



**DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION
IN POST-TRANSITIONAL SETTINGS:
NOTION, PROCESS, AND FACILITATING CONDITIONS**

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ABSTRACT

While a growing literature addresses the difficulties of achieving democratic consolidation, there has often been little clarity over the meaning of this notion, and over the process by which it is achieved. Therefore, building on a minimal formal definition of democracy, this paper presents a delimited conception of democratic consolidation and of the process for reaching it. It also discusses five broad conditions that facilitate (or hinder) consolidation. These have to do with the modalities through which the transitions to democratic governments took place, the influence of historical memories of alternative regimes, the moderation of political conflict, the management of social conflict, and the subordination of the military to the democratic government.

RESUMEN

Aunque un creciente número de escritos se refieren a las dificultades de lograr la consolidación de la democracia, a menudo ha faltado claridad respecto tanto a lo que ello significa como al proceso mediante el cual se alcanzaría. Por esto, partiendo de una definición mínima y formal de la democracia, se presenta aquí una concepción delimitada de la consolidación y del proceso que conduce a ella. Se discuten además cinco grandes condicionantes que la facilitarían (o impedirían). Éstas se refieren a las modalidades de la transición hacia gobiernos democráticos, al impacto de la memoria histórica de regímenes alternativos, a la moderación del conflicto político, al encauzamiento del conflicto social, y a la subordinación militar al gobierno democrático.

As the new democracies that substituted authoritarian rule in country after country during the seventies and eighties grow out of infancy, social science observers have shifted their focus from the analysis of transitions out of authoritarianism to problems of democratic consolidation. Much of the previous scholarly discussion was anchored on examinations of the political processes occurring in the closing phases of authoritarian rule and on the manner in which the change to the democratically elected governments occurs. Current queries center on how really democratic the post-transition political institutions are and on their long-term prospects, i.e., whether they are prone to succumb to a new round of authoritarian rule or whether they will prove to be stable or “consolidated.” The modalities assumed by the transition, the way in which political actors are organized, and the various political institutions that emerge or reemerge during the course of the transition are understood to make a significant difference for the long-term viability of newly democratized regimes.¹

However, this is simply a shift in perspective and not of the basic question being addressed; for both the old and the new discussions are ultimately about the broader problem of the transition from authoritarian to democratic regimes. This process is obviously not over when democratically elected authorities assume power, because this does not necessarily inaugurate ipso facto—journalistic labels applied to nations where such political leaders have constituted governments notwithstanding—a democratic regime. The overall change from an authoritarian to a democratic regime contains, as Guillermo O’Donnell notes, not one but two transitions: the first leads to the “installation of a democratic government,” and the second to the “consolidation of democracy,” or to “the effective functioning of a democratic regime.”² There is a complex

¹ An illustration of this trend is the argument made by Juan Linz regarding the superiority and greater stability of parliamentary over presidential constitutional arrangements for democracies. See his “Democracy, Presidential or Parliamentary: Does it Make a Difference?” paper written for the project “The Role of Political Parties in the Return to Democracy in the Southern Cone,” sponsored by the Latin America Program of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the Smithsonian Institution, and the World Peace Foundation, July 1985. The argument that a parliamentary regime would be best for Chile is made forcefully by Arturo Valenzuela, “Origins and Characteristics of the Chilean Party System: A Proposal for a Parliamentary Form of Government,” paper prepared for idem. Revised and translated versions of these papers appear in Oscar Godoy Arcaya, ed., *Hacia una democracia moderna: la opción parlamentaria* (Santiago: Ediciones de la Universidad Católica de Chile, 1990). Similar institutional and political process arguments are contained in Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, “Political Crafting of Democratic Consolidation or Destruction: European and South American Comparisons” in Robert A. Pastor, ed., *Democracy in the Americas: Stopping the Pendulum* (New York and London: Holmes and Meier, 1989).

² Guillermo O’Donnell, “Transições, continuidades e alguns paradoxos” in Fábio Wanderley Reis and Guillermo O’Donnell, eds., *A Democracia no Brasil: Dilemas e perspectivas* (São Paulo: Vertice, 1988), p. 43. An English version of this paper will appear in Scott Mainwaring, Guillermo O’Donnell, and J. Samuel Valenzuela, eds., *Issues and Prospects of Democratic Consolidation: The New South American Democracies in Comparative Perspective* (Notre Dame, IN: Kellogg Institute series with University of Notre Dame Press, forthcoming).

relationship of continuity and discontinuity between the first and the second transitions. The building of a consolidated democracy involves in part an affirmation and strengthening of certain institutions, such as the electoral system, revitalized or newly created parties, judicial independence and respect for human rights, which have been created or recreated during the course of the first transition. In this sense the process of change from one transition to the other is a lineal one. But in many ways there is no such linearity; building a consolidated democracy very often requires abandoning or altering arrangements, agreements, and institutions that may have facilitated the first transition by providing guarantees to authoritarian rulers and the forces backing them but that are inimical to the second. Such is the case with legislatures that include nondemocratically generated representation, with military autonomy from control by the executive, or with supreme councils empowered to review the actions of democratic governments. Hence, some of the obstacles to surmount on the new course towards consolidation are set by the characteristics of the earlier transition phase.

While the scholarly production referring to problems of democratic consolidation continues to increase significantly, the term itself has often been used in a haphazard, uncritical way, as if its meaning were unproblematically clear and its closure self-evident. Hence, this paper suggests a more clearly delimited conception of democratic consolidation, to which task it turns first. It then indicates the manner in which the process of consolidation unfolds after the first transition from authoritarian rule to a democratic government, and concludes with a lengthy discussion of a series of conditions that can facilitate or, inversely, detract from its realization. This paper illustrates its points by drawing its examples mainly from recent cases of transition.

The Notion of Democratic Consolidation

The juxtaposition of “consolidated” with “democracy” induces uses of the combined term that are misleading for the study of transitions. Since something that is “consolidated” has the quality of being seemingly immune to disintegration, there is a tendency to associate “consolidated democracies” with their stability and, by extension, to convert the passage of time with no regime reversals and the absence of potentially destabilizing factors into the basic criteria of democratic consolidation.

While the durability of a democratic regime is an attribute of consolidation, this characteristic does not provide in itself an adequate basis to ground the notion of consolidation. The retention of democratic government after a process of transition does not necessarily ensure the consolidation of a democratic regime. In some instances it is possible that democratically elected governments may succeed one another for a considerable time without reversals simply as a result of the caution of its leadership in not challenging actors whose power escapes

democratic accountability.³ In this case the resulting stability cannot be equated with progress towards creating a fully democratic regime; what enhances stability may detract from the democratic quality of a regime. The process of democratic consolidation would require redefinitions, sometimes at considerable risk, of the regime's institutions and/or of the relations among political actors. Moreover, consolidated democracies are not necessarily free of destabilizing conditions such as presence of sharp ideological differences among major parties and political leaders, armed separatist or terrorist movements, social unrest that percolates through urban riots, or racial and ethnic tensions leading to violent confrontations; requiring all of these to wither away before presuming democratic consolidation in new or reestablished democracies would be an excessively stringent test. Consolidated democracies are also not immune to processes of breakdown. In fact, they may be vulnerable to the very perception of their solidity by democratic elites that take the existence of democratic institutions, even in situations of crisis, for granted, and therefore do not reach the necessary accommodations to prevent their demise.⁴ In sum, the absence of political crisis, of destabilizing elements, and the durability of a newly democratic setting are in one sense an insufficient test and in another an excessively demanding one for the notion of democratic consolidation. Additional criteria are needed to assess whether destabilizing factors prevent democratic consolidation.

Similarly, all discussions of democratic consolidation carry an explicit or implicit definition of what democracy is, and analysts are not predisposed to assigning the "consolidated democracy" label to a political system that does not meet all of their criteria for what a democracy should be. This produces a tendency to push the conception of democracy in discussions of democratic consolidation towards an ideal, well-structured and comprehensive institutional system that can hardly be attained.⁵ Even long established democracies rarely have all the attributes that can

³ Guillermo O'Donnell, op. cit, p. 48, notes that situations like these can lead to what he calls "slow death" of democracy; Vinicio Cerezo's Guatemala is a case in point.

⁴ Juan Linz, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown, and Reequilibration* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press 1978) notes that democratic breakdowns are more the result of the unwillingness or inability of the regime's defenders to agree among each other than the effect of challenges by antidemocratic forces. Chilean and Uruguayan democracies can be said to have been consolidated in the terms to be noted below prior to their 1973 breakdowns. Major Chilean political leaders of the left, center, and even right, including President Aylwin, have noted that in retrospect they regret the actions they took during the Allende government given their effect in producing the breakdown of Chilean democracy. None foresaw the eventual outcome; even those who eventually favored military intervention expected it to lead to a rapid restoration of democratic government. For an analysis of the breakdown of Chilean democracy, see Arturo Valenzuela, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Chile* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1978).

⁵ This is what happens in José Nun's "La teoría política y la transición democrática" in José Nun and Juan Carlos Portantiero, eds., *Ensayos sobre la transición democrática en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Puntosur editores, 1987), where the notion of democratic consolidation refers to a broad project of building all kinds of political and social relations and institutions. A similar problem can be seen in Manuel Antonio Garretón's *Reconstruir la política: Transición y*

ideally be associated with such regimes. Whether it is low levels of informed citizen participation (and participation *tout court* in the case of the United States), political leaders who are divisive and personalistic, parties that are rigidly ideological or not programmatic enough, the influence of funding hidden from public scrutiny in electoral coffers, the growing sophistication of misleading political marketing as the key venue for capturing the vote, legislatures that are insufficiently influential or that concentrate on petty issues while state bureaucracies go unchecked, the cozy accommodations between private interests and their supposed state regulators, excessive social inequality and inadequate welfare institutions, the insufficient organization of the working class and other popular sectors, inadequate mechanisms for negotiations between capital and labor, and so on, it is always possible to deplore one deficiency or another. If such and other assorted ills can be found in democracies whose “consolidation” is not at issue, situations that have recently made the transit out of authoritarian rule should hardly be held to strict and comprehensive standards either. Otherwise no democratic regime is truly “consolidated” for the lack of an ingredient deemed essential, and it is impossible to assign a reasonable closure to the second transition process.

The notion of democratic consolidation should therefore be linked, as has been suggested by O’Donnell, to a minimalist, not a maximalist, conception of democracy.⁶ There is considerable consensus over what are, as O’Donnell and Schmitter put it, the “procedural minimum” of democracies, namely, “secret balloting, universal adult suffrage, regular elections, partisan competition, associational recognition and access, and executive accountability.”⁷ Similarly, Robert Dahl lists a series of eight “institutional requirements” for the existence of a democracy, which are: “1. freedom to form and join organizations; 2. freedom of expression; 3. right to vote; 4. eligibility for public office; 5. right of political leaders to compete for support [and votes]; 6. alternative sources of information; 7. free and fair elections; and 8. institutions for making government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preference.”⁸ These conceptions refer to the formal and procedural aspects of democracy at a nation-state level, rather than to any substantive or social considerations or to the presence of democratic forms in entities

consolidación democrática en Chile (Santiago: Editorial Andante, 1987), pp. 53-55, where democratic consolidation refers to a model of socioeconomic development that is compatible with democracy, to an increased autonomy but adequate interrelationships among the state, the political system, and civil society, and to an inclusive and well-established party system.

