Cover Page

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CHAPTER II: AUTHORITARIANISM

You are a flaw in the pattern, Winston. You are a stain that must be wiped out. Did I not tell you just now that we are different from the persecutors of the past?

-1984[130]

The term totalitarianism, in common day language, is most closely associated with severe forms of authoritarianism. It is true that if we were to divide the great political traditions in a liberal branch and an authoritarian branch, totalitarianism undoubtedly has its roots in the latter. Yet, as I shall show in the following chapters, totalitarianism, although its intellectual roots and organizational principles can be traced to different forms of authoritarianism, in the end in and its purest form, constitutes a form of political organization that is both anti-liberal whilst being at the same time anti-authoritarian. And whilst authoritarianism in essence seeks to stabilize the public realm, totalitarian movements in their early stages are conversely highly revolutionary, meaning that they work to keep society in a constant state of motion, whilst at the same time employing every means to make the citizens in that society immobilized and politically impotent. As such totalitarianism presents a radical break with authoritarian forms of government, whilst at the same time it employs many of authoritarianism's characteristic elements. These seeming paradoxes are but one of the many paradoxes that make the task of formulating the taxonomy of totalitarianism a daunting one. To truly give an exact taxonomy of totalitarianism, if at all possible, would amount to such a

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[130] The novel *1984* by George Orwell offers perhaps the best depiction of the totalitarian ideal feasible. Seeing that this dystopian novel is very well known, I will refer to it now and again to explain certain elements of totalitarianism and how these elements are reflected in *1984*. George Orwell, Thomas Pynchon, and Erich Fromm, *Nineteen Eighty-Four: A Novel*, Centennial ed. (New York: Plume, 2003). However, for practical considerations, I will refer to the chapter number as well so that the reader can easily find the passage in his own copy.

voluminous work that such an endeavour is clearly outside of the scope of this chapter. In order to solve this problem I will limit myself to a bird's eye view of the authoritarian spectrum and the place totalitarianism occupies in it.

The questions I aim to answer are the following: how can we define non-totalitarian forms of authoritarianism? What are its main characteristics, and which of these characteristics can help us in better understanding the totalitarian phenomenon? In addition, it is the purpose of this chapter to define both authoritarian and totalitarian forms of political organization. Although this book is concerned with the question whether or not Islamist movements can be understood in the light of the totalitarian paradigm, it might well be that different forms of Islamist movements fall into different classes within the authoritarian spectrum. If that is the case, we still need at least a basic understanding of the authoritarian end of the spectrum.

For reasons that will become clear later on, I have limited my brief references to authoritarian regimes to monarchy, tyranny and dictatorship. Monarchy is of relevance since it traditionally claimed authority with a reference to the divine. Tyranny, of which totalitarianism is often accused, is of relevance due to its quest of power for power's sake. In that sense tyrannical rule is the opposite of totalitarian rule, and clarifies a negative typology of totalitarianism, i.e. it tells us what totalitarianism is not. The dictatorship, in the sense of the modern bureaucratic-state centred meaning, not the Roman institute of dictatorship, is of interested since it too is a product of modernity and the modern state. Yet, unlike totalitarianism, it is not guided by an ideology and has no total claims to the individuals under its rule. The transitional nature of fascism, by which I mean that form of extreme authoritarianism which borders on, and in a number of ways could be understood to have given birth to totalitarianism, requires a dedicated analysis apart from the classic definition of

authoritarianism offered by Linz. I will explore that subject later on in chapter four.

As I have mentioned in the previous paragraph, I will be employing the empirical definition provided by J. Linz. Insofar as I will be contrasting the elements of this definition of authoritarianism with the characteristics of totalitarianism, I will do so primarily with the works of Arendt, Lefort and Voegelin.

Linz defines non-democratic, non-totalitarian political systems as authoritarian if they are:

> political systems with limited, not responsible, political pluralism, without elaborate and guiding ideology, but with distinctive mentalities, without extensive nor intensive political mobilization, except at some points in their development, and in which a leader or occasionally a small group exercises power within formally ill-defined limits but actually quite predictable ones.[131]

This definition revolves around a number of key points namely:

1. The existence of limited political pluralism
2. The legitimation of political power by a mentality, rather than an ideology
3. Limited mobilization
4. A small leadership core
5. Limits on power

I will now discuss these points in further detail. Not only do these points clarify the elements that make up authoritarian rule, but they also form the prelude to the concepts that make up totalitarian rule.

2.1 Political pluralism and the lack of responsibility

Pluralism and authority in liberal democracies

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[131] Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, p. 159.

