



An analysis of regime transition: the characteristics, mechanism and types of change in modern political systems

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THESIS

**AN ANALYSIS OF REGIME TRANSITION:
THE CHARACTERISTICS, MECHANISM AND TYPES
OF CHANGE IN MODERN POLITICAL SYSTEMS**

by

Scott A. Weidie

June, 1993

Thesis Advisor:

Scott D. Tollefson

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An Analysis of Regime Transition:
The Characteristics, Mechanism and Types
of Change in Modern Political Systems

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an analysis of regime transition in modern political systems. These transitions can occur gradually or dramatically and may lead to changes in the basic characteristics of a government. Occasionally the changes in basic characteristics are significant enough to affect the type of government. This thesis analyzes the basic characteristics of political systems and develops a model for explaining regime transition. The thesis specifically examines changes in the power relationship between elite and mass participation in civil society, political society and the state, leading to the following processes: liberalization, regression, revolution and coups d'état. These processes can result in transitions of democratic regimes to non-democracies and vice versa. The model developed in this thesis addresses a basic definitional problem that exists in previous analyses and it simplifies the systematic cross-national analysis of regime types and transitions. Finally, the thesis applies the model to the cases of Argentina (1976 and 1983), Germany (1919-1934), and Guatemala (1993). The case study analysis advances the hypothesis that the mechanism of regime transition is the same in all political systems even though the types of transition are different.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"An Analysis of Regime Transition:
The Characteristics, Mechanism and Types
of Change in Modern Political Systems"

LT Scott Alfred Weidie, USN
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This thesis analyzes regime transition in modern political systems. Specifically, it addresses (1) the basic characteristics of political systems; (2) the degree of differences in these characteristics; and (3) changes in the characteristics of political systems. Based on Robert Dahl's analysis of political systems the thesis develops a new model to explain change in modern political systems.

Previous analyses of political systems have encountered a basic definitional problem by either using an inclusive definition of democracy or a procedural definition without a method for distinguishing between democratic and non-democratic regimes. The thesis presents a revised two-axis model that addresses the definitional problem and combines the concepts of consolidation and stability into a more effective system for categorizing regimes and conducting comparative analysis.

A mechanism to explain regime transition is developed that combines societal and institutional factors. Differences in the degree of participation of a society's population are combined with the concept of a society organized into

three arenas for the expression and advancement of interests. The combination of these concepts yields a mechanism relating the competition of elites and masses in society to the structure and stability of a political system.

The thesis examines various methods of regime transition and applies the theory to several cases. The following cases are briefly examined and classified by regime type in the two-axis model: the United States; Switzerland, prior to February 1971; Argentina; Venezuela; the Republic of South Africa; Cambodia; the Republic of the Sudan; Mexico; Ghana; Cuba; and, the State of Bahrain. Additionally, an extensive analysis of the mechanism of regime transition is conducted in the following cases: Argentina's 1976 coup d'état and 1983 redemocratization; Germany's deconsolidation of democracy in the Weimar Republic and consolidation of non-democracy in the Third Reich (1919-1934); and, the possible case of a liberalizing coup d'état in Guatemala in May and June of 1993.

An important contribution of this thesis is the development of a better model to assist in the classification and comparative analysis of political systems but the primary contribution of the thesis is the advancement of the hypothesis that *the mechanism of regime transition is the same in all political systems even though the types of transition are different.*

The mechanism of regime transition is the power relationship between elites and masses in a society. When a regime transition occurs, it is the result of a change in the balance of power between elites and masses in one or more

of the three elements of a society: the state, the political arena, and civil society. The transition does not occur as a result of some other factor such as change (or lack of change) in the economy. For example, a decrease in per capita income does not directly result in a change in the political system. Any such variables are merely antecedents to the changing interests of the elites and masses in a society. It is the organization (or lack of organization) of elites and masses in the state, political society, and civil society that allows for the advancement (or attempted advancement) of elites and masses. When the relative strength of one set of interests increases with respect to the other, one group *may* gain enough power to change the overall balance of power between the groups. The changed power structure may result in regime transition.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. THE DILEMMA AND THE PURPOSE OF THE THESIS

Given a political system, can a more effective model or theory be developed to examine the basic *characteristics*¹ of that system? The question implies that political systems have more than one characteristic, and because it may be possible for characteristics to differ, then it is possible for different political systems to exist. Given that it is possible that characteristics may change, then it is also possible for political systems to change. And given the possibility that political systems can change, can a *mechanism* be developed to explain these changes? Finally, by combining the basic characteristics of a regime with the mechanism explaining regime changes, can a model be developed to analyze the overall *transformation* of the system (regime transition)?

A primary goal of this paper is the development of that model. This model will address a basic definitional problem that exists in previous analyses and it will simplify and aid in an understanding of regime transition.² A

¹ Throughout this paper, the term *characteristics* will be used to describe what Robert A. Dahl termed the "theoretical dimensions of democratization", in his book, Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1971), p. 4.

² This paper will only concern itself with regime transition in already independent nation-states. Excluded from this analysis will be examples of regime transition in

commonly accepted framework for analyzing regime type and transition is essential for the comparative analysis of political system change occurring between two different periods of time in a single-case study or in the systematic cross-national analysis of several different regime transitions.

B. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY & METHODOLOGY

This paper will begin by briefly reviewing some key theoretical contributions and examining important definitions and concepts related to regime transition. Several of these concepts and definitions will be incorporated into a revised two-axis model. This model will introduce the four *basic* types of regimes that can theoretically exist. The model will be expanded upon later by the further introduction of additional concepts. These additional concepts will form the basis for the "labeling" of various regime types located in the model.

The concept of regime transition will be examined and a mechanism will be developed to explain *how* and *why* these transitions occur. The mechanism will consist of an analysis of the interaction between elites and masses in various elements of society. Finally, the paper will point out the various ways in which the mechanism of regime transition can occur by

"hitherto dependent countries subject to other states" and in "independent political systems as a result of military conquest" by external powers. See Polyarchy, chapter 3, for a discussion of the various historical sequences leading to the inauguration of competitive regimes in political systems.

analyzing the distinct *types of transition* (revolution, coup d'etat, liberalization, etc.) which can occur.

The paper will also incorporate various examples of the different regimes and types of regime transition in various political systems for a brief analysis. This brief comparative analysis will assist in formulating a hypothesis that attempts to explain regime transition.

The concluding section will assess the new model's ability to simplify the analysis of regime transition in a political system and assist in the comparative analysis of multiple political systems and regime transitions. In particular, it will focus on the model's ability to categorize regimes by type. Additionally, this section will provide an argument that will support the hypothesis that *the mechanism of regime transition is the same in all political systems* even though the *types* of transition are different.

C. SOURCES

The literature on regime transition is very extensive. While most of the work can be generally categorized according to the type of transition it seeks to explain, relatively few major works deal with the broad study of political order and change. Some of these works will be examined later but the main focus of attention of this thesis will be on the model developed by Robert Dahl in his book, Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition (1971) -- an examination of "democratization." This thesis will utilize concepts from this and several

other significant contributions to develop a better model for analyzing political change.

II. BACKGROUND

A. DEFINING TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Before any substantive analysis of political systems and regime transition can occur, several concepts and definitions must be established.

The most basic concept which will be utilized throughout this paper is the idea of a *polity*. A polity is the form of government of a nation, state, or organization.³ The term can also be defined as any organized society, such as a nation, having one specific form of government.⁴ This paper will utilize the first definition and it will be used interchangeably with the terms regime, government, and political system. The second definition is too broad to be useful in this analysis. An organized society has many elements, like *elites*, *masses*, and *political society*, some of which will be incorporated later in the paper.

The form or type of government is determined by its *characteristics*. These characteristics must be examined before it is possible to make any observations on the possible forms of a government. Simply put, the pieces of a puzzle must first be examined prior to joining the parts into a whole. The two characteristics found in any political system are: (1) *liberalization*, the

³ William Morris, ed., The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1976), p. 1015.

⁴ Ibid.

"...extent of permissible opposition, public contestation, or political competition," and (2) *inclusiveness*, the "...proportion of the population entitled to participate ... in controlling and contesting the conduct of government."⁵ These concepts, and Dahl's model, will be examined later.

There is one additional term that must be defined -- *democracy*. The definition of democracy can be generally described as falling along a continuum starting with a minimal set of criteria and proceeding to an all-inclusive meaning. A strict definition of democracy would be limited to a political system with the freedom to create political parties and to conduct free and honest elections at regular intervals without excluding any effective political office from electoral accountability⁶ (procedural definition). A slightly broader, but still narrow and procedural, definition of democracy would describe a political system completely or almost completely responsive to its citizens.⁷ According to Dahl, this definition, with its dimensions of contestation and participation, has eight institutional guarantees: freedom to form and join organizations; freedom of expression; the right to vote; eligibility for public office; the right of political leaders to compete for support (votes); alternative sources of information; free and fair elections; and institutions for

⁵ Dahl, Polyarchy, p. 4.

⁶ Juan J. Linz, The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown, and Reequilibration, (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), pp. 5-6.

⁷ Dahl, Polyarchy, pp. 2-4.

making government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preference.⁸ Finally, the broadest definition of democracy would be defined in terms of sources of authority for government (rule of, by, and for the people) or purposes for government (social equality).⁹

For the purposes of this paper (and as explained in footnote 9), a limited procedural definition will be used. Some consider this procedural definition of democracy as a demanding "ideal type" and state, "Obviously, no real world regime fits the ideal type perfectly; indeed many regimes that hold regular elections fall far short,"¹⁰ but there is room for disagreement with this statement. The limited procedural definition can serve to establish a boundary between democratic and non-democratic forms of government as distinctive regimes on the political spectrum rather than as opposite ends of a continuum. It is possible for regimes to exceed the minimum requirements of the definition

⁸ Ibid, p. 3.

