Transitions from Authoritarian Rule

Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies

by
Guillermo O'Donnell and
Philippe C. Schmitter

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Introducing Uncertainty

The present volume deals with transitions from certain authoritarian regimes toward an uncertain "something else." That "something" can be the instauration of a political democracy or the restoration of a new, and possibly more severe, form of authoritarian rule. The outcome can also be simply confusion, that is, the rotation in power of successive governments which fail to provide any enduring or predictable solution to the problem of institutionalizing political power. Transitions can also develop into widespread, violent confrontations, eventually giving way to revolutionary regimes which promote changes going far beyond the political realm.

The contributors to this project have approached their respective tasks from perspectives which reflect their own values and preoccupations, as well as the often distinctive characteristics of the countries and issues that they are confronting. We have respected this diversity, regarded it as desirable, and tried to learn from it. Nevertheless, in our coordination of the project we have tried to accentuate three general and shared themes, which we believe are sufficient to ensure as reasonable a degree of convergence as is warranted by the considerable variety of empirical material and the paucity of prior theoretical guidelines. We did not have at the beginning, nor do we have at the end of this lengthy collective endeavor, a "theory" to test or to apply to the case studies and thematic essays in these volumes.

The first general and shared theme is normative, namely, that the instauration and eventual consolidation of political democracy constitutes per se a desirable goal. Some authors may have been more sensitive than others to the trade-offs that this may imply in terms of forgone or deferred opportunities for greater social justice and economic equality, but we all agreed that the establishment of certain rules of regular, formalized political competition deserved priority attention by scholars and practitioners.

The second theme, to a certain extent a corollary of the first, involves an effort to capture the extraordinary uncertainty of the transition, with its numerous surprises and difficult dilemmas. Few moments pose such agonizing choices and responsibilities, ethical as well as political. If we ever have the temerity to formulate a theory of such processes, it would have to be a chapter in a much larger inquiry into the problem of "underdetermined" social change, of large-scale transformations which occur when there are insufficient structural or behavioral parameters to guide and predict the outcome. Such a theory would have to include elements of accident and unpredictability, of crucial decisions taken in a hurry with very inadequate information, of actors facing irresolvable ethical dilemmas and ideological confusions, of dra-

matic turning points reached and passed without an understanding of their future significance. In other words, it would have to be a theory of "abnormality," in which the unexpected and the possible are as important as the usual and the probable. Moreover, the actors' perception of this very abnormality surrounding regime change is itself a factor affecting its eventual outcome. Compared to periods of "order" which characterize the high point of authoritarian rule, the uncertainty and indirection implied in movements away from such a state create the impression of "disorder." This impression some compare nostalgically with the past, while overlooking or regretting the transition's revival of precisely those qualities which the previous regime has suppressed: creativity, hope, self-expression, solidarity, and freedom.

The third theme is closely related to the one we have just discussed. When studying an established political regime, one can rely on relatively stable economic, social, cultural, and partisan categories to identify, analyze, and evaluate the identities and strategies of those defending the status quo and those struggling to reform or transform it. We believe that this "normal science methodology" is inappropriate in rapidly changing situations, where those very parameters of political action are in flux. This includes transitions from authoritarian rule. The increasingly free expression of interests and ideals following liberalization, the variations and shifts in the configuration of power and benefit within the authoritarian regime, and the high indeterminacy of interactions, strategies, and outcomes are, among other characteristics we shall discuss below, crucial reasons for the inadequacy of using "normal" social science concepts and approaches to analyze such situations. During these transitions, in many cases and around many themes, it is almost impossible to specify *ex ante* which classes, sectors, institutions, and other groups will take what role, opt for which issues, or support what alternative. Indeed, it may be that almost all one can say is that, during crucial moments and choices of the transition, most—if not all—of those "standard" actors are likely to be divided and hesitant about their interests and ideals and, hence, incapable of coherent collective action. Moreover, those actors are likely to undergo significant changes as they try to respond to the changing contexts presented them by liberalization and democratization. We believe, therefore, that this type of situation should be analyzed with distinctly political concepts, however vaguely delineated and difficult to pin down they may be. This is not meant to be a methodological credo, advocating the exclusive use of "strategic" concepts heavily weighted toward political calculations and immediate reactions to unfolding processes. Rather, we have attempted to shape conceptual tools that may be reasonably adequate for dealing with choices and processes where assumptions about the relative stability and predictability of social, economic, and institutional parameters—and, therefore, of their descriptive and explanatory power—seem patently inadequate. Nor is this a denial of the long-run causal impact of "structural" (including macroeconomic, world systemic, and social class) factors. It is, to repeat ourselves on a point that we would like not to be misunderstood, our way of

recognizing the high degree of indeterminacy embedded in situations where unexpected events (*fortuna*), insufficient information, hurried and audacious choices, confusion about motives and interests, plasticity, and even indefinition of political identities, as well as the talents of specific individuals (*virtù*), are frequently decisive in determining the outcomes. This is not to deny that the macrostructural factors are still "there," as we shall see at several points in this volume. At some stages in the transition, in relation to certain issues and actors, those broad structures filter down to affect the behavior of groups and individuals. But even those mediations are looser, and their impacts more indeterminate, than in normal circumstances. The short-term political calculations we stress here cannot be "deduced" from or "imputed" to such structures—except perhaps in an act of misguided faith.

As the participants agreed at the beginning, the motivation of this project, and now of the publication of its results, has been practical as well as contemplative. In terms of the latter, the challenge was to explore a theme as uncharted as it is intriguing, taking advantage of the generous support of the Latin American Program of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars of the Smithsonian Institution, and its unprecedented willingness to bring together a working group of distinguished scholars from the United States, Europe, and Latin America. On the side of *praxis* we believe that by exposing the "state of our ignorance," enriched by our reflections about typical dilemmas and choices, and by some generalizations about typical processes, we are providing a useful instrument—pieces of a map—for those who are today venturing, and who tomorrow will be venturing, on the uncertain path toward the construction of democratic forms of political organization. All of us who have participated in this project hope that at least it will contribute to a more intelligent and better-informed discussion, by activists and scholars, of the potentialities, dilemmas, and limitations involved in the complex process of the demise of authoritarian rule and its *possible* replacement by political democracy.

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Defining Some Concepts (and Exposing Some Assumptions)

One major difficulty confronting our collective effort was to create a common language for inquiry among scholars with rather heterogeneous backgrounds. While we cannot pretend to have resolved it completely—many words continue to be used diversely in the chapters of these volumes—the participants did agree on the significance of certain key concepts, and in so doing, they exposed some shared assumptions. These we will try to capture in the following pages.

Transition

What we refer to as the "transition" is the interval between one political regime and another.[1] While we and our collaborators have paid some attention to the aftermath (i.e., to consolidation), our efforts generally stop at the moment that a new regime is installed, whatever its nature or type. Transitions are delimited, on the one side, by the launching of the process of dissolution of an authoritarian regime and, on the other, by the installation of some form of democracy, the return to some form of authoritarian rule, or the emergence of a revolutionary alternative. It is characteristic of the transition that during it the rules of the political game are not defined. Not only are they in constant flux, but they are usually arduously contested; actors struggle not just to satisfy their immediate interests and/or the interests of those whom they purport to represent, but also to define rules and procedures whose configuration will determine likely winners and losers in the future. Indeed, those emergent rules will largely define which resources can legitimately be expended in the political arena and which actors will be permitted to enter it.

Moreover, during the transition, to the extent that there are any effective rules and procedures, these tend to be in the hands of authoritarian rulers. Weakly or strongly, depending on the case and the stage of the transition, these rulers retain discretionary power over arrangements and rights which in a stable democracy would be reliably protected by the constitution and various independent institutions. The typical sign that the transition has begun comes when these authoritarian incumbents, for whatever reason, begin to modify their own rules in the direction of providing more secure guarantees for the rights of individuals and groups.

Liberalization

The process of redefining and extending rights we have labeled "liberalization." It is indicative of the beginning of the transition that its emergence triggers a number of (often unintended) consequences which play an important role in ultimately determining the scope and extension of that process. By liberalization we mean the process of making effective certain rights that protect both individuals and social groups from arbitrary or illegal acts committed by the state or third parties. On the level of individuals, these guarantees include the classical elements of the liberal tradition: habeas corpus; sanctity of private home and correspondence; the right to be defended in a fair trial according to preestablished laws; freedom of movement, speech, and petition; and so forth. On the level of groups, these rights cover such things as freedom from punishment for expressions of collective dissent from government policy, freedom from censorship of the means of communication, and freedom to associate voluntarily with other citizens.

Granted that this complex of guarantees has probably never been totally and unconditionally observed by public authorities in any country, and that its content has changed over time, movement along these lines, however sporadic and uneven, constitutes an important departure from the usual practice of authoritarian regimes. As Adam Przeworski observes in his chapter in Volume 3, such movements have the effect of lowering the costs—real and anticipated—of individual expression and collective action. This, in turn, has a multiplier effect. Once some actors have dared to exercise those rights publicly and have not been sanctioned for doing so as they were during the zenith of the authoritarian regime, others are increasingly likely to dare to do the same. There does not appear to be any necessary or logical sequence to the emergence of these "spaces" for liberalized action, although the reacquisition of some individual rights generally precedes the granting of guarantees for collective action. Nor are progressions in these domains irreversible. On the contrary, a characteristic of this early stage in the transition is its precarious dependence upon governmental power, which remains arbitrary and capricious. If, however, those liberalized practices are not too immediately and obviously threatening to the regime, they tend to accumulate, become institutionalized, and thereby raise the effective and perceived costs of their eventual annulment. This brings us to the relation between liberalization and the central concern of our analysis, democratization.

