Coordination among Opposition Parties in Authoritarian Elections[*]

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Authoritarian rulers frequently use nominally-democratic institutions, such as political parties and elections, to coopt potential opposition and broaden their bases of support. In addition, these institutions frequently serve to divide the opposition since those groups who are allowed to participate become privileged insiders while other groups remain excluded from the political realm. Yet sometimes these institutions cease to serve the intentions of their creators and become the source of challenges to dictatorial regimes by helping opposition groups coordinate to mount challenges to the existing authoritarian order. Under what conditions, then, do presidential elections under dictatorship lead opposition parties and candidates to coordinate their efforts to defeat authoritarian incumbents? In this paper, I argue that coordination among opposition candidates is less likely when the likelihood of a regime change and the constitutionally-stipulated powers of the presidency are high. Under these conditions, no candidate can induce others to withdraw from the race because promises to share power after election are not credible when the office of the presidency confers significant power. A quantitative analysis of all presidential elections in non-democratic states from 1946 to 2002 provides some evidence for these claims. The results demonstrate how constitutional rules, while doing little to constrain the behavior of incumbents in dictatorial regimes, play a role in conditioning the future expectations and behavior of opposition parties and candidates.

Introduction

Elections in authoritarian regimes pose dilemmas for opposition political parties. As with other nominally democratic institutions in non-democracies, such as legislatures and parties, there is the dilemma over whether to participate in the first place (Lust-Okar 2005). Once the decision to contest elections has been made, opposition parties must decide whether to form pre-electoral pacts in an effort to defeat the incumbent (Howard and Roessler 2006, Van de Walle 2006). These pacts include coalitions that may come in the form of joint lists for legislative elections or the agreement of several parties to support one opposition candidate for presidential elections. Finally, once the election occurs and if it has been "stolen" by the incumbent, opposition parties must decide whether to mobilize in non-violent or possibly violent ways against the regime (Eisenstadt 2004, Tucker 2007).

At each of these moments, opposition parties face coordination dilemmas. Electoral boycotts delegitimize the regime only if most (if not all) opposition parties agree to stay away from the contest. Pre-electoral coalitions increase the likelihood of incumbent defeat only if most opposition candidates agree to coordinate so as to not divide the opposition vote. Post-electoral mobilization may force the incumbent to concede power only if the opposition makes a unified display of strength on the streets. At each moment, all parties face the possibility of achieving an outcome that could make them collectively better off (i.e., the possible end of the dictatorship). Yet they frequently fail to coordinate their efforts, enabling authoritarian incumbents to use elections to perpetuate their rule (Levitsky and Way 2002, Magaloni 2006, Schedler 2006).

In spite of these manipulations, however, opposition parties in authoritarian regimes sometimes manage to maintain a cohesive front in challenging incumbents. In the Philippines, for example, Salvador Laurel, head of the largest opposition party, agreed to support Corazon Aquino's candidacy in snap presidential elections called by Ferdinand Marcos in 1985. Similarly, in Kenya, opposition leaders formed the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) in support of Mwai Kibaki, leading to his victory over the regime-sponsored candidate, Uhuru Kenyatta.

Yet for every opposition coalition in presidential elections, there are spectacular cases of non-coordination among opposition parties. In the 1994 presidential elections in Malawi, for example, Bakili Muluzi and Chakufwa Chihana both ran against the thirty-year incumbent Hastings Kamuzu Banda after failing to form a pre-electoral coalition. In South Korea, neither Kim Dae Jung nor Kim Young Sam was willing to yield in their quests to become president, clearing the way for the regime candidate, Roh Tae Woo, to win the 1988 election with only 36 percent of the vote. The variation in the behavior of opposition candidates prompts the question: under what conditions do opposition candidates form pre-electoral coalitions in presidential elections under dictatorship?

The strategic nature of the decision to enter an electoral contest is well-studied for democracies in the context of how electoral rules influence party systems: electoral rules condition voters' and parties' expectations about winning such that parties enter electoral competition only when they expect to obtain votes (Duverger 1954, Cox 1997). But political parties can do more than either field their own candidates for an election or drop out altogether. They have the option of coordinating with other parties to create joint lists of candidates under pre-electoral coalitions. Strom, Budge, and Laver (1994) claim that more disproportional electoral systems encourage the formation of pre-electoral coalitions as parties have to work harder to gain as many votes as possible to insure seat shares. Ferrara and Herrron (2005) find, however, that mixed electoral systems deter pre-electoral coordination due to "contamination effects:" since the placement of a candidate is a single-member district (SMD) race increases the vote shares of the proportional

representation (PR) list affiliated with that candidate in the same district, no party has an incentive to coordinate their SMD candidates with those of another party. In the most comprehensive examination of pre-electoral coalitions within established democracies, Golder (2006) finds that electoral rules are just one of many factors which influence parties' willingness to coordinate in legislative elections. The situation is considerably more complex as potential coalition partners consider their asymmetries in electoral strength, the potential size of a coalition, and ideology (both in terms of the distances between potential partners, but also the ideological dispersion in the party system more generally).

The literature on coordination in democratic legislative elections is insightful in isolating the points of comparison and contrast with the coordination problem facing opposition parties in presidential elections under non-democratic conditions. One obvious difference is in the willingness of incumbents to yield power. Democratic elections are characterized by *ex ante* uncertainty and *ex post* irreversibility in part because the incumbent agrees to possibility of losing (Przeworski 1991). This means that he will not practice such egregious manipulation and fraud so that there is no chance of losing power, and that he will accept the results should he lose the counting of votes. In authoritarian elections, however, there is uncertainty as to whether incumbents will allow for such events.

Another difference is in the nature of coordination in presidential versus legislative contests. For legislative elections, participating parties can divvy up electoral constituencies so that each party competes only in those districts in which it has a high chance of winning. If the parties have calculated correctly, they each will have some share of seats in the elected parliament. Bargaining to form coalitions in support of a single presidential candidate, however, is likely to be protracted and unsuccessful due to the nature of what is at stake. Candidates are competing for an indivisible position. And while potential candidates may try to strike bargains by trading the presidency for the vice-presidency, cabinet positions, and other posts, none of these offices compare to that of the president. The problem may be one of relative gains as opposition parties compare their future benefits from a coalition.