⁹ See Samuel P. Huntington, "The Modest Meaning of Democracy" in Robert A. Pastor, ed., Democracy in the Americas: Stopping the Pendulum, (New York, NY: Holmes and Meier, 1989), pp. 11-25 for an extensive discussion of the meaning of democracy, and see also Huntington, The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century, (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), pp. 5-13 for support for the procedural definition that makes "it possible to judge to what extent political systems are democratic, to compare systems, and to analyze whether systems are becoming more or less democratic."

¹⁰ Michael Burton, Richard Gunther, and John Higley, "Introduction: Elite Transformations and Democratic Regimes" in Higley and Gunther, eds., Elites and Democratic Consolidation in Latin America and Southern Europe, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 1.

and approach a broader definition, therefore, the definition is not an "ideal". As will be shown later, more than a few regimes meet this "ideal" definition. There is obviously no disagreement with the portion of the statement that notes many regimes fall short of constituting democracies despite allowing elections. With a workable definition of democracy, an analysis of the literature is now possible.¹¹

B. ANALYSIS OF THE DAHLIAN MODEL OF POLITICAL SYSTEMS & THE BASIC DEFINITIONAL PROBLEM

As mentioned earlier, Robert Dahl's procedural definition is comprised of certain institutional guarantees that can be expressed by two components which he presents in diagrammatic fashion (see Figure 1). The two dimensions, the degree of public contestation and the degree of participation, comprise the entire field of "democratization".¹²

Dahl's figure provides the basic *concept* for the formation of this paper's revised model. Dahl places four different political systems in each corner of the diagram. These systems are defined by their varying degrees of

¹¹ Only significant literature contributing to the concepts essential to the development of the revised analytical model will be examined.

¹² Dahl, Polyarchy, pp. 5-7. Since Dahl's "theoretical dimensions of democratization" figure illustrates, in one extreme, a state defined by its total lack of opposition and participation, a regime employing this mode of rule obviously cannot be considered a democracy. Thus the field of "democratization" must also consider the extent to which Dahl's institutional conditions are denied. In this way Dahl's "dimensions of democratization" encompasses all forms of political systems.

contestation and participation. A very important distinction between these dimensions must be noted. Dahl notes that, both historically and even now, regimes vary the extent to which his eight institutional conditions are "...openly available, publicly employed, and fully guaranteed." Furthermore, the second dimension is necessary because regimes may "...permit opposition to a very small or a very large proportion of the population."¹³

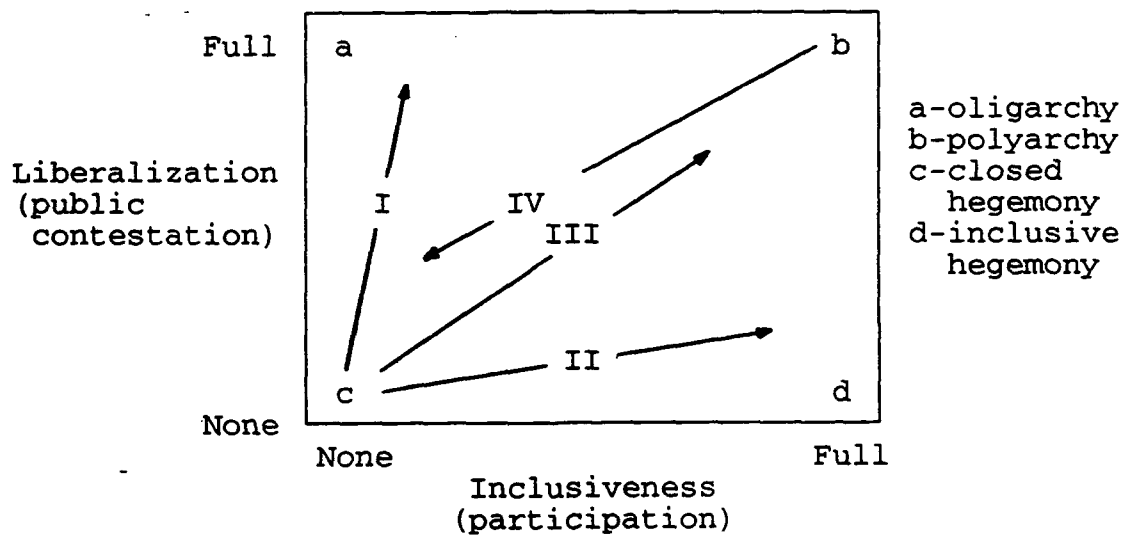


Figure 1
 [source: Robert Dahl's Polyarchy, p. 7.]

Also included in the original model are three paths (path I [from c to a to b], path II [from c to d to b] and path III [from c to b]) to describe various directions of change a regime may undergo in the development to a more democratized political system. There is *at least* one additional path not included in Dahl's original, path IV (from b to c), which

¹³ Ibid, p. 4.

represents the transition from an inclusive democratic to an exclusive non-democratic regime. This and other paths were probably omitted because the focus of Dahl's work was to examine the conditions that favor or impede a transition to more democratized political systems.¹⁴

Path IV has been added to Dahl's figure due to the nature of this paper's objectives.

The most basic problem with Dahl's "democratization" figure is that it does not provide for a clear distinction between democratic and non-democratic forms of government as his procedural definition should allow. The figure represents a continuum between regime types. The model presented later will provide a solution for making the distinction between regime types.

Another problem arises in making a comparison of the relative degrees of inclusiveness (participation) of a regime at different points in time or between different regimes. The difference between what constitutes an inclusive, and what constitutes an exclusive (limited participation) regime, is not clear. Dahl does, however, recognize the varying degrees of participation available in a population¹⁵ and he at least provides a comprehensive list of political systems that incorporates

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 1.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 4.

an analysis of the varying degrees of participation in those systems.¹⁶

The revised model presented later will also provide a solution for making the distinction between inclusive and exclusive political systems.

C. OVERVIEW OF REGIME TRANSITION LITERATURE & ANALYSIS OF VARIOUS EXPLANATIONS FOR REGIME TRANSITION

The efforts to generate an understanding of political transitions have been focused in several areas.¹⁷ Several broad studies have concentrated on democratization and political order.¹⁸ Another set of studies has concentrated on the transitions from democracy to

¹⁶ Ibid, Appendix A, Table A-1, pp. 232-234.

¹⁷ See Michael C. Desch, "Transitions to Democracy: The Role of Militaries," (Los Angeles, CA: By the author as a visiting scholar, Center for International Studies, University of Southern California, [third draft] 1991), p. 3, for a review of various explanations regarding regime transition and for support for an explanation combining societal and institutional factors. This review and analysis is an important contribution to the development of a portion of the mechanism for explaining regime transition that will be developed in Chapter III.

¹⁸ See Dahl, Polyarchy; Samuel P. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968) and The Third Wave; Seymour Martin Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," in *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 53, No. 1 (March 1959), pp. 1-34; Dankwart A. Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model," in *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 2, No. 3, (April 1970), pp. 337-363.

authoritarianism¹⁹ and others have examined the transitions of authoritarian regimes back to democracies.²⁰

Theory attempts to answer some fundamental questions toward an ultimate objective of providing a greater understanding and explanation of a particular event, in this case, the transition of political systems. The general theories explaining regime transition broadly fall into two categories: deterministic theories and probabilistic theories. While each new theory advances the general knowledge of an event or set of events, the problem with deterministic theories is that there is usually a situation that does not fit the general explanation and the theory must be modified, limited to a particular set of circumstances, or discarded.

In addition to the problems encountered by deterministic theories, a brief analysis of non-deterministic, societal level explanations for regime changes has also noted that there exists "...variance [with respect

¹⁹ See Guillermo O'Donnell, Modernization and Bureaucratic Authoritarianism: Studies in South American Politics, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1973); and Linz and Alfred Stepan, eds., The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes, (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

²⁰ See Pastor, ed., Democracy in the Americas; and O'Donnell, Phillippe C. Schmitter, and Laurance Whitehead, eds., Transitions From Authoritarian Rule: Prospects for Democracy, (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

to explanation] in a number of important cases."²¹ An alternate approach to the problems encountered with the socioeconomic variables can be solved by analyzing factors [necessary for the overthrow and reestablishment of democratic regimes] that "...lie within the regime itself, within the apparatus of state not outside in its relations with civil society."²² But this approach also has problems because it ignores important societal factors. Various explanations have combined, or noted the importance of combining, societal and institutional factors in an attempt to analyze the role of institutions (i.e., the military) and provide a basis for explaining regime transition.²³ This final approach will form the basis of the development of the mechanism which will be used to explain regime transitions.

²¹ Desch, "Transitions to Democracy," p. 7.

²² See Schmitter, "Liberation by Golpe: Retrospective Thoughts on the Demise of Authoritarian Rule in Portugal," in *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (November 1975), p. 20.

²³ See Desch, "Transitions to Democracy", pp. 13-15; Stepan, The Military in Politics: Changing Patterns in Brazil, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 55 and Rethinking Military Politics: Brazil and the Southern Cone, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988); and Abraham F. Lowenthal and Samuel J Fitch, eds., Armies and Politics in Latin America, [revised ed.], (New York, NY: Holmes and Meier Publishers, Inc. 1986).

III. A MODEL FOR REGIME TRANSITION

A. THE BASIC MODEL & THE FOUR BASIC REGIME TYPES

The first important contribution necessary to understanding regime transition is the development of a new model. Using the limited, procedural definition of democracy allows for a simple distinction between democratic and non-democratic regimes. This distinction, when coupled with a measure of the degree of participation and a measure of the degree of liberalization provides for the formation of a revised model that can simplify and aid in an understanding of regime transition.

