nour went to prison on contrived corruption charges in Mubarak's Egypt (Brownlee 2007), and Putin in Russia both abolished the independent media and made the Duma nothing more than a rubber-stamp institution (Rosefielde and Hlouskova 2007).

Tyrants next begin to oppress some of the people by arresting, beating, or killing them so that they too cannot threaten the tyrants' newly gained authority and powers. Mao in China sent millions of pro-democracy advocates to labor camps from 1956 to 1957 (Friedman 2009) and Pol Pot massacred most of Cambodia's intellectuals (Tep 2008). Eventually only the tyrants remain as the government, supported by followers in both the military and civilian arenas. Even in the so-called "hybrid regimes," tyrants can exercise significant authority over other governmental institutions, elites, and the people (Geddes 2006; Hadenius and Teorell 2007).

To further their control and justify that initial oppression, tyrants offer a vision for the country that includes where they believe the country should go and how to solve its problems, as did Kim

Jong Il with his Juche philosophy (Global Security 2009), Chinese President Hu with his “Harmonious Society” program (Thinley 2007), Mao with his “Cultural Revolution” (Friedman 2009, 8), and Hitler with his *Weltbild* and *Weltanschauuns* philosophies (Sherman 1934, 430). They hope that the people will accept this vision and so allow the tyrants to gain more support from the people, especially from those who did not suffer much from the earlier oppressive acts. This vision rarely seeks to benefit others, though, mostly because it arises from the tyrants’ self-love and focuses on meeting the tyrants’ needs in various ways. Yet it is couched in terms that can resonate with others to gain their support, even when it is flawed.

Tyrants then couple that vision with the insistence that they need to remain in office for life or that they require re-election for as long as necessary; they argue they must have the time to accomplish the programs and other goals that will allow them to meet that vision’s promise. In doing so, they try to pre-empt the rise of an opposition that might offer a competing vision (Hlavacek and Holzer 2009). Such tyrants have included Ben Ali in Tunisia (Sevier 2008), Chavez in Venezuela (Arcaya 2007), Lukashenko in Belarus (BBC News 2005), Museveni in Uganda (Tangri and Mwenda 2008), Saddat in Egypt (Najjar 2008), and many others. Lengthy terms in office can give tyrants the ability to do whatever they want, especially since they would not have to return to a private civilian life where they would have to account for their actions.

To remain as ruler, then, tyrants often find it necessary to make constitutional changes that will secure their position and authority to act. Once tyrants have consolidated authority, they must change the previous political system by eliminating any constitutional provisions that might allow others to have an office that can oppose the will of the tyrant, as seen in Egypt and Tunisia (Sevier 2008) and Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan (Spechler 2009, 9-14). In doing so, tyrants can reduce the possibility of threats to their rule.

Tyrants can change the constitution either through a legislature they control (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007, 1282) or with a referendum that gives any changes the validity that comes from popular agreement, as did Chavez (Arcaya 2007; Economist 2009), Hitler (Payne 1995, 175), and Lukashenko (BBC News 2005; Beichelt 2004). At other times, tyrants must scrap the original constitution entirely, replacing it with their own new constitution that makes them the absolute leader, as with Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan (Spechler 2008) or Egypt (Najjar 2008). Any of these maneuvers can give tyrants the appearance of legitimacy as they would therefore hold a constitutional office, even though they might use that office in illegitimate ways (Burnell 2006). Once the constitution is changed or made anew, though, the tyrants' will becomes written into law, forcing everyone else to abide by their wishes.

All tyrannies exist as various types of authoritarian rule, and thus share many of the same characteristics as each other. They have a leader and followers and subjects; they exert control over the economy; they use violence as a tool of intimidation and fear; and they strip their citizens of full citizenship, making them mere resources to exploit rather than full participants in the polity. Although some variations can exist depending on the character of the tyranny, most tyrannies organize themselves in similar ways.

### **Political Organization**

The head of the government is the tyrant, or leader, who also has control over other political, social, and economic aspects of the country. Some tyrannies can have more than one tyrant, as with tyranny of the majority or a cabal (Loewenstein 1935, 571; McGuire and Olson 1996; Tocqueville 1969, B1c15), but most tyrannies have one ultimate leader at the top who has the most authority and is the most influential member of the government. Even in tyrannies ruled by a council or junta, one person in the group inevitably has a little more influence or authority and

so dominates the group (von Fritz 1941, 57). Despotism marks the actions of tyrants throughout their tenure as tyrant, like with Putin in Russia (Rosefielde and Hlouskova 2007) and Museveni in Uganda (Tangri and Mwenda 2008) and Nguema in Equatorial Guinea (Tripp 2004, 4). These tyrants seek control of the government, but not necessarily of everything in the country as with totalitarianism. Tyrants primarily want their will to direct the country, rarely seeking to tell everyone what to do in every aspect of their lives as seen in totalitarian states (Arato 2002; Linz 1975; Locke 1988, 398-405; Wintrobe 1990).

Although the tyrant is the key element of the tyranny, others also have official or unofficial places in this hierarchical type of government to help tyrants accomplish their rule (Boix and Svobik 2009; Z 1787). The first group often acts as collaborators or sycophants, tying their fortunes to the tyrants' successes (Aristotle 1986, 1314a). Many have been with the tyrants from the beginning, helping create the initial opportunity for the tyrants to rule and acting as key players in the consolidation of the tyrants' authority, as with Rudolph Hess, Hermann Goring, and others in the Nazi party (Garcia 2009; Payne 1995, 158-160).

