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Review Article

Democratic Transitions in Comparative Perspective

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Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1991.

Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Scott Mainwaring, Guillermo O'Donnell, and J. Samuel Valenzuela, eds., *Issues in Democratic Consolidation: The New South American Democracies in Comparative Perspective*, South Bend, University of Notre Dame Press, 1992.

The surge of democratic governments, starting in 1974 and continuing through the early 1990s, is probably *the* political sign of our time. The political changes entailed, if broadly conceivable in the terms of classic democratic theory, have also certain distinct connotations. Current cases of democratization are different from the classic cases of transitions to modern mass democracies in western Europe in a variety of ways. In the first place, the *anciens régimes* from which transitions have recently departed—bureaucratic authoritarian, state socialist, posttotalitarian authoritarian—are very different from the oligarchic regimes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The actors involved are therefore quite different. Furthermore, the practical unfeasibility, in the current context, of gradually extending the right to vote to broader sectors of the population forecloses the path of incremental democratization through elite contestation, an essential characteristic of the western European transitions. The distinctiveness of the current transitions to democracy, which Huntington refers to collectively as the “third wave” of democratization, has thus stimulated much rethinking of democratic theory and has generated probably more literature than any other area of substantive interest in comparative politics.¹

As recent additions to this voluminous production, the three books under review are important contributions to the ongoing debate. Each emphasizes theoretical and empirical analysis to varying extents. Notwithstanding differences in emphasis, they all seek to contribute to the agenda of understanding what amounts to one of the central current trends in global politics. This shared effort, together with the ambitious aim of each work, makes for a unique opportunity to assess the evolution of a field of study that could be labeled “democratic transitions.”² This review article, thus, presents a thematic discussion, stressing

the main problems within the debate on democratic transitions and assessing the various positions advanced in the reviewed books. On the basis of this assessment, some suggestions to guide future research will be offered.

Three Studies on Democratic Transitions

Issues in Democratic Consolidation, edited by Mainwaring, O'Donnell, and Valenzuela, is the most recent contribution by a group of scholars who have converged at the Kellogg Institute at the University of Notre Dame, one of the key research centers fostering the debate on democratization. The book can be read as a companion volume to the seminal work by O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*, published in 1986.³ Going beyond this now classic work, the present volume, while based primarily on South America, seeks to assimilate and refer to the experiences of East Asia and eastern Europe. It also goes beyond a concern with "transitions from authoritarian rule" to focus primarily on the problems of "democratic consolidation." In an essay that displays his usual creativity and insight, O'Donnell spells out the difference between these two tasks, which he sees as two transitions involving very distinct processes. Thus, while the first transition is primarily geared to undermining an authoritarian regime⁴ and is more clearly antiauthoritarian than prodemocratic, the second transition entails the broader and more complex process associated with the institutionalization of a new, democratic set of rules for political life. This analytical distinction serves to distinguish the most important moments through which democratic transitions evolve, and it also raises the question of the linkage between these two moments, which O'Donnell elaborates upon through carefully focused comparisons of Argentina, Brazil, and Spain.

Rather than opening new ground, Mainwaring's article is concerned above all with introducing consistency to the debate. Key terms and concepts such as "transition," "democracy," "liberalization," "democratization," "legitimacy," and "uncertainty" are discussed with exemplary clarity. In a field where various authors have used a fairly broad number of not always shared terms, and where the same terms have been used, often without having been explicitly defined, to mean different things, Mainwaring's kind of contribution is essential to the continued progress of the debate and ultimately to the accumulation of knowledge. As a start, this exercise in terminological clarification at least helps to define some of the key disagreements in the debate about democratization. Rounding off the contributions by the volume's coeditors, Valenzuela provides one of the most extensive and incisive discussions of the problems surrounding democratic consolidation, dealing with definitional issues essential to empirical and comparative analysis. Valenzuela's conceptual elaborations are then spelled out primarily in the context of the Chilean case. The last theoretically oriented piece by Przeworski basically replicates the second chapter of his book and will thus be discussed in that context (all references are thus to Przeworski's book). In addition to these four explicitly conceptual articles, three empirical contributions are included. In declining order of empirical scope are articles by Felipe Agüero on the military institution in Uruguay, Ecuador, Peru, Argentina, and Brazil, by Catherine Conaghan on capitalists and economic policymaking in Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia, and by Frances

Hagopian on the democratic opportunism of traditional political leaders in Brazil. As a whole, the volume exemplifies a manageable balance between number of cases and conceptual elaborations. Ideas interact quite freely and are reinforced by the detailed empirical accounts.

Przeworski's *Democracy and the Market* is part of an ambitious ongoing project that seeks to compare political transitions and economic reforms in both eastern Europe and Latin America. With regard to political transitions, Przeworski argues for the wholesale application of the O'Donnell-Schmitter model of transitions, elaborated in the context of the southern European and Latin American cases, to eastern Europe. Thus, he outlines the sequence of choices faced by the four main actors of the transition, the hard-liners and soft-liners within the regime and the moderates and radicals within the opposition, essentially translating the series of strategic choices outlined in O'Donnell and Schmitter's 1986 model into game theoretical language.⁵ Przeworski breaks new ground, however, in his discussion of the linkage between political and economic reforms, increasingly one of the key issues in the comparative agenda of democratization. There can be no doubt that throughout the book theory is Przeworski's main concern. Unlike the majority of the contributions in Mainwaring, O'Donnell, and Valenzuela's volume, his book is quite thin on empirical detail. Empirical cases are referred to, but rather than being developed to any significant extent, they serve mostly to exemplify Przeworski's line of reasoning. This high level of abstraction, indeed, is both the greatest strength and weakness of the book.

Finally, Huntington's book, *The Third Wave*, is quite different from both the author's previous works and the other two books discussed above. This book represents, first of all, a shift in Huntington's concerns from the problem of order quite generically conceived, central to his widely read *Political Order in Changing Societies*,⁶ to the problem of democracy. Second, compared to the other reviewed works, Huntington's book stands out as the broadest in scope, both conceptually and empirically. It covers both the process of transition and democratic consolidation and encompasses some thirty-five cases from Latin America, southern and eastern Europe, South and East Asia, and Africa. In dealing with this broad agenda, Huntington displays a high degree of theoretical eclecticism. He seeks to navigate a middle course between two approaches to democracy: the "prerequisites" approach, exemplified by Seymour Lipset's early work, and the "process" approach, represented by the work on transitions by O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Przeworski.⁷ If enticing in its scope and seductive in its pretense to bridge theoretical approaches, these same qualities introduce a grave weakness into Huntington's analysis: his eclecticism does not give way to theoretical integration. Thus, while economic, social, and cultural factors are analyzed as preconditions that explain the origins of transitions and, to a good extent, the prospects of democratic consolidation, when it comes to the process of transition itself actors and their choices carry primary explanatory power. Structure and process, in effect, are neatly segregated. In the end, what can only be described as a loose conceptual framework, based on the simple addition of factors, does little to organize in a more or less systematic fashion the empirical detail from a mass of cases. The attempt to be comprehensive ironically undercuts the author's ability to come up with anything particularly bold or new.

In spite of differences in theoretical and methodological approaches, what unites these three books is their concerted effort to understand and explain the problem of democracy in the current context. Indeed, it is instructive to consider them together in part because of their

differences. This review will compare the various contributions as a way to make a general assessment of the state of the literature. While the broad nature of the literature on democratization could make such an effort both unwieldy and unproductive, on closer examination the quite remarkable degree of overlap in terms of the questions asked facilitates this task greatly. This article will thus focus on the shared agenda, centered around the two core concepts of "transition" and "democratic consolidation," and will highlight significant agreements and disagreements in the three books under review.