The following model makes some changes to Dahl's model by shifting the vertical "Liberalization (public contestation)" axis to a horizontal "Regime Type" axis.²⁴ Dahl's "Inclusiveness (degree of participation)" axis is then centered vertically on the horizontal regime type axis. The basic structure (see Figure 2) solves Dahl's regime continuum problem by providing a distinct division between democratic and non-democratic regimes in accordance with the procedural

²⁴ The change in the name of the new horizontal axis from "liberalization" to "regime type" is for two reasons. First, the degree of liberalization in a political system will determine the type of regime and this axis is necessary for the later categorization of various regimes.

definition. All regimes left of the vertical participation axis can be classified as "democratic" in that the regimes meet the minimum basic requirements of the procedural definition. The further left along the axis, the greater the degree of democratization. Regimes at the extreme left of the regime type axis would meet all the requirements of the broadest possible definition of democracy. All regimes right of the participation axis fail to meet one or more of the eight requirements of democracy. Regimes at the extreme right of the regime type axis would meet none of the requirements of the definition.

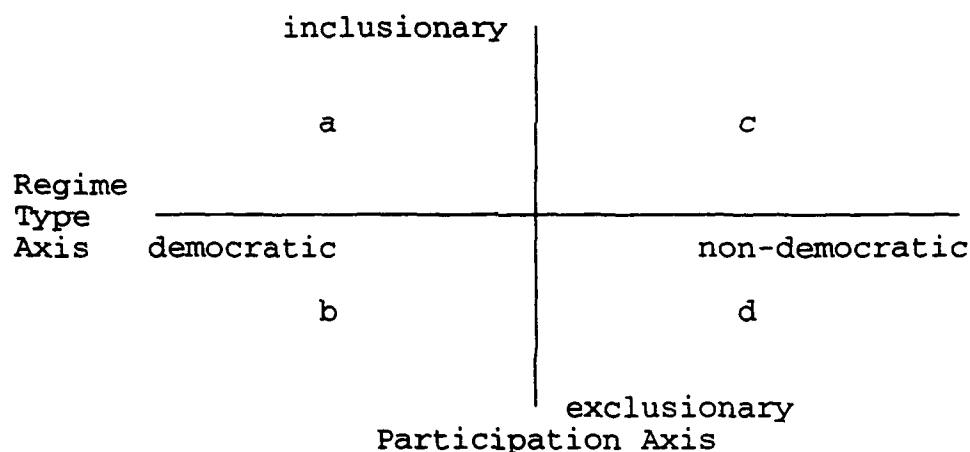


Figure 2
[author's basic model illustrating the 4 basic regime types]

As mentioned earlier, a problem arises when attempting to determine whether a regime is inclusive or exclusive. Since Dahl defined inclusiveness in terms of the "...proportion of the population entitled to participate on a more or less equal plane in controlling and

contesting the conduct of the government....²⁵ then it is theoretically possible to have full (100%) participation as well as no (0%) participation.²⁶ By placing the regime type axis on the degree of participation axis, a division between inclusive and exclusive regimes is possible. Since the percentage of the population entitled to participate is the measure of inclusiveness, then a distinction can be made that categorizes regimes that allow greater than 50 percent of the population to participate (vote) as "inclusionary" and regimes that restrict participation to fifty percent or less of the population as "exclusionary".

According to the new model, four *basic* types of regimes are theoretically possible: (a) inclusionary democratic, (b) exclusionary democratic, (c) inclusionary non-democratic, and (d) exclusionary non-democratic. Examples of regimes in areas (a) and (d) are numerous, examples of regimes in areas (b) and (c) are less prevalent. The United States is an example of an inclusive democratic regime.²⁷ Bahrain would be an example of an exclusive non-democratic regime.²⁸

²⁵ Dahl, Polyarchy, p. 4, and Table A-1, pp. 232-234.

²⁶ For the purposes of this paper, participation will be measured by the proportion of the adult population entitled to vote in elections.

²⁷ U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, The World Factbook, 1991, (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), pp. 324-325.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 23.

At first it would seem absurd to have a democratic regime that permitted participation to less than 50 percent of its population but the model indicates the possibility. Since the procedural definition of democracy used here is not qualified by any mention of the degree of participation, such a regime is possible. A modern example might be the Republic of South Africa, which may meet the minimum requirements for a procedural democracy but denies voting participation to approximately 70 percent of its population.²⁹

Examples of inclusionary non-democratic regimes are more prevalent than would first seem. The modern Mexican state would fit these conditions. Mexico has an inclusive and very vibrant political society but there is significant doubt as to whether any elections can be considered "free and fair".³⁰

²⁹ Huntington considers political systems as democratic "...to the extent that its most powerful collective decision makers are selected through fair, honest, and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes and in which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote." [author's emphasis]. Clearly, Huntington disagrees with this example. See The Third Wave, p. 7.

³⁰ Daniel C. Levy, "Mexico: Sustained Civilian Rule Without Democracy," Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset, eds., Politics in Developing Countries: Comparing Experiences with Democracy, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1990), pp. 135-173

B. CONSOLIDATED AND UNCONSOLIDATED REGIMES

Prior to developing a mechanism to explain regime transition, two final concepts must be incorporated into the model: the concepts of *consolidated* and *unconsolidated* regimes.³¹ These concepts will allow the revised two axis model to be divided into "cells"³² and incorporate various types of political systems.

In an edited work by John Higley and Richard Gunther, the focus [of the country studies] is on the "...factors that contribute to the successful *consolidation* of democratic regimes, rather than the transition to democracy per se."³³ The editors seek to explain how elite agreements, which may lead to consolidation, are *created* and *sustained*. For Higley and Gunther, the mechanism for this consolidation is "...distinctive *elite transformations*, carried out by the elites themselves, [that] constitute the main and possibly the only route to democratic consolidation." Higley and Gunther further state, "For consolidation to occur ... elites that had previously been "disunified" must become

³¹ Burton, Gunther, and Higley in Higley and Gunther, eds., Elites and Democratic Consolidation in Latin America and Southern Europe, pp. 3-5.

³² This term is borrowed from Polyarchy, p. 6. Unlike Dahl, this new model will create a typology to allow for a greater description and analysis of regimes and regime transition.

³³ Gunther and Higley, Elites and Democratic Consolidation in Latin America and Southern Europe, pp. ix.

"consensually unified" in regard to the basic procedures and norms by which all politics will henceforth be played."³⁴

The most basic problem with Higley and Gunther's theory is that it only addresses half the problem – the consolidation of democracy. It seems that whatever mechanism that might be developed to explain the consolidation of democratic regimes might be applied to the consolidation of non-democratic regimes as well.

According to Higley and Gunther, "...a *consolidated democracy* is a regime that meets all the procedural criteria of democracy and also in which all politically significant groups accept established political institutions and adhere to democratic rules of the game."³⁵ Along the same lines, can the same conditions also hold true for non-democratic regimes? That is, can a *consolidated non-democracy* lack all the criteria of a procedural definition of democracy and also be free from competition posed by any politically significant dissident groups? This certainly seems to be a possibility and some real-world examples that approximate these conditions will be provided later.

Continuing with some additional terms, *unconsolidated democracies* would be regimes that still meet all the procedural criteria of democracy

³⁴ Ibid, pp. x-xi.

³⁵ Ibid, p. 3-4.

but in which some politically significant groups are engaged in (1) *semiloyal* or (2) *disloyal* opposition.³⁶ The opposite could also apply to an *unconsolidated non-democracy* – the regime would *not* meet all of the criteria to be considered a democracy and there would also be semiloyal or disloyal opposition from politically significant groups.

It has been noted that there are always at least some dissident groups, even in consolidated democratic systems,³⁷ but in order for a regime, either democratic or non-democratic, to be considered as consolidated, these groups cannot be a politically significant semiloyal or disloyal opposition. The mere existence of a disloyal opposition that questions the existence of the regime and aims at changing it through extralegal means, usually by force, might be considered by some to be politically significant but for the purposes of this paper, disloyal opposition groups must be capable of mobilizing "intense, effective support; and by a variety of means they can take power or at least divide the allegiance of the population."³⁸ In order for a regime to be considered as unconsolidated, it must have either a semiloyal or disloyal

³⁶ Linz, The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown and Reequilibration, pp. 27-38.

³⁷ See Burton, Higley and Gunther, pp. 3-4, and Linz, p. 28.

³⁸ Phrase borrowed from Linz, p. 27.

opposition. This is not to say that the opposition must be engaged in actions that could threaten the survival of the regime, it only requires that these groups be capable of mobilizing a threat. In situations in which the actions of the opposition posed a threat to the continued existence of the unconsolidated regime, the regime could be classified as *unstable*. In cases in which the opposition was only semiloyal or disloyal but politically insignificant, the unconsolidated regime would be classified as *stable*.

By combining the concept of consolidation into the revised two axis model, a more effective system for categorizing regimes and conducting comparative analysis is now available (see Figure 3). Specific examples will be provided later.