Political pluralism as a general concept indicates both the pluralism within the layer of those who govern as well as the pluralism in the society that is governed by them. Liberal democracies know an almost unlimited pluralism where the governing body is made up of periodically changing representatives of the constituents, and where a division of power between the legislative, executive and judiciary power, also known as the trias politca, ensures that political power is more or less distributed amongst the different layers of government. Likewise, society itself is highly pluralistic, meaning that a free competition of ideas and the freedom of organization is allowed to exist which in turn can manifest itself in an abundance of political sentiments, organizations and movements and which ultimately form the foundation on which the governing body is built. This type of political organization is therefore pluralistic in two dimensions: On the one hand those who wield formal political power are limited in the amount of control they have on society by the division between the legislative, executive and judiciary branch of government. Secondly, those who wield the formal political power, i.e. the elected government, are periodically held accountable for their policies by the governed in the form of elections, and are more permanently held in check by the need to interact with the differing layers of civil society, such as labour unions and other forms of civil organizations.

Pluralism and authority in authoritarian regimes

Whilst this bottom-up approach and the ensuing interdependency between those who govern and those who are governed is the essential hallmark of the modern liberal democracy, authoritarianism can be characterized by just the opposite. Typically, authoritarian regimes are characterized by the rule from above, with limited political pluralism in the ruling layer and without significant interdependency between the rulers and the ruled. The authoritarian ruler, or rulers, are not necessarily empowered by the greater part of those whom they rule but rather by a varied and often changing segment of the society which they rule. As such their power is based on the empowerment of the few rather than the many. This is

significant in respect to the concept of political pluralism in the ruling layer and the concept of authority as it is perceived by those who are being ruled.

First of all, Political pluralism in the ruling layer is by definition limited since the majority of the people have not been consulted whether or not they wish to empower the ruler. Furthermore, the ruler, because of this lack of broad empowerment, will have to multiply his strength through violence if he is to attain and keep his ability to rule. Since he cannot do this alone he is destined to mobilize certain segments of the population to his cause, thus making him dependant on these segments. He may repay these segments for their loyalty in the form of material benefits such as land or in the form of delegations of political power. Such systems can be seen throughout history in the form of certain early monarchies and feudalism. Even dictatorships rely to some degree on the support of certain segments of the population. For example; In the case of Chili's military dictatorship headed by General Pinochet, it were the class of landowners, merchants and the army that formed the power base of his regime and the dictator had to take into account their respective demands.[132] As such a certain reciprocity between these privileged classes and the ruler existed which created a limited pluralism. Only totalitarian movements at the height of their power are able to dispense with this limited pluralism and can form a truly monistic centre of power. The essence of totalitarian organization furthermore, is from the beginning of its rise to power, the elimination of pluralism in all its aspects. This sets it apart from all other forms of authoritarian rule. We will return to this in the paragraph dealing with pluralism in totalitarianism.

A second and essential aspect in comparing the place of fascism and totalitarianism to authoritarianism is that in authoritarian regimes pluralism exists within the domain of the ruled themselves.

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[132] Genaro Arriagada Herrera, *Pinochet: The Politics of Power*, Thematic Studies in Latin America. (Boston; London: Unwin Hyman, 1988), p. 7.

The level of pluralism that exists there can be limited depending on two factors namely; the ability to limit it and the desire to limit it. A tribal chief or a Christian monarch for example would wish to stifle dissent only insofar as it would undermine his position of power.[133] If

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[133] Arthur Versluis makes the argument that totalitarianism can trace some of its roots to the inquisition and the cooperation between the Monarch and the church. The church, with its theological doctrines and quest for doctrinal purity enlisted the state apparatus of the Monarch in order purge society. The inquisition in that sense would be an attempt to do more than stifle dissent, and would show the first signs of an attempt to dominate man's mind as well through a combination of theology and terror. I agree with this notion that the idea of a totalitarian ideological desire to purge society can be found in the example of the inquisition. However, whilst the founding thought of the inquisition may have been a proto-totalitarian ideology, I cannot define the inquisition as a whole as a thoroughly totalitarian *movement*. That would require additional criteria to be fulfilled as I will explain in chapter five. Within Islamic history there has been a movement which can be equated, in general terms, to the inquisition: the *Kharijite* movement which came onto the scene shortly after the death of Muhammad, and which sought, unsuccessfully, to 'purify' the early Islamic community. This desire to 'purify by force' is indeed a necessary, but not sufficient criterion of a totalitarian movement. Thus, I agree that the inquisition, like the Kharijite movement, bears the signs of a totalitarian desire to purify society. However, that does not mean that its founding doctrine is a thoroughly totalitarian *ideology*, nor does it mean that its particular mode of political action conforms to the criteria of a totalitarian *movement*. I will, of course, describe these factors in much greater detail chapter five. For now, I should say that it is my contention that neither the Monarch nor the Church could be seen as being able to embark on such an ambitious goal as building a totalitarian movement. As I will show, the formation of a thoroughly totalitarian movement is an incredibly difficult and unlikely event which is dependent on some very specific means of political organization and control, and on equally specific developments in the social fabric of a society; both of which only came into existence in the modern age. The limited power of the Monarch and the Church, owed to their responsibility and dependence on the various interest groups, the pluralism within its own ranks and within the theological doctrines which would have to serve as the model of the 'new man', all stand to reason against identifying the inquisition or other pre-modern movements of purification as totalitarian movements. I am perfectly willing to agree that the inquisition bears the early signs of what would later become known as totalitarian