Yet the issue of relative gains is problematic only when those gains potentially affect enforcement of the original bargain (Fearon 1998). Therefore, the formation of pre-electoral coalitions should be problematic only when opposition parties anticipate that one of them might inherit a strong presidency. A president endowed with significant authority to determine the cabinet, to dissolve the legislature, and to call a state of emergency, might use these powers to disadvantage other parties. If parties know that in the event of an opposition victory leading to regime change, one of them, as president, will possess wide-ranging constitutional powers that may make enforcement of any power-sharing bargain among them problematic, they may not enter into a pre-electoral coalition in the first place.

I test this explanation for non-coordination among opposition parties by examining a cross-national sample of presidential elections in authoritarian regimes from 1946 to 2002. The results show that coordination is less likely when parties anticipate that incumbents would yield and that strong constitutional powers are attached to the presidency that one of them would potentially inherit. These results remain intact even after controlling for the regime's attempts to co-opt or coerce the opposition.

The paper proceeds as follows. In the next section, I discuss how authoritarian elections differ from democratic ones and how that difference affects opposition parties deciding upon electoral strategies. In section three, I provide the empirical variation in electoral coordination and an explanation for it, followed by the analysis in which I also discuss alternative explanations. In the

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conclusion, I discuss how the findings highlight the enforcement problem in this coordination dilemma and suggest how constitutional rules matter under dictatorship.

Authoritarian versus democratic elections

Contemporary scholars recently have singled out non-democratic regimes which hold multiparty elections at the national level as a distinct regime type. Part of the reasoning behind such an effort has been to move beyond a dichotomous conception of political regimes. Diamond (2002) observes that hybrid regimes have the institutional trappings of democracy but do not conform with the norms and practices associated with established democracies while Zakaria (2003) has popularized the notion of "illiberal democracy" or states which hold elections but insure that they are not competitive due to restrictions on political and civil liberties.

Other efforts focus on identifying authoritarian regimes that hold elections as a distinct type of non-democratic state which appears to be increasingly common. Schedler (2006) distinguishes electoral authoritarian regimes as those which "…play the game of multiparty elections… for the chief executive and a national legislative assembly. Yet they violate the liberal-democratic principles of freedom and fairness so profoundly and systematically as to render elections instruments of authoritarian rule." Some of the ways in which non-democratic incumbents violate the spirit of "free and fair" elections include: manipulation of electoral rules, state control of the media and other campaign resources, intimidation of candidates and their supporters, and electoral fraud (Schedler 2002). Levitsky and Way (2002) add harassment of judicial authorities as another feature of "competitive authoritarianism" which insures that opposition parties have no outlet when appealing electoral fraud. Authoritarian incumbents increasingly hold elections due to external pressures – whether in the form of non-governmental groups or other democratic governments – but resort to such tactics to insure that electoral contests never result in alternation.

While elections on an uneven playing field are interesting to study, they are not a new phenomenon. Incumbents using elections to perpetuate their power were common throughout Western Europe and Latin America in the 18th and 19th centuries (Posada-Carbó 1996, Zeldin 1958). Indeed, a glance at elections during the post-World War II period reveals that the share of country-years under authoritarianism that experience a national-level electoral contest has not changed tremendously over time.

*** Figure 1 here ***

While the frequency of elections under authoritarianism may have shifted little, elections seem to have changed from being mostly unanimous plebiscitary events with little opposition to contests in which incumbents face challenges from opposition parties. As a result, authoritarian incumbents appear to draw more frequently from their "menu of manipulation" to prevent electoral contests from escaping their control.

Yet democratic incumbents also engage in a variety of dubious practices to maintain power. They manipulate electoral rules to promote incumbency advantage (e.g., Remington and Smith 1996). They manipulate the economy so that voters will credit them with prosperity (e.g., Remmer 1993). They establish clientelist relations to promote the exchange of votes for goods and services (e.g., Stokes 2005). And when all else fails, they, too, are not above using electoral fraud (Lehoucq and Molina 2002, Cox and Kousser 1981, Argersinger 1985).

What, then, distinguishes non-democratic elections from democratic ones? While democratic incumbents can resort to some of the tricks and tactics that their non-democratic counterparts employ, the crucial distinction is uncertainty over the behavior of incumbents. Elections are democratic when there is certainty that incumbents are willing to step down. As a result, they access the "menu of manipulation" within limits and step down if they lose the counting of votes. In democracies, then, when opposition parties are determining their electoral strategies, they need only consider the strategic behavior of other parties, taking for granted that incumbents will yield if they lose.

For opposition parties competing in authoritarian elections, however, the likelihood of winning is determined by two things: not only their own actions (i.e., whether they put forward a single candidate or split the vote as separate candidates), but also whether the current regime is willing to yield power should it lose the counting of votes.[1]

The two may be related in that the regime may be willing to yield and a democratic transition may occur because the opposition successfully unites in its challenge. Eisenstadt (2004) argues that in Mexico, the post-electoral mobilization strategies pursued by the two main opposition parties, PAN and PRD, were essential in ending the PRI's seventy-year rule. Over a sequence of national and local level elections, the PRD mobilized its supporters on the streets to protest electoral fraud while the PAN extracted concessions from the ruling party to establish more independent electoral institutions. Similarly, Kasara (2005) argues that a coalition among opposition parties in Kenya was essential for ousting Moi and KANU in the 2002 presidential elections. Since Moi won two previous elections with only a plurality of votes, a political transition might have occurred earlier if opposition parties had not remained divided. Besides pealing voters away from the incumbent and mobilizing the electorate "to view the opposition as an alternative governing coalition," Howard and Roessler (2006) argue that opposition cohesion raise the regime's perceived costs of repression and manipulation. In fact, in examining fifty competitive authoritarian elections from 1990 to 2002, they find evidence that pre-electoral opposition coalitions lead to increased political liberalization. Moreover, the fact that an electoral coalition among opposition parties could facilitate a regime transition would appear to distinguish elections under dictatorship from those under democracy.

