Mapping Ambiguity in Democratization

Paul J. Carnegie
Department of Political Science,
British University in Egypt

Abstract
There is already agreement that countries do not emerge in straightforward transitions from authoritarian rule to multi-party democracy. Yet, we find less consensus on how and why democratic institutions, practices and values become entrenched and accepted. This owes much to the fact that two approaches broadly frame the analysis of democratization, namely structural and actor-centric. Each approach carries with it different assumptions about the dynamics of regime change. As a result, scholarly interpretations reflect a tension between how we frame democratization and the conclusions we arrive at. This makes it increasingly difficult to grasp the ambiguous institutional outcomes of recent advances. The following article addresses the challenge of relating ambiguity to the study of democratization. Firstly, rather than neglect the key insights on transition and consolidation provided by the two above approaches, this article offers a complimentary critique of them. Suitably equipped with directions from the extant literature, it proceeds to outline a conceptual framework for mapping ambiguous post-authoritarian settlements.

Introduction

The future stability and expansion of the democratic project has been a major issue in the international community since the end of the Cold War. Yet, how and why democratic institutions, practices and values become entrenched and accepted remain difficult questions to answer. Indeed, there is far from consensus in the field of study about an adequate explanation of democratization. The contested nature of the subject of inquiry arises in no small part from two approaches broadly framing the analysis of democratization, namely structural and actor-centric. Each approach influences assumptions made, interpretations applied and conclusions reached about democratization. This in turn generates different views about the process that often leads to disagreement.

Significantly, as ideas of linear causation and conceptual closure stretch to their limits, this binomial of structure and agency creates a bit of a causal paradox. Firstly, experience tells us that neither structure nor a free-play of unconstrained political agency predetermines democratic

change in exclusivity. Secondly, the process is far more ambiguous in terms of institutional outcomes than either approach presumes. This is something evidenced by the unexpected patterns of institutional transformation and distinct trade-offs that have occurred over the years (Munck 1993, 475-98; Whitehead 2002, 2-3). It seems that the causal narratives of these two approaches both find it difficult to grasp ambiguous change. Indeed, the protean nature of democratization leaves them sitting somewhat uncomfortably with the actuality of recent post-authoritarian settlements.

One of the challenges facing researchers of democratization is to reconcile the analytic tension between paradigmatic assumptions and ambiguous advances. The following article addresses this tension. Firstly, by examining the major schools of thought on transition and consolidation, it locates key epistemological and methodological clues in the extant literature. Secondly, equipped with these coordinates, the article proceeds to outline a conceptual framework for mapping ambiguous post-authoritarian settlements in the study of democratization.

Conceptual travails for a common purpose

Even though democracy takes many different forms, more and more nations are turning toward some form of popular government. For example, despite clear differences between the institutional arrangements and practices of say Costa Rica, Estonia or Ghana, all are democratic. This is where it gets interesting because democratization, whether at the political or social level, is multi-layered and complex. As Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan (1996, 5-14) argue, if democracy is to become the "only game in town" then change has to occur on the behavioural, attitudinal and constitutional levels. This obviously means more than just elections. Having said this, institutional developments do need to take place in both political and civil society before democratic practices and values become entrenched and accepted. Not only does this present a major challenge in practical terms but also without detailed conceptual articulation, we run the risk of applying excessive universalism to a manifold phenomenon.

We, therefore, need to work out what democratization is and is not. It is worth remembering that democracy is not the equivalent of democratization. Democracy specifies the manner of interaction between state and society but democratization denotes the process of political

development that changes a prior authoritarian regime and institutionalises a democratic political system. This distinction may seem theoretically pedantic but it carries considerable implications. As Barbara Geddes (1990, 131-50) notes, whatever we believe to be constitutive components of democracy will determine, in certain respects, our thinking about how a political system democratizes because these components are the ones that need to be present for us to categorize a regime as a democracy. What we have here is a recipe for confusion and contestation about the causes and consequences of democratization (Collier and Levitsky 1997, 430-45).

