



**TRANSITIONS TO DEMOCRACY AND DEMOCRATIC
CONSOLIDATION: THEORETICAL AND
COMPARATIVE ISSUES**

Scott Mainwaring

Working Paper #130 - November 1989

Scott Mainwaring is Associate Professor of Government and Senior Fellow of the Kellogg Institute at the University of Notre Dame. He is the author of *The Catholic Church and Politics in Brazil, 1916-1985* (Stanford University Press, 1986), and coeditor of and contributor to *The Progressive Church in Latin America* (Kellogg Institute/University of Notre Dame Press, 1989). He has published articles on political parties, social movements, and transitions to democracy in Latin America. The author wishes to thank Caroline Domingo, Jonathan Hartlyn, Daniel Levine, Juan Linz, Guillermo O'Donnell, Timothy Power, William C. Smith, and J. Samuel Valenzuela for helpful comments.

ABSTRACT

In the 1980s, an extensive literature has emerged on transitions to democracy and democratic processes in Latin America. Latin Americans and Latin Americanists have produced ground breaking works that have enhanced understanding of these subjects. A number of differences of opinion, usually implicit and not articulated, have arisen. Considering the abundance and quality of the literature, a review of some major themes, debates, and disagreements is overdue. In response, this paper analyzes some of the key comparative and theoretical issues in the literature, in several cases challenging influential arguments.

RESUMEN

En los años 80', se ha producido una extensa literatura sobre transiciones a la democracia y procesos democráticos en América Latina. Latinoamericanos y latinoamericanistas han producido trabajos pioneros, mejorando el entendimiento de estos temas. Varias diferencias de opinión sobre problemas teóricos, generalmente implícitas y no articuladas, han surgido en esta literatura. Considerando la abundancia y calidad de esta literatura, resulta importante realizar una revisión de los temas, debates y desacuerdos mas relevantes. Este documento analiza algunos aspectos comparativos y teóricos que son claves en la producción literaria reciente, en varios casos examinando críticamente algunos de los argumentos mas influyentes.

In this decade, an extensive literature has emerged on transitions to democracy and prospects for democracy in Latin America. This literature has responded to two fundamental developments in the region. First, the current analyses have appeared in the context of the withering of many authoritarian regimes and their replacement by democratic governments. Never before in Latin American history have so many democratic governments survived for so long as in this decade.¹ The sheer number of transitions and the predominance of democratic governments have stimulated academic debates about transitions.

The second development is the increased intellectual interest in and commitment to democracy. Intellectuals have expressed more interest in writing about and supporting democracy than ever before. In previous democratic periods, many intellectuals remained indifferent or even hostile to liberal democracy. After suffering horrendous persecutions, witnessing the deaths of friends and colleagues, and experiencing the palpable reduction of forms of sociability during the past wave of authoritarian rule, intellectuals became convinced of the desirability of democracy. This change is especially marked in South America but has even exercised some influence in the generally inauspicious climate of Central American nations embroiled in civil wars.² Along with the renewed normative commitment to democracy has come greater interest in studying democratic transitions and processes. In terms of sheer quantity and often in terms of quality as well, the new literature on these subjects represents a leap over what was produced in earlier decades in Latin America.

A relatively new subject notwithstanding the much older academic concern with democracy, the study of transitions became a veritable growth industry for several years. Along with colleagues engaged in research on Southern Europe, Latin Americans and Latin Americanists have been the leaders in opening this new field of research. Perhaps because it is a more established theme in the social sciences, no comparable innovations have yet appeared in the burgeoning literature on democratic consolidation. Nevertheless, the literature on this subject has enhanced our understanding not only of current problems in Latin America, but also of democracy in general.

Considering the abundance and quality of this literature, a review of some of the major themes, debates, and disagreements has been overdue. This paper takes on that task. It reviews some key comparative and theoretical issues in the literature on transitions to democracy and democratic consolidation. I focus on two kinds of issues: problems around which an interesting, yet usually implicit and inchoate debate has emerged, and questions on which I disagree with influential analysts. I begin with the problem of how transition and democracy should be defined.

Key Definitions: Transition and Democracy

The controversy in the literature begins with the very notion of transition. O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) offer a useful definition in their excellent succinct work. "The 'transition' is the interval between one political regime and another... Transitions are delimited, on the one side, by the launching of the process of dissolution of an authoritarian regime and, on the other, by the installation of some form of democracy, the return to some form of authoritarian rule, or the emergence of a revolutionary alternative" (p. 6). They add that "the *terminus ad quo* of our inquiry (is located) at the moment that authoritarian rulers announce their intention to extend significantly the sphere of protected individual and group rights—and are believed... The advent of political democracy is the preferred *terminus ad quem*" (pp. 10, 11). My only quarrel with their discussion of the concept is their argument that "to the extent that there are any effective rules and procedures, these tend to be in the hands of authoritarian rulers" (p. 6). This is true in the beginning phases of transitions, but it is not the case throughout the transition as a whole. Over time, the authoritarian elites lose their capacity to define unilaterally the rules and procedures.

As O'Donnell and Schmitter use the term, it is clearly conceptualized and delimited. This is not always the case. Nun and Portantiero (1987) opt for a less bounded usage whose meaning is elusive. Writing nearly four years after the inauguration of a democratic government in Argentina, they still referred to "the transition to democracy" in the title of their book. But democracy already existed in Argentina; the problem was ensuring its consolidation. These are different issues and involve different dynamics.

This is not to say that the current rules are fully institutionalized or to deny that there is a process of flux. But there are more fruitful ways of conceptualizing the current moment than speaking of a "transition to democracy." O'Donnell (1988) gets at the difference between the current moment and the period of demise of authoritarianism by speaking of two transitions: a transition to democracy, and then a transition to a consolidated democracy. Another possibility is to distinguish between a democratic government and a democratic regime (Hagopian and Mainwaring 1987). Regime, of course, is a broader concept than government and refers to the rules (formal or not) that govern the interactions of the major actors in the political system. The notion of regime involves institutionalization, i.e., the idea that such rules are widely understood and accepted, and that actors pattern their behavior accordingly.

Debates about the concept of democracy are old indeed, and it would be impossible to provide a detailed overview here. To a considerable extent, Schumpeter's definition (1950: 269), focusing on electoral competition among political elites and parties, has prevailed: "The democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote."³ Schumpeter's definition has been modified in two ways. Many definitions insist on nearly

universal suffrage, a criterion that Schumpeter neglected.⁴ By adding this dimension of participation to Schumpeter's emphasis on competition, we arrive at Dahl's (1971) influential scheme for conceptualizing polyarchy. In addition, most definitions of democracy now include the notion of respect for basic civil liberties: freedom of the press, freedom of speech, the right to habeas corpus, etc. This dimension is important because a regime can hold competitive elections with broad participation, yet in the absence of guarantees of civil liberties, it is not unequivocally democratic. Contemporary El Salvador illustrates the point, as Karl (1986b) has argued.

In my view, a democracy must meet three basic procedural criteria: (1) Competitive elections must be the principal route to political office. There must be competitive popular elections for the legislature and there usually are for the president as well in a presidential regime.⁵ Fraud and coercion may not determine the outcome of democratic elections. (2) There must be broad adult citizenship. In recent decades, this has meant nearly universal citizenship. Almost all countries have some exclusions—criminals, the insane, military personnel, and the illiterate are often among them. The illiterate, however, may be so numerous that their exclusion undermines the notion of generalized adult suffrage. It is impossible to establish an exact threshold at which exclusions mean that a regime is no longer democratic, in part because the tolerance for exclusions has diminished over time. (3) Democracies necessarily provide guarantees of traditional civil liberties for all; minority rights must be protected.

Although procedural conceptions of democracy have prevailed, some debatable usage of the term still occurs. Seligson (1987a), for example, argued that "Throughout the region, there have emerged formal, constitutional democracies, replete with comparatively honest and open elections, active party competition, and a relatively uncensored press. By mid-decade, only Chile and Paraguay seemed impervious to the trend" (p. 3). In addition to neglecting cases such as Cuba and Haiti that did not meet his own criteria, Seligson confuses the holding of competitive elections with the existence of democracy. Schumpeter's minimalist definition of democracy insisted on the possibility of alternation in power, a condition that Mexico has never met and that Nicaragua fails to.⁶ Serious limits on civil liberties make the inclusion of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Peru dubious. Finally, Brazil has not held democratic elections for president since 1960, and the extent of military intrusion in politics makes it a debatable case. It can probably be included in the set of democracies, but such inclusion is far from automatic.

As these cases illustrate, even if we stick to a procedural definition, deciding what governments should be classified as democratic is not always easy. This problem is particularly acute at a time when several major Latin American nations with formally democratic governments are in a process of rapid social disintegration, and when democracy is surviving not so much because of its own achievements as because of the seeming exhaustion of alternatives. Aware that they contributed mightily to the current crises and that they have no new answers, the

militaries are reluctant to intervene again. Conaghan (1985) coined the term “democracy by attrition” to describe the transition in Ecuador, and some years later this felicitous phrase describes the reality in several other countries as well.

Liberalization and Democratization

A useful beginning point for discussion is the distinction between liberalization and democratization. Political liberalization implies an easing of repression and extension of civil liberties within an authoritarian regime, whereas a transition to democracy implies a change of regimes. Democratization has been used in different ways, but as used here it refers to a movement toward democracy, that is, toward a different political regime. In recent transitions, this movement has occurred through an expansion of political contestation (competition); in most Northern European cases, it occurred primarily through an expansion of participation in politics that already had some competition. The distinction between these two concepts is essential; it calls attention to the value of democracy as opposed to changes within authoritarian rule, and to the fundamental difference between the two.

What accounts for the beginning of political liberalization? Most authors have focused on elite processes, especially those within the authoritarian regime. Kaufman (1986), O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), and Przeworski (1986) argue that liberalization begins with schisms within the authoritarian coalition. Chalmers and Robinson (1982: 5) aver that elite groups “find a liberal regime to be the most appropriate and useful manner of organizing political life under the present circumstances.” Stepan (1988) focuses specifically on schisms within the military. In some cases, the schisms that precede liberalization begin because of the failures of authoritarian regimes. In others, they begin because of a paradox of success; major successes convince authoritarian elites that they have little to lose by opening the political system, and a good deal to gain: international and domestic legitimacy, as well as the defusion of tensions in the armed forces.

While I largely agree with the current emphasis on splits within authoritarian coalitions as a starting point in processes of political liberalization, exclusive attention to internal tensions can lead to neglecting the impact of opposition actors in general, including mass mobilization. Most transitions involve complex interactions between regime and opposition forces from a relatively early stage (Smith 1987: 183-187).

Stating that internal schisms are necessary if an authoritarian regime is to liberalize is correct. It is difficult to imagine a process of regime change in the face of a uniformly cohesive authoritarian coalition committed to remaining in power. However, liberalization can be affected by actors outside the authoritarian coalition from an early stage. Even though authoritarian elites may seem to hold all the cards, this appearance can be deceiving. Often their actions take into

account calculations of how the opposition will react, and some government leaders may attempt to coopt moderate opposition groups. Strategic interaction is contextual; some actors within an authoritarian coalition may begin to support liberalization primarily in response to actors outside the coalition.

Moreover, it is not even necessary that major actors within the authoritarian coalition support liberalization for the wheels of regime change to begin moving. It is tempting to think that liberalization begins because some actors in the authoritarian coalition want it to. In many cases this is true, but there is also another possibility. Schisms that have little to do with democracy or liberalization may emerge within the authoritarian coalition. For example, nationalistic actors can oppose the open market orientation of governmental policy, but without dissenting from the idea of maintaining authoritarian rule. Even in the absence of any liberalizing advocates within the authoritarian coalition, this scenario can make possible increasing mobilization against the authoritarian regime, thereby intensifying the internal schisms. In this case, the emergence of a pro-liberalization faction within the authoritarian coalition is not so much a prerequisite for liberalization as a response to the erosion of the regime. The Argentine case of 1969-1973 suggests that this scenario is more than a hypothetical possibility, as O'Donnell (1982) has shown. This case indicates that, contrary to some arguments (Chalmers and Robinson 1982), authoritarian regime leaders may not freely choose to liberalize, but may do so because they want to minimize their losses.