Democratization

Democracy's guiding principle is that of *citizenship*. This involves both the *right* to be treated by fellow human beings as equal with respect to the making of collective choices and the *obligation* of those implementing such choices to be equally accountable and accessible to all members of the polity. Inversely,

this principle imposes *obligations* on the ruled, that is, to respect the legitimacy of choices made by deliberation among equals, and *rights* on rulers, that is, to act with authority (and to apply coercion when necessary) to promote the effectiveness of such choices, and to protect the polity from threats to its persistence. There have been a great variety of decision-rules and procedures for participation claiming to embody the citizenship principle. Across time and political units, the actual institutions of democracy have differed considerably. No single set of specific institutions or rules by itself defines democracy, not even such prominent ones as majoritarianism, territorial representation, legislative sovereignty, or popularly elected executives. Indeed, many institutions now thought of as distinctively democratic were initially set up with very different intentions, and were only subsequently incorporated within its reigning definition, for example, parliaments, parties, mixed governments, interest groups, consociational arrangements, and so on. What specific form democracy will take in a given country is a contingent matter, although given the existence of certain prominent "models" and international diffusion, there is likely to exist a sort of "procedural minimum" which contemporary actors would agree upon as necessary elements of political democracy. Secret balloting, universal adult suffrage, regular elections, partisan competition, associational recognition and access, and executive accountability all seem to be elements of such a consensus in the contemporary world. On the other hand, other institutions, such as administrative accountability, judicial review, public financing for parties, unrestricted access to information, limitations on successive terms in office, provisions for permanent voter registration and absentee balloting, compulsory voting, and the like, might be considered as less essential, or as experimental extensions of the citizenship principle in more advanced, more "complete" democracies.

Democratization, thus, refers to the processes whereby the rules and procedures of citizenship are either applied to political institutions previously governed by other principles (e.g., coercive control, social tradition, expert judgment, or administrative practice), or expanded to include persons not previously enjoying such rights and obligations (e.g., nontaxpayers, illiterates, women, youth, ethnic minorities, foreign residents), or extended to cover issues and institutions not previously subject to citizen participation (e.g., state agencies, military establishments, partisan organizations, interest associations, productive enterprises, educational institutions, etc.). As is the case with liberalization, there does not seem to be any logical sequence to these processes, although some regional and temporal patterns can be discerned. Nor is democratization irreversible; indeed, all of the countries included in these volumes have had some of these rules and procedures in the past, so that recuperation is often as important a goal as extension and expansion.

Notes on the Interaction of Liberalization and Democratization

As we have defined them above, liberalization and democratization are not synonymous, although their historical relation has been close. Without the guarantees of individual and group freedoms inherent in the former, the latter risks degenerating into mere formalism (namely, the so-called popular democracies). On the other hand, without the accountability to mass publics and constituent minorities institutionalized under the latter, liberalization may prove to be easily manipulated and retracted at the convenience of those in government. Nevertheless, during the transition the two may not occur simultaneously. Authoritarian rulers may tolerate or even promote liberalization in belief that by opening up certain spaces for individual and group action, they can relieve various pressures and obtain needed information and support *without* altering the structure of authority, that is, without becoming accountable to the citizenry for their actions or subjecting their claim to rule to fair and competitive elections; in the literature this form of rule has occasionally been given the euphemistic label of "tutelary democracy." In our discussions we referred to such cases as "liberalized authoritarianism" (*dictablandas*). Inversely, once democratization has begun and its prudent advocates fear the excessive expansion of such a process or wish to keep contentious issues off the agenda of collective deliberation, they may well continue old, or even create new, restrictions on the freedoms of particular individuals or groups who are deemed insufficiently prepared or sufficiently dangerous to enjoy full citizenship status. For these cases we invented the term "limited democracy" (*democraduras*).

Based on these distinctions we venture the following generalizations:

1. Liberalization is a matter of degree even if it is not, strictly speaking, measurable according to a common scale for all cases. It can be more or less advanced, depending on the scope of its guarantees, as well as on the extent to which persons and groups can obtain rapid and effective protection against eventual violations.

2. Democratization also admits of gradations, although again, we find it difficult to specify, out of time and national context, what rules and procedures would be more or less democratic. In the formation of a *political* democracy (i.e., one that restricts the application of the citizenship principle to public institutions of governance) two dimensions seem particularly important, however. One refers to the conditions that restrict party competition and electoral choice—for example, banning certain political parties or ideological currents, fixing prohibitively high thresholds for their formation, restricting admissible candidacies, rigging constituency boundaries and overrepresenting particular districts and interests, and/or limiting the means of party finance. The other dimension refers to the eventual creation of a "second tier" of consultative and decisional mechanisms, more or less explicitly designed to circumvent accountability to popularly elected representatives by placing certain issues out of their reach—for instance,

establishing autonomous parastate agencies, corporatist assemblies, and/or consociational arrangements. Democracy itself may be a matter of principles, but democratization involves putting them into practice through specific and detailed rules and procedures, which quite often have effects far beyond their seemingly microscopic significance.

3. Liberalization can exist without democratization.[2] Fundamental guarantees can be accorded while impeding individuals or groups from participation in competitive elections, from access to policy deliberations, and/or from exercising the rights that may make the rulers reasonably accountable to them. This is frequently justified on the grounds that "immature" subjects must be tutored before they can be allowed the exercise of full citizen responsibilities. Nevertheless, the cases studied in these volumes suggest that once some individual and collective rights have been granted, it becomes increasingly difficult to justify withholding others. Moreover, as liberalization advances so does the strength of demands for democratization. Whether these will be strong enough to compel such a shift and yet not too strong (or too premature, in terms of the field of forces given at any moment in the transition) to provoke an authoritarian regression is one of the major uncertainties of the transition.

4. In all the experiences examined, the attainment of political democracy was preceded by a significant, if unsteady, liberalization. Admittedly, in some cases—Portugal and Greece—the transition was so rapid that the two were almost contemporaneous, but even there, crucial individual and collective rights were made effective before the convocation of competitive elections, the organization of effective interest representation, and the submission of executive authority to popular accountability. Therefore, it seems useful to conceptualize the overall transition as a sort of "double stream" in which these two subprocesses interact over time, each with its own hesitancies and reversions, and each with overlapping motives and constituencies. In the event of a successful outcome (i.e., viable political democracy) the two become securely linked to each other.

5. If liberalization begins the transition, then we can locate the *terminus ad quo* of our inquiry at the moment that authoritarian rulers (or, more often, some fraction thereof) announce their intention to extend significantly the sphere of protected individual and group rights—and are believed. Prior to this, a certain degree of de facto liberalization may have emerged, especially in contrast to the arbitrary "excesses" which tend to characterize the immediate aftermath of an authoritarian seizure of power, but this is likely to be a function of circumstance, inattention, or plain weariness on the part of the agents of repression. What is important is not just the expression of a subjective awareness on the part of the rulers that something must change (often with the Lampedusan coda, "if things are going to remain the same. . . ."), but the reception of this announcement by others. In other words, the intention of liberalizing must be sufficiently

credible to provoke a change in the strategies of other actors. This permits us to exclude from the *problématique* of the transition actions by authoritarian incumbents intended either to ratify or to transform certain of the characteristics of the regime, even when these take the form of a "popular consultation." The Pinochet plebiscite in Chile in 1980 is a case in point, although this strategy can backfire, as did the plebiscite in Uruguay and, in a somewhat different way, the 1974 electoral upset in Brazil. This criterion also permits us to identify abortive transitions in which the announced intention to protect some rights is either withdrawn by its proponents or canceled by rival factions within the regime.

6. One premise of this way of conceptualizing the transition is that it is both possible and desirable that political democracy be attained without mobilized violence and dramatic discontinuity. The threat of violence and even frequent protests, strikes, and demonstrations are virtually always present, but where the *vía revolucionaria* is taken, or when violence becomes widespread and recurrent, the prospects for political democracy are drastically reduced. To use the terms suggested in Schmitter's original essay, a "transfer of power," in which incumbents hand over control of the state to some faction of their supporters, or a "surrender of power," where they negotiate the transition with some of their nonmaximalist opponents, seems more propitious for the installation and consolidation of democracy than an "overthrow of power" by implacable antagonists.[3] For most of the cases in point, the latter scenario has been a simple impossibility, despite occasional terrorism and armed insurrection, given the military capacity of those in government and the unwillingness of the population to support such an uncertain and costly adventure. Nicaragua was the exception among the cases discussed at our 1980 conference, where Richard Fagen suggested why the Somoza regime left virtually no alternative for regime transformation.[4] Gianfranco Pasquino's chapter on Italy at the end of World War II shows that even where armed insurrection did occur and its partisans controlled substantial portions of the country, the decision not to press forward—the famous "Svolta di Salerno" by Togliatti—made a crucial difference in that transition.