On an institutional level at least, there is difference between a political system and the process of establishing that system. Normative ideas of democracy may help define political systems that policy-makers seek to establish but this tells us little about what we need to know to establish those systems. To do that we need to focus on dynamics and how democratic institutionalization works, i.e. the process of establishing a political system. This is because human actors who shape matters in particular settings are the ones who turn structural factors into political resources for change (Kim, Liddle and Said 2006, 247). It is through their efforts to bring about institutional reform that an organizational context exists with the potential to cultivate different behaviour and promote more representative and competitive politics. The establishment of an institutionalized democratic process, therefore, requires political decisions on, amongst other things, new constitutional arrangements, the rules of future political competition, and the dismantling of the structures of authoritarian rule. In these terms, as Adam Przeworski (1991, 26) notes, our concern should focus on the process by which relevant political actors find how best to continue to submit their interests and values to the uncertain interplay of democratic institutions.

Having said this, there is no direct, unmediated or irreversible shift from regime A to regime B. There is always the possibility that political actors will favour certain interests and familiar arrangements. The decisions made by political actors during democratization are not without baggage. A connection exists between preferences, capacities and the conditions in which they appeared. In other words, the context within which a transition takes place is a significant part of future developments.

Add on the fact that a chain of events can also alter a country's dynamics of change and the prospect of finding a one-size-fits-all theory of democratization is unlikely. As Laurence Whitehead (2002, 2-3) rightly notes, democratization resists the attention of a single paradigmatic lens. This is in large part due to the high levels of uncertainty and indeterminacy associated with the process (Mainwaring et al 1992, 332). To elaborate: democratization necessarily involves new actors, rules, practices and perhaps even new values and resources but not everything changes when a polity shifts into the process. That is to say, democratization does not unfold in a vacuum. Countries that enter a process of democratization already vary on the institutional, political, economic and socio-cultural levels that in turn affect their dynamics of change. As a result, research frameworks are constantly struggling to deal with changing realities that in turn test received theoretical wisdom. With these considerations in mind, a good first step towards investigating this inherently indeterminate process would be to situate the major contributions in the field of study.

Modernization school
In the early years of this field of study, influential initial expressions came from the likes of Seymour Martin Lipset (1959), Walt Rostow (1960) and Alexander Gershenkron (1962). They drew broad correlations between economic development and political change. This implied a causal link between Western forms of development and the diffusion of liberal-democratic political ideals across less developed countries. An assumption common to these early works was that democratic breakthrough reflected the level of modernization in a country and the weakening of structural conflict. This perspective saw democratization as the final stage of a secular industrial urbanization dynamic. On a policy level, the thinking was that developing countries should adopt Western economic and social patterns to ensure democratic political development.

Holding to a view of linear acculturation meant that the identification of pre-requisites for democracy became a key focus. Unfortunately, what this tended to ignore was the actuality of cultural difference and contingent historical experience, something that led to significantly different outcomes. Indeed, Samuel Huntington (1965), Dankwart Rustow (1970) and Robert Dahl (1971) were all quick to recognize that a country's own distinctive institutions affect regime change. As Huntington (1965, 386-430) noted, the outcome of economic

development was at least as likely to be political decay, instability and authoritarianism. Having said this, Huntington (1991) did later argue that wealthier developing countries are more likely to be democratic. Other studies, most importantly Adam Przeworski, Michael Alvarez, Jose Cheibub and Fernando Limongi (2000), suggest that socio-economic conditions do not prevent democratic breakthrough. The caveat being that once a breakthrough occurs such conditions do dramatically affect the quality of political democracy that establishes itself. It is reasonable to infer from this that transitions are unpredictable but, once achieved, countries can sustain them provided they achieve higher levels of GDP per capita with increased equitable distribution. This seems to point to the fact that there are a number of interrelated factors conducive to democratic persistence including higher rates of literacy, education, urbanization and an independent media.

Dependency school
The alternative perspective of the dependency school of thought cast doubt on the early optimism of modernization interpretations. This school attributed a failure to democratize in large parts of the world to the global capitalist system itself. For the likes of Immanuel Wallerstein (1974), who followed a broadly Marxian analytic tradition, the ability of a developed 'core' of Western states to exploit the cheap, unskilled labour and raw materials within and between 'periphery' and 'semi-periphery' localities kept them in a state of underdevelopment. Similarly, Andre Gunder Frank (1967) saw this as a reason why many developing countries failed to enjoy the fruits of their labour despite decades of following Western patterns of development. As Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto (1979) noted, the structure of world trade and foreign investment resulted in more capital outflows than inflows in developing countries. Nicos Poulantzas (1976) and Nicos Mouzelis (1986) further concluded that Western-led modernization was harmful rather than beneficial to political development in these countries.