Collaborators generally give strong loyalty to the tyrant, occasionally to receive some personal benefit but mostly because they truly believe in the tyrant or even share an ideology with the tyrant. Such loyalty can help ensure that other elites do not show disloyalty. In such cases, the loyalists can act on behalf of the tyrants to nullify the threat by discrediting the disloyal, removing them completely, or intimidating them publicly. For example, many Nazi leaders felt a personal loyalty to Hitler bordering on the fanatical (Payne 1995) and even Iranian generals have demonstrated such loyalty to Khamenei and other leaders by calling for the arrests and trials of reformers (CNN 2009; Milani 2009). As a reward, collaborators often receive high offices in the tyranny that allow them a little of their own authority to act for the tyrants and

sometimes for themselves, such as in Uganda in 1995 (Tripp 2004), Mexico since the 1930s (Boix and Svolik 2009, 26), and Egypt in 2002 (Brownlee 2007). However should the tyrants fall prey to coups or revolutions, these collaborators suffer just as much; the new government tends to regard them as the willing instruments of the tyrants' commands.

Sycophants, though, frequently possess less true loyalty than collaborators in that these sycophants tend to support the tyrants only to gain some personal benefit; they rarely act out of devotion to the tyrants. Occasionally some of the sycophants will betray their allegiances to act opportunistically as the leaders of a new coup or revolution, especially in those rare instances when they actually can take over the tyranny to benefit themselves (Collier 2009; Gandhi and Przeworski 2007, 1288). For example, Hussein in Iraq forced his cousin Ahmed Hassan Bakr to resign from the presidency so that he could take over, even though Hussein had been Bakr's Vice-President (Butt 1998). Outwardly the sycophants remain the most trustworthy of supporters, doing whatever is necessary for the tyrants. Inwardly they hide their real feelings, swearing allegiance even as they wait for the chance to take over the tyranny, as in Iraq. As a result, tyrants cannot trust any collaborator or sycophant fully (Aristotle 1986, 1313b; Geddes 2006, 10; Tullock 1987; Xenophon 2008).

Nevertheless, collaborators and some sycophants can have many roles in the tyranny, depending on their capabilities and how long they have supported the tyrants. For these tyrants, collaborators are especially useful in the military or police (both regular and secret) since coercive force often ensures the continuing rule of the tyrants (Snyder 2006), as seen in Uganda (Tangri and Mwenda 2008). Hence if able, tyrants will quickly replace all military officers and police commanders who do not swear their complete personal allegiance, usually doing so through forced retirements or purges. Other military officers attain promotion to higher ranks as

a reward for their loyal support, as seen in Aristide's Haiti (Snyder 2006), Hitler's Germany (Garcia 2009; Payne 1995, 171-185), Hussein's Iraq (Rasuli 2003), and Putin's Russia (Rosefielde and Hlouskova 2007).

However some tyrants cannot remove all military officers when in the process of consolidating authority for fear of sparking resistance by factions in the military or from soldiers protecting a beloved leader. In such cases, tyrants will wait to attain complete authority before they feel safe enough to remove these officers or will try to convert them into loyal followers by giving them other positions and wealth (Acemoglu et al. 2007). Ultimately tyrants prefer to personally select military officers as a way to ensure allegiance to the tyrants, forcing these officers to acknowledge that their fortunes rise or fall with the tyrants (Geddes 2006, 10). Such officers pose less of a threat to tyrants, allowing the tyrants to feel a bit more secure in their rule. The tyranny then can use the military as a tool of oppression without fear of serious opposition.

When it comes to other political leaders, though, tyrants seek to replace all who have failed to support the tyrants from the beginning or who show disloyalty later (Aristotle 1986, 1311a; Plato 1968, 566e, 567b-c). Tyrants especially target those who cannot be corrupted, like with Pakistan's Supreme Court (Ahsan 2007). They also go after those who would be strong rivals to the tyrants, as seen at various times in Germany before and during Hitler's reign (Payne 1995, 176). Although Boix and Svolik (2009) argue that tyrants must negotiate with these other elites to make them "allies," usually tyrants prefer not to bargain with any other leader who might later rally those dissatisfied with the tyranny to rise up against the tyrants (Aristotle 1986, 1313a; Sherman 1934, 433). Mugabe in Zimbabwe is well known for such recalcitrance (Dugger 2008) as are Egyptian tyrants (Najjar 2008), Khamenei and Ahmadinejad in Iran (Zakaria 2009), and Putin in Russia (Hlavacek and Holzer 2009).

These tyrants instead want to choose the holders of almost every office in the tyranny to guarantee loyalty and support. Any hint of opposition by other political leaders results in their removal or marginalization, including those previously chosen by the tyrants, like the reformers in Iran (MSNBC 2009d) and opposition leaders in Zimbabwe (Cross 2007a, 2007b). Hitler eliminated many rivals from his own party on the Night of Long Knives (Loewenstein 1935, 589). Tyrants can choose from a number of options when dealing with these potential rivals; they can either have the rivals killed outright as a lesson to others, force them to “resign” depending upon their own support among the people, disgrace them publicly, arrest them, or prevent them from running for office, as seen in Iran (Zakaria 2009), al-Maliki’s Iraq (Parker 2007), Russia (Beichelt 2004), and Ukraine (Kudelia 2007). Lukashenko in Belarus is particularly known for such maneuvers (BBC News 2005).

