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Political Change and
Authoritarian Rule

18 The kaleidoscopic pattern of events in Africa in recent years has given some observers the impression of political chaos. Parties are banned, governments are overthrown, and political leaders rise and fall with some frequency. Through all of this, however, African politics are not chaotic. Many of the changes that are taking place can be seen as a process of political jockeying and institutional experimentation as leaders seek to establish effective rule over the newly independent states. This process has been more difficult and tortuous in some countries than in others, and these differences have in turn led to different types of national political regimes. This chapter suggests that this process of experimenting with new forms of political rule has gone through certain well-defined stages and has followed certain orderly patterns. Understanding what has happened at each stage provides important insights regarding what happens at the next stage. The discussion focuses on ex-colonial Black Africa, that is, on the twenty-six countries of Tropical Africa which were the former colonies of Britain, France, and Belgium.

Elimination of Competitive Party Politics

A useful starting point for exploring the origins of contemporary regimes in Africa is the period of nationalism or decolonization which spanned the approximately fifteen-year period from the end of World War II to roughly 1960 (see chapter 10). This period saw the introduction in the African colonies of many of the democratic institutions of the European colonial powers. Elections were introduced, the right to vote was extended until it became universal, political parties appeared on the scene to contest these elections, and the powers of government increasingly resided in an elected parliament and prime minister

rather than with the colonial rulers. The culmination of this process of decolonization was, of course, formal political independence.

The introduction of new political institutions was an interesting experiment in the transfer or "export" of democracy. These democratic institutions had originated and flourished in the very different historical context of Europe. Generally speaking, they evolved there rather gradually and in a context of somewhat higher levels of economic and social modernization. Would these democratic institutions take hold in Africa, where they were being introduced rapidly and in a very different social, cultural, historical, and economic setting?

Soon after independence it became clear that the Western democratic model would not be followed. Leaders of the newly independent nations moved rapidly and deliberately to eliminate competitive party politics and the popular election of political leaders, two crucial features of competitive democracy. This process occurred in two interrelated phases.

The first phase involved the attempt to form one-party regimes, that is, regimes in which effective political power is held by only one political party. The appearance of one-party regimes actually occurred in some countries before independence, during the period of decolonization. In most of these earlier cases, the overwhelming electoral victory of a single party or the merger of two parties into one made it possible for that party to eliminate effectively all competition. By 1960, the year in which most of colonial tropical Africa became independent, nine countries had one-party regimes. Amid statements by both political leaders and social scientists justifying or rationalizing the one-party development as a potentially "democratic" form of government suitable to the multi-ethnic societies of Africa, there followed in the next half decade the formation of seven additional one-party regimes. In most of these later cases, however, the one-party status did not result from electoral victory or merger, but rather from the straightforward banning of all opposition parties or from the outright rigging of elections. Even in the one-party states which achieved that status by more legitimate means, the supremacy of the single party was maintained by repressing the opposition and was sometimes ratified in law or in new constitutions proclaiming that only one party could legally exist. As civil liberties began to disappear throughout tropical Africa, it became increasingly clear that the attempt to transplant democracy from Europe to the African colonies had not been successful. Rather, authoritarian regimes were being established on the African continent.

A number of reasons have been advanced to explain the abandonment of democratic practices and the impetus for the formation of one-party regimes. First, Western democratic institutions had been only very recently introduced.

As foreign transplants they did not correspond to the needs or interests of those wielding political power, and the democratic values they embodied were neither deeply seated nor widely held. There were thus relatively few institutional and cultural constraints on authoritarian tendencies, on the desire of political elites to restrict or eliminate opposition in order to have greater control of political affairs, whether it be for reasons of personal power and aggrandizement or to facilitate decision-making and pursue national goals of one type or another.

A related reason for the formation of one-party regimes and the elimination of competitive party politics was the changing interests of the political leaders. The introduction of competitive democracy was initially supported and even demanded by the nationalist elite in the preindependence period because it aided them in the struggle for self-government and independence. Elections formed a basis for appeals to popular sovereignty and were an international symbol of readiness for independence. Once independence was achieved, however, the political game changed substantially. What was important for coming to power was not necessarily viewed as appropriate for maintaining power or for achieving policy goals. During the nationalist period, the African masses had been mobilized and politicized as part of the campaign to press for independence, and had been promised an improvement in the conditions of life. With this background of rising mass expectations and with the inability of the new independent governments to deliver, the one-party regime, with its elimination of competitive party politics, served to control one channel of mass demands, which the government either could not or chose not to fulfill. One-party systems also served to deny rival elites the important political resource of mass popularity and backing.