Having said this, the dependency school failed to explain why a third wave of democratization occurred despite the continuing peripheral economic status of many of the countries involved. In fact, the transitions in Southern Europe, Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia between 1974 and 2000 highlighted the dependency school's over-determined causality. Indeed, both modernization and dependency schools privilege the economic infrastructure as determining political

outcomes. Yet, the work of Barrington Moore (1966) and Dankwart Rustow (1970) demonstrates that the arbitrariness of economic preconditions makes it impossible to generalize them across all cases.

Bureaucratic authoritarian school

As a palliative to structural over-determinism, Huntington's (1968) work on praetorian political orders provided the groundwork to go beyond the explanatory rubric of preconditions. As Huntington (1968, 1-39) argued, political institutional developments were significant factors in explaining a lack of democratic development and authoritarian persistence. His work on the "isolated state" as a self-interested, autonomous actor had considerable explanatory appeal in the Southeast Asian context, where military coalitions perennially gained control of the government apparatus. Indeed, you could view these countries as bureaucratic authoritarian regimes because military and civil service elites tapped into economic resources to service the state and their own interests.

For Guillermo O'Donnell (1973, 6-8) modernising elites ensured the rise of bureaucratic authoritarianism to protect their own interests and those of Western capital. This was a crucial factor in stalling democracy and promoting authoritarianism in Brazil after 1964 and Argentina after 1966. In the latter cases, technocratic experts gave operational expression to the broad exclusionist practices of their military patrons. Similarly, for Mochtar Mas'Oed (1989) this matched the dynamics of authoritarian persistence in Indonesia in the late 1980s. By the 1990s, however, the bureaucratic authoritarian school of thought no longer seemed to capture the intricacies of societies experiencing rapid growth and social change.

Strategic choice school

From the 1970s onwards, in an attempt to bridge the dilemma of structural determinism, theorists began to explore political agency lines of inquiry. Rustow (1970, 337-63) questioned the earlier work of the modernization school that suggested a consensus on civic culture or certain levels of economic development were prerequisites. He recognised that these were more likely the results of democracy rather than its causes. For Rustow, successful democratization rested on a gradual process of compromise. He understood that human agency affects this dynamic. Indeed, the handiwork of politicians skilled in

bargaining techniques could create a pattern of compromise in the developmental process and facilitate transition.

Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan (1978), following on from Rustow, opened this new path further. Linz and Stepan (1978, 1-5) emphasised a more process-oriented perspective in their account of authoritarianism and democratic breakdown. Likewise, in their seminal four-volume work, Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe Schmitter and Laurence Whitehead (1986, 71) adopted a strongly actor-orientated focus. This was because for them it was neither logically or historically possible to prove a structurally determined causal relationship between economic development and political change. From this perspective, stable democratic outcomes depended less on structural factors and more on the strategic interactions of principal actors involved during the transition (O'Donnell et al 1986, 27-29). What we have here is a significant shift from a political economy of social conflict to explain change and towards an analysis grounded in human agency, in particular that of elite political action. As such, it highlighted the hitherto unexplored link between the strategic interactions of political elites and democratic transition.

In doing so, they were able to draw distinctions between different types of authoritarianism and different types of transition. This highlighted that authoritarianism in Southern Europe was more the product of right wing political coalitions. As a form of *dicta blanda* (soft autocracy), it differed from the *dicta dura* (hard autocracy) of say Argentina. In Spain, for example, the ruling party played a subsidiary role to the ruling class coalition. When they became an obstruction to coalition interests, the friability of authoritarian arrangements became all too apparent. This led to schisms between regime 'hard-liners' (*duros*) and 'soft-liners' (*blandos*) (O'Donnell et al 1986, 19). In Spain, Portugal and Greece, the crumbling of consensus created internal crisis and the opportunity for a conditional democratic compromise (O'Donnell et al 1986, 27). In these terms, the negotiated pacts between political elites rather than any structural preconditions were crucial for the success or failure of transitions.