Given the ability of authoritarian incumbents to use manipulation and fraud in controlling electoral outcomes, however, it seems more plausible that the decision by incumbents on whether they will yield in the event of electoral defeat is determined before any electoral results come in. When incumbents hold elections and reduce their "menu of manipulation," opposition parties have a chance of obtaining enough votes to take over political office. But it is not the opposition's vote totals, themselves, that convince authoritarian incumbents that they must leave office. The decision to step down had to have occurred earlier. Otherwise, the opposition would not have been able to win the election in the first place.

As a result, most scholars of democratic transitions view opposition parties as largely irrelevant for determining whether dictators are willing to yield power. The source of incumbents' willingness to yield is driven by splits within the authoritarian elite (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986, Przeworski 1991, Wood 2000).[2] In support of this view, recent work on dictatorships

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[1] That there is uncertainty over whether incumbents will step down from power is what distinguishes authoritarian elections from democratic ones.

[2] The reasons for why the ruling elite may split vary. Wood (2000), for example, discusses how economic elites in El Salvador and South Africa came to support a political settlement entailing democratization because the current dictatorship was no longer serving their economic interests. Barros (2002), for example,

examining how ruling parties are essential in holding together elite coalitions, implies that elite fissures, first and foremost, are required for political change (Geddes 1999, Magaloni 2006, Brownlee 2007).[3] In all of these accounts, the role of the opposition in influencing transitions appears minimal. Van de Walle (2006: 78) perhaps best summarizes this position in observing: "…opposition cohesion is not a cause of transition but rather a consequence of a growing probability of transition due to a number of interrelated factors." In other words, factors exogenous to the behavior of opposition parties determine whether incumbents will step down in the event of electoral defeat, and these factors can be observed by opposition parties when they are deciding upon their electoral strategies.

The problem of coordination

Given the fact that electoral outcomes can have such a significant influence on whether a country remains under authoritarian incumbents or not, one would expect opposition parties to do everything possible to win elections. In elections in which incumbents have so many ways to insure high vote totals, opposition parties likely must coordinate their efforts to win. Sometimes, in fact, this does occur. In the Philippines, for example, Salvador Laurel, head of the largest opposition party, agreed to support Corazon Aquino's candidacy in snap presidential elections called by Ferdinand Marcos in 1985. Similarly, in Kenya, opposition leaders formed the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) in support of Mwai Kibaki, leading to his victory over the regime-sponsored candidate, Uhuru Kenyatta.

Yet for every opposition coalition in presidential elections, there are spectacular cases of non-coordination among opposition parties. In the 1992 presidential elections in Kenya, for example, seven opposition candidates ran against the 14-year incumbent, Daniel Arap Moi, allowing him to squeak by with 37 percent of the vote. In South Korea, the regime candidate, Roh Tae Woo won the 1988 election because neither of the main two opposition candidates, Kim Dae Jung and Kim Young Sam, was willing to yield to the other. Together, the two Kims had polled 54 percent of the vote, a total which easily would have beaten Roh's 36 percent.

Table 1 provides cases in which the regime candidate, facing more than one opposition candidate, received less than 50 percent of the total votes in a presidential election. Assuming that voters who cast their ballots for separate opposition candidates would have supported a single representative of the opposition, coordination among opposition parties would have resulted in an opposition victory.

*** Table 1 here ***

Probably some voters made strategic decisions in supporting the incumbent, preferring not to bear the costs of opposing the regime when the opposition was so divided and unlikely to win. These voters might have switched their vote to an opposition candidate who headed a unified coalition. Their actions could have made the difference in a number of other elections in which the regime candidate obtained just over a majority. All together, the regime candidate polled less than 60 percent of the vote in 43 percent of the elections. That the regime allowed for opposition

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details how some members of the junta in Chile broke with Pinochet because they believed that prolonged military rule would politicize the armed forces.

[3] External pressures may serve as another source of incumbents' willingness to yield that is exogenous to the behavior of domestic opposition (Brinks and Coppedge 2006, Gleditsch and Ward 2006, Kopstein and Reilly 2000, Mansfield and Pevehouse 2006).

candidates to come so close to achieving victory indicates that in these cases incumbents may have been willing to step down. As a consequence, the inability for opposition parties appears particularly puzzling.

To explain the behavior of the opposition, consider a simplified version of the world in which there are two opposition candidates (and their parties), A and B, who are deciding whether to form a coalition in an authoritarian election. Because they are contesting a presidential election, formation of a coalition will require one of the parties (say, B) to agree to not contest the election and support the other party's candidate (A) as the opposition standard-bearer. In exchange, B will receive an important ministry in A's cabinet should A win the election. This is the nature of the power-sharing agreement that undergirds the electoral coalition.

Assume that the parties are homogenous in that: a) they are located close enough to each other in the policy space so that ideology does not prevent an obstacle to coordination,[4] and b) they are relatively similar in terms of strength.[5] In addition, assume that the regime's actions are constant so that any type of action by the opposition parties will result in a cost that is borne equally by both parties. In other words, the expected value of pursuing cooperative action for either party is determined primarily by what the other party does (rather than what the authoritarian regime might do).

Since A and B are competing in an authoritarian election, they know that the likelihood of taking power has both an endogenous and an exogenous component. It is endogenous in part because their decision to form a coalition will determine whether they garner enough votes to win the presidency. It is exogenous in part because even with the votes, in order for the opposition to take power, the dictator must be willing to yield it. And the factors which determine this are exogenous to opposition behavior.

When there is little chance of incumbents yielding, then opposition parties have little incentive to form pre-electoral coalitions. Contracting to form a coalition requires costly effort on the part of the parties to negotiate with each other, to convince their constituents to support such a deal, etc… If A and B anticipate that the dictator is so determined to stay in office that there is no chance for the opposition to take power, they will be unwilling to pay the costs of forming a coalition. With or without a coalition, the likelihood of coming to power either is too small.