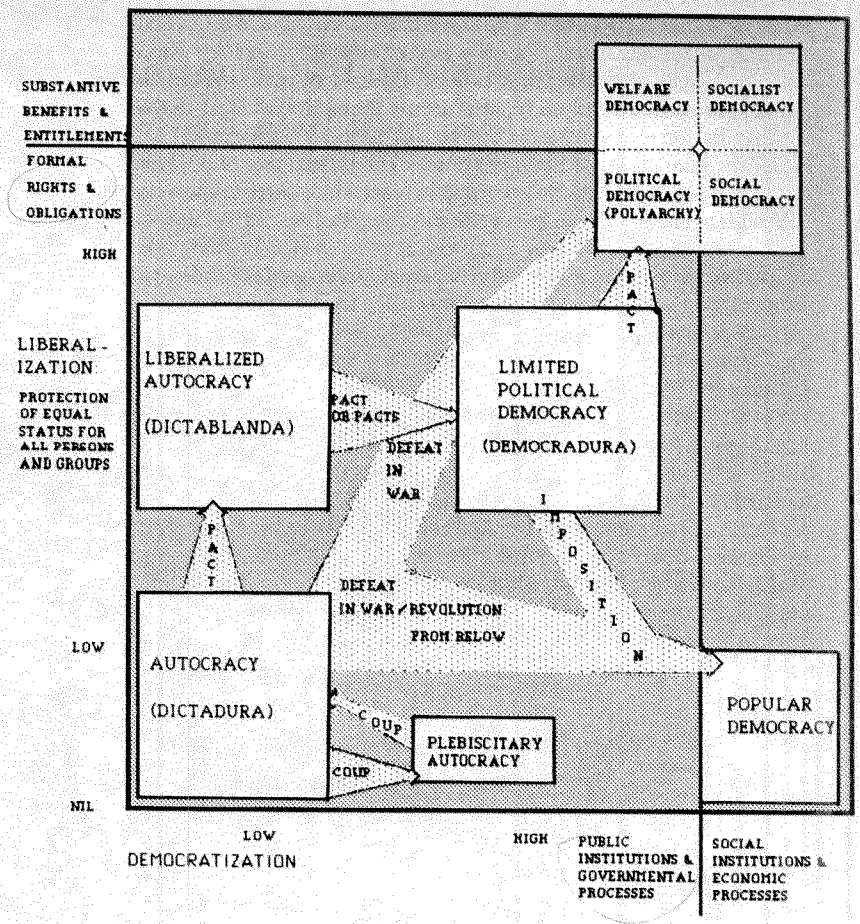
Socialization

The advent of political democracy is the preferred *terminus ad quem* of our interpretive effort, but it is not the end of struggles over the form and purpose of politics. As Adam Przeworski argues in his chapter, democracy institutionalizes uncertainty, not only with respect to the persons and groups who will occupy positions of authority, but also with respect to the uses to which authority will eventually be applied. In a sense, the transition to political democracy sets up the possibility—but by no means, the inevitability—of another transition. For the citizenship principle of equal treatment in matters

affecting collective choices knows no intrinsic boundaries, except those set, at a given moment, by tradition, received wisdom, explicit agreement, or countervailing power. De Tocqueville was perhaps the first to grasp the powerful potentialities of this fact and to glimpse the possibility that once applied to the procedures of public government, it could also be extended in two directions: (1) to cover other, "private" social institutions; (2) to demand that not merely formal equality of opportunity but also substantive equality of benefits be attained.

At the risk of confusing the term with other uses in the social sciences, we have called this "second" transition "socialization." It also involves a double stream, two independent but interrelated processes. The one, which some label "social democracy" consists of making the workers in factories, the students in schools and universities, the members of interest associations, the supporters of political parties, the clients of state agencies, even the faithful of churches, the consumers of products, the clients of professionals, the patients in hospitals, the users of parks, the children of families, etc., *ad infinitum*, into citizens—actors with equal rights and obligations to decide what actions these institutions should take. The other process, at times associated with the term "economic democracy," relates to providing equal benefits to the population from the goods and services generated by society: wealth, income, education, health, housing, information, leisure time, even autonomy, prestige, respect, and self-development. Their simultaneous presence or attainment is what is meant here by "socialization," and this remains a powerful hope for many actors. Whether these processes are, or can be made, compatible with each other—whether equal participation in the units of social action would entail equal distribution of the benefits from collective choices, and vice versa—is indeed one of the major, unanswered questions of our time. Certainly the experience of both the modern welfare state and "real-existing socialism" shows that more equal public provision of services and availability of goods does not always encourage higher levels of citizen participation—and can even lead to recipient passivity, clientelistic structures, and dependence upon experts and administrators. Inversely, higher levels of participation in some institutions, through such devices as workers' councils and corporatist forums, can result in an increase rather than a decrease in the overall inequality of benefits, as each sector or unit seeks maximum returns for itself and passes off the costs to others.

For our purposes, the persistent (if remote) goal of socialization has a double relevance. On the one hand, the attainment of a relatively stable mix of liberalization and democratization—what Robert Dahl has called "polyarchy"[5]—may have the effect of freezing existing social and economic arrangements. This is most obviously the case where the basis of the compromise rests on mutual recognition of income shares and property rights. On the other hand, the aspiration to socialism leads some actors to expect that the transition from authoritarian rule will lead in relatively short order to widespread substantive benefits for all and to the destruction of the nondemocratic arrangements that



persist in private and semipublic institutions. In the contemporary world, these two transitions—to political democracy and to socialism—are simultaneously on the agenda. There will always be "radicals" advocating the desirability of leaping to the latter without pausing for the former, as well as "reactionaries" arguing that, by transiting to the former, societies are starting inevitably on a slippery slope toward the latter.

In this context, all we can do is reaffirm our earlier presumption that political democracy per se is a goal worthy of attainment, even at the expense of

forgoing alternate paths that would seem to promise more immediate returns in terms of socialization. Not only is the probability of their success much lower and the likelihood of their promoting an authoritarian regression much higher, but the taking of such paths seems to require, at least in the interim, the installation of a popular authoritarian regime which is unlikely to respect either the guarantees of liberalization or the procedures of political democracy. Even leaving aside the predictable reaction of external powers to countries which take such a route (see the arguments advanced by Laurence Whitehead in Chapter 1 of Volume 3 and the actions presently being taken by the United States to "destabilize" the Nicaraguan revolution), it is by no means clear whether such a *vía revolucionaria* will in the long run be more successful than incrementally and consensually processed change in making socialization compatible with the values embodied in liberalization and political democracy.

For the convenience of the reader, in Figure 2.1 we have attempted to display graphically the "property-space" involved in the interaction between liberalization and democratization, as well as their possible supersession by socialization. The area of predominant concern in this volume is bounded on the vertical dimension by individual and collective rights and obligations, and on the horizontal one by public institutions and governmental processes. Within it, we identify two intermediate regime configurations (*dictablanda* and *democradura*), and several transition paths (involving defeat in war, revolution from below or without, or negotiation through successive pacts) which will be discussed in later chapters.

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Opening (and Undermining) Authoritarian Regimes

The Legitimation Problem

During the interwar period, authoritarian rulers could aspire to legitimate their government through some combination of the mobilizing imagery of Fascism and references to more traditional forms of corporatism. Such regimes could (and did) promote themselves as long-term solutions to the problems of political order and as the best possible modes of governance for their societies, especially when compared to impotent and divided parliamentary democracies elsewhere in Europe and to the prepotent and monolithic regime in the Soviet Union. Authoritarian rulers emerging after 1945 have not been able to count on such a possibility. This is their Achilles' heel, and it explains their ideological schizophrenia. They are regimes that practice dictatorship and repression in the present while promising democracy and freedom in the future. Thus, they can justify themselves in political terms only as transitional powers, while attempting to shift attention to their immediate substantive accomplishments—typically, the achievement of "social peace" or economic development.

The often haphazard attempts of these regimes at institutionalizing themselves clash with the limits imposed by their own discourse. These limits are, in part, imposed by the contemporary worldwide "marketplace" of ideas and, also, by enduring domestic aspirations, both of which imply that legitimate political domination can only be the expression of popular sovereignty or, in exceptional cases, the issue of a revolutionary mandate for dramatic social transformation. Under these conditions, the usual flurry of decree-making and law generation, as well as the bureaucratic expansion, of authoritarian regimes may increase their immediate capacity for control (and repression), but such efforts are not likely to be considered, even by incorporated and benefited social actors, as permanent arrangements. As for those sectors of the population that are excluded and victimized, the schizophrenic stamp of the regime opens the ideological space within which they can express what often becomes their fundamental demand: the removal of the authoritarian regime and its replacement by a democratic one.

"Hard-Liners" and "Soft-Liners"

In this context we must analyze the relationships between two groups typically present in such regimes: in the vocabulary of O'Donnell's original essay

for this project, "hard-liners" (*duros*) and "soft-liners" (*blandos*).[1] The first are those who, contrary to the consensus of this period of world history, believe that the perpetuation of authoritarian rule is possible *and* desirable, if not by rejecting outright all democratic forms, then by erecting some facade behind which they can maintain inviolate the hierarchical and authoritarian nature of their power. These hard-liners are usually composed of several factions. Some adopt this position out of opportunism, indifferent to longer-term political projects, and preoccupied instead with their own survival in office and retaining their share of the spoils. Were these the only hard-liners, the task of transition would be largely a matter of determining the cost of buying them out at the right moment. But the main core of the hard-liners is formed by those who reject viscerally the "cancers" and "disorders" of democracy and who believe they have a mission to eliminate all traces of such pathologies from political life. Once a transition has begun, and even after political democracy has been established, this nucleus of unconditional authoritarians is likely to remain the stubborn source of attempted coups and conspiracies.

As for the soft-liners, they may be indistinguishable from the hard-liners in the first, "reactive"[2] phase of the authoritarian regime. They may be equally disposed to use repression and to tolerate the arbitrary acts of the appropriate ministry or security agency. What turns them into soft-liners is their increasing awareness that the regime they helped to implant, and in which they usually occupy important positions, will have to make use, in the foreseeable future, of some degree or some form of electoral legitimation. To this the soft-liners add that, if its eventual legitimation is to be feasible, the regime cannot wait too long before reintroducing certain freedoms, at least to the extent acceptable to moderate segments of the domestic opposition and of international public opinion.

