

The 'Regime-Model' of Fascism: A Typology

Introduction

In recent years there has been a revival of interest in the nature of *generic* fascism. This renewed search for a paradigmatic model of fascism originated as a reaction to the trend of overstating specificity, of studying fascist phenomena in the *longue durée* and of using their individual differences to underscore the futility of grand theories of fascism. A large part of the blame for the discrediting of comparative approaches is borne by the erratic and often mystifying sample of the studies themselves. Lack of clarity about the nature and content of fascism resulted in a number of comparative studies, whose insufficiently justified sample of case studies left the concept of 'fascism' in disarray. The 'totalitarian' approach focused on the political features of fascism as regime (i.e. Italy and Germany), but then subjected it to a broader definition which dovetailed with aspects of such a disparate socio-political phenomenon as communism.¹ Nolte's *Three Faces of Fascism* provided an insightful account of the ideological similarities between the Italian and German regimes, only to obfuscate his paradigm by including *Action Française* in his analysis.² The ideological affinities notwithstanding, the weaknesses of his generic definition are obvious. If 'fascism' is a broad *ideological* phenomenon, then why are other case-studies excluded (Austria, Britain, etc.)? If, on the other hand, 'fascism' is both ideology and action, movement and regime, then why is *Action Française* comparable to the Italian and German regimes? Even the recent account by Roger Eatwell has focused on a curious combination of two major interwar regimes (Italy, Germany) and a plethora of disparate movements (most of which achieved limited, short-lived appeal and none of which ever

reached power) from two further western European countries (Britain, France). Similarly, the all-inclusive studies of the 1960s and 1970s offered insight into numerous intricate aspects of fascism, but at the same time undermined its generic value through an excessive broadening of the sample.³

The two most elaborate recent works on generic fascism, by Roger Griffin and Stanley G. Payne,⁴ have rectified to a large extent the inadequacies of previous comparative interpretations through a significantly more elaborate theoretical paradigm of fascism and a notably wider pool of case-studies. In spite of their individual methodological differences, both works rest on the presupposition that the two *dimensions* of fascism (*vertical*: fascism within long-term national history; *horizontal*: fascism as an epochal phenomenon of interwar Europe), rather than being antithetical, may jointly promote a deeper and more elaborate understanding of the nature of fascism. However, the puzzling epochal appeal of fascism, the mushrooming of movements/parties sponsoring an original or mimetic fascist ideology, and the unprecedented success of some of them in reaching power have to be carefully analysed and accounted for.⁵ Recently, Robert O. Paxton has stressed the value of studying the *dynamics* of fascism's evolution 'in time': from its ideological origins to the acquisition and exercise of power. His critique of the 'static' character of 'generic' theories of fascism focuses on the fundamental difference between 'a regime where fascism exercises power' (referring particularly to Italy and Germany as the most developed expressions of fascism) and a 'sect of dissident intellectuals' (a number of fascist groups and movements which either failed to gain power or were neutralized by the political establishment).⁶ In this sense, a distinction between fascist *movement* and fascist *regime* is not a question of semantics but a necessity induced by the entirely different reasons behind the occurrence of each of the two forms of fascism. In terms of its ideological crystallization, fascism may be seen as an exceptional variant of hyper-nationalism — a 'hyper-nationalism-plus' phenomenon which activated, revived or recast a set of extreme prescriptions from the reservoir of each country's radical nationalist aspirations and imagery.⁷ In its epochal, horizontal dimension fascism was also motivated by a short-term, violent response to specific historic challenges — resentment from frustrated nationalist aspirations after the First World War, fear of socialist mobiliza-

tion after the 1917 Bolshevik revolution, social insecurity, political crisis, etc.

However, for those cases where a regime with at least one 'fascist' component was established, the above minimum definition is inadequate. The nature of a regime is defined by a plethora of additional factors — how it was installed, who supported it, in which political direction it evolved, how competing notions of future action were negotiated and formulated into official policy, to what extent intentions were facilitated or impeded by exogenous elements. It is a truism that no 'fascist' regime in Europe was established as a result of majority popular choice. It is also a fact that no such regime was instituted in total opposition to the existing ruling political, economic and social elites. In all cases, and at least initially, fascist leaderships either headed coalition cabinets or drew their legitimacy from the support of established institutions (Head of State, church, armed forces, established political parties).⁸ Everywhere the 'fascist solution' was endorsed by such powerful individuals, groups and institutions in order to strengthen the popular appeal of the existing state. This was intended to be a single remedy for two acute needs — to safeguard the state against socialist subversion and to use the principle of fascist 'charismatic' leadership as an antidote to the crisis of the liberal-parliamentary system for ensuring strong, stable government. Because of all these factors and considerations, the rationale behind installing 'fascist' regimes reflected more the elites' longing for a new type of authoritarian system rather than their endorsement of fascist ideology or — even less — a desire to see the latter's radical prescriptions translated into action.

Therefore, assessing the fascist credentials of a regime involves much more than just ascertaining the 'fascist' character of the leaders' ideological beliefs and visions. This article argues that the regime-model of fascism developed in the framework of elite experimentation with new forms of the *populist authoritarian, anti-socialist* model, based on a pro-system logic of strengthening the existing political and social domestic structures. What distinguished the regime-model of fascism from conventional authoritarian systems was the ability of the fascist component to assert its political supremacy over conservative expectations, to develop its own radical momentum and to embark on the realization of its particular ideological objectives. Such ability depended on four factors — the *ideology* of the fascist component; its

domestic consolidation; the objectives behind *policy-making*; and the *scope* of its regenerating ambitions. These criteria are applied to eight case-studies (Italy, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Austria, Hungary, Romania) in order to assess to what extent and for what reasons each of these regimes departed from the conventional authoritarian model.