The Why, When, and How of Transitions

The first focus of debate has been the closely related questions of why, when, and how transitions occur. Regarding the question of why transitions occur, the influential O'Donnell-Schmitter model of 1986 pointed to the emergence of a schism between hard-liners and soft-liners within regimes as the primary reason for the initiation of a transition.⁸ Thereafter, the transition was seen to advance through a series of bargains between state and opposition elites that defined a modal pattern of negotiated transitions. This original formulation set the terms for the subsequent debate, which centered on the relative contribution of factors within the regime and the opposition. However, in a rather polemical fashion much of the literature did not go much beyond a rather sterile either/or formulation, counterposing state elite to mass driven transitions.

Leading the way out of this impasse, Mainwaring's contribution offers a level-headed assessment of the role of the powerholders and the opposition. In the interactive perspective he advances, Mainwaring suggests that "exclusive attention to internal tensions [within the regime] can lead to neglecting the impact of opposition actors. . . . Many transitions involve complex interactions between regime and opposition forces from an early stage" (p. 299). He also argues cogently that, instead of attributing transitions to the role of political elites or to mass mobilization, the varying linkages between elites and masses should be studied.

Mainwaring's conceptualization of the forces shaping transitions leads to a nuanced understanding of how transitions take place. If there is more to transitions than schisms within the regime and elite bargaining, as in the modal pattern outlined by O'Donnell and Schmitter, then the notion of variable modes of transition takes on importance. This notion was first elaborated through the counterposition of Spain and Portugal, which led Juan Linz to distinguish transitions that take place through a "reform" or a "rupture" with the old authoritarian system. Mainwaring argues that this insight is a good starting point, given that it highlights an important variable in transitional processes, the degree of control over the process by the authoritarian powerholders and their ability to impose conditions on the opposition. But he argues for the inclusion of an intermediary category. Thus, where the outgoing regime retains a high degree of power, a "transition through transaction" takes place. This corresponds to Linz's transition through "reform," exemplified most clearly by the cases of Spain and Brazil. Where the regime simply collapses, there is a "transition through regime defeat." This is Linz's transition through "rupture," a category Portugal, Greece, and Argentina fit nicely. Finally, between these two modalities a third "transition through extrication" is possible (pp. 317-26).⁹ As Valenzuela's contribution clarifies, in a transition through transaction the transition occurs without the rules of the old regime having

been broken, while in a transition through extrication the rules of the authoritarian regime are abandoned but the rulers retain sufficient power to negotiate their retreat from power (pp. 74–75).

Przeworski goes beyond the other authors in articulating the timing of transitions. He states quite rightly that “it is easier to explain why communism had to fall than why it did.” In other words, “the response to the question ‘Why did communism collapse?’ is not the same as to ‘Why did it collapse in the autumn of 1989?’ ” (p. 1). However, Przeworski fails to provide an adequate response to his own question. He basically follows O’Donnell and Schmitter’s 1986 argument concerning transitions. Like O’Donnell and Schmitter, who saw the Latin American and southern European transitions as responding to domestic or internal factors, Przeworski argues that in the eastern European cases “the constraint was external, but the impetus was internal” (p. 5). Again like O’Donnell and Schmitter, he highlights the importance of splits within the regime as a factor accounting for the initiation of the transition and links in effect the timing of the transition with the emergence of these schisms. But this explanation simply pushes the question back one step further. That is, one must still explain why the splits emerged when they did. Here Przeworski goes beyond O’Donnell and Schmitter’s regime-centric account in seeing the emergence of splits as a response, in part, to societal opportunities. As in Mainwaring’s interactive perspective, he sees the calculations of the powerholders as influenced by societal forces (pp. 56–57). Still, like O’Donnell and Schmitter, Przeworski simply describes but never explains the origins of the splits within the regime. He says little about the timing of key events associated with the beginning of the transition.

To explain the timing of transitions, what is needed is an in-depth analysis of both the characteristics and contradictions of the *ancien régime* and the formation and activities of opposition groups.¹⁰ Yet Przeworski glosses over key aspects of the *anciens régimes*. Beyond a brief statement to the effect that authoritarian regimes can draw on three bases of stability—lies, repression, and economic success (pp. 58–59)—he says little about the political structures through which eastern European and Latin American countries were governed or about the effects of authoritarian rule on their societies. The reason for not discussing the *anciens régimes* in depth appears to be his concern with establishing the comparability of a broad and seemingly disparate set of cases. Przeworski thus rejects a basic premise of the “totalitarian model” and stresses the similarities between the state socialist regimes of eastern Europe and the bureaucratic authoritarian regimes of Latin America. Even if the root causes of the collapse of Communism might be different than those explaining the end of military rule in South America, the dynamics of the transition process is essentially the same. This may be so, but in seeking to refute any radical difference between the *anciens régimes* of Latin America and eastern Europe Przeworski errs on the side of emphasizing similarities. In the end, no analytical tool is provided to distinguish between various authoritarianisms or forms of dictatorship. Thus, even a very broad question such as why transitions from state socialist regimes proved harder to start than transitions from bureaucratic authoritarian ones—in other words, why the eastern European regimes lasted longer than the South American ones—is left unanswered.

In clear contrast to Przeworski’s strategic choice model, Huntington provides a more traditional view of the initiation of transitions. Their cause is seen to lie in legitimacy problems, the effect of economic growth on social structure, changes in religious doctrines,

the policies of external actors, and demonstration effects (chapter 2). The eclecticism of this approach, while avoiding some of the shortcomings of Przeworski's work, has its own problems. In contrast to strategic choice models, which in striving for economy fail to capture important empirical variations, Huntington sacrifices conceptual tightness for potential gains in empirical depth. What results, however, is an explanation that essentially draws upon different factors to account for different cases.

If there are some clear differences between Huntington and Przeworski concerning the causes of transitions, there is an uncanny convergence between their approaches when Huntington turns to the question of how transitions advance. Casting aside the analysis, based on preconditions, used to explain the origin of transitions, the transition itself, that is, how transitions advance, is explained in terms drawn from the literature on process. Huntington's discussion basically follows O'Donnell and Schmitter's 1986 model; he draws a similar distinction between four actors, while adding a fifth. These actors, distinguished according to their attitude toward democracy, are the standpatters (hard-liners) and the liberal reformers and democratic reformers (both soft-liners) in the government coalition and the democratic moderates (moderates) and revolutionary extremists (radicals or maximalists) in the opposition (pp. 121–24). Huntington goes beyond O'Donnell and Schmitter's model, however, in showing how the different roles of and the mutual interactions among these key actors account for variable modes of transition (chapter 3). As in Mainwaring's contribution, Huntington distinguishes three modes of transition. In place of Mainwaring's distinction among transaction, extrication, and defeat, he proposes the terms "transformation," "transplacement," and "replacement" (pp. 114–15). Huntington's three-way distinction is based similarly if more crudely upon the balance of force between the government and the opposition.

Despite similarities with the other two books in the conceptualization of the interaction of actors in the transition phase, Huntington addresses a question not raised by the others. While all three works consider the link between transitional processes and the problems of democratic consolidation, Huntington alone considers the potential effect of the preceding type of authoritarian regime on the transition process. This approach is significant in that it looks beyond the strategic choices of actors for other potential explanations of how transitions occur. In a fairly simplistic analysis of the linkage between prior regimes and modes of transition, Huntington plots thirty-five cases of transitions from 1974 to 1990 according to the preceding type of authoritarian regime and the mode of transition (p. 113). He concludes that transformation and transplacement are the most usual forms of transition from both military regimes (thirteen of sixteen cases) and one-party systems (nine of eleven cases). If these two frequently encountered modes of transition are considered together, no clear pattern distinguishing military regimes from one-party systems is established. If these two modes of transition are separated, still no clear pattern emerges. Five of eleven one-party systems had transitions through transformation, as opposed to four through transplacement, and eight of sixteen military regimes had transitions through transformation, as opposed to five through transplacement. The strongest conclusion is that transitions through replacement are rare (six out of thirty-five).