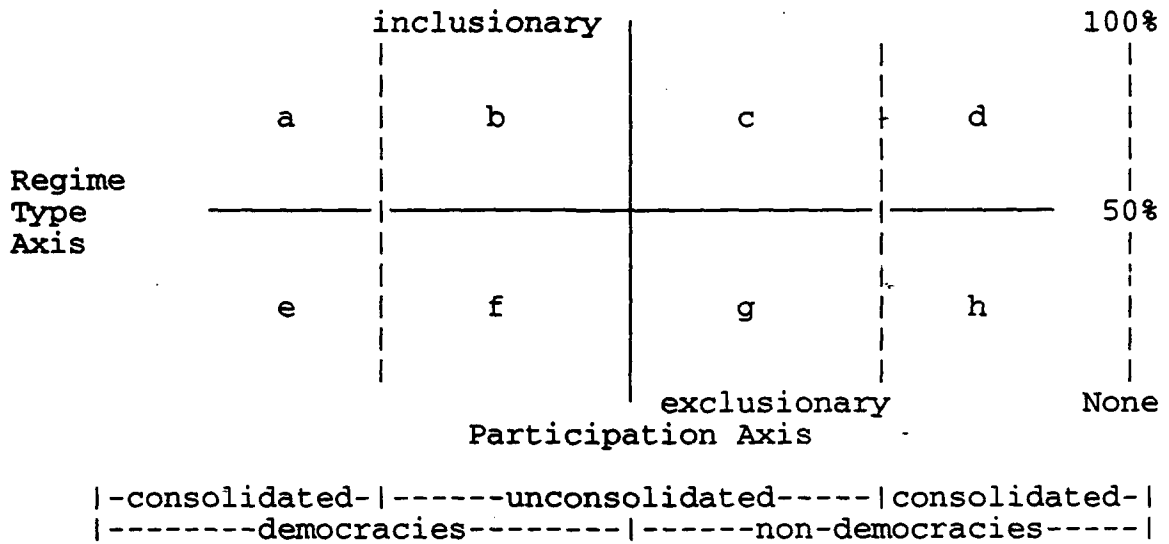


Figure 3

Notes: By definition, regimes in areas a and e are stable consolidated democracies. Regimes in areas d and h are also stable consolidated non-democracies. Regimes in areas b and f can be stable or unstable unconsolidated democracies and regimes in areas c and g can be stable or unstable unconsolidated non-democracies.

C. THE MECHANISM OF REGIME TRANSITION

The final important contribution necessary for understanding regime transition is the development of the mechanism combining societal and institutional factors to explain the changes in political systems.

Since transitions are the result of changes in the characteristics of political systems, then the cause of regime transition is change in the degree of participation and/or liberalization.

By examining the concept of participation, it is possible to incorporate some terms presented in other works on political transition

or consolidation. Changes in participation are manifested by increases or decreases in the proportion of the population eligible to vote. Since the extremes of the participation dimension are expressed by the participation of a few or many, the model will incorporate the concepts of *elite* and *mass* participation.³⁹

In order to complete the mechanism, it is necessary to describe the environment in which these groups participate. This mechanism will incorporate Stepan's "...conceptually and politically useful...." distinction between "...three important arenas of the polity: *civil society*, *political society*, and *the state*."⁴⁰ For this paper, *mechanism* will be used to

³⁹ Burton, Gunther, and Higley, p. 4. The definition of elites by the above authors will apply here also (see p.8). Elites are "...persons who are able, by virtue of their strategic positions in powerful organizations, to affect national political outcomes regularly and substantially. Elites are the principal decision makers in the largest or most resource-rich political, governmental, economic, military, professional, communications, and cultural organizations and movements in a society." The masses are everybody else.

⁴⁰ Stepan, Rethinking Military Politics, pp. 3-4. "*Civil society* is that arena where manifold social movements and civic organizations from all classes attempt to constitute themselves ... so that they can express themselves and advance their interests. *Political society* [is the] arena in which the polity specifically arranges itself for political contestation to gain control over public power and the state apparatus. *The state* is ... the continuous administrative, legal, bureaucratic, and coercive system that attempts not only to manage the state apparatus but to structure relations between civil and public power and to structure ... relationships within civil and political society."

describe the competition, cooptation, or cooperation (power relationship) between elites and masses in the state apparatus, political society and civil society.

Finally, this mechanism must be fully explained, in terms of its elements, in order to describe the direct relationship between the mechanism and the type of regime. It is this relationship that will attempt to prove that the mechanism of regime change is the same in all political systems.

As already noted, regime type is a function of the power relationship between elites and masses in the three elements of society (see Table 1).

An analysis of the power relationships expressed in Table 1 reveals that the differing combinations of elements in the mechanism will result in differing regime types. Various attempts have been made to classify some regimes as *hegemonic party systems*, *pseudodemocracies*, *stable-limited democracies*, *authoritarian* or *totalitarian* regimes⁴¹ but the typology and definitions have been unsatisfactory. The exercise undertaken here will not attempt to apply these labels to the current model at this time

⁴¹ See Huntington in Robert A. Pastor, ed., Democracy in the Americas, pp. 16-18; Diamond, Linz, and Lipset, Politics in Developing Countries, pp. 6-9; and Burton, Gunther, and Higley, Elites and Democratic Consolidation in Latin America and Southern Europe, pp. 3-8.

because to do so would be in Dahl's words, "elaborate" and "redundant."⁴²

TABLE 1

| CASE | ARENAS SUBJECT TO ELITE/MASS CONTROL | | | REGIME TYPE |
|------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| | State | Political Arena | Civil Society | |
| I | mass cntrl | mass control | mass control | Consolidated Democracy |
| IIa | competition | mass control | mass control | Unconsol. stable demo. |
| IIb | competition | mass cntrl w/ pol signif opp | mass control | Uncon. unst. Democracy |
| IIIa | elite cntrl | elite cntrl w/ pol signif opp | mass/elite competition | Uncon. unst. Non-demo. |
| IIIb | elite cntrl | elite control | mass/elite competition | Uncon. stab. Non-demo. |
| IV | elite cntrl | elite control | elite control | Consolidated Non-demo. |

[source: author's table indicating the regime type as a function of the power relationship between elites and masses in the three elements of society. The case numbers will be used for easy reference in the following section examining the mechanism of regime transition.]

In the first case, a consolidated democracy, the masses have control over the elites in the state apparatus, political society and civil society. Elites still function in the all three arenas but the masses have *de facto* and *de jure* control of over all the elements. The degree of liberalization, contestation or [loyal] opposition is very high and all eight

⁴² Polyarchy, p. 6.

requirements of the procedural definition of democracy exist.

Legitimacy is very high – the elites and masses cooperate or compete according to the established rules. There are no politically significant semiloyal or disloyal opposition movements, as there is little or no reason for these groups to exist and the system is very stable.

In the last case, a consolidated non-democracy, the elites have control over the masses in all three arenas of society. The degree of legitimacy may be high in some extreme cases but it is more likely that the elites effectively exercise, or possess the will and ability to exercise the coercive power of the state to maintain order, if necessary. The degree of contestation is very low and if it exists, may be limited only to factions of the elite. There are no requirements of the procedural definition of democracy available to the masses. If elections are held, they are not "free and fair" and merely exist to provide some method by which the regime can make claims to legitimacy. These political systems are totally dominated by one political party or ban political activity altogether.

Like the first case, cases IIa and IIb are representative of a democracy – all eight of Dahl's requirements exist in the political system but these regimes are not consolidated. In both cases, there is mass control of the state apparatus but there is competition by the elites. The

masses have control over the political and civil arenas but, as mentioned previously, these unconsolidated democratic regimes can be either stable or unstable. Regimes in which the competition between elites and masses occurs within the bounds of the established rules are stable (case IIa). Regimes with politically significant semiloyal or disloyal elite opposition are unstable (case IIb).

Cases IIIa and IIIb are representative of unconsolidated non-democracies. These regimes are non-democratic because the system fails to provide all eight requirements of procedural democracy. It may be difficult to distinguish actual cases in these categories from unconsolidated democracies but these regimes generally fail to provide at least one requirement fully. In most cases, it seems that the requirements found to be lacking are free and fair elections or the ability of electoral competition to have an effective influence over government policies. Extreme cases, in which most of the procedural requirements are absent, are easy to identify. Elites have at least *de facto* and in some cases, *de jure* control over the state apparatus. Again, unconsolidated regimes may be either stable or unstable. In stable regimes (case IIIb), there may be some mass competition in the civil society arena but elites have control over political society and there are no politically significant semiloyal or disloyal opposition groups. In unstable, unconsolidated

non-democracies (case IIIa), the elites maintain control over the political arena but competition is provided by a politically significant semiloyal or disloyal mass opposition. In these cases, the elites are also attempting to maintain or regain some semblance of control over the masses in civil society but this arena is, for all intents and purposes, under mass control.

D. TYPES OF REGIME TRANSITION

There is one last distinction that must be made regarding the model. That distinction is the way in which a change in a political system, or more simply put, a regime transition, is manifest. Given that the term *mechanism* is used to describe the power relationship in a regime, the term *transition type* will be used to describe the form or mode of regime transition.

The process of regime transition can occur in one or two abstract ways. The most common form of transition is the "shift" of a system along the regime type axis through an increase or decrease in the number of the procedural requirements that determine regime type.

The other form of transition is a shift along the participation axis. Regimes can become more inclusionary by increasing the proportion of

the adult population eligible to vote or become more exclusionary by decreasing the numbers.

These two abstract forms of change occur in modern political systems in various ways. First, the shift along the regime type axis can occur through the following types of transition: *liberalization*, *regression* (reverse liberalization), *revolution* or *coup d'etat*. These "horizontal" transitions, apart from involving changes in the degree of liberalization, opposition, or contestation, also have a time element incorporated. These transitions can be slow and have an incremental effect on the degree of change as in the cases of liberalization and regression or the transitions can occur quickly and have a great impact on the degree of change as in the cases of coups d'etat and revolution.

The second form of transition, an increase or decrease in the degree of participation, does not appear to have a time element involved. An increase in the population entitled to participate can be sudden or the end of a long struggle. Once given, the right to vote is *usually* not withdrawn. If it is withdrawn, it is often the result of a sudden loss of rights due to changes in the degree of liberalization.

The types of regime transition that occur in political systems must be analyzed in terms of the mechanism of regime transition (the power relationship between elites and masses).