But the timing of the first serious attempts at liberalization poses a typical paradox that greatly weakens the prospects for regime incumbents during the transition. The most favorable occasions for attempting liberalization come at periods of widely acknowledged success of the authoritarian regime, including a high economic conjuncture, in which the soft-liners hope that the regime's effectiveness will be transferred into popular support for the regime during the transition. But these are the periods during which the soft-liners are likely to find less support for—and to be less self-convinced of—their goals. If things are going well, and no important crises or challenges are foreseen, why decide on changes that will inevitably introduce new actors and uncertainties, however tightly liberalization may be controlled by the regime? Why risk the "achievements of the regime" for the sake of the fuzzy long-term advantages advocated by the soft-liners? This is the typical argument used by hard-liners, technocrats, and many others who prefer to continue enjoying the perquisites of unchallenged authoritarian rule, against the soft-liners—if the latter dare to express their views at all before such unpropitious publics. Thus, these regimes lose their golden opportunity to liberalize under the conditions that would maximize their chances for exercising close and enduring control over

the transition. Of course, there have been authoritarian regimes, such as the 1976–83 Argentine one, which could hardly miss the opportunity, since they experienced during their entire duration very few "successes." But even those regimes attempted liberalization only when they were already going through some serious crisis, perceived as such by at least some of the regime incumbents and—most importantly—by the entire opposition.[3]

In any case, when liberalization is attempted, the innovations initially introduced by the regime rarely go beyond highly controlled (and often indirect) consultations and the restitution of some individual rights (not extensive to social groups or opposition parties). But even under such limited circumstances, soft-liners distinguish themselves from hard-liners by proclaiming that some form of democracy is the necessary outcome of the authoritarian episode that they "unfortunately" had to impose. In the vocabulary of Schmitter's original essay, they have begun to accept the "dispensability" of the regime and its incumbents. But like the hard-liners, the soft-liners are themselves composed of diverse currents. Some have gotten what they wanted from authoritarian rule and are prepared to withdraw to the enjoyment of private satisfactions. Others wish to see the transition stop at a limited liberalization which protects their tenure in office or their privileged access to authority. Still others aspire to elected positions in the emergent regime and are prepared to undertake the risk of leading down the trail to political democracy.

Thus, different orientations toward political order and political time have a subtle, but not insignificant, importance even before the transition begins. Moreover, the motives and circumstances under which an authoritarian regime came to power can have a lasting effect on its eventual outcome. The hard-liners tend to have more weight in the initial phases, all the more so where the threat and preceding crisis have been the most severe.[4] This implies a tendency for a greater and more systematic use of repression and the probability that there will be a more extensive effort to eradicate the institutions of previous democratic experiences. Even in such an unfavorable context, however, soft-liners do eventually emerge with their recognition that, at some time in the future, some kind of political "opening" will be necessary. At that point, some of the excluded actors will have to be allowed to reenter political life—however purged of "extremists" and "intransigents"—and this will be all the more difficult the longer harsh repression and violation of rights are practiced. Hence, even in the very moments when the regime's discourse seems most monolithic and cohesive, these elements of differentiation are likely to have appeared and to have sent out ambiguous signals to potential allies and real opponents.

The Context for Transitional Openings

As Philippe Schmitter, Laurence Whitehead, and others have pointed out, the most frequent context within which a transition from authoritarian rule has

begun in recent decades has been military defeat in an international conflict. Moreover, the factor which most probabilistically assured a democratic outcome to the transition was occupation by a foreign power which was itself a political democracy.[5] On the other hand, in spite of the Greek fiasco in Cyprus, and until the Malvinas/Falklands war caught us by surprise, the deus ex machina of military defeat seemed unlikely for the cases which interested us. Italy was an exception among our cases, and Gianfranco Pasquino shows that the Allied invasion and subsequent occupation played a key role there. Portugal represented a partial exception, in the sense that the impending defeat of its colonial pretensions was a major factor in bringing down the authoritarian regime. But even there, as Kenneth Maxwell's chapter indicates, domestic conflicts and motives were important factors in the regime's inability to defend itself against what was, after all, initially a putsch by a small group of junior army officers.

In all the other cases, the reasons for launching a transition can be found predominantly in domestic, internal factors. Of course, ideological constraints at the international level have some effect on actor perceptions of the long-term viability of a given regime, and the negative impact of a downturn in the international economy can accelerate matters. Nevertheless, it seems to us fruitless to search for some international factor or context which can reliably compel authoritarian rulers to experiment with liberalization, much less which can predictably cause their regimes to collapse. Even if one seizes upon the impact of military fiascos such as the Malvinas/Falklands for Argentina and Cyprus for Greece, it is more accurate to interpret them as the result of an already tottering and stalemated regime launching a *fuite en avant* rather than as the cause for the regime's having reached such an impasse.

In this sense our explorations took a rather different turn from those which have attempted to explain the advent of the very authoritarian regimes whose demise—actual or potential—was the object of our interest. This is somewhat ironic, given the fact that several of the participants in our project (one of the coauthors included) were active protagonists in the research and discussions generated by attempts to account for the emergence of those authoritarian regimes.[6] This may be a sign of intellectual flexibility—or of theoretical fuzziness. But in our opinion, it is basically a recognition that political and social processes are neither symmetric nor reversible. What brings down a democracy is not the inverse of those factors that bring down an authoritarian regime—and the same can be said for the successful consolidation of these respective regime types. Political democracies are usually brought down by conspiracies involving few actors (even though, usually at later stages, those actors may obtain mass support for their efforts), and this may give special leverage to external manipulations and calculations. The liberalization and eventual democratization of authoritarian regimes may have its conspiratorial side, but it also involves, as we shall see, a crucial component of mobilization and organization of large numbers of individuals, thereby attenuating the role of external factors.

But the main reason for this asymmetry springs from the themes and assumptions we stated at the beginning of this volume, that is, the high degree of indeterminacy of social and political action and the inordinate degrees of freedom that collective and even individual action may have at some momentous junctures of the transition. Hope, opportunity, choice, incorporation of new actors, shaping and renewal of political identities, inventiveness—these and many other characteristics of the politics of the transition stand in sharp contrast to the mode and tone of politics in the periods preceding the breakdown of democratic regimes. One of the basic arguments (which we share) of the Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan volume to which we have just made implicit reference,[7] is that none of those breakdowns was fatalistically bound to occur, that is, they could have been avoided if some strategic decisions had been made and especially if some crucial mistakes had not been committed. This, however, does not detract from the fact that crucial *personae* during the breakdown period seem in retrospect like actors in a Greek tragedy, anticipating their fate but fulfilling it to the bitter end, powerless either to modify their solidarities, alliances, and styles, or to control the international, macroeconomic, macrosocial, and institutional factors that led toward the breakdown. In contrast, the uncertainties, risks, and deficits of information characteristic of the transition away from authoritarian rule have as their counterpart a context of expanding (if uncertain) choices, of widespread (if often exaggerated) hopes, of innumerable (if seldom finally institutionalized) experiments toward the expansion of the political arena,[8] and of manifold levels of social participation. What actors do and do not do seems much less tightly determined by "macro" structural factors during the transitions we study here than during the breakdown of democratic regimes. The dismayed impotence of most democratic political actors during the latter contrasts sharply with what gives a characteristic flavor to many moments of the transition—namely, the exultant feeling (even if it is usually quite exaggerated) that the future is open, and that ideals and decisions count as much as interests and structures. Even by itself, this strong belief is likely to be a powerful factor, in the short and medium run, for reinforcing the high degree of structural indeterminacy that characterizes such moments.

Leaving these speculations aside, let us return to our statement that domestic factors play a predominant role in the transition. More precisely, we assert that there is no transition whose beginning is not the consequence—direct or indirect—of important divisions within the authoritarian regime itself, principally along the fluctuating cleavage between hard-liners and soft-liners. Brazil and Spain are cases of such a direct causality. In those two countries, the decision to liberalize was made by high-echelon, dominant personnel in the incumbent regime in the face of a weak and disorganized opposition. Portugal offers a slight variant on this scenario, in that the "openers" came from the middle echelon of the military, who were quickly compelled by the ensuing spontaneous popular mobilization not just to liberalize but to democratize. In Greece, Peru, and Argentina circa 1970, the "decision to open" was heavily

influenced by the presence of strong opposition forces in the civilian population. Nevertheless, several putschs and purges had to occur, in the government and in the armed forces, before the soft-liners acquired sufficient control over governmental and military positions to be able to implement such a decision.

Nor can the timing of an opening toward liberalization be correlated predictably with the performance of authoritarian rulers in meeting socioeconomic goals. Both relative success and relative failure have characterized these moments, although admittedly, standards are highly subjective, and evaluations are likely to differ both inside and outside the regime. Most cases fall somewhere in the middle, but it is interesting to contrast Brazil and Spain, on the one hand, with Peru, Greece, and Argentina. In the latter cases, not just opponents but most of those within the regime concluded that the experience of authoritarian rule was a resounding failure even according to the standards the regime itself had established. Opponents were stimulated to act because the failure was so obvious. Ruling groups, including the armed forces, were less and less confident of their own capacities, as well as deeply fragmented by recriminations over who was responsible for the regime's failures. Mediators were no longer willing to arbitrate dissent and hold coalitions together. Faced with this, the authoritarian rulers sought a rapid "political outlet" (*salida política*). This gave ample room to the soft-liners, for whom it seemed less risky to launch the country into liberalization, and even democratization, than to continue struggling inflexibly and ineffectively against a rising tide of opposition, fed by defection from the regime's ranks.