The distinction between liberalization and democratization poses another question: how and why does what begins as a project of liberalization culminate in a transition to democracy? At least three important points are germane. First, the interaction and negotiations between government and opposition are crucial in determining the course of a transition. Second, divisions within the government and opposition are also important. Finally, there are meaningful differences in transition processes, so it is impossible to develop a general model of how transitions occur.

Before turning to these issues in greater detail, it is important to emphasize that liberalization does not always lead to a democratic transition. Liberalization is sometimes aborted and leads to renewed repression, and successful transitions to democracy are usually characterized by constant vicissitudes: threats by the hardliners to lead a coup, efforts by the softliners to use the threats of the hardliners to bolster their own situation, real if temporary reverses in the process of liberalization, authoritarian crackdowns. There are no recent cases, if there are any at all, in which the instauration of a democratic government came about easily.

Although liberalization usually begins with a split within the authoritarian elite, this does not mean that democratization is a product of these elites (Bresser Pereira 1984; Moisés 1986; Smith 1987). The authoritarian elites who initiated liberalization wanted it limited to some form of

political regime in which they would retain power. Some may have envisaged a political regime that allowed for competition for the main electoral positions, but they did so with the illusion that they would be able to win such positions. There are few true democrats among those who initiated liberalization schemes, even if these leaders are often less authoritarian, or at least less disposed to resort to massive repression, than their predecessors.

Even if liberalization begins with a decision by some members of the authoritarian coalition, that decision sends signals to other actors that changes in the political system are possible. Many actors get involved in and influence the political process. From this point on, transition processes are characterized, as O'Donnell and Schmitter argue, by a high level of flux and uncertainty. All recent transitions have been marked by constant interplay between regime and opposition forces once the regime signals its intention to liberalize. In no recent transitions has an authoritarian government been so thoroughly defeated that it was incapable of asserting influence over the transition. Even in a case like Argentina in 1982, in which the government suffered an embarrassing external defeat, the military was able to protect some of its interests. This fact was obscured at the time by the stunning magnitude of the military's failures, but subsequently it has been all too apparent as the armed forces have reasserted themselves in the political scenario. Conversely, even the authoritarian regimes that exercise most influence and control over transitions engage in constant negotiations with and maneuvers to outdo the opposition.

Many authoritarian rulers take the imposed silence that hovers over civil society as a sign of support or at least acquiescence. This fact helps explain drastic miscalculations committed by leaders of authoritarian regimes. Whitehead (1986: 58) on Bolivia chronicles such a miscalculation: "In November 1977, when President Banzer embarked on a process of electoral transition, he had no sense of being defeated." Similarly, General Lanusse ultimately acceded to virtually everything he hoped to block in the Argentine transition of the early 1970s.

Opening the political system subjects regime leaders to conundrums they had not faced during the apex of authoritarianism. As Stepan (1988) shows, military leaders may establish alliances with civilian elites to help them offset the threat of a coup by the hardliners. But establishing such an alliance also has a cost: the civilian elites assume more responsibility and gain greater influence. One of the early steps in most liberalization processes, allowing greater space for expressions of dissent, can lead to massive repudiation of authoritarian rule. Opposition actors of various stripes and colors re-enter the political stage, demanding the end of authoritarian rule. This is the resurrection of civil society of which O'Donnell and Schmitter write. The process contains no inevitable outcomes, but once a certain momentum is gained, it is difficult for authoritarian regimes to contain it. In this sense, transitions bears a certain similarity to reform

measures as discussed by Huntington (1968): such processes can have a snowball effect in which the satisfaction of one demand, far from dampening further demands, does the opposite.

Throughout transitions, divisions within the authoritarian elite and within the opposition are crucial. One could not get very far in understanding these processes with a simple model of regime and opposition forces. As noted above, divisions within the regime itself usually lead to the beginning of liberalization. Some forces within the regime almost invariably try to block liberalization, but others seek alliances within the opposition as a means of overcoming these attempted vetoes. Some actors within the opposition may oppose negotiation with the government and opt for a “maximalist” strategy; when this is the case, the probability of a successful transition diminishes (O’Donnell 1979a). As Cortázar (1987) has argued, this was one of the major problems blocking a transition in Chile until 1988.

O’Donnell’s scheme (1979a) for conceptualizing differentiations within the regime and the opposition is an enduring contribution. O’Donnell categorized the regime supporters into hardliners and softliners, the latter being more willing to negotiate with the opposition and to entertain possibilities of promoting liberalization. The main divisions within the opposition are among the opportunistic opposition, generally comprising former regime supporters who have no serious commitment to democracy but who hope to gain something by their tentative and late opposition to authoritarian rule; the moderate opposition; and the maximalists, who are unwilling to negotiate anything with the authoritarian regime and who are generally not committed to political democracy.

Many governments eventually convoke elections as a means of bringing the process to an end, still hoping that they will be able to remain in power or at least score electoral victories that vindicate their rule and give them a cornerstone in a nascent democracy. Most often, these hopes are frustrated. When they subject their legitimacy to the electoral arena, authoritarian rulers depend on political parties. With few exceptions, they have spent much of their time railing against parties in an effort to convince the nation of the desirability of authoritarian rule. Among the more advanced nations of Latin America, Brazil is the only one in which parties and congress functioned during military rule. Authoritarian leaders may have vast advantages in distributing patronage and in controlling and in gaining access to publicity, but they almost never succeed in structuring a viable political party. Brazil and Spain stand out as the exceptions.

Elites, Masses, and Democracy

In the past two decades, political scientists have focused mostly on the role of political elites in sustaining democracies. The transitions literature has furthered the analysis of democracy as a product of elite interactions. Rustow’s seminal article (1970) argued that

democracy “is acquired by a process of conscious decision at least on the part of the top political leadership... A small circle of leaders is likely to play a disproportionate role” (356). Many recent works on transitions have continued this emphasis.

Huntington (1984) wrote that “democratic regimes that last have seldom, if ever, been instituted by mass popular action. Almost always, democracy has come as much from the top down as from the bottom up; it is as likely to be the product of oligarchy as of protest against oligarchy” (212). Despite its careful wording, this passage misses one of the essential features of many transitions to democracy: that they involve a dynamic interaction between elites and masses. Huntington is right that enduring democracies are not created by mass action alone, but Therborn (1977) and Stephens (1987) are equally correct in insisting on the fundamental contributions of the labor movement to democratization in Europe.

Transitions usually begin with splits within authoritarian regimes, but over time more and more actors become involved. Exclusive focus on elite actors will not do for this reason; the efforts of popular sectors to redefine the political scene are also important. In virtually all of the recent transition processes, a panoply of popular organizations struggled against authoritarian governments and on behalf of establishing democracy. Labor unions, peasant groups, neighborhood associations, and church groups played prominent parts in the struggles that ended authoritarian rule. Without some initial cracks in the authoritarian coalitions, their impact was limited, but once such cracks appeared, they bolstered the efforts to oust autocratic governments.

Equally apposite, the *linkages* between elites and masses are often crucial in transition periods. As liberalization proceeds, governments and oppositions alike attempt to win popular sympathies in efforts to bolster their bargaining power. Opposition groups often attempt to organized popular sectors and to win the support of extant popular organizations in their battles against autocrats. Once elections are convoked, competing parties jockey to secure popular favor.

The tendency to understate the impact of common people and see politics as an exclusive elite affair has carried over to discussions of the new democracies in Latin America. Granted, most of these feckless democracies have failed to implement policies that safeguard popular interests. However, their failures do not imply that democratic politics is exclusively an elite affair, or even that the masses are absent in the current political scenarios in these countries.

Some analysts have overstated the extent to which “the people” are not interested in, or do not participate in, democratic politics. In a variety of ways, common people do participate in movements, institutions, and practices that either are controlled or simply do not exist under authoritarian governments. People, and especially leaders of popular groups, may care more about preserving democracy than some of the literature suggests. Caring about this issue, of

course, may not always lead to an effective ability to contribute to democratic consolidation. But a society in which there is broad support for violence as a means of realizing interests does not bode very well for democracy. As Ollier (1986) points out, in Argentina broad acceptance of violence in the early 1970s gave legitimacy to guerrilla organizations, to terrorism of the right, and to markedly authoritarian conceptions and practices among virtually all political actors. Conversely, where popular leaders are committed to democracy and enjoy broad legitimacy in their organizations and movements, prospects for democracy are much better.

Democratic politics allows for more spaces of popular participation than many authors in the current literature suggest. Because relatively few citizens are well informed and because the decision making process in democracies is largely restricted to elites, it can appear that democratic politics depends almost exclusively on elite interactions. However, elites must constantly vie for popular sympathies if they are to build successful political careers. Democratic politics is a system of interactions and accountability between rulers and ruled. One need not romanticize how effective accountability is to perceive that the position of the rulers depends on their ability to appeal to the majority (Dahl 1956: 124-151; Dahl 1961; Sartori 1987: 86-130). This accountability of elites to the masses through elections is one of the characteristic features of democracy.

As Reis (1988) has argued, the nature and beliefs of the electorate affect what kinds of parties are viable. This is one of the many ways in which the beliefs of the masses affect the functioning of democracy. Citizen predilections are not infinitely malleable, even though they are shaped by elite institutions. Of course, the interaction is mutual: the nature of political parties shapes the characteristics of the electorate, just as the electorate's predilections shape the parties.

Legitimacy and Democracy

Earlier I noted that declining legitimacy can help induce authoritarian governments to leave office. However, the explanatory value of the notion of legitimacy has recently been questioned by Adam Przeworski (1985: 133-170; 1986). Przeworski juxtaposes two kinds of explanation of regime change:

- 1) The regime loses its legitimacy, and since no regime can last without legitimacy, it disintegrates.
- 2) Conflicts within the ruling bloc cannot be reconciled, and some ruling factions decide to appeal to outside groups for support.

Przeworski prefers the second alternative; interests, and not subjective evaluations, form the basis of the explanation. But the dichotomy between 1) and 2), between legitimacy and conflicts within the ruling bloc, may not be as sharp as Przeworski suggests. The way conflicts within the ruling bloc emerge and are handled ultimately cannot be divorced from the question of

legitimacy. When a regime enjoys legitimacy, the problems that governments inevitably face are less likely to unleash unresolvable conflicts within the ruling bloc.

As Linz (1973) has observed, one of the fundamental dilemmas for contemporary authoritarian regimes is that they lack legitimizing formulae. The defeat of the fascist countries in World War II led to an eclipse of ideologies and organizational models that could create long-term legitimacy for authoritarian regimes, at least in the west in the decades since 1945. This backdrop helps explain why authoritarian regimes in the west have enormous difficulty in sustaining themselves in power over a long period of time. If they had enduring legitimacy, authoritarian regimes would be better able to face problems without internal schisms and defections.

My argument here supposes a point that Przeworski disputes: that legitimacy cannot be reduced to self-interest or to some other explanation. Before defending this viewpoint, I concede that regime stability cannot always be explained on the basis of legitimacy. As Przeworski notes, at least three other factors could explain regime stability:

- 1) People are intimidated and coerced into obeying.
- 2) People follow the rules out of self-interest.
- 3) It does not occur to people that a different kind of regime could exist, so they passively assent.

In contrast to Przeworski, however, I believe that none of these three factors, or even all of them, can adequately explain regime stability. Following Weber (1978: 31-38, 212-271), I believe that the stability of a mode of domination based solely on coercion, self-interest, or apathy/resignation is dubious. "Custom, personal advantage, purely affectual or ideal motives of solidarity do not form a sufficiently reliable basis for a given domination" (p. 213). Effective coercion requires considerable cohesion within the repressive apparatus itself, and this cohesion is almost certain to erode if powerful figures in the authoritarian coalition do not accept the legitimacy of authoritarian rule. The coercive apparatus does not exist in isolation, even though communication between it and civil society may be limited.