However tyrants do need collaborators and even sycophants to help run the country, enact the wishes (laws) of the tyrant, and ensure that all regions of the country succumb to the tyranny, as al-Maliki has learned in Iraq (Parker 2007). They therefore make collaborators and sycophants the officials of the tyranny. Some of these officials have high places within the bureaucracy tyrants establish or co-opt to help control the country. An efficient bureaucracy is essential to impose the tyrants’ will, enforcing policies and gathering information about potential opposition and the people (Epstein et al 2006, 6; Levitsky and Way 2002, 62; Wheatley and Zurcher 2008, 9). These responsibilities can give the bureaucrats substantial authority in their own arenas but generally not enough to threaten the tyrants (Gat 2009; Spencer 1884). Although a great distance between the center of the government and the fringes of the tyranny usually offers some opportunities to moderate the tyrants’ commands or gain wealth and other benefits, an aware tyranny reduces this possibility by appointing loyal bureaucratic officials, revolving the heads of

the agencies, using spies, and/or enacting harsh penalties for too much independence (Aristotle 1986, 1313b; Geddes 2006, 16; Sherman 1934, 433). The authority bureaucrats do have and the punishments they might suffer, though, can motivate them to enforce the tyrants' rules fully.

Other officials receive specific responsibilities in the tyranny beyond the bureaucracy, allowing them to act more independently but still according to the tyrants' orders. These officials often form a group of advisors or a cabinet to tyrants, providing information and suggestions about the running of the country (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007, 1280; Snyder 2006, 2), as with Ukraine's "power ministries" in 2000 (Kudelia 2007) and Georgia's "presidential networks" (Wheatley and Zurcher 2008, 6). Some officials also possess their own authority in very particular areas of the government and society where they have the flexibility to make whatever policies they deem important. For example, Hitler allowed other Nazi leaders a significant amount of control over propaganda, the SS, the Luftwaffe, etc. (Garcia 2009; Payne 1995, 175-85). Nevertheless these advisors remain subordinate and subservient to the tyrants who can and will replace officials that become too ambitious or counter the tyrants' own desires, as Stalin did with his frequent purges (Kenez 2006).

These officials can include the chief of the secret police, the chief of propaganda, the highest ranked military officer, the chief of the bureaucracy, the chief scientist, among other positions. Tyrants tend to give these positions only to those who reliably demonstrate the most loyalty, thereby leaving out many of the more obvious sycophants. Yet tyrants rarely consider the officials as friends since tyrants do not have any friends (Plato 1968, 567a, 568e; Tullock 1987; Xenophon 2008, I-III). Most of the time tyrants can rely on these officials to offer their continual support, thus creating an inner circle of security for tyrants, as seen in such varied countries as Aristide's Haiti (Snyder 2006, 4), Mussolini's Italy (Spencer 1927, 541), and

Museveni's Uganda (Tangri and Mwenda 2008). Nevertheless, tyrants keep a careful watch on those officials to ensure they remain loyal and know their place.

Often to guarantee the allegiance of the officials, tyrants recruit quite heavily from kinfolk. Tyrants generally prefer to rely more on the ties of blood to establish loyalty than the normal relationship of dependence between tyrants and officials, especially in countries that value such ties of kinship, as in Iraq (Butt 1998), Nazarbayev's Kazakhstan (Spechler 2009), Bakiyev's Kyrgyzstan (Matthews 2010), and Uganda (Tangri and Mwenda 2008). Even so, tyrants make sure that all of the officials, both military and political, have significantly less authority than the tyrants, consequently reducing the chances of an internal challenge (Aristotle 1986, 1305a; Geddes 2006; Plato 1968, 565c, 566d). Accordingly, all officials constantly must demonstrate their personal allegiance to tyrants, even in ways they might find distasteful. Should they fail to do so, they risk losing not only their status but often even their lives, as did critics of Hitler's Nazi programs (Garcia 2009; Payne 1995, 176-177). These officials must tread very carefully then, always making certain they know the mind and moods of the tyrants and can meet their responsibilities well.

Below these subordinate officials lie the tyrants' general followers, those who truly believe in the tyrants or find no other recourse but to support the tyranny. Many also come from the tyrants' kinfolk, including extended families or cousins far removed. They often take the opportunity of having a relative in control of the country to make their lives better. Their claims of kinship can give them positions in the government and society that can allow them to live fairly comfortably, as in Kazakhstan (Spechler 2009). They can benefit more favorably from the laws as well, even to the extent of being allowed to ignore some laws, as with the Saudi royal family (Sevier 2008). Yet many times when a tyrant falls, the kin also suffer for being related to

that tyrant. Since their kinship puts these relatives at risk anyway, tyrants know they can depend on them for support. However relatives are not the only followers tyrants can have.

Most tyrants also prefer to have non-related supporters in the general society because such supporters can make it easier to run the country and provide other substantial benefits to the tyranny. To mobilize these supporters, tyrants often create their own political party or exploit those that already exist. The political party is indeed a useful institution for tyrants in that it can create three different benefits for them. First, political parties can permeate the entire society to help organize that society and to make it easier to rule (Geddes 1999; Loewenstein 1935, 581; Schedler 2006, 15). In doing so, the party brings people into the tyranny, making its survival their survival and the tyrants' prosperity their good fortune. It therefore can enhance the stability of the regime by increasing the number of people willing to support the tyranny (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007, 1285). Such parties include ZANU-PF in Zimbabwe (Magaloni 2007a), White Rus in Belarus (Usov 2008, 101), and the Workers' Party of North Korea (Hadenius and Teorell 2007, 147), among many others.