Therefore, when it seems more likely that the dictator would be willing to yield in the event of an electoral defeat, A and B would seem to have incentives to form a coalition. With a coalition, the opposition might be able to defeat the incumbent, leading to a regime transition and the opposition's rise to power. But when the opposition takes office, one side will have more power than the other. Because the office of the presidency is indivisible, the nature of the power-sharing agreement is asymmetrical: A becomes president while B becomes a member or head of the cabinet. The asymmetrical gains from any power-sharing agreement may be enough to deter a coalition. As Przeworski (1991: 67) observes, the struggle for democracy "creates a dilemma: to bring about democracy, anti-authoritarian forces must unite against authoritarianism, but to be victorious under democracy, they must compete with each other. Hence, the struggle for democracy always takes place on two fronts: against the authoritarian regime for democracy and against one's allies for the best place under democracy." In other words, an electoral coalition

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[4] Parties may not have strongly distinct ideological identities because the anti-regime dimension overwhelms any ideological distinctions or because the ideological militants within the party are neutralized, leaving the party as a unitary actor.

[5] Strength here may refer to membership, support within the electorate, or resources to win elections.

may benefit the opposition as a whole vis-à-vis defeating the dictatorship, but it may not benefit opposition parties vis-à-vis each other.

Yet it is not clear why relative gains should be an impediment to agreement if both parties are made better off by the contract. If the opposition comes to power, B may occupy a position in the new government inferior to that of A, but he is still better off being in power (as a result of having formed the coalition) than not being in power (the outcome if he had not entered into the coalition). Even if B is concerned about A's relative gains, he still should agree to the coalition because it improves his welfare.[6]

What may deter B from entering into the contract with A, is if he anticipates that once the coalition wins, A will use the powers of the presidency to renege on their original bargain. In other words, A and B may not be able to reach a pre-electoral agreement because whoever occupies the presidency in the future cannot credibly commit to not using his authority to diminish the other party's political position. Whether the presidency affects the parties' future bargaining power, however, depends on the type and strength of the powers attached to the office. All presidents have legislative versus non-legislative powers (Shugart and Carey 1992). Legislative powers (e.g., veto authority, control over budgetary process, agenda-setting powers) provide presidents the authority to shape the law-making process. Non-legislative powers, in turn, include those prerogatives through which presidents can influence the power of other political actors: authority to declare a state of emergency, to dissolve the assembly, to appoint cabinet members (without legislative approval). Strong legislative powers would enable presidents to renege on any agreement about policy while strong non-legislative powers provide them with the means to break contracts regarding the sharing of offices.

Yet most pre-electoral bargains among opposition parties usually pertain to the distribution of political offices rather than policy compromises. The focus on office rather than policy may be due to the fact that under dictatorships, the main division within society is the anti- versus pro-regime one rather than other standard ideological or policy cleavages (Tucker 2006). That political offices, rather than policies, are the object of these bargains, is important because it implies that a president's ability to renege on a power-sharing agreement is less sensitive to his legislative authority (and more sensitive to his non-legislative powers). If as president, A were to use his legislative powers to affect the balance of power between his party and B's, it would entail using the rules to forward his legislative agendas in an attempt to claim credit among voters and to capture more votes than B in the next election. While these uses of legislative power can certainly affect the balance of power among parties, they do so in a slower and more contingent way. Non-legislative powers, however, enable presidents to affect the parity between parties more directly. As president, A may decide not to appoint B to his cabinet post, or he might dissolve the legislature or call a state of emergency as a pretense for banning B's party. As a result, parties should view presidencies with strong non-legislative authority as an impediment to reaching agreement because these powers can affect their post-electoral existence while strong legislative powers pose less of a problem.

One question is whether parties could attempt to devise institutional solutions to solve their commitment problem and as a result, reach an agreement. This solution might come in the form of institutions that reduce the president's non-legislative powers. Indeed, Kasara (2005) argues that opposition parties in Kenya were able to form a coalition in 2002 because they had an understanding that constitutional revisions reducing the president's powers would be made after

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[6] The assumption is that actors are more interested in maximizing their welfare rather than minimizing someone else's, or that efficiency considerations trump distributional ones (Knight 1992).

the election. Yet it is not clear why such an "understanding" would be credible. After all, neither of the two main parties to the agreement was in power, meaning that any proposed constitutional revision would remain just a promise. It could be carried out only after one of them occupied the presidency. But at that point, it would be too late: whoever occupied the presidency would be able to renege.

To summarize, opposition parties consider coordinating their electoral strategies in authoritarian elections when they think such actions can affect their chances of winning elections and obtaining power. Whether their bargaining actually leads to an agreement, however, depends on the nature of the object over which they are bargaining. Parties should agree to coalesce around a single opposition candidate only if that candidate stands to inherit a presidency with weak non-legislative powers. Presidential office endowed with strong non-legislative authority, in turn, deters parties from entering into a pre-electoral contract because they fear that the new president will use those powers to renege on any power-sharing agreement. Observationally, then, we should expect to see less coordination among opposition candidates when the likelihood of incumbents yielding is high, conditional on the strength of the president's non-legislative authority that parties expect to inherit.

Empirical analysis

Data and analysis

The unit of analysis is a presidential election under dictatorship where regime type follows Przeworski et al.'s (2000) minimalist definition.[7] Since Przeworski et al. (2000) code the regime type of a country as of December 31st of the year, the sample includes all presidential elections in dictatorial years and in the first year of a democratic spell if the election occurred prior to the regime change. In each presidential election, there must be at least one challenger. Therefore, plebiscites and referenda on the incumbent are not included.

As a proxy for coordination on the part of opposition parties, I include the largest vote share obtained by an opposition candidate (*Largest opposition share*).[8] A larger vote share for the first candidate indicates that votes against the regime have been divided among fewer candidates. As an additional proxy, I rerun the models using the number of opposition candidates as a dependent variable (*Number of candidates*).

The first independent variable of primary interest has to measure the willingness of regime incumbents to cede power. As discussed earlier, the literature on dictatorships and democratic transitions emphasizes the importance of elite fractures in indicating that an authoritarian regime is crumbling. Opposition parties can observe such actions, deducing that splits with the regime make it more likely that incumbents will yield. To capture this idea, I include the variable *Defection*, a dichotomous variable coded 1 if a member of the ruling elite leaves the regime party

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[7] Non-democracies include all regimes that: 1) do not have competitive legislative elections, 2) do not have competitive executive elections, 3) do not allow for more than one political party, and/or 4) do not allow for alternation in office. For an updated version of the data, see Cheibub and Gandhi (2004).