The self-interest explanation of obedience is crucial to rational choice models. This explanation need not postulate that an actor attempt to undermine democracy simply because his/her interests are not realized. The cost of attempting to subvert a democratic regime when no other actors are doing so could explain why an actor does not act against democracy every time his/her interests are countered. Rational actors would join a conspiracy against democracy to further their interests only if there is a reasonable chance of success. Otherwise, the costs of action would drastically outweigh the costs of acquiescence. But without some notion of legitimacy it is impossible to understand why the costs of action are so high in consolidated democracies. Because actors believe in the system, they are willing to make concessions to abide by the rules of the game. Where self-interest is the rationale for obedience, the stability of the political system rests heavily on payoffs, especially of a material nature. Przeworski is quick to

recognize this fact (1985: 133-169). Yet all political systems have periods when payoffs are low, and such periods do not necessarily undermine democratic institutions. The difference between consolidated democracies and democracies that falter is not the ability of the former to avert recessions so much as the acceptance by major political actors of low payoffs when recessions come. The cost of anti-democratic action is high only because other actors do not approve of it, regardless of their own objective situation. Legitimacy is every bit as much the root of democratic stability as objective payoffs, and it is less dependent on economic payoffs than Przeworski (1985: 133-169) and Lipset (1959) indicate.⁷ As many Latin American cases evince, where elites and popular organizations subscribe to democracy primarily out of self-interest, democratic stability is precarious.

Finally, it is true that many people passively assent to a given mode of domination. But no political regime in the contemporary world can exist simply because of the inertia of the population. This is particularly the case of democracy, where the rulers need periodic electoral consecration to retain their positions of power. Moreover, where people passively assent because they cannot conceive of a different kind of regime, this very fact expresses a form of legitimacy.⁸

Przeworski's critique of the notion of legitimacy supposes that the analysis of politics can be reduced to 1) actors' interests in 2) an interactive context.⁹ In his view, concepts of a subjective or perceptive nature, such as legitimacy, identity, or political culture do not enrich analysis. With Pizzorno (1985), I would insist on the ongoing importance of such concepts. Actors bring baggage to the situations and contexts in which they fight for their interests. Depending on their identities, different actors in similar objective situations can respond in radically different ways (Sahlins 1976). Conversely, actors with very different objective situations can respond in similar ways if they have similar identities. Perceptions of self-interest are not only bound by a set of objective conditions, but also mediated by cultural determinations.

In brief, the theme of legitimacy remains fundamental to understanding democratic politics. Legitimacy does not need to be universal in the beginning stages if democracy is to succeed, but if a commitment to democracy does not emerge over time, democracy is in trouble. Where common citizens are not committed to democracy, they will be open to "disloyal opposition" leaders and groups, and such actors are often lethal. This is not deny the problems in operationalizing the concept of legitimacy, but some concepts have heuristic value even though they cannot be neatly operationalized. Nor is this to reduce all explanations of regime change to arguments about legitimacy. Przeworski is right that a crisis of legitimacy is not sufficient to explain regime changes, though, contrary to his argument, it may be necessary.

Three caveats are in order. First, legitimacy among the masses is more important in democratic regimes than in authoritarian ones. If the military is the main pillar behind an

authoritarian regime, as long as it remains united, the regime can withstand low levels of legitimacy in civil society. Second, in all political regimes, the legitimacy of actors who participate actively in politics is more important than the legitimacy of passive citizens (see Dahl 1971; Lamounier 1979a; and Linz 1978: 21). This difference is especially pronounced in authoritarian regimes. Finally, the notion of legitimacy should not be idealized. It does not imply that citizens actively participate in government or that they support a particular government. Rather, it suggests a broad acceptance of a political regime, above and beyond any particular government and set of substantive issues. Linz's definition (1978: 18) is useful: "A legitimate government is one considered to be the least evil of the forms of government. Ultimately, democratic legitimacy is based on the belief that for that particular country at that particular historical juncture no other type of regime could assure a more successful pursuit of collective goals."

Democracy and Democrats

In addition to the shift from studying the masses to analyzing elites and institutions, recent democratic theory has focused more on behavior and less on values. Together, these changes meant that elite behavior became the primary focus of attention; even elite values are often seen as secondary. These theorists have consequently downplayed the importance of a normative commitment to democracy on the part of political elites.

Rustow (1970) synthesized this orientation. "Democracy, like any collective human action, is likely to stem from a large variety of mixed motives. ... In so far as it is a genuine compromise it will seem second best to all major parties involved... What matters at the decision stage is not what values the leaders hold dear in the abstract, but what concrete steps they are willing to take" (357). In other words, what matters is not that political elites have a normative commitment to democracy, but that they be willing to accept it as a compromise. Huntington (1984) and Karl (1986c) likewise argue that democracy has been an unintended consequence, and that political elites viewed democracy as a means of realizing other objectives.

This dismissal of the importance of a normative commitment to democracy is questionable. Certainly there are cases where democracy emerged in part as an accident. In the United States, for example, the founding fathers foresaw neither the broad participation that emerged in the first half of the nineteenth century, nor a competitive party system. Even so, dominant political elites were committed to the notion of free government; they simply did not foresee or intend the mechanisms that would make modern mass democracy possible. Moreover, conditions in the early democratizing nations are not the same as those in later cases. In Latin America, democracy has worked only where political elites saw it as a best solution, not as an instrumental means of securing some of their interests. Contrary to the argument that democracy

has generally been an unintended consequence, it has rather resulted from the purposeful efforts of people who have devoted much of their lives to the democratic cause (Levine 1988).

Many of the particulars of a democracy may represent a second best compromise, but in Latin America democracy has not succeeded unless political elites were committed to it as a first choice of regime type. Indeed, many particulars necessarily represent a second best choice for a wide range of actors, for compromise about particulars is the stuff democracy is made of. Negotiations about electoral systems, labor legislation, responsibilities of the various branches of government, etc., may produce agreements in which all sides compromise. But compromise on these issues does not imply that democracy itself is viewed as a second best solution.

I am not suggesting that all political actors must be committed to democracy if it is to thrive. In many cases, the actors who supported authoritarian rule remain equivocal at best about democracy as a form of government. In the early phases of a new democracy, it is more feasible to induce these actors to abide by the democratic rules out of self-interest, by creating a high cost for anti-system action, than to transform their values. Some powerful actors, including business elites, may have instrumental attitudes towards democracy even in well established democracies. On the other hand, as I argued earlier, democracy without legitimacy tends to be unstable, for all political systems experience periods when payoffs are low. This means that over the medium term, it is important to induce most actors to play by and believe in the democratic rules.

Moreover, while most new democracies can withstand some anti-system actors, if the political elites who are running the government and who lead the main opposition parties are ambivalent about democracy, prospects for democracy are dim (Dahl 1971). Conversely, a firm commitment to democracy on the part of the political elite can help overcome otherwise adverse conditions in constructing democracy (Lijphart 1977). Arguably the outstanding distinctive feature that explains why the oldest democracies in Latin America are found in Costa Rica, Venezuela, and Colombia is the commitment of political elites to establishing and maintaining a polyarchy (Hartlyn 1988; Levine 1973; Peeler 1985). In all three countries, after periods of bitter fighting, political elites realized that for survival they needed to compromise and construct an institutional system that placed preserving democracy above immediate partisan objectives. They have continuously reaffirmed this commitment to preserving democracy, even at the expense of neglecting other important problems. This elite commitment and the resulting institutional arrangements made democracy possible despite formidable obstacles. Inequalities are not noticeably less pronounced in these countries than in the rest of Latin America (though Costa Rica is among the less inegalitarian nations of Latin America), nor were standards of living significantly higher than the Latin American average when democracy was inaugurated. Political elites wanted to construct a stable democracy and devised institutions that made possible their goal.

Vivid analyses of political elites and actors who were not committed to democracy explain part of the appeal of the contributions by Cavarozzi (1983; 1986), O'Donnell (1982), Ollier (1986), and Viola (1982) on Argentina, and by Malloy and Gamarra (1987) on Bolivia. To the extent that groups and parties fought for democracy, it was primarily for instrumental reasons, i.e., to further objectives that had nothing to do with democracy. Democracy cannot work under these conditions, for no political regime can satisfy a majority of the actors all the time.

While commitment of political elites and parties to democracy is a necessary condition if democracy is to thrive in the medium term, it is not a sufficient condition for stable democracy. It is also essential that elites create institutions that represent interests in society and exercise moderating power over those interests. Societal polarization makes this process more difficult; moderation does not depend exclusively on the will and skill of political elites. Nevertheless, commitment to democracy helps make possible the creation of effective democratic institutions, and it also generates a legitimacy that can help new democracies withstand less-than-excellent policy performances.

Even though the methodological problems in studying beliefs are greater than those in examining behavior, this does not mean that we can neglect the former. The way people, classes, institutions, movements, and state agencies act cannot be inferred from their "objective" circumstances. Notions of what constitutes legitimate political authority and self-interest vary somewhat independently of class and other "objective" factors, and in turn affect the identities of political actors. Political action is contextual and strategic, but it also reflects the ideologies, values, and perceptions of actors.

These abstract arguments about the importance of a normative commitment to democracy are relevant in analyzing the current situation in South America. One of the few auspicious factors in current prospects has to do with a greater commitment to democracy than ever before in South American history. Politicians, intellectuals, and leaders of social movements are more interested in preserving democracy than they ever have been (Coutinho 1980; Lamounier 1979b; O'Donnell 1986; Pakenham 1986; Weffort 1984). Objective conditions are dismal, and if they were determining factors, few of the new democracies would have survived this long.

Ideology, values, and expectations affect how citizens evaluate public policy performance. Given exaggerated expectations and demands, a high growth rate coupled with reformist initiatives may not suffice; consider the reactions to Frei in Chile (1964-70) and Illia in Argentina (1963-66). The ascendancy of bureaucratic authoritarian regimes coincided with a prolonged period of rapid growth in Latin America, though as Hirschman (1987) notes, only recently have some of the achievements of the 1960-75 period been recognized. Economic problems recurred despite rapid growth, but this is nothing specific to Latin America, nor do these problems adequately explain the demise of democracy (Hirschman 1979; Serra 1979). On the

other hand, most of South America is currently experiencing what Whitehead (1985) aptly called a revolution of falling expectations. Democracy can withstand economic performances far worse than those that generated widespread discontent two decades ago. Indeed, democracy in southern Europe was consolidated in the context of struggling economies.

This is one of the great—and tragic—paradoxes in Latin America as we approach the last decade of the twentieth century: the period of most dismal economic results the region has experienced since independence has also been the most democratic decade ever. Horrendous inflation rates, economies that are moving backwards, socially regressive policies, and greater misery have accompanied the dawning of democracy in most countries. With the sole exception of Uruguay, democratic governments have not only failed to ameliorate these problems, they have actually presided over their exacerbation. This is not to suggest that democracy will thrive if public policy performance continues to be as dismal as it has been in most countries. It is rather to underscore the importance of subjective evaluations and ideologies as an intermediating factor between policy performance and public response to that performance, in general, and of the new commitment to democracy, in particular.

Democracy and Uncertainty

One of the interesting issues in the literature is the connection between democracy and uncertainty. Przeworski's contributions have highlighted the uncertainty of democracy.

The process of establishing a democracy is a process of institutionalizing uncertainty, of subjecting all interests to uncertainty. In an authoritarian regime, some groups, typically the armed forces, have the capacity of intervening whenever the result of a conflict is contrary to their program or their interests... In a democracy, no group is able to intervene when outcomes of conflicts violate their self-perceived interests. Democracy means that all groups must subject their interests to uncertainty (1986: 58; see also 1988).