Liberalization almost always involves an increase in the number of the procedural requirements available to the population in a political system. In non-democracies, this shift towards a democracy involves greater opportunities for opposition and contestation between the elites and the masses in the three elements of society. Practically, liberalization involves a decrease in elite control or competitiveness with a corresponding increase in mass control or competitiveness. In general terms, liberalization can occur in all regime types, but it should more specifically be utilized to describe transitions that occur up to the point at which seven of the eight requirements of a democracy are fulfilled. The transition of a political system to a democracy by the attainment of all eight requirements can now be termed *democratization*. Because it is possible for regimes to exceed the minimum requirements of a democracy, democratization may also be utilized to describe democratic regimes in a transition toward the fulfillment of broader definitions of democracy, but the phrase *consolidation of democracy* is perhaps more practical for distinguishing this type of regime transition from the actual transition of a non-democratic regime to a democratic one. As noted above, liberalization does not always involve an increase in the procedural requirements – the *consolidation* of a democracy is a form of liberalization that does not involve an increase in the procedural

requirements of the definition because all the requirements are already met.

Regression is the opposite of liberalization. Like liberalization, it can be generally described as being comprised of at least one, and as many as three, of the following distinct phases: the deconsolidation of a democratic regime, the regression to a non-democracy, and the consolidation of a non-democratic regime.

The deconsolidation of a democratic regime does not involve a decrease in the number of procedural requirements available to the population of a political system. Rather, this type of regression is caused by increased semiloyal or disloyal competition by elites in the state and political arenas that results in a transition from a consolidated democracy to a stable or unstable, unconsolidated democracy. If continued regression were to occur that resulted in a decrease in the number of procedural requirements constituting a democracy, then the transition to a non-democratic regime would occur. Finally, if the elites in a non-democratic political system were to eliminate any semiloyal or disloyal opposition, then the system would undergo the transition to a consolidated non-democracy.

Liberalization and regression, like increases or decreases in participation, are unique types of transition. These types of transition

involve a movement along an axis in only one distinct direction. The following types of transition are characterized by the actors involved rather than the direction of transition.

Revolutions and coups d'état are rebellions -- an uprising or organized opposition intended to change or overthrow an existing government or ruling authority.⁴³ While both types of transitions fall under the same definition, each is distinct from the other. A revolution is a [sudden] "...political overthrow brought about from within a given system....", especially: "...a forcible substitution of rulers or of ruling cliques and the seizure of state power by [the militant vanguard of] a subject class or nation".⁴⁴ A coup d'état is a "...sudden stroke of state policy involving deliberate violation of constitutional forms by a group of persons in authority".⁴⁵ Both are similar in that they involve a (relatively) sudden change in the ruling authority of a political system and both transition types are forcible or extralegal. The distinction is in the actors. In a coup, the political change is brought about by individuals and institutions in positions of authority in the state

⁴³ Morris, The American Heritage Dictionary, p. 1087.

⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 1113.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 304.

apparatus. In a revolution, groups outside the state apparatus are the main actors implementing change.

Unlike liberalization or regression that yield regime transitions in one direction only, a revolution or coup d'etat can result in a regime transition in either direction. It is theoretically possible that a coup, or revolution, could result in the formation of a democracy just as it could result in the creation of a non-democracy.

With the model complete, a brief overview of regime transition in various political systems is now in order.

IV. CASE STUDIES

This chapter will examine the classification of different regimes and a limited number of regime transitions that have occurred in various political systems. The analysis will assist in formulating a hypothesis that attempts to explain regime transition.

The first section of this chapter will provide various examples of political systems for classification in the two-axis model. Since the model theoretically encompasses the entire spectrum of possible regime types, the classification of all modern political systems should be possible. Given that such a task is beyond the scope of this thesis, the examples in Table 2 are provided as representative cases for classification purposes.

The second section of this chapter will focus on two major cases involving regime transition: Argentina (1976-1983) and Germany (1919-1934). These particular cases have been selected for the following reasons: the cases (1) involve different types of regime transition; (2) provide a cross-regional comparison; and, (3) provide a cross-period comparison essential to testing the author's revised model. In short, the theory should apply to all cases, in all regions, at all times. Finally, the last portion of this section will briefly examine the political turmoil that

occurred in Guatemala in late May and early June 1993 to test the model's applicability in a situation involving the military elite in a possible case involving a liberalizing coup d'etat.

A. REGIME CLASSIFICATION IN THE TWO-AXIS MODEL

The following section briefly analyzes various political systems and categorizes these systems into the revised two-axis model developed in Chapter III. See Table 2 for a classification of various regimes. Figure 4 incorporates several of these examples into the two-axis model.

TABLE 2

- I. CONSOLIDATED DEMOCRACIES:
 - United States (Inclusive)
 - Switzerland, see note below (Exclusive)

- II. UNCONSOLIDATED DEMOCRACIES:
 - A. STABLE
 - Argentina (Inclusive)
 - N/A, see note below (Exclusive)
 - B. UNSTABLE
 - Venezuela (Inclusive)
 - Republic of South Africa (Exclusive)

- III. UNCONSOLIDATED NON-DEMOCRACIES:
 - A. UNSTABLE
 - Cambodia (Inclusive)
 - Sudan (Exclusive)
 - B. STABLE
 - Mexico (Inclusive)
 - Ghana (Exclusive)

- IV. CONSOLIDATED NON-DEMOCRACIES:
 - Cuba (Inclusive)
 - Bahrain (Exclusive)

Notes: Most of the above classifications were made based on information contained in the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, The World Factbook, 1991. The cases have been reanalyzed to reflect the current political situations as of early 1993, with the exception of Switzerland. The exclusive, consolidated democratic categorization utilizes the case of Switzerland prior to February 1971. Prior to this date only males age 20 and older could vote.⁴⁶ There are no current examples of stable, exclusionary, unconsolidated democracies (see the examination of South Africa on pp. 38-39).

⁴⁶ James Murray Luck, History of Switzerland, Palo Alto, CA: The Society for the Promotion of Science and Scholarship (SPOSS) Inc., 1985, p. 821.

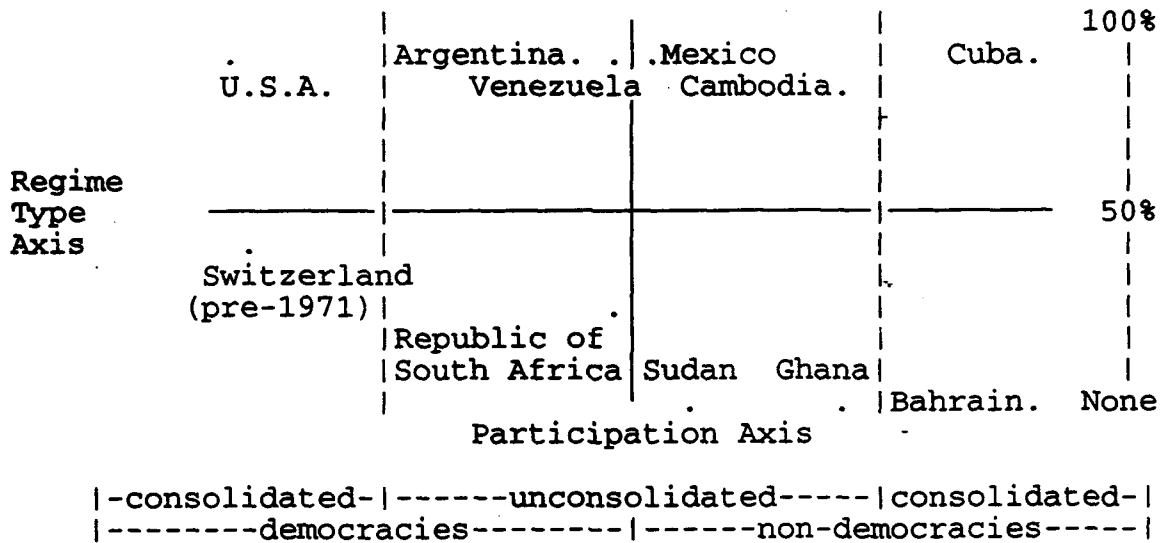


Figure 4

The classification of the United States as an inclusive, consolidated democracy is based on the following: it is a federal republic far exceeding the minimum requirements of the procedural definition of a democracy. The U.S. is stable (no politically significant semiloyal or disloyal opposition) and allows citizens age 18 and older to participate in elections (greater than 50 percent participation).

As mentioned in the note in Table 2, there currently exist no exclusive, consolidated democracies. The most recent example of this classification would be Switzerland prior to 7 February 1971.

The current government in Argentina fits the classification of a stable, inclusive, unconsolidated democracy. There is no politically significant semiloyal or disloyal opposition. Argentina remains

unconsolidated – it has only recently (1983) made a transition back to meeting the minimal requirements of the procedural definition of democracy and will require more time before it is able to approach a broader definition of democracy. Venezuela, until recently, could have been classified as a stable, inclusive, unconsolidated democracy but that changed on February 4, 1992. A coup d'etat was attempted against the government headed by President Carlos Andres Perez.⁴⁷ Any "...efforts to topple the regime itself, through organized coups or mass rebellions, clearly manifest the collapse of democratic stability."⁴⁸

The classification of South Africa as an unstable, exclusive, unconsolidated democratic regime is based on the significant and violent nature of the opposition faced by the white minority government. This republic is classified as a democracy despite restricting political participation to less than a quarter of the population. A possible case of

⁴⁷ The New York Times, February 4, 1992, p. A3, February 5, 1992, p. A10, and World Monitor, September, 1992, pp. 44-49.

