

**The Perfect Dictatorship?  
Comparing Authoritarian Rule in South Korea and in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico<sup>1</sup>**

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Abstract

*The Perfect Dictatorship: Comparing Authoritarian Rule in South Korea and in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico*

What is a “perfect dictatorship”? Such a regime provokes little societal resistance at installation. Its leaders act jointly to consolidate the regime and to broaden the support coalition by agreeing upon succession rules to rotate the presidency within the authoritarian regime. They delegate policy-making authority to civilians in areas of their competence. They emphasize consultation, not open contestation, prefer cooptation to repression, eschew ideological appeals, compel social actors into regime-licensed organizations, and deactivate civil society. South Korea under Park Chung Hee is compared on these dimensions to Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico, all at a time when authoritarian regimes governed them.

Prepared for delivery at the 2002 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, August 29-September 1, 2002, Boston. Panel 11-25. Copyright by the American Political Science Association.

Authoritarian rule established through an act of force, such as a military coup, poses several distinct challenges to the authoritarian ruler. The first is how to install the regime, that is, how to survive past the initial moments of the overthrow of the old regime in order to establish a pattern of rule that will last. This requires reducing the need for initial repression, consolidating unity within the coup leadership group, and arranging for succession rules in order to stabilize and broaden the support coalition for the new dictator. A second challenge is the choice of institutional means. Will the new dictator delegate significant executive decision making powers to competent civilians in specialized areas in which civilians excel? Will the new regime employ consultative procedures, legislative assemblies, and partisan organizations to shape the new rules for governing, obtain political information, and reduce the resort to repression? And what will be the relative role of the police and the military in enforcing compliance? A third challenge is the choice of a strategy to govern the society. Will regime leaders claim to rule seeking the consent of the governed through explicit ideological appeals? Will the regime tolerate, and make use of, societal pluralism? And will it activate or deactivate citizen engagement?<sup>2</sup>

A politically effective military dictatorship is likely to display the following traits:

1. It will provoke little societal resistance at its installation in order to cut its costs.
2. Its leaders at the time of installation will act jointly and cooperatively to consolidate the regime.
3. Its leaders at the time of installation will broaden the support coalition by agreeing upon succession rules to rotate the presidency within the authoritarian regime in order to prolong its duration.
4. Regime designers will delegate policy-making and executive authority to civilians in areas of their special competence, including economic policy.
5. Regime designers will choose institutional means that emphasize consultation and employ legislatures and political parties within the authoritarian context to diversify the tool-kit for ruling and policy-making, expand the coalition in support of the regime, and gather political information.
6. Regime executives will prefer political means to brute repression as ways to cope with opposition and protest in order to reduce the costs of rulership and sustain a broad base of support for the regime.
7. The regime will eschew ideological appeals, depriving civil society and especially the opposition of independent standards to hold the dictator accountable.
8. Regime designers will compel political, economic, and social actors into regime-licensed organizations to maximize state control over the society, harness economic and social forces toward the government's goals, while employing a minimum of military force.
9. Regime executives will employ political strategies to deactivate the population politically and constrain independent voices in civil society.

In this work, I examine the response of the Park Chung Hee regime in South Korea to these three challenges by comparing it to the similar responses in four Latin American countries also under authoritarian regime at the same historical moment: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico. This study focuses, however, mainly on analytical time, that is, the unfolding of decisions regardless of the starting date of each regime. It looks only at regimes established mainly by national military leaders in countries where ethnic, racial, or religious divisions did not play an overt role in the organization of national politics before or after the establishment of the authoritarian regime.

Park Chung Hee's rule began with the military coup of 16 May 1961. Dictatorships began in Argentina in 1966 and again in 1976 (after a three-year period of

civilian rule), in Brazil in 1964, and in Chile in 1973. The Mexican authoritarian regime was, in distant fashion, heir to the Mexican revolution of the second decade of the twentieth century. However, the Mexican regime that lasted until 2000 was actually founded in 1929 when General Plutarco Elías Calles convened the victorious generals from two decades of civil war to create a single political party that would rule for the next seven decades. This party allocated opportunities and rewards and administered penalties. Thus the Mexican authoritarian regime, too, began as the rule of military leaders accustomed to using force in domestic politics. All five political regimes emerged from the political actions of top-ranking soldiers, and all but Mexico's were founded between 1961 and 1973. Latin American authoritarian regimes out-lived Park's (assassinated on 26 October 1979) in all four countries.

South Korean society is, of course, much more ethnically and linguistically homogeneous than that of any Latin American country, including the four in this study. Nonetheless, in no Latin American country before 1980 were there nationally organized political parties or social movements based on race, ethnicity, or language. The troubling social differences within the respective societies along these lines had yet to be mobilized politically, nor were these differences politically significant for the founding or evolution of the various authoritarian regimes.

South Korea and these four Latin American countries share sufficient social, economic, and political traits to permit comparison, as evident in Table 1. The time frame is the 1960s, when General Park rose to power and military coups overthrew constitutional governments in Argentina and Brazil. Authoritarian rule prevailed in Mexico. The seeds were also being sown for the Chilean military coup that took place in 1973. South Korea ranks at or near the median in this comparison, although its specific ranking varies across indicators (it occupies the same rank only twice). South Korea seems closer to Mexico and Brazil than to Argentina and Chile; the latter are consistently more socially and economically developed. South Korea never ranks first; Argentina characteristically outranks it.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 1. Comparative Rank Order of Social, Economic, and Political Indicators in the 1960s**

Population in 1965	Gross National Product per Capita in 1965	Per Cent Living in Cities of 100,000+ in 1960	Per Cent Literate Age 15+ in 1960	Deaths from Domestic Political Violence 1948-67
Brazil	Argentina	Argentina	Argentina	Argentina
Mexico	Chile	Chile	Chile	<b>South Korea</b>
<i>South Korea</i>	Mexico	Brazil	<i>South Korea</i>	Mexico
Argentina	Brazil	<i>South Korea</i>	Mexico	Brazil
Chile	<i>South Korea</i>	Mexico	Brazil	Chile

Source: Charles Lewis Taylor and Michael C. Hudson, *World Handbook of Political and*

*Social Indicators* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), Tables 3.4, 4.1, 4.5, 5.1, and 5.5.

The authoritarian regimes established in South Korea and these four Latin American countries arose from the actions of high-ranking military leaders in societies that were not politically activated along the lines of race, ethnicity, or language and that shared certain characteristics of low to middle levels of social and economic development by world standards. None was among the world's poorest or least well educated countries, nor was any of them among the most developed countries. The international circumstances were also remarkably similar. The anticommunist authoritarian regimes of the 1960s and early 1970s were close U.S. allies during the Cold War. Anti-communism was a specific motivating element in military intervention in politics in Brazil, Chile, and South Korea. (All of these authoritarian regimes but Mexico became targets of human rights campaigns during Jimmy Carter's brief presidency.) South Korea fits comfortably in a comparison surrounded by Latin American cases.<sup>4</sup>

### ***The Installation of the Authoritarian Regime***

What happens the morning after a successful military coup? New authoritarian regimes face two immediate and one medium-term installation problems. First, they must seek enough consent from the governed. At a minimum, this consent is passive: acquiescence or tolerance of the new rulers, no or low levels of violent political resistance, and no or low levels of strikes or other forms of non-violent resistance against the founding coup. More actively, new dictatorships seek some claim to legitimacy, asserting that the immediate past was unacceptable and had to be overcome to secure a brighter future. Dictatorships thus seek historical and prospective bases of legitimacy because they lack procedural legitimacy, that is, they gain power by violating the constitution in the absence of free and fair elections.