To argue that uncertainty is a decisive defining feature of democracy, Przeworski needs to establish not only that the outcomes of conflicts in democracy must be uncertain but also that the outcomes of conflicts in democracy must be, in general, *more* uncertain than in other political regimes. The sentences quoted above evince his awareness of this dual exigency, but Przeworski fails to muster sufficient support to sustain this second point. He overstates the uncertainty of democratic regimes and overdraws the contrast to authoritarian regimes. Przeworski bases his argument about uncertainty on the claim that actors in a democratic system must respect all majority outcomes; this being the case, any previously agreed to decision can be overturned by a new majority, a situation that would logically (if not necessarily empirically) lead to considerable uncertainty. But the starting assumption that actors in a democratic system must

respect all majority outcomes is not correct, both because democracy is not simply a system of majority rule, and because some kinds of outcomes would probably upset any democratic system.

The common statement that democracy is a system of majority rule is misleading in two fundamental ways, both of which have important consequences for Przeworski's argument. In the first place, democracy necessarily (definitionally) involves protection of minority rights. This means that decisions of the majority must observe some limits. When these limits are infringed upon, we no longer have democracy (Sartori 1987: 21-38). The range of possible outcomes is therefore not unlimited or completely uncertain; rather, respect for minority rights can entail complex constitutional and political engineering that has major consequences in structuring political life and in limiting the range of possible outcomes. The mechanisms found in consociational democracies to ensure the rights of minority groups are the most evident example (Lijphart 1977). These mechanisms exist precisely to ensure a high level of certainty on key issues.

Second, almost all democracies have written constitutions (Israel, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand are exceptions), and Przeworski's assumption that the rules of the game can be changed with a new majority is not correct for most constitutions. Changing most democratic constitutions is a difficult matter that usually requires more than a temporary majority. Changing constitutions often requires not one but several majorities (for example, both chambers of a bicameral national legislature and ratification by state assemblies). Moreover, constitutional changes often require qualified majorities, i.e., a specified percentage greater than an absolute majority. In brief, it takes more than a temporary majority to change some rules of the game. The difficulty of changing constitutions in consolidated democracies helps explain why major constitutional change does not occur with great frequency.

Of course, some rules are easier to change than those that are found in constitutions. Even so, it often takes more than one simple majority. Moreover, uncertainty in consolidated democracies is reduced by the fact that a majority of professional politicians have generally done well with the current rules. Constitutions have a significant impact on the logic of actors in consolidated democracies: actors structure their behavior according to the rules of the game, and over time they form their political identities in relation to those rules. In short, formalization of the rules of the game, the difficulties of changing some of the most important rules once they have been established, and the tendency of the strongest parties to stick to rules that have done them well mean that it takes more than a majority to overturn some past decisions, that powerful actors usually have a stake in avoiding such changes, and that uncertainty is not so ubiquitous as Przeworski indicates.

There is another quite different sense in which majority predilections need not prevail in democratic politics. As recent experiences in the new democracies of Latin America show, at least two decisive actors have means of ensuring veto power over crucial items on the agenda.

Perhaps most important, the new democracies face real limits in terms of military strategy; they cannot abolish the militaries or drastically attack the military institution, even if that is what the majority (of elected representatives, of the people, or both) wants. Such efforts would lead to a military attack on the democracy, and there is little doubt as to which side would win.

The capitalist class also retains some veto power because in the absence of certain broad guarantees, it can sabotage democracy. At a minimum, these guarantees include the preservation of the capitalist system and the continuing opportunity to make profit. Where such guarantees do not exist, the capitalist class can undermine the economy by withdrawing investment, engaging in massive speculation, etc. As Przeworski himself writes elsewhere (1985: 138), "Capitalism is a form of social organization in which the entire society is dependent upon actions of capitalists." This fact gives capitalists considerable political power, as Przeworski (1988) has argued.

Where capitalists act to undermine democracy, its prospects are dim. This is true not so much because capitalists have enormous power of persuasion as because of their capacity to disrupt the economy. Well established democracies can withstand lengthy economic recessions, but new democracies are unlikely to be able to do so, especially when recessions are coupled with speculative behavior, capital flight, high rates of inflation, and the panoply of other problems that beset most Latin American nations. Przeworski writes that in a democracy, "in principle, workers endowed with universal franchise can even vote to nationalize the privately owned means of production, to dissolve the armed forces, and so on" (59). Actually this statement is not true in principle or in practice. It is not true in principle because it is not generally workers who make this kind of decision, but rather executives and legislatures functioning in well defined (and sometimes even seemingly stultified) institutional and legal structures. Workers help elect those who decide, but modern mass democracy is representative democracy, not direct democracy. Consequently, even if workers did vote to nationalize the means of production, this fact in itself would have no legal effect (though it might have profound political repercussions) in democratic regimes. Moreover, even if proper legal procedures were pursued, nationalizing the means of production would almost certainly destabilize any democracy; capitalists, armies, and vast sectors of the middle class would not passively accept this measure.

Przeworski can counter that where an actor holds veto power, we are not really dealing with a democratic government, or at least not a democratic regime. Where an actor's veto power is extensive, this argument is correct. But my claim here is that in all new democracies, the military and capitalists can torpedo some decisions.

Przeworski is right that some groups can avoid accepting undesirable outcomes in authoritarian regimes, but this point, too, can be overstated. As Stepan's works show, even

military governments do things that the military-as-institution does not like. The military-as-institution may act against a particular measure, but it does not always win.

Capitalists and conservative middle-class actors often support coups in the name of order, stability, and certainty. But the certainty of authoritarian rule proves more elusive than they imagine in the praetorian pre-coup moments. Military governments often prove far less reliable than civilian groups had imagined—which, as Kaufman suggests, is one of the reasons the initial coup coalition eventually begins to disintegrate. This is so not only because policy outcomes sometimes are very different from what their formulators hoped would be the case, but also because the highly closed nature of the decision making process can produce erratic results. Decision making in authoritarian regimes is usually less institutionalized and hence in a very important sense more uncertain than in democratic regimes. This lower degree of institutionalization of the decision making process frequently has a spillover effect on outcomes, which are often more erratic and every bit as uncertain as in democratic regimes. As Conaghan (1988) has suggested, this is one of the reasons why capitalists in several Latin American countries supported a return to democracy.

Authoritarian regimes sometimes manipulate this element of uncertainty and unpredictability to instill fear and produce demobilization. Przeworski emphasizes the institutionalized character of democratic regimes, but he suggests a radical gulf between a high degree of regularity in procedures and a low degree of certainty in outcomes. Yet the gulf between procedure and outcome is not that great; in many authoritarian regimes, the lack of institutionalization of procedures can result in greater, not less, uncertainty in outcomes for a majority of actors.

Although Przeworski's argument about uncertainty has some questionable implications, it is correct in one meaningful sense. The highest ranking leaders of an authoritarian regime generally face fewer obstacles in decreeing policies than the highest leaders of a democratic government. This situation engenders greater certainty of one kind (i.e., the ability of the highest leaders to ensure that they will be able to implement their policies), but it creates uncertainty of other kinds (e.g., arbitrary decision making). Moreover, if we analyze the implementation side of policies, the differences between authoritarian and democratic governments in establishing certainty are considerably less dramatic.

On first impression, Przeworski's emphasis on uncertainty is reproduced by O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986). O'Donnell and Schmitter begin their essay with a section entitled "Introducing Uncertainty," and reiterate throughout the "extraordinary uncertainty of the transition, with its numerous surprises and difficult dilemmas" (p. 3). Later, however, they explicitly disagree (p. 67) with Przeworski's emphasis on uncertainty as the central distinguishing characteristic of democracy.¹⁰ To characterize the transition period as one of considerable

uncertainty is different from arguing that uncertainty is a central feature of democratic regimes, for in the former case the very nature of the regime is undergoing redefinition, while in the latter it is well institutionalized. During democratic transitions, the basic rules of the political game are in constant flux; indeed, actors cannot even know what the rules are. For this reason, O'Donnell and Schmitter are ultimately more convincing than Przeworski on the issue of uncertainty.

Different Modes of Democratic Transitions

To what extent do transitions follow a general pattern, as opposed to several differentiated patterns? Some important common points can be found in most contemporary transitions, but a great deal is lost if we remain only at this general level, for the dynamics in transitions differ markedly. This is not an argument for a "particularistic" strategy, of focusing only on the peculiarities of each individual case. Rather, I would call for a multiple strategy of awareness of general dynamics and problems, as well as empirical analysis of concrete cases. But there is a necessary bridge between these two domains: comparative analysis. Without neglecting general tendencies and country level specificities, it is essential to put country studies in comparative perspective and, conversely, to differentiate among kinds of transitions in more general reflections. Both tasks require thinking about the main modes of contemporary transitions.¹¹

Despite some helpful efforts, this problem has not been wholly resolved. In this section, I first look at how this issue has been addressed in the literature, then present a skeleton outline of a typology of transitions that I have found useful.

O'Donnell and Schmitter do not explicitly address this question at length, but their analysis generally differentiates between kinds of transitions. They correctly argue that the dynamics of transitions are very different in cases of "successful" as opposed to "unsuccessful" authoritarian regimes. Elsewhere, O'Donnell (forthcoming) has extended this analysis in fruitful ways. At times, however, they make general affirmations that appropriately characterize some transitions but that do not apply to others. Two examples illustrate the point.

First, they argue that liberalization and eventual democratization "involves a crucial component of mobilization and organization of large numbers of individuals" (p. 18). This may be true, but it overlooks crucial differences among transitions. In Argentina in 1982-83, mobilization occurred only after an extraordinary defeat of the authoritarian regime, and even then, surprisingly little mobilization took place in the immediate aftermath of the Falklands-Malvinas war. In a similar vein, the assertion that "political democracies are usually brought down by conspiracies involving few actors" is debatable. In Chile in 1973 and Brazil in 1964, a mass mobilization against democracy did occur.

O'Donnell and Schmitter also argue that a cycle of mobilization accompanies transitions. In early phases, the opposition is quiescent because of the massive costs of opposing authoritarian rule. But over time, liberalization enables the opposition to mobilize, and a "resurrection of civil society" takes place. Finally, after the transition follows a process of demobilization with a return to democratic normalcy. Again, however, this cycle depends on the kind of transition and on specific cases. In Argentina, in 1982-83 there was no massive mobilization following the military's bellicose adventure. Mobilization increased notably after elections were already announced, hence, after a transition was all but certain. O'Donnell and Schmitter state that "the popular upsurge during the transition is by no means a constant" (p. 54), but some of the time they write as if it were. The "enormous backlog of anger and conflict (that) accumulates during these authoritarian regimes" (p. 53) again cannot be generalized. There was no such widespread collective anger toward the Franco regime (McDonough et al. 1981; López-Pintor 1987) or toward the Brazilian regime. On the other hand, not all transitions are followed by demobilization. Argentina between 1973 and 1976 was anything but a demobilized society (see Viola 1982).

Baloyra's attempt (1987b) to construct a model of transitions is less attuned to differences among cases. He argues that regime transition is begun by the deterioration of the authoritarian government, wrongly assuming that deterioration is always a condition for initiating the process of extrication. In fact, some authoritarian regimes begin a process of liberalization at a moment of strength rather than from a position of weakness. The authoritarian regimes in Brazil, Spain, and possibly Ecuador are examples. Baloyra argues that "a collapse of the incumbent government followed by a marked discontinuity in the nature of the regime" is a necessary condition for regime transition (p. 10). This obscures crucial differences in processes of democratic transition, as well as flying in the face of much empirical evidence. Among the recent transitions in Latin America, only in Argentina can we speak of regime breakdown. The other authoritarian regimes suffered internal erosion (varying in magnitude from one case to the next), but none of them collapsed.

Baloyra developed a typology that distinguished among four patterns of democratic transitions: early-internal, delayed-external, delayed-internal, and late-external. In addition to being somewhat cumbersome, these terms are neither self-explanatory nor well explained. Baloyra says that the first two patterns are difficult to distinguish (p. 17), which means that regime transitions as radically different as those in Spain and Argentina are grouped close to one another. Conversely, transitions that differ in fundamental regards, such as those in Ecuador and Portugal, are grouped in the same category.

Morlino's typology (1987) gets us no farther. He proposes comparing democratic transitions on the basis of nine variables, ranging from the duration of the transition to the level of continuity in administrative and judiciary positions between the authoritarian and democratic

periods. The problem is that even if we measure these dimensions in a simplified polar model (high X low), with two possible rankings, we would still get 512 feasible kinds of transitions. To be useful, a typology must be more parsimonious.