It has further been argued that one-party regimes are more compatible with planning and with "objective," technocratic solutions to economic and social problems. They have been said to depend less on the delicate balancing of political groups and to facilitate consensus. They can thus, it is argued, more easily take decisive policy positions, which may be viewed as necessary for achieving development goals, particularly those that may meet with opposition either from the masses or from certain entrenched interests. This belief in the greater effectiveness of the one-party regime was another factor stimulating its formation in Africa. The other side of this, of course, is that such regimes are less responsive to groups and interests in the society, and can also provide an effective mechanism for the perpetuation and self-enrichment of a privileged political class.

Another reason for the formation of one-party regimes may be that distinct problems are associated with party competition in the African context of multi-

ethnic societies. In such a situation, political competition tends to coincide with ethnic divisions, since different parties tend to represent different ethnic groups. Political conflict that has an ethnic basis often has no easy solution. There may be no outcome that reduces the conflict, no compromise that is satisfactory to both sides, as any benefit offered to one side is seen as a cost or disadvantage to the other. The formation of a one-party regime, in which all groups in the country would be embraced in the single political party, was seen as a way of promoting national integration and avoiding the politicization of ethnic ties and secessionist movements based on ethnic-regional parties.

The second phase of the attempt to eliminate competitive party politics took the form of the military coup, in which the civilian governments in some of the new independent states were overthrown by the armed forces. This phase became dominant in 1966. The first military coup in tropical Africa actually occurred in 1960 in Congo-Leopoldville (Zaire), following closely on the heels of independence. In 1963 three more coups occurred, in Congo-Brazzaville, Dahomey (Benin), and Togo. In all four cases, the military did not stay in power but simply intervened to bring about a change in the civilian government. In the next two years there were four more coups, but three of these were in countries where coups had already occurred and the other, in Gabon, was reversed by the intervention of French troops, which restored the former civilian government. The military coup was definitely a fact of political life on the African continent, but it did not yet seem that it was a pervasive phenomenon.

The events of 1966 changed this assessment. There were coups in five additional countries (indeed there were two coups in two of them) and the list, for the first time, included ex-British as well as ex-French and ex-Belgian colonies. By the end of the decade there were eight additional coups, bringing the total up to twenty-two in twelve countries. In the 1970s this trend has continued. Between 1970 and 1975 there were eight more coups, four of them in countries that had not previously had any. This brought the total up to thirty in sixteen countries. The army has clearly become one of the most important sources of political change in Africa.

The year 1966 signaled as well a change in the role of the military after coups. Coups no longer involved a short-term intervention for the purpose of installing a new civilian government. Rather, the role of the military was expanded, and the military not only seized power to oust the civilian regime, but retained power, setting up military regimes. In 1976, fourteen Black African countries were ruled by military governments (see figure 19).

The causes of military coups and the establishment of military governments are many and are wide-ranging in nature: some are underlying and some are

FIGURE 19
Contemporary Regimes in Tropical Africa, 1976

<i>One-party Plebiscitary</i>	<i>One-party Competitive</i>	<i>Military</i>		<i>Other</i>
Cameroon	Kenya	Benin	Niger	The Gambia
Gabon	Tanzania	Burundi	Nigeria	Malawi
Guinea	Zambia	Central African Republic	Rwanda	Sierra Leone
Ivory Coast		Congo	Togo	
Mauritania		Chad	Uganda	
Senegal*		Ghana	Upper Volta	
		Mali	Zaire	

*Senegal has recently allowed the formation of two additional official parties, one to the right and one to the left of the ruling party. The role these parties might be allowed to play is still unclear.

immediate sparks for the coup. One salient cause is often a sense of threat to the armed forces itself. For instance, officers may feel threatened by a cut in the military budget or by what they view as insufficient military appropriations (in fact, coups are usually followed by increases in the military budget); by the fear or perception that they are losing power to other institutions concerned with security matters, such as the police or special security forces; or by other kinds of policies affecting the military as an institution. Key groups of officers may be antagonized by a lack of opportunity for promotion within the ranks, or may be motivated by personal rivalries and factional in-fighting. Other causes are less related to the specific needs of the military and refer more generally to the inadequate performance of the overthrown regime. They include economic mismanagement; unpopular policy decisions, such as devaluation of the currency or austerity measures; corruption, nepotism, and inefficiency; the inability to control mass demonstrations or unrest; and inter-elite strife and the political stalemate that may result from it.