⁶ Guillermo O’Donnell in “Notes for the Study of Democratic Consolidation in Contemporary Latin America,” paper presented at a meeting on “Dilemmas and Opportunities of Democratic Consolidation in Contemporary Latin America” held at CEBRAP, São Paulo, December 16/17 1985, pp. 2, 4.

⁷ Guillermo O’Donnell and Philippe Schmitter, “Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies” in Guillermo O’Donnell, Philippe Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead, eds., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Prospects for Democracy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), p. 8.

⁸ Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971) p. 3.

at the subnational level.⁹ They are also based on an admittedly narrow notion of citizenship and formal legal and political equality, rather than on a more comprehensive conception of equality, the development of which is in any case not precluded.¹⁰ The associational freedoms that accompany formal democracies can lead as well to the development of corporate interest groups and mechanisms of corporatist interest intermediation.¹¹ But without the above noted formal democratic procedures at the nation-state level a democracy cannot be said to exist no matter how egalitarian the society, how progressive the social policies, how advanced the democratic procedures at the subnational level, or how developed the expression of interest representation through corporatist intermediation. The notion of democratic consolidation should refer to this procedural minimum.

Nonetheless, attaching a minimal definition of democracy to the conception of democratic consolidation is only a first step towards elucidating what a consolidated democracy is. This latter notion requires further elaboration.

The minimal procedures of a democracy presuppose, despite their minimality, the development of a complex institutionalization, the skeletal outlines of which are generally formally established, i.e., written, in constitutional and other laws. It includes the separation of powers, without which there is no executive accountability nor protection for the rights of citizens, and also more specific matters such as the rules for carrying out elections or streamlining the legislative process. This democratic institutional edifice permits, even fosters and shapes, the development of organizations, such as parties, interest groups, and lobbies, and a press through which a variety of opinions can be expressed, all of which articulate and channel societal political demands. Their access to and intervention in the policy-making process is very often not formally established, but becomes nonetheless part of the recurrent and accepted set of institutionalized procedures of the democratic system, even though its appropriateness may occasionally be challenged and

⁹ Formal definitions of democracy owe much to Joseph Schumpeter's discussion of the concept. See his *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1962, third edition) part V. For a discussion of some of the limitations of his definition of democracy see J. Samuel Valenzuela, *Democratización vía reforma: La expansión del sufragio en Chile* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones del IDES, 1985), pp. 22-35. For a radically different, and in my view inadequate, "participatory" conception of democracy see C. B. Macpherson, *The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), chapter 5. See also Carole Pateman *Participation and Democratic Theory* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1970) for a critique of formal democratic conceptions from the perspective of effective participation by ordinary people in the affairs of government as well as the subnational level.

¹⁰ For critique of this narrow conception of equality and a discussion of democracy from a broader perspective of this notion see David Held, *Models of Democracy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), especially chapter 9.

¹¹ For a discussion of the endurance of corporatism in democracies see Philippe Schmitter, "Still the Century of Corporatism?" in, among other sources, Philippe C. Schmitter and Gerhard Lehmbruch, eds., *Trends toward Corporatist Intermediation* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1979). See also Philippe C. Schmitter, "Democratic Theory and Neo-Corporatist Practice," *Social Research*, 50, no. 4 (Winter 1983).

publicly debated. Both the impact of the democratic institutional edifice on the formation of such organizations as well as the latter's influence over the elaboration of policy, including policy decisions regarding the formal outlines of the institutional edifice itself, attest to the characteristic blurring of the lines of separation between the state and civil society in a democracy. The daily workings of these institutions, both formal and informal, and of their associated societal organizations, configure what can be called a *virtuous* institutionalization in so far as they permit the reproduction of the minimal procedures of a democracy. Yet to hinge the consolidation label only onto a system that has developed an adequate set of such virtuous institutional mechanisms, even if such adequacy could be determined correctly with due consideration for the great variety of forms they assume in different types of democracies, would stretch the notion of consolidation needlessly and make it highly ambiguous. It would hinge, perhaps unwittingly, once again the conception of democratic consolidation upon an institutional ideal of what it should be.

Therefore, instead of focusing on the institutionalization, both formal and informal, that is compatible with—and even buttresses—the workings of a democracy, it is better to look at that which tends to undermine the latter's operation—or at what can be called *perverse* institutionalization. Following this analysis, a consolidated democracy would be one that does not have perverse elements undermining its basic characteristics. But the list of such perversities cannot be extended endlessly; otherwise, the conception of consolidation runs the risk of being anchored, again perhaps unwittingly, on the presence or absence of what in the last instance can be viewed as potentially destabilizing elements. To retain a delimited conception of democratic consolidation, the perverse patterns must be closely anchored on the minimal conception of democracy.

Since in essence a democratic regime is one in which governments are formed by individuals who win national elections, the possible perversions are those that can undermine the end of the democratic process, i.e. the authority of democratically elected governments, and can detract from its means, i.e., from the fairness as well as the centrality of the electoral mechanism as a route to form governments. While the list of perverse elements could probably be extended, the following four are the principal ones that can be identified.

To begin with those that undermine government authority, a first perverse element is the existence of *tutelary powers*. A regime cannot be considered a consolidated democracy if those who win government-forming elections are placed in state power and policy-making positions that are subordinate to those of nonelected elites. Obviously, no democratic government is above the law, and all are therefore subjected to oversight by the courts and other specialized bodies (such as accounting offices); but these forms of overview are specific executive accountability, serve to review government and or legislative compliance with the constitution and other basic laws, to protect human rights, and to guard against corruption and abuses of power. A tutelary

power is quite different: its limits are ill defined, and it can exercise broad oversight over the government and its policy decisions. Part of the process of building European democracies in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was to eliminate the tutelary power held by monarchs, making cabinets and prime ministers accountable only to elected parliaments, and armies subordinate to decisions taken by the government rather than the crown. In recent transition settings, the military have often sought to place themselves in such a tutelary role. This can occur through the creation of formal institutions, as illustrated notably by the military-dominated Council of the Revolution enshrined in the Portuguese constitution of 1974, or through ambiguous constitutional references to the role of the Armed Forces as “guarantors” of the constitution and the laws. It can also exist informally as a result, for instance, of military self-definitions as the “permanent institution” of the state (i.e., as opposed to “transient” ones such as governments) that can therefore best interpret and uphold the “general interests of the nation.” Hence, where the individuals who win government-forming elections are subjected to such tutelary power, they do not unambiguously “acquire the power to decide,” to use Schumpeter’s expression.¹² And the various political forces whose policy preferences most closely coincide with those holding such tutelary power will be tempted to use the latter’s possible intervention in the political process as a threat to obtain what they want, thereby undercutting democratic arenas of negotiation and compromise.

A clear attempt by the outgoing authoritarian regime to establish the institutional and organizational basis for exercising military tutelarity over the democratic process occurred in the Chilean transition. The 1980 Constitution, enacted by General Pinochet, vaguely stipulates that the Armed Forces “guarantee the institutional order of the Republic.”¹³ There is no explanation as to how this function is to be exercised. And yet top military officers do not lack the means to make their views known in the institutions of the new constitutional order. They occupy four (including, in addition to the heads of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, the head of the National Police) of eight seats in a “National Security Council” whose objectives are, in addition to

¹² Schumpeter, p. 269. The quote is drawn from his well-known definition of democracy.

¹³ *Constitución Política de la República de Chile: 1980* (Santiago: Editorial Jurídica, 1985) article 90. General Pinochet attributes great significance to this clause. In a speech given on August 23, 1989, on the relation between the Armed Forces and the transition, he stressed this clause as one of the main innovations of the 1980 Constitution, one that finally recognizes a “natural function of the Armed Forces and Police,” one that “recognizes their political function.” He went on to list a long number of policies that civilian authorities must follow in the future to remain in agreement not only with the letter but also the “spirit” of the Constitution. Among these he included no change in the Amnesty Law of 1978 that exempted all military officers from prosecution for human rights violations. See *La Epoca*, 24 August 1989, p. 13.

The Brazilian constitution of 1988, although it was dictated after the first transition, also places the Armed Forces in a guarantorship role. It notes that they “guarantee constitutional powers and, by the initiative of any one of these powers, law and order.” *Constituição: República Federativa do Brasil, 1988* (Brasília: Centro Gráfico do Senado Federal, 1988), article 142.

overseeing national security, to examine any matter that may “gravely undermine the bases of the institutional system,” for which they may demand information from any government or state official.¹⁴ Two of the nonmilitary members of the National Security Council were also named, indirectly, by General Pinochet before leaving the Presidency. Moreover, the transitory articles of the 1980 Constitution allow General Pinochet to remain the Commander in Chief of the Army for eight years after the initiation of the first democratically elected presidential term of office. President Patricio Aylwin, whose term began in March of 1990, asked Pinochet to resign despite the legal stipulations, since “it would be more convenient for the country,” but the latter refused.¹⁵ Hence, although the constitution also stipulates that the head of the Army is subordinate to the President, the most fundamental element of that subordination, the power of appointment and removal, is absent for a lengthy period after the transition to an elected government. Pinochet’s attempt to place himself in a position of tutelariness over the democratic process was reaffirmed by his creation of a so-called Political-Strategic Advisory Committee, whose officially announced role is to assist him in carrying out his duties as a member of the National Security Council. The Committee, which has roughly 50 staff members, is designed to keep tabs on every aspect of national policy.¹⁶

A second element that prevents full governmental empowerment is the existence of what can be called *reserved domains* of authority and policy-making. By contrast to the ambiguous and generalized tutelary power, the reserved domains remove specific areas of governmental authority and substantive policy-making from the purview of elected officials. Again, there are many instances in which policy areas are excluded from elected government officials’ control or from the scope of electoral majorities in regimes that can be considered, nonetheless, democratic. Democracies that are strongly consociational or consensual, as Arend Lijphart has argued, deliberately restrain the influence of electoral majorities in areas of policy that are of specific interest to minority segments of the political community.¹⁷ Even in democracies that are strongly majoritarian, key policy areas may be insulated from the influence of elected officials; a good case in point is the Federal Reserve Bank of the United States. Such insulation may be the product of informal agreements or formal pacts, and may be enshrined in constitutions, laws, or in

¹⁴ *Constitución Política de la República de Chile: 1980*, articles 95 and 96. These articles were modified to some extent in mid 1989. The modifications appear in *La Epoca*, 2 June 1989, and the text above incorporates them.

¹⁵ See *El Mercurio*, December 24, 1989, p. D1, for an account of the first meeting between General Pinochet and President Aylwin, in which the latter asked him to resign.

¹⁶ A description of the so-called Comité Asesor Político y Estratégico appears in *Hoy*, no. 679 (23-29 July 1990), pp. 11-13.