[8] In presidential elections, it is not obvious what should be the universe of all possible coalition partners since any single individual can declare himself/herself as a candidate. Identifying the complete set of potential coalition partners is slightly easier in legislative elections where contestation requires the participation of parties.

to challenge the incumbent in the election, 0 otherwise.[9] Departure from the party must be voluntary. Expulsion from the party is not coded as a defection, because in such cases, the member no longer has a choice over leaving.[10] In addition, departure from the party must occur between two elections or, in the country's first multiparty election, after elections have been called or parties have been made legal.[11]

To gauge the power of the presidency that opposition parties expect to inherit, I examine presidential power as indicated in the constitution under which the election occurs. Authoritarian regimes usually operate under an official legal order, either maintaining a past democratic constitution (e.g., the 1935 constitution during Marcos' early years in the Philippines) or creating a new constitution (e.g., Yushin constitution under Park in South Korea). And while non-democratic rulers often do not obey the tenets spelled out in these higher laws, those opposition candidates contesting elections who expect to follow them, will inherit these constitutional constraints upon coming to power. As a result, when opposition parties are bargaining over the formation of pre-electoral coalitions, they take as a reference the presidential powers that are enumerated in the constitution under dictatorship.

Shugart and Carey (1992) differentiate between the legislative and non-legislative powers of presidents. The authority of the chief executive to dissolve the assembly is one type of non-legislative tool that presidents potentially can use to arrogate more power and renege on any pre-electoral bargain. *Dissolution* takes three values to indicate the powers of the president to dissolve the legislature. When *Dissolution* takes the value of 0, the constitution explicitly states that the president has no right to dissolve the assembly. A value of 1 signifies that a constitutional clause exists, either restricting the frequency of dissolution or the point in time during the president's or legislature's tenure when dissolution can occur or providing for dissolution only in response to actions taken by the legislature. For example, the president may dissolve the assembly in response to censure or may not dissolve if the legislature is considering a no-confidence motion. Finally, the value of 2 indicates that the decision to dissolve is bounded by circumstances determined by the president himself. For example, in Yemen, the president can dissolve the assembly after a referendum, but the president, himself, can call a referendum. Higher values of *Dissolution* indicate fewer restrictions on the president's ability to eliminate (even if temporarily) the legislative branch.

Two variables provide some indication of presidents' legislative authority. The first is *Partial veto*, a categorical variable that measures the degree to which presidents have partial veto power

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[9] In some cases, parties are defined loosely to include movements, as in the cases of Uganda under Yoweri Museveni and Iran after the 1979 Revolution, where, even though parties are officially illegal, there is a clearly defined regime-supported "movement" that serves the regime in the same capacity as a hegemonic party. For more details, see Gandhi and Reuter (2007).

[10] This coding rule may exclude instances in which a potential defector challenges the regime with the precise goal of being expelled. Such individuals may be the functional equivalents of defectors, for instead of voluntarily defecting, they may challenge the regime from within, disregarding the consequences. Some of these individuals may even subsequently run against the regime in elections. Yet including these cases then would require including regime-initiated purges in which notable party members are simply expelled against their own will. As a result, to maintain consistency, no expulsions are counted as defections.

[11] This rule is devised to address situations in which a single party dominated politics for so long that anyone involved in politics and competing in the first (or subsequent) elections had to have been a member of the single party at some time in the past. In these cases, prior membership in the party is not a sufficient criteria for discerning defection. It is assumed that once a member leaves a party, he can not return. So if any member runs in more than one election, it is not possible for the individual to be a defector in all elections subsequent to the one for which he may be a defector.

that can be countered by the legislature.[12] The variable takes five values: 0 if the president has no partial veto, 1 if his partial veto can be overridden by a simple majority of quorum, 2 if override requires an absolute majority of the total membership, 3 if only an extraordinary majority can override the partial veto, and 4 if the legislature has no override power. As is evident, higher values of *Partial veto* indicate stronger legislative powers for the president.

The second variable is *Budget*, indicating the legislature's powers vis-à-vis the president's in determining government expenditures. The variable takes four values: 0 if the assembly has unrestricted authority in preparing or amending the budget, 1 if the legislature can amend the budget only within the president's designated upper limit or if it finds new revenues, 2 if the legislature can only reduce the budget, and 3 if the legislature has no authority to amend the budget. Higher values of *Budget* indicate a stronger hand for the president in shaping a budget to match his preferences.

To determine whether the effect of the likelihood of incumbents yielding on opposition electoral strategies is conditional on the strength of presidential power, I include interaction terms between *Defection* and each of the three types of presidential power. If issues around enforcement are the key to understanding the variance in coordinative behavior, then only the interaction term containing an indicator of the president's non-legislative power (i.e., *Defection*Dissolution*) should be significant.

The models include a number of control variables to take into account how concurrent elections, electoral rules, social cleavages, and actions by the regime affect opposition electoral strategies. First, parties trying to form a coalition for the presidential election may be helped or hindered by negotiations over concurrent legislative elections. It is not clear what effect concurrent legislative elections should have on parties trying to reach agreement over presidential elections. On the one hand, forming a legislative pre-electoral coalition should be easier than a presidential one due to the divisibility of gains in the former. So the momentum gained from forming a legislative coalition may spill over into concurrent presidential elections. On the other hand, concurrent elections mean that parties may feel compelled to form a coalition encompassing both elections. An increasing number of issues on the table may present more potential stumbling blocks for parties attempting to reach agreement. *Concurrent election*, a dichotomous variable coded 1 if there are presidential and legislative elections within 12 months of each other, 0 otherwise, is included.