The second installation problem faced by new authoritarian regimes is to sort out who is in charge. Sometimes there is one undisputed leader; at other times there is a military junta. This also raises the third or medium-term installation problem: is the dictatorship to be personalist or institutionalized? The most successful authoritarian regimes, namely, historical bureaucratic empires, had means of succession from one monarch to the next and featured bureaucratic organizations for the sharing and exercise of power.<sup>5</sup>

Military regimes, born from a coup, have had to face this question repeatedly. Samuel Huntington long ago recognized the conflict soldiers face in the aftermath of a coup, namely, between "their own subjective preferences and values and the objective institutional needs of society." New political institutions are needed, he argued, not just to "reflect the existing distribution of power" but also "to attract and to assimilate new social forces as they emerge and thus to establish an existence independent of those forces which initially gave them birth." These political institutions should also be capable

of regulating succession and providing for the transfer of power from one leader or group of leaders to another without recourse to direct action in the form of coups, revolts, or other bloodshed.”<sup>6</sup> Well-installed authoritarian regimes, therefore, settle upon effective succession procedures early on to enable the regime to broaden the support coalition and last beyond the lifetime of its founder. One measure of a well-installed dictatorship, therefore, is how many peaceful successions it managed within the framework of the authoritarian regime.

The South Korean military coup of 16 May 1961 held promise for installing an effective authoritarian regime. No military coup is free from some violence, arrests, and other means of conflict and repression. By these standards, this coup entailed rather low levels of violence or other forms of resistance. The new government repressed the organized labor movement and provided few inducements for organized labor support for the regime but, at its birth, it also faced relatively little resistance from organized labor. Moreover, the rebellious officers had a legitimating claim: to overcome a recent past of corrupt practices in government, to accelerate the prospects for economic growth, and thus to build a stronger South Korea to face its communist enemy to the north. There was also little difficulty in establishing who was in charge. General Park Chung Hee was the coup’s principal leader and the head of the military junta.<sup>7</sup>

Park’s political role from the start was so great that he reduced the likelihood of collegial rule. He soon marginalized his most important comrade in coup plotting, Kim Jong-Pil. He ordered the court martial of General Yun Pil-Yong in 1973 based upon slender information that General Yun had begun to think about Park’s succession.<sup>8</sup> Park took no credible steps to provide for his own succession, never transferred power peacefully, and was assassinated while still serving as president.

The Park regime’s political installation record looks middling compared to Argentina and Brazil: somewhat worse than Argentina, roughly comparable to Brazil. At first, the June 1966 coup in Argentina held even more promise of installing an effective authoritarian regime. “There was almost no opposition to the coup within the armed forces, and there was practically no civilian attempt to prevent it,” writes Guillermo O’Donnell. He adds that “the coup had the approval of most of the population and of nearly all social organizations ... [including] a considerable part of the popular sector, and was endorsed by a majority of political and union leaders.”<sup>9</sup> The claim to legitimacy was the search for Argentina’s modernization and faster economic growth as well as the eradication of corruption, for all of which “order” was the key.

South Korea and Argentina in 1966 were similar on two other dimensions. There was no doubt in Argentina in 1966, as there had not been in South Korea in 1961, about who was in charge: the Army’s Commander in Chief Lt. General Juan Carlos Onganía whose ascendancy had been undisputed since armed clashes in 1962-63. Onganía’s towering role made it difficult to create institutionalized procedures within the dictatorship to respond to crises with flexibility. In South Korea, Park’s comparable dominance during the 1960s gradually reduced his regime’s flexible response capacity.

The Argentine authoritarian regime unraveled more quickly than South Korea's, however. In April and May 1969, there were massive uprisings in Argentina's major urban centers, particularly among blue-collar workers. (The protest is known as the "Cordobazo" because the industrial city of Córdoba was the flash point for many strikes.) The government had suppressed channels of popular representation so well that it lacked information about discontent. On 8 June 1970, the commanders of the army, navy, and air force deposed Onganía against his will. His successor, Roberto Levingston, a junior general, was overthrown in 1971 by General Alejandro Lanusse, who ended the military regime in 1973.

At its installation moment, the Argentine dictatorship begun with a coup on 24 March 1976 improved somewhat on the 1966 pattern and, hence, also on South Korea. Between 1973 and 1976, Argentina was governed by three Peronista presidents: provisionally by Héctor Cámpora, and then by Juan Domingo Perón (who died in office) and was succeeded by the vice-president, his wife, María Estela Martínez (Isabel) de Perón. By the time of her overthrow, Argentina had sunk into chaos. In the first quarter of 1976, the annualized inflation rate was 3000 percent; labor unions were vigorously militant. Extensive civil violence broke out, including terrorist and paramilitary assassinations and kidnappings. "To no one's great surprise, and to the undisguised relief of many ordinary Argentines (including Peronists), the armed forces ... deposed the now thoroughly discredited Peronist regime. There was no resistance..."<sup>10</sup> The legitimating claim was similar, only more urgent. Argentina had to stabilize its economy and end civil violence. The armed forces chose to employ very high levels of repression, however, even though there had been little resistance to the coup.<sup>11</sup>

The Argentine military had also learned from its previous dictatorship and, as we shall see, from the Brazilian experience. Upon taking power in 1976, the military issued a "Statute of the Revolution" that stipulated a single, five-year mandate for any presidential incumbent. In 1976, General Jorge Videla, chief of the army, became president while agreeing on the termination date for his term. From the start, a presidential succession was scheduled for, and took place in, March 1981. At that moment, however, Argentina was in the midst of a financial crisis. The new president, General Roberto Viola, was overthrown in December 1981; his successor, General Leopoldo Galtieri, ousted in July 1982, was held responsible for Argentina's defeat at war with the United Kingdom over islands in the South Atlantic Ocean.

Thus Argentina's starting circumstances were somewhat more auspicious for the installation of dictatorship at both times (but especially in 1976) than in South Korea because in Argentina there was little opposition and extensive support for both coups. Onganía's and Videla's predominance were comparable to Park's, and neither had a good strategy for institutionalized succession. But the Argentine military in 1976 had a better plan to institutionalize authoritarian rule than Park or Onganía did.

The Brazilian armed forces overthrew President João Goulart in a revolt between March 30 and April 2. The general confederation of workers called for a general strike but the workers did not respond. Loyalist troops failed to fight the military rebellion.

Calls for a popular uprising went unheeded. Brazil, too, had suffered from high inflation in the months preceding the coup (though at rates much lower than in Argentina and Chile at the time of the 1976 and 1973 coups, respectively) and intense and widespread social conflict. The Goulart government had been politically weak and presided over economic stagnation. Goulart had been elected vice president in October 1960 and acceded to the presidency in August 1961 only because President Jânio Quadros resigned. In circumstances similar to South Korea's at the time of the 1961 coup, the Brazilian armed forces claimed legitimacy to overcome these ills.

Initial conditions were less favorable in Brazil than in South Korea, however, because the organization of power in the new regime took some time to construct. The War Minister, General Dantas Ribeiro, was immobilized in the hospital. The chief of the Army General Staff, General Humberto Castello Branco, took the lead in the military conspiracy but political complexity deferred his becoming president until April 11. Castello Branco was elected to the remainder of the presidential term, that is, the Brazilian constitution was not set aside but would be amended tortuously and painfully in subsequent years. The Congress was purged; political parties were dissolved, and presidential elections and gubernatorial elections were made indirect. But the notion that no single person had seized power remained entrenched.

The military reached consensus on General Arthur Costa e Silva, chosen president in October 1966. The Brazilian authoritarian regime thus completed a very successful installation featuring institutionalized succession within the authoritarian regime. There would be a total of four peaceful transitions of presidential power during the authoritarian regime (and thus five military presidents) before its end in 1985. The difficulty in making the coup and consolidating the regime at the start led the Brazilian military to install more collegial and eventually more effective procedures of rule than in South Korea, Argentina 1966, or Chile, and more successfully than in Argentina 1976-83.<sup>12</sup>

In short, at the start the installation of dictatorship in Brazil was less propitious than in South Korea in terms of leadership unity and about the same in terms of resistance to the installation. But the Brazilian dictatorship was more effective at establishing workable succession rules. Overall, Brazil and South Korea seemed comparable.

The Park regime's installation looks better than the opening moments of General Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship in Chile. There was probably more resistance to the overthrow of constitutional President Salvador Allende in Chile in 1973 than in South Korea's comparable moment in 1961. The brutality of immediate military repression of that resistance in Chile in 1973 exceeded repression levels in South Korea in 1961. During the last twelve months of Allende's presidency, the annualized inflation rate was 286 percent; social conflict was widespread and intense. Chileans were more divided than South Koreans and Argentines at the moment of the founding coup but many Chileans welcomed the dictatorship and most acquiesced to it in order to "rescue" Chile from chaos and confrontation — the new military regime claim to legitimacy.