The Regime-Model of Fascism: Criteria

Ideology

As with any general theory of fascism, the problem of which case-studies to include in the analysis of the regime-model of fascism has generated wide controversy. Apart from the two most obvious and generally indisputable candidates (Germany and Italy), there is a plethora of regimes which Roger Griffin has accurately described as 'para-fascist', in the sense that they comprised specific 'fascist' elements and groups with strands of conservatism, authoritarianism and indigenous nationalism.⁹ In many cases (Spain, Austria, Romania, Hungary) the fascist component manifested itself in a variety of different forms, ideologies and organizations with competing programmes and aspirations. In some cases (Austria, Romania, Hungary) a para-fascist regime was established in opposition to other, more extreme fascist movements/parties or at least showed active distrust of their eventual motives. Finally, during the Second World War, fascist-style puppet regimes were introduced in a number of European countries, either as the direct result of occupation by the Axis forces (France, Hungary in 1944, Croatia) or in order to offset such a development (Yugoslavia before the Nazi invasion, Romania). The methodological postulate of this article is to exclude this last category of fascist-like regimes from its sample, as the logic behind their establishment was primarily conditioned by security considerations and not by elite-driven experiments with new forms of executive power. Instead, all other cases of regimes supported by at least one movement/party of 'fascist' character will be considered.

The first crucial factor in shaping the regime's outlook is *ideology*. Two criteria are relevant in this respect: whether the ideology of the political pillars of the regime was *radical* or *conservative*; and, in cases where the regime represented a coalition

of disparate socio-political forces, which of the two elements was more dominant in the overall world-view of the regime. Here the cases of Italy and Germany are straightforward. Numerous studies on the two movements have ascertained their radical idiosyncratic ideological credentials.¹⁰ Also, although Mussolini and Hitler came to power as heads of coalition governments, commanding the support of wide conservative and liberal groups, they succeeded in ridding themselves of this pattern of cohabitation and in gradually establishing a monocratic type of regime where the fascist component dominated the ideological physiognomy of government. In all other cases the regimes displayed a combination of conservative and fascist elements in constant interaction and sometimes conflict for the crystallization of the regime's ideological character. In Portugal the Salazar regime evolved in continuity with the Carmona military dictatorship, which had abolished the proto-liberal/parliamentary system in 1926. This continuity ensured support from conservative strata in the Portuguese society and remained unchallenged as the official political agenda of the regime. Although Salazar introduced radical social reforms in some areas (the Estado Novo/New State) and emulated 'fascist' organizational elements (militia, secret police, etc.), the *raison d'être* of the regime was the preservation of conservative and Catholic values, as well as the defence of the existing system against radical alternative conceptions of domestic organizations.¹¹ One of these rival alternatives was the National Syndicalist movement, headed by Preto and established in 1932. The organization, sponsoring a more extreme blend of corporatism, anti-socialism and integral nationalism, became disaffected with Salazar's timid agenda and staged an unsuccessful bid for power in 1934. Preto's coup was followed by violent suppression of the movement from which the National Syndicalists never actually recovered.¹² Although in subsequent years Salazar accentuated his commitment to a mimetic 'fascist' model of domestic organization, this remained confined to the articulation of form and style rather than extending into the sphere of political substance. His regime remained an essentially pro-system pattern of conservative-authoritarian government whose 'fascist' elements of style were duly shed in the 1940s.

The case of Spain is similar with regard to the syncretic (i.e. not purely 'fascist') basis of the regime's support but different in its balance of power between traditionalism and radicalism. The

hybrid fascist organization of JONS (Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista), founded in 1931 and merged with the Falange in 1934 to form the Falange Española de las JONS, blended revolutionary integral nationalism and aggressive anti-socialism with a traditionalist commitment to militarist and Catholic values.¹³ In contrast to the fate of Preto's National Syndicalists, the organization — headed by José Antonio Primo de Rivera, son of the erstwhile Spanish dictator Miguel Primo de Rivera — sided with the Nationalist forces in 1936 and was later absorbed and diffused into the Francoist regime (under the umbrella organization Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las JONS, established in April 1937), whose ideological outlook remained deeply imbued with conservative social views, Carlist sympathies and strong Catholic values. Those initial leaders of the JONS who were opposed to the traditionalist spirit of Franco's dictatorship were either politically marginalized or arrested and placed under confinement; others gradually chose the path of political demobilization.¹⁴

In Greece the Metaxas regime (established in 1936) demonstrated a similar symbiosis of fascist organizational style and conservative world-view. Albeit emulating formal patterns of Italian Fascism (youth organization, neo-classicism, palingenetic/nostalgic hyper-nationalism), the Metaxas regime was co-opted by the king and the pro-monarchical bourgeois right in the framework of a system-preserving function.¹⁵ The political agenda of the regime was dominated by the long-term aspirations and dispositions of the monarchical right-wing political elite, of which General Metaxas had long been a distinguished (though not influential) member.¹⁶ This type of conscious co-opting may also be seen in Romania. The Iron Guard, established in 1934 by Corneliu Codreanu as the paramilitary wing of his Legion of the Archangel Michael (founded in 1927), and after its founder's assassination in 1938 headed by Horia Sima, demonstrated a peculiar mix of ultra-nationalism, antisemitism, Orthodox mysticism and mimetic fascist organizational features (youth and paramilitary organizations, street violence).¹⁷ It was wooed into the ruling authoritarian coalition both by King Carol in 1940 and by the Antonescu regime later in the same year, creating the short-lived 'National Legionary State' (named after the Legionaries, as the members of the Iron Guard were known). However, unlike in Greece and Spain, the co-habitation between the conservative-

authoritarian and the quasi-fascist component neither was continual nor originated from a long-term strategy of co-opting the Iron Guard. Hence, a pattern of inconsistent, opportunistic co-opting emerged, whereby the fascist element would be exploited at crucial moments to strengthen the legitimacy of the authoritarian state but would be violently suppressed when it attempted to increase its influence on the ideology of the regime. This happened in early 1941, when Antonescu, in agreement with Hitler, disbanded the Iron Guard and substituted the Legionary State with his 'National and Social State'.¹⁸