Second, the party can help tyrants keep an eye on the other institutions of the tyranny, including the bureaucracy, legislature, and military (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007, 1285). The party can infiltrate each of these institutions to help keep them under control. This is true especially with the legislature whose members would almost entirely come from the party or affiliated parties with a few or even no opposition parties allowed, depending on the tyranny (Geddes 2006). As for institutions like the military and bureaucracy, the party can embed political officers in both to monitor their actions for loyalty, like the NKVD did for Stalin (Kenez 2006).

Third, the party can bring significant political advantages to the tyrant. It can help control the people when necessary, especially when the economy grows worse or in other times of trouble. It can rally behind tyrants by engaging in mass demonstrations that can reinforce the perception that tyrants do have substantial popular support. Party members also often act as informers so that tyrants can keep control over dissent, as seen in many Eurasian countries (Spechler 2009). Members fill the lesser positions of the bureaucracy to ensure that it works properly in enforcing the tyrants' decisions. Members moreover can validate the tyranny through the educational system, becoming "official intellectuals" indoctrinating students, as in Belarus (Usov 2008, 87) and Botswana (Good and Taylor 2007, 276). The party's structure additionally can balance subordinates against each other to prevent them from opposing the tyrants, thus ensuring loyalty through distraction. All of these actions can help prevent rebellions or coup attempts.

Political parties, though, are not the only way to mobilize supporters. Quite often tyrants create pro-government, semi-independent militias that give the tyrants many of the same advantages political parties offer (Geddes 2006). Militias, though, differ from parties in that militias generally tend more toward violent action or intimidation against threats to the tyrant. These militias also frequently give unquestioned support and steadfast loyalty to tyrants, partly as a result of the privileges and other benefits the tyrants give the militias. Like other forms of government, the tyranny abhors the mobs in the street unless that mob can be turned toward supporting the tyranny (Collier 2009). Militias can either break-up an opposition mob or movement, usually with violence, or they can create their own mob of people marching in support of the tyranny.

The Iranian government uses the Basij militia and the Revolutionary Guard for those very purposes, giving the government popular support when needed as well as acting as enforcers so

that ordinary citizens have trouble creating their own movements against the government (CNN 2009; Fassihi 2009; MSNBC 2009c). Putin's versions were Nashi and Walking Together (Rosefielde and Hlouskova 2007), the Muthanna Brigade offered support to the Iraqi government (Parker 2009), the Patriot Unionists defended Primo of Spain (Spencer 1927, 544), and Pakistan under Musharraf had many paramilitary groups demonstrate in support of his rule (Ahsan 2007) as did Mugabe in Zimbabwe (Washington Post 2008). Sometimes, though, the actions of these militias can backfire by creating more opposition to the government, depending on the people's level of frustration or the use of excessive force, as with recent events in Iran (Zakaria 2009). Nevertheless militias have a key role to play in preserving the tyranny.

Hence tyrants cultivate common Believers for both the political parties and militias, those people who truly have an intense faith in the tyrants and consequently devote themselves entirely to the tyrants regardless of the personal or social costs to themselves. These Believers agree wholeheartedly with the tyrants and can see no wrong in whatever these tyrants do. Believers are rewarded for their support; they gain economic advantages that can allow them to prosper more fully and generally will have a higher social status. While many reject the need for such rewards, they do tend to accept them when offered, such as with the anti-Western Nashi and Walking Together (Rosefielde and Hlouskova 2007). They also often feel a greater sense of self-worth because they see themselves as an essential part of the political system. Nazi SS members offer a good example of these types of followers (Payne 1995, 184-186).

Yet any tyranny can harbor those who seek advantages over others; these opportunists are not necessarily Believers but do embrace the tyranny as the way to have a better life, especially since the tyranny is the main source of power and privileges in the political system (Geddes 2006; Jacobs 1995; Usov 2008, 91). Consequently they support the tyranny or take positions in it to

benefit themselves, often seeing it as the only recourse to a life of hardship and poverty, as seen with the vast increase in Nazi party membership from 1936 to 1937 (Payne 1995, 181). Like with tyrants, these opportunists act out of self-love; unlike tyrants, they do not have the abilities or resources to take over the government. These opportunists therefore might enlist in the military for the security it can give them, although they rarely want to fight in wars as seen with Iraqi soldiers in the 2003 Persian Gulf War (Fox News 2003). They may become the police (secret or regular) to have some small degree of authority over others. They can attempt to find positions in the bureaucracy, believing that they then could guarantee economic security for themselves and their families (Geddes 2006). Some might join the tyranny to gain a greater standing in society that makes them feel more worthwhile, especially in comparison to others whom they can then bully (Plato 1968, 567d). Yet should tyrants show weakness, these people often are the first to turn away from the tyrants to seek advantages elsewhere.

The majority of people in a tyranny has no real part in it and therefore tends to suffer continually from it. These people have little choice but to accept the tyranny since they have no other feasible alternative to it. They often live in oppression and fear, having miserable lives, as in Belarus (Beichelt 2004), Panama (D'Amato 1990, 517), Uganda (Tripp 2004), and Zimbabwe (Cross 2007a, 2007b). While most experience dissatisfaction with the tyranny, they seldom seek to change it because they view themselves as helpless against its coercive force and are scared of what it might do to them or their family. They have little independence, rarely leading the lives they would choose for themselves if given the chance (Jacobs 1995; Spencer 1884). The tyranny itself makes these people tools for the greater aggrandizement of the tyrants or reduces them to mere resources the tyranny can draw upon at will. Tyrants additionally often use these people as an excuse to legitimize the tyranny or help the tyrants continue to rule, arguing that the tyrants

must take responsibility for the country because the people cannot or will not do so, as seen in Russia under Putin (Kagan 2008a; Rosefielde and Hlouskova 2007). Even should the people want to oppose the tyranny, they often either do not know how to do so effectively or do not have the resources to enact the change they desire.