In contrast to these three cases, military authority in Chile at the time of the coup

was in flux. Before the coup, the Chilean military's chain of command snapped several times and a military mutiny had occurred in June 1973. Pinochet was sworn in as commander in chief of the army only nineteen days before the coup that overthrew Allende. In the Air Force, General Gustavo Leigh was appointed commander in chief only twenty-nine days before the coup. In the navy, Vice Admiral José Toribio Merino was appointed chief only four days before the coup. All three had conspired not just against Allende but also against the officers whom they replaced. These three coup plotters were joined by the chief of police to create a four-man ruling junta. Moreover, Generals Sergio Arellano and Oscar Bonilla, "both more dashing and respected than Pinochet, emerged as heroes of the coup with new sources of power." Bonilla became interior minister; Arellano, commander of the garrison for the capital city. Within six months, both generals met mysterious deaths. Pinochet's predecessor as army commander in chief, General Carlos Prats, remained popular in the army and in Chile in late 1973 and early 1974; he was assassinated in September 1974. The military junta made Pinochet the chief executive only in June 1974. In July 1978, Pinochet ousted General Leigh from the junta (not unlike the case of General Yun in South Korea in 1973) for deigning to discuss transition scenarios. In part because Pinochet had such difficulty in establishing his primacy, he took no steps to organize his succession within the authoritarian regime. Until the day of his defeat in a plebiscite in 1988, he never believed that he would stop serving as Chile's president until his death.<sup>13</sup> The Chilean installation was thus more troubled at the outset than South Korea's — greater initial resistance, lower leadership unity — and equally poor in the shared failure to institutionalize succession within the regime.

The Mexican authoritarian installation was initially the most troubled. Resistance to new rulers was high and leadership unity was low. The Mexican revolution began in October 1910, swiftly overthrew President General Porfirio Díaz, but continued for much of that decade as various factions fought each other. In 1920, the most powerful revolutionary commander, General Venustiano Carranza, who had become president of Mexico, attempted to impose his chosen successor for the presidency. Carranza's gambit failed. He was killed in May 1920. The second great survivor of the revolution, General Francisco (Pancho) Villa, signed a peace agreement in July 1920. There was, however, no one winner but a triumvirate. General Adolfo de la Huerta became provisional president until General Alvaro Obregón was elected president later that year. General Plutarco Elías Calles followed, being elected in 1924 after the government beat back General de la Huerta's rebellion. Obregón was reelected in 1928 but was assassinated by a religious fanatic before his presidential inauguration. Religious civil war flared in various regions of Mexico between 1926 and 1929. The elections of the 1920s were highly uncompetitive and fraudulent.

Faced with civil war, the assassination of Mexico's most public figure, and prospects for further severe instability, President Calles acted as if he had read Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan*. Because men live in a perpetual state of war without a leviathan, "the life of man [is] solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." To address those ills, men covenant: "I authorize and give up my right of governing myself, to this [single party], on this condition, that thou give up thy right to [it], and authorize all [its] actions in like



manner.”<sup>14</sup> On the occasion of his last message to Congress, Calles called for the formation of a single party. The National Revolutionary Party, founded in March 1929, included all the powerful military leaders and civilian bosses. Until 1934, Calles ruled indirectly through puppet presidents: Emilio Portes Gil, Pascual Ortiz Rubio, and Abelardo Rodríguez. Calles also tried to control Lázaro Cárdenas, elected in 1934, but Cárdenas broke Calles’s power and, in April 1936, exiled him.<sup>15</sup>

Anchored in a single party, eventually known as the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the Mexican authoritarian regime lasted until the 1990s. The first president of Mexico ever elected from the opposition, Vicente Fox, took office only in December 2000. A key to the regime’s success was its no reelection rule, which applied to presidents, governors, mayors, members of Congress, and subnational legislators. You obey me today, the regime’s key rule implied, in the certainty that I will step down on schedule and you will then have your chance to rule. Starting at the end of Cárdenas’s six-year term in 1940, there were ten peaceful presidential successions within the same single-party regime. In addition to its hold on the presidency until 2000, the ruling party controlled every governorship until 1989 and both chambers of Congress until 1997; it typically claimed three-quarters to nine-tenths of the valid votes cast in every (fraudulent) presidential election until 1988.

In Mexico, even more than in Brazil in 1964, but unlike in South Korea, Argentina, and Chile, the contestation at the start of the authoritarian regime forced a collegial outcome. This contributed, in turn, to a longer-lasting and more stable authoritarian regime. The early emergence and consolidation of rule by Park, Pinochet, and Onganía worked to the detriment of the installation of a long-term institutionalized authoritarian regime.

### *The Choice of Institutional Means*

Every authoritarian regime in this study chose the same institutional means for executive decision-making. The new ruler delegated significant powers to civilians in specialized areas of the regime. These regimes differed, however, in their choice of institutional means for rule making and information gathering. The Chilean and Argentine militaries abolished parliament, while the Brazilian, and Mexican militaries retained parliaments. South Korea retained a parliament during 1961-1972 but gutted it during the so-called Yushin period, 1972-79. The “parliamentary dictatorships” employed consultative procedures, legislative assemblies, and party organizations to shape the new rules for governing; in general, the greater the resort to these procedures, the more politically effective the authoritarian regime was and the lower was its resort to police or military repression.

President Park relied on highly talented and admirably trained civilian economic policy officials, privileging the role of the Economic Policy Bureau.<sup>16</sup> South Korea’s economic growth during the Park era was stunning. President Onganía chose a comparably talented civilian Minister of the Economy and Labor (who also controlled the

finance ministry), Adalberto Krieger Vasena, from 1967 through 1969. Inflation fell, average annual industrial wages in real terms did not decline, and the growth rate of per capita gross domestic product reached 7 percent in 1969, Krieger's last year.<sup>17</sup> President Videla's economic policies were less successful, though he also relied on a bright civilian Minister of the Economy, José Martínez de Hoz. Unable to cut the budget deficit because of military and other pressures, Martínez de Hoz manipulated the exchange rate to bring down inflation but ultimately failed.<sup>18</sup>

The Brazilian military likewise hired talented and hardheaded civilian finance ministers. Key reforms were enacted under Roberto Campos and Octávio Gouvêia de Bulhões, with Campos in the lead as Planning Minister. The military government's economic growth policy, however, can be traced to the appointment of Antonio Delfim Neto in March 1967. The rate of economic growth doubled from 4.8 percent in 1967 to 9.3 percent in 1968; it stayed above that rate for four consecutive years, with growth rates in the 1970s averaging 8 percent through 1976. This period was known as the Brazilian economic "miracle." The military government's economic policies were less successful thereafter, but civilian officials (including Delfim Neto for a second round) continued to design and implement economic policy.<sup>19</sup> President Pinochet made famous his "Chicago Boys," so nicknamed because many of his civilian economic policy officials studied at the University of Chicago. However, Chilean economic policy in the 1970s and early 1980s was unevenly successful at best, plunging Chile into a financial panic in 1983.<sup>20</sup> A different set of civilian ministers engineered Chile's economic recovery for the balance of the 1980s. The last General to serve as president of Mexico was Manuel Ávila Camacho, who stepped down in 1946. Civilian economic policy officials prevailed throughout Mexican twentieth-century history, and certainly during the years of the Mexican "miracle," 1940-1960, when the average annual growth rate exceeded 6 percent. Mexican economic malperformance occurred only in subsequent years.<sup>21</sup>

In sum, there is no variation among these regimes in their willingness to delegate economic policy to talented civilians. They also delegated other responsibilities. As a set, they differed from other authoritarian regimes of the 1970s, such as Peru under military rule, which appointed only military officers to cabinet posts.