¹⁷ On such democracies, see Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977); and Arend Lijphart, *Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-One Countries* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984).

the statutes of autonomous state agencies. In still other settings areas of policy may be left by elected officials for discussion and agreement among, and/or with, corporatist interests, as happens particularly in small European democracies with strong forms of sectoral corporatism.¹⁸

The problematic reserved domains of democratic transitional settings are different. They pertain to areas of policy that elected government officials would like to control in order to assert governmental authority or carry out their programs, but are prevented from controlling by veiled or explicit menaces of a return to authoritarian rule.¹⁹ The reserved domains are products of impositions by political actors—such as the military, the monarch, the judicature, the high civil service, and/or nonstate actors such as capitalists—who are not themselves subjected to electoral accountability but have privileged access to crucial elements of state power to make credible their threat of destabilization. By contrast, policy insulation in democracies results from arrangements reached by negotiation and agreement among political actors who are empowered to enter these arrangements by virtue of their recognized leadership and/or representation of a segment of the political community. As is the case with tutelary powers, the reserved domains may be the product of tacit or explicit “understandings” the margins of which may be unclear, or they may be formally established. In either case they may have facilitated the first transition by providing assurances to powerful nonelectoral actors or electoral minority ones related to the authoritarian regime that their interests would not be affected by democratically elected authorities. This is one important instance in which the second transition to a consolidated democracy may have to undo what was wrought to facilitate the first transition to a democratic government. What may have eased the first may constrain the second transition.

The Chilean transition furnishes, once again, convenient examples of these reserved domains, in this case of a highly institutionalized nature. The most important is the Armed Forces and military policy. The legal apparatus legated by the authoritarian regime permits the Armed Forces to derive automatically a large portion of its own income—which in no case can fall below 1989 levels in real terms—from the sales of copper. Democratic government officials cannot determine the use of the military budgets, acquisitions of armaments, have virtually no say over officer promotions and appointments, even for foreign service assignments, and are barred from changing military doctrine and the curricula in the respective Academies. Control over military

¹⁸ See Gerhard Lehbruch, “Concertation and the Structure of Corporatist Networks” in John Goldthorpe, ed., *Order and Conflict in Contemporary Capitalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984) for a development of the concept of “sectoral corporatism.”

¹⁹ Manuel Antonio Garretón has used the terms “authoritarian enclaves” or “residues” to refer generally to what I have called reserved domains. These are misnomers. Enclaves are separate entities within, but not connected to, others; the reserved domains are, by contrast, at the center of the political problematic of the second transition. Residues are trace elements that do not affect their environment; again, this is not the case with the reserved domains of transitional settings. See Manuel Antonio Garretón, *La Posibilidad democrática en Chile* (Santiago: FLACSO, 1989), pp. 51-63.

intelligence is also left entirely in officers' hands. The departing Pinochet regime also created—and named the first board members to lengthy terms—an autonomous Central Bank that has control over monetary, credit, and exchange policies, and an autonomous Council to oversee radio and television programming and licensing of stations.²⁰ In addition, by inducing older justices to retire it appointed about half of the members of a Supreme Court with expanded powers; it named all but 16 of the nation's 325 mayors; and it legally prohibited the new democratic government from appointing all but the top officials at all levels of the state administration, effectively granting tenure to all civil servants—even those who previously held only temporary positions. The democratically elected Congress is also barred by a special law from exercising its constitutionally established prerogative of investigating and judging malfeasance by previous government officials, and an amnesty law protects the military from prosecution for human rights abuses.

Turning to the means of selecting those who will form governments (as well as occupy legislative seats), a third way in which the operation of minimal democratic procedures can be viciated is through major discriminations in the electoral process.²¹ Surely, most electoral systems in democracies are biased in the sense of underrepresenting minority parties and candidates. This is particularly the case with the simple plurality system in single member districts, which normally produces substantial legislative majorities for parties that obtain a minority of the national vote.²² Some discrimination against such minority representation is, nonetheless, necessary to ensure proper democratic governance: this facilitates building legislative majorities (with or without coalitions), and minimizes the possible tyranny of the minority that can come from having fringe elements in the political community hold the balance of power between larger blocks.²³

And yet, situations of transition may be, again, different from these. The electoral rules may be deliberately designed by actors who hold power at key moments of the first transition to grossly underrepresent significant sectors of opinion, while overrepresenting others (even though these rules may not always work as they are intended to by their framers). This may be

²⁰ In the case of the Central Bank, the Pinochet government appointed some Board members sympathetic to the democratic opposition in what was viewed as a major concession.

²¹ This discussion assumes transitions to mass suffrage democracies, since all democratic transitions at this point in time lead to universal access to the vote by adult citizens. It also glosses over important differences between presidential and parliamentary systems.

²² Elections in Great Britain are generally singled out as an example of this effect. The majoritarian effect is exacerbated in this case by the existence of well structured parties. For a brief analysis of the broad variety of electoral systems and their mathematical properties in generating representation see Robert A. Newland, *Comparative Electoral Systems* (London: The Arthur McDougall Fund, 1982).

²³ The Israeli electoral system, while the least biased of all possible systems with its proportional representation in a single nation-wide district, in fact prevents proper democratic governance by over-empowering the minority parties that hold the balance of power between Likud and Labor.

done through the vote counting procedures or through an electoral apportionment that creates glaring inequities in the weight of individual votes. In addition, as often occurs in the first elections after authoritarian rule, party choices of candidates for office and voter preferences may be guided by calculations (correct or incorrect) regarding who can best ensure the continued stability of the new democratic system. While this may indeed bolster that stability, this form of choice by no means reflects democratic consolidation. In some cases, certain candidates may be expressly prohibited from running, or may feel physically threatened if they do. These settings are only questionably democratic.

The Chilean transition also illustrates the egregious discriminations that can occur in situations of transition with congressional representations and electoral laws. Pinochet's 1980 Constitution reserves nine senate seats to be filled by individuals appointed by the president or by other state organs, such as the supreme court, that have been closely connected with the authoritarian regime. All of these appointments were made before the transfer of power to the democratically elected government. Moreover, the electoral law was deliberately and successfully crafted to furnish the largest possible contingent of members of congress in both houses for the right.²⁴ As a result, with its nine designated senators and its representation greatly favored by the electoral system, the right has, with a minority of the vote, a majority in the senate and a sizeable segment of 48 seats in a 120 member house.²⁵ With its senate majority, the right can block legislation and all efforts to reform the constitution dictated by the military regime, which it generally views as one of the latter's most important legacies.

Finally, a fourth problem pertains to the centrality of the electoral means to constitute governments. Free elections must indeed be *the only* means through which it is possible to do so. Democratic consolidation cannot occur if military coups or insurrections are also seen by significant political actors as possible means to substitute governments. This is the basic linchpin

²⁴ The electoral system devised by the Pinochet government is unique in the annals of elections. It can best be labelled as a binominal majority list system. Binominal, because each district (whether senatorial or for the lower house) elects two representatives; in addition, the law requires that each list present not more than two candidates per district. The votes are then added by list to determine a first and a second place winning list. If the second winning list has less than half the vote total of the first, then the first list elects its two candidates to fill the district representation. If the second list has half plus one or more of the votes obtained by the first, then the candidates who obtained the highest vote totals on each of the two lists are elected, regardless of whether the runner-up candidate in the first winning list has more votes than those of the best placed candidate on the second list.

²⁵ The right's "Democracy and Progress" pact, from which all the right's representatives to the congress were elected, obtained 33.28% of the vote in the senate races and elected 42% of the seats that were disputed; and with 33.35% of the vote in the lower house elections it elected 40% of the total seats. Figures calculated from *La Segunda*, 15 December 1989. These electoral percentages do not include the votes for other extreme right and right lists. To figure them into the calculation of the relation between votes and seats is incorrect because it is not clear how many votes the main list of the right would have lost had those fringe candidates been included in it.

underlying all the other elements that detract from the consolidation process, for tutelary powers, reserved domains, and electoral discriminations would be impossible to maintain in the long run were it not for the threat of overthrowing democratically elected authorities. These are tactics applied by powerful, but nonelectoral or electorally minoritarian, political forces to safeguard their interests. The actors who are committed to the electoral procedures and who generally stand to gain from them are likely, given the threat of a complete reversal of the democratic process, to feel compelled to accommodate to their opponents' institutional and substantive demands. The democratic method is thereby subverted to a large extent even when regularly scheduled elections are not interrupted, i.e., when there are no coups or successful insurrections. This then generates a vicious cycle of perverse institutionalization. Success yields repetitions of successful strategies, thereby strengthening the importance of the rules of the political game that violate the democratic method, which then further enhances their importance and use. While powerful nonelectoral or electorally minoritarian actors could develop an organizational capacity to protect and pursue their interests through venues that are potentially compatible with democracy (such as creating new parties or establishing privileged links with pre-existing ones, forging coalitions, appealing to public opinion, lobbying with legislators, quietly or publicly petitioning the executive, and/or participating in corporatist forms of interest intermediation) they may still rely on their capacity to threaten an interruption of the democratic process in order to increase their ability to obtain preferred policy options through the normal democratic venues. They will therefore seek to retain that potentially subversive option alive.

Virtuous and perverse institutionalizations can coexist, but their conjunction is perverse. Disaffected capitalists who disinvest, workers who strike and demonstrate in the streets, farmers who clog capital cities with their tractors, truck drivers who block highways, and military officers who remonstrate all know, even if they also try to influence the outcome of elections, that there is in the last instance the possibility of stimulating a military coup.²⁶ Eventually, this situation can lead to widespread disaffection with what becomes an inadequate democracy by those segments of the population that would ordinarily prefer the continued existence of the democratic regime. This may enhance the prospects of more radical or populist appeals, and further exacerbate, as a result, the tendency of the opposing political forces to seek protection from the application of the democratic method to form governments.

By contrast, a system in which elections are the only means to form governments obliges the significant political actors to design their political strategies in ways that are consistent with the democratic procedures. This permits a cycle of virtuous institutionalization: the more the various actors develop an effective organizational political capacity to advance their goals, protect their

²⁶ This is what Samuel Huntington called "mass praetorianism." See his *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968), chapter 3.

interests, and preserve their values in the democratic institutional environment, the more secure will be their commitment, in general, to that environment. For this effect to occur, the democratic system must of course permit all major politically active segments of the population a voice: democracy must be inclusive. In this environment, groups flexing their particular nonelectoral “power capabilities,” to use Charles Anderson’s term, will assess their actions in different terms from those available in the perverse cycle one.²⁷ Thus, unions and working-class parties will try to calculate the effects of strikes on the possibility of gaining middle-class votes; capitalists know that if they disinvest, the resulting sluggish economic performance can be blamed on incumbents in the next elections; and military leaders who remonstrate know that they simply jeopardize their careers, as they do not have a chance to set in motion a coup and therefore cannot count on pursuing their goals by threatening insubordination. The difference between the perverse and the virtuous cycles does not lie in the fact that various social groups will resort to *entirely* different strategies in seeking to press for their policy options or protect their interests. The difference lies in the presence or absence of additional means, aside from the electoral one, to form governments.