The problem with Huntington's very basic correlational analysis is that it overlooks some of the complex conceptual issues involved in explaining the links between prior type of political regime and modality of transition. Indeed, there are various lines of questioning one

could pursue concerning Huntington's treatment of the linkage between prior regime type and mode of transition. First, the lack of any positive finding may derive from the fact that he simply uses the various regime types as conceptually undeveloped labels. Fitting cases as disparate as El Salvador, Brazil, and Sudan under the label of "military" regimes is bound to dilute any trend associated with regime type and to leave open the question whether some theoretically complex link between key features of the prior regime and transitions can be found.¹¹ Second, the lack of evidence for linkage could be a case of incorrect coding of cases. Doubt is reinforced when one compares the plotting of cases in terms of their mode of transition by Huntington and Valenzuela (p. 77). Of the fourteen cases they both code, there is agreement on nine and disagreement on five. Thus, a fair test would demand greater care in studying particular cases and in justifying their placement under one or another mode of transition.¹² Finally, one could go even further and question the completeness of the standard conceptualization of modes of transition. For example, the difficulty in locating cases such as Poland or Hungary within the schema of three possible modes of transition may be due to the fact that the eastern European cases are forced into a schema originally developed for southern Europe and Latin America. It is probably prudent to argue that it remains to be seen whether an expanded understanding of modes of transition, along with a more nuanced typology of nondemocratic regimes and a more discriminate plotting of cases, will allow us to verify some heretofore hidden pattern linking prior regime and mode of transition.

These various modifications do not eliminate an even more radical solution. In my view, the notion of modes of transition is most useful for comparisons of transitions from similar types of political regimes, generally intraregional in scope, and loses much of its utility when applied to comparisons of transitions from different types of nondemocratic regimes, as attempted in more encompassing cross-regional studies. The question is whether broad differences in prior regime type account at a general level for different types of transition. Variations within the same regime type can subsequently be used at a lower level of abstraction to explain variations in modes of transition within the same type of transition.

The impact of prior regime type on the transition process is quite evident. Even if the eastern European transitions did not depart from totalitarian regimes, as Przeworski argues, a convincing argument can be made that the transitions started from "posttotalitarian authoritarian" regimes. As Linz stresses, totalitarianism had "succeeded in changing societies and largely destroying the bases of the socio-cultural pluralism of civil society . . . [and] the independence of economic actors."¹³ From a comparative perspective, in contrast, the variety of authoritarianisms found in South America and southern Europe did not change society in this way; rather, nonpolitical groups were allowed a degree of autonomy that could potentially be used as a basis of power from which to oppose the regimes.

Unsurprisingly, transition processes reflected these differences.¹⁴ For example, while the issue of the position of the capitalist class with regard to the regime figured prominently in the dynamics of transitions in southern Europe and South America, no such dynamic existed in the eastern European transitions. There, in contrast, a key issue was the "conversion" of the apparatchiks into entrepreneurs. Even more broadly, while the transitions in southern Europe and South America were accompanied by what O'Donnell and Schmitter refer to as the "resurrection of civil society," in eastern Europe it is more accurate to refer to "a re-inventing rather than a resurrection of civil society."¹⁵ These differences do not seem to be captured by distinctions between modes of transition and justify the introduction of the

notion of types of democratic transitions. They have generally been overlooked in those analyses that, influenced by O'Donnell and Schmitter's 1986 work on transitions, stress the strategic choices of actors. Indeed, they probably present the most serious challenge to the strategic choice approach to transitions.¹⁶

The Problems and Prospects of Democratic Consolidation

A central but usually glossed over issue is how to define the term "democratic consolidation," the second organizing concept in recent debates about democratization. It is important to avoid confusing "new" or "transitional democracies" and "consolidated democracies." For, if a country can be labeled democratic as soon as it emerges from authoritarian rule, inasmuch as its authorities are popularly elected, it still usually lacks the characteristics associated with consolidated democracies. The consolidation of new democracies, moreover, entails more than a question of time, as maintained by those who stress that democratic consolidation takes one or two generations. Indeed, what is at stake is the institutionalization of a new set of rules for the political game or the very construction of a new type of regime. Thus, in discussing democratic consolidation it is crucial at the outset, to dispel the notion that successful transitions from authoritarian rule somehow lead more or less naturally to consolidated democracies. In a nutshell, the processes of transition from authoritarian rule and of democratic consolidation are quite distinct, and the actors, strategies, and conditions that facilitate transitions do not necessarily overlap with those that make democratic consolidation likely.

Democratic consolidation, in contrast to the rather pointed objective of undermining authoritarian rulers, is a complex process. As Valenzuela argues, democratic consolidation involves both the elimination of residues of the old system that are incompatible with the workings of a democratic regime and the building of new institutions that reinforce the democratic rules of the game. A definition of democratic consolidation draws upon a minimal definition of democracy, encompassing secret balloting, universal adult suffrage, and executive accountability, as proposed by Robert Dahl, and a strategic conception of actors. In other words, as both O'Donnell (pp. 48-9) and Valenzuela (pp. 60-2, 70-1) argue, a country can be said to have a consolidated democracy when all major actors accept the rules of the democratic game, as outlined in a minimal definition of democracy, and when none of these actors uses resources outside those sanctioned by the democratic game.¹⁷

This conceptualization of democratic consolidation is crucial in assessing the problems faced by many countries in posttransitional settings. As several observers have pointed out, most new democracies are surviving. But merely surviving is the problem. They are "surviving" without consolidating. Indeed, outside of southern Europe, only in the rare cases of redemocratization such as Uruguay and Chile, where democratic consolidation was achieved before the installation of authoritarianism, does democratic consolidation appear as a clear possibility. Most other countries appear to be languishing, well short of meeting the criterion of a consolidated democracy, in some sort of half-way house.¹⁸

In retrospect, democratic transition looks like a fairly easy process. The literature on democratic consolidation is markedly more pessimistic than the literature on transitions. Not unrelatedly, the movement of concern from transitions to democratic consolidation has been

accompanied by a broadening of the conceptual field. The widespread reliance on strategic choice models has, above all, given way to theories that stress economic, social-structural, and institutional factors. This added complexity, along with the evolving nature of the literature, makes an assessment of the state of the debate on democratic consolidation harder than in the case of transitions. Yet it is still possible to assess the literature inasmuch as it touches upon certain recurring factors that are seen as affecting the problems and associated prospects of democratic consolidation.

A first area of inquiry concerns the link between the preceding type of authoritarian regime and the problems of democratic consolidation, a topic that has led to a debate concerning the proper weight to be attached to historical legacies. On this issue, Przeworski has strongly voiced one position. He considers that where a country is heading to, not where it is coming from, is key. This stark counterposition of the pull of forward-looking orientations, as opposed to the push of historically informed orientations, does not lead Przeworski to overlook the difference between authoritarian regimes based on Communist parties and those based on military institutions (pp. 74ff). It does, however, appear to account for an analysis that does not draw out the implications of these differences and a skeptical view of the importance of the prior regime for the process of democratic consolidation.