Second, provisions regarding run-offs if no candidate succeeds in securing a majority in the first round should affect the decision of candidates to enter in the first place. Run-off elections should result in more presidential challengers, or less opposition coordination, for two reasons. First, under plurality only one candidate can win while under two round run-off, two can move past the first stage. As a result, a challenger who might anticipate winning enough votes for second place might not enter an election with plurality rule, but will if he knows that a second round is possible (Cox 1997). Second, candidates might enter the race with the goal of obtaining enough votes so that they can bargain for benefits in exchange for their endorsement (Jones 1999). With the possibility of reaching a second round, these candidates might be in a better position to bargain for benefits. *Run-off*, a dichotomous variable indicating whether electoral rules allow for a second

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[12] When the constitution states that the president has the power "to make observations" (e.g., Guatamala's 1965 constitution) or "to demand a second reading of a bill in part" (e.g., Benin's 1991 constitution), I consider these provisions of partial veto.

round run-off among top candidates from the first round, 0 for plurality formula, is expected to have a negative impact on the largest opposition vote share.[13]

Electoral rules work in tandem with social cleavages to determine the number of competitors in elections (Cox 1997, Mozaffar et al. 2003, Ordeshook and Shvetsova 1994). A greater number of social cleavages, all else being equal, should encourage the entrance of more opposition candidates. To capture the effect of social cleavages on opposition strategies, *Ethnic fractionalization*, is included. The variable is constructed with the population shares of different ethnic groups as defined by Fearon (2003) according to the formula: $1 - \Sigma (p_i^2)$ where p_i is the share of the population that belongs to ethnic group i. It is expected to have a negative effect on the vote share of the first opposition candidate.

Finally, authoritarian regimes can act to deter the opposition from presenting a unified front. Indeed, much of the literature on electoral authoritarianism focuses on how dictators use techniques including the buying of votes, the manipulation of electoral rules, the intimidation of opposition candidates, and the fraudulent counting of votes to prevent opposition victories. I broadly group these strategies into ones of co-optation and coercion. To co-opt supporters, regime candidates provide selective inducements to voters and engage in manipulation of the economy suggestive of political business cycles (Barclay 2008, Blaydes 2006, Magaloni 2006). In addition, regimes can try to co-opt opposition parties and prevent them from forming a unified front. This strategy is possible only if incumbents have access to rents. Therefore, *Rents* is included as a control variable. It is a five-point scale variable measuring the value of exports from fuel, minerals, and/or ores as a percentage of GDP (Ross 2001). When resource exports' share of GDP is less than 1 percent, *Rents* is equal to 0. When resource exports constitute between 1 and 5 percent of GDP, the variable is coded 1; between 5 and 15 percent, coded 2; between 15 and 30 percent, coded 3; and, when greater than 30 percent, coded 4. Missing values of this scale are filled in by examining surrounding non-missing values of this variable (Jensen and Wantchekon 2004).[14] As *Rents* increase, opposition coordination should be less likely, and the share of the largest opposition candidate should decline.

Finally, to substitute or compliment co-optive strategies, regimes can deploy coercive ones as well. It is unclear, however, how coercion might affect electoral coordination among opposition parties. On the one hand, the selective use of coercion on some opposition parties, but not others, might reduce the number of parties competing, seemingly increasing the degree of coordination. On the other hand, dictators may use coercion precisely to break up any attempts at form a united front that could be seriously threatening to their control over elections. To control for the regime's use of intimidation to influence the opposition, I include *Purges*, or the sum of instances of systematic elimination of political opponents by jailing or execution for the five-year period previous to the election (Banks 1996).

Table 2 provides descriptive statistics for all the variables used in the analysis.

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[13] Second round polling usually consists of just the top two vote-getters from the first round, but in rare cases may include more than just these two (e.g., Tanzania). These unusual cases are included on the grounds that as long as the second round admits fewer candidates than the first, the strategic winnowing out of candidates should still occur if only in lesser degrees.

[14] Following Jensen and Wantchekon (2004), missing values of this scale are filled in by examining surrounding non-missing values of this variable. This variable differs slightly from their scale, since these authors were measuring resource exports as a percentage of merchandise exports rather than as a percentage of GDP.

The model, then, is as follows:

Opposition coordination = B_0 + B_1*Defection* + B_jPresidential power + B_n*Defection**Presidential power + B_mControls + ε

where
Opposition coordination includes *Largest opposition share* or *Number of candidates;*
Presidential power includes *Dissolution*, *Partial veto*, or *Budget*; and,
Controls include *Concurrent election, Run-off, Ethnic fractionalization, Rents,* and *Purges*.

Since the hypothesized effects of the willingness of incumbents to yield on opposition electoral behavior are conditional on the strength of presidential powers, B_1 is expected to be zero while $(B_1 + B_n)$ is expected to be positive (Brambor et al. 2006).[15]

Ordinary least squares is used to estimate the models in which *Largest opposition share* is the dependent variable while a negative binomial model is appropriate for the models in which *Number of candidates*, a count variable, serves as the dependent variable.[16]

Table 3 provides results from models with different specifications.

In Table 3, columns 1A and 1B provide results from the OLS models using *Largest opposition share* as the dependent variable while columns 2A and 2B refer to the negative binomial models in which the number of opposition candidates is the measure of coordination. The models in 1A and 2A are tests of the primary hypothesis – that when authoritarian incumbents are likely to yield power, opposition coordination is less likely when candidates expect to inherit a presidency with strong non-legislative powers. As expected, in both models, the impact of *Defection*, or the proxy for probable regime change, is not statistically significant on its own. In addition, column 1A shows that the net effect of *Dissolution* and *Dissolution**Defection is positive and statistically significant. The results constitute some preliminary evidence that strong presidential powers conditional on the likelihood of regime change deter opposition coordination.

In addition, concurrent legislative elections appear to make pre-electoral bargaining more difficult. None of the other control variables, however, have an impact on the opposition's largest vote share that is significantly different from zero. As column 2A shows, however, when opposition coordination is operationalized as a count variable, the effects of the variables both of primary and secondary interest are null.

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[15] Since the interaction relation is symmetric, B_j also is expected to be zero while $(B_j + B_n)$ is expected to be positive.

