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Introduction: elite transformations and democratic regimes

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For all the meanings that "democracy" has acquired, there is broad
scholarly agreement that it can best be defined and applied in terms
of the procedural criteria that Robert Dahl (1971) has specified: a
political regime characterized by free and open elections, with rela-
tively low barriers to participation, genuine political competition, and
wide protection of civil liberties. Elaborating Dahl's definition, Juan
Linz writes that a political system can be regarded as democratic

> when it allows the free formulation of political preferences, through the use
> of basic freedoms of association, information, and communication, for the
> purpose of free competition between leaders to validate at regular intervals
> by non-violent means their claim to rule, . . . without excluding any effective
> political office from that competition or prohibiting any members of the po-
> litical community from expressing their preference. (Linz 1975, pp. 182–3)

This procedural conception of democracy is a demanding "ideal
type." All of its criteria must be approximated closely before a regime
can be called "democratic." Obviously, no real-world regime fits the
ideal type perfectly; indeed, many regimes that hold regular elections
fall far short. Some regimes tie voting rights to stringent property
qualifications, as in most Western countries during the nineteenth
century. Some deny the suffrage to whole ethnic categories, as in
South Africa or the American South until quite recently. Some outlaw
parties that espouse radical ideologies and programs, as has happened
to Communist parties in a number of countries. Others marshal ma-
jority support for governing parties through corrupt and coercive
practices, as the Mexican regime has done for decades. Some regimes
sharply limit the effects of democratic procedures by reserving pow-
erful government posts for individuals or bodies that are neither di-
rectly nor indirectly responsible to the electorate (e.g., the Portuguese
Council of the Revolution between 1976 and 1982). Thus, conceiving

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of democracy in procedural terms does not lead to a simple distinction between democratic and undemocratic regimes. Between these two poles lie a variety of systems that we will refer to as "limited" and "pseudo" democracies. We can distinguish the more fully democratic regimes from these semidemocratic systems insofar as the former effectively recruit governing elites through free and fair competition among all parties that want to participate – in conformity with democratic rules of the game but irrespective of other aspects of their ideologies or programmatic preferences – and through widespread and unhindered mass participation based on universal suffrage.

The principal alternative to procedural conceptions of democracy is a substantive conception that equates democracy with greater equality in the distribution of national wealth and with "social justice." We have rejected this alternative, for several reasons. First, democracy and economic equality are distinct concepts. For example, under the now-defunct Communist regime of the German Democratic Republic, the distribution of national wealth was more equal than in most Western democracies, and the official ideology endorsed social justice as a main goal, yet the GDR was clearly not democratic. Second, the most common reason for rejecting a procedural conception of democracy (particularly among Latin Americanists) is that democracy is too often little more than a facade behind which a privileged economic elite dominates and exploits the popular classes – through intimidation, electoral corruption, the passivity of unmobilized population sectors, or the outright exclusion of certain political options. But our use of a demanding ideal–typical procedural conception of democracy enables us to deal with such undemocratic practices by classifying the regimes that perpetrate them as limited or pseudo-democracies. Finally, more analytic leverage can be gained by keeping separate the concepts of democracy and economic equality, as one may be temporally and perhaps causally prior to the other. Our rejection of a substantive conception of democracy does not in any way mean that we deny the importance of economic and other equalities (particularly in areas like Latin America, where inequalities are often extreme). We simply think that the concepts of democracy and economic equality are best kept analytically distinct.

This volume is concerned with more than the creation of democratic regimes; it is especially concerned with their stability and prospects for long-term survival. Maintaining stability is often a complex and demanding task in democracies, for by their very nature, they involve the open expression of conflict. Democratic stability requires a careful balance between conflict and consensus. The failure of a democracy to achieve or maintain this balance is manifested in at least three ways

(see Gunther and Mughan 1991). The first is a deliberate stifling of democracy through de facto or de jure denial of civil and political rights (preventing significant groups from participating in politics) or through electoral corruption that effectively negates the preferences of a majority of voters, enabling a dominant elite to govern unchecked by electoral accountability. Second, democratic regimes may be unable to keep the expression of conflict within nonviolent bounds. Thus, the occurrence of frequent and widespread political violence is evidence of instability. Finally, efforts to topple the regime itself, through organized coups or mass rebellions, clearly manifest the collapse of democratic stability. Conversely, in stable democracies, civil and political rights are respected; large-scale mass violence does not occur; and coups or other forcible power seizures are essentially unthinkable (Powell 1982; see also Sanders 1981).