The authoritarian regimes under study differed in their willingness to retain a parliament and lawful political parties. The Argentine and Chilean dictatorships disbanded Congress and proscribed political parties for nearly all of their duration, necessarily relying on secret police and brute repression to cope with the opposition and obtain pertinent political information. They were sophisticated dictatorships in some economic policies but rather primitive in their politics.

The Mexican single-party regime, in contrast, never dispensed with Congress during its decades in power and, by definition, it featured a ruling party. The party was organized into worker, peasant, and "popular" (catch-all) sectors; labor and peasant union leaders, and many middle-class groups were thus linked directly to the ruling party. Nominations of candidates for the presidency remained the informal but effective prerogative of the incumbent president until the 2000 election. Nominations for other

ruling party posts were also negotiated within narrow ruling circles to ensure control from the top and party discipline. The main long-term opposition party, the National Action Party (PAN), was founded in 1939 and never banned. It was cheated from many subnational electoral victories during its history; it won the presidency for the first time only in 2000. The regime tolerated other small parties but these, unlike the PAN, were often coopted. The ruling party won elections by using legal and illegal means, including fraud. Outgoing President Cárdenas set the example in the 1940 presidential election, ensuring the election of his chosen successor over a strong opposition candidate.

Posts in Congress rewarded politicians from various regions and from the party's various sectors to sustain the broad ruling coalition; membership in Congress "nationalized" regional and sectoral politicians. The no-immediate-reelection rule enabled many politicians to rotate as members of Congress. But Congress also gave the opposition voice without power. In the early 1960s, the constitution was amended to ensure some opposition party representation in the Chamber of Deputies elected from party lists. In 1977, the constitution was amended again to ensure that there would be not fewer than 100 opposition deputies in the 400-member chamber. A decade later, as part of the start of the political transition, the opposition was guaranteed 200 seats in a 500-member Chamber. Until the 1988 elections, Congress posed no serious challenge to the president's powers; between 1988 and 1997, the president needed support from the PAN when he wished to amend the constitution. In short, the choice of consultative, partisan, and legislative institutional strategies gave the Mexican authoritarian regime "safe" instruments to reward supporters, discipline members, and allow the opposition to vent its grievances without resorting to violence or harming policies. It was a brilliant political strategy for authoritarian rule.

The Brazilian military government stumbled onto a similar scheme. Its approach proved to be less successful than in Mexico but rather more so than in Argentina and Chile. As already noted, after the 1964 coup the Brazilian military purged the Congress, weakened it institutionally, and in 1965 disbanded the pre-existing political parties. But the toothless Congress continued, and new political parties were founded. Politicians were herded into an official party, the National Renewal Alliance (ARENA), or the tolerated opposition, the Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB). In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the opposition held about one-third of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies, a much higher proportion than in Mexico before the start of its democratic transition.<sup>22</sup> The Congress and the tolerated opposition party voiced discontent without impairing executive policies. The government employed cooptation strategies and patronage to woo selected opposition members and keep in line ARENA party members of Congress and subnational politicians. This strategy served the government well even in the 1982 legislative elections, the last elections held under dictatorship. ARENA won 49 percent of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies; by that point, the government has authorized the creation of other parties so ARENA remained the largest party. And ARENA held two-thirds of the Senate seats.<sup>23</sup> ARENA was never as central to the Brazilian military regime, however, as the PRI was in Mexico. The Brazilian executive was beholden to the top military officer corps and independent from ARENA, whereas in Mexico the president typically was a successful PRI politician.

The South Korean experience was superior to Mexico's and Brazil's in the 1960s but inferior in the 1970s. Mexican and Brazilian authoritarians relied increasingly upon political strategies for governing. The South Korean sequence was the opposite, that is, there was decreasing use of political strategies from the 1960s to the 1970s. South Korea moved away from subtle authoritarian rule (Brazil, Mexico) toward the more primitive exercise of power (Argentina, Chile). President Park un-learned politics in office.

The Park regime began with the construction of the Democratic Republican Party (DRP) and the toleration of a significant opposition. In 1963, Park won the presidency with 42.6 percent of the vote, just 1.5 percentage points ahead of opposition candidate Yun Bo-Sun. In 1967, Park widened his margin of victory to 10 percentage points over Yun. In 1971, Park also won comfortably, although his margin of victory narrowed slightly. During these years, the National Assembly included substantial opposition representation and, especially between 1963 and 1967, noteworthy opportunities for individual Assembly members to propose bills. The Assembly also typically modified about half of all executive bills. Yet, as the years passed, the political space shrank for Assembly member initiatives or for DRP-led amendments of executive bills. In contrast to ARENA in Brazil and the PRI in Mexico, the DRP atrophied steadily since its birth.<sup>24</sup>

Some of the blame for the weakness of the opposition rests with the opposition itself and some with an excessively successful government effort to weaken the opposition. In the 1963 legislative elections the combined opposition parties won half the votes while the government won only one-third (this did not happen at all during the first half of the Brazilian authoritarian regime, and it happened only as part of the end of the Mexican authoritarian regime) but the single-member plurality district electoral law, and the division of the opposition into four major parties, left the government with 63 percent of the seats. The South Korean opposition would have benefited from being forced into a single party like Brazil's MDB. By the 1967 election, excellent economic growth performance and resort to election rigging gave the DRP a majority of the votes and nearly three-quarters of the seats. In the 1971 legislative election, the distribution of seats resembled the distribution of votes more closely because government and opposition parties had become regionally concentrated and thus able to win single-member district seats relatively proportionate to their national share of the votes (the DRP, nonetheless, still won more seats than its share of the national vote). With nearly 45 percent of the seats, the opposition could block constitutional amendments.<sup>25</sup>

Compare the Park regime's response to the 1971 parliamentary elections to the Brazilian dictatorship's response to the 1974 parliamentary elections. In Brazil, the opposition MDB won sixteen out of twenty-two senators and nearly doubled its share of the popular vote in the Chamber of Deputies, reaching almost 38 percent of the votes. In anticipation of the next elections, Brazil's military government amended the constitution, arrogating to itself the power to appoint one-third of the Senate and gerrymandering the Chamber of Deputies to increase the representation of the rural areas where it was stronger. Soon thereafter, however, the government also relaxed its political party law, permitting various parties to organize, and it adopted a much more tolerant attitude

toward labor union strikes.<sup>26</sup> The government began to loosen the historical state-corporatist control over labor unions, enabling independent labor unions to organize (see discussion below). The government preferred that labor protest should focus on business firms, not on the state. To cope with the more complex political situation, the government increased its reliance on the official ARENA party. ARENA incorporated most of the appointed Senators. The net result retained sufficient space for the opposition and sufficient power for the government. The government preferred to rely on political instruments instead of brute repression. A sharper, more destabilizing political crisis was avoided. Higher levels of repression were unnecessary and the cost of coercion was reduced. Bolívar Lamounier summarized the regime's strategy well in comparative perspective: "Between the impossibility of a lasting Mexicanization, and more dictatorial immobilism, General Geisel [the fourth consecutive military president] opted for a third road, which was gradual and secure decompression."<sup>27</sup>

The Park regime's response to the April and May 1971 election challenges differed and was less effective in maintaining an authoritarian regime that relied on the consent of the governed or at least their toleration, with low resort to repression. Park could not Mexicanize and would not even attempt to Brazilianize South Korea's political system. Along with other factors, the 1971 elections led Park to install the Yushin regime the next year. Under Yushin, Park could control the appointment of one-third of the National Assembly members. Because South Korea's parliament was unicameral, this was a much greater proportionate power of appointment than the Brazilian authoritarians would obtain a few years later. In contrast to the rising role of ARENA in Brazil, Park chose to rely less on the DRP because he was assured of support from his appointees. The electoral law and the government's manipulation of the political process greatly weakened the opposition parties as well. The Yushin regime also imposed tougher controls over Korean labor unions. Park relied increasingly on the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) and other repressive forces to provide him with information to repress the opposition.<sup>28</sup>

The installation of the Yushin regime, as Im Hyug-Baeg indicates in his study, was directly related as well to the regime's founding flaw – a flaw that authoritarians had avoided in Brazil and Mexico. Park insisted on remaining in power, forcing an amendment of the constitution to enable him to run for a third reelection in 1971 against the opposition of members of his own coalition, and employing this succession crisis as a tool to enable the subsequent construction of the Yushin regime. The authoritarian regimes in Brazil and Mexico were spared these succession troubles because they had arranged for the rotation of presidential power within the authoritarian regime.