we assume that the main goal of authoritarianism is the organization of political power to the benefit of the ruler and his supporters, than oppression of autonomous organization in the level of the ruled is necessary only in so far as to benefit this stated goal. A Christian monarch, who has been empowered by the church to rule, may for example need to stifle dissenting religious voices in order to secure the continuing support of those who have empowered him. He has however, no need to interfere with the autonomous organization of non-religious trade organizations, unless this would harm his financial interest or the interests of the supporters on which he still relies. The medieval example of the Christian monarch applies to modern day dictatorships as well. Pinochet for example, initially relied heavily on the support of the Catholic Church who empowered him to fight Communism. As long as Pinochet fulfilled this role he could rely on the support of the church. When however the economic policies of Pinochet threatened the poor, who formed the Catholic Church's main constituency, the church opted to abandon its support for the regime and took on a role of opposition.[134]

Therefore, authoritarianism is in this sense essentially a bartering game between different power brokers in society. The authoritarian ruler is the one who can successfully manipulate the diverting interest in society and in the ruling class to multiply his personal strength and safeguard its results. Always dependant on the wishes and demands of his supporters, pluralism in the ruling layer will always be divided accordingly. This in turn leads to a situation in which the supporters will guard themselves against the accumulation of too much power

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thinking. However, based on Versluis's book I do not think that the Inquisition had a sufficient totalistic ambition to be described as totalitarian. One might call it clerical proto-fascism, but this discussion would sidetrack this research too much to engage in. Versluis, *The New Inquisitions: Heretic-Hunting and the Intellectual Origins of Modern Totalitarianism*.

[134] Anthony James Gill, *Rendering Unto Caesar: The Catholic Church and the State in Latin America* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 141-149.

and the over-multiplication of personal strength of the ruler; for if this were to occur it could weaken their own position of power. Since the supporting agents rely on the larger population by whom they themselves have been empowered, there will always remain a necessity for pluralism within the layer of the governed for if there were none this would undermine the position of the supporting agents.[135] It is for example, unthinkable that the Catholic Church which partially empowered Pinochet would allow Pinochet to outlaw Catholicism simply because this would amount to suicide on the part of the Church itself. Authoritarianism in this respect contains a strong economic component in that in the end, it is a balancing act between the different forces within society which results in the attainment of formal political power in the hands of the ruler, and delegated political power for his supporting agents. The necessary delegation of power will therefore put limits on the ability of the ruler to interfere too much with the autonomous spheres of society at large.

Totalitarianism on the other hand, from the outset, strives to, and needs to abolish this division or plurality of power in the layer of the ruled and in the layer of the rulers in such a way that all distinctions within society disappear. Although we will return to this more in-depth in chapter 5, it is important to point out some of the most striking dissimilarities with authoritarian concepts from the outset so that the relevance of this paragraph in relation to the chapter as a whole becomes clear. Totalitarian movements, embodied in the party and headed by the singular leader, aim for the complete identification of society as a whole and power as a whole with the movement and its head in the two principles which Claude Lefort calls "the People-as-One" and "power-as-One":

what appears, in the first instance, is the image of the people-as-One. [..] This image is combined with that of a Power-as-

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[135] See for an intriguing example of this bartering mechanism Machiavelli's famous depiction of Florentine politics in *Il Principe*, first published in 1531 by the Roman publisher Antonio Blado.

One, power concentrated within the limits of the ruling apparatus and, ultimately, in an individual who embodies the unity and will of the people.[136]

Moreover, Arendt has also commented on this lack of plurality in both society and the ruling class, in totalitarian systems:

In totalitarian states, neither army nor church nor bureaucracy was ever in a position to wield or to restrain power [..] No group or institution in the country is left intact, not just because they have to "co-ordinate" with the regime in power and outwardly support it – which of course is bad enough – but because in the long rung they are literally not supposed to survive.[137]

Lack of responsibility

Whilst democratic rulers rule because of the people, authoritarian rulers rule despite of the people. It should in that respect be noted that the whole concept of 'the people' as a self-conscious entity capable of making political choices is a modern phenomenon.[138] The obligation to account for their deeds is therefore confined to those who helped the ruler attain his position of power and to those whom secure his position of power. Although there exists informal responsibility towards those on whose support the ruler is directly dependant, the greater majority of the population have no direct means of holding the ruler accountable for his decision. This lack of responsibility towards his subjects however, need not translate directly into a lack of authority. Democratic participation of the common population in the political decision making process is not a

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[136] Lefort and Thompson, eds., *The Political Forms of Modern Society: Bureaucracy, Democracy, Totalitarianism*, pp. 286-287.