The co-habitation of fascist and reactionary forces was significantly more complex in Hungary and in Austria. In spite of the co-opting of Gömbös' National Socialists by Admiral Horthy's conservative regime between 1932 and 1936, the physiognomy of the regime remained essentially traditionalist in ideology.¹⁹ This was also manifested in the antagonistic relation between other, more revolutionary anti-system groups — Böszörmény's Scythe Cross and Szálasi's Arrow Cross. The former reacted to the socially conservative agenda of the regime by staging an unsuccessful coup in 1936 which was violently suppressed by the authorities. The latter was significantly more influential and radical in its emulation of the National Socialist ideological model, posing a potent alternative to Horthy's conservative regime. This explains why it was consistently persecuted until 1944, when the occupation of Hungary by the Nazi forces paved the way to the seizure of power by Szálasi and the establishment of a puppet regime under the political tutelage of Germany.²⁰

Austria followed a similar trajectory of antagonistic pluralism of quasi-fascist organizations. The Heimwehr, a paramilitary hyper-nationalist organization consisting of ex-war veterans of the National Guard, emerged as a combination of mimetic Pan-German, fascist-corporatist and Christian ideological strands in 1927 under the leadership of Starhemberg. In spite of their pledge to overthrow the liberal system of government and to pursue union with Germany, the Heimwehr leadership remained essentially pliable towards the conservative political establishment and displayed a disinclination to sponsor the aggressive bid for power staged by its Styrian branch in 1931.²¹ This pro-system attitude enabled the Dollfuss conservative-authoritarian regime to co-opt Starhemberg in 1933. The neutralization of the Heimwehr was completed under Schuschnigg, who succeeded

the assassinated Dollfuss after the July 1934 Nazi putsch, when the regime disbanded the movement and absorbed its membership into a state-sponsored paramilitary organization (Front-Miliz) in 1936.²² However, Austrian fascism had another, more uncompromisingly anti-system face, the DNSAP/NSDAP (Austrian National Socialists). Linked to the development of the National Socialist movement in 1918, the Austrian brand maintained its closed links with its Bavarian sister-organization after the rejection of a German–Austrian union by the victors of the First World War. It also became the main repository of support by disaffected nationalists, including radical Heimwehren, and grew considerably in the 1928–38 decade. In spite of its spectacularly unsuccessful bid for power in July 1934 and the subsequent outlawing of the organization, it fought back and co-engineered with Berlin the 1938 Anschluss.²³ It is therefore evident that the Austrian conservative establishment co-opted the more traditionalist variant of diluted fascism (Heimwehr) but remained essentially impervious both to internal models of revolutionary fascism (National Socialists) and to external pressures (especially by Mussolini in 1933–6) for transforming the authoritarian regime into a mimetic quasi-fascist system.²⁴

Consolidation

The second criterion for assessing the character of the regime-model of fascism is domestic political consolidation. This pertains to control over the official state apparatus, over the decision-making process and over other surviving (if any) antagonistic institutional poles of power within the system. In order to assess the degree of fascist consolidation in a regime, three further aspects should be appraised: the *type* of fascist consolidation (whether it was co-operative or antagonistic to existing institutions); its *degree* (limited/diffused or dynamic/all-embracing); and finally its *pace* (fast track or slow). Again, Nazi Germany offers the most extreme example of fascist domestic consolidation. Apart from a short period of political co-habitation with surviving party organizations and President Hindenburg (until 1934), the Nazi leadership employed a dynamic, antagonistic and extremely fast strategy for solidifying its power. This process officially ended in 1938 with the removal of the last conservative functionaries in the government (the

Economics minister, Schacht, in late 1937, the Foreign Minister, Neurath, in 1938, and the armed forces leadership — Blomberg, Fritsch and Beck — by the summer of 1938.)²⁵ However, Hitler's ability to rid himself of such powerful figures of the conservative establishment in such an effortless manner alludes to a highly successful prior strategy of establishing an effective monopoly of control over decision-making that had been initiated immediately after the seizure of power. The fact that this type of consolidation was intended to be entirely antithetical to the existing state structure invested the Nazi regime with a sense of extreme antagonistic dynamism and facilitated a swift transition to a monocratic (though not monolithic) fascist regime-model.²⁶

Fascist Italy departs from this model of consolidation in two ways. First, the establishment of the Fascist regime after the declaration of dictatorship in January 1925 did involve the gradual marginalization of traditional elite groups but did not remove a pattern of institutional co-habitation with the Head of State, King Victor Emmanuel III. This constitutional anomaly, whereby Mussolini's position as Prime Minister depended on the Crown's support or tacit approval, was maintained throughout the life span of the regime and became the mechanism for the removal of the Duce in July 1943.²⁷ At the same time, the Fascist regime was forced to deal with another powerful traditional repository of public loyalty, the Catholic Church. The 1929 Concordat with the Vatican produced a *modus vivendi* which, albeit antagonistic and fraught with disputes, constituted a *de facto* limitation to the regime's monocratic ambitions.²⁸ In this respect, the consolidation of fascism in Italy was dynamic but oscillating between co-opting and antagonism. The latter tendency was accentuated after 1935 — from that point onwards the Fascist leadership accelerated the pace of consolidation and embarked on a course of increasing marginalization of alternative centres of power and neutralization of opposition by the surviving traditional institutions of the state.²⁹

In all other case-studies of regime-models the pattern of consolidation pursued was either not entirely dynamic, not overtly antagonistic, or both. In Spain, as we saw, the Francoist regime diffused the influence of the real fascist element (the Falange) on the political physiognomy of the ruling bloc and chose an essentially co-operative strategy in its dealings with traditional groups and institutions (Monarchy, Church, big landowners).