In conclusion, Mexican authoritarians institutionalized means for consultation and thus fashioned policies that gathered support. Their choice of means also made it easy to obtain political information about opponents. The ruling PRI managed the choice of incumbents at election time with relative ease. The Brazilian dictatorship was less capable, but it also employed various consultative mechanisms, retained a parliament, permitted a strong lawful opposition and, for most of its duration, preferred to coopt than to repress. These two authoritarian regimes were prepared to repress, of course, and at

times did so. One should not confuse an “intelligent dictator” with a democrat.

The means for stable and politically successful authoritarian rule, with low levels of repression, created in Mexico and to some extent Brazil, were for the most part absent in Argentina (especially in the late 1970s) and in Chile. The remarkable South Korean feat is that its ruler exchanged the most politically effective means of the 1960s for less politically effective means of the 1970s.<sup>29</sup>

The previous choices about means for rule making, information gathering, and representation had consequences for the enforcement of compliance. The fewer the channels for peaceful expression of dissent are, the greater the likelihood of protest and repression is. The authoritarian regimes in Argentina (especially the one begun in 1976), Chile, and South Korea under Yushin were highly repressive. Torture became an administrative practice, large numbers of political prisoners were held, and labor union protest was dealt with harshly. In contrast, levels of political imprisonment were much lower in authoritarian Brazil. Both torture and political imprisonment were lower still in authoritarian Mexico.<sup>30</sup>

### *The Labor Question*

Mexican authoritarians relied on two sets of instruments to control organized labor. One set included state controls on worker participation, selective repression of labor opposition movements, and cooptation of labor leaders; this set made the regime authoritarian. But the long-term stability of authoritarian rule in Mexico also rested on the alliance forged from the 1920s and the 1940s between the national political elite and key elements of organized labor. Despite at times contradictory policies, the national political elite valued this alliance at least until the mid-1990s and supported its labor union allies in return for their backing the regime.<sup>31</sup> Few strikes got “out of control” during the long decades of PRI rule; repression was limited even at those times. This does not excuse the regime’s authoritarian practices but it recognizes their political effectiveness.

The Brazilian military government installed in 1964 inherited the labor code first elaborated in 1943. That code intended unions to collaborate with the government to promote social peace. It gave the Labor Ministry broad powers over the unions, including the capacity to intervene in union elections and replace union leaders. Strikes were extremely rare. General nationwide labor confederations were prohibited. This scheme for labor control came to be known as state corporatism.<sup>32</sup> In 1964, the government used this labor code to the hilt to get rid of union leaders it disliked and to crush union power.

Brazil’s economic “miracle” transformed the social and economic basis for labor unions. From 1960 to 1980, the number of people employed in secondary activities nearly quadrupled. They were geographically concentrated. In the 1970s, about half of all secondary-sector employment was located in the state of São Paulo, making it easier for labor activists to organize unions. Led by metalworkers, in 1978 a wave of union strikes swept over the manufacturing sector, especially in São Paulo. This labor upsurge

captured the country's imagination and would lead to the foundation of the Workers' Party (PT) in 1979. That was made possible, in turn, by the regime's change in the electoral law, permitting the creation of new parties, and in labor laws to permit wage increases and the emergence of inter-union organizations.<sup>33</sup> There was no "Cordobazo" in Brazil in 1978 because the dictatorship – led by President General Ernesto Geisel — knew how to adjust. There was also less need for brute repression because other political instruments could be employed.

The political ineptitude of Argentine regimes stands out. Mention has been made of the Cordobazo — the outbreak of labor union and other protest, especially in the industrial city of Córdoba in May 1969, that led eventually to the unraveling of the Argentine authoritarian regime founded in 1966. The Onganía regime had sought to subordinate, not to destroy, organized labor; the latter thus remained strong enough to provide eventually the major impetus for the regime's termination. Nevertheless, this military regime generally preferred to coopt than repress the labor unions. In 1976, the Videla dictatorship believed it had to avoid that "mistake." In addition to the thousands of people murdered by the security forces, the Videla government attacked the General Confederation of Workers (CGT). It sought to abolish "political unionism," destroying the CGT's capacity to coordinate hundreds of labor unions and drastically curtailing their economic power. Labor unions suffered much more from this second authoritarian regime but they re-emerged nearly as strong as ever to re-claim their power in the 1980s after this dictatorship collapsed in 1983. Argentine organized labor's political and economic militancy remained vibrant during the 1980s.<sup>34</sup>

The Chilean authoritarian regime was also extremely hostile to the labor movement. Its economic and social policies led to a drop in real wages, increased unemployment, heightened repression, and severe limitations on the capacity of unions to represent their members. The immediate post-coup repression of labor was at least as severe as in Argentina. Yet in Chile, government authorities innovated a more successful labor policy; Labor Minister José Piñera was its architect. His "Labor Plan" greatly curtailed the possibility of organized labor political networks to affect elections of any kind but it created a space for labor unions at the plant level. The Labor Plan markedly weakened the areas eligible for collective bargaining but such bargaining remained a tool available for unions. It became very difficult to call a strike legally but strikes were not banned. The outcome permitted a limited role for labor unions. In the 1980s, the unions were key actors in the political opposition to the dictatorship but they were never powerful enough to overthrow it or to prevent the accomplishment of its economic objectives.<sup>35</sup> The Chilean labor movement had been one of Latin America's most powerful before the 1973 coup, certainly far more so than South Korea's in either 1961 or 1972. The Chilean dictatorship, unlike Argentina's, dealt with these labor unions harshly but not stupidly.

The South Korean authoritarian response to the same set of problems is another example of President Park's declining political skill during his rule. In the 1960s, the Park regime attempted to Brazilianize the labor movement, employing the tools of state corporatism to enhance state control over the unions. It deposed and arrested the union

leaders it disliked; it banned some nationwide union federations. It created procedures to interfere regularly with the selection of union leaders and prohibited union political activities. It mandated the creation of joint labor-management committees as the site for collective bargaining. But it also permitted the persistence of industrial-level unions. The South Korean economic “miracle” in the 1960s was closest in some respects to Brazil’s in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Both countries grew at comparably very fast rates during a short time. Yet, in time, they would differ. The Brazilian dictatorship responded to increased labor economic significance and activity through a managed opening. President Park installed the repressive Yushin regime.

The Yushin system eliminated the influence of industrial-level unions and removed the legal basis for collective action. It ruled via emergency decrees, viewing any form of labor protest as a challenge to the regime itself. Thus the Yushin system drove labor union leaders and workers into the opposition, lacking lawful peaceful means to express their normal grievances.<sup>36</sup>

The Yushin regime faced intensified labor protests in 1978 and 1979 exactly at the same historical moment as the Brazilian dictatorship faced labor protest. The Yushin system collapsed and Park was assassinated (though for reasons unrelated to the labor protest); the South Korean military employed even higher levels of brute repression. The Brazilian military regime’s accommodationist tactics, in comparison, were more effective politically and less costly; the regime endured another half-dozen years.

Compared to President Geisel, President Park was less politically effective. Compared to both, the Mexican PRI incarnated genius in the political management of labor politics. In general, South Korea under Yushin and Argentina after 1976 were the least politically effective authoritarian regimes in their handling of the labor question, while Mexico’s and to a lesser extent Brazil’s authoritarian regimes were the most effective.

### ***Governing the Society***

An authoritarian regime faces three important choices to govern society. Will it fashion an ideology to persuade citizens to consent to its rule? Will it tolerate and make use of societal pluralism to permit the articulation of civil society interests? And will it activate or deactivate citizen engagement to advance its ends?