[137] Arendt, "On the Nature of Totalitarianism: An Essay in Understanding," p. 347.

[138] One could argue that the Athenian polis is a prelude to this idea but it should be noted that even the polis was a severely limited democracy that did not come close to the idea of mass democracy.

concept that held general acceptance for the largest part of human history. As such the authority invested in the ruler depended to a large extent on the amount of influence the ruler exerted over the population and whether or not this influence was perceived as being beneficial or not. The more beneficial the community of the ruled, perceive the rule of the authoritarian ruler to be, the larger the amount of authority he will eventually enjoy. A highly unbeneficial ruler, or a benevolent ruler that failed to exert control over those to whom he delegated part of his power, could stir popular resentment which could in turn find its way up the ladder to the region of the supporting agents that empower the ruler. There exists in other words, some kind of cycle in which the ruler indirectly has to account for his rule to the population. If the supporting agents had to fear more from their own backing than from the ruler, the position of the ruler would become weak. Although not democratic in any formal way, this system of balancing the different interests of supporting agents and their constituents can be said to have some indirect democratic element by which the ruler can be held responsible.

The real difference between truly democratic and extreme forms of authoritarian systems of governance exists there where authority and responsibility are completely lacking and power is derived through coercion and violence alone. This type of governance is typified by the tyrant or dictator who disregards the system of mutual benefits explained above.[139] What separates the tyrant or dictator from other forms of authoritarianism is that the circle on

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[139] I distinguish tyranny and dictatorship mainly on the grounds that tyranny is a pre-modern phenomenon and dictatorship a modern one. Dictatorships, as we understand them today, are irrevocably connected to concept of the state and the means of state repression. These are all modern concepts. Tyranny on the other hand can exist without these modern innovations. Although both tyranny and the dictatorship essentially exist for the same reason, power for power's sake, a tyranny is vastly more unstable than a dictatorship precisely because it lacks the modern means of repression, control and the disentanglement from interest groups through the development of a bureaucracy. I will return to this later on.

which he relies to keep him in power is much smaller, because of the lack of interest in the division of benefits, and the amount of opposition to his rule is far greater, thus creating a need for coercion and violence to secure his place at the top of the hierarchical pyramid. Although fascism and totalitarianism are often equated with tyranny and dictatorship due to the level of political violence, this comparison does *not* hold true. Unlike totalitarianism and fascism, the tyrant and dictator rule for their own benefit, not for a higher (semi) transcendent cause. The tyrant and dictator are merely interested in stifling opposition as long as it advances their own interest. In other words, they seek power for power's sake. fascism and especially totalitarianism in contrast, are respectively interested in creating a new form of society and a new type of man. The rule of the fascist and totalitarian leadership is subservient to this goal and thus quite the opposite of tyranny and dictatorship. Whereas political violence, or terror, in dictatorships and tyrannies is utilitarian, meaning that it serves the goal of stifling opposition and substituting for a lack of authority, terror in totalitarian societies is non-utilitarian in that it serves neither the ruling class nor the people but aims to reshape all of mankind to reflect a transcendent principle.[140] This will be discussed in greater depth in chapter five.

Furthermore, whereas the lack of responsibility in authoritarian regimes is limited to a small group of classes, it is completely missing in totalitarian regimes. Although the totalitarian movement claims to rule for the benefit of the people, thus implying some sort of responsibility, in reality the people have no recourse to any sort of

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[140] "The terror of tyranny reaches an end once it has paralyzed or even totally dispensed with all public life and made private individuals out of all citizens, stripping them of interest in and a connection with public affairs. Tyrannical terror has come to an end when it has imposed a graveyard peace on a country" Arendt, "Mankind and Terror," p. 298.

responsibility on the part of the movement.[141] In fact, to claim justification from the movement by appealing to its responsibility would equate to accusing the movement of some sort of failure, which would most certainly amount to suicide. Whereas this is also true in particularly severe dictatorships, these dictatorships still allow a form of limited responsibility in that they keep at least some segments of society appeased, due to the balancing act that their limited plurality requires. As we will see in chapter five, totalitarian societies lack even this small sphere of responsibility because the object of responsibility is neither the individual citizen nor the group that empowered the leadership, but the mystified concept of "the People-as-One", and the transcendent laws of History or Nature. The roots of totalitarian violence however, are clearly related to the authoritarian concept of limited responsibility.[142]