In opposition to Przeworski, Huntington argues that the nature of the rulers under the preceding regime makes a difference in the process of democratic consolidation. Huntington makes an interesting contrast between transitions in Latin America, where the military's retreat to the barracks entails a full withdrawal from the political game, and in eastern Europe, where the Communist party goes through a less complete withdrawal and remains a political actor. This contrast is seen as affecting the position of the old powerholders in the posttransitional setting and hence the prospects of successful democratic consolidation. In Huntington's words:

After democratization a former monopolistic party is in no better position than any other political group to reinstate an authoritarian system. The party gives up its monopoly of power but not the opportunity to compete for power by democratic means. When they return to the barracks, the military give up both, but they also retain the capacity to reacquire power by nondemocratic means. The transition from a one-party system to democracy, consequently, is likely to be more difficult than the transition from a military regime to democracy, but it is also likely to be more permanent. (p. 120)

Even if Huntington's argument that the transitions in Latin America entailed a radical break in the military institution's ability to exercise control is overdone, as Agüero and Valenzuela (pp. 87-93) would argue, it does call attention to the lingering effects of the preceding type of authoritarian regime. And here Huntington is not alone in advancing this argument. Another argument concerning the impact of certain aspects of the prior authoritarian regime on the prospects of democratic consolidation is presented by O'Donnell. He sees cases where the authoritarian regime was economically successful and relatively less repressive as being more prone to an authoritarian regression given that the historical memory of the authoritarian period is less likely to include strong antiauthoritarian sentiments among the population (pp. 31-7).

The debate about legacies and prospects of democratic consolidation has centered even more on the question whether certain modalities or "modes of transition" from authoritarian rule have a differential effect on the prospects of democratic consolidation. Again Przeworski finds little historical connection between the modality of transition and the features of the emerging regime (pp. 94–99). And again Huntington takes the opposite view, arguing that, "overall, it seems more plausible to hypothesize that a consensual, less violent transition provides a better basis for consolidating democracy than do conflict and violence. If this is the case, negotiated transplacements [transitions through transaction] may be more supportive of consolidation; transformations [transitions through extrication] would be next; and replacements [transitions through regime defeat] . . . would provide the least support for consolidation" (p. 276). It is instructive to spell out Huntington's line of thought.

What is relevant about Huntington's argument is that different modes of transition appear to be associated with peculiar problems in the phase of democratic consolidation. As Valenzuela argues, in transitions where the authoritarian rulers retained an important degree of control, which he sees to be the case in transitions through both transaction and extrication, the conditions imposed on the opposition by the authoritarian rulers linger on as legacies (pp. 73–75). Especially in cases of transition through transaction, these legacies can be quite detrimental. In Chile, a clear case of a transition through transaction, Valenzuela points to the "tutelary powers," "reserved domains," and distorting electoral rules that democratic authorities must confront if they are to consolidate democracy. The situation faced by the new democratic authorities in cases like Chile is quite different from that where transitions result from the collapse or defeat of the authoritarian regime, that is, where the former rulers lacked the power to impose conditions, as in Argentina, Greece, and Portugal.

Indeed, the contrast between the two extreme modes of transition, transaction and regime defeat, could be linked to peculiar dilemmas in the phase of democratic consolidation. And this linking is precisely what O'Donnell does, referring to Brazil and Argentina. On the one hand, where the transition from authoritarian rule relied heavily on pacts among elites, as in Brazil's transition through transaction, O'Donnell links the important authoritarian legacies with the progressive restriction of civil power. In this case, new democracies appear particularly susceptible to a "slow death," in which civilian authorities remain subordinate to the military's power. On the other hand, where the inability of the authoritarian powerholders to condition the transition leads to an unrestrained competition between democratic actors, as in Argentina's transition through regime defeat, the new democratic government is vulnerable to an authoritarian regression by "sudden death," that is, through a classic military coup (p. 19).¹⁹ Transition through transaction allows for too much continuity with the old regime, while the break introduced by a transition through regime defeat may militate against the exercise of restraint and, most fundamentally, the emergence of the consensus needed to shore up a nascent democracy. Hence, as Huntington and various other authors have argued, the prospects of democratic consolidation appear to be enhanced in those cases where the more or less balanced power between the authoritarian leaders and emerging opposition groups makes compromise on both sides an essential ingredient of the transition.²⁰

In sum, *pace* Przeworski, a variety of cogent arguments indicate that the nature of the problems faced by the new democratic authorities are shaped in part by the type of *ancien régime* and the mode of transition.²¹ To be sure, democratic consolidation entails a new

process and distinct dynamics that differentiate it from transitional processes. But inasmuch as actors and their circumstances are historically shaped, historical legacies play a role. Thus, without disregarding the novelty represented by the new democracies, the variable weight of the old regime should not be ignored.

Nonetheless, Przeworski seems to be right on one point concerning the link between the prior regime type and the mode of transition: it does not have as straightforward an impact on the prospects of democracy as some would argue. As suggested above, the concept of modes of transition should perhaps be subordinated to the concept of types of transition. Thus, similar modes of transition would have different implications for the process of democratic consolidation according to the type of transition in question. That is, arguments like O'Donnell's concerning "slow death" and "sudden death" scenarios should be read as spelling out the impact of different modes of transition within the context of the same type of transition. Indeed, as indicated by Huntington's own argument concerning the impact of the prior regime type on the problems of democratic consolidation, the equivalent of the "sudden death" scenario does not appear likely in places where the military had not taken power, such as eastern Europe, no matter what the mode of transition was. While historical legacies affect the prospects of democratic consolidation, the problems faced by democratic authorities in consolidating democracy are not solely a function of the mode of transition. A contextualized analysis would have to sort through the combination of effects from both the type and the mode of transition.

The Role of Economic Factors in the Process of Democratic Consolidation

Another recurring theme in the study of democratic transitions is the link between economic factors and the democratization process. Although this subject is a huge area of research, compared to the debates referred to above the discussion on the role of economic factors has still not crystallized into a clear debate. A serious dialogue is hindered, on the one hand, because the linkage between economic and political aspects of transitions has been formulated in quite different manners. The recent date of many attempts at economic reform, on the other hand, means that much of the data is not yet available. Still, it is instructive to consider the arguments concerning the political consequences of economic factors advanced in the reviewed works.

Huntington considers the influence of variations in economic structure associated with a particular level of economic development on the process of democratization, a fairly traditional and straightforward way of conceiving the problem. He argues that, as economic development pushes countries into the middle income range, which he defines as \$1,000 to 3,000 per capita GNP in the late 1970s, they enter a "political transition zone" in which the likelihood of starting a transition to democracy increases (pp. 59–60, 315–6). Unlike some other factors, moreover, a country's level of economic development both helps trigger a transition and aids in democratic consolidation (pp. 270–73).

This argument amounts to a revision of Lipset's classic argument about the positive impact of economic development on democracy. O'Donnell demonstrated in his work on bureaucratic authoritarianism that the type of linear progression originally envisioned by Lipset can be empirically refuted; Huntington seeks to rescue much of the old modernization

thesis (pp. 59–72).²² As in modernization theory, economic factors are given much weight. The disclaimers concerning the rejection of determinism and the references to the role of political leadership aside, poverty is still seen as “probably *the* principle obstacle to democratic development” (p. 311, my emphasis). And if economic development can lead to a bureaucratic authoritarian regime in its initial phases, the positive link between modernization and democracy is subsequently reestablished. Nevertheless, Huntington’s minor revisions do not address the main flaw of the standard modernization argument: how the impact of economic trends on political developments is conceptualized. Thus, he does little to explore why economic factors have ambivalent political consequences, referring only in passing to changes in the attitude of middle class groups. Indeed, he addresses only long-term economic trends and says little about how actors are affected by and react to economic factors. As in the literature of the 1960s on modernization, the translation of economic forces into democratic political institutions remains unexplained.