### **Economic Organization**

Tyrants often require more than political and social control over the people; they seek considerable economic dominance for their own private benefit as well to prevent socioeconomic development from creating a middle-class that can threaten them (Aristotle 1986, 1311a; Kagan 2008b; Plato 1968, 567a, 568e; Snyder 2006). With the exception of tyranny of the majority which depends on a substantial middle-class, most other tyrannies loathe the development of a large middle-class even though it can act as an engine of economic growth.

According to modernization theory, the middle-class is defined as those who are literate and more importantly have a relatively decent income but not so much that they are rich (Lerner 1958, 1964; Deutsch 1961). Members of the middle-class do not generally move in the higher levels of society but neither are they poor. They have some luxury time but nevertheless must spend a considerable amount of the rest of their time working. Modernization theory then argues that once a large middle-class emerges, it wants more personal liberty, influence on the government, and a better standard of living (Friedman 2009, 10; Gat 2009; Link and Kurlantzick 2009; Ulfelder and Lustik 2007, 361). Tyrants thus worry that a large middle-class might decide that the tyranny is illegitimate, especially in that the middle-class fears and dislikes repression. Such a middle-class could subsequently seek to replace the tyranny with a more responsive government providing more democratic freedoms and economic opportunities (Dahl 1971; Epstein et al 2006; Lipset 1959). Eventually a large middle-class would directly clash with the

tyranny, consequently either overthrowing it or making the tyrants' rule more difficult. Hence tyrants want to prevent the rise of that strong middle-class.

However, many tyrants and researchers have realized that a good economy can help tyrants maintain their rule. Multiple studies have shown that a well-run economy tends to give tyrants more popular support while a poor economy tends to foster ever greater discontent with the tyranny, frequently leading to uprisings or better opportunities for opposition leaders to demand reform (Kagan 2008b; Rosendorff 2001), as seen recently in Russia (Blank 2007; McFaul and Stoner-Weiss 2008). During these bad economic times, tyrants therefore can become more repressive to keep that discontent from becoming a danger. They tend to use their followers and increasing levels of coercion to restrict any opposition and eliminate threats (Gassebner et al 2009; Spechler 2009, 5), as seen lately in Venezuela (Margolis 2010). A productive economy, though, can provide more money to tyrants but also can create some satisfaction within the populace who might not have to live at a subsistence level and who may not therefore rebel (Kagan 2008a; Olson 1993; Ulfelder and Lustik 2007, 362).

Accordingly tyrants must strike a balance in their economic policies; they need to ensure a prosperous economy while enacting progressive taxes on all those not deeply part of the tyranny. The taxes can keep many people relatively low-income, especially an emerging middle-class that might imperil the tyrants. Nevertheless, tyrants will allow for a certain degree of economic security for the people that will provide political security for the tyrants as well (Olson 1993). Normally, then, the people will spend most of their time trying to make enough money to have just a little extra for their families after taxes (Spencer 1884), as in Paraguay (Richards 2008). Hence most people will remain submissive or even content that they do have some income, and thus will not create trouble for the tyranny.

Yet tyrants never let the economy grow so out of control that it creates the large middle-class they so hate, preferring instead to have a wide division between rich supporters and poor majorities. Should that middle-class nevertheless threaten to emerge, tyrants often will enact further regulations or taxes to slow or stop its growth, as did Cuba in the 1990s (BBC News 2005). Often they err on the side of caution by not allowing the economy to grow well at all. While such actions can reduce the size of the middle-class and thereby limit its demands for political rights, these actions also can result in a currency devaluation or massive economic problems, as seen in Iran (MSNBC 2010b), post oil-boom Russia (Ostrovsky 2009), and Zimbabwe (Dickinson 2009).

The taxes have an additional purpose – to increase the personal wealth of the tyrants and their followers (Fox 1783; McGuire and Olson 1996). This wealth allows for a greater expression of the tyrants' self-love; it helps tyrants have every pleasure met. It also gives them grand possessions, like with Saddam Hussein's palaces that had gold faucets and personal zoos (Bridge 2008; CNN 2002) or Imelda Marcos's shoe collection (Olson 1993). They then can live a life of opulence.

Such wealth has a political benefit too. Tyrants can use their wealth to buy the loyalty of elites either directly or by giving them the opportunity to prosper as well; tyrants also can purchase the support of the people by paying for public works programs (Bahari 2010; Olson 1993; Spechler 2009, 4; Xenophon 2008, IV, VIII). Tyrants additionally can use that wealth to reward the behavior of supporters to further ensure their loyalty and to demonstrate to others what such loyalty can furnish. If tyrants are willing or forced to have elections, they can spend lavishly on electioneering activities to ensure that opponents have little hope of winning (Gandhi

and Przeworski 2006, 14; Magaloni 2007b; Schedler 2006). Wealth thus can help create more stability in the tyranny as a whole.

However, relying on taxes alone to garner wealth can have mixed results. Tyrants do have an incentive to keep taxes high to increase their own personal wealth and decrease the likelihood of possible opponents, as seen in Paraguay (Richards 2008) and Zimbabwe (Cross 2007b). Yet limits exist on the use of taxes for such purposes; tyrants do not want to eliminate all productivity which might then stifle the economy and create too much discontent (McGuire and Olson 1996; Olson 1993). Tyrants also tend to understand that excessive taxes can provide the spark needed to flame the spirit of rebellion. When people have no money or no food and little hope for improvement, they do not have much to lose in trying to overthrow the tyranny. Hopeless people can be dangerous people. They then can start to support opposition leaders or even take to the streets in mob action (Xenophon 2008). Since tyrants fear mass uprisings that would directly challenge their authority, they must use caution in enacting burdensome taxes.