2.2 The difference between a mentality and an ideology as the basis of authority

In the definition of Linz it is stated that the political attitude of authoritarianism is hallmarked by distinctive mentalities rather than elaborate guiding ideologies.[143] This is an essential difference between authoritarian and totalitarian systems of government. Whereas mentalities guide the authoritarian movement, ideologies form the basis of the totalitarian political ontology. I will describe the importance of ideologies in totalitarian thinking in chapter five. The difference between an ideology and a mentality, according to Linz,

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[141] "The proletariat was master of a power of which it happened to be complete dispossessed." Lefort and Thompson, eds., *The Political Forms of Modern Society: Bureaucracy, Democracy, Totalitarianism*, p. 53.
[142] "Totalitarian terror is so often confused with the intimidation measures of tyranny or the terror of civil wars and revolutions because the totalitarian regimes we are familiar with developed directly out of civil wars and one-party dictatorships and in their beginnings, before they became totalitarian, used terror in precisely the same way as other despotic regimes we know from history" Arendt, "Mankind and Terror," p. 298.
[143] Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*.

derived from Theodor Geiger[144] (1891-1952) and can be formulated as follows:

> Ideologies are systems of thought more or less intellectually elaborated and organized, often in written form by intellectuals, pseudo intellectuals, or with their assistance. Mentalities are ways of thinking and feeling, more emotional than rational, that provide non-codified ways of reacting to different situations…Mentality is *subjektiver geist* (even when collective); ideologies are *objektiver geist.*[145]

What this means is that a mentality is a general, unwritten unformulated attitude that is prevalent among the different layers of a given society. For example; whilst modern day men might find the idea of living as a serf under the rule of a non-responsible tsar quite unappealing, and cause for revolt, this need not have been the same attitude as was experienced by the serfs themselves. Although it is highly likely that they would have found their circumstances unappealing, the idea of revolt itself, the idea of demanding representation and responsibility would have seem very strange to them indeed. For a very long time in Europe's history, the idea that God himself had appointed the king as his representative on earth, that the king was in fact the physical and earthly representation of God's kingdom in heaven was a dominant mentality. Propagated by the church over centuries, this idea became so commonplace that to revolt and stand up for democratic rights would have seemed unthinkable.[146] To know one's place in society and to accept that

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[144] Danish Sociologist known for his groundwork contributions to the study of social stratification in state-level cultures.

[145] Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, p. 162.

[146] Sunni Islam does not know this doctrine. Its rulers are ideally appointed by the Muslim body, the *ummah,* to uphold the laws of Allah, but they do not have an inborn divine right and can be removed from power if they fail to uphold the law. It bases loyalty to the ruler not on divine right but on the duty to uphold Islam and the need to avoid social chaos and infighting, *fitna.* The notion of Monarchy, *mulk,* is disdained in Islam and seen as a tyrannical

place was part of a mentality that kept the system running smoothly. One can even discern some type of fatalistic thinking in such a mentality. Take for example the question of the warrior king who has his band of supporters but no authority to speak of. His victories to us modern day men, are merely a display of his accumulated strength and yet, in the eyes of someone who adheres to the idea of divinely appointed rule, such a king, especially when backed by church empowerment, must have surely been sent by God or could at least have counted on his approval. Resistance then, if one adheres to this mentality, would become blasphemous. In another case, a dictatorship which presents itself as being on a crusade against Communism, such as certain Latin-American dictatorships and early fascist movements, might also appeal to the backing of the church and thus to the mentality of the population which is accustomed to following the church's advise in political matters.

The degree to which those who govern can eventually make the transformation from limited empowerment to widely held authority depends on the nature of their government. A tribal lord or divinely appointed ruler enjoys authority by virtue of an already existing widely held belief in tradition or divine sanction. As such his reign will not necessarily be opposed because of the element of authority. A tyrant, a prophet of a new religion with political aspirations or a dictator on the other hand will always have to compensate for its

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form of government antagonistic to the essence of Islam. Shi'a Islam however does know a system of divinely appointed rulers, the *imamate,* although this for all practical terms ended with the major occultation of the last imam, the *Mahdi.* Since the occultation of the Mahdi, and the absence of true Islamic leadership, both Sunni and Shi'a Islam have either rescinded into political quietism or have developed novel forms of political theory, foremost of which is the subject of this study namely, Islamism. In essence, both Sunni and Shi'a Islamism legitimize their claims to rule not on divine *right,* but on divine *duty.* The subject of Christian doctrines of divine right is, however, a very different topic which I will not engage in, in this study. For those interested, I refer to Cliteur, *The Secular Outlook: In Defense of Moral and Political Secularism*. Chapter 4

inherent absence of authority by violence, by the manipulation of an existing belief, or the invention of a new system of belief that, can artificially created authority. When such an invented belief is adorned with popular consent, it can overtime develop into an authoritative tradition or belief of its own. I will return to the latter in the next chapters when we deal with the transition from mentality orientated systems towards fascism, totalitarianism and the concept of political religion.