This should not, of course, detract from the dynamic character of the consolidation of the Francoist regime *per se* — a fact attested to by the longevity of the system, the effective neutralization of its opposition and the long-term transformation of organizational structures of the Spanish state.³⁰ A similar situation characterized the case of Portugal. Here, in spite of the effective removal of the true fascist component (Preto's National Syndicalists) from the ruling bloc, the Salazar regime survived the 1945 watershed, removed any credible political alternative and effected lasting modifications through the introduction of the *Estado Novo*.³¹ However, the nature of fascist consolidation was significantly more precarious or complex in the rest of the case-studies. In Greece, the collusion of Metaxas with King George II and the traditionalist right ensured a co-operative pattern of consolidation which appeared dynamic in its formal aspects ('style', discourse, organization of society) but the 'fascist' component remained essentially superficial and entrenched within the framework of a conservative authoritarian regime, depending on the support of the Monarchy.³² In Hungary and Austria there appears to be a correlation between the ideological predisposition of the fascist organizations and their participation or not in the regime-model. Gömbös' diluted, conservative variant of fascism and the Heimwehren corporatist-traditionalist *mélange* were accommodated in the ruling bloc, while Szálasi's more radical Arrow Cross and the Austrian National Socialists (both essentially anti-system radical forces) were ostracized and suppressed to varying degrees. However, there also seems to be a connection between ideology and type of consolidation of those fascist components that eventually reached power. The traditionalistic nature of the two former movements' ideology facilitated their co-opting but also enabled their dilution in a limited co-operative pattern of consolidation which left the essential conservative authoritarian features of the state largely unchallenged. In Romania, on the other hand, co-opting the Iron Guard into the conservative-militarist ruling bloc was bracketed by systematic persecution and repression, thus resulting in a limited and ephemeral pattern of fascist consolidation within the framework of a predominantly authoritarian regime. In fact, whenever the Iron Guard instigated activities aimed towards an antagonistic, more widespread version of fascist consolidation in the regime-model, conservative elites minimized the potential disruption

through violent ostracizing strategies (as happened in 1940 and 1941).³³

Leadership is another pivotal element of the physiognomy of a political regime. Leaders have a strong influence upon the process of policy-making, both because of their personal ideological beliefs about what is socially desirable and because of their *de facto* role as co-ordinators of the executive function of the state. In fascist movements leadership was probably the strongest element of cohesion and incarnation of 'fascist' values. Although initially performing a token role of *primus inter pares*, the fascist leadership soon rose to a level of symbolic pre-eminence, as an ideological and political elite in charge of leading the movement to power and orchestrating the process of domestic regeneration.³⁴ With regard to the regime-model of fascism, an important distinction has to be made between those cases where a fascist leader became head of the government (Italy, Germany, Greece), those regimes embracing the fascist component but headed by conservative figures (Spain) and those regimes co-opting a less radical fascist component while ostracizing the more extreme variant (Austria, Portugal, Hungary). Again, the personal ideological beliefs of a leader determined his vision of desirable political action. However, the actual political margins for policy-making were conditional upon two additional factors — *popular legitimacy* and *attitude towards the other components/pillars* of the regime-model.

In Italy, Germany and Greece, as already mentioned, the fascist leaders (Mussolini, Hitler, Metaxas) were co-opted by the conservative establishment to head the new executive constellation and gradually asserted their individual role in the process of policy-making. However, the Italian and German leaderships possessed two additional advantages which Metaxas could not, and did not, entertain. First, both Mussolini and Hitler could boast a high level of popular legitimacy, either as leaders of wide social movements (PNF, NSDAP) or as charismatic figures representing the 'acceptable' face of fascism.³⁵ Metaxas, on the other hand, was in a significantly weaker position, lacking any discernible charisma, essentially isolated from any base of popular support and deprived of any influence on traditional institutions of the state (for example, the armed forces). While all three leaders were co-opted by the conservative establishment in order to perform a system-maintaining and stabilizing function,

Mussolini and Hitler championed far more radical ideologies of political/social change than Metaxas' essentially half-hearted commitment to radical reform. They could also use their carefully choreographed charismatic appeal to legitimize their antagonistic consolidation against the wishes of their initial conservative sponsors — something that Metaxas never contemplated due to his limited personal appeal. In this sense, the Greek variant of fascist regime remained entrenched in its initial function as stabilizer of the existing system and continued to rely on the political sponsorship by the conservative, pro-monarchical establishment.³⁶

In Spain the leadership of General Franco drew its legitimacy from the successful conclusion of the civil war against the Republican forces. Although, as we saw earlier, the Falange was absorbed in the ruling bloc, Franco's personal prestige after 1936 did not allow significant margins for alternative, more radical leadership patterns. His co-operative attitude towards conservative institutions and social groups ensured that his position as system-stabilizer would be effectively entrenched and the more radical prescriptions of other participating forces (especially of the Falange) would be diluted and neutralized by the regime.³⁷ In Portugal, the lack of charisma in the moderate leadership (Salazar) was compensated by its sense of continuity with previous arrangements (the Carmona dictatorship) and its promise of domestic stability in the face of destabilizing plots by both the left and other, more radical fascist components (National Syndicalists). A similar notion of continuity legitimized the choice of Antonescu in Romania (a choice of the monarchical establishment for the stabilization of the system), again in spite of the clear lack of popular legitimacy of personal charisma.³⁸ By contrast, the regimes in Austria and Hungary, both co-operative in their consolidation and selective in their co-opting of certain moderate fascist components at the expense of more radical organizations, were effectively reduced to an increasingly difficult task of defending the system and balancing the conflicting social claims for change. In Austria, Dollfuss and especially Schuschnigg suffered both from a distinct lack of popular appeal and from the popularity of the excluded anti-system variant of National Socialism. In Hungary, the Horthy regime was forced to deal with the increasing social support for Szálasi's radical Arrow Cross after 1935. Although the movement was carefully marginalized (and at some points ruthlessly sup-

pressed), Horthy's regime survived until the occupation of the country in 1944 (which brought Szálasi to power) by performing a limited system-maintaining function without any departures from the long-term expectations of the Hungarian conservative establishment.³⁹

It seems that there is a correlation here between the position of the fascist component in the leadership structure of the regime-model, the personal legitimacy of the leader and the policy-making character of the regime itself. In cases where the fascist group became the dominant component in an antagonistic model of consolidation (Italy, Germany), radical change was pursued to varying degrees. By contrast, co-opting moderate fascist groups in the framework of co-operative, stabilizing arrangements did not result in the pursuit of a radical, anti-system political agenda (Metaxas in Greece, Gömbös in Hungary). Finally, in those cases where the fascist component was diluted in an otherwise conservative constellation of power and under the leadership of a moderate figure, the ensuing regime-model was either unstable (Austria, Hungary) or modest in its political aspirations, performing a limited 'stabilizing' function.