The taxes therefore rarely provide as much money as tyrants might like. To gain more wealth, tyrants often have the tyranny take over some businesses and other economic entities to use them as income sources. Sometimes tyrants nationalize industries and markets, like oil, to allow the government to run them directly so that tyrants can have more control over them and can pocket some of the profits (Haber and Menaldo 2008; Richards 2008; Spechler 2009). For example, the government of Azerbaijan controls the oil sector (Wheatley and Zurcher 2008, 6), Myanmar allows almost no independent industries (BBC News 2005), and Russia is quickly taking over major industries (Blank 2007). At other times or with specific industries, tyrants indirectly run the industries through subordinates or other agents while taking some of the profits and gaining more control over the economy. These industries in turn give substantial political

support to the tyrants, with the profits further helping to ensure loyalty (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007, 1282; Spencer 1927, 550). For example, China concentrates its wealth in elites who then defend the government and Russia has given economic offices to Putin's supporters (Rosefield and Hlouskova 2007).

To ensure the success of these investments, tyrants give significant advantages to their industries and markets while harming all others, as seen in Putin's Russia (Ostrovsky 2009). Tyrants will try to reduce the presence of other competitive industries, both foreign and domestic, by creating regulations and additional taxes that prevent these companies from competing well. Tyrants also can subsidize their industries' products to export them at cheaper prices to gain more profits internationally; often these tyrants export so much of these products that they leave little for their own people, including food, as is often seen in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan (Spechler 2009, 4, 7). Essentially tyrants create government-owned monopolies that allow them to gain more wealth and live well while keeping a tight control over the tyranny.

Tyrants have yet another strategy to garner wealth; they can allow the development of semi-independent or fully independent industries or markets. Often the most loyal followers and family members receive support in their own personal economic endeavors, as long as their success does not create problems for the tyrants (Spencer 1927, 550), as seen in Malaysia (Pepinsky 2007) and Kazakhstan (Spechler 2009). Tyrants, though, occasionally will allow the development of industries or markets completely separate from the tyranny, but only if their products and services also do not threaten it. These independent businesses can help provide a stable economy, although not one that will create a large wealthy or middle class. In addition, tyrants then can excessively regulate these industries and markets to give tyrants more control

over them but more importantly to bring in additional wealth through fines, as in Belarus (Usov 2008, 103).

Tyrants furthermore can use the economy for other political purposes, tailoring economic systems to strengthen their rule beyond the sharing of wealth. For example, many tyrants like Hitler, Hussein, and Kim Jong Il have insecurities that include a self-perceived weakness or failing, extreme paranoia, or even drug addiction (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007, 1288; Global Security 2009; Jacobs 1995; Kenez 2006; Lasswell 1938; Murray 1943; Sherman 1934, 430; Wilde 2009; Witts 1980). These tyrants often use their wealth to intimidate everyone else so that the tyrants' authority does not get questioned and they can feel better about themselves. Tyrants thus attain wealth partly for self-aggrandizement and to project strength, building monuments and statues everywhere that serve as constant reminders of the tyrants' authority and glory, as seen in Hitler's Germany (Payne 1995, 187), Hussein's Iraq (Butt 1998), and Malaysia (Pepinsky 2007). These grandiose structures also function as a reminder of the tyrants' ever-watchful eye, further keeping the people quiet.

However, those people not on board with the tyranny rarely have the same economic opportunities and therefore remain downtrodden politically as well (Cook 2008). For example, Mugabe in Zimbabwe frequently used the economy as a political weapon to give himself more control over the people (BBC News 2005; Cross 2007a). Since the ordinary people of a tyranny retain little income, they seldom have the time or opportunity to become politically aware nor do they have a position of wealth that might garner them some of their own supporters and thus a power base (Kagan 2008b; Richards 2008; Spencer 1884). Tyrants keep down all those with the ambition to make more of themselves but who refuse to join the tyranny, seeing them as potential threats to the tyranny. Hence tyrants enact substantial governmental regulation over

economic goods and services, including censoring products or technologies that might allow people to have some prosperity or even independence of thought, as does China with the Internet (Link and Kurlantzick 2009) and Venezuela with Twitter (Margolis 2010). Economics then becomes a tool for greater control, allowing only the tyrants and their supporters to flourish fully.

### **A Culture of Oppression**

In all aspects of society, including politics and economics, tyrants act in the guise of protecting the people even though they rarely do so (Aristotle 1986, 1304b; Kagan 2008a; Loewenstein 1935, 582). Nevertheless, tyrants ensure that the people know that the tyrants defend them from multiple threats, including corrupt officials at home and the chaos that can come from too much liberty (Plato 1968, 564a, 565c-d). As mentioned above, many tyrants initially emerge by couching their ascendancy in terms of helping the people against harm, even though the tyrants later prefer not to protect them from the tyranny itself. Once tyrants have consolidated authority, they tend to act in ruthless ways to eliminate potential threats and strip the people of liberty and citizenship (Arato 2002, 486; Wintrobe 1990, 851), as seen in Russia (Rosefielde and Hlouskova 2007), Uganda (Tripp 2004), and Zimbabwe (Cross 2007a). The mark of a true tyranny, then, is the excessive intimidation of the people to create deep fear in them, consequently enhancing the control tyrants have over the entire country. The people thus face increasing amounts of oppression that they cannot moderate or prevent from happening.