For O'Donnell et al (1986, 73) negotiations can also take different forms depending on the relative strength of the actors involved. A *ruptura pactada* can occur where there is a lack of political continuity with the prior regime. Alternatively, a *reforma pactada* can occur where there is an

element of legal continuity with the prior regime, e.g. the 1977 Pact of Moncloa in Spain between government, parliament and trade unions. O'Donnell et al (1986, 74) saw this as a template for a successful and stable transition. Either way, it is clear that the type of pact negotiated is crucial to the resultant post-authoritarian outcome. As Giuseppe Di Palma (1990) underlined, pacts bring stability as they allow the possibility of democratic co-existence. For Di Palma, establishing democracy was, in the main, a matter of proper crafting. From this perspective, if elite political actors commit to political change then democracy can be possible despite adverse structural conditions.

Path dependency school

In the early 1990s, path dependency emerged as a significant school of thought in the literature. Its central premise for studying democratization is that proximity to events of the day leads to a loss of perspective. Scholars like Ruth and David Collier (1991), Douglass C. North (1990) John Mahoney (2000) and Paul Pierson (2000) all introduced more diachronic perspectives into their work. Their work links the immediate catalysts of political instability with long-term factors of regime instability. This highlights the embedded nature of contingent transition phenomena in broader social dynamics. From a path dependency perspective, transitions are part of longer historical processes. In terms of democratization, critical junctures in a country's historical and institutional development shape its political arena. This in turn affects the prospects of political stability and future regime dynamics because historical and institutional junctures can trigger self-reinforcing feedback in a political system. That is to say, different historical contingencies can constrain and/or enable the choices political actors make and lead to different democratization paths. As such, a regime's historical antecedents provide important clues to the underlying forces at play both internally and externally in a particular setting.

Notably, continuity from a previous regime -and the kind and degree of political institutionalization- may lead different polities to produce different responses to similar sets of exigencies. Although links to pre-existing structures are neither straightforward nor specific across cases, a temporal sequence of events and processes shapes the political arena and influences the kind of democracy established. One cannot simply assume that political elites will 'choose' democracy as the most rational option. Political actors have to make choices but historical, cultural and

economic legacies constitute a context within which they must operate. That is to say, even with the advent of new institutional reform, underlying societal conventions, cultural practices and authoritarian legacies can restrict, enhance or predispose specific options. This in turn can produce distinct trade-offs and unexpected patterns of transformation and modification.

The path dependency school does more than fit appropriate cases into a modal pattern. By introducing an analytically coherent account of history, timing and sequence in a non-deterministic manner, it shows how the feedback of economic context, historical structure and political choices affects a country's democratization path. This provides a counter to some common misapprehensions by highlighting that differences are often too wide-ranging to generalize across the board. As we know, to paraphrase Kant, outcomes from the crooked timber of human activity are rarely straightforward.

To elaborate: when countries have different political institutionalization, socio-cultural heritage or economic fundamentals thinking that they can achieve democracy in a manner that fully conforms to an abstract democratic norm is as an unreasonable expectation. There are stark differences between the preceding regimes of say Eastern Europe and those of Latin America, Southern Europe or Southeast Asia. State socialist regimes were different in relation to structure, ideology, political economy, civil-military relations and position in the international system than other democratizers. State, nation and identity were at the very centre of the transitions in Eastern Europe. Their change was simultaneously political and economic, whilst in Latin America and Southern Europe the transformations were much more political in nature, with East and Southeast Asia falling somewhere in between. What this indicates is that to learn more about the nature of democratization these differences demand detailed explication

What is democratic transition and consolidation?
What these major schools of thought highlight is simultaneously a contested field of study but one with common ground. Despite their differences, the schools readily agree that understanding the relationship between key stages of democratization -namely democratic transition and democratic consolidation- is crucial to understanding a country's overall process of democratization. They also agree that clear

articulation of these two different but interrelated phases is a far from straightforward task.

Firstly, democratic transition is a temporal phase of rapid change that can vary in length and uncertainty (Linz 1978, 30-35). In the broadest sense, it begins with the breakdown of an authoritarian regime and ends with the initial establishment of some sort of democratic structures. Of course, a liberal democratic outcome is far from a guarantee, as the rules of the political game are still very much up for grabs. We know the point of departure, authoritarianism, but there is no way of knowing a priori the point of arrival. Indeed, a democratic transition can be suspended, wound back or stalled as politicians struggle to define future rules and procedures (O'Donnell et al 1986, 6).