In contrast, authoritarian regimes that had been relatively successful and hence had encountered a less active and aggressive opposition opted for the transition with a higher degree of self-confidence. Hoping that they could put together a comfortable majority, they aimed at attaining electoral ratification and popular legitimation for what has always been the most sensitive internal management problem for authoritarian rulers, namely, succession to top executive office. In addition, they expected to earn a nice bonus in the eyes of international public opinion by following through on their original claims to be preparing the country for a return to democracy. Admittedly, as already noted, such decisions usually disguise important and rising tensions within the ruling coalition, as the chapters of both Luciano Martins and Fernando Henrique Cardoso show was the case in Brazil since practically the inception of this regime. Not only were some of the Brazilian military led to prefer liberalization by their own factionalism, but in the early 1970s part of the bourgeoisie opted for limited democratization out of concern over the expansion and growing autonomy of state agencies which had accompanied economic growth during the previous authoritarian decade. In Spain, a business class similarly favored by authoritarian rule was also prepared to support a transition from it, even more so since it was seen as a requisite to eventual entry into the European Community—but the exact timing of its occurrence was contingent upon a specific event, the death of Francisco Franco. Even with

these peculiarities, the general point remains: those regimes that felt themselves successful were those in which the decision to embark on a transition was taken without a high degree of prior internal disaggregation or external pressure.

As O'Donnell notes in the Introduction to the volume on Latin America, the military-populist authoritarian regime in Peru had goals and social bases quite different from the other experiences we have examined. Also, it applied only moderate repression and made few changes in habitual patterns in this regard. Similarly, the experiment in bureaucratic-authoritarian rule which began in 1966 in Argentina was characterized by a low level of previous threat, the ambiguous role played by Peronism and the unions in their initial support for the coup, and by high expectations that "social peace" and development would be relatively easy to achieve; hence, the level of repression was relatively low.[9] In both cases, policy failures led to generalized dissatisfaction, and the regime lost control of the agenda and timing of the transition. This suggests that where dissent is high and regime self-confidence low, unless the cost of organizing collectively is raised (i.e., unless the hard-liners are prepared to invest more and more in repression, which may well be a self-defeating proposition), the transition will be imposed by a mobilized opposition. In such cases, the latter is likely to have comparatively high influence over the rules and issues of the transition. Conversely, no transition can be forced purely by opponents against a regime which maintains the cohesion, capacity, and disposition to apply repression. Perpetuation in power or armed revolutionary struggle become the only likely outcomes of such cases. On the other hand, where the cost of acting in dissent is rather low, but the objective performance and subjective confidence of the regime are high, a transition is not likely to occur, and when it does, it is bound to be restricted initially to rules and issues which the authoritarian rulers feel they can control.

None of these generalizations exclude the possibility of *accidents de parcours* in even the most carefully crafted of transitions, especially with regard to electoral results. Nevertheless, the regime-confident, self-initiated scenario differs from the opposition-induced one in two key respects: (1) the sequence, rhythm, and scope of liberalization and democratization tend to remain more firmly in the control of incumbents (and, therefore, occur more slowly and with less generalized uncertainty); and (2) the social and political forces which supported the authoritarian regime stand a better chance of playing a significant electoral and representational role in the subsequent regime.

The Preauthoritarian Legacy

Another important element differentiating the cases in these volumes concerns the extent to which representative institutions—political parties, social movements, interest associations, autonomous agencies, local governments—have survived from the period prior to authoritarian rule. In some

cases, the longevity of such regimes and/or the ruthlessness with which they eradicated national political institutions and local autonomies meant that the transition faced almost a *tabula rasa*. Portugal is a case in point, and Manuel Antonio Garretón argues in his chapter that a similar situation might occur in Chile in the event of a liberalization-democratization of the Pinochet dictatorship. In other cases, usually of shorter duration, the structures and even the personnel inherited from the previous democracies have shown a surprising capacity for revival. Brazil and Peru are examples of this. Even in Italy, where the Fascists were in power for over twenty years, the king, the military, and even the Fascist Grand Council played a crucial role—for good and for ill—in ensuring some continuity during the transitional period, as Gianfranco Pasquino shows. In Spain, the institutions and legislation of the Franco regime, with roots in previous Spanish experience, were of major importance. The Cortes, its personnel unchanged, committed the extraordinary act of voting its own extinction and opening the way for the establishment of democratic institutions. In addition, the person of the king and the institution of the crown were essential in providing a central focus which consistently supported the transition and was accepted by almost all as being above party, faction, and particular interests.

Ironically, the more episodic and incoherent authoritarian experiences of Latin America, as well as that of Greece, seem to have done more to undermine the institutions of the more-or-less democratic regimes which preceded them than the longer-lived and ideologically stronger authoritarianisms of Italy, Spain, and Portugal. The former regimes have often destroyed previous institutions and practices without replacing them with alternative forms of representation, decision-making, or policy implementation. This may testify more to the greater resiliency of civil society in Southern Europe than to the inefficacy of authoritarian rulers in Latin America. Additional factors seem to be extreme fear of the "chaos" which preceded authoritarian rule in Latin America and the much stronger military component in these countries as compared with Italy, Portugal, and even Spain, which probably made them more hostile to any form of civilian political representation.

In this respect, Brazil is an interesting exception. As was the case with Argentina, Chile, Peru, Greece, and all other recent cases elsewhere, no serious attempt was made in Brazil to create distinctively authoritarian institutions. Rather, the generals who have governed Brazil since 1964 had the good sense to rule largely by distorting rather than by disbanding the basic institutions of political democracy. Previous parties were banned, but their quasi-resurgence was tolerated under the all-embracing rubrics of an official two-party system. Parliament was periodically closed down and had little to do with legislation and policy-making, but it did function most of the time and gradually acquired effective authority. Candidacies were controlled, but elections were held fairly regularly, especially at the local level, where competition remained lively. Thus, by the time the liberalization (*abertura*) was signaled by the relaxation of censorship in 1972, and then launched with the 1974

elections, some channels of organized political expression were already in place. Admittedly all this was carefully monitored by the regime, regressions did occur when "undesirable" results happened or even seemed likely, and the transition has gone much slower than elsewhere. Nevertheless, the role of representative institutions grew steadily, to the point that opposition parties became heavily represented in Congress[10] and controlled several important state governorships. Nevertheless, until 1984, they were denied the opportunity to compete under democratic rules for the highest national executive office.

Most of the other cases analyzed in these volumes have been different. The institutional context has had to be invented and learned almost *ex novo*. Authoritarian incumbents, having failed to create new institutions or to conserve old ones, have found themselves facing uncertain futures and dim prospects for protecting what they consider to be their vital interests. Regime opponents, having been given virtually no role within the authoritarian scheme of governance and, in some cases, having returned from exile to act in societies which have undergone substantial changes, often have had to rely on precarious past identities, outmoded slogans, and unimaginative combinations.

Once liberalization has been chosen—for whatever reason and under whatever degree of control by incumbents—one factor emerges which hangs like a sword of Damocles over the possible outcome. This is the fear of a coup that would not only cut short the transition but impose a regression to an even more restrictive and repressive mode of governance.

Fearing the Present

If there is one characteristic common to all our cases it is the omnipresent fear, during the transition, and often long after political democracy has been installed, that a coup will be attempted and succeed. Yet with the exception of Bolivia and the rather special case of Turkey, such coups did not occur during the transitions we have studied. There have been uncountable conspiracies and not a few failed attempts, but none of our other transitions was interrupted by a successful coup.

Why, then, has this nonevent received so much attention and generated so much anguish? In part, the question itself provides the answer: by being obsessed with its probable occurrence, contending forces in the transition take steps to prevent such an outcome and avoid taking decisions which they feel might encourage it. Obviously, this double negativity—the coup that doesn't happen and the actions not taken which could have encouraged it to happen—is most difficult to examine empirically. But there is subjective evidence from the actors themselves with which one can gain a better understanding of this crucial problem.

The possibility of a coup is not fictitious. Many groups within a declining or defunct regime—and not just military ones—are initially opposed to an open-

ing, and become even more so once the conflicts and uncertainties it generates manifest themselves. These actors, the hard-liners, fear that the transition and political democracy are bound to lead to an abyss, and are prepared to force at any cost a return to the "good old times" of "order," "social peace," and "respect for authority." However secretly they may conspire, their existence and activities are known to the proponents and supporters of transition. However divided these proponents and supporters may be on substantive and procedural issues, they share an overriding interest in avoiding a coup. Indeed, this provides a crucial convergence, which may lead to explicit or implicit cooperation among these actors.

The impending coup poses difficult choices, especially to those pressing for full-fledged political democratization. They may feel it imperative to prevent or discourage the mobilization and the politicization of issues by groups which could be their crucial allies in the medium and long term but whose activity could constitute the *casus belli* that might trigger the coup. But how can those who want to push the transition avoid a coup without becoming so paralyzed by fear of it that they will disillusion their supporters and diminish their ability to press for further steps in the transition? Indeed, if they pursue this anticipated reaction too far, the promoters of the coup will have achieved their objectives without having acted: the transition will remain limited to a precarious liberalization, and the regime opponents will end up divided and deluded. Faced with such a dilemma, there does not appear to be a formula correct for each case and every conjuncture, but it is important to keep in mind the shifting strategic context. This will occupy us in the following pages.

Playing Coup Poker

Typically, at the beginning of the transition the soft-liners within the regime have a strong hand in relation to the opposition, the more so to the degree that they feel successful in having attained past goals. Their ace in the hole is the threat that if the opposition refuses to play according to the rules they propose initially—usually a modest liberalization confined to individual rights and a restricted democratization with tight limits on participants and a narrow agenda of permissible policy issues—they will simply cancel the game and return to the authoritarian *status quo ante*. This tends to weaken and divide the proponents of further democratization. Some believe the threat and, preferring to avoid the worse outcome, agree to play the soft-liners' game. Others prefer the risk of a showdown to accepting such a self-limited outcome. But, despite the initial strengths and intentions of the soft-liners their hand will eventually be recognized for the bluff that it has become. What forces the cards to the table is the growing evidence that, if a coup does indeed occur, the hard-liners will not only have to repress the regime's opponents but will also have to overthrow the soft-liners within its ranks. The factionalism of the regime is likely to increase to the point that the soft-liners come to recognize the interest they share with the opposition in avoiding a return to full-fledged authoritarian rule, even if the transition turns out to extend beyond the political forms and policy issues they initially tried to impose. Moreover, by continuing with the transition, the soft-liners can keep alive the hope that they will eventually be able to control the process and protect their interests. (This is the other side of the uncertainty of democracy; it can lead to self-limiting, conservative outcomes as well as to expansive, progressive ones.) Furthermore, if the transition results in the implantation of democracy, the soft-liners will not only be protected from the accusations of treachery laid on them by the hard-liners, but also be rewarded by "history" for having led their country to an arguably more honorable future. As Albert Hirschman has noted,[11] passions, even virtuous ones, can be as important as interests, and—we would add—concern for future reputation can be as powerful a motive as the desire for immediate satisfaction.