[16] A Poisson regression model usually is employed for count outcomes in which for a discrete random variable, Y, and observed frequencies, y_i, i = 1,…, N, where $y_i \geq 0$, and regressors x_i, prob$(Y = y_i) = e^{-\lambda i} \lambda i^{yi}$ / $y_i!$, y = 0, 1,…, ln $\lambda_i = x_i$. Both the mean and the variance of y_i are characterized by a single parameter, λ_i. Yet in almost all the model specifications used here, tests for overdispersion indicate that this assumption can not be satisfied. As a result, I use a negative binomial model which is simply an extension of the Poisson regression model, allowing for the variance of the process to differ from the mean by including an additional parameter to reflect unobserved heterogeneity among observations. The model is estimated taking into account left truncation at zero since the sample does include any elections uncontested by the opposition (Greene 1997).

The models in columns 1B and 2B are tests of the idea that the strength of the president's legislative authority does not deter opposition coordination because these powers do not affect parties' abilities to enforce power-sharing agreements. If this is the case, then the president's partial veto and budgetary powers should have no significant impact on the opposition's electoral behavior. The results in columns 1B and 2B provide some preliminary support for this idea. Neither the interaction terms nor the constituent terms of the variables of interest are statistically significant.

The results from columns 1A, 1B, and 2B provide empirical support for the idea that parties' anticipation of their future bargaining positions may influence their choice of electoral strategy. In particular, if parties expect that enforcement of power-sharing agreements may be problematic due to the strength of the future president's ability to use his legal authority to renege on such bargains, then they will resist electoral coordination. That the empirical results show that non-legislative, rather than legislative, power is significant, confirms the importance of the commitment problem in the formulation of opposition electoral strategy. Parties fail to coordinate not just because presidential office is an indivisible prize and each finds it attractive, but also because they confront future difficulties in enforcing agreements.

The results also suggest the importance of formal rules in influencing the expectations and behavior of parties even under dictatorship. But one may wonder whether *de jure* and *de facto* presidential power are correlated in which case it would be difficult to determine the independent effect of rules. The difficulties of measuring *de facto* presidential power are numerous (Shugart and Carey 1992), but *Rents* may serve as an initial proxy of *de facto* power. Resources may enable a future president to renege on a power-sharing agreement by co-opting others or even financing the arming of his faction.

Table 4 shows the results of two models of opposition coordination in which *Rents* is included separately and as a constituent of an interaction term with *Defection*. The idea is that if de facto power is more important than formal rules in determining parties' strategies, then *Rents* and its interaction term should have a statistically significant impact on the two measures of opposition coordination.

*** Table 4 here ***

The results in Table 4 show that the effects of neither *Rents* nor *Rents*Defection* on electoral coordination is significantly different from zero. In contrast, the impact of the formal constitutional rules regarding the president's power to dissolve the assembly remains positive and strong. The null impact of *Rents* remains even if *Dissolution* and its interaction term with *Defection* are removed from the model specification.[17] Yet the fact that the presence of resources does not have a direct impact on opposition behavior does not preclude the possibility that resources matter conditional on the president's formal authority to control them.

Conclusion

Elections under dictatorship typically are viewed as mere instruments by which incumbents perpetuate themselves in power (Levitsky and Way 2002). Yet the electoral process does present moments when the opposition can organize itself in order to better challenge authoritarian rulers

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[17] Results available upon request.

(Schedler 2002). Indeed, as Brownlee (2007) observes, from an empirical standpoint the evidence is rather mixed: elections sometimes have helped consolidation of authoritarian rule while at other times, has led to regime failure.

One such moment that opposition parties can seize is the period before elections when they must decide whether to form a pre-electoral coalition. In deciding on the best strategies to pursue, however, opposition parties face competing pressures: they recognize the benefits of being united in challenging the dictatorship, but may be wary of each others' relative gains in the future (Przeworski 1991). The issue of relative gains emerges as a commitment problem for parties in that enforcement of any bargain underlying a pre-electoral coalition becomes problematic when one of the parties ascends to a strong presidency. But strong presidential powers should be a deterrent to coalition formation only if parties have some expectation that one of them has the opportunity to inherit these powers. In other words, opposition parties must expect that the current authoritarian incumbents will step down if they lose at the polls. The empirical analysis here provides some preliminary evidence that the commitment problem, rather than the indivisibility of presidential office, strongly influences opposition electoral strategies. In addition, the degree to which the problems of enforcement deter cooperation is structured by formal institutions. The effect of *de jure* presidential powers on the electoral behavior of opposition parties shows that constitutions under dictatorship are more than just parchment. Written rules do matter: even if they do not constrain authoritarian incumbents, they influence the behavior of opposition parties who are striving to become future incumbents.

Figure 1: Non-democratic elections, 1946-2002
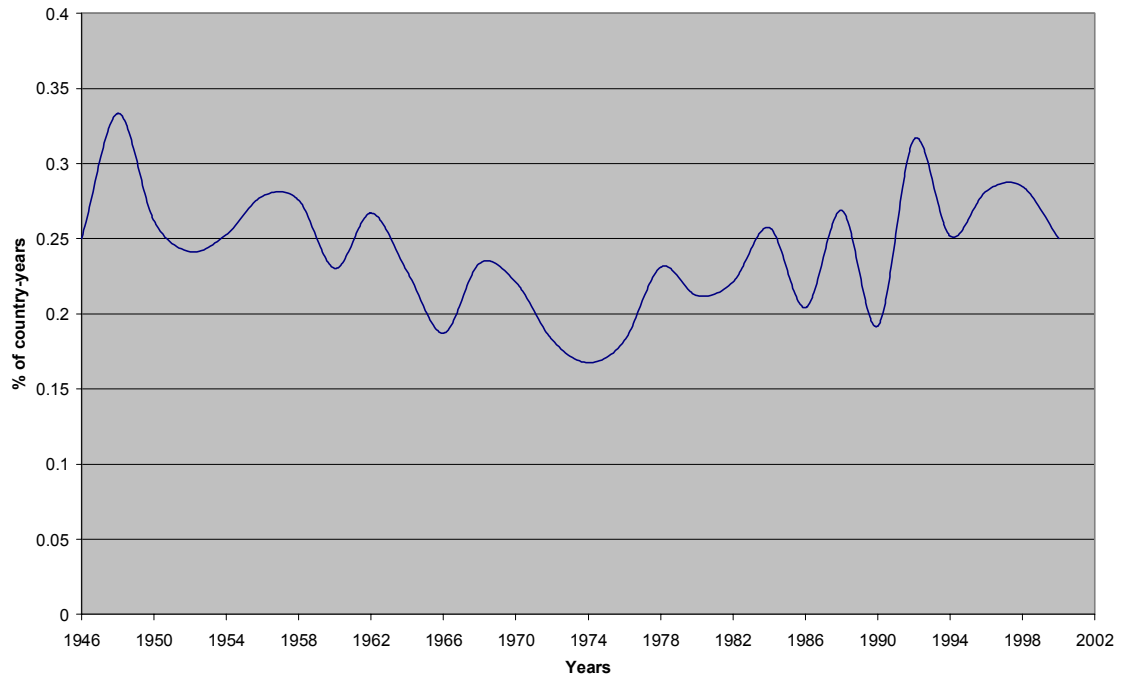
Table 1: Potential coordination failures among opposition parties in authoritarian presidential elections, 1946-2002