The most general and underlying cause of military coups is the weakness of the civilian regimes that are ousted: their lack of support, power, prestige, and legitimacy. This weakness is the outcome of the experience that the countries had with competitive party politics during the period of decolonization and with the subsequent pattern of dismantling democratic institutions. Though there have been many coups across the African continent in the decade and a half since independence, not all countries have had coups, and their occurrence has not been random. Where they have occurred depends to a great degree on previous patterns of political change.

Types of One-party Regime Formation and Military Coups

In order to understand why some countries have had coups while others have not, it is necessary to go back and take a closer look at what happened earlier, in the first phase of the establishment of authoritarian rule in independent Africa, that is, with the attempt (or lack of it) to form one-party regimes. Different patterns of one-party regime formation, in turn, reflect the prior experience that each country had with competitive party politics during the period of decolonization. In the following discussion, one-party regimes will be defined as those in which one party holds all national elected posts, including parliamentary seats and the office of president or prime minister.

As indicated above, one-party regimes have been established in three ways: by the electoral success of one of the parties, by a merger of parties, or by the repression of all but one party. In addition to the countries which followed one of these patterns, there are those in which a one-party regime was never formed.

Whether and how a one-party regime was established depended on the power and popularity of the dominant party in each country. Where a one-party regime was formed by election, as in Ivory Coast and Tanzania, the dominant party had the least opposition and was able to fill all the elected legislative seats on its own. The cases of one-party regime formation by merger, as in Guinea, also represent a situation where one party became clearly dominant but faced some opposition from a much weaker party which it could not eliminate electorally. It was nonetheless sufficiently dominant that the opposition party finally decided it would fare better inside the dominant party than in opposition to it. One-party regimes formed by electoral victory or by merger, then, were based on clearly dominant parties. They emerged relatively well-consolidated with a relatively large amount of power and little opposition in the immediate postindependence period.

Where a one-party regime was not established by election or merger, the dominant parties had been relatively weak in the preindependence period and had never been able to establish as broad an electoral base. These parties were thus unable either to eliminate the opposition in a legitimate election or to absorb it through merger. In these cases the most dominant party had relatively less support and legitimacy and more opposition, and, with a few exceptions, did not have the same capacity to institute a successful one-party regime. Many of these countries attempted to set up a one-party regime through coercive means by simply outlawing opposition parties, as in Upper Volta, or by effectively prohibiting the opposition from contesting elections, as in Togo. Other

regimes, as in Nigeria, did not attempt to institute a one-party regime by such measures, but tried to work within the framework of a multiparty system.

The ex-French and ex-British colonies which had not formed one-party regimes by election or merger tended to choose differently between the remaining alternatives. The former French colonies employed a variety of methods, including repression, harassment, and the rigging of elections, to institute a one-party regime. In no former French colony was a multiparty system retained. Among the former British colonies, however, there was much greater hesitancy to employ these methods and a greater tendency to retain a multiparty system.

The type of one-party regime formation that occurred around the time of independence had important consequences for the kinds of regimes that have appeared in the first decade and a half of independence in Africa. In countries such as Ivory Coast and Tanzania, where a one-party regime was formed by election or merger, these regimes were based on parties that had fared well under the competitive elections introduced during the period of decolonization. Furthermore, this method of achieving one-party status was more or less within the rules of the political game then being played. Consequently, these regimes had relatively little opposition and greater legitimacy. They have not been susceptible to military overthrow—the major exception being Mali—but rather have experienced substantial political continuity since independence.