These factors generate a subtle but effective, and most often implicit, "first-order understanding"—the foundation of eventual pacts—between soft-liners and those in the opposition who are preeminently interested in the installation of political democracy. Of course, this does not mean that the two tacit allies will not continue to struggle with each other. But it does imply that their conflicts will tend to attenuate and to shift more and more to procedural rules and substantive restrictions. Once the soft-liners' bluff has been called, their manipulation of the specter of a coup becomes less direct and threatening. They then argue that if the opposition exceeds certain limits, this will strengthen the hand of the hard-liners in their coup attempts and/or in the competition for positions in the governing and military hierarchies that could be decisive for the rhythm and extent of the transition. But, as we shall see, this is very complicated, too.

That those who begin the transition by threatening a coup become the principal guarantors against such an outcome is one of the numerous paradoxes of our theme. But for this guarantee to be effective, the skills and machinations of the soft-liners may not be enough. It is crucial that among them, in a prominent role, should be found well-placed and professionally respected military officers. Just as the literature on the execution of coups stresses the role of "swingmen" at crucial conjunctures,[12] so the (nonexistent) literature on noncoups should emphasize the strategic importance of "swingmen" in making alternative outcomes possible. These officers may support the transition much more because of what they believe is good for the armed forces than because of any enthusiasm for democracy. In any case, their weight within the armed forces means that a coup will have to be made against them and in the face of armed forces that are likely, for that very reason, to be deeply divided. This makes the launching of a coup quite risky and its outcome predictably less successful, especially if we consider the numerous military officers who are opportunistic in their political options; they basically wish to come out on the winning side, and when in doubt about the odds they are more likely to support the existing situation than rebellious alternatives. We shall return to this theme.

The Cycle of Mobilization

But the real importance of these choices internal to the regime and to the armed forces can be appreciated only when they are related to concomitant developments in the opposition camp. The "opening," "thaw," "decompression," or whatever it is called, of authoritarian rule, usually produces a sharp and rapid increase in general politicization and popular activation—"the resurrection of civil society," as O'Donnell has described it. However, this wave crests sooner or later, depending on the case. A certain normality is subsequently reasserted as some individuals and groups depoliticize themselves again, having run out of resources or become disillusioned, and as others deradicalize themselves, having recognized that their maximal hopes will not be achieved. Still others simply become tired of constant mobilization and its intrusion into their private lives. These "shifting involvements"[13]—first with depoliticized life under the authoritarian regime, then with rapid and strong politicization during the first periods of the transition, and, later on, with a return to some form of relatively depoliticized citizenship (which may be, as it was in Spain, temporarily reactivated for the defense of democracy from hard-line threats)—are typical of the processes we studied. The inverted U-shaped curve formed by the strike rate in the Spanish case represents this pattern graphically and can be repeated with many other indicators of mobilization and protest in all our cases. In terms of the strategies of hard-liners and soft-liners, those three periods have differing significance. First, at the onset of the transition, before most actors have learned that they can act at lower cost to themselves and their followers and, therefore, before an explosion of opposition has occurred, the soft-liners may well believe (and convince others) that they have and can keep control of the transition. The hard-liners then find it difficult to enlist support, since most of their potential recruits prefer to wait and see if the soft-liners can deliver their promise of retaining control while at the same time achieving a postauthoritarian political formula that will be more enduring and more acceptable domestically and internationally.

In the second period, when conflicts and "disorder" reach their zenith, the hard-liners' worst fears may be confirmed, and their capacity to recruit "fence-straddlers" increases. Then the conditions seem favorable for the coup that would produce the feared authoritarian regression. This is when the soft-liners are forced, for the reasons already noted, to reveal their predominant interest in preventing such an outcome. On the other hand, the greater the mobilization and protest of the opposition, the more obvious to the promoters of the coup that more extensive and systematic repression will be necessary. This implies not merely returning to the *status quo ante* but to some very extreme version of authoritarian rule, in which, quite obviously, the soft-liners will lose their present positions. The hard-liners may not have serious objections to applying the kind of repression that such authoritarian regression implies. But in order to do so, they and their would-be supporters need to count on the

one element that the very existence of the soft-liners denies to them—a high degree of cohesion within the armed forces.

It follows that, contrary to the wishes of the soft-liners and the advice of almost everyone, the regime's opponents should increase their activity instead of prudently diminishing it, as the feared moment of the coup seems to approach. In particular, they should promote the diversification and extension of opposition throughout society, since that increases the perceived costs of repression for the hard-liners. However, we are confronted with one of those tricky, parabolic, if not sinuous relationships in which only good political judgment can test the limits of a situation. If the opposition menaces the vertical command structure of the armed forces, the territorial integrity of the nation-state, the country's position in international alliances, or the property rights underlying the capitalist economy, or if widespread violence recurs, then even bland regime actors will conclude that the costs of tolerance are greater than those of repression.[14] In such situations, the longer-term benefits of an eventual liberalization (not to mention democratization) will seem to those actors much less appealing than the shorter-term security of an immediate return to authoritarian rule.

Adding to the uncertainty of such calculations is the fact that the capacity for tolerating disorder and threats varies by class and sector of each society, and by historical period. What is regarded as an "insult to the armed forces," an "act of secession," or a "threat to property" is hardly a constant. Nor is it possible to specify a priori how specific social sectors will interpret the situation and react. One class condition which does seem unavoidable for the viability of the transition is that the bourgeoisie, or at least important segments of it, regard the authoritarian regime as "dispensable" in Schmitter's terms, either because it has laid the foundations for further capitalist development or because it has demonstrated its incompetence for doing so. Should the mobilization of regime opponents seem to go "too far," however, then authoritarian rule may again be judged to be indispensable, if unfortunate. Moreover, as was suggested by the study of the breakdown of democracy,[15] an authoritarian inflection by a large part of the bourgeoisie is usually accompanied by another symptom of impending danger: the mobilization of middle sectors in favor of a coup that will bring "order" to society. This class convergence, along with suitably inclined elements within the armed forces, is a necessary—if not sufficient—condition for a successful authoritarian seizure of power, against both a democratic regime and a transitional one.

By the time the third, or relatively demobilized, phase is reached, the capacity for tolerance of diverse actors has increased. Soft-liners and indecisive elements within the already defunct regime, as well as the social classes and sectors which supported it, have come to countenance conflicts and demands, modifications in the rules of the game and institutional arrangements, as well as levels and patterns of popular demands and organization they would never have accepted at the beginning of the transition—and have found

that they can live with them. This is another way of illustrating that the transition involves continuous, if not linear or irreversible, modifications in both the relations of force between diverse actors and the conceptions they have about their interests.

But our analysis of this complex process of dissuasion, threat, and learning cannot advance further without tackling the problem which most contaminates the ethical and political climate of the transition and which, because of its reverberations within the armed forces, feeds the worst fears of a brutal regression. This is the problem of dealing with the repressive acts perpetrated during the authoritarian regime.

Settling a Past Account (without Upsetting a Present Transition)

In the cases analyzed here, the respective authoritarian regimes applied, at least for some period of their existence, severe and consistent coercion to broad segments of the population, and even more systematic and focused repression to particular parties, organizations, and individuals which they held responsible for the "chaos and corruption" that preceded their seizure of power. But behind this generalization lie significant differences from case to case.

A first difference hinges on whether or not the armed forces as such were directly responsible for most of the acts of repression. In those regimes which were scarcely militarized, such as Fascist Italy, Salazar's Portugal, or even Franco's Spain (where, despite its origins in a civil war and the prominent role this assigned to military officers, the government was progressively civilianized over the long period of the dictatorship), the most direct and "dirty" tasks were executed by a political police not formally subordinated to the military establishment. The latter may have "helped out" occasionally and looked on with sympathy, but its officers could claim not to have been directly implicated in such crimes. This facilitated their eventual acceptance of a democratic opening for two reasons: (1) they had less grounds for fearing revenge by civilian rulers, which would have affected their persons or their institutional integrity; (2) having intruded less into the administrative and functional apparatus of the state, they had a less traumatic adjustment to make in their individual careers or professional structures when ordered to return to their barracks.

In contrast, the cases of authoritarian rule in Latin America and Greece exhibit a more direct and unambiguous link between the armed forces and the commission of repressive acts. But here variations are also significant. Even where the separation between the political police and the military is, at best, unclear, there are cases—such as Brazil and Chile—where at least the dirtiest acts were committed (and in the latter case, are still being committed) by more or less specialized units within the armed forces. This prevents the military from merely feigning disgust and attributing to other agencies the "unfortunate" atrocities carried out, but it does exempt the bulk of military officers

from charges of direct responsibility. The situation is worse in Argentina and Uruguay. There, repression reached levels equivalent to those of Chile, and much higher than those of Southern Europe (except those that followed the end of the civil war in Spain). Furthermore, such repression was the "institutional responsibility" of the armed forces—indeed, of many of its operative units. This makes it even more difficult for the bulk of the armed forces to disengage itself from the worst acts of the regime.