In an illuminating view, Valerie Bunce (2000, 707) defines the macro-political trajectory of transition as a leap from "uncertain procedures and certain results" to "certain procedures and uncertain outcomes." What we have here is a gap of uncertainty between the breakdown of the previous regime (the entry into uncertainty) and the installation of a new regime (the exit from uncertain procedures to certain ones with uncertain outcomes). This is a fluid phase of opportunity and risk. In these terms, it would be naïve to assume that democracy arises merely from the breakdown of the prior authoritarian regime. There is a protean quality to the new institutional structures because residue from the old regime still exists. Moreover, the actual mode of transition can also influence future developments, i.e. transition by collapse (Greece and Portugal 1974,) transfer of power (Bolivia 1978-1980,) or negotiated regime-dominated transition (Spain 1974-1975 and Brazil 1978-1979.) Having said this, Munck (1994, 355-75) does seem to identify a common thread between the relative strength of actors involved, the subsequent strategies they adopt and the impact this has on consequences.

Secondly, the factors affecting democratic consolidation often differ from that of transition. So whilst establishing institutional arrangements is one thing, sustaining them over time without their reversal is quite another. Consolidation involves not only the survival of a political democracy but also an element of sustainability. Famously, Juan Linz (1990, 153) identified this as the requirement for democracy to become the "only game in town." As Gunther et al (1996, 168) also noted, a democracy achieves consolidation, "when all politically significant groups regard its key political institutions as the only legitimate

framework for political contestation, and adhere to democratic rules of the game." Likewise, for Adam Przeworski (1992, 26), democratic consolidation takes place "when all relevant political forces find it best to continue to submit their interests and values to the uncertain interplay of institutions." It would seem that consolidation involves a greater passage of time as the new set of rules for the political game are constructed and institutionalized. Institutionalization is, clearly, a more important aspect of consolidation than transition.

Having said this, some scholars questioned the definitional closure implied by the use of the term consolidation. They urged us to remain cautious about "attaching the term 'consolidated' to something that will probably though not certainly endure." (O'Donnell 1996, 38) In fact, the closure we ascribe to our definition depends, in large part, on what point of the authoritarianism/developed democracy continuum we as observers choose to place ourselves. As Don Chull Shin (1994) and Guillermo O'Donnell (1996) both note, there is either explicitly or implicitly a requirement for a high degree of institutionalization and the establishment of formal procedural rules. O'Donnell (1996, 39) went on to argue that:

"This produces a tendency to push the conception of democracy in discussion of democratic consolidation towards an ideal, well-structured and comprehensive institutional system that can hardly be obtained, otherwise no regime is truly consolidated for the lack of an ingredient deemed essential and it is impossible to assign a reasonable closure to the second transition."

Indeed, John Markoff (1997, 68) echoes this sentiment, by noting that, "democracy is not a fixed entity, to be consolidated, but an invitation for further transformation, perhaps deepening and perhaps trivializing." To elaborate: there is little doubt that there is overlap between the consolidation phase and the uncertainties and insecurities of the transition period but conditions that facilitate transition do not necessarily overlap with those that make democratic consolidation likely. Importantly, consolidation involves legitimisation at both the elite and popular level. This makes it qualitatively different on the political, economic and civil society level (Pridham 1990, 103-117). To equate the breakdown of an authoritarian regime with a successful consolidation of democracy is a somewhat sanguine attitude to adopt. There is no simple linear progression from former to latter. It may be one thing to establish

democratic electoral arrangements but sustaining them over time without their reversal is quite another. In extreme cases, extensive inherited constraints can even freeze the dynamics of change. That is to say, regime change can stall in a semi-authoritarian or oligarchic condition. Countries like Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Nigeria and Turkmenistan have all struggled with the enormous complexity of democratization. They have tended to drift in a 'protractedly unconsolidated' state, unable to transform basic socio-economic orientations.