Democratic consolidation occurs with the initiation of the above depicted virtuous cycle. Or, to put it with the terms used here, a democracy is consolidated when elections following procedures devoid of egregious and deliberate distortions designed to systematically underrepresent a certain segment of opinion are perceived by all significant political forces to be unambiguously the only means to create governments well into the foreseeable future, and when the latter are not subjected to tutelary oversight or constrained by the presence of reserved domains of state policy formulation.²⁸ Other nonminimalist features of such democratic systems

²⁷ Anderson thought the perverse cycle setting described the “Latin American political system.” But he failed to note that individuals in established democracies also use their peculiar “power capabilities” to score political points; the difference is that the perverse cycle settings include, quite simply, the possibility of a military coup or insurrection while the consolidated democratic ones (even when they are Latin American cases) do not. He also tied his conception to a modernization approach. He assumed that the “Latin American political system” would decline as the countries of the region increased their development. This is a very questionable assumption. See Charles Anderson *Politics and Economic Change in Latin America* (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1967), chap. 4.

²⁸ A parenthetical note on the qualifier “significant” in the above definition: conspiratorial antisystem groups, such as terrorist elements or putchist nuclei in the armed forces, may exist in consolidated democracies as long as they are isolated from other political forces, are composed of small minorities, and are viewed as incapable of disrupting the democratic system by the participants in the democratic political game. Thus, French, Italian, German, and even Spanish (post 1981) democracies can be viewed as consolidated despite the presence of terrorist groups at various points. Peruvian democracy facing the Sendero Luminoso insurrection cannot.

Can British democracy be faulted for distortions in its electoral procedures that would lead to questioning its consolidation given the definition above? My answer is a firm no. The same electoral procedures have been in place ever since the United Kingdom has had democratic elections; they are not the product of the deliberate distortions noted in the definition. The American South before the Civil Rights legislation is a more problematic case. In fact, given its denial of voting rights to large numbers of Blacks it can hardly be considered to have had

can flow from the prevalence over time of these basic conditions; thus, parties, interest groups, issue-specific movements of opinion, a more or less informative mass media, a political culture of compromise and negotiation, concertation among opposing organized interests, respect for individual rights, and other organizational and institutional features that buttress democracy may develop—to a greater or lesser extent—in what can become quite different types of democracies. The term democratic regime should, strictly speaking, be reserved for such consolidated democracies. The expression “nonconsolidated democracies” can be used to refer to political systems where the formalities of a democracy exist, namely, periodic universal suffrage elections, freedoms of expression and organization, and so on, but the electoral process is not viewed unambiguously as the only means to create governments, and/or where tutelary powers, electoral discriminations, and/or important “reserved domains” of policy-making exist.

The Process of Democratic Consolidation

Once the first transition has been accomplished, the process of reaching democratic consolidation consists of eliminating the institutions, procedures, and expectations that are incompatible with the minimal workings of a democratic regime, thereby permitting the beneficent ones that are created or recreated with the transition to a democratic government to develop further. It reaches closure, following the basic conception presented above, when the authority of fairly elected government and legislative officials is properly established (i.e., not limited as noted) and when major political actors as well as the public at large expect the democratic regime to last well into the foreseeable future. Given favorable conditions—to be noted below—and barring all reversals, this kind of closure can occur relatively rapidly in some cases, as happened in Spain, but in others it may take decades, as was the case with the French Third Republic.

The establishment or reestablishment of the procedures consonant with democratic governance multiplies the numbers of political and social actors who actively participate in politics. The new institutions generate a new political balance of forces, as some actors win and others lose relative shares of power, authority, and influence when compared to the balance that prevailed under the previous regime. The attempts to preserve tutelary oversight, reserved domains, egregious discriminations in the electoral system, and the notion that a nonelectoral route to create the national government is always possible, constitute formal or informal institutional mechanisms for some actors to retain power capabilities they would otherwise not have given the exclusive operation of forms of empowerment compatible with democracy. Thus, while democratic consolidation is basically about the elimination of formal and informal institutions

democratic local and state governments. And yet the Black population of the South did not constitute a clearcut “segment of opinion.”

that are inimical to democracy, it takes the form of a struggle between actors who benefit—or think they could benefit at a certain point—from those institutions' existence, and those who do not.

The process of consolidation, or its derailment, thereby unfolds through precedent setting political confrontations that alter or revalidate the institutional and procedural environment in its perverse or beneficent aspects.²⁹ When perverse aspects are formally instituted in the constitution, in laws, or in statutes, some of these confrontations will necessarily be over their change. Democratic consolidation is impossible without undoing (by deliberate changes or by converting the offending items into dead letter) the formally established institutions that conflict with the minimal workings of a democracy. Other confrontations can be over incidents, notably coup attempts, in which the continuation of the transition itself is at stake and in which the most perverse of the polity's informal institutions—the notion that governments can be created through coups—is displayed. But most confrontations are over specific issues, be they whether to prosecute military officers for past human rights violations, increase wages, alter the tax burden, reduce defense spending, change the judicial system, reform labor legislation, reorganize the administration of schools, revamp municipal government, et cetera. These events contain a text (the overt issue being debated or the specific incident being resolved) and a subtext which is far more significant for the purposes of analyzing democratic consolidation. It has to do with whether or not the debate and resolution (if any) of the issue enhances, sustains, reduces, or eliminates the perverse formal or informal institutions that impair democratic consolidation. Has the issue led, say, to challenging the tutelary power of the military or trodden into one of its reserved domains in a manner that makes it less able—by revealing divisions among top officers, a lack of support from civilian leaders for military pretensions, or some such circumstance—to effectively exercise such power or reserve such domain in the future? Has the debate led certain political forces to seek military support for their aspirations in a way that shows their ability—or their inability—to use a threat of destabilization as a prop to obtain the policies they favor? Has the confrontation shown that elected officials in the government and in congress have the authority to resolve key questions of policy, or has it been deflected to another formal or informal institutional arena? The discussion if not resolution of these issues may not only set important precedents that manifest

²⁹ Guillermo O'Donnell has presented the process of democratic consolidation as a struggle between forces that favor democracy and those that prefer authoritarianism, struggle that is played out in part by seeking to capture the support of the larger segments of the body politic that are indifferent, or neutral, to the existence of one or another regime. See his "Notes for the Study of Democratic Consolidation in Contemporary Latin America," and his "Transições," pp. 46-47. While benefitting from this insight, the analysis here presents this confrontation as one that is about preserving or eliminating the formal and informal procedures that are incompatible with democracy. In these confrontations, actors who are basically democratic do not always take positions—given short-run calculations—that advance consolidation, nor do those who are pro-authoritarian consistently advocate institutional arrangements that detract from it. This represents a shift in focus which is, nonetheless, consistent with much of O'Donnell's analysis.

the extent to which the beneficent institutions of a democracy are in operation but, more significantly, it may also advance the citizens' and political actors' change of expectations regarding their long-term durability. As a result, the process of consolidation may either be advanced, held on hold, or derailed in what can be seen in retrospect—but hardly ever in anticipation—as a concatenation of critical events that progressively mold the institutional and organizational environment as well as the actors' perceptions of it, increasing or deflating in the process the relative preeminence of the various political actors.³⁰

The process of consolidation is not necessarily advanced by the prodemocratic forces setting a deliberate agenda of “consolidation” and by their singleminded pursuit of its goals. (Such a prodemocratic agenda can be established for reaching the formal institutions of a democracy, but accomplishing the necessary changes to attain that goal is not equal to, nor does it necessarily guarantee, democratic consolidation.) In fact, announcing the existence of such an agenda will in most cases be self-defeating. Openly discussing whether or not a certain measure advances consolidation or whether consolidation has been reached may detract from its advancement by raising it as a questionable rather than a taken-for-granted and therefore moot issue. Once democratic institutions are in place, consolidation is reached, in the last analysis, only when most political actors perceive them to be in place unproblematically well into the future. Consolidation occurs as a post factum realization. The debate and, if possible, resolution of the issues leading to the various confrontations present opportunities to—so to speak—“use” the complex institutions of a democracy, and in the process—hopefully—to disarticulate those that are inimical to it. It is the double combination of such use and such purging that eventually should generate the desired sense that the democratic institutions are durable indeed.

In the course of the confrontations over issues, most political actors, whether they prefer democratization, its limitation, or renewed forms of authoritarianism, will pursue short-term gains over their opponents without much regard for the long-term consequences for consolidation of their actions. On occasion, those favoring democratic consolidation as a long-term goal may pursue short-run gains—perhaps as a result of their strife with other prodemocratic forces over

³⁰ One of the most dramatic examples of a confrontation that had a consolidating effect was the failed coup of 23 February 1981 in Spain. It was the most serious event involving the military, elements of which had previously remonstrated against the civilian government authorities. The defeat of the uprising through the active intervention of the King, in whose support the conspirators mistakenly had placed their hopes, became the deathknell of this nondemocratic option to constitute the Spanish government. Not all cases are so dramatic or so successful. The defeat of several military insurrections in Alfonsín's Argentina did not have the effect of eliminating the notion that military coups are an option in the future. Rendering the mechanics of military coups inoperable may take years of constantly reasserting civilian supremacy over the military, and repeated unsuccessful coups may, given the specific context, keep this option alive rather than show its ineffectiveness.

In the use of the notion of a “concatenation of critical events” I am repeating my analysis in *Democratización vía reforma*, pp. 132-133.

policy issues—that in retrospect prove injurious to that goal; there may even be at times no immediate clarity regarding the long-term consequences of their actions. Similarly, actors preferring a re-edition of the authoritarian regime may well press successfully for short-term gains whose long-term consequences are, when examined in retrospect, beneficial to democratic consolidation. For example, in preserving the unity of the Armed Forces under his command—a key to retaining his own power—General Pinochet could be indirectly contributing to democratic consolidation in Chile. Such consolidation is unlikely if the Army is a fractious one. Hence, while it is reasonable to expect that the short-run failures of actors seeking to preserve perverse procedures and the short-run successes of those hoping to eliminate them will benefit democratic consolidation in the long term, it is difficult to determine unambiguously that all their actions will have these results. The historical agenda of the consolidation process is subject to many contingencies.

Conditions Affecting Democratic Consolidation

Despite the contingencies in the process of consolidation, a comparison of transition settings should permit the abstraction of a proximate roster of conditions that facilitate consolidation. What follows is an illustrative presentation of some of these facilitating features. Although these are elements that can help determine the outcome, none of them should be viewed as necessary to it. Otherwise, the analysis of consolidation could be construed to hinge once again on a stringent list of ideal conditions.

A. The Modalities of the First Transition, and the Attitudes of the Principal Authoritarian Regime Elites towards Democratization

The manner in which any new regime, whether authoritarian or democratic, is inaugurated has a significant effect over the regime's subsequent evolution. In cases of democratization, it should be possible to point to the inaugural conditions that are most conducive to initiating a rapid process of democratic consolidation.

The quite varied modalities assumed by the transitions out of authoritarianism have led analysts to propose typologies to discriminate among them. After usefully reviewing the various types, Scott Mainwaring suggests that a three-fold typology is the best way to distinguish such transitions: some occur through a "defeat" or "collapse" of the authoritarian regime; others give way to democratization through "transaction"; while others, those that lie somewhere between these polar types, undergo transition by "extrication."³¹ This typology essentially adds a third

³¹ Scott Mainwaring, "Transitions to Democracy and Democratic Consolidation: Theoretical and Comparative Issues," Kellogg Institute Working Paper, no. 130 (November 1989), pp. 20-29. His own categories are presented on pp. 25-26.

intermediary category to the overall distinction between *reforma* and *ruptura* that emerged from the stark contrast presented by the initiations of the Spanish and Portuguese transitions of the mid 1970s. It is necessary, as Mainwaring notes, to accommodate the many cases that do not fit well in either.³²

Further clarification of the differences among the three categories could enhance their usefulness by turning the intermediate one into a distinct type, and not only an intermediate point on a continuum.