Another, and certainly more dynamic, approach to the link between the economic sphere and democracy is provided by Przeworski. Addressing economic issues in greater depth than the authors of any of the other reviewed works, he considers the links between market-oriented reforms and the process of democratic consolidation. Przeworski is most original and makes his greatest contribution here. Indeed, following a timely assessment of what kinds of economic systems are better at ensuring material welfare (chapter 3), Przeworski offers a masterful account of the complex issues involved in these economic reforms and the subtle interaction between economic and political issues (chapter 4).

For Przeworski, the durability of new democracies depends on their economic performance, and “profound economic reforms must be undertaken if there is to be any hope that the deterioration in living conditions experienced by many nascent democratic countries will ever cease” (p. 189). Rather than focusing on levels of development, as Huntington does, Przeworski focuses on the presence of an economic crisis and the need to improve economic performance as the driving force in his argument. The need for structural economic reform as a way to improve standards of living following prolonged economic crises in eastern Europe and Latin America does not come as a startling revelation. But, as Przeworski underlines, what matters in terms of the process of democratic consolidation is the decision-making style adopted to deal with these pressing economic needs. Indeed, if there is consensus in most quarters about the need for market-oriented reforms, there is still certainly much dispute over just how these reforms should be carried out.

Przeworski addresses this controversy by first considering the political dynamics of economic reforms in terms of the attitudes of three actors—politicians in office, technocrats, and the voting population—and the resulting choice of strategies. What emerges as the optimal strategy is the adoption of radical reform programs, regardless of whether the electorate supports them. Problems start here. For as social costs are experienced, the reforms are slowed, partially reversed, or even abandoned. A cyclical process is opened as new governments are formed and launch new attempts at reforms, only to face an increasingly skeptical population. Thus, even if the record shows that, in spite of their zigzagging course, reforms have advanced (though it is still early to say if they will be successful in promoting economic growth), the political consequences of economic reforms appear far from beneficial. As governments “vacillate between the technocratic political style inherent in market-oriented reforms and the participatory style required to maintain

consensus," representative institutions are undermined and democracy is weakened (p. 183). This style of economic policymaking, in effect, hinders the consolidation of democracy and creates instead a tendency toward what O'Donnell has labeled "delegative democracy."²³

Przeworski sees an alternative to what has generally been referred to as the "neoliberal" approach. His social democratic approach, in which "reforms would have to emerge from widespread consultation channeled through representative institutions and ratified by elections," would avoid the destabilizing consequences inherent in most current attempts at structural adjustment and assist the process of democratic consolidation (p. 187).²⁴ However, as Przeworski pessimistically acknowledges, the factors conducive to such an economic policymaking style do not appear to be present in most new democracies.

As is characteristic of Przeworski's entire book, the argument concerning the connection between economic reforms and democratic politics is presented in a crisp and powerful manner. But here again, as in the discussion of the types of political regimes from which transitions departed in eastern Europe and Latin America, a key issue of the comparative agenda on democratization is glossed over. Przeworski seeks to show that the economic reforms in both eastern Europe and Latin America are comparable. He thus shows how the economic structures in place before the democratic transitions in eastern Europe and Latin America were not so radically different and that, moreover, leaders in both regions share the common goals of introducing market reforms (pp. 139–46). This exercise is certainly necessary and firmly establishes comparability. But in the process of countering the criticism that the experiences of these two regions are simply not comparable, Przeworski avoids the question about how the legacies of the old regime in the area of the economy affect the task of democratic consolidation.

As has been pointed out by various authors, it is possible to distinguish among two main paths followed by different countries in the timing of successful economic reforms and the process of democratization.²⁵ Very briefly, it is possible to distinguish countries like Chile, Taiwan, and South Korea, where the task of economic reform was successfully carried out by the authoritarian rulers before the start of the transition, from cases like Poland, Russia, Brazil, and Argentina, where newly installed democratic rulers had to urgently tackle a critical economic situation. Even if the main concern is with the economic situation faced by new democratic governments, it follows that the economic challenges they face have much to do with inherited economic structures. The negative tendencies Przeworski so aptly explains, rather than affecting all countries facing democratic consolidation, are peculiar to only one subset of countries. Other countries, where the democratic authorities inherit a functioning economy, are able to avoid the simultaneous tackling of structural economic and political reforms. In these cases, as illustrated probably best by Chile, the politically destabilizing consequences of market-oriented economic reforms can be avoided and energy can be devoted to the more focused task of developing antipoverty programs.

From a comparative perspective, then, there appears to be a connection between the economic situation inherited from the authoritarian past by the new democratic authorities and the prospects of democratic consolidation. Indeed, this same general point is made in the discussion of the impact of former authoritarian rulers. That is, if all countries do not embark on the task of democratic consolidation in the same context and with the same

prospects of success, it behooves comparativists to address the issue of different posttransitional settings.

Directions for Research: Placing Actors in Context

The state of research on democratic transitions shows mixed results. At a conceptual level, one can talk of a tightly integrated research program, although it is somewhat complicated by the bewildering number of different terms authors insist on using. Gradually, some of the profuse terminological confusion is giving way to a more clearly defined set of shared questions and a serious dialogue in the works of leading scholars. What emerges from a review of the literature, most interestingly, is a series of disagreements concerning the effect of features of the *anciens régimes* on the processes of both transition and democratic consolidation and the effect of the transitional process on the problems of democratic consolidation. If there is some clarity concerning disagreements, however, it is still hard to adjudicate among the various positions because the disagreements on substantive issues appear to be linked to different theoretical and methodological approaches. Perhaps most crucially, as this article has stressed, there is little consensus on how to think about actors and the historically shaped context within which they make their choices. Some insights about how to assess the various arguments and how to conduct future research can thus be derived from an evaluation of these differing approaches.

Because of the clarity and forcefulness of his arguments, it is convenient to start with Przeworski. He is unambiguous in arguing that actors shape outcomes through their choices in a way that is not especially influenced by historical legacies, as can be traced either to the preceding nondemocratic regime or to the mode of transition. The argument, it bears stressing, is couched at a very abstract theoretical level and hardly refers to empirical cases. Thus, on variations between authoritarianisms, the implications of the difference between authoritarian regimes based on Communist parties and those based on military institutions is never drawn out. With regard to the impact of modes of transitions, moreover, Przeworski acknowledges variations in the transitional process but does not do much with the distinction between transitions where "extrication" is fairly automatic due to regime collapse and those where the withdrawal of the military or the Communist party must be negotiated (pp. 67, 79).²⁶ The same goes for the discussion of economic reforms and their political consequences. Przeworski certainly acknowledges that the economic situation inherited by the new democratic authorities varies from case to case, but the differences do not form the core of his analysis (pp. 138, 144, 187). Ignoring these empirical variations, he not surprisingly finds little connection between the preceding regime type, the specificities of the transitional processes, and the economic legacies from the authoritarian period, on the one hand, and the problems and prospects of democratic consolidation, on the other. Actors make forward-looking choices outside of any (nonstrategic) context that would hinder or promote certain courses of actions. Effectively ignoring the presence of historical legacies, Przeworski's uniform skepticism toward historically informed comparative arguments is not based on a fair test and thus is not particularly illuminating on this issue.