Nonetheless, there are a number of commonly agreed upon features. For instance, effective consolidations appear to have the following features-popular legitimation; the stabilization of electoral rules; judicial reform; the diffusion of democratic values; the marginalization of anti-system actors; civilian rule over the military; the removal of reserved authoritarian domains; party system development; the routinization of politics and stabilization of the economy (Schedler 1998, 91-92). As Huntington (1991, 263) rightly points out, such developments take time, i.e. at least two successful elections and one transfer of power from incumbent to opposition.

What we do know from the extensive body of work on democratization is that transition and consolidation are difficult concepts to define and even harder to put into practice. Ad-hoc or informal types of institutionalization may or may not settle, overtime, into more referable institutional arrangements. In fact, for many countries consolidation is more an ex post facto realisation than a set of criteria. On a more positive note, however, over the last 30 years there have been numerous consolidations. Having said this, a good grip on the dynamics of successful regime change does remain decidedly elusive.

A framework for mapping institutional ambiguity
Clearly, the extant literature contains considerable strengths and many investigations shine bright light on the dynamics of democratization. In fact, there seems little advantage in viewing different schools of thought pejoratively because they all contribute, in an intelligent manner, to the common search for answers. Nonetheless, certain blind spots do remain in our understanding of democratization.

On the one hand, structural approaches tend to focus on impersonal forces such as technological innovation, the spread of market-based

social relations and the emergence of new social identities as the driving forces behind democratization. We can see that a structurally influenced interpretation is excellent for identifying important economic and institutional developments of regime change but also tends to be over-determined in terms of that structure. But, it struggles to link, in a convincing manner, regime change dynamics with the agency of democratic transitions.

On the other hand, actor-orientated approaches view political choice as a crucial factor in democratic transitions and, therefore, tend to focus on decisions taken at crucial stages by leading political actors. We can see that the influence of the latter approach may bring human agency to the fore but it also struggles to explain contingent socio-historical factors that shape actors' choices. As Gerardo Munck (1994, 360) notes, exclusive focus on political elite interaction runs the risk of screening out broader social factors involved in conditioning political change.

Similarly, when we downplay historical contingency we are tempted into accepting a form of political voluntarism (Bunce 1995, 124). In other words, our chain of causality becomes too reliant on the subjective choices of key actors and leaves long-term factors of political instability under-conceptualized. This is despite the fact that historically constituted structures can both enable and constrain the range of options available to decision-makers. It seems naïve to think that things change in a free-play of unimpeded political-agency. In other words, context is clearly important to future developments. Something brought into stark relief by the anomalous character of democratization in post-Communist, East and Southeast Asian countries (Bunce 2000, 703-734).

What this indicates is that the establishment of democracy involves generative factors beyond the rational capacity of elites to bargain about clear-cut choices. The preferences and capacities of individuals embody a historical context that may predispose specific options. Rather than democratization being direct and unmediated, variations of time and context create the possibility of different paths in particular settings. As a result, modes of transition may appear similar but subtle variations can create large differences in outcome.

In sociological terms, what we begin to appreciate is that democratization is a constantly changing phenomenon in terms of time and context. Achieving democracy is, therefore, not a predetermined

end-state, but a long-term and somewhat open-ended outcome (Whitehead 2002, 3). However, one can still unwittingly adopt a "retrospective determinism" (assuming what did happen is what had to happen) or even worse, "presentism" (considering the motives and perceptions of the past are the same as those of the present). If we are to appreciate the dynamics of change, it is necessary to grasp that the contexts of regime instability within which actors deploy statecraft involve different notions of state, nation and identity. These political actors are not operating from a tabula rasa projecting the most feasible solutions (Kirchheimer 1965, 964-974). The past developmental patterns and underlying societal conventions that they confront influence the emergence of distinct trade-offs and unexpected institutional transformations. In fact, it is probably fairer to say that the politics of pragmatic democratic change more often than not serve the interests of established elites. Having said this, a constructive grammar of political action can transform structural context into political resources for institutional change. As a process of negotiation, this does not lead to a predetermined end-state but rather political actors utilise a polity's language of self-understanding to imagine and reconstitute disarticulated political space. In a very Aristotelian sense, we actually realise that political activity is what constitutes stable futures from troubled pasts.