A basic distinguishing feature of transitions that occur by “extrication” or by “transaction” from those that begin through a “defeat” of the authoritarian regime is the relative ability, in the former cases, of the outgoing rulers to hold on to power for a significant length of time beyond the onset of the crisis that sets in motion the process of transition. Rulers who have this capacity can threaten to stretch it out further, and are therefore able to specify some conditions to their eventual transfer of power. While this distinction separates “defeat” or “collapse” from “extrication” and “transaction” fairly well, the difference between the latter two categories, which rests implicitly on the degree to which outgoing authoritarian rulers can stipulate their departing conditions, is not drawn sharply enough. Presumably in cases of “transaction” this capacity is maximal, but it is hard to make categorical judgements with such differences of degree. Hence, adding an additional criterion, namely, whether the first transition occurs with or without breaking the formal rules of the authoritarian regime, can assist in establishing the difference between cases in which authoritarian rule does not simply “collapse.” These rules can be enshrined in a constitution or basic document, in special acts, or simply in a selective but circumscribed and predictable use of aspects of a pre-existing, even democratic, constitution. Transitions through “extrication”—no matter how long they take—would refer to those in which such rules are broken, and transitions through “transaction”—again, no matter how long they take—would be reserved for transitions occurring without having broken the formal framework of the prior authoritarian regime. Authoritarian rulers can generally be presumed to have greater capacity to impose conditions—to “transact” in a way favorable to them—over their oppositions in “transaction” (*reform* may still be the better term to use) rather than “extrication” situations. In all transitions by “collapse” the rules of the authoritarian regime are violated, but its rulers are unable to impose any conditions to their leaving power—otherwise the transition would occur by “extrication.”

Still, these categories need to be supplemented by others before they can usefully distinguish among the dynamics of various transitions. For instance, both the Spanish and the Chilean transitions occurred through reform, i.e., without violating the formal rules of the authoritarian regimes, but this similarity is of little interest in what have been such different cases.

³² Mainwaring, p. 26. He refers explicitly to “most recent transitions in Latin America” as examples that do not fit.

What must be added to the above discussed types is a dimension that captures the attitudes of the last ruling elites of the authoritarian regime towards democratization. Some favor it, as did King Juan Carlos and Adolfo Suárez in Spain, perhaps Roh Tae Wu in South Korea, and more recently, the authorities in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Lithuania. Others may have an ambivalent attitude towards democratization, confusing it with the liberalization of the authoritarian regime and revealing considerable wariness over its extension, as has been the case of the military in Brazil and perhaps of the top Communist authorities in Poland and the Soviet Union. And still others may be fundamentally opposed to it. Such was the case with General Augusto Pinochet, who repeatedly rejected democracy by associating it with assorted ills he saw in the Chilean past, such as demagogic politicians, chaos, Marxist infiltration, and so on. His explicit intention was to create a “protected” democracy, a euphemism for the continuation of an authoritarian regime under his direction.

The combination of both dimensions, i.e. the modalities of the transition with the attitudes of the exiting authoritarian rulers towards democratization, generates a variety of types which are exemplified with approximate national examples in Figure 1. There is no space here to discuss each one as a prototypical first transition. What is important to highlight is that the first transitions that are most likely to generate the least problematic processes of democratic consolidation are those in which the last ruling elites of the authoritarian regime favor democratization. Such situations occur after the triumph within the authoritarian regime of what could be called, borrowing in part from Guillermo O'Donnell's classic statement of the “soft-liner” versus “hard-liner” split, as the super-soft-liners, i.e., those who not only favor the liberalization of authoritarian rule but are committed to democratization.³³ Moreover, transitions led by such super-soft-liners that occur, in addition, through reform, are more likely to permit the same political leaders who carry out the transition to retain leading positions in the new democratic context. As such, their first to second transitions have greater continuity. These transitions are only threatened by the ability of hard-liners to stage a revolt against them, but hard-liner success in these cases is limited by the fact that the super-soft-liners have already emerged by defeating them from within the regime; hence it is not surprising that Alexander Dubcek's Czechoslovakia and Imre Nagy's Hungary, two cases that led to authoritarian reversion, required external support.

³³ Guillermo O'Donnell, “Notas para el estudio del proceso de democratización política a partir del estado burocrático autoritario,” *Desarrollo económico* 22, no. 86 (July-September 1982).

**ATTITUDES OF THE LAST MAIN
AUTHORITARIAN REGIME ELITES
TOWARDS DEMOCRACY**

**MODALITIES OF TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY FROM AUTHORITARIAN RULE
Change Occurs Through**

FIGURE 1

	Collapse, Defeat or Withdrawal ¹	Extrication ²	Reform ³
Favor full democratization	Czechoslovakia 1989	East Germany 1990 Peru 1980 Brazil 1945	Spain 1975-76 Hungary 1989 South Korea 1987
Prefer liberalized authoritarian regime but will accept democratization	Argentina 1983 Colombia 1958	Venezuela 1958 Argentina 1973	Poland 1989 Brazil 1980s
Opposed to democratization	Greece 1974 Portugal 1975 Germany and Japan 1945 Italy 1945 Romania 1989	Uruguay 1985	Chile 1990

- ¹ Rules of the authoritarian regime are abandoned; rulers cannot or opt not to negotiate conditions for leaving power.
- ² Rules of the authoritarian regime are abandoned, but rulers negotiate leaving power.
- ³ Transition occurs without breaking the rules of the old regime.

Other cases of transition are less favorable for the successful resolution of the process of consolidation. While transitions that occur through the collapse or defeat of entrenched “hard-line” rulers opposed to democracy have the advantage of generating a largely clean slate upon which to build new institutions, as first transitions to democracy these are extremely risky, since it is not at all clear that those who take power in such convulsed situations will be committed to building a genuine democracy, or whether the social and political forces that supported the authoritarian regime will be allowed, or even willing, to participate in it. The second transition in these cases will have a greater probability of success and will occur more smoothly if the outgoing authoritarian regime elites are highly isolated from the nation’s social and political forces, if political leadership willing to participate (and have its opponents participate) in a democratic framework is available for all major segments of opinion, and if the authoritarian regime collapses swiftly in the absence of civil war or much internal violence. The Greek transition was therefore much easier than that of most other cases such as Portugal or Nicaragua. The Portuguese transition required the elimination of the Grand Council of the Revolution, a body designed to protect the new regime from the influence of forces supporting the old order. In Nicaragua, the commitment of the Sandinistas and of their opponents to democratic consolidation was questionable, and the mutual suspicions and resentments were aggravated by the fact that in the aftermath of civil war the Sandinista-controlled army became the Nicaraguan Armed Forces. That army has become, after the transfer of power to President Violeta Chamorro, a “reserved domain” of Sandinista control.

Among the remaining situations, the most unusual is the one combining a first transition through reform with a hard-line authoritarian regime leadership opposed to democracy, i.e., the Chilean case in Figure 1. This type of first transition poses unique and difficult problems for the subsequent consolidation of democracy. As a transition through reform, it permits a great deal of continuity in the political elites and state officials who remain in place from the authoritarian regime to the democratic situation. And given that in the main such elites are basically opposed to a democratic regime (at best some accept it conditionally), the transition through reform allows them the capacity to create formal (i.e., legally based) institutions and the organizational basis for exerting tutelarity, for reserving domains, and for staking a claim to revert to the authoritarian regime while ceding the way to what becomes a highly bounded transition. The second transition must then proceed unavoidably through reform as well. Its success depends on a favorable relative balance of political forces within the new institutional strictures, and the opportunities they offer to accomplish the necessary reforms without abandoning their formal procedures.³⁴

³⁴ There is no space in this paper to explain the paradoxical combination of a first transition through reform in which the main helmsman of the authoritarian regime is opposed to democratization. It has to do with the fact that the Pinochet regime made the 1980 Constitution a centerpiece of its political legacy, but the democratic opposition was able to defeat Pinochet following its procedures. The latter could then not abandon the legal apparatus he had created,

B. Regime Comparisons, Historical Memories, and Legitimacy

All transitions stimulate collective memories of past political symbols, institutions, leaders, parties, and social organizations, creating images of what must be restituted, newly created, avoided, and eliminated. These memories are associated with past regimes, inviting most importantly comparisons among the evolving transitional democratic situation, the prior authoritarian regime, and the regime or regimes (depending on the specific experiences) that preceded the latter.

The leaders of regime changes often stimulate comparisons to the immediately preceding regime by appealing to what can be called “inverse legitimation,” i.e., attempts to validate the new regime and even garner support for it by pointing to real or exaggerated faults of the previous one.³⁵ Referring to these comparisons, Guillermo O’Donnell suggests that democratic consolidation is favored by widespread highly negative experiences of the population with repression and economic failure under the authoritarian regime.³⁶ If this is the case, there may well be greater public resistance to any attempts to overthrow the democratic regime when it faces difficulties, as well as greater reluctance on the part of political elites favoring authoritarianism to make them.³⁷ As a result, the notion that the electoral route is the only viable one to form governments would be enhanced.

O’Donnell also suggests that, in general, cases that involve redemocratization, i.e., those in which there already was a consolidated democracy in the not so remote past, have significant advantages over those in which the current transition represents a case of constructing a democratic regime for the first time.³⁸ Parties and a party system are usually more readily reconstituted to operate in a democracy in such cases, and other political institutions, such as the

but chose to bind it with additional strictures diminishing the authority of the democratic government.

³⁵ Arturo Valenzuela and I first used the notion of “inverse legitimation” to point to the deliberate attempts by the then new military government in Chile to validate its rule by referring to the failures of the previous government and the democratic past in general; in J. Samuel Valenzuela and Arturo Valenzuela, “A Regime in the Making?: Post-Coup Politics in Chile,” paper presented at the World Congress of Sociology, Toronto, 19-24 August 1974, at a Political Sociology Research Committee session chaired by Juan Linz, p. 43.

Juan Linz’s “minimal definition of legitimacy” incorporates the notion of comparisons: “a legitimate government is one considered to be the least evil of the forms of government” in Juan Linz, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown, and Reequilibration* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), p.18.

³⁶ Guillermo O’Donnell, “Transições,” pp. 58-64.

³⁷ From this perspective, the widespread perception of economic and political failure of Communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe is an important advantage for democratic elites. Similarly, for Spanish political elites and public opinion the successful model of democracy and development in the European Economic Community served as powerful proof that both were possible at the same time, and that the Franco regime stood in the way of an integration into Europe.