During this century, many democratic regimes have come into existence in Latin America, Europe, and elsewhere in which free elections were held, barriers to participation were low, there was meaningful party competition, and civil liberties were not trampled upon. Yet, most of these democratic regimes were either terminated by coups and other violent events, or they gradually gave way to single-party authoritarian regimes. Clearly, a transition to procedural democracy does not guarantee democratic stability. It is necessary to examine both the ways in which democracies are created and the reasons that they do and do not survive.

A key to the stability and survival of democratic regimes is, in our view, the establishment of substantial consensus among elites concerning rules of the democratic political game and the worth of democratic institutions. In Giovanni Sartori's formulation, democratic stability requires that elites perceive politics as "bargaining" rather than "war" and that they see political outcomes as positive- not zero sum (Sartori 1987, pp. 224–6). We regard the establishment of this elite procedural consensus and outlook as the central element in the consolidation of new democratic regimes. By taking the concept of democratic consolidation as our point of departure, we can usefully distinguish several types of democratic regimes.

Consolidated and other democratic regimes

As we define it, 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. This is, of course, another ideal type, because there is no real-world case in which all political groups fully

obey democratic rules of the game and fully acknowledge the legitimacy of the political institutions and principles under which they live – there are always at least some dissident groups in these respects. Because no democratic regime is ever fully consolidated in the ideal-typical sense, democratic consolidation is best regarded as a "process of adaptation/freezing of democratic structures and norms, which come to be accepted as legitimate by part or all of civil society" (Morlino 1986, p. 210). Or again, as Bolivar Lamounier puts it, democratic consolidation is a "process through which democratic forms come to be valued in themselves, even against adverse substantive outcomes" (Lamounier 1988, p. 1).

Analytically, consolidated democracies can be thought of as encompassing specific elite and mass features. First, all important elite groups and factions share a consensus about rules and codes of political conduct and the worth of political institutions, and they are unified structurally by extensive formal and informal networks that enable them to influence decision making and thereby defend and promote their factional interests peacefully (Higley and Moore 1981; Sartori 1987). Second, there is extensive mass participation in the elections and other institutional processes that constitute procedural democracy. No segments of the mass population are arbitrarily excluded or prevented from mobilizing to express discontents, and recourse to various corrupt practices that distort mass participation is minimal. As we shall argue, these elite and mass features of consolidated democracies make them stable and resilient in the face of sometimes severe challenges, with good prospects for long-term survival.

We regard all regimes in Western Europe and North America, together with Japan, Australia, and New Zealand, as consolidated democracies today, although some have only recently achieved this condition. But if consolidation means that all politically significant groups accept democratic rules of the game and acknowledge the legitimacy of existing political institutions, as well as the philosophy that undergirds them, one might question our characterization of Britain and Spain as consolidated. British democracy is not consolidated in Northern Ireland: Irish nationalists deny the legitimacy of the government at Westminster, and they depart frequently from democratic rules of the game in pursuit of their cause; and although Ulster Unionists fiercely defend the Westminster government's legitimacy, their regular resort to violence and repression of minority rights hardly fits with democratic principles. Likewise, in Spain, roughly one quarter of the Basque population supports Basque separatism, and some Basque nationalists have fueled a substantial level of political violence. Although one should not expect perfect con-

formity with all criteria whenever ideal-type definitions are used, Britain and Spain cannot be regarded as completely consolidated democracies. In both countries, however, all politically significant national-level elites and their organizations (representing an overwhelming majority of citizens in each polity) remain steadfast in support of the existing democratic regime. Hence, we feel comfortable in regarding both countries as consolidated democracies, even though each of them contains a small region in which processes of consolidation are as yet incomplete. What is both theoretically and politically important is that consolidation at the national level has enabled these democratic regimes to withstand serious challenges to their stability and survival, involving the violent deaths of about 2,500 British and 700 Spanish citizens.

The absence or greatly reduced extent of the elite or mass features of consolidated democracies signifies some other regime type. First, where the trappings of procedural democracy exist and there is substantial mass participation, but where there is no real elite consensus about democratic rules of the game and institutions, and where elites are instead disunified in the sense that they distrust and have little traffic with one another, we may speak of an *unconsolidated democracy*. Typically, this follows in the wake of an authoritarian regime's sudden collapse or overthrow. Two classic instances were Weimar Germany, 1919–33, and the Second Spanish Republic, 1931–36, which followed collapses of the German monarchy at the end of World War I and the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, respectively. Both regimes were fully democratic in terms of their constitutions and workings, but both were unstable and extremely precarious. They experienced intense electoral struggles that regularly boiled over into street violence, clashes between paramilitary groups, and, in the case of Spain, civil war. Austria between the two world wars, Italy immediately after World War I, Belgium, Greece, Portugal, and several other European regimes during parts of that critical period were also unconsolidated democracies. Today, the Philippines is a graphic instance of a democracy that remains unconsolidated. After Ferdinand Marcos was overthrown in 1985, democracy was reinstituted, but with a disunified elite, it has been beset by much political violence and several attempted coups. What principally distinguishes unconsolidated from consolidated democracies is, in short, the absence of elite consensual unity.