Nonetheless, to make this observation raises considerable issues. What it speaks to is the notion that social structures are not independent of the values and practices they govern. The preferences and capacities of political actors do not exist independently from the conditions in which they appeared. Merely to state this brings complex analytic considerations to the fore. To draw briefly on the work of Henri Lefebvre (1991, 1-10), this involves considerations about the space within which change occurs, how political actors' draw upon, re-invent or transform traditional identifications and how others involved might interpret what occurs. Indeed, the manner in which political actors remember, imagine, or transform their roles has to appeal and respond to a mass audience accustomed to viewing politics through extant socio-cultural-historic lenses. This means that the interplay between an evolving grammar of political action and structural context can both constrain and enable the re-articulation of political space. Although new political space opens and new audiences emerge, the space and audience operate within a symbolic context that is already present and located at the level of the polity's relationship to itself. The decisions made during

democratization are, therefore, not necessarily rational in the strictest sense but are more an adaptation to changing political space. Our ontological categorization, therefore, can no longer remain a binary dualism between structure and agency but must move towards a relational one. Thinking in terms of binary dualism is a false dichotomy. Indeed, the difficulty in separating social fact from social value calls for a different approach to the subject of inquiry. Rather than ascribe to overly paradigmatic attitudes, one should adopt a more integrative focus (Pridham 2000, 5-38). Keeping an open sensibility to our inquiries will allow us to synthesize in a rigorous manner a plurality of approaches. This in turn opens potential ways to understand ambiguous regime change dynamics and unravel the interplay between political action and context in post-authoritarian settings.

Framing democratization as a political renegotiation of history, culture and identity is an important step for such an approach to work. By giving democratization an implicitly non-linear construction, it provides a framework for mapping what is a complex process. This allows us to grasp that change occurs through time by way of contestation, destabilisation and differentiation. Placing uncertainty at the very heart of democratization also lends analytic coherency to the endeavour because we open up the possibility of learning from the experience of other countries. In fact, it may end up being the most pragmatic route for mapping unplanned effects and outcomes in the study of democratization.

Conclusion
Evidently, countries do not emerge in straightforward transitions from authoritarianism to multi-party democracy. There are often unexpected patterns of modification and transformation as political arenas undergo alteration and reconstitution. This sets us a number of challenges. On the one hand, pragmatic decision making and compromise stabilise an uncertain process. On the other, there is little doubt that things do not pan out in an unimpeded play of political agency. A county's societal conventions, cultural practices and developmental legacies shape its post-authoritarian settlement. What these two facets of democratization indicate is that institutional outcomes are a complex interplay between political agency and context.

The pattern of democratic politics that eventually emerges in a particular setting is, therefore, a reiterative interplay between its own

culture and politics and the discourse and practice that enacts it. This process both reflects and constructs a polity's own specificity in a non-linear manner because it oscillates between uncertainty, continuity and change. In common with most renegotiations, ambiguity becomes to democratization, as push is to shove. In fact, there are no simple categorizations, but rather matters of time and degree.

In these terms, the introduction of more fine-grained readings of the relationship between democratization, agency and contextual narratives of history, culture and identity is a useful step to take in unravelling the ambiguity of recent post authoritarian settlements.

Bibliography

Bermeo, Nancy. 1990. Rethinking Regime Change. Comparative Politics. 22,3:359-77.

Bermeo, Nancy. 1997. Myths of Moderation: Confrontation and Conflict during Democratic Transitions. Comparative Politics 29,3: 305-22.

Bunce, Valerie. 1995. Should Transitologists Be Grounded? Slavic Review. 54,1: 111-127.

Bunce, Valerie. 2000. Comparative Democratization: Big and Bounded Generalizations. Comparative Political Studies. 33,6-7: 703-34.

Cardoso, Fernando H., and Enzo Faletto. 1979. Dependency and Development in Latin America. Berkley: University of California Press

Carothers, Thomas.2002. The End of the Transition Paradigm. Journal of Democracy 13,1: 5-21.

Collier, David and Steven Levitsky. 1997. Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research. World Politics. 49,3: 420-51.

Collier, Ruth B., and D. Collier. 1991. Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Dahl, Robert.1971. Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Di Palma, Giuseppe. 1990. To Craft Democracies: An Essay on Democratic Transitions. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ethier, Diane., ed. 1990. Democratic Transition and Consolidation in Southern Europe, Latin America and South East Asia. Basingstoke: MacMillan Press.

Geddes, Barbara. 1990. How the Cases you choose affect the answers you get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics. Political Analysis. 2,1: 131-150.