³⁸ O’Donnell, “Notes for the Study of Democratic Consolidation in Latin America,” p. 9.

organization of legislatures, the operation of the electoral system, the restoration of civic ceremonies associated with a prior democracy, and so on, all fall more easily into place. Similarly, the new democratic situation appears to be a continuity of something that existed in the past rather than a new and unknown departure, a notion that is all the more important and favorable for a *reconsolidation* of democracy if the prior democratic regime was in addition tied to feelings of national identity and pride.³⁹ Such cases of *redemocratization* are only hampered by returning images of the crisis that led to their breakdown, which opponents of the democratic process will usually attempt to emphasize. Successful *redemocratizations* therefore require a deliberate effort on the part of the democratizing elites to avoid resurrecting symbols, images, conducts, and political programs associated with the conflicts leading to prior breakdown.⁴⁰

In cases where the past democratic referent is to democratic situations that contained one or more of the perverse institutional elements delineated above (tutelarity or coup politics for example), the reconstitutive tendency in the new transitional process may lead to a reassertion of the same perverse elements, adding considerable difficulties to the prospects for democratic consolidation. Past democratic episodes in many Latin American countries have been of this nature; in Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia, most notably, civilian and military elites usually retained an undercurrent of coup politics behind the formalities of the democratic process, and in Brazil—again most notably—the military somehow retained the sense that it is entitled to exercise the old *poder moderador* of the emperor, thereby leading to pretensions of tutelarity. In these cases, democratic consolidation requires a decisive break on the part of the democratizing elites (hopefully both civilian and military) with such past practices. A widespread sense that they led to profound failures may stimulate this change.

A central difficulty with collective memories of regimes, political figures, and symbols is that they can be a source of significant division among different segments of the population. One of the main problems of democratic consolidation in the French Third Republic was that the political elites were divided in their regime preferences, and each sector had its past regime referent and its associated symbols to fall back on.⁴¹ Thus, democratic consolidation is favored by situations in which the evaluations of the past by the different sectors all lead, somehow, to attitudes favorable to an accommodation among political forces. This accommodation requires the

³⁹ Such was the case in Latin America, especially in Chile and Uruguay.

⁴⁰ In Chile and Uruguay this has been done quite consciously by the main political elites of the democratic transition, and constitutes a hopeful sign for democratic consolidation. Spain also furnishes a good example of this purposive avoidance of associations with problematic elements from the past.

⁴¹ Paradoxically, the inability of the various elites to come to agreements over the form the regime should take and over which should be the national colors permitted, by default, the inception of the Third Republic. See Jean-Marie Mayeur, *Les débuts de la III^e République, 1871-1898* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1973), chapter 1.

various sectors to view positively those elements in their favored past regimes that other segments do not find too objectionable, and reject or at least criticize those that were most divisive. An example of the latter from the Spanish case is the rejection of the current Left of the extreme and rabid anticlericalism of its forebears during the Spanish Second Republic. Accommodation also requires a search for unifying national symbols. If each sector relentlessly insists on changing the name of every plaza and street to commemorate past figures and dates that are highly divisive, and if anniversaries of past events that have entirely different meanings for the various communities are observed, then political symbols and regime comparisons will retain the currency of past conflicts. Similarly, democratic consolidation is favored if the various sectors agree that a democratic regime would be, following Juan Linz's minimal definition of legitimacy, if not the most favored then the "least evil" among the alternatives.⁴²

The initial period of transition can itself stimulate such perceptions. For this, it is best if, to use Juan Linz's terms again, the new democratic government is relatively efficacious and effective, and its leadership is perceived to be relatively honest and able.⁴³ At a time in which the democratic institutions are fragile because they are new or have been recently recreated, it is best if the policies and leaders that emanate from their workings be given relatively high marks; otherwise, the public (and especially the politically organized and active segments) may associate negative performances with the regime and its alternatives may appear preferable. This does not necessarily mean that overall economic and social conditions must be favorable for a successful transition. Rather, the basic point is that democratic political leaders and governments be widely viewed as doing the best that can be done given the circumstances, even if the transition coincides with difficult times.⁴⁴

Unfortunately, as noted briefly by Linz, such public perceptions can be more difficult to attain in a democratic context given its greater openness and the expectations it often raises.⁴⁵ By broadening the arena for discussion of national issues (in legislatures, television debates, universities, and so on) and by stimulating political competition for votes, the public's awareness and exposure to problems can easily expand, thereby increasing the sense that the government is inadequate to resolve them. Democratic guarantees to freedom of expression also raise the extent of public scrutiny of political leaders, and while this is a necessary and welcome

⁴² Linz, *supra*.

⁴³ Efficacy refers to the ability of the government to articulate policies and goals that will resolve national problems, while effectiveness refers to the capacity to actually implement such policies and goals. High marks on both counts are important in enhancing, as Linz notes, the legitimacy of democratic institutions. See Juan Linz, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes*, pp. 16-23.

⁴⁴ Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, "Political Crafting of Democratic Consolidation or Destruction: European and South American Comparisons" in Robert Pastor, ed., *Democracy in the Americas: Stopping the Pendulum* (New York and London: Holmes and Meier, 1989), note that Spanish consolidation occurred despite coinciding with economic difficulties; see especially pp. 43, 46.

⁴⁵ Linz, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes*, p. 22.

development, it exposes leaders to the barbs of unethical opponents who may succeed in distorting the public's perception of them. If the political change raises popular expectations that long-standing problems and privations associated with the authoritarian regime will be overcome, the gap between such expectations and the possibilities of meeting them even with the best of policies may be unbridgeable.

Democratic consolidation would therefore be favored by government leaders who try to lower public expectations while at the same time undertaking policies that deliver results that exceed their own rhetoric; by a relative absence of government corruption; by the development of a truthful but responsible press that is not strictly tied to partisan alignments; and by the presence of a restrained, nondemagogic democratic opposition. The Spanish transition, despite the negative economic context in which it occurred, exemplifies well this combination of favorable perceptions and responsible press as well as opposition behavior. Such conditions are a tall order, but approximating them is all the more important if the prior authoritarian regime has an aura of success and probity, whatever the actual facts.

C. The Moderation of Political Conflict

It is hardly novel to assert that the moderation of political conflict would serve to advance democratic consolidation. Nothing is more destructive of democracy than frequent confrontations in the streets, the legislature, the state administration, and elsewhere between groups who view themselves as engaged in zero-sum conflict. The lifting of authoritarian repression and the return of democratic liberties to organize, petition, and demonstrate should not lead to widespread disorder and violence. The establishment of democratic constitutional processes should not lead to either policy stalemates for want of compromises among different forces, or to what politically organized minorities view as a complete disregard for their interests and values (or of course for their democratic rights, but if these are violated the new regime is not a democracy). Hence, the greater the degree of consensus among political forces, the easier it is to consolidate democracy. Attempts to retain a tutelary power, reserved domains, electoral discriminations, and the use of coup or insurrection politics are in the last analysis expressions of distrust by powerful actors of the consequences they perceive would flow from the electoral victories of their opponents.

Giovanni Sartori has usefully broken down the notion of consensus into three possible meanings: firstly, that over "ultimate values"; secondly, over "rules of the game, or procedures"; and finally, over "specific governmental policies." He notes that the first is a "facilitating" but not an indispensable condition for the existence of a democracy, while the second is indeed a

fundamental prerequisite; he adds that discussion and dissensus in the third sense is part of the essence of democratic governance.⁴⁶

Following the first sense, political conflict would certainly take on moderate contours if there were a relatively small ideological distance among the major sectors of the polity, and if the national community were not divided into different linguistic, religious, racial, or ethnic segments that distrust each other and have a history of conflict. However, countries that have experienced democratic breakdown in the past or that only recently made transitions to democracy generally do not have the kind of ultimate value consensus that can be found in Scandinavia or the United States. Hence, this facilitating condition is generally lacking. Nonetheless, consolidation would be favored if the transition coincides with a decline in ideological distance (as has occurred in countries with a strong Marxist Left as a result of the rise of Eurocommunism and, more recently, the collapse of the Communist model); with a surge in support for pragmatic center parties and moderate leaders, old or new, and a decline in that for the extremes; and/or with a new willingness on the part of political leaderships, both top and middle level, to forge agreements and understandings that safeguard the value commitments and interests of their respective constituencies or communities. This latter point is particularly important. Political conflict is often stimulated by the more extremist views of the leaders and militants of different segments of societies, and their willingness to resort to negotiations and compromises in fact will in these cases not place them beyond but more in line with the sentiments of their constituencies. Such moderation is the likely result of what political leaders see with new clarity as the costs and sacrifices imposed by the outgoing authoritarian regime, and of the current development of a new or renewed appreciation for the democratic system and its rights.

Sartori's second dimension of consensus, that over procedures, amounts, when reached, to a minimization of what Linz would call disloyalty and semi-loyalty.⁴⁷ It is certainly an important component of democratic consolidation, for it buttresses the notion that democracy will continue indefinitely.

But several comments are in order: first, despite the analytical usefulness of Sartori's distinctions, this dimension of consensus is not completely detached from the former one. The procedures will be accepted as long as the various political forces view them as being fair. This consensus will prove to be elusive if the procedures are not inclusive of all political forces, or are viewed by some as giving undue advantages to others, resulting in policy outcomes that are perceived to be unacceptably injurious to some segment's values or interests. Hence, procedural consensus is more readily reached if the participants in the democratic process do not expect

⁴⁶ Giovanni Sartori, *The Theory of Democracy Revisited. Part One: The Contemporary Debate* (Chatham, NJ: Chatham House Publishers, Inc., 1987) pp. 90-91.

⁴⁷ Juan Linz, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes*, pp. 27-38.

to lose all the time, and think that no dire consequences will follow when they do lose. The more the political community is sharply divided, as Sartori notes, the more the democratic majority principle has to be tempered with respects for minority positions.⁴⁸ The procedures must also be molded to the specificities of national societies, yielding different types of democracies. Such procedures serve to structure a particular balance of power among the various segments of the political community, and this balance should not be viewed as grossly out of kilter with the size and importance of the segments' various social bases. Second, the consensus over procedures cannot include what I have labelled here the perverse formal and informal institutions. Not only does their existence prevent democratic governance, but they may also derail the second transition in the long run by stimulating conflict over the procedures, the alienation of the political forces that are disadvantaged by them, and eventually the "slow death" of democracy—to follow O'Donnell's expression.⁴⁹ Thirdly, some procedures are quite simply better than others. Despite a consensus over the procedures, their actual workings may lead to unnecessary rigidities, conflicts, and even breakdowns. Generally speaking, procedures that lead to staging zero-sum forms of conflict can be detrimental to democratic consolidation. By avoiding one important winner take-all form of confrontation, namely presidential elections, parliamentary regimes are, for instance, more suitable to the transit to a consolidated democracy than presidential ones.⁵⁰ Semi-presidential systems are no better. Their potential for generating two heads of state when the president does not belong to the same majority as the prime minister who enjoys the confidence of the legislatures is an open recipe for conflict that could have dire consequences unless the leaders in question reach the necessary accommodations based normally on who has the most recent electoral majority. While any system can only work adequately, in the last analysis, given the willingness of political leaders to avoid pushing it to crisis limits, the adoption of procedures that can stimulate debates over competencies or that call for zero-sum confrontations will not favor consolidation.

Finally, while disagreements and discussions over policy are part of the essence of democracy, democratic governments—especially transition governments—should not pursue single-mindedly policies that reflect divisive positions. Moreover, as noted earlier, policies that maximize efficacy and effectiveness can enhance the ability of the transition government to consolidate the democratic process.