The Mexican authoritarian regime was founded in response to the Mexican revolution but, except during the presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas, was not particularly revolutionary. It deemphasized ideological appeals, except in the most general way, and the regime-sponsored participatory activation of citizens. It valued nationalism and the defense of the state’s international sovereignty. Government-sponsored school textbooks exalted the accomplishments and good intentions of Mexican governments over the twentieth century and especially supported the president’s legitimacy. Government officials spoke the language of social justice, at times genuinely, at times in order to



justify the extensive state involvement in economy and society. The state promised economic growth and succeeded in delivering it from the 1930s to the end of the 1960s. But none of this was part of a well-articulated ideology. There were no “sacred” ideological texts. The government and the PRI avoided creating a standard against which they could be judged. Nor was the Mexican authoritarian regime interested in fostering citizen participation. Election turnouts were low. Independent popular political movements were typically few and fragmented, and most were based just in specific regions. Through the 1950s Mexicans had low interest or involvement in politics.<sup>37</sup>

The most important and enduring political legacy of the Lázaro Cárdenas presidency was the corporatist organization of politics. The government fostered the organization of social and economic groups subordinated to the state or the ruling party. The PRI, as already noted, was organized into sectors for workers, peasants, and middle class associations. But the state also required nearly all business firms to join state-chartered business organizations to “represent” and control business interests. The Roman Catholic church, Mexico’s largest, had been militarily and politically defeated during the revolution and, especially, by President Calles during the “Cristero” war (1926-1929); it operated politically with great caution. This system of corporatist controls functioned relatively effectively, with only modest changes, from the 1930s to the 1980s. Its breakdown was coterminous with the regime transition toward democracy.<sup>38</sup> The corporatist system, though frayed, even helped Mexico overcome its deep economic depression of the 1980s.<sup>39</sup>

The Brazilian, Chilean, and both Argentine authoritarian regimes justified their rule in the name of the nation, patriotism, modernization, public order, morality, anti-communism, measures against corruption, economic reorganization and growth, and a deep distrust of “politics.”<sup>40</sup> These were invariably vague pronouncements, albeit frequently repeated, which provided little guidance for political action and did not risk being held as a standard for assessment. These notions – as those of Mexican authoritarians — were what Juan Linz called “mentalities” rather than ideologies. “It is more difficult to conceive of mentalities as binding,” Linz wrote, “requiring a commitment of the rulers and the subjects irrespective of costs and of the need of coercion to implement them. Mentalities are more difficult to diffuse among the masses, less susceptible to be used in education...”<sup>41</sup> Nor can mentalities be used readily to hold rulers accountable.

The Chilean and Argentine (especially post-1976) dictatorships had a similar approach toward citizen participation: don’t! They banned political parties, smashed many labor unions and social movements, and mostly failed to develop channels to engage popular participation. Military regimes in both countries cultivated friendly labor union leaders but these efforts had little impact on the broader labor movement. The Pinochet government also employed a national network of Women’s Centers. These had charitable purposes but they were also means to build support for the government among conservative women.<sup>42</sup> But because the government distrusted civil society and especially mass politics, these endeavors, too, failed to activate participation: they emphasized compliance.

These policies had broader consequences for societal pluralism and the articulation of interests. Organizations that might represent workers, peasants, or the poor more generally were repressed. Business organizations, albeit under some constraints, continued to function. The constraints on business were greater in Argentina between 1976 and 1980 because government authorities disdained the competence of business executives and directly intervened in the management of business federations. But the general asymmetry in organization and potential for representation between upper class and lower class organizations prevented the sort of social pact that was the bread and butter of everyday politics in Mexico and that helped to cushion the impact of business-government disagreements between 1970 and 1982 and the economic crisis that followed in Mexico in the early 1980s. In Argentina and Chile under dictatorship, for several years the state and business federations had no partners with whom to negotiate. This regime failure to permit and make good use of societal pluralism proved fatal for Argentine dictatorships. In Chile, it required a much larger dosage of repression to retain the dictatorship in power at the time of economic crisis in the early to mid-1980s. The Mexican authoritarian regime, however, endured the economic depression of the 1980s, ending only in the 1990s.<sup>43</sup>

The Brazilian authoritarian regime, though similar to the others in its reliance on mentality rather than ideology, differed from the Chilean and Argentine dictatorships in its approach to societal pluralism. It addressed it through state corporatism. The Brazilian dictatorship did not activate citizen participation, but it always held elections, tolerated an opposition, and was less likely to repress. As noted earlier, the Brazilian regime inherited the Labor Code of 1943 and employed it. Labor practices were more repressive than before the 1964 coup in the early years of the dictatorship but policies toward labor and labor unions, in practice, became more tolerant after 1979. As was true for its counterparts elsewhere in Latin America, the Brazilian regime for the most part tolerated business organizations, but the Brazilian government also permitted these organizations to become sources of opposition to government policies in economic and political spheres. Brazilian business leaders understood sooner than their Chilean counterparts that political authoritarianism had costs and that business executive would be likely to wield greater influence under democratic politics. They favored the “softer” themes of the authoritarian regime and would in the end help foster the transition to democracy.<sup>44</sup> The Brazilian regime’s approach to societal pluralism came closer to Mexico’s than to Argentina’s or Chile’s.

President Park’s ideas about economic modernization, nationalism, and rejection of democratic politics echo well the themes from Latin American authoritarians. But Park’s ideational formulations went beyond these mentalities. He sought to re-shape the school curriculum and affect the ways Korean families related to the nation. There was an attempt to indoctrinate civil society, not just to repress it. Park cultivated anti-elitist and populist values, including egalitarianism, in part to cope with elements of opposition in cities and especially in universities. He cultivated support in the rural areas, with some success, in part through the New Community Movement. This Movement was more effective in the 1960s than in the 1970s because, with the success of Korean

industrialization policies, the size of the rural sector shrunk.<sup>45</sup>

In these ways, the Park regime in the 1960s created ideational standards against which it could subsequently be judged: was the egalitarian populist promise fulfilled and were communities empowered? Although the extent of effective participation in the New Community Movement was limited, it was more extensive than anything promoted by ruling South American dictatorships and exceeded only in Mexico whose ruling party developed similar forms of limited rural engagement over a longer span of time.

From the 1960s to the 1970s, the Park regime's approach to societal pluralism veered away from the Mexican comparison and resembled Argentina 1976 and Chile more closely. As noted earlier, Park emulated Brazilian state corporatism toward labor unions in the 1960s but turned toward sharper repression of urban labor in the 1970s, departing from both the Brazilian and Mexican patterns. Park developed an economic strategy of choosing certain business firms as "national champions," nurturing their development as *chaebols*, subordinating their strategies to governmental objectives managed through highly competent bureaucracies (echoes of the Argentine military's disdain for business acumen in the late 1970s), and sacrificing the development of a broader-based medium- and small-sized set of business firms that might have served to some limited extent as a proxy for civil society. The lack of strong labor federations and the lack of business federations that might have represented civil society indirectly deprived the South Korean regime of the Mexican-style "social pact" that might have smoothed political and economic crises. The South Korean government entered also into conflict with Christian churches to an extent unrivaled in Latin America (where the only remote parallel is the critical posture of the Chilean Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference toward the Pinochet regime from the late 1970s onwards).<sup>46</sup>

By the late 1970s, the South Korean authoritarian regime was as incapable as the Argentine and Chilean authoritarian regimes to address societal pluralism to advance its objectives, harness national efforts toward regime goals, and reduce the costs of repression. The Yushin regime gave up on state corporatism, practiced briefly in South Korea during the 1960s, relying more directly on overt repression of labor and greater guidance of big business. But by having earlier emphasized the values of egalitarianism and limited forms of participation in the New Community Movement, the South Korean regime made itself somewhat vulnerable to the criticism that, through the establishment of Yushin, it broke its own promises to the Korean nation. It sowed the least effective combination of variables to foster its own political objectives: it created ideological standards, gave up on state corporatism, and increased repression.

### ***Conclusions: The Perfect Dictatorship?***

Authoritarian regimes are often politically ineffective because many military officers who create and lead them do not care for or understand politics very well. Authoritarian regimes often depend just on one leader, seek to ban all aspects of politics, and resort to repression as their means to cope with disagreement. The politics of such

regimes is at times so primitive that, by the second half of the twentieth century, they were less likely to survive for long in increasingly complex modern societies. Nonetheless, there is variation in the political performance of authoritarian regimes.