Geddes, Barbara. 1994. Politician's Dilemma: Building State Capacity in Latin America. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Geddes, Barbara. 1999.What Do We Know About Democratization After Twenty Years? Annual Review of Political Science. 2: 115-144.

Gerschenkron, Alexander. 1962. Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective: A Book of Essays. New York: Praeger.

Gunder Frank, Andre. 1967. Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America: Historical Studies of Chile and Brazil. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Huntington, Samuel P. 1968. Political Order in Changing Societies. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Huntington, Samuel P. 1991. The Third Wave: Democratization in the late Twentieth Century. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.

Karl, Terry L. 1990. Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America. Comparative Politics. 23,1: 1-23.

Karl, Terry L., and Philippe C. Schmitter. 1991. Modes of Transition in Latin America and Eastern Europe. International Social Science Journal, 43, 128: 269-284.

Kim, Yong C., R. William Liddle and Salim Said. 2006. Political Leadership and Civilian Supremacy in Third Wave Democracies: Comparing South Korea and Indonesia. Pacific Affairs. 79,2: 247-268.

Kirchheimer, Otto. 1965. Confining Conditions and Revolutionary Breakthroughs. American Political Science Review. 59,4: 964-974.

Kitschelt, Herbert.1992. Political Regime Change: Structure and Process Driven Explanations? American Political Science Review, 86,4: 1028-1034.

Lefebvre, Henri. 1991. The Production of Space. Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. London: Blackwell Publishing.

Linz, Juan J., 1990. Transitions to Democracy. Washington Monthly. 2,2: 12-34.

Linz, Juan J., and A. C. Stepan. 1978. The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Linz Juan, J., and A.C. Stepan. 1996. Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Lipset, Seymour M. 1959. Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy. American Political Science Review, 53,1: 69-105.

Mahoney, John. 2000. Path Dependence in Historical Sociology. Theory and Society. 29,4: 507-548

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

Markoff, John. 1997. Really Existing Democracy: Learning from Latin America in the Late 1990s. New Left Review. 223: 48-68.

Moore, Barrington. 1966. Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World. Boston: Beacon.

Mouzelis, Nicos. 1986. Politics of the Semi-Periphery. London: McMillan Publishers Ltd.

Munck, Geraldo. 1993. Between Theory and History and Beyond Traditional Area Studies: A New Comparative Perspective on Latin America. Comparative Politics, 25, 4: 475-98.

Munck, Geraldo. 1994. Democratic Transitions in Comparative Perspective. Comparative Politics. 26,3: 355-75.

O'Donnell, Guillermo. 1973. Modernization and Bureaucratic Authoritarianism. Berkeley: Berkeley Institute of International Studies.

O'Donnell, Guillermo. 1996. Illusions about Consolidation. Journal of Democracy. 7, 2: 34-51.

O'Donnell, Guillermo, Philippe C. Schmitter and Laurence Whitehead. eds. 1986. Transitions from Authoritarian Rule. Four Volumes. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Ottoway, Marina. 2003. Democracy Challenged: The Rise of Semi-Authoritarianism. Washington D.C.: Carnegie Foundation.

Pierson, Paul. 2000. Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics. American Political Science Review. 94, 2: 251-267.

Poulantzas, Nicos. The Crisis of the Dictatorships: Portugal, Greece, Spain. London: New Left Books, Humanities Press.

Pridham, Geoffrey. 1990. Political Actors, Linkages and Interactions: Democratic Consolidation in Southern Europe. West European Politics. 13,4: 103-117.

Pridham, Geoffrey. 2000. The Dynamics of Democratization: A Comparative Approach. London/NewYork: Continuum.

Przeworski, Adam. 1985. Capitalism and Social Democracy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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

Przeworski, Adam. ed. 2000. Democracy and Development. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Przeworski, Adam, M. M. Alvarez, J. A. Cheibub and F. Limongi. 2002. Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Rustow, Dankwart. 1970. Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model. Comparative Politics. 2, 3: 337-63.

Wallerstein, Immanuel. 1974. The Modern World-System, vol. I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century. Studies in Social Discontinuity Series, New York: Academic Press.

Whitehead, Laurence. 2002. Democratization: Theory and Experience. Oxford: Oxford University Press.