D. The Management of Social Conflict

⁴⁸ Sartori, p. 240. This in fact occurs in most democracies, not only in consociational ones, as Dahl shows in his discussion of Lijphart's model of consociationalism. See Robert Dahl, *Democracy and its Critics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989) pp.156-162.

⁴⁹ O'Donnell, "Transições," p. 48.

⁵⁰ See footnote 1 above.

The consolidation of democracy is also favored by the creation of the proper frameworks for channeling and resolving social conflict. Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter have noted that the transition to democracy leads to a broad "resurrection of civil society."⁵¹ Many groups take advantage of the new political circumstances to create (or recreate) and expand their organizations and articulate their grievances, some of which may have been suppressed by the authoritarian regime.⁵² The new organizing may lead to confrontations among social groups, "resurrecting" as well old animosities among communities—as shown by the resurgence of regional nationalisms most dramatically in Central Europe and in the Soviet Union.

Obviously, political and social conflicts are intimately related. During the authoritarian regime, the absence or inadequacy of institutions (such as national elections and democratically generated legislatures) through which opponents of the regime can express their views and programs leads them to center their opposition activities in a variety of loci in civil society (such as churches, the labor and student movements, sports clubs, etc.).⁵³ The resulting confrontations between authoritarian regimes and social movements and organizations can help undermine authoritarian rule by continually demonstrating its essential illegitimacy. During the course of the first transition, as O'Donnell and Schmitter argue, the willingness and ability of social organizations to show restraint may prove to be an important contribution to ensuring that it will not be derailed by a reassertion of the possibly still powerful hard-line forces of the outgoing authoritarian regime.⁵⁴ But a successful second transition requires the elimination of this form of politically motivated restraint, and this by definition: even if such restraint can help ensure the stability of the transitional form of democracy, it is a reflection of the fact that important social and political actors do not lend credence to its endurance into the foreseeable future.

Yet the release of this restraint (or its absence in certain transitions) should not lead to broadscale confrontations among social groups. If this were the case, the consolidation of democracy may well be delayed or questioned anew. The resulting overload of issues difficult to resolve and public disorder as demonstrations and possibly violent confrontations among groups spill into the streets can foster doubts about the ability of the fledgling democratic process to address national problems and can rekindle sentiments in favor of renewed authoritarian rule.

⁵¹ Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter, "Tentative Conclusions," pp. 48-56.

⁵² For a discussion of labor movements in the context of the first transition to democracy see J. Samuel Valenzuela, "Labor Movements in Transitions to Democracy: A Framework for Analysis" in *Comparative Politics*, 21, no. 4 (July 1989).

⁵³ José María Maravall, *Dictatorship and Political Dissent* (London: Tavistock, 1978), p. 166, notes this point in his discussion of the connection between the parties of the Spanish Left and the worker and student movements. It is elaborated and illustrated with the Chilean case in Arturo Valenzuela and J. Samuel Valenzuela, "Party Oppositions under the Chilean Authoritarian Regime" in J. Samuel Valenzuela and Arturo Valenzuela, eds., *Military Rule in Chile: Dictatorship and Oppositions* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1986), especially pp 213-219.

⁵⁴ O'Donnell and Schmitter, pp. 26-27.

Although the financial capacity of the state and overall economic conditions will hardly, if ever, suffice to satisfy all demands, this is not the crucial point regarding these challenges. Rather, the key lies in the creation of what can be called adequate “social demand processing settlements.”

Such settlements include the creation, change, or expansion of a variety of arrangements. They may entail, first, setting up new state institutions (or restructuring old ones) that will receive and process social demands; second, the establishment, expansion, or recreation of popular and other associations to voice demands and negotiate some resolution to them, with leaders who have the necessary legitimacy and support to be able to call off demonstrations and other collective actions;⁵⁵ third, the development of mutually agreeable procedures that social groups who confront each other regularly (such as labor and business) can follow to settle their differences, with or without state assistance; and fourth, the existence of the proper links between social groups and the political class in parliament if not also in the executive to ensure that legislation and other state actions affecting the features of the settlement and its subsequent changes result, as far as possible, from a parallel political as well as social consensus.

These settlements are most adequate to facilitate democratic consolidation when they are perceived by all those concerned to operate with a minimum of politicization. In other words, when state institutions are responsive to social group demands through their normal bureaucratic operation, without provoking drawn-out collective action against them given the widespread perception of their insensitivity or unfairness; when the leadership of social groups is viewed as acting primarily in the best interests of its members, however defined for the short, medium and/or long term, and not primarily in response to the national strategies of the parties they may be affiliated to; when the procedures to be followed in negotiating differences are not continually put into question by the relevant actors; when it is unclear who the proper actors to resolve the issues at hand are; or when social demands and disputes continually become part of a national political debate given the intervention of legislators, cabinet members, or party leaders, thereby interfering with the “normal” conflict resolution procedures and making the outcome hinge in part on the national balance of political interests and forces. This form of politicization can result from the lack of congruity (produced by the operation of the electoral system and/or the high degree of segmentation of party constituencies) between the strength of a party or parties in the formal institutions of the political arena and the extent and intensity of its or their support within social movements and organizations.

In brief, democratic consolidation is favored if social conflicts and demands are handled through predictable and broadly accepted procedures that are inclusive of all the relevant groups

⁵⁵ The capacity to call off collective actions is a key component of labor movement formation. See J. Samuel Valenzuela, “Uno schema teorico per l’analisi della formazione del movimento operaio” in *Stato e mercato*, vol. 1, no. 3, December 1981, p. 467. Such a notion can be extended to other organizations that engage in collective action.

but are, at the same time, insulated within the narrowest possible boundaries in terms of the specificity of the issues and the state, political, and social actors who are involved. But “social settlements” with these characteristics do not occur automatically in the immediate aftermath of the first transition, a point at which social conflicts and demands will inevitably be highly politicized as a result of the regime transition. An important aspect of the second transition is the construction of new social demand and conflict processing settlements, and its success depends at least in part on their adequacy. It may not always be possible to reach proper arrangements to deal with them, in which case the new democratic system may continue to be perceived as fragile.⁵⁶

E. Subordinating the Military to the Democratic Government

Placing the military under the authority of the elected government is a key facilitating condition for democratic consolidation. In so far as elected government officials are unsuccessful in their attempts to subordinate the military, the resulting military autonomy is contrary to the consolidation of democracy since it would be, following the above indicated conception, a reserved domain containing a fundamental ingredient of state power: force of arms. In this case reducing military autonomy is an indispensable ingredient for consolidation. In its most extreme form, military autonomy contains the following elements: fixed budgetary lines that provide the basic sources of funding for the armed forces but cannot be reviewed by democratic government officials; exclusive military control over the expenditures of its budget; no or only pro forma review of officer promotions by elected authorities or their representatives; designation of the top ranking officers strictly following the lines of seniority; no civilian governmental review of training programs and military doctrine; exclusive military control over the deployment of units, and over

⁵⁶ One of the social settlements that always needs to be addressed in democratic transitions is that of labor-management relations. Authoritarian regimes invariably interfere with the industrial relations system given labor’s potential to become a locus of opposition organizing. The transition does not permit the survival of the authoritarian regime’s labor containment schemes, and a new settlement must be reached. Forging it will prove easiest and most conducive to democratic consolidation when both labor and employer organizations can rapidly develop (if they do not already have them) broadly accepted leaderships, and when these leaders are able to devise the new procedures by mutual consent with a minimum of state interference.

Other conflicts and demands can vary widely across national societies. In some, the existence of peripheral or regional identities or nationalisms can be a vexing problem that surfaces strongly with the lifting of the authoritarian regime’s repression. The creation of the Spanish *autonomías*, which for some regions such as Castilla and León meant the development of somewhat artificial units, can be seen in retrospect to have been an excellent way to settle the centrifugal regionalisms of that divided national society. The settlements must be tailor-made to the specificities of each situation. In the Soviet Union, which may not be a viable unit under a democratic system, the Spanish solution of limited sovereignty would probably only accelerate national disintegration. In other transitions one of the most difficult issues can result from demands for redress of the authoritarian regime’s human rights violations. This problem has particularly acute consequences in situations where the forces associated with the authoritarian regime retain powerful positions in the new democratic context.

intelligence gathering and storing of information; and a ghettoization of military life, including family life, through the development of separate housing units for officers, hospitals, schools, clubs, and credit unions.

Let us suppose that democratically elected government officials and their civilian political opponents have no interest in exerting any control over military policies and other such matters, readily agreeing to let this aspect of the state remain in the hands of officers. This is an implausible scenario, for even where elected government officials seemingly express no interest in seeking control over the military it is not clear whether such inaction results from impotence or from conviction. Be this as it may, in this case military autonomy would not constitute, following the definition noted above, a reserved domain.

And yet, even in the unlikely event that military autonomy would not constitute a reserved domain, it would still be inimical to democratic consolidation. Such autonomy tends to engender, if it is not already present, military tutelariness over the political system, as officers have the independent organizational basis, plus the force of arms, to question government policies. For the same reason it also tends to generate an undercurrent of coup politics as officers can sooner or later be perceived by civilian opponents of the government to be available, given appropriate conditions, to overthrow it. Elections would not then be the only means to constitute governments, in which case the democratic process would hardly be consolidated.

Hence, a fully democratic regime should contain in constitutional and other basic laws the formal outlines of military subordination to elected government officials, exclusive of any provisions suggesting military tutelariness. And yet, prescribing this subordination in statutory terms by no means ensures it in practice, as demonstrated by Alfonsín's Argentina, nor does it prevent retrogression of government control over the military where it appears to present few difficulties during the course of the first transition, as was the case in Spain and could perhaps be in Central and Eastern Europe. Consequently, the key question for democratic consolidation is whether or not the second transition succeeds in removing or preventing the emergence of the specter of coup politics.

There is broad consensus in the specialized literature that successful military coups occur when there appears to be considerable civilian support for them, and that coup politics therefore involves both civilian and military elites.⁵⁷ In this form of politics, civilian opponents of the

⁵⁷ This is one of the basic points elaborated in Alfred Stepan, *The Military in Politics: Changing Patterns in Brazil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971). For other sources that develop this notion see Felipe Agüero, "The Military and the Limits to Democratization in South America," forthcoming in Scott Mainwaring, Guillermo O'Donnell, and J. Samuel Valenzuela, eds., footnote 2. It should be noted that such appearance of support for a military coup has nothing to do with majority opinions in the population as expressed in elections or in reliable surveys. It pertains more to a certain "climate of opinion" generated by newspaper editorials and public comments by political and other elites.

government seek to maximize their capacity to use the threat of a military coup to further their political ends. This involves establishing and retaining close links to important officers and/or the ability to initiate civil unrest and other forms of destabilization that will induce the military to intervene. To counter opposition efforts the government cannot let its relations to the military deteriorate. As a result, it is bound to be receptive to the military's demands, whatever they may be, and eager to demonstrate to its opponents that it has a good working relationship with the military. As part of this effort, some heads of government appoint military officers to important positions where they can serve, depending on the circumstances, in a "neutral" and "technical" capacity or in a way that deliberately expresses the military's support for the government's policies (or vice versa, in effect). The end result is to continually buttress, paradoxically, the autonomy and politicization of the military: the latter can obtain from the government what it wants as long as it is courted by civilian forces that are never far from playing coup politics, but it is forced, in order to continue the game, to make itself available as the ultimate political arbiter. This form of politically induced autonomy leads to military tutelage over the political process, and can be exercised on a more or less continuous basis without resorting frequently to actually staging a coup. Needless to say, democratic consolidation under these circumstances is hardly possible. Through the actions of both civilians and the military, the democratic government remains under a thinly tethered sword of Damocles. Ironically, governments that are able to tether the sword more tightly by properly playing coup avoidance may also reaffirm the sword's place in the political system; engaging in the rules of perverse institutions is a vicious circle.