Policy-Making

A third crucial factor shaping the profile of a regime is the nature and long-term framework of its policy-making. The ideological worldview of the leadership determines what is perceived as both socially desirable and politically feasible for future action. However, the ability of the leaders to translate thought and ambitions into action is an extremely intricate process that is only partly defined by pure ideological intentions. Obviously, there is a correlation between the degree and type of fascist consolidation, on the one hand, and the ability of fascist ideology to permeate and shape the official state policy-making, on the other. In instances of limited-diluted and/or co-operative consolidation, as well as of inconsistent co-opting of the fascist component into the ruling bloc, the latter's ability to pursue its more radical ideological prescriptions was greatly limited by the co-habitation with more conservative components. Having said that, even in cases of (near-)monocratic or all-embracing fascist consolidation, the limits of what was politically feasible were in the end defined by external factors which remained largely impervious to fascist

intentions — the cohesion of the traditional elite groups, the economic and military capacity of the system, international random events and stimuli.

Unsurprisingly, the Nazi regime displays an extremely favourable combination of all the above elements — radical ideology, strong consolidation, high potential capacity of the domestic system to meet the material demands of Nazi ambitions, and auspicious random events. Notwithstanding a fairly conventional political profile until 1934, Nazi policy-making soon unfolded its radical agenda and displayed a determination to implement even the most radical traits of its long-term vision, including the elimination of 'inferior races' and a new territorial order in Europe. With regard to both these policies, external factors and resources made a substantial contribution to their implementation. A highly effective bureaucratic machinery supervised the allocation of resources for the speedy elimination of Jews and other ethnic/social groups, while the impressive performance and capacity of the German economy facilitated the approximation of the extortionate demands of rearmament for territorial expansion.⁴⁰

In a similar vein, the Italian Fascist regime offers another example of an ideologically radical fascist party achieving a high degree of control over policy-making, albeit with some institutional limitations that formally forestalled the establishment of a monocratic regime-model. In spite, however, of such limiting factors and the much more protracted period of domestic consolidation, the Fascist regime displayed both a commitment to a more radical style of politics and an increasing ability to radicalize its political agenda. International factors (the rise of Nazism, the instability of the European system, the appeasement by western powers) facilitated or did not effectively impede the pursuit of those radical prescriptions of fascist ideology (expansion, militarization of society). The Italian regime, in common with the Nazi regime-model, demonstrated an intensely radical perception of what was socially desirable and very wide margins for what they regarded as politically feasible. However, the Italian case diverges from its German equivalent in that the limited effectiveness of the state's co-ordinating functions and the resistance of the indigenous society to the militarizing/regenerating fascist schemes (the *uomo fascista* and the *cittadino-soldato*) circumscribed the freedom of the fascist leadership to set and effectively pursue its radical agenda.⁴¹

In the rest of the case-studies examined here, the framework of policy-making may be characterized as essentially conventional in its long-term objectives. This was the result of a combination of factors explored already — diluted radicalism in the ideology of the participating fascist movements in the regime, exclusion of the more radical fascist variants from power, limited and/or co-operative types of consolidation, and finally inauspicious external influences. While all these regimes aped organizational and stylistic aspects of either the Italian Fascist archetype or the Nazi extreme variant,⁴² their co-opting of fascist 'new' politics stayed clear of a commitment to the revolutionary, anti-system potential prescriptions of fascist ideology. Even in those cases where the leadership of a regime acknowledged the alleged 'decadence' of the existing system and called for radical reform and regenerating action, the overall framework of policy-making was largely borrowed from the conservative-authoritarian regime-model and was dominated by the long-term aspirations of its traditional social pillars. All these regimes combined a mimetic reproduction of certain 'fascist' formal aspects (militia, youth organizations, mass politics, secret police) with traditional authoritarian aspects (anti-socialism, censorship, nationalism and trans-class discourse).⁴³ Yet, the co-operative and/or limited type of fascist consolidation in all these cases required the preservation and defence of comprehensive continuity with past structures and policy priorities or necessitated the consent of traditional forces for any changes in the political direction of the regime. The example of the violent repression of the Iron Guard in early 1941 by Antonescu demonstrates the limiting influence of co-ordinated conservative opposition to the revolutionary designs of radical fascist movements.

Scope of change

The fourth and final criterion defining the physiognomy of the regime-model of fascism is the scope and long-term aspirations of its policy-making. As extreme and idiosyncratic variants of the hyper-nationalist tradition and imagery, all fascist regimes embarked upon the realization of their version of domestic regeneration and trans-class nationalism, thus acting as a bulwark to the expansive spirit of internationalist socialism. However, some fascist movements projected their ideological commitment

to social rebirth outwards, to wider regions, to Europe and potentially to the world as a whole. This was intended to constitute a rival utopia to socialism, a form of counterbalancing the latter's appeal as the conquering creed of the twentieth century. Fascism founded its universalist ambitions on the basis of its self-perception as ethical, cultural and political elite in a social Darwinist perception of history as a struggle of cultural entities for the predominance of the fittest.⁴⁴ This version of expansive fascism was underpinned by a sense of historic responsibility and a *crusading spirit* of spreading this new 'conception of life' to territories and political units beyond the realm of its nation. Again, of course, it has to be noted that an *ideological* commitment to this type of crusade did not necessarily translate into expansive *action* by the regime-model of fascism; external factors — such as those analysed earlier — played a crucial role in encouraging, frustrating or thwarting such ideological ambitions.