In countries such as Togo where one-party regimes were established by coercive means or Nigeria where multiparty systems continued to exist, no party had fared as well under the competitive elections in the period of decolonization. The postindependence regimes in these countries had less legitimacy and more opposition. In such a situation an attempt to form a one-party regime involved the elimination of rivals who were viable power contenders. This more coercive method of forming a one-party regime was rarely successful, and instead of producing a more unified political system, it tended to intensify rivalries and increase opposition. Almost all of these regimes have been overthrown in military coups. In Congo-Brazzaville the announcement of the intention to form a one-party regime provided the spark for mass rioting and demonstrations and one of the few popular coups that have taken place on the continent. In most other cases the effect was not so immediate, though the military tended to oust these governments within a year or two.

The 1961 elections in Togo illustrate the coercive means often employed to form a one-party state. The election rules were changed to make it mandatory that any party participating in the election put up candidates for every assembly seat. All voters would then vote for the entire party list of candidates, thus assur-

ing that only one party would have seats in the assembly. In addition to this, however, the candidates running on the opposition ticket were disqualified for filing too late. The opposition claimed they had been prevented by the government from doing so on time. The formation of a one-party regime in Togo, then, was not based on relative consensus and neither reflected nor created a politically united country. In the year that followed, opposition became more active and was met with greater repression. The government became increasingly unpopular and was left with little support when the military decided to intervene in 1963.

Those countries which did not establish a one-party regime initially continued to have multiparty elections. Most of these regimes have also been overthrown, and in fact one of the direct and immediate causes for military coups in these countries has been the unworkability of those elections. For instance, Nigeria and Sierra Leone in ex-British Africa, as well as Burundi and Zaire in ex-Belgian Africa, all maintained multiparty regimes in the immediate post-independence period and eventually held a multiparty competitive election. In each case, however, the outcome of that election was disputed by some of the parties or was unacceptable to some group. In the power struggle which followed, no acceptable solution could be reached and no one party was able to predominate. In each case, the military intervened. Of the countries that did not try to establish a one-party regime in the postindependence period but rather continued to operate multiparty systems, only Gambia has not had a coup—and it must be mentioned that Gambia, with less than half a million people, does not have an army.

The tendencies to retain or to abolish competitive elections in the newly independent countries correspond to a more general difference in the way in which the transferred democratic institutions were dismantled in the two ex-colonial groupings. Among the ex-British colonies, there was a widespread tendency to retain some form of electoral competition. Electoral competition was eliminated completely only in Malawi, Ghana, and Uganda. Elsewhere it was maintained either in its original form as a multiparty elective system, or in modified form as a one-party competitive system which allowed voters to choose among candidates who were all members of the single party. Among the ex-French colonies, in contrast to the British African experience, there was a universal move to abolish political competition through the elimination both of opposition political parties and of electoral competition within the dominant party. This occurred in those countries with a dominant party which had been able to form a one-party regime by election or merger and also in those with weaker parties which had used coercion to establish a one-party regime.

These patterns of political change may be summarized as follows. In those countries with parties which fared well in the multiparty competitive elections introduced in the period of decolonization, the dominant parties managed to eliminate the opposition and form one-party regimes in the course of these elections—either through complete electoral victory or through the merger of a weaker party into a clearly dominant one. There were two different kinds of one-party regimes that were formed, however, and this difference was associated with former colonial rulers; in the first kind, primarily found in former French Africa, all electoral competition was eliminated, while in the second, primarily found in former British Africa, electoral competition was retained within the framework of a one-party system. In those countries where the majority party had not fared as well in the multiparty elections of the preindependence period, the final result has been military rule, though it is possible to distinguish two alternative intermediate steps. In the former French African countries that followed this pattern, coercive means were used to establish a one-party regime; in the ex-British and ex-Belgian colonies, a multiparty regime was initially retained. Neither of these subpatterns produced a viable solution to the problem of a lack of consolidation of power, however, and in both cases the regimes tended to be overthrown and military rule ultimately established.

Mass Participation and Authoritarian Rule

From the foregoing, it is possible to distinguish three types of authoritarian rule in contemporary Africa: the plebiscitary one-party regimes of former French Africa, the competitive one-party regimes of former British Africa, and the military regimes (see figure 19). One possible starting point for distinguishing among types of authoritarian rule in Africa is the presence or absence of political parties and, where they exist, the institutional framework within which they carry out what appears to be their principal function of holding elections.¹ These factors imply somewhat different distributions of power, different roles of the party, different degrees or types of popular participation, and different bases for the legitimacy of the regime.