Discarding coup politics requires changes both in the military establishment and in the civilian political forces. The military's disposition and ability to interject itself in the overall political process and couple its corporative demands with the implicit threat of using its arms against the government must somehow be drastically reduced. It should no longer be available to civilian forces pressing the government with their alternative policy agendas. Civilian political elites should also end all attempts to use contact with the military or appeals to the military as trump cards to enhance their power capabilities. Change must occur at both levels for a long-term resolution of this problem. Any hint of military availability to act against elected authorities will eventually generate civilian forces willing to use it to buttress their positions, and no military establishment can refrain permanently from continuous courting by civilian forces in both the opposition and the government seeking to score political gain in an atmosphere that—given precisely the existence of civilians courting the military—will stimulate perceptions of national political crisis.

Second transitions differ regarding whether or not the specter of coup politics will become a significant problem. The variations are related to the following points.

Regarding the military side of the coup politics equation, cases of transition differ in the military's proximity to and identification with the outgoing authoritarian regime. These differences

can have a significant impact on the military's autonomy from and attitudes towards the new democratic government when coupled, in particular, with the modalities assumed by the transition. When the military was very proximate to the authoritarian regime (as in cases of military government) and the officers identified strongly with its objectives, military autonomy and the development of coup politics are likely to be higher than in other situations unless the modality of the transition permits a thorough reorganization or refounding of the armed forces under a new leadership committed to democratic norms. This refounding occurred, for example, in postwar Germany and Japan under the influence of the allied and American occupation forces, and in Costa Rica under the aegis of the successful 1948 insurrection led by José Figueres. Such reorganizations spring from transitions through defeat or collapse rather than reform or extrication, but not all such defeats lead to the complete revamping of the armed forces. While the Argentinean transition of 1982-83 in many respects occurred through a collapse of the authoritarian military regime, it did not lead to a profound transformation of the military institution despite President Alfonsín's reforms.⁵⁸

In the absence of these transitions through collapse and military refounding, the creation of a military establishment that is unavailable to civilian coup wishers and plotters can nonetheless be obtained through the reorientation of the armed forces under new political-military leadership. King Juan Carlos made a critical difference in the Spanish transition through his decisive leadership against military insubordination—most dramatically during the February 23, 1985 coup attempt—thereby permitting the civilian transitional governments to restructure the armed forces. Although Franco's regime was not a military one, the armed forces were virtually the only segment in the Spanish post-transition that continued to have strong Franquist sentiments and identity.⁵⁹ In Portugal General Eanes played an important role in pressing the military to regain its discipline and return to the barracks. Subsequently, military tutelage over the government as expressed through the military-dominated Council of the Revolution was terminated through the constitutional reforms approved in 1982 under Eanes' presidency.⁶⁰ Individual idiosyncrasies of

⁵⁸ For a discussion of the Argentinean military in the aftermath of the transition see Andrés Fontana, "La política militar del gobierno constitucional argentino" in Nun and Portantiero, eds., *Ensayos sobre la transición democrática en la Argentina*. In Fontana's estimation, the changes did not "destroy completely (although they did affect) the institutional bases of military autonomy and corporative consciousness," p. 382.

⁵⁹ The relationship between the military and the Spanish transition is discussed in Felipe Agüero, "Gobierno y Fuerzas Armadas en la España posfranquista," unpublished paper, August 1989.

⁶⁰ Although General Ramalho Eanes was not particularly pleased with the diminution of presidential power in the 1982 reforms, he supported the abolition of the Council of the Revolution and other features that assured the subordination of the military to the elected government. For a general discussion of these matters see Walter C. Opello, jr., *Portugal's Political Development: A Comparative Approach* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1985), p. 74 and chapter 7. For a general treatment of the Portuguese transition see Thomas C. Bruneau, *Politics and Nationhood: Post-Revolutionary Portugal* (New York: Praeger, 1984).

actors placed in key positions and other fortuitous circumstances can have important unexpected effects on key processes of the transition, and military subordination to civilian authority is no exception. No observers would have expected King Juan Carlos, Franco's hand-picked successor through a monarchical restoration that passed over Juan Carlos' father, to play such a decisive democratizing role.

The unavailability of the military for coup politics is also enhanced if its military doctrine—i.e., the conception of its role in the state and national society, of its actual or potential enemies, of the nature of war, and the definitions of national security that flow from these—focuses primarily on external threats to national territorial integrity. Such a doctrine minimizes the internal political involvement of the military, even if defensive planning requires paying attention to the internal economic and social conditions that buttress it. It also generates military organization, armament and deployment that is less conducive to internal political intelligence and to the logistics of staging coups. Internal security matters should be in the hands of specialized police units under the Ministries of the Interior. Such an externally focused doctrine will be easier to develop in the absence of serious internal insurrectionary threats against the state. And, as noted by Alfred Stepan, military doctrine and national security definitions should be elaborated primarily by civilians and should result in a civil-military consensus with military involvement in an advisory capacity.⁶¹ Such consensus is, again, easier to retain when the object of military doctrine rests on external threats.

Unfortunately, as has occurred most significantly in Latin America, military doctrine has been in many cases elaborated exclusively by the armed forces. Moreover, its emphasis outside a few arenas of likely international conflagration has been on what are perceived to be internal threats to the security of the state. Genaro Arriagada has shown that this internal focus began in the Southern Cone with the confrontations between the military and striking workers—and the emerging radical Left—in the early twentieth century.⁶² It expanded with the rise of the Cold War and the new role of the Armed Forces as bulwarks against the spread of Communism, which led to a greater focus on internal “subversion” in all areas of national societies, including the churches, unions, and educational institutions.⁶³ This led to a great expansion of internal intelligence gathering as military professionalism led officers to a direct involvement with internal political control and repression. Although the end of the Cold War should facilitate change in military

⁶¹ Alfred Stepan, *Rethinking Military Politics*, p. 141.

⁶² See Genaro Arriagada Herrera, *El pensamiento político de los militares: estudios sobre Chile, Argentina, Brasil y Uruguay* (Santiago: Centro de Investigaciones Socioeconómicas, 1984).

⁶³ In addition to Genaro Arriagada's discussion of this process, see Alfred Stepan, “The New Professionalism of Internal Warfare and Military Role Expansion” in Alfred Stepan, ed., *Authoritarian Brazil*.

doctrine, military establishments are bound to view with great suspicion any attempt by civilians in transition governments to alter its components, conceptions, and training programs.

Given a military-civilian consensus over the mission of the armed forces, governments should try to furnish the military with the necessary means to accomplish it, which includes proper channels for the military to express its corporative needs. Officer discontent over salaries, assignments, and promotions should be avoided, as long as these are consistent with forms of professionalism compatible with democratic governance.⁶⁴ Any military rebellions motivated by officer discontent over institutional and career problems can set the kindling for the initiation of coup politics. No matter how circumscribed officer demands may be to military problems, such rebellions can lead civilian opponents of the government to side with them in order to gain military contacts that can subsequently enhance their power capabilities or even generate a coup coalition. Officer rebellions can therefore signal to civilian elites their availability to engage in coup politics. The principal difficulty in many cases, is that there is no civilian-military consensus over the military's mission. Hence, officer discontent and rebellions against civilian authorities may be a manifestation of attempts to impose, or retain, definitions of the military's mission that are rejected by civilians.

Turning to the civilian side of coup politics, such politics are avoided if the civilian political forces develop the necessary consensus—preferably over fundamental ends, but at least over procedures—including the agreement that none will attempt to develop a military trump card to enhance power capabilities. Such an agreement, explicit or implicit, may be difficult to obtain in some situations. It is facilitated by a context that includes significant international pressures in its favor; that contains a negative assessment of the previous military interventions or governments; that permits civilian forces close to the military to voice their demands effectively following the democratic procedures; and in which the political leadership—civilian or military—of the outgoing authoritarian regime develops a favorable attitude towards democracy. The result should be a total political isolation of rebellious military officers, such as in Spain where only the far rightist fringe had sympathy for them. It is likely that had this not been the case, the King alone would not have been able to take such effective action to confront military insubordination. Given the Latin American military's overdimensioned definition of its mission and its willingness to act against governments repeatedly in the past, a firm consensus among civilian leaders to reject any involvement with rebellious military officers or to strike privileged relations with the military is the main recourse to eliminate or prevent the emergence of coup politics. Among the Latin American cases the Uruguayan comes closest to having attained this important consensus.

⁶⁴ See Stepan, *Rethinking Military Politics*, p. 132, where he cites what J. Samuel Fitch calls “democratic professionalism” as one such form that is compatible with the democratic process.

Conclusions

This paper has attempted to present a delimited notion of democratic consolidation. Such consolidation can be said to have been achieved when most significant political actors and informed publics expect the democratic process to last indefinitely, and when it is free of what have been called “perverse institutions,” namely, tutelary powers, reserved domains of policy, egregious and deliberate distortions of the electoral system and political representation, and the existence of the widespread belief that nonelectoral means are possible to form the national government. These “perverse” elements are conceptually anchored on a minimal formal definition of the democracy. While the procedures that comprise the democratic process lead to a complex institutionalization of a “virtuous” sort since it buttresses a reproduction of that process, the notion of democratic consolidation cannot be left to rest on an analysis of these institutions without tying it to an ideal conception of the features present in democratic polities. Were this the case, few democracies would be considered consolidated. The conceptual link to elements that detract from the minimal workings of the democratic process is strict enough; in fact, by its measure no democracy in Latin America can presently be considered consolidated, with the possible exception of Uruguay. Moreover, consolidated democracies have been a rarity in Latin America: Costa Rica since the 1950s, Venezuela since the 1960s, Chile from the mid 1930s to 1973, Uruguay since the mid 1930s to the Bordaberry presidency, and perhaps Argentina in the mid 1920s.

This paper has also noted that the process of democratic consolidation unfolds through a series of political confrontations which either buttress or remove the perverse elements that detract from the minimal democratic process. These confrontations can be over reforms of the political institutions themselves or over substantive policies. While actors favoring democratic consolidation and those opposing it will generally act in ways that advance their preferences, both can actually contribute to the process or detract from it given short-run calculations of gain, miscalculations, or unanticipated consequences. Consolidation is reached as an *ex post factum* realization; any deliberate plan to advance it will, by virtue of its stated goal, indicate to all those concerned its absence.

While keeping the notion of democratic consolidation tied strictly to a procedural skeleton, this paper has also analyzed some conditions that can facilitate (or detract) from its advancement. Other facilitating conditions could be added to those that were mentioned, as this seems to be a particularly fruitful venue for further comparative research.