Yet it is also worth highlighting that the authoritarian regimes under consideration also varied regarding economic outcomes. South Korea and Brazil had generally excellent economic growth results. Chile and the second Argentine dictatorship had poor economic growth results. Chile under General Pinochet has the international reputation for having engineered an economic miracle. Yet the best the Pinochet regime could muster during its second decade in power (1981-90), after presumably it had purged the Chilean economy of all its viruses, was an annual average growth rate of gross domestic product per capita of 1.4 percent.<sup>47</sup> Mexico and the first Argentine dictatorship had periods of excellent economic growth results (in Mexico, this first-rate performance lasted from the late 1930s to the late 1960s) followed by economic downturns. The relationship between dictatorship and economic growth is indeterminate, therefore.

**Table 2. Comparative Rank Order for Authoritarian Political Effectiveness: Performance during the Installation of the Regime**

	<i>Low Resistance</i>	<i>Leadership Unity</i>	<i>Succession Rules</i>
1 <i>Best</i>	Argentina 1966*	<b>South Korea*</b>	Mexico
2	Argentina 1976*	Argentina 1966*	Brazil
3	<b>South Korea**</b>	Argentina 1976*	Argentina 1976
4	Brazil**	Chile	Argentina 1966*
5	Chile	Brazil	Chile*
6 <i>Worst</i>	Mexico	Mexico	<b>South Korea*</b>

*Note:* Asterisks indicate ties in any one column. In the “Low Resistance” column, Argentina 1966 and 1976 are tied. South Korea and Brazil are also tied at a lower rank

**Table 3. Comparative Rank Order for Authoritarian Political Effectiveness: Choice of Institutional Means**

	<i>Delegate to Civilians</i>	<i>Use Legislature and Political Parties</i>	<b>Coopt &gt; Repress Labor Unions</b>
1 <i>Best</i>		<b>S. Korea 1961-72</b>	Mexico
2		Mexico	Brazil
3	<b>All alike</b>	Brazil	<b>S. Korea 1961-72</b>
4		<b>S. Korea Yushin</b>	Argentina 1966
5		Argentina 1966*	Chile
6		Argentina 1976*	<b>S. Korea Yushin</b>
7 <i>Worst</i>		Chile*	Argentina 1976

*Note:* Asterisks indicate ties in the second column.

**Table 4. Comparative Rank Order for Authoritarian Political Effectiveness: Governing the Society**

	<b>Eschew Ideology</b>	<i>State Corporatism</i>	<i>Deactivate Participation</i>
1 <i>Best</i>	All alike, except:	Mexico	Mexico
2		Brazil	Brazil
3		<b>S. Korea 1961-72</b>	<b>S. Korea 1961-72</b>
4		Argentina 1966	Argentina 1966
5		Argentina 1976	<b>S. Korea Yushin*</b>
6		<b>S. Korea Yushin</b>	Argentina 1976*
7 <i>Worst</i>	<b>South Korea</b>	Chile	Chile*

*Note:* Asterisks indicate ties in the third column.

The analysis of the political effectiveness of dictatorships in these five countries is summarized in Tables 2, 3, and 4. Because there was no variation in the likelihood that authoritarian rulers would delegate authority to competent civilians in various areas, including economic policy, this variable drops out from the analysis.

Argentina in both 1966 and 1976 and, to a lesser extent, South Korea had the best circumstances at the start of the installation of the Onganía, Videla, and Park regimes. There was low resistance to the respective coups and substantial leadership unity. Where the installation was more difficult because the resistance was greater and there was no leadership unity, as in Brazil and Mexico, the likelihood that regime installers would agree on succession rules within the authoritarian regime was much greater. Those authoritarians who had to work harder at stabilizing their coalition at the moment of installation discovered the utility of succession rules early and to great effect. (Chile was an exception. Its installation was difficult, and yet General Pinochet succeeded in imposing his will over his coup allies and over the societal opposition.)

The regimes of difficult installation (Brazil and Mexico) were also more keenly aware of the need to expand and sustain the coalition to support the authoritarian regime and to gather political information useful for governing. They were, therefore, also more likely to employ some legislative institutions and one or more political parties to advance their goals. To be sure, these legislatures and parties were deeply constrained in their powers and their capacities; they differed from legislatures or parties in democratic political system even though they carried out some of the same roles. The regimes of difficult installation also learned earlier about the costs of repression. They preferred cooptation to repression as means to cut the cost of rulership and sustain a broad base of support for the regime. In this regard, the South Korean regime in the early 1960s scores high: its willingness to create a National Assembly and accept political parties is greater than might have been expected from its circumstances at installation.

The regimes of difficult installation (Brazil and Mexico) and South Korea 1961-72 followed similar strategies to govern the society. They deactivated political participation and, for the most part, employed low levels of repression to accomplish this purpose and thus reducing the incentive for opponents to rise in protest. They employed state-corporatist instruments to control the society and harness it toward regime ends. Brazil and Mexico — but not South Korea 1961-71 — eschewed ideological appeals in order to deprive their critics of a standard to judge them accountable.

Argentina and Chile had primitive and politically ineffective authoritarian regimes. In order to govern, they bashed heads. They banned legislatures and parties, found it difficult and distasteful to coopt critics, repressed brutally, and eschewed state-corporatist strategies. They deactivated political participation by force, thereby giving their opponents strong incentives to organize to defeat the authoritarian rulers. Argentina's second dictatorship was generally a worse performer than its first dictatorship; alas, even though the second dictatorship at its start learned the utility of succession rules, its leaders broke those rules soon after the first scheduled succession.

The Park regime's political effectiveness systematically deteriorated from the 1960s to the 1970s. By comparative political standards, it was an above-median performer in the 1960s (most often resembling Brazil) but a below-median performer in the 1970s. President Park un-learned politics in power. The Park regime in the 1960s employed the legislature, sponsored an official political party, preferred to coopt rather than repress, attempted to frame organized labor within a state-corporatist scheme, and promoted political deactivation especially in urban areas but with low levels of repression. (Oddly, the Park regime was the only one to create a fairly formal official ideology.) The founding of the Yushin regime in 1972 led to worse performance on all of these dimensions. The longer Park ruled, the more politically underdeveloped his regime became. This pattern of political decay continued during his immediate successors.

“The perfect dictatorship is not communism, nor is it the Soviet Union, nor is it Fidel Castro: it is Mexico.”<sup>48</sup> So alleged Peruvian novelist and essayist Mario Vargas Llosa in August 1990 during a series of round tables convoked in Mexico City by the dean of Mexican letters, the late Octavio Paz. Vargas Llosa noted that the long-term permanence of a single party in power, the manipulation of elections, and the suppression of domestic criticism marked this dictatorship. He also emphasized the political effectiveness and complexity of the Mexican regime's procedures and institutions.

Park Chung Hee was an economic-growth visionary. His choice of politically inept strategies leading up to and under the Yushin system was a mistake. His regime was politically far less perfect than Mexico's authoritarian regime. Park's political errors probably contributed to his assassination and certainly to the death of the Yushin system.

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<sup>1</sup> This work is part of a large project focused on the Park Chung Hee regime in South Korea. Professors Byung-Kook Kim (Korea University) and Ezra Vogel (Harvard University) lead this project. My study draws on the works of South Korean authors for this project as the basic source of information about the South Korean regime. Thus I am greatly in debt to Profs. Kim and Vogel and to all other South Korean

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colleagues in this project for their insights, hard work, and generosity. All mistakes are mine alone.

<sup>2</sup> The classic theoretical and comparative analysis is Juan J. Linz, "Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes," in *Handbook of Political Science: Macropolitical Theory* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1975).

<sup>3</sup> See chapter by Paul Hutchcroft in this project. See also Meredith Woo-Cumings, ed., *The Developmental State* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999) and, for the end of the Park regime, Stephan Haggard and Robert R. Kaufman, *The Political Economy of Democratic Transitions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

<sup>4</sup> The analytical task of the chapter is to assess how authoritarian regimes can be politically effective. I do not endorse such regimes. I hope that none of these countries will ever again suffer from dictatorship.