As noted above, the ex-French colonies which formed a one-party regime by election or merger have tended to have plebiscitary one-party regimes in the postindependence period. By holding plebiscitary elections in which the voter can vote only for or against the one official candidate for each office, the government seeks to generate support for the regime. In Ivory Coast, for instance, these elections have been held on schedule every five years since independence, and are plebiscites quite literally. There is no opposition and no choice among

candidates. The fundamental feature of these elections, however, is that they appear to involve a substantial amount of popular mobilization. Close to half the total population is generally reported as voting. Official returns in most of these countries also show at least 90 percent of those registered actually voting, and nearly 100 percent of the voters giving their support to the official candidates. Even allowing for substantial over-reporting in the official figures, it seems clear that sizable numbers of people are mobilized in a ritual act of voting on election day. This is a fairly impressive feat for countries in which systems of communication are not highly developed. For comparative purposes it may be noted that in the United States about 60 percent of the electorate has voted in recent presidential elections. The mobilization in Africa and the seriousness with which these elections are taken are also reflected in a tremendous amount of campaign and election coverage in the local media.

The fact that these elections are taken seriously indicates that they are more than mere drama, a charade, or a sham. They do, or have the potential for doing, at least three things: in their extensive mobilization, they elicit support for the regime, its officeholders, and its policies; they provide an opportunity for communication with the masses; and they give the political leaders a regularized and ritual opportunity for changing or rotating certain personnel and playing a kind of patronage game.

In plebiscitary elections, there is only an appearance of the possibility of rejecting official candidates; the real function is to legitimate them. In making a show of the mass support that can be mobilized behind a regime, its candidates, and its policies, these elections serve as legitimating mechanisms. The plebiscite, a political device often used by an authoritarian state, has the main purpose of unifying the people behind the party and ratifying the decisions of the state.²

By eliciting support, plebiscites may also serve to integrate the citizen into the political system by providing the occasion for the affirmation or reaffirmation of his sense of identity with it. In the campaigns, which form an important part of plebiscites, people are encouraged to attend rallies and meetings. In getting people out in this manner, the campaigns make the citizens more aware of the government and raise national consciousness. Campaigning is based on a national, rather than an ethnic, appeal and an effort is made to impart a feeling of being a participant in a single nationwide event and to build a sense of identification with the nation.

In addition to functioning as a support mechanism, plebiscitary elections and the election campaigns are also useful devices through which the leadership can communicate with the people, publicizing the goals and programs of the

regime. They provide opportunities to explain and to propagandize. They also provide opportunities to get a feeling of grass roots sentiments—to sound out opinion at the local level and get some feedback on the impact of government policies.

Finally, plebiscitary elections serve as an occasion for personnel change among legislative deputies. The elections provide a periodic, legitimate, and institutionalized opportunity for removing and replacing a substantial portion of the members of national legislatures. In plebiscitary elections, of course, these personnel choices are made not through the vote but through the nominating process, and nomination is similar to appointment. Nevertheless, this gives the regimes a source of political patronage that may be important regardless of the power—or lack of power—of the legislature. Nomination to the legislature or removal from it is an important way of rewarding political friends and paying political debts, of co-opting potential opposition leaders, and of punishing—or threatening to punish and thereby keeping in line—those who stray from the path of political loyalty.

A somewhat different pattern has emerged in the ex-British colonies that formed one-party regimes. Rather than plebiscitary, these regimes can be characterized as one-party competitive. Such regimes have been instituted in Tanzania, Kenya, and Zambia. Here some degree of political competition exists, but within the context of a one-party system. In Tanzania the party selects two competing candidates to stand in each constituency, and the voters select one of the two in the general election. In Kenya there is a competitive primary in which voters select the one official candidate who will stand unopposed and be declared the winner on election day. In Zambia voters select three candidates in a competitive primary and then elect one of them in the general election. In these situations, electoral choice is not eliminated, but it is restricted to candidates within the single party who are running on the overall program of the party.