Tyrants employ violence as the main method of generating fear and repression. At times violence has a legitimate purpose, especially when the police must use force to subdue or otherwise deal with criminals. Mostly, though, the tyrant's agents use violence illegitimately to "force compliance, to subjugate, to persuade, or to intimidate" (Meadow 2010, 231). Frequently these agents have their own authority to act apart from the standard police power common to all

governments. They can include the military, the secret police, other sanctioned factions, or semi-independent militias; all operate at the behest of the tyrants to support the tyrants and enforce their rulings (Acemoglu et al 2008, 1-3; Schedler 2006, 18-19; Spencer 1927, 549). All of these groups also have the authority to use coercive force when needed or required by the tyrant.

Violence seeks to ensure that the people toe the line in their actions, subjugating them so that they cannot present a threat to the tyrants. It can consist of arbitrary arrests or public beatings at all times, such as in Cambodia (Tep 2008), Iran (MSNBC 2009d), Uzbekistan (Spechler 2009, 14), and Zimbabwe (Cross 2007a; Meadow 2010, 238). Yet the violence quite often takes the form of frequent killings or mass murders, as with the 100,000 Kurds killed by Saddam Hussein's government (CNN 2006) or the multiple murders in the Idi Amin regime (Tripp 2004) or the killing of over 200 journalists critical of Putin's Russia (Rosefielde and Hlouskova 2007). All this violence generally prevents anyone from feeling safe; any person at any time, from top officials to ordinary people, can suffer from the tyrants' whims or insecurities, as demonstrated by Hitler, Hussein, Idi Amin, Kim Jong Il, the Myanmar Junta, Mubarak, Mugabe, Putin, Stalin, etc. Such violence therefore motivates everyone to do what tyrants request of them.

Violence can have great effectiveness, since it can remove potential problems like an opposition figure and can constantly create an overwhelming environment of fear throughout the entire country. This fear motivates the people to follow the orders of the tyranny at the cost of their own freedom (Jacobs 1995; Montesquieu 1894, III; Spitz 1965, 293), as seen in Egypt (Dickey 2010) and Russia (Blank 2007). Dissent is not allowed, publicly or privately, beyond the acceptable forms of a regulated opposition. Everyone must unite behind the tyrants, no matter what the tyrants may do, or else they get punished. The fear thus results in the loss of liberty, where tyrants do not allow the people their own independent judgment (Arato 2002, 486;

Spencer 1884). Tyranny thus becomes a perverse form of parental government that tells the people what is best for them rather than allow them to fail or succeed on their own. It intrudes into areas where people can and should act for themselves, instead forcing them to accept its version of proper actions by enacting them into law (Arendt 2007). It thus often tells them what morality to follow, what religion to believe in, and how to be “good” citizens.

The people remain in continual fear, constantly worrying they might disappear or suffer next. This fear shapes most of their actions, making them hesitant about doing even the most everyday of activities. It also can make them more paranoid about their friends and neighbors, who might just be agents or informants of the tyranny (Aristotle 1986, 1313b; Sherman 1934, 433), as often happens in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and other Eurasian countries (Spechler 2009). The people thus live in perpetual uncertainty and anxiety where trust no longer exists. They become quiescent, not concerning themselves about anyone else or politics as a whole (Montesquieu 1894, V). They only wish to survive, often seeing no other purpose in life than to take care of themselves and their family. They live Thoreau’s life of “quiet desperation,” which then reduces the likelihood of mass uprisings against the tyranny.

Many political philosophers and statesmen dread all forms of tyranny because it eliminates most roles for people beyond that of passive spectators, or mere subjects of the tyranny. The people do not have permission to act as full citizens (*The Essex Result* [1778] 1966; Kagan 2008a; Puddington 2009). Tyrants rarely expect or want the people to contribute to the government, even those who are the common Believers or were initial supporters of the tyrant. Tyrants view most of the people as irrelevant, especially since tyrants do not really care what the people want as do legitimate governments (Rosefielde and Hlouskova 2007). In return, the people fear the tyrants so much that they seldom inform the government about their needs or

concerns, nor do they help regulate its affairs, as seen in Egypt (Brownlee 2007; Najjar 2008). Hence they cannot become true citizens who make positive contributions to their community and country (Burnell 2008; Lincoln [1837] 2004, 12). Eventually the people forget how to engage in civic actions well, becoming little more than subjects following commands (Collier 2009; Sharp 2003). The tyranny thus eliminates all sense of civic responsibility and awareness among the people. Only the desires of the tyrant remain to guide the country.

Tyrants indeed immediately try to eliminate any move towards developing a more public life among the people that can restore their civic sensibilities. As Aristotle argued, tyrants “allow no public meals, no clubs, no education, nothing at all, but to guard against everything that gives rise to high spirits or mutual confidence...and to endeavor by every means possible to keep all the people strangers to each other” (1986, 1313b). Most tyrants thus want to destroy the ability of the people to gather together as a way of preventing them from associating with each other in ways not controlled by the tyranny, as in Museveni’s Uganda (Tripp 2004) or Mugabe’s Zimbabwe (MSNBC 2009a) or Stalin’s Soviet Union (Kenez 2006; Wilde 2009) or especially in the Myanmar Junta (Aung 2007). Advancing technology has made it easier for tyrants to eliminate all types of association, thereby further limiting the ability of the people to come together physically or virtually. For example, web filters can limit the spread of information essential for associating well just as shutting down internet providers can restrict access to community websites (Fowler 2009; Kagan 2008a). Perhaps then the tyrants’ greatest sin is their attempt to destroy emergent publics that might allow subjects to transform into citizens.