But we must take into account still other factors. One is the sheer magnitude and "quality" of physical repression—the degree to which particularly repulsive acts were committed, and the extent to which clearly innocent persons suffered. The more brutal, inhumane, and extensive were the repressive actions, the more their actual perpetrators—the institutions involved and those persons who collaborated in them or supported them—feel threatened and will tend to form a bloc opposing any transition. Where they cannot prevent the transition, they will strive to obtain iron-clad guarantees that under no circumstances will "the past be unearthed"; failing to obtain that, they will remain a serious threat to the nascent democracy.

This observation must be corrected by a more optimistic one, illustrated by the Spanish case. The passage of time attenuates the bitterest of memories, both of the regime's acts and of those of the opposition which "justified" the regime's atrocities. In such cases, those directly involved will have retired or been forgotten, and leaders of parties and groups representing those who suffered can invite all political actors "not to dig around in the past," as Santiago Carrillo, head of the Spanish Communist party, put it during a strategic moment in Spain's transition. This may calm the fears of those who might intervene to stop the transition, but in cases where the agents of repression are still very much alive and active, it will leave entrenched in important positions some of the most violent and dangerous protagonists of the outgoing regime—a point made forcefully in Alain Rouquié's chapter.

Thus, a policy of clemency would seem most viable and least dangerous for democratization where the repression was initially less brutal and extensive, or where it occurred a long time ago. Even so, the Spanish and Brazilian cases show the extreme sensitivity to this issue, and the ease with which it can threaten the transition or a recently consolidated democracy. Greece is another case in point. There, the authoritarian rulers committed a number of horrible crimes, but they were less repressive than the regimes of the Southern Cone of Latin America. Nevertheless, the succeeding civilian government had to rein in its stated intention to sanction all the military officers who had committed such acts, even where, as in contemporary Argentina, such a purpose was facilitated by the deep unpopularity of such officers following the army's military defeat in an external adventure. When the government of Karamanlis tried to condemn some important military figures, it limited itself to prosecuting a few—which led to accusations "from the other side" that it was perpetrating a "farce" that exculpated all the others. Nevertheless, this government found itself walking a tightrope over a series of attempted coups

and assassinations. In other words, even a successor government as impeccably conservative and anti-Communist as that of Karamanlis had considerable difficulty in applying justice to what was almost a personal clique—embarrassingly defeated in war, moreover—of middle-level officers within the Greek armed forces.

Here we encounter yet another of the paradoxes that plague (and enervate) these transitions: where and when it is easier to bury the past, is where and when it is less important to do so. On the contrary, where these "past accounts" are of greater weight and more recent origin and involve a wider spectrum of persons, it is much more difficult and dangerous to attempt to collect them. Memories are more intense; victims (or their survivors) and victimizers are still present. Superficially this may seem to suggest that it is better (or at least more prudent) in such cases just to bury the past and to get on with the future. But this risks provoking justifiably indignant reactions, which may prove more difficult to cope with than the specter of a possible coup. We are here in a situation of most difficult ethical, as well as political, choice. Morality is not as fickle and silent as it was when Machiavelli wrote his expediential maxims of political prudence; transitional actors must satisfy not only vital interests but also vital ideals—standards of what is decent and just. Consensus among leaders about burying the past may prove ethically unacceptable to most of the population. All our cases demonstrate the immense difficulty of this dilemma;[16] none provides us with a satisfactory resolution of it.

But even under the worst of circumstances—heavy and recent occurrence, and heavy and widespread military complicity, as in contemporary Argentina—we believe that the worst of bad solutions would be to try to ignore the issue. Some horrors are too unspeakable and too fresh to permit actors to ignore them. Part of the cost of such a cover-up, as observed by Alain Rouquié in his chapter in Volume 3, would be to reinforce the sense of impunity and immunity of the armed forces, especially of the most sinister of its elements. A second cost is more diffuse but no less crucial. It is difficult to imagine how a society can return to some degree of functioning which would provide social and ideological support for political democracy without somehow coming to terms with the most painful elements of its own past. By refusing to confront and to purge itself of its worst fears and resentments, such a society would be burying not just its past but the very ethical values it needs to make its future livable. Thus, we would argue that, despite the enormous risks it poses, the "least worst" strategy in such extreme cases is to muster the political and personal courage to impose judgment upon those accused of gross violations of human rights under the previous regime. This requires due process of law fully guaranteeing the defendants' rights. No doubt, the first of such trials will be a traumatic experience,[17] but it is to be hoped that it can be made clear that judgments with respect to even widespread atrocities by military officers do not imply an attack on the armed forces as an institution.

What is even more fundamentally at stake in this issue is the change of the armed forces' messianic self-image as *the* institution ultimately interpreting and ensuring the highest interests of the nation—a conception, alas, even enshrined in the written constitutions of some countries. Such a conception, frequently linked to ideologies of "national security," implies that the armed forces should have an indisputable monopoly on determining what those interests are, and when and how they are being menaced. This, in turn, "commands" the military to intervene whenever it feels that some unacceptable ("subversive" or "antinational") party is about to come to power, that some intolerable degree of "disorder" or conflict has been reached, or that some vengeful force is about to act against the armed forces itself. The list of possible *casus belli* is long and varied—a tribute to the imagination, if nothing else, of the military and their civilian ideologues.

This reference to civilians reminds us of a crucial point: demilitarization is not a problem referring only to the military. The political tradition of the countries examined here has been plagued (and continues to be plagued) by civilian politicians who refuse to accept the uncertainties of the democratic process and recurrently appeal to the armed forces for "solutions," disguising their personal or group interests behind resounding invocations of the national interest; in no case has the military intervened without important and active civilian support.

How the messianic self-image of the armed forces' role and the manipulation of it by civilians can be transformed, is one of the key questions of the transition, and one which persists well into the phase of democratic consolidation. The answer depends not only upon whether and how certain actors are punished for their past transgressions, but also upon the lessons everyone draws from the authoritarian experience. We may be turning necessity into virtue, but it is important to note that many of the transitions examined here resulted from a traumatic and obvious failure of the preceding authoritarian regime. There is some reason to hope that in such cases quite a few actors will have been "vaccinated" against the temptation to pursue further authoritarian adventures, at least long enough (and here again, time and timing are crucial dimensions of our theme) for political democracy to emerge and take its first steps toward consolidation. Here we may have found—for a change—a fortunate paradox: the will to resist the temptation will be all the stronger the more resoundingly unsuccessful the previous authoritarian regime has been. Inversely, where the previous experience has been reasonably successful and, hence, where ensuing problems can be more credibly imputed to transitional or democratic rulers, the more likely it will be that actors will look back nostalgically (and selectively) to the "good old times" and be disposed to favor an authoritarian regression. This means, conversely, that a very negative evaluation of an obviously failed and highly repressive authoritarian experience, shared even by important segments of those who supported it, can be a subtle but important immunization against the risks and uncertainties that kind of

transition is bound to face. Thus, if civilian politicians use courage and skill, it may not necessarily be suicidal for a nascent democracy to confront the most reprehensible facts of its recent past.[18]

Defusing (but Not Necessarily Disarming) the Military

We have suggested some necessary conditions for the armed forces to find and retain a "normal" institutional status within a functioning political democracy: they must somehow be induced to modify their messianic self-image; they must be given a creditable and honorable role in accomplishing (but not setting) national goals; and they must be made more impervious to the enticements of civilian politicians who turn to them when frustrated in the advancement of their interests by democratic means.

Only lengthy experience on the part of military officers presently on active duty and, especially, a concerted effort at educating future generations of recruits are likely to produce such a change in political behavior and expectations. This cannot be called into existence just by some fortunate coalition of political forces or by some clever distribution of material payoffs. Rapid changes can be made in the juridico-formal definition of the military's role, such as redrafting constitutions and laws which assign it the role of sovereign adjudicator, or which link it to institutions other than those held by electorally accountable executives (e.g., commander-in-chief positions), but these are not likely to have much impact upon the deeply rooted self-images and attitudes of the officer corps.

There is also the issue of the armed forces' role in running state and parastate enterprises, a role that has been quite extensive in several of our cases (Brazil, Argentina, Peru, and Turkey). While this raises the prospect of militarization of the state and productive apparatuses, one could argue that such an engagement may be more positive than negative, especially where the armed forces play only a weakly credible role in the country's defense against external aggressors. Setting aside the question of whether, in a given society, officers may be uniquely qualified for such managerial positions (a favorite theme of the North American literature on "the military in development" of the 1960s), one can observe rather cynically that such activities can be useful in occupying the time and interests of officers—active and retired—who might otherwise find little else to do. Moreover, this exposes those officers to a range of nonmilitary contacts wider than that provided by the unavoidable civilian "coup-inducers" discussed above. Even at the risk of increasing the danger—and cost—of corruption, such widening of civilian contacts may prove useful in diminishing the likelihood of a coup.

Again we find that we cannot advance further without drawing distinctions between the various situations represented by our cases. The form and presence of the armed forces, as well as the nature of civil-military relations, differ considerably from country to country. At one extreme we find the most traditional or "sultanistic" dictatorships, in which the armed forces are hardly more than the praetorian guard of the despot. Even if, as was the case in Nicaragua, they have modern arms, their professionalization is very low; as Max Weber pointed out, in these cases positions and lines of command depend on the whims of the *jefe máximo*, and the benefits of a military career come less in the form of salaries and institutionalized fringe benefits than in prebends allocated from above, or in payoffs extracted directly from the population. As the direct coercive agent of the despot, these military are difficult to distinguish from the ruling clique. They act more like armed bands than like armed forces. This makes it possible for revolutionary militias to mount a serious challenge to their monopoly of violence over a given territory. To this should be added that with the patrimonial, even "sultanistic," administration of the despot, and with the extractions of the military absorbing a large part of the country's economic activity, there tends to exist only a very weak native bourgeoisie. This pattern makes it most unlikely that a loyal opposition and a competitive political process will develop. In such cases, armed insurrection seems to be the only way for regime change and eventual democratization.