⁴⁸ See Burton, Gunther and Higley, pp. 2-3. Other manifestations of democratic instability include: "...a deliberate stifling of democracy through de facto or de jure denial of civil and political rights...." and the inability "...to keep the expression of conflict within nonviolent bounds." As defined in chapter 2, the definition of democracy used here is not qualified by restrictions on the proportion of the population entitled to participate and the restriction of voting rights in political systems conducting free and fair elections does not constitute instability for classification purposes.

a stable, exclusionary, unconsolidated non-democracy might be South Africa prior to the March 1960 civil unrest in Sharpsville planned by organizers of the Pan-Africanist Congress, a militant offshoot of the African National Congress, and the December 1961 formation of a national liberation front by the ANC.⁴⁹

The classification of Mexico as a stable, inclusive, unconsolidated non-democracy has much support. Although Mexico has been characterized as a democracy in previous analyses, it does not meet all the procedural requirements of the definition. In Mexico's case, the requirements most often found to be lacking are freedom of the press, free and fair elections, and institutions for making government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preference.⁵⁰ There are no

⁴⁹ Harold D. Nelson, ed., South Africa: A Country Study, Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1981, pp. 46-48. The transition to an inclusive democratic regime may be set to occur on elections scheduled for April 27, 1994 -- South Africa's first multiracial elections (see The New York Times, June 4, 1993, p. A1).

⁵⁰ Although this exact terminology is unique, other characterizations of Mexico as a *limited-democracy*, *pseudo-democracy*, *hegemonic one-party regime*, or *inclusive authoritarianism* are all based on the incomplete satisfaction of the procedural requirements of a democracy. See Wayne A. Cornelius and Ann Craig, The Mexican Political System in Transition, (San Diego, CA: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego, 1991); Daniel C. Levy, "Mexico: Sustained Civilian Rule Without Democracy," in Diamond, Linz, and Lipset, eds., Politics in Developing Countries; Wynia, The Politics of Latin American Development; and Judith Gentleman, ed., Mexican Politics in Transition, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, Inc., 1987).

politically significant semiloyal or disloyal opposition groups in Mexico and suffrage is universal and compulsory (but not enforced) beginning at age 18.⁵¹

An excellent example of an unstable, inclusive, unconsolidated non-democracy is Cambodia. The Khmer Rouge guerrilla forces still pose a significant threat to extensive areas of Cambodia and the current government. Although elections were held in May 1993, in which over 85 percent of Cambodia's 4.7 million registered voters participated⁵² (inclusive), the country has not made the transition to democracy – the elections were held to form a new national assembly, which will be responsible for drafting a constitution and forming a new government.⁵³ Additional factors hindering a possible transition include statements from the governing Cambodian People's Party that indicate a possible willingness to use force to hold onto power after its apparent defeat in the elections.⁵⁴

The Sudan is similar to Cambodia for classification purposes with one exception – it is exclusive. Since the 30 June 1989 coup and

⁵¹ The World Factbook, 1991, pp. 204-206.

⁵² The New York Times, May 27, 1993, p. A3.

⁵³ Ibid, June 2, 1993, p. A4.

⁵⁴ Ibid, June 3, 1993, p. A5.

imposition of martial law, the Republic of the Sudan has been ruled by the military. The country is totally exclusive and non-democratic. Executive and legislative authority is vested in a 13-member Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) with the council chairman, Lt. Gen. Umar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir, acting as Prime Minister. Political parties were banned and voting rights eliminated following the 1989 coup and no elections have been held. An Islamic state with a large Sunni Muslim population (70%), Sudan is one of the world's poorest countries and is buffeted by civil war and chronic political instability.⁵⁵ The Sudanese republic is classified as an unstable, exclusive, unconsolidated non-democracy.

The Republic of Ghana is classified as a stable, exclusive, unconsolidated non-democracy. Ghana has been ruled by the military since 31 December 1981 when Flt. Lt. (Ret.) Jerry Rawlings assumed power in a coup d'état. The military government continues to ban political activity and has held no elections. Although a small number of communists and sympathizers are active these groups are not considered politically significant semiloyal or disloyal opposition groups.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ The World Factbook, 1991, pp. 293-294.

⁵⁶ Ibid, pp. 114-115.

The final two cases are classified as consolidated (i.e., stable) non-democracies. The first case, Cuba, is further classified as inclusive. Elections were recently held in Cuba in which all citizens age 16 and over were eligible to participate.⁵⁷ The Cuban people were allowed to vote secretly and directly for national and local parliamentary representatives for the first time since Fidel Castro took power in 1959, but the Cuban government is an excellent example of a state attempting to seek legitimacy through "democratic processes" while falling far short of fulfilling the procedural requirements of a democracy. The most obvious flaws were evident in the electoral process itself – no opposition parties or candidates were allowed on the ballots. There are no known politically significant semiloyal or disloyal opposition groups currently operating in Cuba although a significant potential threat may be posed by a virulently anti-Castro, anti-communist, Cuban population residing in the United States.

The final regime classified in the two-axis model is the State of Bahrain – an exclusive, consolidated non-democracy. Bahrain's government is a traditional monarchy ruled by Amir 'Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa, in which elections are non-existent and political parties are

⁵⁷ See "Cuban Election Holds a Few New Twists," The Christian Science Monitor, February 24, 1993, p. 8.

prohibited. Although several small clandestine leftist and Islamic fundamentalist groups have been active in the past, no opposition groups in Bahrain can be considered politically significant.⁵⁸

B. EXAMPLES OF TYPES OF REGIME TRANSITION

Given that this thesis only concerns itself with regime transition in *already independent nation-states* and *not as a result of foreign military conquest*, a significant number of cases of regime transition will be omitted from this section. Table 3 provides a partial list of political systems that have experienced these regime transitions.⁵⁹

As with the previous section dealing with regime classification, this section will briefly analyze a limited number of selected cases for illustrative purposes. This thesis will only analyze the following transitions: Argentina's regressive coup d'état of 1976 and subsequent liberalization and redemocratization (1983); and the case of Germany (1919-1934), a dramatic case of democratic deconsolidation, regression and non-democratic consolidation. The analysis of liberal or regressive

⁵⁸ The World Factbook, 1991, pp. 23-24.

⁵⁹ See Polyarchy, Chapter 3, Table 3.1, for an extensive list of political systems that have made a transition to a democracy, albeit not permanently in some cases.

TABLE 3

I. LIBERALIZATION, DEMOCRATIZATION, & DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION:

- Argentina (since 1983)
- Belgium
- Brazil (since 1985)
- Britain
- Chile (1932-1973)
- Costa Rica
- Denmark
- Japan (Meiji Restoration to the 1932)
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Sweden
- Switzerland

II. DEMOCRATIC DECONSOLIDATION, REGRESSION, & NON-DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION:

- Germany (1918-1934)
- Japan (1932-1945)

III. REVOLUTION

- A. LIBERAL REVOLUTION:
 - France (1789-1792, 1848)
 - Mexico (1910-1917)
 - Germany (1919)
 - Spain (1931)
- B. REGRESSIVE REVOLUTION:
 - Cuba (1959)
 - Nicaragua (1979)
 - Russia (1917-1921)

IV. COUP D'ETAT

- A. LIBERAL COUP D'ETAT:
 - Guatemala (1993)
- B. REGRESSIVE COUP D'ETAT:
 - Argentina (1943, 1955, 1962, 1966, 1976)
 - Brazil (1937, 1964)
 - Chile (1973)
 - Iraq (1963, 1968)
 - Thailand (1951, 1957, 1958, 1971, 1976)
 - South Korea (1961)
 - Zaire (1965)

[source: this is a revised and updated table of Dahl's Table 3.1 on page 42 of Polyarchy. It is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all such regime transitions.]

revolutionary transitions will be omitted for the sake of brevity and to maintain a focus on the theoretical aspects of this thesis. Finally, although a case of a liberalizing coup d'état (the transition from a non-democratic to a democratic regime) seems non-existent, the developments in Guatemala in June 1993 provide an example that may closely approximate this scenario and will be briefly commented on later. To analyze these transitions without an examination of the political history of these states would not provide a solid foundation upon which to conduct the analysis but, for the sake of brevity, an extensive historical analysis of these political systems will be omitted here.⁶⁰

1. Argentina, 1976 & 1983

The first case study examining regime transition is Argentina.⁶¹ Two types of regime transition will be examined: the

⁶⁰ Sources for the analytical examination of the various cases cited above will be referenced later in the individual case studies.

⁶¹ For an analytical examination of Argentina's political history see: George A. Lopez and Michael Stohl, eds., Liberalization and Redemocratization in Latin America, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1987); O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead, eds., Transitions From Authoritarian Rule; James M. Malloy and Mitchell A. Seligson, eds., Authoritarians and Democrats: Regime Transition in Latin America, (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987); Pastor, ed., Democracy in the Americas; David Rock, Authoritarian Argentina: The Nationalist Movement, Its History and Its Impact, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993); and Alain Rouquie, The Military and the State in Latin America, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987).

regressive military coup d'etat of 1976 and the liberalization/democratization that occurred after the disastrous military defeat of the Argentine armed forces in the Falkland Islands War in 1982.

In March 1973, a Peronist candidate, Hector Campora, won the presidential election in Argentina. Less than two months later, he resigned to open the way for new elections and the return of Juan Peron from exile in Spain. This action was the beginning of the end of the democratic regime that lasted in Argentina from 1973 to 1976. Peron's election in October 1973 only served to increase the polarization of Argentine society and political violence escalated dramatically after his death less than one year later.⁶²

Argentina was an unstable, unconsolidated democracy in the mid-1970s. The chief internal threats that led to the 1976 military coup were the leftist urban guerrilla movements, the *Ejercito Revolucionario Popular* (ERP) and the *Montoneros*, and the "...more general climate of political [and economic] chaos...." existing under the presidency of Isabel Peron.⁶³

⁶² Edward Gibson in Pastor, ed., Democracy in the Americas, pp. 194-198.

⁶³ Desch, "Transitions to Democracy," p. 32.