The tyrants’ oppressive actions all lead to extreme levels of suspicion and paranoia throughout the tyranny. Tyrants do not trust the people and the people do not trust the tyranny or each other, as in Zimbabwe (Cross 2007b). Tyrants remain always uncertain of the motivations

and actions of subordinates, including the inner circle of “trusted” followers, as seen in Ukraine (Kudelia 2007). Tyrants then tend to feel vulnerable, forcing the creation of an elite guard to protect them (Aristotle 1986, 1285a; Burnell 2006; Plato 1968, 566b; Xenophon 2008, I-II). Frequently tyrants enhance the widespread paranoia by taking actions like purges that cause further fear and dissatisfaction among the people and subordinates, as happened often in Hussein’s Iraq (Rasuli 2003) and Stalin’s Soviet Union (Kenez 2006). This discontent leads tyrants to prevent potential or existing threats even more aggressively by enacting additional policies to both suppress opposition and provide tyrants with more security. The tyranny thus becomes increasingly more oppressive in order to survive. Yet such policies tend to alienate even more people, as seen with Hippias’s Athens (Hooker 1996), Khamenei’s Iran (Milani 2009), the Junta generals in Myanmar (Aung 2007), and in Kyrgyzstan (Matthews 2010). A vicious cycle emerges that can result in various alternatives: the tyrants manage to eliminate all who appear untrustworthy and dangerous, the tyrants lose power from within through a coup, successful resistance by opposition leaders moderates the tyranny into a less autocratic system, or a foreign government intervenes.

As the tyranny fosters more unhappiness among the people, it occasionally can create opportunities for new leaders to emerge who can rally the people’s support when those leaders openly criticize or act against the tyranny, as with Khatami and Mousavi in Iran (Zakaria 2009) or Yushchenko in Ukraine’s Orange Revolution (Kudelia 2007, 92-97). These leaders subsequently may advocate for mass uprisings to create a new government, as with Iran in 2009, or try to force tyrants into power-sharing agreements that diminish the tyrants’ control, as with Zimbabwe in 2008-2009 (Washington Post 2008). In these circumstances, tyrants have lost

control of their own tyrannies; the results sometimes can be chaos or the emergence of another different tyranny, but occasionally a better system of government does arise.

### **Conclusion**

Tyranny remains a lingering concern in the western political tradition, especially since numerous countries still adopt some version of authoritarian government. While political philosophers like Aristotle and Machiavelli have sought to define tyranny in some detail, contemporary political scientists and researchers tend to explore various aspects of tyrannies without devoting enough time to significantly characterize tyranny as a political system. They generally call a tyranny an authoritarian regime but rarely try to define that authoritarianism in substantial ways. This lack of definition leads them to expend much of their efforts arguing with one another over how to classify tyrannies according to very specific descriptive features and institutions rather than delving fully into how these tyrannies actually work. Even though these researchers have revealed some important practices of particular institutions within the tyrannies, they nevertheless focus entirely too much on how tyrannies differ from one another. They therefore have created much confusion about what constitutes tyranny in the first place. As a result, it has become more difficult to identify tyrannies properly, especially in the beginning stages when there are more opportunities to successfully oppose an emergent tyranny.

This article, though, redresses those problems by delineating the essential features of such tyrannies. It suggests that these tyrannies have more similarities with each other than differences from one another that can help better explain what tyrannies can accomplish for tyrants and what harms they can do to their own people. It seeks to clear up some of the confusion about tyranny by providing a more complete understanding of why tyrants act and how they structure their

tyrannies. It therefore can help elites and ordinary citizens to know when to oppose those who seek more control over a country before they can become fully consolidated tyrants. It also supplies the foundation for more cohesive studies of tyranny by allowing different researchers to start from the same understanding so that they can compare and evaluate tyrannies more clearly and comprehensively.

The article thus argues that even though a wide variety of different tyrannies exist depending on the characteristics of the tyrants and the institutions of the tyranny, they do share many things in common. All tyrants act on the basis of their own self-love. Yet they all must find a way to balance their government, their own selfish needs, and a positive economy to remain in place as the tyrant. They cannot be too repressive but cannot be too open for fear that either action will cause greater calls for more civil liberties or political reforms. Tyrants must give other elites some authority to act but not so much that these elites become ambitious. Tyrants must create a sustainable economy but not to the degree that a large middle-class will emerge to challenge the tyrants' rule. They must even balance the institutions of the tyranny against each other so that none become a direct threat to the tyrants.

It is important to note that tyrants often fail to achieve this needed balance and so lose their position as tyrant and sometimes their life. Like anyone else, they can make mistakes by guessing wrong or misjudging situations and intentions. They might not recognize potential challengers for what they are and thus get caught unprepared. They even might spend too much time meeting their own selfish needs that they stop paying attention to everything else around them. Intriguingly, it therefore can be the tyrants' own self-love that will cause their downfall. Consequently tyrants disappear, and almost as often as new tyrannies emerge, such as with Idi Amin, Hussein, Mubarak, Mugabe, etc. Tyrannies thus remain too unstable and selfish to

provide good governing, leading most people to label all tyrannies as illegitimate and the worst of all governments. Hence people throughout time have fought tyrannies with courage and conviction.

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