2.3 Political mobilization

The amount to which a particular authoritarian political movement will rally large parts of the population to its cause depends largely on the aims of the movement, and the point in time in which we analyze this movement. For authoritarian movements, mobilization can be as much of a blessing as it can be a burden. Mobilizing the population means to combine the strength of that population behind one central goal. The multiplying effect this has on the strength of the leader is of course obvious. The downside of mobilization is that it encourages large groups of people to become involved in politics, and when these groups become aware of their *own* power as a group they can become a contester to the power of the leader.[147] When the ultimate aim of the authoritarian movement is not the well being of all, but the well being of a privileged few, the involvement of people who stand to gain nothing by the increasing power of the movement becomes a danger in itself. The authoritarian movements that arose in the final days of Europe's colonial regime in large parts of Africa and Asia for

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[147] See Ortega y Gasset's description of the self-discovery of the masses as a political power. Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* A good example of this phenomenon of the danger of mobilizing the masses, even to the fascist ruler, is the example of the relationship between Mussolini and his fascist movement, and in the totalitarian spectrum, the relationship between Mao and the red guards. Rallying the masses is very often an exercise in controlling the bull upon which one rides. The killing of the SA cadres in the night of the long knives, Mao's struggle with the Communist mass movements and the Bolshevik purge of soviet society are all examples of controlling the bull at the moment of his dissent.

example, had as their agenda one goal, namely independence. In such cases the mobilization of large parts of the population served to consolidate the collective strength of the independence ideal of the population. Once the goal of independence however had been achieved, one could often witness a quick dying down of the mobilization effort. The mobilized masses present the movement with one of three choices: democratise, totalitarianism or demobilization. Of these three options only the third one, demobilization, leaves the authoritarian regime intact. [148] Democracy would create a virtually unlimited pluralism in which the regime would not be able to sustain itself and in which its supporting agents would experience the competition of new interest groups. Totalitarianism would destroy all pluralism and would require, as we shall see, a complete transformation of the movement. Demobilization, which essentially means creating political apathy, is the only one of these three possibilities that leaves the structure of the authoritarian regime intact and removes the threat posed to it by political involvement of the masses.

Totalitarian movements resemble this type of political mobilization but unlike authoritarian regimes or authoritarian regimes that transform to democratic regimes, perpetually maintain the momentum which mobilization creates.[149] Furthermore, whilst mobilization in the early moments of the totalitarian movement is limited to a select group of followers and resembles the authoritarian function of providing power and authority to the movement, it later on reaches the stage of mass-mobilization, where the entire population is recruited or coerced into mass displays of support for the movement. The reason underlying such mass displays of support is not because the population rallies to support the movement itself, but because of the coerced, indoctrinated self-identification of the

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[148] Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, p. 166.
[149] See for instance the regular mass rallies in North-Korea or in other communist countries.

people with the movement and because of the coercive power such displays of mass support exert on the individual. Mass rallies, organized by the movement themselves at the peak of their power, never intend to demonstrate the authority of the movement and do not have the function of empowering the leadership, which are its prime functions under authoritarian conditions.[150] Their chief aim is to remind the individual of its complete impotence and superfluity in face of the giant machinery of the movement.

2.4 Limits on power and small leadership core

As we have seen, authoritarian regimes are ruled by either a single leader or a small clique of leaders which depend on a number of interest groups which can empower them. Due to the power-balancing act in which the ruling layer has to keep the interest groups that support them content, and avoid too much resentment amongst the opposing interest groups, power is necessarily limited. There are simply too many factors to take into consideration to be able to speak of unlimited power. Although the tyrant may disregard this balancing act, he would do so at his own peril. In essence, the interest groups through which the authoritarian ruler is able to effectuate his power function as a transmission belt between him and society in general. Since these interest groups primarily strive to further their own interest, the authoritarian ruler can never truly rely on *a priori* compliance to his every demand. In addition, since the authoritarian ruler is also dependant on these interest groups to effectuate his will, he cannot rid himself of these groups. Although the adagio 'divide and rule' will serve greatly to increase his power in this balancing act, the truth is that he will always be dependent on some sort of interest groups that will bind him.