The problem with Huntington's work is different. He advances some interesting arguments about historical legacies, but they are not always consistent. What seems to plague

Huntington's work is the lack of a strong theoretical framework that would allow him to deal consistently with the large number of empirical cases he seeks to encompass. As a result, he oscillates between different styles of analysis. Thus, when he develops concepts that are firmly institutional in nature and are geared toward only a subset of his cases, he finds some important connections between both the preceding type of authoritarian regime and the mode of transition, on the one hand, and the problems of democratic consolidation, on the other. But when testing is based upon the simple plotting of the entire set of thirty-five cases under broad labels, there appears to be little relation between the preceding type of authoritarian regime and the way they transitioned to democracy. There is a reason, thus, for Huntington's inconsistency.

The contradictory nature of Huntington's arguments concerning historical legacies appears to be related to the level and degree of development of the concepts he uses and the number of cases he studies. When mid-level and well developed concepts are used to analyze a small set of in-depth case studies, some interesting hypotheses concerning legacies are developed. When a very large sample of cases is studied in terms of concepts that are not theoretically developed to any significant extent, a similar intellectual reward is not forthcoming.²⁷ Huntington's laudable effort to deal comprehensively with the various problems and the universe of cases of democratization unfortunately fails. The work's eclecticism leads at best to an additive approach, which invokes different factors to explain either different problems or different cases. This lack of theoretical synthesis, in turn, makes any comprehensive organization of the extensive empirical cases simply impossible. In the end, the work never really comes together.²⁸

Przeworski and Huntington represent polar opposites in terms of their balance between theory and empirical cases, the former sacrificing empirical richness for theoretical elegance and the latter sacrificing theoretical significance for empirical comprehensiveness. The articles in the Mainwaring, O'Donnell, and Valenzuela volume represent a middle ground, both in theoretical and methodological terms. They are more oriented to theory building than Huntington's work, and they remain more grounded in a manageable set of empirical cases than Przeworski's work. The key to the happy balance this volume strikes is its reliance on mid-level concepts. Such concepts allow for the easier incorporation of insights, particularly in terms of how actors and context interact to shape particular outcomes, gained in detailed country studies and quite delimited comparative research. They also provide the most reliable way of exploring the variable impact of different types of authoritarianisms, modes of transitions, and economic legacies on the process and prospects of democratic consolidation. Not surprisingly, the contributions of O'Donnell and Valenzuela produce the most nuanced and consistent arguments, clearly supporting a causal link between modes of transition and variations in the process of democratic consolidation.

Given the current state of the literature on democratic transitions, the style of analysis exemplified by the Mainwaring, O'Donnell, and Valenzuela volume seems to be the most fruitful for future research. But Huntington is still the one to turn to in terms of the challenge future research should address. He attempts to bring the various phases of the democratization process, from the starting point of the authoritarian regime through the transition to the process of democratic consolidation, under one tent. In advancing this encompassing agenda, Huntington also stresses, very correctly, the need to deal with both actors' choices and the context within which choices are made. If Huntington ultimately

does not deliver on his promises, the question is still how to tackle this challenge successfully. To meet this challenge, it is imperative that an adequate theoretical framework be developed. Although this review is not the place to develop such a framework, it is useful to lay down some pointers, drawing upon the insights of the three works and learning from their shortcomings. What follows is but a sketch of what could be called a "political-institutional" approach to democratic transitions.

The conceptualization of democratic transitions should start with the insight discussed by O'Donnell and Schmitter in their 1986 work on transitions. As they stated, one of the defining features of democratic transitions, or more broadly of periods of regime change, is that they are moments of plasticity.²⁹ In contrast to periods of normal or routine politics, actors appear to face an unusual opportunity to shape the course of events. The rise of epoch-making leaders such as Mandela, De Klerk, Gorbachev, Yeltsin, Havel, and Walesa mark these periods and, indeed, fully justify an emphasis on choice and crafting. The importance of choice, however, lies not only in the choices that start a transition and move it along, the focus of O'Donnell and Schmitter's 1986 model, but also in the shaping of new institutions. In other words, with the beginning of the transition, sometimes lasting beyond its conclusion, countries enter a constitutional or founding moment. As in critical junctures, the "constitutional choices" made during this time period have a lasting effect in setting countries on particular paths.

These "constitutional choices" result in institutions that may be more or less conducive to democratic consolidation.³⁰ This analysis may seem backward, since in one sense institutions take on a life of their own and begin to structure the interaction between actors only after the process of consolidation is successfully completed. But in the immediate posttransitional period a dialectical process is at work. That is, the different institutional designs adopted by the new democracies have different chances of gaining acceptance by all the major actors and consequently vary in the likelihood of their becoming consolidated. The consequences of institutions set up through "constitutional choices," in short, affect the prospects of democratic consolidation.

Now, to say that actors have choices does not mean that outcomes are random or that actors are equally likely to pick any set of potential institutional designs. Probably the primary factor explaining the shape of emerging institutions, as has been underlined by various authors, is the relative power of the actors involved in the process, the rulers and the opposition. Thus, it makes a difference, and we should seek to study in what ways, if the new institutional rules are imposed or if they result from struggle and compromise between opposing actors. Indeed, the relative power of actors is the key mechanism that underlines and validates arguments concerning the impact of the mode of transition on the process of democratic consolidation.³¹ But this type of argument is still very thin or decontextualized.

The elusive but all-important problem of how to conceptualize agency during regime change must, therefore, be confronted head on. In this regard, there can be no question that the study of democratic transitions has benefited from the emphasis put on choice. Strategic choice models have, indeed, offered a useful alternative to much of the work on democracy in the 1960s, which Przeworski rightly criticizes for seeing outcomes as "uniquely determined by conditions" (p. 96). But it is probably also fair to say that the shift from "prerequisites" to "process," or from structural determinants to strategic choices, has gone too far. This shift is particularly evident in Przeworski's stark counterposition of where a

country is coming from and where it is heading. It is necessary to grasp “the fact that those who are making major political decisions are not working from a *tabula rasa*, merely projecting the most technically feasible solutions.”³² But it is also necessary to go beyond the simply additive approach provided by Huntington, who considers structures and choices separately. What is needed is a theory of regime transition and formation that incorporates the simple yet theoretically complex notion that actors make choices but not in the circumstances of their choosing. Indeed, if the relative degree of power of the actors involved in the transition process determines the degree to which reform of the system will minimize or maximize the break with the *ancien régime*, we can gauge how and if “constitutional choices” affect the process and prospects of democratic consolidation only by placing the actors and their choices in the broader context within which transitions occur.³³

Probably most obvious is the need to consider the defining features of the nondemocratic regime from which a transition departs and, going even further back, the practices during the period before the origins of the authoritarian regime. This long-term context shapes the raw material or building blocks from which the attempt at founding a new regime will be launched during transition phase. It configures the social basis of politics. This context is hard to change in the short run, but it does not affect the prospects of democratic consolidation in the way a prerequisite would. Rather than determining anything by itself, this context operates in interaction with actors’ choices. In a given context, certain institutional designs work better than others, and the “constitutional choices” most conducive to the consolidation of democracy can not be assessed outside of this long-term context.

If the most common manner of talking about context is in terms of its long-term manifestations, another less usual and less static form of thinking about context is related to the short-term context shaped, quite literally, by “where a country is coming from.”³⁴ For example, the short-term context includes the nature of the rulers under the preceding regime and the economic situation inherited by the new democratic authorities. In contrast to the long-term context, short-term factors are more time-bound and operate at a mid level between structures and choices. They thus play a more active role in affecting actors’ choices. They make certain forms of change more likely than others, or certain outcomes more probable than others. But they still do not, by themselves, determine outcomes.