In the contemporary world, however, sultanistic dictatorships are exceptional cases. None are left in Southern Europe, and very few still exist in Latin America. Moreover, the interest of world powers in extending and stabilizing their "zones of influence" has raised the capacity of armed bands in these countries through military "assistance." They may still be far from professionalized armed forces, but they have made it more difficult for armed popular insurrections to succeed. Once the military has reached a minimal level of professionalization, only a severe rupture within it can open the way to a successful revolution. But even in such a case, the personalities and factions of the armed forces, allied with diverse parties and groups, are likely to become the principal protagonists (and antagonists) of the transition, as Portugal demonstrated in the aftermath of the 1974 "Revolution of the Carnations." But this happened under circumstances difficult to repeat elsewhere. First, as Kenneth Maxwell's chapter in Volume 1 makes clear, the Portuguese armed forces were in an unusual situation, due not only to their frustrated effort to defend the country's colonial empire, but also to their patterns of recruitment and promotion of officers. Second, even though the army's internal unity was broken by the putsch, there was no civilian insurrection in the metropole to challenge the armed forces' supremacy in the control of the means of violence.

In the other countries which concern us here, the armed forces are reasonably professionalized and have clear coercive supremacy within their territorial dominions. The regimes in which they find themselves (and which often they brought to power) are more formalized and depersonalized than patrimonial or sultanistic dictatorships. Moreover, there are local bourgeoisies with firm roots in the national productive structure. These features of the military and dominant classes make it highly improbable that the insurrectional route will be successful. In fact, attempts to impose a radical alternative by those means were crucial factors in the emergence of the authoritarian regimes whose eventual transition we are discussing (Argentina and Uruguay) or in the

hardening of one already in place (Brazil). Our factual conclusion—stated above as a normative preference—is that for such countries the only route to political democracy is a pacific and negotiated one, based on initial liberalization and on the subsequent introduction of institutions of electoral competition, interest representation, and executive accountability—with the costs, trade-offs, and uncertainties such a course, as we shall see, entails.

Degree of Militarization of the Authoritarian Regime

The degree of military penetration of the polity and society varies across authoritarian regimes, as well as across the democratic ones that may follow them. The Franco regime may have been markedly military in its origins, but by the time of its transformation, the armed forces had become only one of several elements in what Juan Linz has called its "limited pluralism."[19] Portugal and Italy were even less military right from the start. At the other extreme, the Argentine regime of 1976 was governed institutionally by the armed forces, which designated the president, himself a high-ranking officer, who was in turn quite closely controlled by a military junta. Between these extremes, one can discern other combinations. For example, the authoritarian regime in Chile was originally headed by Pinochet as *primus inter pares* with fellow officers, but was gradually transformed into the personal dictatorship of Pinochet. Something similar occurred with Velasco Alvarado in Peru (1968–73) and Onganía in Argentina (1966–70). In the case of Brazil since 1964, the military have governed with a not insignificant civilian participation and without such a personalization of authority; moreover, high officers have rotated into upper executive office without incumbents always being able to control their succession. These differences have important consequences.

When the armed forces neither have nor feel a responsibility for the policies of the regime, it is easier for them to take a hands off attitude to the transition, by declaring themselves concerned only with protecting their own institutional values of stability and autonomy, as well as public order and national security. In such cases the armed forces can remain relatively indifferent to the emerging rules of the political game, the identity of partisan actors, and the content of policy demands. When the transition is initiated from regimes with extensive military participation, and especially where military officers remain as chief executives during the transition itself, the impact is more direct and immediate: the institutional interests of the military—not to mention the personal interests of the officers involved—cannot but be affected by emerging civilian authorities who may not be sympathetic to such considerations.

The situation is different when a *caudillo* has emerged from the pack to take personal command of the regime. Such individuals cannot imagine that the country could do without their services. In no case has a transition been initiated or guided by one of these *caudillos*. The only way out seems to depend either on the supreme leader's death (Franco and Salazar) or his overthrow (Onganía, Velasco Alvarado, Papadopoulos, and, perhaps soon, Pinochet). According to the latter scenario, the leader's colleagues arrive at the conclusion that his perpetuation in power poses a serious risk to them. Central to this calculation is the perception within the upper ranks of the armed forces that protracted exposure to the temptations and conflicts of government is causing an erosion of the military's professional integrity. Corruption is part of the problem, but the greatest concern centers on the politicization of the military establishment itself. Once a consensus forms within the armed forces that, in order for it to remain in power (i.e., to preserve its capacity to intervene in matters of importance to itself), it will have to get out of power (i.e., remove itself from direct responsibility for governing), the stage is set for a putsch aimed at transferring or surrendering political office to civilians. The more personalistic and concentrated power was in the authoritarian regime, the easier it will be for the putschists to make the ousted despot and his clique uniquely responsible for the failures and "excesses" of authoritarian rule, and the less they are likely to feel institutionally threatened by the subsequent transition.

Another factor encouraging a withdrawal from government concerns the agencies of repression. Whenever this "instrument" is used protractedly and indiscriminately, and whatever the initial formal engagement of the military, the units specifically responsible tend to develop an increasing autonomy and capacity to command resources. This exacerbates old rivalries between service branches and leads to skirmishes over jurisdictions and methods. Not only do the security agencies tend to prevail over more orthodox military units in such conflicts, but the very logic of their task leads them to apply their "skills" of surveillance, intimidation, interrogation, internment, and torture more widely, eventually to members of the regime itself (or to their friends and family members). The information they extract becomes an integral part of the regime's *arcanae imperii* and can be used to affect military promotions and lines of command. Faced with the growth of such a force in their midst, professionally minded officers may become willing to support a civilianization of authority which can deal effectively with such excesses. If such is the case, one imperative is that democratic civilians should accept (and encourage) in the armed forces the spirit of corporate professionalism that gave them the opening in the first place. This means following predictable and fair criteria with respect to promotions, while at the same time asserting the right of civilian authorities to control such appointments. Following such a policy is difficult since, on the one hand, the armed forces will be demanding decisional autonomy as a guarantee of their institutional interests and, on the other, some civilian political forces will be wishing to install individuals loyal to their aspirations in high military office, even if that means jumping ranks or appointing less professionally competent candidates.

The transitional regime and the eventual nascent democracy will also have to deal with the sensitive issue of military expenditures. During and immediately following the transition, there will be many competing claims for public

funds and a generalized revulsion against materially rewarding the armed forces for what many are bound to feel is the mess they have made of civic life and, often, of the economy during the authoritarian period. It may even be tempting to disarm them or, at least, to scale down their salaries, perquisites, and equipment,[20] but this would conflict with the goal of encouraging professionalization—and it may trigger a violent reaction. We have not systematically inquired into the effects of a transition on military expenditures, but our impression from available evidence is that they tend to increase or, at least, not to decline. What seems crucial is not so much a crude buying off of the military as the devising of a shift in the strategic doctrines and operational capabilities of the armed forces which can provide them with a credible role in society—and that costs money.[21]

Our conclusion, then, is that there are conditional possibilities for coaxing the military out of power and inducing them to tolerate a transition toward democracy. The most difficult immediate problems are how to administer justice to those directly responsible for past acts of repression and how to assert some degree of civilian control over decisions about promotion and resource allocation within the armed forces. As we argued before, the longer-term issues—and hopes—involve a gradual change in the military's image of itself as ultimate guardian of the national interest and a shift from preoccupation with internal security to some more credible and orthodox role as defender of the country's (or the region's) external security.

While we are guardedly optimistic about the prospects for controlling the behavior of those within the armed forces who are antagonistic to democracy, the success of the transition may depend even more on whether some civilian, as well as military, leaders have the imagination, the courage, and the willingness to come to interim agreements on rules and mutual guarantees.

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Negotiating (and Renegotiating) Pacts

Pacts

The concept of "pact" emerged rather early in our discussions about possible transitions from authoritarian rule and was subsequently reiterated on many occasions. Only Terry Karl's chapter on Venezuela deals explicitly and thoroughly with such arrangements, but repeated pacts have also been an important feature of the Spanish transition. If Colombia had been included in our sample, we would have encountered more evidence for their crucial significance.[1] While we are not claiming that such arrangements are necessary features of a successful transition, we believe that they can play an important role in any regime change based on gradual installment rather than on a dramatic event.

A pact can be defined as an explicit, but not always publicly explicated or justified, agreement among a select set of actors which seeks to define (or, better, to redefine) rules governing the exercise of power on the basis of mutual guarantees for the "vital interests" of those entering into it. Such pacts may be of prescribed duration or merely contingent upon ongoing consent. In any case, they are often initially regarded as temporary solutions intended to avoid certain worrisome outcomes and, perhaps, to pave the way for more permanent arrangements for the resolution of conflicts. Some of the elements of those pacts may eventually become the law of the land, being incorporated into constitutions or statutes; others may be institutionalized as the standard operating procedures of state agencies, political parties, interest associations, and the like.

Otto Kirchheimer, who may have been the first to recognize the emerging importance of pacts in the contemporary world, pointed out that these compromises involve adjustments to standing contradictions between social content and political form.[2] Where the underlying distribution of de facto power in classes, groups, and institutions differs from the distribution of de jure authority, such arrangements permit a polity to change its institutional structure without violent confrontation and/or the predominance of one group over another. Moreover, he argued, the nature of these compromises was shifting away from the traditional liberal pact based on a strict delimitation of the spheres of civil society and the state, guaranteeing the individual right to dissent and the private privilege to own property, toward modern, "post-liberal" pacts based on complex exchanges between public and private groups, mutually guaranteeing their collective right to participate in decision-making and their respective privilege to represent and secure vital interests.