The military elite viewed these threats as significant to their corporate interests as well as to the interests of society in general. The coup of March 1976 set about to eliminate Argentina's internal threats and the country made a transition from an unstable, inclusive, unconsolidated democracy to an unstable, exclusive, unconsolidated non-democracy.⁶⁴

The unity exhibited by the military in its solution to the country's problems began to weaken when it succeeded in wiping out the last remnants of the insurgency in 1978 (the regime became a stable, unconsolidated non-democracy). Eventually, the junta's inability to present a unified solution to the political questions surrounding economic policies contributed to the increased factionalism between the military elite and increased pressures "from below" (i.e., the masses) for political change. The economic crisis in 1981 was the result of poor administration of the country by the military-as-government (elite control of the state apparatus) and this fostered anti-government/anti-military sentiment among certain sectors of the population.⁶⁵

In a last-ditch attempt to end internal divisions in the military and rally nationalist support from the masses, the Argentine

⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 32.

⁶⁵ Philip Mauceri in Democracy in the Americas, p. 241.

junta proceeded with a plan to invade the Falkland (Malvinas) Islands in April 1982. The quick defeat of the Argentine forces by the British only deepened the regime's crisis with the public and increased cleavages in the ruling elite. The junta began to disintegrate with the departure of the Navy and Air Force chiefs. The economic and political elite became divided and the masses pressed for change. The threat to the military elite was too great and it withdrew from power in 1983 with the election of Raul Alfonsin as president.⁶⁶ See Figure 5 for a representation of these two regime transitions in the two-axis model.

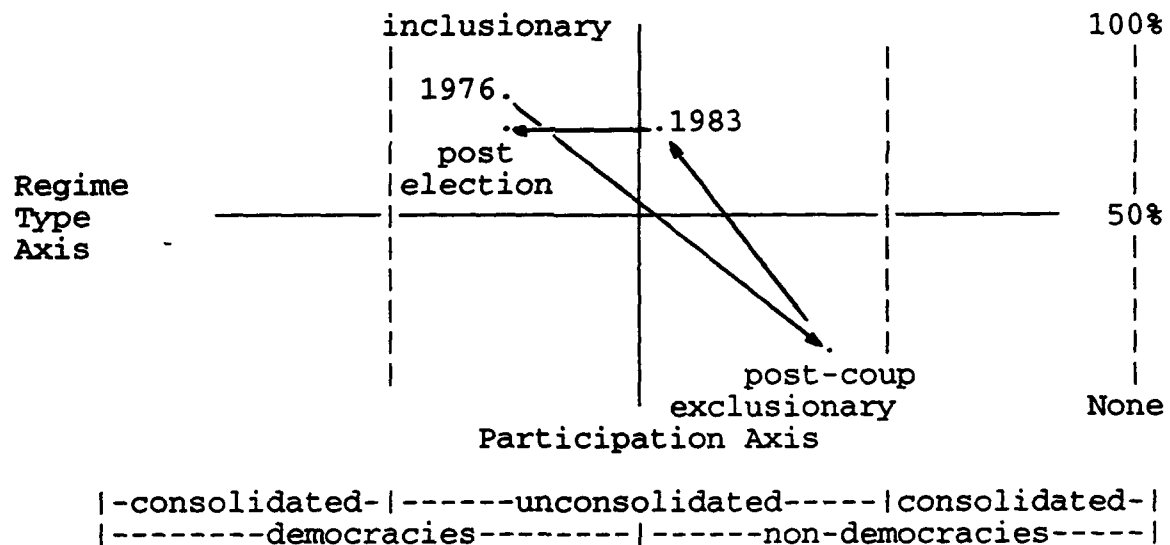


Figure 5 - Argentina (1976-1983)

The above figure indicates the "relative" classifications of the Argentine political system during the two regime transitions in question. The 1976 unstable, inclusive, unconsolidated democracy underwent a

⁶⁶ Ibid, pp. 241-242.

regressive coup d'état to an unstable, exclusive, unconsolidated non-democracy (post-coup position). During the liberalizing transition back to democracy, the regime held elections as a stable, inclusive, unconsolidated non-democracy prior to the redemocratization of the Argentine political system with the installation of a new democratically elected president.

2. Germany, 1919-1934

The democratic breakdown of the Weimar Republic (1918-1933) and non-democratic consolidation of the Third Reich (1934-1945) will provide the second case study of regime transition in this chapter.

Although the failure of democracy and the rise to power of Adolf Hitler has been characterized as a *legal revolution*, it was not legal or a revolution.⁶⁷ Hitler did use democratic processes to position himself advantageously to seize power, but the seizure and consolidation of power were far from legal. The regime transition in Germany was "revolutionary" in its speed, replacement of elites, changes in lifestyles and business, shift in economic parameters, and establishment of new

⁶⁷ Karl Dietrich Bracher, "The National Socialist Seizure of Power," in The Path to Dictatorship: 1918-1933, translated by John Conway, New York, NY: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., Publishers, 1966, p. 119, and Henry M. Pachter, Modern Germany: A Social, Cultural, and Political History, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1978, p. 204.

legal and administrative systems but it was not achieved by a revolutionary transition.

The German Empire ended when the Weimar Republic was "proclaimed by accident" on November 9, 1918 in the post-World War I confusion and disorder that existed in Germany.⁶⁸ Elections were held in January 1919 and on 6 February the National Constituent Assembly opened in Weimar. The Weimar Constitution that took effect on 11 August 1919 gave the president considerable powers. Among these powers was the "notorious" Article 48 that gave the president the right to rule by emergency decree. The constitution also included a voting system of proportional representation with universal suffrage for all adult men and women, a first in Germany.⁶⁹ This constitution established Germany as an inclusive unconsolidated democratic regime that was far from stable.

Germany was suffering greatly from its military defeat in World War I and the period from 1919 to 1923 was marked by political and economic turmoil. The Republic was under continuous attack by the German elite, attempted putsches by the right, and social

⁶⁸ Ellen E. Switzer, How Democracy Failed, Brattleboro, VT: The Book Press, Inc., 1975, p. 10.

⁶⁹ Mary Fulbrook, A Concise History of Germany, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp. 160-162.

mobilization, strikes, and revolutionary movements by the left, in the context of mounting economic problems. War reparations and foreign intervention contributed greatly to German anxiety. The rate of inflation was sent spiralling out of control by the massive printing of paper money. The economic situation was brought under some control by late 1923 with the introduction of a new currency and a restructuring of reparations.⁷⁰

Between 1924 and 1928, Germany seemed to experience a period of relative stabilization, with some successes in the area of foreign relations. But domestic political instability remained.⁷¹ Despite the apparent stabilization, neither the elites or the masses were genuinely committed to the republic, and democracy was never truly consolidated. Paul von Hindenburg, Imperial Germany's Field-Marshal during the First World War, was elected president (1925-1934) and "...was positively considering plans for the development of a right-wing, authoritarian form of government excluding parliamentary and social-democratic influence."⁷²

⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 158-164.

⁷¹ Fritz Stern in the Introduction to The Path to Dictatorship, p. xx, and Fulbrook, pp. 167-168.

⁷² Fulbrook, p. 171.

Between the August 1919 formation of the republic and the October 1929 stock market crash on Wall Street, Germany had seen the formation and collapse of 14 coalition governments.⁷³ Although the economic crisis of the depression was a factor contributing to the political pressures in Germany, there were also other factors at work. Institutionally, the system of proportional representation and the existence of a number of small political parties meant that no single party was able to attain an overall majority. Also, the promulgation of emergency decrees under the authority of Article 48 was increasingly used to circumvent the problems encountered in the Reichstag.⁷⁴

The unstable, unconsolidated democratic republic was finally "doomed" by the coincidence of two factors in the years between 1930 and 1933: the "...attacks on parliamentary government by the old elites...." and "...the rise of a new mass movement [by] a large proportion of the population seduced by the appeals of a charismatic leader figure, Adolf Hitler."⁷⁵ In March 1932, Hitler ran against Hindenburg in the election for president. Hindenburg failed to achieve a majority (49.6% to

⁷³ The Path to Dictatorship, Appendix A, pp. 189-192.

⁷⁴ Fulbrook, pp. 171-172; Pachter p. 191, and The Path to Dictatorship, Appendix A, pp. 194-198.

⁷⁵ Fulbrook, p. 173.

Hitler's 30.1%) in the first election but won the run-off election in April.⁷⁶ Hindenburg dismissed the 16th coalition government headed by Heinrich Bruening (March 1930 - May 1932) partly because of Bruening's mismanagement of Hindenburg's re-election.⁷⁷ The economic and political upheaval in Germany reached a peak in the autumn of 1932 and several coalition cabinets fell. With no stable leadership, Hindenburg appointed Hitler as chancellor on January 30, 1933.⁷⁸

The regime, undergoing a regressing transition since the formation of the republic, quickly made a transition to non-democracy under Hitler. In February, the Reichstag was burned down (probably under Hitler's orders) and Hindenburg signed a decree suspending most civil liberties under the Weimar constitution. The last "free" elections were held on March 5, 1933 and the National Socialists still failed to garner a majority in the Reichstag. To obtain a majority, all communist votes were voided and when the Reichstag met on the evening of 23 March, Hitler forcefully prevented the communists and 21 Social Democrats from attending the session. Now with the necessary two-

⁷⁶ The Path to Dictatorship, Appendix C, p. 208.

⁷⁷ Fulbrook, p. 174, and Pachter, p. 194.

⁷⁸ Switzer, p. xii; Fulbrook, p. 176; and Pachter, p. 198.

thirds majority, Hitler secured the passage of the Enabling Law that authorized him to pass laws by decree based on Article 48 of the constitution. By the summer of 1933 all political parties were outlawed and Hitler became *Der Fuhrer* in August 1934 after Hindenburg's death.⁷⁹ See Figure 6 for a representation of this regime transition in the two-axis model.