In this framework of analysis, the Nazi regime remains the indisputably most extreme, effective and destructive form of crusading fascism. Domestic regeneration was the first crucial step towards the restoration of the German *Volk's* greatness. Territorial expansion along historic irredentist lines — i.e. over those lands that had historically formed the German *Lebensraum* in its most extensive version — constituted the second stage of allegedly ensuring the welfare of the German people. However, the Nazi biological perception of human society as a constant struggle of the healthy elements against alien or otherwise detrimental components remained an essentially universalist, non-state-specific ethical task. In its campaign to *eradicate* such harmful elements (seen as the only guarantee of social and cultural regeneration for the white race⁴⁵) the Nazi genocidal machine did not limit its annihilationist designs to the extended territory of the German Reich but attempted to implement a rigid notion of race hierarchy in all conquered territories in Europe and, after the launch of Operation Barbarossa, in the Soviet Union. For the Nazi regime, the vision of 'new order' was not simply about domination and political control; it also entailed the export and imposition of an extremely unbending experiment in radical social reconstitution with unprecedented destructive implications.⁴⁶

The Italian Fascist regime eventually rallied to the cause of a fascist crusade but followed a different trajectory and maintained

a distinct version of what universal fascism would mean. In the early years of the fascist regime-model Mussolini had emphasized the domestic, purely Italian character of the fascist experiment — a quality that rendered it unsuitable for other countries. Yet, by the end of the 1920s he had made a spectacular political U-turn by declaring fascism an 'export' product. The publication of the *Doctrine of Fascism* in 1932 provided a systematization of this universalist notion: fascism, like liberalism in the eighteenth century and socialism in the nineteenth, was the only true universal doctrine of the twentieth century.⁴⁷ Initially, this commitment to international fascism was expressed in terms of a voluntary association of all kin regimes and movements in the framework of a Fascist International (the 1934 abortive Conference in Montreux). However, the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in the summer of 1936 provided the first appropriate battleground for the ideological struggle between fascism and communism for the domination of Europe.⁴⁸ In the remaining years until the Nazi invasion of Poland in September 1939 fascist Italy displayed an increasing commitment to the aggressive agenda of the Axis alliance and a gradually radicalizing perception of the regime's long-term goals. However, in contrast to Nazism, the Italian Fascist regime remained primarily committed to its specific historic irredentist agenda of reconstituting the 'third Roman Empire' in the Mediterranean.⁴⁹ Its crusading spirit was more traditionalist in its rationale, less extended in its scope and even less rigid in its social implications for the societies of the conquered states. The genocidal campaigns in Libya during 1928–32 and the establishment of a quasi-apartheid regime in Ethiopia after 1936 reflected a fairly conventional prejudice against 'alien races', prompted by either security considerations (in Libya) or an attempt to emulate previous colonial practices of domination (in Ethiopia). There is very little evidence to suggest a rigid perception of race hierarchy for Europe similar to the Nazi notion of 'race super-state' — an assumption that is further validated by the half-hearted, inconsistent and limited implementation of the antisemitic laws after 1938. Furthermore, the crusading aspirations of the fascist regime-model were further thwarted by the limited economic/military capacity of the Italian system. Participation in the war was delayed until June 1940 due to logistical problems of preparation, it remained initially limited due to scarcity of resources and, when it acquired a more exten-

sive character in the autumn of 1940 (in the Balkans and Africa), it was undermined in its effectiveness by similar material and organizational problems, resulting in a spectacular and swift defeat in all fronts by early 1941. Even after the rescue of the Italian war by the Nazi forces, the Italian administration of the conquered areas showed little inclination to emulate the radical social programme of the Nazi authorities in German-occupied areas.⁵⁰

The other fascist regimes did not manifest crusading tendencies in their policy-making. In those cases where an ideological commitment to some form of expansion beyond the national territory existed, such policies were either never implemented or resulted from a conventional expansionist spirit of accumulating *irredenta* without rigid attempts to instil a new framework for social organization. Francoist Spain was a traditional nationalist regime, more intent on establishing and perpetuating domestic social stability than extending the national territory. In spite of its alleged political affinity to the Fascist and Nazi regimes, Franco's government stubbornly resisted the attempts of the two Axis leaders during 1940–1 to lure Spain into the war in return for substantial territorial compensations. Apart from his limited interest in the crusading aspects of international fascism, Franco was also aware of the extremely limited capacity of the Spanish economy and his armed forces to unleash and sustain an international war after a recent long period of infighting for the control of the country itself. These two factors explain his obstinate neutrality throughout the Second World War, as well as the inward-looking character of his regime.⁵¹ The Metaxas regime in Greece demonstrated a similar emphasis on domestic reorganization and an even more conspicuous self-restraint with regard to its potential expansionist designs. In terms of its ideological profile, the regime's motto of a 'third Hellenic civilization' emulated the palingenetic discourse of the 'third Rome' put forward by the fascist regime in Italy. Both countries' nationalist traditions shared a similar nostalgia for past imperial glories and an emotional imagery of regeneration for future ascendancy. However, the policy-making framework of the Metaxas regime remained essentially system-preserving, tied both to the British foreign policy of avoiding war and to the political efforts of the so-called Balkan Entente to achieve enduring peace in the region.⁵² Notwithstanding the traditional irredentist ambitions of

Greek foreign policy in the north (northern Epirus in Albania, Cyprus, the Dodecanese, and areas on the western coast of Turkey), Metaxas remained intent on avoiding any disturbance in the region. A further restraining factor was the awareness of the structural and material shortcomings of the Greek system. The experience from the disastrous campaign against Turkey in 1920–2 had exposed the limited capacity of the Greek war-machine and had resulted in a subsequent moderation of the political aims of Greek foreign policy (the abandonment of the 'Great Idea' for a Greater Greece).⁵³ In the 1930s, both before and during the Metaxas period, Greece — as a pro-system state — was more interested in fostering the existing status quo and defending it against growing Italian aggression (especially after the invasion of Albania in April 1939) rather than in unilaterally revising it.