One-party competitive and plebiscitary elections both provide a focus for the task of national integration. In both types, the national government, through the campaign, is brought to the people, and citizens are encouraged to attend rallies and meetings. Yet there are differences in the functions of the two types of elections. Turnout in one-party competitive elections is considerably lower than the reported turnout in plebiscitary elections. For instance, the percentage of the population reported voting in the plebiscitary elections in Ivory Coast in 1965 was more than twice as great as that in the competitive one-party elections in Tanzania in the same year. This contrast would appear to reflect a major difference in actual turnout as well as a difference in the desire of the govern-

ments to give the appearance of massive participation by inflating the figures. In one-party competitive regimes the government does not seem to consider it so symbolically important to claim universal participation and support. Legitimacy in these regimes may derive more from popular choice, however limited or controlled it may be, than from apparent or elicited mass support and ratification. Though there is obviously, to varying degrees, central control over the nominations in one-party competitive regimes, the system is more open than plebiscitary regimes, since the preferred candidates must stand in a competitive primary or election and incumbents can be held more accountable to the people by the threat of non-re-election. In Tanzania close to half (45 percent) of the former members of Parliament who ran in the 1965 elections lost their seats by vote of the electorate. It is interesting to compare this to the United States, where in the 1972 election only 7 percent of the U.S. Representatives who ran for re-election were voted out of office in either the primary or the general election. The presence of electoral competition also means that the patronage function is diluted, since there is less control over the final outcome. It may also mean that the communications function is different, since in the one-party competitive regimes there is more room for the expression of grass-roots sentiment. Studies have shown that in both Tanzania and Kenya electoral campaigns are oriented around *local* issues and do not serve to promote the broader goals of the national regimes. It appears that one-party competitive elections are less well suited to mass mobilization for national goals.³

The final type of authoritarian regime in Africa is the military regime. Military regimes actually represent a wide range of styles of rule, from very personalistic, such as Idi Amin's Uganda, to quite bureaucratic, such as Acheampong's Ghana. Relative to the two types of one-party rule, however, military regimes have certain characteristics in common which set them off as a group. These regimes are dominated by coalitions of bureaucrats and army officers, and the usual pattern is for all parties to be banned, though a single party is occasionally allowed. Although there have been some cases in which the military has held either competitive or controlled elections, the more general policy of the military has been to stay in power and to rule without holding elections. An interesting exception to this is found in Zaire, where the military rulers have set up and legalized a single party, which they control and which they apparently would attempt to use to move toward a more plebiscitary pattern of rule. Generally, however, military regimes do not make any use of controlled or manipulated electoral mobilization present in the other two types of authoritarian rule. Here, of course, the decline in popular participation is the greatest, since there are no electoral and often no party channels left at all. Patterns of

recruitment into public office are different, coming more predominantly from the military instead of from the party. Given the more provincial background and traditional orientation of members of the armed forces, it would appear that the types of individuals placed in high government positions may therefore be different.⁴ Finally, there is a difference in the basis of legitimacy of a military regime, since there is no use of elections of either type to provide apparent support, ratification, or representation. As a result, military regimes must put greater reliance on force as well as on the popularity of their policies in order to maintain themselves in power.

Conclusion

It is clear from this discussion that the experiment in the transfer of Western democracy to contemporary Africa has not worked. Competitive democracy has not been sustained, and the countries of tropical Africa are ruled by authoritarian regimes. However, these regimes tend to be relatively weak, with limited financial, personnel, and political resources at their disposal. They operate in a context of extreme underdevelopment, political and economic dependency on the advanced industrialized world, and internal strains and conflicts among different ideological, political, economic, and ethnic groups. Furthermore, the scope of central political authority is quite limited, being generally restricted to the relatively small modern sector.⁵

This description of African regimes as weak is applicable to one-party and military regimes alike. One aspect of the weakness of one-party regimes may be seen in the declining role of the party.⁶ In the immediate postindependence period, these parties grew in strength as an attempt was made to incorporate into them all the elements of society. Mass mobilization was encouraged and to varying degrees was achieved through participation in the activities of local party units. Separate party auxiliaries were formed to mobilize and incorporate youth, labor, women, and farmers. A major goal of the party was to elicit widespread allegiance to the new state. This phase of party evolution did not last long, however. Party officials were recruited into government posts, and as the activities of the party declined, mass involvement declined with it. Party auxiliaries increasingly became an outlet for criticism rather than support for the government. As a result, their leaders were purged and the auxiliaries were brought under the control of the appropriate governmental ministries and deactivated. The parallel structures of party and government proved inefficient and produced rivalries. Given the increased demand for technical expertise and the more dependable loyalty of the civil servants, the governmental structure

became dominant. Accompanying this decline of the party was a great reduction in its mobilization activities and a corresponding restriction of one important channel for the expression of popular demands.