Where elites share substantial consensus and display structural unity, but where mass participation does not extend much beyond relatively well-off strata owing to a restricted suffrage, and/or where a passive peasantry makes up a large segment of the population, we

may speak of *stable limited democracies*. Commonly in such regimes, elections to parliaments or other deliberative bodies are regularly held and publicly contested, and the outcomes of these elections, as well as the decisions of the duly elected deliberative bodies, are binding on the formation and policies of government executives. Government executive power thus passes peacefully between competing political factions and camps who, in effect, take turns governing. At the same time, mass unrest is kept to moderate levels, either because elites actively seek to contain it or because most of the mass population is isolated and uninvolved, and the elites, reflecting their basic consensual unity, do not attempt coups or other irregular power seizures. In short, there is regime stability, but the absence of substantial mass participation means that democracy is limited to such an extent that the requirements of our ideal-type definition of democracy are not met.

Classic examples of stable limited democracies were Britain and Sweden in the nineteenth century. For reasons and in ways detailed later, British and Swedish elites displayed substantial consensual unity by that point in their countries' political development, and those elites operated stable regimes based on principles of representation. But large numbers of adult citizens remained unenfranchised, and occasional outbursts of mass discontent were dealt with harshly (e.g., the Chartist movement in Britain during the 1830s and 1840s). A different, more controversial example of a stable limited democracy is Mexico since 1929. In that year, elites making up the "revolutionary family" achieved substantial consensual unity (see Chapter 4) and, in so doing, set the stage for regular elections to Congress and the presidency, involving peaceful competition for power mainly between factions of the PRI, that now extend over some sixty years. The Mexican regime has been markedly stable and at least outwardly democratic in its workings throughout this period. Most observers agree, however, that mass participation has been seriously fettered by a variety of practices that the PRI has used to maintain its hegemony, so that even today Mexico is, at most, a stable limited democracy.

A fourth, somewhat residual category of democratic regimes must be added to the consolidated, unconsolidated, and stable limited democracies we have distinguished. For want of a better term, we will call them *pseudo-democracies*. We have in mind the large number of regimes that regularly hold elections and proclaim themselves to be "democratic" but in which the elite and mass features of consolidated democracies do not exist to any meaningful extent. Typically, pseudo-democracies are rather tight one-party regimes, de facto if not offi-

cially. Elections are held, but they involve so little elite competition and so much mass intimidation that they merely represent perfunctory public ratification of the dominant elite's political choices. Most of the "presidential monarchies" of Africa, the Middle East, and Asia during the past thirty years are examples. Such pseudo-democracies will not concern us in this book, but any typology of democratic regimes requires acknowledging their existence.

On what basis can we classify actual regimes as falling within one or another of the four categories just described? The extent to which a regime is functioning according to the procedural criteria of democracy is rather easily assessed, but how can we tell if it is consolidated? A common temptation is to infer consolidation from observed stability: the regime survives, ergo it must be consolidated. This is, of course, tautological. In an era of mass- and elite-opinion surveys, extensive media coverage of politics, and in-depth interviews with political leaders, however, a variety of measures reflecting the presence or absence of consolidation are available, thus enabling the analyst to collect independent measures of consolidation. The most straightforward of these are found at the time when a constitution (which gives institutional form to a new democracy and helps define its rules of the game) is being drafted and ratified, as this process involves numerous public statements by representative elites, as well as formal votes of ratification by elites and often the electorate. A substantial vote against a constitution motivated by fundamental disagreements signals the absence of consolidation. But it is possible that a sector of society that initially rejected a constitution will later come to regard as acceptable the regime that is built upon it. In such a case, behavioral, elite-interview, or opinion-survey data, in combination with a careful monitoring of public statements made by elites representing the relevant sector, are likely to provide evidence of consolidation.