Of the other case-studies discussed here, Austria offers an interesting variant of the inward-looking, system-defending type of regime. Although Austrian nationalism comprised a distinctive anti-socialist and socially regenerative discourse, it remained conspicuously devoid of any clear expansive aspirations or designs. Austrian nationalism itself lacked a definitive ideological direction and long-term vision. The creation of the Austrian state itself was the result of the dissolution of the Habsburg empire and the rejection of the claim for union with Germany by the victorious powers. In this sense, Austrian nationalism oscillated between three visibly different political rationales. There was the extreme *Gesamtdeutschland* vision, sponsored by the Austrian National Socialists and certain pan-German sectors of the Heimwehr, which had little time for the notion of Austrian independence and was intent on bringing about the absorption of Austria into a Greater Germany. There was the Habsburg, pro-monarchical legitimist variant, advocated by traditional conservative circles and by the less radical elements of the Heimwehr, which subscribed to the notion of Austrian independence as an interim stage towards the restoration of an Austrian Habsburg conservative system. Finally, there was a strong system-preserving component, epitomized by the official line of the Dollfuss–Schuschnigg regimes, which aimed to entrench the existing status quo vis-à-vis both monarchical fantasies and external assimilationist influences. This situation forced the Austrian regime to a purely defensive position, steer-

ing clear from the other two alternatives as the only available antidote to the crusading spirit of National Socialism and the threat to Austrian specificity posed by it.⁵⁴

Conclusions: The Regime-Model of Fascism and Authoritarianism

Fascism in its generic epochal form did not evolve in an ideological and political vacuum. As an idiosyncratic and extreme variant of hyper-nationalism it was essentially rooted in (albeit not constrained by) the radical nationalist tradition of each country. In terms of its ideological production, fascism in each country recast and radicalized pre-existing radical themes, provided a new overall prescription for future action and appealed to a powerful extreme nationalist imagery in order to historicize its vision and legitimize its specificity (vertical dimension). At the same time, fascism originated as a specific form of reaction to the reality of postwar political and economic crisis in proto-liberal, unstable systems of various European countries (horizontal, epochal dimension). A generic explanation of the emergence of fascist movements may be formulated on the basis of a 'hyper-nationalism-plus' formula, which identifies a set of similar factors that motivated the emergence of fascist movements while taking into account relative variations in the autochthonous conditions and traditions that shaped the physiognomy of each movement. However, with regard to the regime-model of fascism, a number of other elements must be carefully analysed. Without any exception, fascist movements/parties climbed to power through the complicity of indigenous elite sectors in the framework of a conscious political experiment with more popular forms of authoritarianism. All these fascist components, even the one with the largest electoral constituency (NSDAP in Germany), initially shared executive power with certain traditional political groups and enjoyed the passive support of a wide range of social forces. In this sense, a rigid distinction between authoritarian and fascist regime-model is highly problematic — first because of this early political co-existence between the two components, and second because of their *de facto* similarities in political practice and objectives (strong state, anti-socialism, censorship, restrictions in political and social association etc.). Instead, the crucial factor is to what extent the fascist component

emancipated itself from the initial predominance of its traditional conservative sponsors and to what degree it departed — once in power — from conventional forms/objectives of policy-making towards a more radical direction.

Four main criteria were employed to assess the character of a number of regimes which contained at least one 'fascist' component. *Ideology* remains a crucial determinant factor, in the sense that it set the limits of what each movement regarded as the most desirable prescription for long-term action. Especially in those countries where a multiplicity of 'fascist' movements with varying degrees of ideological extremism remained politically active (Austria, Hungary, Portugal, Spain), participation or exclusion/suppression determined to a great extent the ideological profile of the regime-model and its commitment to radical change. While in Germany, Italy and Greece the most radical 'fascist' component seized power, in the remaining countries there was a high degree of ideological dilution. In Spain, the Falange was gradually absorbed and neutralized in the more conservative Francoist regime. In Portugal the radical component (national syndicalism) was violently suppressed, while in Austria and Hungary the regime co-opted the less extreme variant (Heimwehr and National Socialists) and carefully ostracized the main anti-system force (National Socialists and Arrow Cross). In Romania the co-opting of a radical form of fascism (Iron Guard) was intermittent and short-lived, thus minimizing its ideological impact on the official regime's policy-making.

However, regimes are much more than just ideological intentions and aspirations. The formulation of policies rests on long-term perceptions of what is the most desirable course of action, but is also determined by a series of structural factors that may enhance or restrict the political freedom of a leadership to translate its ideas into action. *Domestic consolidation* is a crucial variable as it relates to the political struggle between conventional authoritarianism and radicalism (fascism) for the soul of the regime-model. Where the consolidation of the fascist component was antagonistic and all-embracing (Germany, Italy to a high extent), the margins of freedom for the fascist leaderships to promote their more extreme plans were significantly larger. By contrast, a co-operative type of consolidation resulted either in the neutralization or relative moderation of the fascist component (Austria, Spain, Hungary). The relative strength and cohe-

sion of the conservative authoritarian bloc is a significant factor in explaining why in some cases the antagonistic intentions of certain fascist groups were effectively thwarted (Portugal, Romania) but succeeded in overpowering the conservative opposition in other countries (Germany, Italy).

Policy-making is the qualitative criterion that provides a clear standard for judging the varying ability of the fascist components to influence the formulation of political objectives. The correlation between this factor with both domestic consolidation and ideological intentions is crucial. Those fascist groups that achieved a comprehensive, (near-)monocratic type of consolidation (Germany, Italy) generally emancipated themselves from the restraining framework of conventional policy-making and sponsored more radical activities. In co-operative or diluted models the adoption of a 'fascist' profile by the regime was restricted to aping or counterfeiting formalistic aspects of the 'fascist' *style* but did not result in a clear departure from conventional political objectives (Austria, Hungary, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Romania). Also, the co-opting of less radical fascist components (at the expense of other, more extreme forms) by authoritarian regimes ensured a more uneventful co-habitation without substantially imperilling the continuity in policy-making.