Placing actors in context, the heart of a political-institutional approach to democratic transitions, does not contradict the view of transitions as moments of high drama. Rather than letting us simply assume or assert that actors make efficacious choices, a contextualized view of actors insists that we can learn how, and therefore if, actors shape “their” history only by considering how choices interact with context. If we are to show that transitions are moments particularly open to agency, we must show that particular outcomes would not have been the same without the intervention of actors. The influential strategic choice models face this problem. For, if strategic choice models have made a fundamental contribution to the democratization debate, especially through their emphasis on the interactions among actors, they have in other ways been strangely empty and inadequate. In ignoring, or at least not explicitly addressing, the context within which actors make choices, these models have failed to provide a baseline from which to assess the impact of human intervention. In other words, they have failed to develop a conceptual framework that allows

us to show when and in what ways people have acted collectively to shape the institutional patterns by which they subsequently live.

Thus, in spite of the massive number of works on the large and still expanding number of democratic transitions, and the important advances represented by works such as those reviewed here, the literature has a way to go. The subject of democratic transitions still lacks a work comparable to Theda Skocpol's on social revolutions.³⁵ And before one is written, more empirical work, building on the conceptual debates discussed above, is needed. There is still room for detailed case studies and small comparative studies examining the causes and timing of transitions, as well as the possible linkages between various authoritarianisms, types and modes of transition, and associated problems and prospects of democratic consolidation. It is crucial that the understandable concern with pressing problems affecting new democracies should not prevent a reexamination of authoritarianisms and transitional processes. Rather, we should strive to construct a more integrated field from the various questions and strands of the debate discussed in this article and show how the situation of the new democracies around the globe can be best understood within a broad conceptual framework.³⁶

This agenda is ambitious. But it deals with issues at the heart of comparative politics and is certainly worth engaging in. A central puzzle for comparative politics is why freedom is not found in equal measure across time and space. Just as important, no doubt, is what humans do with their freedom when they have it. Though usually phrased in different terms, these questions are raised in the study of the democratic transitions of the last two decades. It could be argued, indeed, that this agenda presents comparative politics with its most important challenge as the twentieth century draws to a close.

NOTES

1. The most important contributions to the understanding of the third wave of democratization include Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead, eds., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Prospects for Democracy*, 4 vols. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour M. Lipset, eds., *Democracy in Developing Countries*, 3 vols. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989); and John Higley and Richard Gunther, eds., *Elites and Democratic Consolidation in Latin America and Southern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). Two as yet unpublished works by major comparativists are Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Eastern Europe, Southern Europe and Latin America*, and Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour M. Lipset, *Democracy in Developing Countries: Persistence, Failure, and Renewal* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers).

2. I use this label as a shorthand way of referring to three questions or issues around which the literature centers. There is, first, the problem of exiting from authoritarian rule, of starting a transition from some nondemocratic regime. Next, there is the problem of installing a democracy, of ensuring a transition to democracy. Finally, there is the problem of consolidating the newly installed democracy. These tasks can be seen as phases in a broad democratization process, even though they may overlap chronologically.

3. Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986). On this work see Nancy Bermeo, "Rethinking Regime Change," *Comparative Politics*, 22 (April 1990), 359-77.

4. Here, as in various parts of the text, I use the term "authoritarian" in a loose fashion to refer to the various types of nondemocratic regimes.

5. Przeworski was a participant in the project spearheaded by O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead, to which he contributed the article "Some Problems in the Study of the Transition to Democracy," in Guillermo O'Donnell,

Philippe Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead, eds., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Comparative Perspectives* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986). He first applied O'Donnell and Schmitter's work on transitions to the Polish case in "Democracy as a Contingent Outcome of Conflict," in Jon Elster and Rune Stagstad, eds., *Democracy and Constitutionalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

6. Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968).

7. The distinction between prerequisites and process is developed in Samuel Huntington, "Will More Countries Become Democratic?," *Political Science Quarterly*, 99 (1984), 193-218.

8. O'Donnell and Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, pp. 19, 21. There is some confusion regarding the use of the term "regime" in a ubiquitous reference to splits or divisions "within the regime." While the split between hard-liners and soft-liners is clear, it is unclear whether these actors are part of the state or part of a broader ruling authoritarian coalition. The latter seems to correspond to the most common usage of the expression. At any rate, I will ignore this confusion and the misuse of the term "regime" and will stick to convention by referring to splits or divisions "within the regime."

9. Linz has also argued that reform and rupture are only two poles on a continuum and that many mixes are possible. Juan Linz, "Transition to Democracy," *The Washington Quarterly*, 13 (1990), 150-52. Valenzuela, however, argues that, rather than a point on a continuum, extrication should be conceptualized as a distinct mode of transition (pp. 74-75).

10. In the eastern European cases, furthermore, the timing of the transition would have to be partly explained by external factors. If eastern Europe both originated and disintegrated as a bloc, the changing Soviet role in its sphere of influence can not be avoided as an explanatory factor. Only recently has the international dimension of democratic transitions been given serious attention, thanks in particular to Laurence Whitehead, "International Aspects of Democratization," in O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead, eds., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Comparative Perspectives*, and "Democracy by Convergence and Southern Europe: A Comparative Politics Perspective," in Geoffrey Pridham, ed., *Encouraging Democracy: The International Context of Regime Transition in Southern Europe* (London: Leicester University Press, 1991). See also Philippe Schmitter, "The International Context of Contemporary Democratization," *Stanford Journal of International Affairs*, 2 (1993), 1-34.

11. Hence the need for a more refined typology of nondemocratic regimes than is currently available. In general one could say that, if the comparative literature on democratization has acknowledged and incorporated the impact of institutional dimensions of military rule on the transition process, the peculiarities of Communist party rule on the transitional process have so far been less well assimilated. For example, while discussing the tensions between the military as government and the military as institution, a central aspect of the dynamics of the military regimes in South America, Mainwaring says nothing about the institutional structure of state socialist regimes (p. 324).

12. The same goes for the way Huntington fits cases within his typology of nondemocratic regimes. For example, does the label "one-party" regime aptly describe both the Soviet Union and Mexico? Is the difference in regime type between Spain and Brazil captured by the labels of "personal" and "military" regime, respectively (p. 113)? In the end we must come back to the first point about the need to develop a more appropriate typology that captures the differences among these cases.

13. Juan Linz, "Authoritarianism," in Joel Krieger, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 63.

14. A partial exception to the pattern in eastern Europe, it could be argued, is Poland. For, as Linz points out, due to the role played by the Catholic church, even before the rise of Solidarity, Poland did not have a "posttotalitarian authoritarian" regime. As one would expect, the greater elite autonomy in Poland accounted for differences in the transition process compared to its neighbors. Etzioni-Halevy's research supports the view that greater elite autonomy in Poland accounted for differences in the democratization process. *Ibid.*, p. 63; Eva Etzioni-Halevy, "The Autonomy of Elites and Transitions from Non-Democratic Regimes: The Cases of the Soviet Union and Poland," *Research in Political Sociology*, 6 (1992), 257-76.

15. Grzegorz Ekiert, "Peculiarities of Post-communist Politics: The Case of Poland," *Studies in Comparative Communism*, 25 (1992), 349; O'Donnell and Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, ch. 5. One should probably argue that, if one is to address the context within which transitions occur, it is necessary to go even further back than the prior political regime. Particularly where authoritarian rule is of short duration and where the rulers were ineffective in bringing about sweeping changes, as in many South American cases, trends in the period before the origins of the nondemocratic regime are important. For example, the resurrection of civil society is linked to the presence, not replicated in eastern Europe, of a ready-made political class with experience in democratic and party politics before the advent of bureaucratic authoritarianism.