Stepan's "Paths toward Redemocratization" (1986) is an ambitious attempt to conceptualize the major modes of redemocratization. Notwithstanding the chapter's comparative breadth and interesting arguments, it does not wholly succeed. The problems begin with the the notion of *redemocratization*, which is used excessively loosely. Indiscriminate use of the word *redemocratization* can obscure one of the most important differences in current political processes in Latin America: some countries really are undergoing a process of *redemocratization*, while others are for the first time having a reasonably sustained experience of polyarchy. Uruguay's democratic institutions are far more solid than those of any other country that has recently undergone a transition, and this difference stems largely from the fact that it is Latin America's outstanding example of redemocratization (Gillespie 1986; González 1988).

Stepan establishes eight (or ten, depending on how we count) paths toward redemocratization. In the first three, war and conquest play a decisive part: 1) internal restoration after external reconquest; 2) internal reformulation; 3) externally monitored installation. In the second broad category, authoritarian elites themselves initiate the move toward democratization. Stepan subdivides this category into three, but still considers it as only one path. Why these subdivisions are not considered distinct paths, as is the case with the subdivisions of redemocratization through war and conquest or through society-led transitions, is not apparent. One of the three categories, redemocratization initiated by military as government, is apparently a null set. The final four paths are all led by opposition forces: transitions caused by social upheavals, party-pact induced transitions, an organized violent revolt coordinated by democratic parties, and a Marxist-led revolution. Two of these four paths (the first and last) are null sets, and the penultimate has only one historic case—Costa Rica. Stepan indicates that most empirical cases fit into more than one path of democratization.

This panoply of paths to democracy usefully draws attention to the variety of ways in which democracies can be instituted. Nevertheless, the fact that there are so many null sets helps point to a problem: we are not consistently dealing with paths to democratization or kinds of transitions, but rather in some cases with a categorization of what forces lead different transitions. The reason why few transitions fit well into the categories is that most transitions have an interactive character. They are based on negotiations, dialogues, bluffing, and power plays among different regime and opposition forces, rather than led by a particular actor from beginning to end. This point, captured by O'Donnell and Schmitter, is generally missing from Stepan's analysis. What makes this absence surprising is that Stepan's excellent book (1988) on the military in processes of democratization in Brazil and the Southern Cone insists on this point. He shows how intrastate

conflicts have induced military leaders to seek support in civil society as a means of furthering their own project.

Share (1987) develops a four-fold typology of transitions to democracy, derived by focusing on two dimensions. “First, is the democratic transition brought about with the participation or consent of leaders of the authoritarian regime, or does it transpire without such participation or consent?” (529). The former transitions are termed consensual; the latter, nonconsensual. Second, “does the transition to democracy occur gradually, transcending a single generation of political leaders, or is it a relatively rapid phenomenon?” (530). These two dimensions produce the following two X two matrix:

Figure 1

Democratization led by or against Authoritarian Regime

	By Regime Leaders	Against Regime
Gradual	Incremental democratization	Transition through revolutionary struggle
Rapid	Transition through transaction	Transition through rupture

Following Dahl (1971), Share notes that incremental consensual democratization—the pattern followed by the early democratic nations—is increasingly implausible in the contemporary world. Among other reasons, this is because in later processes of democratization, demands for mass participation emerge simultaneously with greater competition in the political system. There are no cases of a gradual transition against the leaders of an authoritarian or oligarchic regime. Thus the category of “transition through protracted revolutionary struggle” is a null set. This means that only two remaining categories describe contemporary transitions: transition through rupture and transition through transaction. At this point, Share’s typology comes very close to distinctions made by O’Donnell forthcoming (transition by collapse versus transition by transaction); Linz 1981 (ruptura por golpe versus reforma pactada); or Martins 1986 (continuous versus discontinuous transitions).

I do not radically disagree with Share’s typology or these other distinctions, and indeed think they are on the right track. But where Stepan’s typology may be insufficiently parsimonious, Share’s is excessively parsimonious. Few of the current transitions in Latin America can be

described as cases of transition through transaction *or* transition through rupture. The Brazilian case most closely approximates the model of transition through transaction, but the regime erosion between 1982-85 led it to deviate from the paradigmatic Spanish case. The Argentine transitions of 1971-73 and 1982-83 both fit in the category of transitions through rupture. But the recent transitions in Peru, Uruguay, and probably Ecuador and the Dominican Republic do not fit either category well. The transitions in Peru and Uruguay were negotiated, and the outgoing authoritarian regimes were able to impose some basic rules over the transitions. This excludes them from the category of transitions through regime defeat. On the other hand, neither of these military governments influenced or controlled the transition process as strongly as the Spanish or Brazilian regimes. Neither of them was capable of organizing a political party that could compete in democratic elections. For these reasons, it would be misleading to classify the transitions in Peru or Uruguay in the same category as the Spanish or Brazilian transitions. Share is aware of this and seems to group the Peruvian and Uruguayan transitions in the category of “ruptures,” but this is equally inappropriate. Moreover, doing so would imply that almost every single contemporary transition would be lumped together, while three of the four ideal types would have few, if any, contemporary empirical references. This situation calls attention to the need for an intermediate category between transitions through transaction and transitions through rupture.

In comparing recent transitions in Latin America and Southern Europe, I have worked with a three-fold typology (see Mainwaring and Viola 1985; Mainwaring and Share 1986).¹² A transition through regime defeat takes place when a major defeat of an authoritarian regime, such as those suffered by Argentina in 1982-83, Portugal in 1975, and Greece in 1974, leads to the inauguration of a democratic government.¹³ Just as democratic governments face serious crises, respond inadequately to challenges, and sometimes break down, so do authoritarian governments. The processes by which they break down are varied, and such breakdowns may lead to a different form of authoritarian regime rather than a democracy. In some cases, however, regime elites hold elections and leave office as one of the ways of dealing with breakdown. Here the authoritarian leaders have little choice; they must relinquish office, given severe internal schisms and delegitimation.

At the other end of the spectrum, in a transition through transaction, the authoritarian government initiates the process of liberalization and remains a decisive actor throughout the transition. It chooses to promote measures that eventually lead to democratization. This does not imply that the opposition plays an insignificant role in the process or that the government controls the entire process. In the middle is transition through extrication; an authoritarian government is weakened, but not as thoroughly as in a transition by defeat. It is able to negotiate crucial features of the transition, though in a position of less strength than in cases of transition through transaction.

Figure 2 below outlines these three possibilities.

Figure 2

Paths from Liberalization to Democratization: A Typology of Contemporary Transitions to Democracy

- I. Transition through transaction: the authoritarian regime chooses to continue opening the political system because:
 - A) The costs of staying in power increase and/or the costs of liberalizing decrease
 - 1) The costs of staying in power increase because of:
 - a) a succession crisis
 - b) declining military cohesion
 - c) declining legitimacy
 - 2) The costs of democratizing decrease because of:
 - a) elimination of perceived threat
 - b) stability of socio-economic order
 - B) The initial idea was to intervene in a crisis situation and restore democracy after a short interlude
- II. Transition through extrication: the authoritarian regime is weakened, but remains strong enough to dictate important terms of the transition
- III. Transition through regime defeat: the authoritarian regime collapses

The underlying idea of this typology is to indicate differential positions of power in the negotiations, dialogue, power plays, and other interactions that characterize all contemporary transitions. This typology underscores decisive differences in how much authoritarian regimes influence the transition process. The three-fold typology developed out of my conviction that two-fold typologies did not do justice to the important intermediary category of transitions through extrication. As noted above, neither the category of transition through transaction, nor that of transition through rupture, captures the reality of most recent transitions in Latin America. Of course, one could object that all transitions are different and that ideal types never do justice to reality. But this kind of objection leads to vacuous empiricism, for it denies all possibility of categorization. Alternatively, one could claim that three categories are still too few—but at a certain point, the inevitable tradeoff between parsimony and completeness tips in the other direction.

Transitions through transaction are especially noteworthy because of the element of choice by government leaders. It seems paradoxical that an authoritarian government would pursue policies that could lead to its own extinction, but some regime leaders may perceive important benefits in doing so (Mainwaring and Share 1986; Stepan 1988). The conscious choice of a government to promote democratization can be understood in terms of the costs and benefits of authoritarian rule. As Dahl (1971: 15) put it, "The more the costs of suppression exceed the costs of toleration, the greater the chance for a competitive regime." Or to state it slightly differently, the perceived costs of staying in power increase and/or the perceived costs of undertaking democratization decrease.

The perceived costs of staying in power might increase for three principal reasons (Mainwaring and Share 1986). A succession crisis can unleash grave difficulties for an authoritarian regime. Succession rules are clearly spelled out in democratic regimes, but this is usually not the case in authoritarian regimes. This fact in itself makes succession a more difficult problem for authoritarian regimes to face. In addition, most authoritarian regimes are "top-heavy" in the decision making process; the president and a few close associates make most of the weighty decisions. The histories of many authoritarian regimes are integrally connected to a single personality. Often, this individual is the only person who can maintain the authoritarian coalition intact. This may be because of his/her particular political skills, or because no one else has the trust of the major actors who support the authoritarian coalition, or both. Leadership succession tends to be most complicated in cases where a single leader has ruled for a long time and where he/she enjoys charismatic legitimacy among some decisive political actors. But almost without exception, succession poses serious problems for authoritarian regimes. It is not rare for authoritarian regimes to collapse when a ruler dies or appears likely to die in the immediate future. Alternatively, the difficulties created by succession may lead new incumbents to decide that remaining in power is likely to be too costly.

Military regimes generally face tensions that can lead them to withdraw from office. In particular, there is almost invariably some tension between the military as government and the military as institution. The military as institution strives to remain above politics and to keep intact the professionalism and unity of the armed forces. The military as government, conversely, involves the military in politics, albeit to varying degrees. Political differences within the military as government or between it and the military as institution can cause troublesome divisions within the armed forces. Military leaders may opt for leaving office as a means of reducing these divisions.

Finally, declining legitimacy can increase the costs of staying in power. In the post-World War II era, authoritarian regimes have lacked a stable legitimizing formula in the western world. It is common for authoritarian regimes to justify their actions in the name of furthering some democratic

cause. This justification may be plausible to some sectors of the nation, and it may help win legitimacy for a limited period of time. But appealing to safeguarding democracy is a two-edged sword for authoritarian governments, for their very appeals eventually call attention to the hiatus between their discourse and their practice.

Most authoritarian governments initially seek a kind of “negative legitimacy”: they are against chaos, corruption, eroding moral values, inflation, and communism. In praetorian moments, such appeals can have considerable success; arguably, what a majority of citizens most want from government is stability. Yet negative legitimacy formulae are almost inherently unstable in the contemporary western world. If a government “restores order” in the economy and the polity, the problems that legitimated military intervention no longer exist. If it fails to restore order, its inability to deal with the “threats” to the nation can suggest that it is no more effective than the civilian government that preceded it. Garretón (1986) termed this initial phase a “reactive” period and noted the unstable bases of such appeals.

The costs of democratization for an authoritarian regime can decrease for two main reasons. First and most important, if the regime has defeated the “subversive” threat that challenged the dominant order, reestablishing a more open political system does not seem threatening. In many South American cases, the military wiped out guerrilla organizations, thereby eliminating the biggest “enemy.” In most cases, the left that survived began to eschew violent revolution as an ideal, so the prospect of revolutionary upheaval became dim. Second, if in addition the military has managed some economic successes, the prospect of economic chaos seems remote. This is especially so if the economy has done well over a period of time.

A special case of regimes that initiate political liberalization deserves separate mention. Sometimes coups have responded to an immediate sense of threat, and military leaders actively plan to return power to civilians within a delimited period of time. This is the “moderating pattern” of which Stepan (1971) wrote; it has been common in Brazil. These military governments never seriously entertain the possibility of staying in power for a long time.