Thus, while it was once thought that the African one-party regimes could be compared to Communist one-party regimes, implying a strong, highly organized, hierarchical party eliciting overwhelming popular support and with considerable capacity to mobilize the citizenry and pursue social and economic goals, it has since been recognized that this model does not apply. Rather, the parties, which were never very strong, have been reduced in importance and perform fewer and fewer activities as the government bureaucracy and the civil service have become more dominant in political life.

Similarly, it has been recognized that the military regimes which have come to power in Africa are not necessarily more successful than the civilian regimes they replaced. Some analysts had thought that the military was an advanced, Westernized, well-disciplined, "de-tribalized," and technically oriented institution, which upon assuming control of the state could reduce corruption, avoid the bickering and politicking of different political parties or factions, overcome ethnic rivalries, and address itself more directly and efficiently to the problems of administration and economic development. This also was a false impression. In fact, "many African armies are a coterie of distinct armed camps owing primary clientelist allegiance to a handful of mutually competitive officers of different ranks seething with a variety of corporate, ethnic, and personal grievances. One direct corollary is that when the military assumes political power it is frequently not able to provide an efficient, nationally oriented, and stable administration," but rather is subject to all the same strains, tensions, rivalries, abuses, and weakness as the civilian government it replaces.⁷

The conclusions about the weakness of all types of authoritarian rule in contemporary Africa can be overstated, however. Along with important similarities among these regimes, there are differences. All African regimes may be weak, but some are clearly weaker than others. The countries with military regimes tend to be more unstable than those with one-party systems. This can be seen not in the obvious fact that the first independent civilian governments in the former category were overthrown, but rather in the fact that the military governments that replaced them have themselves tended to be overthrown. Furthermore, though all African regimes may be authoritarian, it is possible to identify different patterns through which these authoritarian governments emerged, as well as different types of authoritarian regimes, which are the contemporary outcomes of these different patterns. Throughout Africa, elitist bureaucratic institutions have become dominant over the participatory institu-

tions that were initially introduced in the period of decolonization. Yet in some countries a controlled electoral arena continues to exist. It is the presence or absence of this arena and the kind of electoral participation permitted which allow us to distinguish different types of authoritarian regimes.

It would be interesting to take these differences one step further and consider the relationship between the various types of regimes and the adoption and successful pursuit of development goals (see chapter 19). This topic has not yet been carefully analyzed by scholars concerned with Africa, but certain preliminary observations may be made. Though it does not appear that one kind of regime tends to be more radical or more conservative than another, it may be that the capacity of different governments to pursue development goals successfully, whether capitalist or socialist, depends in part on the type of regime involved. It would be interesting to explore the different kinds of organizational, symbolic, and coercive resources that military regimes and the two types of one-party regimes bring to the task of building long-term development policies. One-party regimes may have certain resources available to them that are not available to military rulers: the continuity of political institutions that may be provided even by a weak one-party system; somewhat greater use of political symbols and ideology that may play a critical role in contexts in which material resources are in short supply; and the possibly greater political flexibility of party structure in responding to opposition and crisis. In light of the apparent importance of such resources, it is noteworthy that several Black African countries often identified as having particularly well worked out development policies—such as Ivory Coast, Tanzania, and Kenya—are one-party regimes. There may thus be an important relationship between the differing structural characteristics and political resources of these regimes and their effectiveness in important areas of public policy.

NOTES

1. This corresponds to criteria for distinguishing types of authoritarian rule proposed by Juan J. Linz. See his "Notes toward a Typology of Authoritarian Regimes," paper delivered at the 1972 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C., especially pp.31 and 49; and "Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes," in Fred Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby, eds., *Handbook of Political Science*, Vol. 3 (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1975).
2. A. J. Milnor, *Elections and Political Stability* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1969), p.115.
3. Goran Hyden and Colin Leys, "Elections and Politics in Single-Party Systems: The Case of Kenya and Tanzania," *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 2 (1972), pp.389-420.
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