16. The need to distinguish between types of transitions is also brought home by the South Africa case. In South Africa, due to the nature of the apartheid regime, it is important to capture how the move toward democracy also entails a national liberation struggle. Talk of types of democratic transitions would certainly complicate comparative analysis and even raise some doubts about the value of defining a global approach to the study of democratization. But rather than invalidate this comparative enterprise, as Offe suggests, this complication can be thought of in terms of levels of abstraction. What must be avoided is not cross-regional analysis, but the all too common tendency to engage in conceptual travelling without respect for the rules of concept formation. As Sartori reminds us, comparativists must fight the temptation to carry out comparisons mechanically, without establishing the level of abstraction at which the analysis is cast. Comparativists must be careful to develop their concepts at the level of abstraction that is appropriate for the scope of their comparisons. If we follow Sartori's *per genus et differentiam* mode of analysis, "democratic transitions" would refer to the genus of phenomenon being studied across the various regions of the globe, while the various types of transitions we observe in different regions or cases would be species of the same genus. The tendency in the literature has been to move from within-species comparisons to cross-species comparisons without making the necessary conceptual adjustments. Claus Offe, "Capitalism by Democratic Design? Democratic Theory Facing the Triple Transition in East Central Europe," *Social Research*, 58 (1991), 865-892; Giovanni Sartori, "Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics," *American Political Science Review*, 64 (1970), 1033-53.

17. Along with these two articles by O'Donnell and Valenzuela, two of the most illuminating discussions of the concept of democratic consolidation are provided by Schmitter, "The Consolidation of Political Democracy in Southern Europe," mimeo, third revised version, Stanford University and European University Institute, June 1988; and Leonardo Morlino, "Consolidações Democráticas na Europa Meridional: Indicações Teóricas para Análise Empírica," *Dados*, 35 (1992), 145-72.

18. The shortcomings of an important subset of "new democracies" has led to new conceptual elaborations, among which O'Donnell's argument about "delegative democracy" is probably one of the most interesting. Guillermo O'Donnell, "Delegative Democracy?," *Working Paper 172* (Notre Dame: The Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies/University of Notre Dame, 1992).

19. This argument, however, is not the only position advanced by O'Donnell. It represents something of a change compared to the position held by O'Donnell in his 1986 work with Schmitter, where he argued that pacted transitions hold the best prospects for democratic consolidation. O'Donnell and Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, p. 39. O'Donnell shows that there are different sorts of pacts, which he demonstrates through the cases of Brazil and Spain (pp. 27-31). Subsequently, O'Donnell has again modified his argument, now stating that the modes of transition, whether pacted or not, are probably less important for the prospects of democratic consolidation than the "longer-term historical factors and . . . the degree of severity of the socioeconomic crisis newly installed democratic governments may inherit." O'Donnell, "Delegative Democracy?," p. 1. Indeed, O'Donnell's work exemplifies probably better than any other person's work both the strengths and weaknesses of the literature on democratization. On the positive side, it has remained close to the ground, raising new issues and providing insights of unusual value. On the negative side, the maze of not always consistent hypotheses and arguments has hampered the task of accumulating knowledge.

20. This view is consistent with Giuseppe Di Palma, *To Craft Democracies: An Essay on Democratic Transitions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

21. The article by Hagopian in the Mainwaring, O'Donnell, and Valenzuela volume presents an in-depth analysis of how Brazil's mode of transition shaped the problems it confronted in the phase of democratic consolidation. The link between modes of transition and variations in the process of democratic consolidation is also supported by Terry L. Karl, "Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America," *Comparative Politics*, 23 (1990), 1-21.

22. Seymour M. Lipset, "Some Prerequisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," *American Political Science Review*, 53 (1959); Guillermo O'Donnell, *Modernization and Bureaucratic Authoritarianism: Studies in South American Politics* (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies/University of California, 1973).

23. O'Donnell, "Delegative Democracy?."

24. The "social democratic" approach to economic reform that Przeworski favors is further elaborated in Luiz Carlos Bresser Pereira, José María Maravall, and Adam Przeworski, *Economic Reform in New Democracies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

25. See Stephan Haggard and Robert Kaufman, "Economic Adjustment and the Prospects of Democracy," in Stephan Haggard and Robert Kaufman, eds., *The Politics of Economic Adjustment: International Constraints, Distributive Conflicts, and the State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

26. There can be some confusion over the term "extrication," because Przeworski uses it to describe the process of removal of the former regime, a general process all transitions have to go through rather than one particular mode of transition.

27. Huntington's inconsistency extends to his treatment of institutions. For example, after making a strong case for the link between differences in the preceding type of regime and the problems of democratic consolidation (pp. 120, 231ff), Huntington returns to the issue with a much more noncommittal position (p. 277). Furthermore, Huntington dismisses arguments about the impact of variations in political party system and form of government (presidential or parliamentary) on the durability of democracy as inconclusive, all in the space of one paragraph (pp. 277-78)!

28. A similar additive approach weakens the most ambitious of all studies of democratization by Diamond, Linz, and Lipset, *Democracy in Developing Countries*. For a preview of this still unpublished conclusion to a twenty-six country study, see Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour M. Lipset, "Introduction: Comparing Experiences with Democracy," in Diamond, Linz, and Lipset, eds., *Politics in Developing Countries: Comparing Experiences with Democracy* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1990).

29. O'Donnell and Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, pp. 3-5, 18.

30. There is a vast literature on the effect of different electoral laws, party systems, and constitutional structures on democratic consolidation and stability. See, most recently, Arend Lijphart, ed., *Parliamentary versus Presidential Government* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); and Juan Linz and Arturo Valenzuela, eds., *Presidential or Parliamentary Democracy: Does It Make a Difference?* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, forthcoming).

31. It is thus surprising that Przeworski, after criticizing the literature that seeks to find a link between the modalities of transition and the features of the emerging institutions, spells out a fairly similar argument concerning the shaping of new institutions (pp. 79-88, 98).

32. Otto Kirschheimer, "Confining Conditions and Revolutionary Breakthroughs," *American Political Science Review*, 59 (1965), 974.

33. The tendency to abstract actors from their context is a problem that plagues cross-regional analyses that try to link the relative degree of power of actors in the transition process with subsequent outcomes. This problem is related to the issue of types of transition discussed above. Moreover, even when applying such an argument within one region, as Arend Lijphart does for eastern Europe, there is an apparent need to invoke a number of additional explanations to fully explain the observed outcomes. Arend Lijphart, "Democratization and Constitutional Choices in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland, 1989-91," *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 4 (1992), 207-23.

34. The importance of the short-term context can be understood in terms of the notion of "sequential effects" developed by Roberto M. Unger, *False Necessity: Anti-Necessitarian Social Theory in the Service of Radical Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 312-19. A related notion, which has found its way into the literature on democratization through Otto Kirschheimer, is "confining condition." This term, however, is more restricted, being defined in a negative way and referring only to those conditions that have to be overcome if a new regime is to be consolidated. My point is that there can be certain legacies from the authoritarian period which can assist the process of democratic consolidation. Kirschheimer, "Confining Conditions and Revolutionary Breakthroughs."

35. In terms of works still in progress, the work by Linz and Stepan, provisionally entitled *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, is probably the one that holds the greatest promise.

36. Given the conceptual complexities of such a project, comparisons of a small set of cases, for example, between six and eight, are more likely to yield better results than the broader type of study Huntington engages in. Comparative historical analysis has made its greatest contributions through studies with this scope.