Many authoritarian rulers may perceive compelling advantages in relinquishing power and may imagine that they can reproduce the Spanish or Brazilian path. In most cases, this perception is an illusion, because this kind of transition requires conditions that few authoritarian regimes meet (Mainwaring and Share 1986; Share 1987). In particular, in order to effect a transition through transaction, an authoritarian regime must have a high level of support in civil society. Ironically, however, when authoritarian governments have considerable support they generally resist making changes. Most authoritarian governments undertake changes only in response to crises, when controlling the major contours of a transition is extremely difficult, given conspicuous defections from the regime and a bolstering of the opposition.

Socio-Economic Conditions, Political Factors, and Democracy

For as long as they have analyzed democracy, social scientists have argued about the conditions that facilitate this kind of political regime. Here I address only one side of this debate: the relative importance of socio-economic conditions and of political factors in the strict sense. These two factors do not exhaust the myriad approaches to studying democracy, but they have had considerable weight. Arguably the most important dividing line in contemporary work on democracy is between those who see it primarily as a result of propitious economic, social, or cultural conditions, and those who see it primarily as a result of political institutions, processes, and leadership.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the dominant trend in political science was to emphasize the socio-economic, structural, or cultural requisites of democracy. These approaches have subsequently been criticized (for example, Barry 1978: 47-98), and in the past two decades, political science has generally emphasized the autonomy of political factors more than it did in the 1950s and 1960s. Among Latin Americanists, this change toward greater focus on political variables came about somewhat later and is less pronounced. In the second half of the 1960s and first half of the 1970s, the dependency and the bureaucratic-authoritarian paradigms were prominent; both saw politics primarily as derivative. This is not to argue that the formulators of these paradigms saw politics as unimportant, or that they disregarded the value of democracy. Rather, it means that they saw politics as primarily determined by the broader socio-economic system and by international variables. Both paradigms have been widely criticized, in part *because* they tended to see politics as derivative.

Increasingly, social scientists who study Latin America have emphasized the autonomy of political factors. Democracy has been seen more as a product of political elites and arrangements, electoral and party systems, than of a level of modernization, a mode of interaction with the international system, or a form of social structure. Only the naive would argue that these latter factors are insignificant, but the emphasis has shifted somewhat. González (1988), Lamounier (1979b), Levine (1973), Linz (1973), Santos (1987), A. Valenzuela (1978), and A. Valenzuela and J.S. Valenzuela (1983), among others, have contributed to this redefinition of the field. There is something of a “new institutionalism” in the study of Latin American politics,¹⁴ just as there is in political science in general (March and Olsen 1984).

Where does the present literature on democratic transitions fit in? The dominant trend is toward greater emphasis on the autonomy of politics with respect to social structure and class. Several authors in the O'Donnell/Schmitter/Whitehead volume were leading contributors to the earlier dependency and bureaucratic-authoritarian paradigms: Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Julio Cotler, Luciano Martins, O'Donnell himself. All of them have reformulated their understanding of

democracy somewhat over the years. All emphasize the autonomy of politics more than they did in years past.

Among recent works that have underscored socio-economic factors that make democracy possible, those of Karl (1986a) and Seligson (1987a and 1987b) are representative. Karl's well crafted piece seeks to establish a balance between socio-economic and political factors, but it probably overstates the extent to which Venezuelan democracy was dependent on petroleum revenue. Mexico benefitted from enormous oil wealth in the 1970s, but did not evolve into a democratic polity. Only now, with the economy in shambles, has real political competition emerged. Argentina has long met some basic structural conditions generally conducive to democracy, but has not managed to create a stable democracy. Finally, Venezuelan democracy has withstood a severe and protracted economic crisis in the 1980s. Karl is not oblivious to these facts but assigns greater weight to oil's importance than I would. Several works by Levine (1973, 1978, 1989) provide an alternative explanation of democracy in Venezuela, focusing more on the attitudes and behavior of political elites and parties. Levine recognizes the importance of oil in Venezuelan politics, but assigns it a less decisive role than Karl does. Karl (1986a) criticized Levine's book (1973) for understating the importance of oil in the construction of Venezuelan democracy; Levine's recent article (1989) pays more attention to oil than his book did.

Seligson's two chapters in *Authoritarians and Democrats* argue that the rapid economic growth much of Latin America experienced in the 1960s and 1970s helps explain why the 1980s have been a decade of democracy. Essentially following Lipset (1959), Seligson affirms that a minimal level of economic development is a necessary but not sufficient condition for democracy. Operationally, he focuses on two measures that indicate a crucial threshold below which democracy does not work: a per capita income of \$250 in 1957 dollars and a literacy rate of 50%.

The high correlation between level of economic development and democracy has been noted by many authors (Lipset 1959; Dahl 1971; Bollen 1979; Huntington 1984) and is beyond dispute. Nevertheless, the manner in which Seligson formulates his arguments is debatable. Despite the strong correlation between per capita GNP or literacy and democracy, the case of India suggests that there is no *necessary* minimal threshold. Conversely, the fact that three of the countries with the highest literacy rates and GNPs per capita in Latin America—Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay—suffered authoritarian involutions in the 1960s and 1970s is troublesome for his argument. Seligson does not claim that economic development and literacy are sufficient conditions for democracy, but in Latin America the fit between GNP or literacy and democracy is terrible. This notably poor fit led to O'Donnell's formulation (1973) that at a certain stage in industrialization, the more developed countries might be subject to greater pressures toward authoritarianism than the intermediate ones. O'Donnell's book has been criticized on other scores, (see Cammack 1985; Collier 1979; Linz 1975; Remmer and Merx 1982), but his

argument about the weak correlation between modernization and democracy in Latin America has endured. Coulter (1975) showed that on a global level, this correlation was strong, but that in Latin America it did not exist. Finally, Seligson's own data (Figure 8.5) contradict his assertion that Central America has reached the minimal threshold necessary for democracy.¹⁵ Today, only Guatemala and Costa Rica are above the threshold; with the protracted wars, both El Salvador and Nicaragua have slipped below it.

The level of aggregate development is an important factor in supporting democracy, but it is only one of several such factors. The sequence of economic development also appears to matter,¹⁶ as do degrees of inequality (see Dahl 1971 and Stephens 1987). Political arrangements (the party system, the electoral regime, a presidential or parliamentary system) can have a decisive impact on prospects for democracy. González (1988), Linz (1984), and A. Valenzuela (1978, 1985) have made original contributions in this line of analysis in recent years. Lijphart (1984) makes apparent that no single institutional arrangement is necessary for democracy, but it still seems plausible that some arrangements are more conducive than others. In a different vein, Sartori (1976) calls attention to the crucial importance of party systems in the functioning of democracy. Levine (1973), Rustow (1955 and 1970), and once again Dahl (1971) and Linz (1978) have underscored the fundamental weight of elite values and/or behavior in the consolidation of democratic regimes, a point I discussed earlier. Hartlyn (1988) emphasized elite pacts in this same process.

This is not to argue that socio-economic conditions are not important in assessing prospects for democracy; there is massive evidence that they are. But unfortunately, the best explanations of what makes democracy work are not very parsimonious. Socio-economic conditions, political arrangements and institutions, and cultural patterns and ideas all weigh in making democracy viable.¹⁷ This is not to make the vapid argument that everything matters; such a perspective leads nowhere. Dahl's *Polyarchy* (1971) exemplifies a clear formulation, with reasonably parsimonious yet not simplistic explanations. This is what we should all strive for.

The Methodology of Studying Democratic Transitions

How should we study democratic transitions? The question is vast, and several aspects of it have already been addressed implicitly. Here I wish to focus on a methodological issue of considerable importance in our understanding of transitions: whether studying transitions requires a different method from studying a stable regime type. This issue emerges most conspicuously in differences between O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) and Levine (1988). Central to O'Donnell and Schmitter's argument is the contention that studying democratic transitions requires a different method from studying democratic processes. Central to Levine's

criticism (1988) of their argument is the assertion that this contention is wrong. My own position is that both sides are correct on one aspect of the question, but mistaken on another.

O'Donnell and Schmitter begin their discussion of transitions by underscoring the high level of uncertainty and indeterminacy. They insist on

the high degree of indeterminacy embedded in situations where unexpected events (*fortuna*), insufficient information, hurried and audacious choices, confusion about motives and interests, plasticity, and even indefiniteness of political identities, as well as the talents of specific individuals (*virtù*) are frequently decisive in determining the outcomes... The short-term political calculations we stress here cannot be 'deduced' from or 'imputed' to such structures (1986: 5).

Elsewhere, the authors claim that this indeterminacy, this uncertainty, the importance of choice, distinguishes transitions from "normal" political circumstances. Under most conditions, choice is less of an element of politics; political life is more closely bounded by structural factors. They argue that there is an asymmetry between the processes that lead to the demise of democratic governments and those that lead to transitions from authoritarian rule to democracy. "Hope, opportunity, choice, incorporation of new actors, shaping and renewal of political identities, inventiveness—these and many other characteristics of the politics of the transition stand in sharp contrast to the mode and tone of politics in the periods preceding the breakdown of democratic regimes" (p. 19).

Levine takes O'Donnell and Schmitter to task for distinguishing so sharply between the study of transitions and the study of democracy. He argues that the proper study of transitions must be rooted in an understanding of democracy. "(P)redominant or exclusive attention to transitions will not suffice. Full understanding requires that study of transitions to democracy be rooted in consideration of democracy's own characteristic motivations, organizational resources, and operative patterns of leadership and legitimacy... (O'Donnell and Schmitter) reveal an empirical focus more concerned with transitions than with either authoritarianism or democracy" (1988: 377, 385).

Levine's assertion that O'Donnell and Schmitter are primarily concerned with transitions rather than authoritarianism or democracy is indisputable, as the authors themselves recognize. The question is whether such a focus is warranted. I think it is, for two principal reasons. First, transition processes constitute an interesting and important subject in their own right; there is no reason not to focus on them. Adequate analysis of transitional periods does require an understanding of authoritarianism and democracy, as Levine argues, but both O'Donnell and Schmitter have contributed to such understanding. Second, O'Donnell and Schmitter's claim that transition processes are different from political processes under an institutionalized authoritarian regime or a consolidated democratic regime is compelling. A fundamental characteristic of a consolidated democratic regime is that the rules of the game are widely known and accepted. The

rules of the game are often not as clear in authoritarian regimes; many such regimes use uncertainty about the rules as a means of reinforcing fear. Nevertheless, in a stable authoritarian regime, the major political actors attempt to conform to what they perceive as the dominant rules of the game. In contrast, in a transition period the rules are in constant flux; they are neither widely known nor widely accepted. Sharp change in the rules is unusual (though possible) in consolidated democracies; it is common in transition processes.

The dominant actors in democratic politics are not always important in transition periods, and conversely the actors who are important in transition periods are not always central to democratic politics. For example, parties and elections are essential in understanding democratic politics, but they may be secondary during the transition phase. Among recent transitions in Latin America, the Brazilian case is the only one in which both parties and elections played a major role from the beginning of the transition, though plebiscites were important in Uruguay and Chile. By the time elections are called, parties invariably become important actors, but in numerous cases they appear relatively late on the scene of transition politics. Conversely, the military has consistently been a dominant force in transition politics and has remained an unfortunately obtrusive actor in the new democracies, but in consolidated democracies becomes considerably less conspicuous.

The other question revolves around the more specific issue of choice and leadership in politics. I agree with Levine that not only transitions, but all politics—democratic, transitional, authoritarian—involves choice. O'Donnell and Schmitter are generally right in suggesting that there is a big difference between analyzing transitional politics and stable democracies, but on this particular issue they overstate the differences. There is nothing extraordinary about the fact that the choices, leadership abilities, and predilections of political leaders can affect the outcome of transition processes. Linz (1978) compellingly argued that this is also the case in processes of democratic breakdown. It is equally true in new democracies, in which the battles to define the rules are ongoing. Only in well institutionalized democracies does the element of choice become slightly less important, and then only in specific ways: radical change (whether substantive or in the rules of the game) is less likely. In highly institutionalized political systems, choice, strategies, and leadership are of crucial importance, but choice is usually less comprehensive in the sense that it does not involve making the basic rules of the game—as it does during transition periods. Leadership is generally a residual category for analysis because it is difficult to formulate non-tautological, rigorous arguments about it. In terms of impact on politics, however, it is very far from being residual.