Totalitarian movements however, are fully aware of these deficiencies and strive to abolish them at the earliest convenience. Their primary

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[150] Kim jong Il, leader of the North-Korean communist party for instance, has been known to regularly neglect attending mass rallies which were officially intended to honor him.

instrument to achieve this goal is violence. [151] Lefort illustrates this mechanism as follows when he describes the totalitarian movement at the peak of its power, when it incorporates the state into the movement itself; in order to be freed from the constraints of the demand for responsibility, authority and the different interest groups and supporting agents, the movement transfers, or professionalizes the support it once got from these actors to the bureaucracy. This bureaucracy then becomes the acting agent of the movement, wholly independent from the constraints I just mentioned:

> In other words, Stalinist totalitarianism emerged when, after silencing the old dominant strata, the political apparatus forged by the revolution freed itself from any control by the proletariat; this political apparatus then directly subordinated the production apparatus to itself. [152]

The movement subsequently had to ensure that the bureaucracy did not become an interest group of its own, for if it did it would be confronted with the demands of authority, responsibility and the new interest group of the bureaucrats. [153] The way it did that was through

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[151] Totalitarianism according to Lefort "signifies a regime in which state violence is practiced on society as a whole, a system of generalized, detailed coercion – scarcely more than that." Lefort and Thompson, eds., *The Political Forms of Modern Society: Bureaucracy, Democracy, Totalitarianism*, p. 292.

[152] Ibid., p. 66.

[153] Lefort goes into the nature of the bureaucracy in: Claude Lefort and John B. Thompson, "What Is Bureaucracy?," in *The Political Forms of Modern Society: Bureaucracy, Democracy, Totalitarianism* (Cambridge: Polity, 1986), pp. 89-122. Whilst outside of the scope of this paragraph, Lefort argues, in line with Max Weber, that the bureaucracy under normal circumstances does include personal motives for the bureaucrats, in other words, the bureaucrats form a class of their own with their own special class interest. The purges for which totalitarian regimes have become known, and especially communist totalitarianism, are nothing more than an attempt on the side of the movement to assure themselves of the unyielding loyalty of the bureaucracy, or to paraphrase Arendt: ""The purges also served the purpose, amongst others, of ferreting out, as it were, those "convinced" adherents of the government. Someone who supports a cause of his own

ensuring that the bureaucrats, like the people whom they subordinated themselves, became aware of their own impotence and superfluity:

> The Stalinist purges showed that the bureaucracy was ideally everything and the bureaucrats nothing; the periodic eviction of thousands or tens of thousands of bureaucrats, far from being contrary to the interest of the bureaucracy, seemed to me to be proof of its power, beyond the fate of individuals.[154]

Arendt concurs on this point as she states:

> These purges [..] test whether the government can actually depend on the ideological training of its bureaucracy, whether the internal coercion created by indoctrination corresponds to the external coercion of terror by forcing the individual to participate unquestioningly in the show trials and thus fall completely in line with the regime no matter what monstrosities it commits.[155]

2.5 Summary of authoritarianism: tribalism, monarchy, tyranny, dictatorship

As we have seen, authoritarian systems are governed from the top-down, have limited pluralism both in the ruling layer as well as in the layer of society, thereby leaving interest groups to compete for

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volition can change his mind tomorrow. He is not a reliable member of the totalitarian team. The only reliable people are those who not only know enough or are well trained enough not to have an opinion, but also don't even know any more what it means to be convinced. The experiments of the purges have shown that the ideal type of the totalitarian functionary is the one who functions no matter what, has no life outside of his function. "Arendt, "Mankind and Terror," p. 305.

[154] Lefort and Thompson, eds., *The Political Forms of Modern Society: Bureaucracy, Democracy, Totalitarianism*, p. 293.

[155] Arendt, "Mankind and Terror," p. 305, ———, *Essays in Understanding 1930-1954: Formation, Exile, and Totalitarianism*.

power, have a distinct mentality that can serve to provide authority but which fails to structure society towards a specific common goal and therefore lacks the ability for mass mobilization and the ensuing multiplication of his personal strength which is typical of modern mass movements. Common to democracy, albeit to a far lesser degree, the authoritarian ruler has to take into account the effect his political choices have on the population in general because those effects can work their way up to the ruler through the different existing interest groups. Since these interest groups primarily serve their own interest, and form alliances with the ruler for their own benefit, a system of indirect responsibility is left to exist, which could in extreme circumstances cause revolt or at least force the ruler to compromise. If we would draw a line from the least authoritarian on the left, to the most authoritarian on the right we would roughly see the following: On the far left, congruent with pre-modern means of political organization, we would have the tribal ruler whose power depends on custom, mentality of the ruled and widely held authority. Bound by custom and the small size of the archetypal tribal community, one could expect pluralism amongst the governed to be limited without any preceding action on the part of the ruler. Beneath the ruler traditionally stand the elders with whom he is expected to confer regarding major decision. Since the ruler, the elders and the community itself are bound by the same custom and mentality, it is not to be expected that great discrepancies between different opinions is likely to follow, thus securing his authority and negating any use for violence.

