



Latin Fascist Elites: The Mussolini, Franco, and Salazar Regimes

Paul H. Lewis

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Many dictatorships are short-lived, but a few manage to stay in power for decades. Lewis takes three Latin fascist tyrants—Mussolini, Franco, and Salazar—and shows how they perpetuated their rule through the careful recruitment and circulation of top-echelon subordinates to carry out their orders.

Long-established dictatorships have to respond to political and social pressures surrounding them, just as democracies do, but it is harder to study them because they are closed systems. One possible way of viewing their internal processes is by observing who they recruit into top leadership positions. Every dictator, however powerful, must delegate some authority to an elite stratum just below him. By watching which kinds of men are recruited, how long they are kept in power, and whether different skills are sought at different times, it may be possible to chart the evolution of a 20- or 30-year regime.

The Mussolini, Franco, and Salazar regimes all fit the criteria of being long-established. Mussolini ruled for almost 21 years, Franco for over 37, and Salazar for 36. Moreover, all three shared a family resemblance as being fascist. Comparing them affords the additional advantage of adding to our understanding of the Latin variant of fascism, as contrasted to the Central and Eastern European. A provocative work for scholars, students, and other researchers involved with European Politics, Modern European History, and fascist regimes.

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