None of this is to imply that choices are not bounded by structural factors; they obviously are. But it is simply not clear that what O'Donnell and Schmitter term “normal” political processes (p. 5) involve radically less choice and radically more determination by structural factors.

Conclusion

In the past decade, the volume of literature analyzing democratic transitions and democratic processes in Latin America has far outstripped anything produced in the past. Latin Americans and Latin Americanists have produced works on democracy that have received attention throughout the entire western world, and in many countries beyond the West. They did groundbreaking work on transitions to democracy, and have also contributed important works on democratic processes.

One of the results of the quantity and quality of work on these subjects is that a rich debate has emerged on several important issues. Until now, however, these debates have generally been inchoate. Because the transition phase is over and democratic governments are now in place, it is predictable that fewer people will write about democratic transitions as they turn their attention to the new democratic processes. But it would be unfortunate to simply forget about the interesting issues in the transitions literature, especially because, as I have implied throughout this paper, they have strong implications for the analysis of democratic processes as well. It is precisely at this point when a considerable amount has been written that an overview of the issues and debates can be most valuable. That is what I hoped to do in this effort to flush out several debates in the literature and to challenge influential writings on some issues.

Notes

- 1 Although I am not suggesting that prospects for democratic consolidation are uniformly or even generally good, this point can be obscured by those who speak of cycles of authoritarianism and democracy in Latin America. It is true that Latin America has experienced several cycles of authoritarianism and democracy in the past; see Chalmers (1977) for one explanation of this phenomenon. However, until the 1980s, authoritarian regimes and oligarchic pre-democratic regimes consistently prevailed except for short interregnums.
- 2 The current longevity of the new democracies in Latin America owes more to this change among intellectuals than is generally recognized. Latin American intellectuals have considerable influence in parties of the left and center-left, as well as in a wide amalgam of social movements. Their shift from the dependency to the democratic paradigm helps explain the current longevity of democratic governments as much as this longevity explains the interest of intellectuals in democracy. At other points in Latin American history, it is doubtful that democratic governments could have withstood such dismal public policy performances.
- 3 Although I agree with Schumpeter's critique of idealized conceptions of democracy, this does not mean that I agree with all aspects of his own conception. Schumpeter wrote (p. 287) that democracy "forces upon the men at or near the helm a short-run view and makes it extremely difficult for them to serve such long-run interests of the nation as may require consistent work for far-off ends." In itself, this statement is unobjectionable, but there is no evidence that democracy holds a monopoly on myopic politicians; authoritarian leaders can be equally, if not more, short-sighted. Also, Schumpeter generally understates the importance of mechanisms of accountability in democratic politics. For a discussion of Schumpeter's definition of democracy, see J. S. Valenzuela (1985: 22-35).
- 4 This requirement cannot be applied to regimes usually considered democratic in the period before women won the right to vote. It creates a troublesome issue in a case like Switzerland in which women won the suffrage late: was Switzerland not a democracy because women could not vote? This problem underscores the difficulty of developing an all-encompassing definition of democracy; on the other hand, we cannot flee from definitions simply because they are difficult.
- 5 A caveat is necessary because of the U.S. electoral college and mechanisms such as those in Argentina, Bolivia, and Chile that provide that congress elect the president if there is not an absolute majority in the first round of the popular vote. However, none of these mechanisms systematically favor one party over another; they are not intended to thwart popular preferences.
- 6 Scholars will disagree about some countries, with Nicaragua being a controversial case in some circles, and El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras in others. For an example of the argument that Nicaragua is democratic, see Stahler-Sholk (1987), who builds on a definition of democracy different from the one employed here.
- 7 Linz (1978: 16-23) properly insists that "the relationships between these variables (legitimacy, efficacy, and effectiveness) are far from fully transitive and lineal, since perception of the efficacy and effectiveness of a regime tends to be biased by the initial commitments to its legitimacy" (18).
- 8 Weber is not consistent on this point. At times he seems to imply that obedience through tradition does not constitute legitimacy. He affirms that "an order which is adhered to from

motives of pure expediency is generally much less stable than one upheld on a purely customary basis through the fact that the corresponding behavior has become habitual... But even this type of order is in turn much less stable than an order which enjoys the prestige of being considered binding, or, as it may be expressed, of 'legitimacy'" (31). Elsewhere, however, he argues that "actors may ascribe legitimacy to a social order by virtue of tradition: valid is that which has always been" (36). Here, as in most of his work, he argues that unquestioning adherence to tradition constitutes a form of legitimacy.

- 9 This is why Przeworski (1985) insists on a materialistic reading of Gramsci's notion of hegemony. I am skeptical about this reading, which undercuts one of Gramsci's most important contributions to Marxist thought and contemporary social science: the ideological and cultural bases of hegemony. It is impossible to understand Gramsci's concern with religion, education, and culture on the basis of a materialistic notion of hegemony.
- 10 O'Donnell and Schmitter seem to be somewhat inconsistent on this point. Elsewhere (p. 11) they agree with Przeworski's argument that uncertainty is a central feature of democracy. "As Adam Przeworski argues in his chapter, democracy institutionalizes uncertainty."
- 11 I emphasize contemporary transitions. By this, I exclude the generally protracted transitions from oligarchic regimes to modern mass democracies that occurred in the United States, Canada, and northern Europe during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The reason for excluding these cases is that they would be impossible to reproduce in the contemporary setting. See Therborn (1977) for a broader typology of paths to democracy.
- 12 For a thoughtful criticism, not of this typology as a whole, but of its applicability to Brazil, see Diniz (1985). Commenting upon Mainwaring and Viola (1985) and an early draft of Mainwaring and Share (1986), she argued that we overstated the control the Brazilian authoritarian regime exercised over the transition process. Share and I benefitted from her comments and in revisions insisted more on the fluid nature of all transitions. We also appropriately renamed this category "transition through transaction" rather than "transition from above."
- 13 One of the problems of parsimonious classifications is apparent here; the category of transitions initiated with regime defeats is somewhat heterogeneous. Stepan's discussion (1986) of three paths in which warfare and conquest play a major role usefully disaggregates this category.
- 14 Jonathan Hartlyn observed to me that the "new institutionalism" in the study of Latin American politics resembles the "old institutionalism" in American politics. The "new institutionalism" in Latin America has some precursors, especially in the study of Venezuelan politics, where attention to institutions is well established. However, even in Chile and Uruguay, political institutions had never received widespread scholarly attention until recently.
- 15 Seligson uses 1957 dollars for his minimum threshold, while Figure 8.5 reports 1950 dollars. Even if the table were adjusted to 1957 dollars, it appears unlikely that El Salvador and Nicaragua would reach the minimum threshold of \$250 per capita.
- 16 Bollen (1979) argues that sequence is not too important. He takes only one year (1965) and shows that at that particular juncture, there was a strong positive correlation between democracy and GNP, and only a very weak correlation between democracy and timing of development. This approach has two problems. First, because he focuses on one year, the method does not allow him to examine the question of *stable* democracy. Second, if GNP is the critical variable, then we should compare the GNPs (in fixed dollars) of non-democratic countries with those of established democracies at the period of democratic instauration, not at the present. Collier (1975) argued that timing of development had an independent impact on democracy; the late developing countries within Latin America were less likely to be democratic.

- 17 I am aware that emphasizing cultural patterns runs counter to some trends in the transitions literature and in democratic theory in general. At a minimum, what I have in mind is something akin to Dahl's (1971) analysis of the beliefs of political elites, Hirschman's (1979) emphasis on how ideology affects development models and politics, and Weber's insistence (1958) on the importance of ideas in history. Broader cultural patterns also have their importance, but their impact is more difficult to weigh. See Scott (1985) and DaMatta (1985) for interesting contributions to this question.

References

- Baloyra, Enrique, ed. 1987a. *Comparing New Democracies: Transition and Consolidation in Mediterranean Europe and the Southern Cone*. Boulder: Westview.
- Baloyra, Enrique. 1987b. "Democratic Transition in Comparative Perspective." In Baloyra, ed., *Comparing New Democracies*, pp. 9-52.
- Barry, Brian. 1978. *Sociologists, Economists and Democracy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bollen, Kenneth. 1979. "Political Democracy and the Timing of Development." *American Sociological Review* 44 (August), pp. 572-587.
- Bresser Pereira, Luis Carlos. 1984. "Os Limites da 'Abertura' e a Sociedade Civil." *CEDEC Cadernos Contribuições* No. 4.
- Cammack, Paul. 1985. "The Political Economy of Contemporary Military Regimes in Latin America: From Bureaucratic Authoritarianism to Restructuring." In Philip O'Brien and Paul Cammack, eds., *Generals in Retreat*, pp. 1-36. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Cavarozzi, Marcelo. 1983. *Autoritarismo y democracia (1955-1983)*. Buenos Aires: Centro Editor.
- _____. 1986. "Political Cycles in Argentina since 1955." In O'Donnell et al., eds., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, part 2, pp. 19-48.
- Chalmers, Douglas. 1977. "The Politicized State in Latin America." In James Malloy, ed., *Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Latin America*, pp. 23-46. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh.
- Chalmers, Douglas, and Craig Robinson. 1982. "Why Power Contenders Choose Liberalization." *International Studies Quarterly* 26 (March), pp. 3-36.
- Collier, David. 1975. "Timing of Economic Growth and Regime Characteristics in Latin America." *Comparative Politics* 7 (April), pp. 331-360.
- _____, ed. 1979. *The New Authoritarianism in Latin America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Conaghan, Catherine. 1985. "Democracy by Attrition: Parties, Civil Society, and Political Order in Ecuador." Paper for the Conference on Redemocratization in Latin America, University of Pittsburgh, March 28-30.
- _____. 1987. "Party Politics and Democratization in Ecuador." In Malloy and Seligson, eds., *Authoritarians and Democrats*, pp. 145-163.
- _____. 1988. "Capitalists, Technocrats, and Politicians: Economic Policy-Making and Democracy in the Central Andes." Kellogg Institute Working Paper #109 (May).
- Cortázar, René. 1987. "La no transición a la democracia en Chile y el plebiscito de 1988." *Estudios CIEPLAN* 22 (December), pp. 111-128.
- Coulter, Phillip. 1975. *Social Mobilization and Liberal Democracy*. Lexington: Heath.
- Coutinho, Carlos Nelson. 1980. *A Democracia como Valor Universal*. São Paulo: Ciências Humanas.
- Dahl, Robert. 1956. *A Preface to Democracy Theory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- _____. 1961. *Who Governs?* New Haven: Yale University Press.
- _____. 1971. *Polyarchy*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- DaMatta, Roberto. 1985. *A Casa e a Rua*. São Paulo: Brasiliense.
- Diniz, Eli. 1985. "A Transição Política no Brasil: Uma Reavaliação da Dinâmica da Abertura." *Dados* 28, No. 3, pp. 329-346.
- Garretón, Manuel Antonio. 1986. "Political Processes in an Authoritarian Regime: The Dynamics of Institutionalization and Opposition in Chile, 1973-1980." In J. Samuel Valenzuela and Arturo Valenzuela, eds., *Military Rule in Chile: Dictatorship and Opposition*, pp. 144-183. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Gillespie, Charles. 1986. "Uruguay's Transition from Collegial Military-Technocratic Rule." In O'Donnell et al., eds., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, part 2, pp. 173-195.
- González, Luis. 1988. "Political Structures and the Prospects for Democracy in Uruguay." Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University.
- Hagopian, Frances, and Scott Mainwaring. 1987. "Democracy in Brazil: Prospects and Problems." *World Policy Journal* IV, pp. 485-514.
- Hartlyn, Jonathan. 1988. *The Politics of Coalition Rule in Colombia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hirschman, Albert. 1979. "The Turn to Authoritarianism in Latin America and the Search for Its Economic Determinants." In Collier, ed., *The New Authoritarianism in Latin America*, pp. 61-98.
- _____. 1987. "The Political Economy of Latin American Development: Seven Exercises in Retrospection." *Latin American Research Review* 22, No. 3, pp. 7-36.
- Huntington, Samuel. 1968. *Political Order in Changing Societies*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- _____. 1984. "Will More Countries Become Democratic?" *Political Science Quarterly* 99 (Summer), pp. 193-218.