<sup>5</sup> S. N. Eisenstadt, *The Political Systems of Empires* (New York: The Free Press, 1963).

<sup>6</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1968), 244-245.

<sup>7</sup> See chapter by Han Yong-Sup, "The Military Coup for the National Revolution." On the relatively low level of resistance, see also chapter by Park Myung-Lim, "Chaeya: The Politics of Passion, 1961-1979." On organized labor, see chapter by Song Ho-Keun, "State and Labor under the Park Chung Hee Regime: The Limit of Labor Politics."

<sup>8</sup> See chapters by Kim Joo-Hong, "The Military under Park Chung Hee's Reign since the Transfer of Power in 1963," and Hoong Jaung, "The Abortive Modernization Experiment of Party Politics: The Failure of the Democratic Republican Party"

<sup>9</sup> Guillermo O'Donnell, *Bureaucratic Authoritarianism: Argentina, 1966-1973, in Comparative Perspective* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 39-40.

<sup>10</sup> William C. Smith, *Authoritarianism and the Crisis of the Argentine Political Economy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), 230-231.

<sup>11</sup> David Pion-Berlin, *The Ideology of State Terror: Economic Doctrine and Political Repression in Argentina and Peru* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1989), and Smith, *Authoritarianism*, 231.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil, 1930-1964: An Experiment in Democracy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 294-313.

<sup>13</sup> Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela, *Chile Under Pinochet: A Nation of Enemies* (New York: Norton, 1991), chapters 1-4, and pp. 297, 310-11; Arturo Valenzuela, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Chile* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 55 and *passim*.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Michael Oakshott (New York: Collier, 1962), 100, 132.

<sup>15</sup> Robert E. Scott, *Mexican Government in Transition* (Rev. ed. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964), 115-125; Enrique Krauze, *Mexico: Biography of Power*, tr. Hank Heifetz (New York: Harper Collins, 1997), 426-435.

<sup>16</sup> See chapter by Kim Byung-Kook, "The Leviathan: Economic Bureaucracy under Park Chung Hee."

<sup>17</sup> O'Donnell, *Bureaucratic Authoritarianism*, 104, 108, 113.

<sup>18</sup> Guillermo A. Calvo, "Fractured Liberalism: Argentina under Martínez de Hoz," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 34, no. 3 (April 1986): 511-529.

<sup>19</sup> Edmar L. Bacha, "Issues and Evidence on Recent Brazilian Economic Growth," *World Development* 5, no. 1-2 (1977): 47-64; Albert Fishlow, "Some Reflections on Post-1964 Brazilian Economic Policy," in *Authoritarian Brazil*, ed. Alfred Stepan (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973).

<sup>20</sup> Sebastian Edwards, "Stabilization with Liberalization: An Evaluation of Ten Years of Chile's Experiment with Free-Market Policies, 1973-1983," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 33 (1985): 223-54.

<sup>21</sup> For a succinct discussion of the successful growth model, see Daniel Levy and Gabriel Székely, *Mexico: Paradoxes of Stability and Change* (Sec. Ed. Boulder: Westview, 1987), chapter 5.

<sup>22</sup> Frances Hagopian, *Traditional Politics and Regime Change in Brazil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 184-185.

<sup>23</sup> Scott Mainwaring, *Rethinking Party Systems in the Third Wave of Democratization: The Case of Brazil* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 94-98.

<sup>24</sup> See chapter by Hoon Jaung, "The Abortive Experiment of Party Politics: The Failure of the Democratic Republican Party."

<sup>25</sup> [fill in author], "A Study of Opposition Parties in the Park Chung Hee Era."

<sup>26</sup> Luciano Martins, "The 'Liberalization' of Authoritarian Rule in Brazil," in *Transitions from*

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*Authoritarian Rule: Latin America*, ed. Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 83-86.

<sup>27</sup> Bolívar Lamounier, "Authoritarian Brazil Revisited: The Impact of Elections on the *Abertura*," in *Democratizing Brazil*, ed. Alfred Stepan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 70.

<sup>28</sup> See chapter by Im Hyug-Baeg, "Historical Origins of Yushin: Park Chung Hee's Machiavellian Moment."

<sup>29</sup> Huntington's *Political Order*, published in 1968, scored Mexico and South Korea as comparably successful authoritarian regimes (see p. 261), which at that time they indeed were.

<sup>30</sup> For comparative data on torture and political imprisonment, Jorge I. Domínguez, Nigel Rodley, Bryce Wood, and Richard Falk, *Enhancing Global Human Rights* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), 93-102.

<sup>31</sup> Kevin J. Middlebrook, *The Paradox of Revolution: Labor, the State, and Authoritarianism in Mexico* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 29-30.

<sup>32</sup> For a thorough study of Brazilian state corporatism, see Philippe Schmitter, *Interest Conflict and Political Change in Brazil* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1971).

<sup>33</sup> Margaret Keck, "The New Unionism in the Brazilian Transition," in *Democratizing Brazil*, ed. Alfred Stepan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

<sup>34</sup> Smith, *Authoritarianism and the Crisis of the Argentine Political Economy*, 231, 263-5, and chapter 6.

<sup>35</sup> Manuel Barrera and J. Samuel Valenzuela, "The Development of Labor Movement Opposition to the Military Regime," in *Military Rule in Chile: Dictatorship and Oppositions* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

<sup>36</sup> See chapter by Song Ho-Keun, "State and Labor under the Park Chung Hee Regime: The Limit of Labor Politics."

<sup>37</sup> Wayne A. Cornelius, *Mexican Politics in Transition: The Breakdown of a One-Party-Dominant Regime*, Monograph Series no. 41 (La Jolla: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California-San Diego, 1996), 89-98; Roderic Ai Camp, *Politics in Mexico: The Decline of Authoritarianism* (Third ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), chapters 3 and 8.

<sup>38</sup> Camp, *Politics in Mexico*, chapter 6; Cornelius, *Mexican Politics in Transition*, 51-56.

<sup>39</sup> Ian Roxborough, "Inflation and Social Pacts in Brazil and Mexico," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 24 (October 1992): 639-664.

<sup>40</sup> O'Donnell, "Bureaucratic Authoritarianism," 51-61; Pion-Berlin, *The Ideology of State Terror*, 97-101; Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil*, 304, 314; Constable and Valenzuela, *Chile Under Pinochet*, 62-63.

<sup>41</sup> Linz, "Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes," 267.

<sup>42</sup> Constable and Valenzuela, *A Nation of Enemies*, 161-162.

<sup>43</sup> Carlos Acuña, "Business Interests, Dictatorship, and Democracy in Argentina," and Blanca Heredia, "Mexican Business and the State," both in *Business and Democracy in Latin America*, ed. Ernest Bartell and Leigh Payne (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1995).

<sup>44</sup> Leigh A. Payne, *Brazilian Industrialists and Democratic Change* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).

<sup>45</sup> See chapters by Han Seung-Mi, "Ethos and Politics of Development Project: Focusing on the New Community Movement;" Moon Chung-In, and Jun Byung-Joon, "Modernization under Park Chung Hee: Ideational Dimensions;" and Lee Young-Jo, "Peasants in Earlier Park Regime: Economic Development, Political Competition, and Agricultural Policy."

<sup>46</sup> See chapters by Park Gil-Sung, and Kim Jung-Ho, "Chaebol;" Rhyu San-Young, "POSCO: Neither Miracle Nor Irony;" Lee Nae-Young, "Developmental Alliance between the State and Local Big Business: The Korean Auto Industry Case;" Kim Byung-Kook, "The Leviathan: Economic Bureaucracy under Park Chung Hee;" and Mah In-Sub, "Rule by Emergency Powers."

<sup>47</sup> Naciones Unidas, Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe, *Balance preliminar de las economías de América Latina y el Caribe* (Santiago, Chile: Naciones Unidas, 2001), 86.

<sup>48</sup> Quotation from Jorge Chabat, "Mexico's Foreign Policy in 1990: Electoral Sovereignty and Integration with the United States," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 33, no. 4 (Winter 1991), 12.