The next type of authoritarianism would be the monarchy. A monarch typically rules over a much larger population than the tribal lord does, and thus has many more interests to take into account. In a way, one can think of the Monarch as he who sits on top of a pyramid of internally competing interest groups. Whilst in theory he holds supreme authority, especially in Monarchies established on the basis of divine right, in reality the monarch too has to balance the interests of the diverse groups that constitute his base of power. Due to the

increased population under his control compared to the tribal lord, the plurality of opinion is also likely to increase thus potentially undermining his authority. Although his reign can be supported by a common mentality, such as the belief in divinely appointed rule, the mentality is too diffuse when compared to an ideology to automatically adorn all the aspects of every day rule with authority. Where a lack of authority exists, the ruler is either destined to rule by violence, tyranny, or by use of the different interest groups that do enjoy authority amongst the population. In addition, since the monarch is but one man, he is destined to rely on others to effectuate his policies for him, whether it is the army or the nobility. This reliance on others necessity limits his power, creates pluralism in the governing layer and creates a system of indirect responsibility. Should his rule come under threat because of discontent under the ruled, the monarch still has a wide variety of interest groups who could empower him to make up for any lack in authority. In the worst case, that is when authority is negligible; the monarch would have to resort to violence and may descent into tyranny. Tyranny can then only be avoided if one of the interest groups that enjoy widely held authority, such as the church, agrees to empower the monarch despite of his lack of authority. It stands to reason that such will come at a high price. The monarch in that situation prolongs his political life at the cost of his own power. In the end, no monarch can survive by violence alone and is therefore condemned to some sort of power sharing; thereby ensuring perpetual plurality in both society and in the layer of the governed and continuing obligations to act in accordance with the demands of responsibility. In this respect authoritarianism cannot be conceived of as a strictly top-down structure, since the top is still reliant on those beneath him unless he would form an unstable regime such as a tyranny.[156] This constellation changes as we

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[156] I refer to pre-modern tyranny as being unstable not because it runs the risk of imploding at every moment, but because in the long run its chances of survival are slim. Without the aid of a centralized state with a monopoly on violence, communication and the social realm, and a security apparatus that

incorporate the means of modern political organization. When we finally arrive at the totalitarian mode of political organization, we will see that it is that form which *can* rely on violence alone and is actually threatened if that violence ever were to subside and be replaced by interest groups, responsibility and accountability.

At the right end of our imaginary line we find the dictatorship. Although dictatorships are not an entirely new phenomenon, the Roman state for instance knew a form of twin-dictatorship, dictatorships in the present day usage are a type of authoritarianism that we most commonly associate with the modern state and its institutions. Unlike the monarch or to a lesser degree the tyrant, who were dependent on differing interest groups such as guilds, the army or the church; the dictator, as the head of a state, can circumvent these groups via the rather novel invention of the state apparatus. It is as if the state has become a new player on the field. Owing loyalty to no one except those who happen to stand at the head of the state, and those within the bureaucracy themselves, their loyalty is ensured by simply paying their wages. With such limited demands, no interest groups of their own to attend to, and lacking the organic, social and historic unity we have come to see in interest groups such as guilds or the church, the state apparatus is surprisingly, albeit not entirely, neutral. This does not mean that the lack of authority that usually accompanies dictatorships is compensated for by the state, but the state apparatus does give him a means of control that is of a more de-

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only developed in modern times, the tyrant will always be reliant on different interest groups. While a regime based on fear might actually have a long life, its refusal to bear responsibility will always create discontent, most detrimentally in the groups that he relies on for his empowerment. The only tyrannical regimes that can know stability are to be found in modern times, but in those cases it is more appropriate to speak of a dictatorship in order to emphasize that the transition from instability to stability is highly dependent on the existence of modern means of political organization; tyranny in that sense is a decidedly pre-modern phenomenon whilst dictatorships, although they still seek power for power's sake, can only be built upon modern innovations.

politicized nature than that of an interest group. By being less dependent on interest groups, and with the might of the state apparatus under its control, the dictatorship's ability to limit pluralism in all layers of society increases as the need for direct and indirect responsibility decreases. Unsurprisingly, dictatorships are often military dictatorships since the lack of authority can now be compensated by brute violence without having to take into consideration the different interest of the groups on which previous forms of authoritarian rulers were so dependent. The authoritarian types of regime that we have seen so far, never have been able, in so far as they even aspired to do so, to completely rid themselves of plurality in the governing layer or in the layer of those whom they govern. They were not able, due to the circumstances I described, to rid themselves of the burden of responsibility and always needed, to a varying degree, to legitimize their rule by keeping the political forces in balance either by appeasing the different support or interest groups, by keeping the population at large content, by resorting to some mentality to give authority to their rule or, in the absence of authority, to resort to violence, although even then they were still bound by the demands of those who were able to exert this violence. This all would change dramatically by the challenges of modern democracy and the advent of fascism in the early part of the twentieth century.