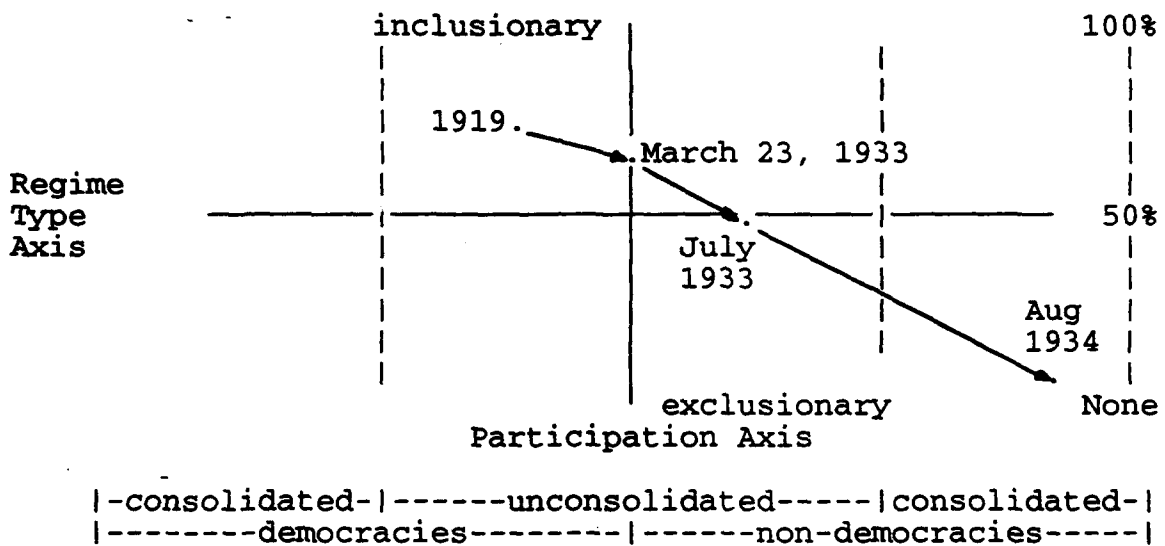


Figure 6 - Germany (1918-1934)

In the figure above, the Weimar Republic formed in 1919 is classified as an unstable, inclusionary, unconsolidated democracy. Between 1919 and 1933, the political system was in a regressive transition. The last "free" elections were held on March 5, 1933, but the transition to an unstable, inclusive, unconsolidated non-democracy

⁷⁹ Switzer, p. xii; Fulbrook, pp. 178-180; Pachter, pp. 202-210; and Bracher in The Path to Dictatorship, pp. 121-130.

occurred on March 23. The degree of participation also decreased during the passage of the Enabling Act because some of the members of the Reichstag were not allowed to participate. The regression continued and the degree of participation decreased further when political parties were banned on July 14, 1933. Finally, Hitler consolidated his exclusive, stable non-democracy with the death of Hindenburg on August 1, 1934 and the personal oath of loyalty to Hitler taken by all members of the armed forces on August 2, 1934.

The cases of Argentina and Germany provide excellent examples of different political systems, in different regions of the world, at different points in time, and representing different types of regime transition. By analyzing the degrees of participation and liberalization, these cases demonstrate that the revised two-axis model does allow for the classification of regimes by type. Additionally, the analysis of these regime transitions can be adequately explained in terms of the mechanism developed in Chapter III. The regime transitions in these cases are a direct result of changes in the power relationship between the elites and the masses in the three elements of society.

3. Guatemala, 1993

Although this section is not intended to be an inclusive analysis of examples of all types of regime transitions, some additional

observations are worth noting. In the case of a liberalizing coup d'etat, the events in Guatemala in the spring of 1993 are worth inspection.

On May 25, 1993, Guatemala's president, Jorge Serrano Elias, dissolved the Congress and the Supreme Court and suspended constitutional rights in what appeared to be a military-backed effort to stem growing political and economic protests.⁸⁰ This "auto-coup" by the head of state, apparently with the military's support, bore striking resemblance to the actions taken by Peru's President Fujimori in April 1992. However, growing opposition to the end of democracy came from opposition politicians and former military leaders. On May 26, the country's Constitutional Court declared the coup illegal.⁸¹ By May 31, military leaders were backing away from their support for President Serrano's seizure of dictatorial powers and on 1 June a counter-coup by the military forced Serrano from power.⁸²

The Guatemalan government, under military control after Serrano's removal, announced that Vice President Gustavo Espina Salguero would take over as the new leader and it appeared that democracy would be restored. The Congress, however, did not indicate

⁸⁰ The New York Times, May 26, 1993, p. A3.

⁸¹ Ibid, May 27, 1993, p. A4.

⁸² Ibid, June 3, 1993, P. A3.

that it would accept the vice president's new role. The Congress contended that Espina's resignation was "presented" upon President Serrano's removal from power. It appeared that Mr. Espina, with military backing, would become president, but as of 4 June, he still had not been administered the oath of office.⁸³

By the afternoon of Saturday, June 5, 1993, it appeared as if all sides were going to accept a compromise moderate candidate. The military elite still had effective "veto" power over the situation. The business elite, afraid of the economic impact caused by the suspension of foreign aid and possible sanctions, joined the mass public in an attempt to control the outcome of the political fight.

When the Congress began voting Saturday afternoon, the political and business leaders thought moderate candidate, Arturo Herbruger Asturias, would win and become the next president. But after the results of the first secret ballot had been tabulated, the former Attorney General of Human Rights and frequent critic of the military, Ramiro de Leon Carpio, had managed to garner a majority of the votes, but was short of the required two-thirds to confirm. Before the Legislature voted again, a senior military official made a telephone call to the podium where the President of Congress sat to say that the

⁸³ Ibid, June 4, 1993, p. A5.

military would accept de Leon Carpio as the new Commander-in-Chief.⁸⁴ Although the exact details are still unclear, it appears that this case may provide an example of a liberalizing coup d'etat.

Clearly, the military elite in Guatemala exercise a significant degree of political power. Although pressure from business elites and the mass public was a factor in the ouster of President Serrano, it is doubtful that it could have happened had not the military elite withdrawn its support of Serrano's "auto-coup". The military elite's intervention was the major force in Serrano's removal and its decision not to use the coercive power of the state in the subsequent political settlement allowed Guatemala to return to a democratic form of government. Guatemala's reclassification as a democracy can certainly be debated but the instability of the political system is beyond question. Until civilian controls over the military are strengthened significantly, the system balances precariously in the struggle between the military and political elite on one hand, and the business elite and the masses on the other.

This section analyzing regime transitions in Argentina, Germany, and Guatemala has demonstrated the applicability of the revised two-axis model and the mechanism explaining regime transition.

⁸⁴ Ibid, June 7, 1993, p. A6.

By describing all political systems in terms of their two basic characteristics, the degrees of liberalization and participation, it is possible to categorize the regime by type. By describing changes in the power relationship between elites and masses in a society, it is possible to make a thorough comparative analysis of regime transition in different cases, at different points in time, anywhere in the world.

V. CONCLUSIONS

In the introduction a number of questions were raised that were addressed throughout the thesis. Specifically, the thesis addresses (1) the basic characteristics of political systems; (2) the degree of differences in these characteristics; and (3) changes in the characteristics of political systems. Based on Robert Dahl's analysis of political systems the thesis develops a new model to explain change in modern political systems.

Previous analyses of political systems have encountered a basic definitional problem by either using an inclusive definition of democracy or a procedural definition without a method for distinguishing between democratic and non-democratic regimes. The thesis presents a revised two-axis model that addresses the definitional problem and combines the concepts of consolidation and stability into a more effective system for categorizing regimes and conducting comparative analysis.

A mechanism to explain regime transition is developed that combines societal and institutional factors. Differences in the degree of participation of a society's population are combined with the concept of a society organized into three arenas for the expression and advancement of interests. The combination of these concepts yields the

matrix in Table 1 that relates elite/mass competition in society to the structure and stability of a political system.

Finally, the thesis examines various methods of regime transition and applies the theory to several cases. The following cases are briefly examined and classified by regime type in the two-axis model: the United States; Switzerland, prior to 1971; Argentina; Venezuela; the Republic of South Africa; Cambodia; the Republic of the Sudan; Mexico; Ghana; Cuba; and, the State of Bahrain. Additionally, an extensive analysis of the mechanism of regime transition is conducted in the following cases: Argentina's 1976 coup d'état and 1983 redemocratization; Germany's deconsolidation of democracy in the Weimar Republic and consolidation of non-democracy in the Third Reich (1919-1934); and, the possible case of a liberalizing coup d'état in Guatemala in May and June of 1993.

An important contribution of this thesis has been the development of a better model to assist in the classification and comparative analysis of political systems, but the primary contribution of the thesis is the advancement of the hypothesis that *the mechanism of regime transition is*

*the same in all political systems even though the types of transition are different.*⁸⁵

The mechanism of regime transition is the power relationship between elites and masses in a society. When a regime transition occurs, it is a result of a change in the balance of power between elites and masses in one or more of the three elements of a society. The transition does not occur as a result of some other factor such as change (or lack of change) in the economy. For example, a decrease in per capita income does not directly result in a change in the political system. Any such variables are merely antecedents to the changing interests of the elites and masses in a society. It is the organization (or lack of organization) of elites and masses in the state, political society, and civil society that allows for the advancement (or attempted advancement) of the interests of elites and masses. When the relative strength of one set of interests increases with respect to the other, one group *may* gain enough power to change the overall balance of power between the groups. The changed power structure may result in regime transition.

⁸⁵ This mechanism applies only to regime transition in (1) already independent states and (2) independent states not subject to foreign military intervention.

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