- Karl, Terry Lynn. 1986a. "Petroleum and Political Pacts: The Transition to Democracy in Venezuela." In O'Donnell, et al. eds., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, part 2, pp. 196-219.
- _____. 1986b. "Imposing Consent? Electoralism Vs Democratization in El Salvador." In Paul Drake and Eduardo Silva, eds., *Elections and Democratization in Latin America, 1980-1985*, pp. 9-36. San Diego: University of California.
- _____. 1986c. "Democracy by Design: The Christian Democratic Party in El Salvador." In Giuseppe Di Palma and Laurence Whitehead, eds., *The Central American Impasse*, pp. 195-217. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Kaufman, Robert. 1986. "Liberalization and Democratization in South America: Perspectives from the 1970s." In O'Donnell et al., eds., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, part 3, pp. 85-107.
- Lamounier, Bolivar. 1979a. "O Discurso e o Processo Da Distensão às Opções do Regime Brasileiro." In Henrique Rattner, ed., *Brasil 1990: Caminhos Alternativos do Desenvolvimento*, pp. 88-120. São Paulo: Brasiliense.
- _____. 1979b. "Representação Política: A Importância de Certos Formalismos." In Lamounier, Francisco Weffort, and Maria Victoria Benevides, eds., *Direito, Cidadania e Participação*, pp. 230-257. São Paulo: Tao.
- Levine, Daniel. 1973. *Conflict and Political Change in Venezuela*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- _____. 1978. "Venezuela since 1958: The Consolidation of Democratic Politics." In Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, eds., *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes*, pp. 82-109. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- _____. 1988. "Paradigm Lost: From Dependency to Democracy." *World Politics* 40, pp. 377-394.
- _____. 1989. "Venezuela: The Nature, Sources, and Future Prospects of Democracy." In Larry Diamond, Juan Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset, eds., *Democracy in Developing Countries*, Vol. 4, pp. 247-289. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
- Lijphart, Arend. 1977. *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- _____. 1984. *Democracies*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Linz, Juan. 1973. "The Future of an Authoritarian Situation or the Institutionalization of an Authoritarian Regime." In Alfred Stepan, ed., *Authoritarian Brazil: Origins, Policies, and Future*, pp. 233-254. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- _____. 1975. "Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes." In Fred Greenstein and Nelson Polsby, eds., *Handbook of Political Science*, pp. 175-411. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- _____. 1978. *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown, and Reequilibration*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- _____. 1981. "Some Comparative Thoughts on the Transition to Democracy in Portugal and Spain." In Jorge Braga de Macedo and Simon Serfaty, eds., *Portugal Since the Revolution: Economic and Political Perspectives*, pp. 25-45. Westview: Boulder.

- _____. 1984. "Democracy: Presidential or Parliamentary. Does It Make a Difference?" Unpublished paper.
- Lipset, Seymour Martin. 1959. "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy." *American Political Science Review* 53, pp. 69-105.
- López-Pintor, Rafael. 1987. "Mass and Elite Perspectives in the Process of Transition to Democracy." In Baloyra, ed., *Comparing New Democracies*, pp. 79-106.
- Mainwaring, Scott, and Donald Share. 1986. "Transitions through Transaction: Democratization in Brazil and Spain." In Wayne Selcher, ed., *Political Liberalization in Brazil*, pp. 175-215. Boulder: Westview.
- Mainwaring, Scott, and Eduardo Viola. 1985. "Transitions to Democracy: Brazil and Argentina in the 1980s." *Journal of International Affairs* 38 (Winter), pp. 193-219.
- Malloy, James. 1987. "The Politics of Transition in Latin America." In Malloy and Seligson, eds., *Authoritarians and Democrats*, pp. 235-258.
- Malloy, James, and Eduardo Gamarra. 1987. "The Transition to Democracy in Bolivia." In Malloy and Seligson, eds., *Authoritarians and Democrats*, pp. 93-120.
- Malloy, James, and Mitchell Seligson, eds. 1987. *Authoritarians and Democrats: Regime Transition in Latin America*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- March, James, and Johan Olsen. 1984. "The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life." *American Political Science Review* 78 (September), pp. 734-749.
- Martins, Luciano. 1986. "The 'Liberalization' of Authoritarian Rule in Brazil." In O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead, eds., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, Part 2, pp. 72-94.
- McDonough, Peter, et al. 1981. "The Spanish Public in Political Transition." *British Journal of Political Science* 11, pp. 49-79.
- Michels, Robert. 1959. *Political Parties*. New York: Dover.
- Moisés, José Alvaro. 1986. "Sociedade Civil, Cultura Política e Democracia: Descaminhos da Transição Política." In Maria de Lourdes Covre, ed., *A Cidadania que não Temos*, pp. 119-150. São Paulo: Brasiliense.
- Morlino, Leonardo. 1987. "Democratic Establishments: A Dimensional Analysis." In Baloyra, ed., *Comparing New Democracies*, pp. 53-78.
- Nun, José, and Juan Carlos Portantiero, eds. 1987. *Ensayos sobre la transición democrática en la Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Puntosur.
- O'Donnell, Guillermo. 1973. *Modernization and Bureaucratic Authoritarianism*. Berkeley: Institute of International Studies.
- _____. 1979a. "Notas para el estudio de procesos de democratización política a partir del estado burocrático-autoritario." *Estudios CEDES*, Vol. 2, no. 5.
- _____. 1979b. "Tensions in the Bureaucratic-Authoritarian State and the Question of Democracy." In Collier, ed., *The New Authoritarianism in Latin America*, pp. 285-318.
- _____. 1982. *El estado burocrático-autoritario, 1966-1973: Triunfos, derrotas y crisis*. Buenos Aires: Editorial del Belgrano.

- _____. 1984. "¿Y a mí, que me importa?: Notas sobre sociabilidad y política en Argentina y Brasil." Kellogg Institute Working Paper #9, University of Notre Dame (January).
- _____. 1986. "Introduction to the Latin American Cases." In O'Donnell *et al.*, eds., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, Part 2, pp. 3-18.
- _____. 1988. "Transições, Continuidades e Alguns Paradoxos." In Fábio Wanderley Reis and Guillermo O'Donnell, eds., *A Democracia no Brasil: Dilemas e Perspectivas*, pp. 41-71. São Paulo: Vértice.
- _____. Forthcoming. "Transitions to Democracy: Some Navigation Instruments." In Robert Pastor, ed., *Democracy in the Americas: The Swing of the Pendulum*. New York: Holmes and Meier.
- O'Donnell, Guillermo, and Philippe Schmitter. 1986. "Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies." In O'Donnell *et al.*, eds., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, Part 4, pp. 1-78.
- O'Donnell, Guillermo, Philippe Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead, eds. 1986. *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Prospects for Democracy*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Ollier, Maria Matilde. 1986. *El fenómeno insurreccional y la cultura política (1969-1973)*. Buenos Aires: Centro Editor.
- Packenhams, Robert. 1986. "The Changing Political Discourse in Brazil." In Wayne Selcher, ed., *Political Liberalization in Brazil: Dynamics, Dilemmas, and Future Prospects*, pp. 135-173. Boulder: Westview.
- Peeler, John. 1985. *Latin American Democracies*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Pizzorno, Alessandro. 1985. "On the Rationality of Democratic Choice." *Telos* 64 (Spring), pp. 41-69.
- Przeworski, Adam. 1985. *Capitalism and Social Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- _____. 1986. "Some Problems in the Study of the Transition to Democracy." In O'Donnell *et al.*, eds., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, Part 3, pp. 47-63.
- _____. 1988. "Democracy as a Contingent Outcome of Conflicts." In Jon Elster, ed., *Constitutionalism and Democracy*, pp. 59-80. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Reis, Fábio Wanderley. 1988. "Partidos, Ideologia e Consolidação Democrática." In Fábio Wanderley Reis and Guillermo O'Donnell, eds., *A Democracia no Brasil: Dilemas e Perspectivas*, pp. 296-326. São Paulo: Vértice.
- Remmer, Karen, and Gilbert Merkx. 1982. "Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism Revisited." *Latin American Research Review* 17, No. 2, pp. 3-40.
- Rustow, Dankwart. 1955. *The Politics of Compromise: A Study of Parties and Cabinet Government in Sweden*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- _____. 1970. "Transitions to Democracy." *Comparative Politics* 2 (April), pp. 337-363.
- Sahlins, Marshall. 1976. *Culture and Practical Reason*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Santos, Wanderley Guilherme dos. 1987. *Sessenta e Quatro: Anatomia da Crise*. São Paulo: Vértice.
- Sartori, Giovanni. 1976. *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- _____. 1987. *The Theory of Democracy Revisited*. Chatham, NJ: Chatham House.
- Schumpeter, Joseph. 1950. *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Scott, James. 1985. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Seligson, Mitchell. 1987a. "Democratization in Latin America: The Current Cycle." In Malloy and Seligson, eds., *Authoritarians and Democrats*, pp. 3-12.
- _____. 1987b. "Development, Democratization, and Decay: Central America at the Crossroads." In Malloy and Seligson, *Authoritarians and Democrats*, pp. 167-192.
- Serra, José. 1979. "Three Mistaken Theses Regarding the Connection between Industrialization and Authoritarian Regimes." In Collier, ed., *The New Authoritarianism in Latin America*, pp. 99-163.
- Share, Donald. 1987. "Transitions to Democracy and Transition through Transaction." *Comparative Political Studies* 19 (January), pp. 525-548.
- Smith, William. 1987. "The Political Transition in Brazil: From Authoritarian Liberalization and Elite Conciliation to Democratization." In Baloyra, *Comparing New Democracies*, pp. 179-240.
- Stahler-Sholk, Richard. 1987. "Building Democracy in Nicaragua." In George Lopez and Michael Stohl, eds., *Liberalization and Redemocratization in Latin America*, pp. 57-103. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Stepan, Alfred. 1971. *The Military in Politics: Changing Patterns in Brazil*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- _____. 1986. "Paths toward Redemocratization: Theoretical and Comparative Considerations." In O'Donnell et al., eds., *Transitions to Democracy*, pp. 65-84.
- _____. 1988. *Rethinking Military Politics: Brazil and the Southern Cone*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Stephens, John. 1987. "Democratic Transition and Breakdown in Europe, 1870-1939: A Test of the Moore Thesis." Kellogg Institute Working Paper #101 (November).
- Therborn, Goran. 1977. "The Rule of Capital and the Rise of Democracy." *New Left Review* 103 (May-June), pp. 3-41.
- Valenzuela, Arturo. 1978. *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Chile*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- _____. 1985. "Origins and Characteristics of the Chilean Party System." Working Paper #164, Latin American Program, Woodrow Wilson Center (May).
- Valenzuela, Arturo, and J. Samuel Valenzuela. 1983. "Los orígenes de la democracia: Reflexiones teóricas sobre el caso de Chile." *Estudios Públicos* 12 (Spring), pp. 5-39.

Valenzuela, J. Samuel. 1985. *Democratización vía reforma: La expansión del sufragio en Chile*. Buenos Aires: IDES.

Viola, Eduardo. 1982. "Democracia e Autoritarismo na Argentina Contemporânea." Ph.D. thesis, University of São Paulo.

Weber, Max. 1958. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

_____. 1978. *Economy and Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Weffort, Francisco. 1984. *Por que Democracia?* São Paulo: Brasiliense.

Whitehead, Laurence. 1985. "The Consolidation of Democracy: A Discussion Note." Unpublished paper.

_____. 1986. "Bolivia's Failed Democratization, 1977-1980." In O'Donnell et al., eds., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, Part 2, pp. 49-71.