Country-year	Regime candidate[*]	Regime votes, percentage of total[**]	Opposition candidates, number	Run-off
Angola 1992	Jose Eduardo dos Santos	49.6	10	No
Belarus 1994	Alyaksandr Lukashenka	44.8	4	Yes
Bolivia 1979?	Hernan Siles Zuazo	36	7	No
Bolivia 1980?	Hernan Siles Zuazo	38.7	12	No
Bosnia-Herzegovina 1996	Alija Izetbegovic	42.3	3	No
Burkina Faso 1978	Sangoule Lamizana	42.2	3	Yes
Cameroon 1992	Paul Biya	40.0	5	No
Chad 1996	Idriss Deby	43.8	14	Yes
Comoros 2002	Azali Assoumani	39.8	8	Yes
El Salvador 1972	Arturo Armando Molina	43.4	3	No
Guinea-Bissau 1994	Joao Bernardo Vieira	46.2	7	Yes
Honduras 1954	Tiburcio Carias Andino	30.8	2	No
Kenya 1992	Daniel Arap Moi	36.6	7	No
Kenya 1997	Daniel Arap Moi	40.4	14	No
Korea, South 1987	Roh Tae Woo	35.9	4	No
Moldova 1996	Mircea Snegur	38.7	4	Yes
Niger 1999?	Mamadou Tandja	32.3	6	Yes
Nigeria 1983	Shehi Shegari	47.5	5	No
Panama 1984	Nicolas Ardito Barletto	46.9	6	No
Paraguay 1993	Juan Carlos Wasmosy	41.6	8	No
Peru 2000	Alberto Fujimori	49.9	8	Yes

[*] Refers to either the incumbent or the candidate supported by the incumbent
[**] For cases in which a run-off occurs, refers to the regime candidate's vote share in the first round

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of variables in analysis

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum	N
Largest opposition share	26.577	17.040	0	76.5	173
Number of candidates	4.447	4.055	1	40	208
Defection	0.130	0.337	0	1	223
Dissolution	0.542	0.737	0	2	192
Partial veto	1.528	1.497	0	4	193
Budget	1.171	1.253	0	3	193
Concurrent election	0.750	0.434	0	1	220
Run-off	0.521	0.501	0	1	217
Ethnic fractionalization	0.504	0.270	0.002	0.899	211
Rents	1.222	1.246	0	4	194
Purges	0.897	2.543	0	25	214

Table 3: Effect of presidential powers on opposition coordination

	Dependent variable: Largest opposition share		Dependent variable: Number of candidates	
	1A	1B	2A	2B
Defection	-1.080	-6.634	0.022	0.243
	(4.580)	(5.982)	(0.361)	(0.342)
Dissolution	-4.781**		0.0009	
	(2.217)		(0.120)	
Dissolution*Defection	10.751**		0.099	
	(4.767)		(0.375)	
Concurrent elections	8.428**	9.886	0.117	0.092
	(3.606)	(3.496)	(0.190)	(0.219)
Run-off	3.325	0.661	0.291	0.363**
	(3.341)	(3.190)	(0.177)	(0.173)
Ethnic fractionalization	-3.232	-0.128	0.377	0.254
	(6.509)	(5.976)	(0.363)	(0.304)
Rents	-0.053	-0.007	-0.040	
	(1.382)	(0.005)	(0.077)	
Purges	0.582	0.008	-0.025	-0.024
	(0.734)	(0.013)	(0.049)	(0.048)
Partial veto		-1.236		0.032
		(1.054)		(0.057)
Partial veto*Defection		3.147		0.050
		(2.353)		(0.152)
Budget		-1.355		0.027
		(1.270)		(0.067)
Budget*Defection		5.887**		-0.222
		(2.889)		(0.206)
Constant	21.301***	21.377***	0.995***	0.923***
	(4.560)	(4.694)	(0.220)	(0.217)
Dispersion parameter			0.436***	0.419***
			(0.130)	(0.128)
Log-Likelihood	-593.662	-656.043	-361.562	-364.228
Number of observations	141	156	156	157

Robust standard errors in parentheses; *** signifies $p \leq 0.01$, ** $p \leq 0.05$, * $p \leq 0.10$

Table 4: Effect of access to rents on opposition coordination

	Dependent variable: Largest opposition share	Dependent variable: Number of candidates
Defection	-1.089	-0.149
	(5.664)	(0.427)
Dissolution	-4.781**	-0.004
	(2.228)	(0.119)
*Dissolution*Defection*	10.746**	-0.001
	(5.119)	(0.453)
Rents	-0.054	-0.076
	(1.513)	(0.081)
*Rents*Defection*	0.008	0.152
	(3.050)	(0.200)
Concurrent elections	8.428	0.098
	(3.627)	(0.191)
Run-off	3.326	0.300*
	(3.384)	(0.175)
Ethnic fractionalization	-3.232	0.405
	(6.535)	(0.361)
Purges	0.582	-0.025
	(0.737)	(0.049)
Constant	21.303***	1.043***
	(4.636)	(0.221)
Dispersion parameter		0.425***
		(0.129)
Log-Likelihood	-593.662	-360.978
Number of observations	141	156

Robust standard errors in parentheses; *** signifies $p \leq 0.01$, ** $p \leq 0.05$, * $p \leq 0.10$

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