Finally, the *scope* of long-term intentions depended on both the ideological nature of each movement's nationalism, the margins for anti-system action and the influence of external or random factors. In this respect, the Nazi regime departs from all other regime-models in its large-scale ideological commitment to a new universal social order, in its political determination to pursue such an ambition, and in its ability to do so extensively and effectively. The Italian Fascist regime demonstrated a comparable crusading spirit but retained the traditional focus on historic irredentism and refrained from imposing new radical models of domestic organization in the conquered areas in Europe. The rest of the regimes focused on the domestic aspects of regeneration, either as a means of defence against external threats (Austria) or because they lacked the material/structural preconditions for a form of expansive policy (Greece, Hungary).

In the end, a categorical distinction between authoritarian and fascist regime-model obfuscates the complex structural and political continuities between the two models, as well as the affinities in their ideological rationale.⁵⁵ When admitted into

power, the fascist movements/parties lacked a concrete political alternative vision for a totally novel form of regime. They were co-opted by traditional groups and were forced to operate within the framework of a conventional authoritarian system which entailed a combination of social forces with disparate anticipations and notions of *desirable* or *feasible* action. The varying emancipation of individual fascist components in government took the form of a gradual process of rejecting aspects of the existing system and conceptualizing new prescriptions in opposition to conventional pro-system attitudes. In this sense, an ideal-type of the regime-model of fascism [radical anti-system ideology, all-embracing antagonistic consolidation, radical policy-making, crusading spirit] does not constitute a check-list for deciding whether a regime was or was not fascist; it is only meaningful as a description of the end-result of a *tendency* towards the gradual re-organization of the authoritarian model's style and content. The Nazi regime offers the closest approximation of this model, while the Italian Fascist variety continued to oscillate between its radical ideological agenda and the restrictive structural continuities with the pre-existing composition of the system.⁵⁶ The remaining case-studies absorbed the fascist component in an essentially pro-system political structure or subjected its ideological aspirations to the needs of *Realpolitik* and adherence to pre-existing strict political choices. The epochal impact of Italian Fascism (as the archetypal fascist regime) and of German Nazism (as the most dynamic example of fascist regime-model) prompted mimetic reproductions of 'fascist' stylistic elements in many other European regimes. However, the fascist 'style' could be appropriated more easily than its substantive political implications. The crucial test was the extent to which these new constellations of power regressed into the conventional authoritarian model or developed a political momentum in the other direction, i.e. towards a new version of authoritarianism based on a radical re-ordering of social forces, forms of participation and long-term political objectives. Rather than entailing a rigid identification with any ideal-type, the regime-model of fascism evolved within idiosyncratic autochthonous political frameworks, occupying in each case varying positions between the indigenous model of conventional authoritarianism and its alternative reinterpretations by traditional or new social forces.

Notes

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5. J.J. Linz, 'Some Notes Towards a Comparative Study of Fascism in Sociological Historical Perspective', in W. Laqueur, ed., *Fascism: A Reader's Guide. Analyses, Interpretations, Bibliography* (Harmondsworth 1979), 21 ff.; 'Political Space and Fascism as Late-Comer', in Larsen, Hagtvet and Myklebust, eds., *Who Were the Fascists?*, 153-4.
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16. Y. Andricopoulos, 'The Power Base of Greek Authoritarianism', in Larsen, Hagtvet and Myklebust, eds, *Who Were the Fascists?*, 568–84.

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19. I. Deák, 'Hungary', in *European Right*, 377–81; Griffin, *Nature of Fascism*, 127–8; Carsten, *Rise of Fascism*, 169–75.

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48. For the attempts at a 'Fascist International' see D. Veneruso, *L'Italia fascista (1922–1945)* (Bologna 1981), 165–75. For Italy's involvement in the Spanish Civil War see R. Cantalupo, *Fu la Spagna. Ambasciata presso Franco, febbraio–aprile 1937* (Milan 1948).

49. Knox, 'Conquest', 1–23; Griffin, *Nature of Fascism*, 69–76.

50. For the policies in Libya see G. Rochat, *II colonialismo italiano* (Turin 1973), 103 ff. For the quasi-apartheid policies in Ethiopia see L. Goglia, 'Note sul razzismo coloniale fascista', *Storia Contemporanea*, 19 (1988), 1223–66. For the economic and military deficiencies of the Italian system see F. Minniti, 'Aspetti della politica fascista degli armamenti dal 1935 al 1943', in R. De Felice, ed., *L'Italia fra Tedeschi e Alleati. La politica estera fascista e la seconda guerra mondiale* (Bologna 1973), and 'II problema degli armamenti nella preparazione militare italiana dal 1935 al 1943', *Storia Contemporanea*, 2 (1978), 1–56. M. Knox, 'Expansionist Zeal, Fighting Power, and Staying Power in the Italian and German Dictatorships', in R. Bessel, ed., *Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. Comparisons and Contrasts* (Cambridge 1996), 115–33; J.J. Sadkovich, 'The Italo-Greek War in Context: Italian Priorities and Axis Diplomacy', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 28 (1993), 493–64, and 'Understanding Defeat: Reappraising Italy's Role in World War II', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 24 (1989), 27–61. For the implementation of the anti-Semitic legislation see J. Steinberg, *All or Nothing. The Axis and the Holocaust, 1941–42* (London 1990).

51. For Franco's negative replies to the German proposal for a joint front against the British see DGFP, D, 11, 220/207/227/246/476/491.

52. For the ideology of the Metaxas regime see Andricopoulos, op. cit., 579–80. For the regime's foreign policy see Close, op. cit., 209 ff.; Clogg, op. cit. For the attempts for Balkan co-operation in the 1930s see B.M. Janković, *The Balkans in International Relations* (Basingstoke & London 1988), 149–64.

53. M.L. Smith, *The Ionian Vision. Greece in Asia Minor* (London 1973).

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55. Blinkhorn, op. cit., 9–13; S.G. Payne, *Fascism. Comparison and Definition* (Madison 1980), 6 ff.

56. Griffin, *Nature of Fascism*, Ch. 8.

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