Antisystem parties with significant and persistent levels of electoral support also indicate a lack of consolidation. The concept of "antisystem party" must be clarified, however. Too often it is used for polemical purposes to stigmatize a democratic party that has no real intention of overthrowing a regime, as the Italian Christian Democrats have done to the Italian Communists. To be regarded as a manifestation of the absence of democratic consolidation, an antisystem party must be unequivocally opposed to the existing regime. Fortunately, from an analytical point of view, most antisystem parties make no bones about their stance: They vote against constitutions or organize boycotts of constitutional referenda; they regularly condemn the re-

gime and articulate their vision of the alternative regime they seek; and they often try to subvert existing institutions, even when elected to serve in them.

Still clearer evidence of the lack of democratic consolidation is the existence of sustained mass mobilization or insurrection against a regime by a large movement demanding radical political change through irregular means. There can be little doubt, for example, that supporters of the Sendero luminoso reject the legitimacy of the Peruvian regime. Given the magnitude of such a movement (in contrast with the much smaller and regionally restricted terrorist movements in Spain and Northern Ireland), the regime cannot be regarded as consolidated and thus likely to survive over the long term without undergoing considerable change.

To conclude, we distinguish four types of democratic regimes: consolidated, unconsolidated, stable limited democracies, and pseudo-democracies. Compared with consolidated democracies, each of the other types lacks elite consensual unity, substantial mass participation in democratic institutions and processes, or (in pseudo-democracies) both. Changes from authoritarian regimes to any of these types of democratic regimes, as well as changes from one to another of the democratic types depend on a variety of circumstances, events, and processes. Understanding these changes and their long-term consequences is the basic purpose of this volume. Let us turn to what we contend is the most crucial variable in such changes: elites.

Elites and democratic regimes

We define *elites* as 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 (see Burton and Higley 1987b; Dye 1983; Higley, Deacon, and Smart 1979; McDonough 1981; Moyser and Waystaffe 1987; Putnam 1976). This means that they are made up of people who may hold widely varying attitudes toward the existing social, economic, and political order, including the holders of key positions in powerful dissident organizations and movements. Elites in large countries like the United States and the Soviet Union probably number upwards of ten thousand people (see, e.g., Dye 1983; Lane 1988); in somewhat smaller countries like Mexico or Italy, their number is probably somewhere between one thousand and five thousand; whereas in quite small countries like Portugal or

Chile, and most historical cases, elites probably encompass fewer than one thousand persons.

Elites affect political outcomes "regularly" in that their individual points of view and possible actions are seen by other influential persons as important factors to be weighed when assessing the likelihood of continuities and changes in regimes and policies. This does not mean that the typical elite person affects every aspect of regime operation and policy but, rather, that he or she is able to take influential actions on those aspects that are salient to his or her interests and location (Merritt 1970, p. 105). Elites affect political outcomes "substantially" in the sense that without their support or opposition, an outcome salient to their interests and locations would be noticeably different. In addition to their strategic positions in powerful organizations, this ability of elites to affect political outcomes regularly and substantially distinguishes them from other persons and sectors of a society. A lone political assassin can affect outcomes substantially but not regularly, and a citizen casting votes in democratic elections can affect outcomes regularly but not substantially.

Elites relevant to democratic transitions are located within, and in opposition to, authoritarian regimes. Leaders of clandestine labor organizations, political parties, or ethnic, religious, or student movements may be as capable of affecting the course of a democratic transition as is the outgoing authoritarian elite. But whether they are part of an authoritarian regime or of the opposition to it, elites must possess acknowledged authority vis-à-vis an organized sector of society. Not all opposition movements are organized, and therefore, they may lack representative, authoritative elites. (As we shall argue, this is an extremely important variable that greatly affects the prospects for elite transformation and democratic consolidation.) This is not to deny that spontaneous, unstructured, or uncoordinated popular protests and uprisings sometimes have major consequences for regimes. But unless they are directed by acknowledged leaders and are organized, such popular outbursts usually dissipate or are promptly suppressed. The millions of Chinese who demonstrated in May 1989 against the government of Li Peng and, in the final stage, against the PRC regime itself succeeded in bringing to a halt normal life in large parts of the People's Republic and in powerfully voicing their demands for change. But lacking overall organization and thus an acknowledged and coordinated set of elites, they were incapable of formulating and implementing strategies. Even simple decisions, such as to abandon Tienanmen Square on May 30, could not be enforced; instead, the leader of the moment was displaced by those who favored sticking it out to the tragic end.

Even if unorganized popular forces somehow succeed in toppling a regime, they are unlikely to establish a stable democracy. The reason is that democratic stability depends on agreements that can be struck only among elites representing rival organizations and popular groupings. If important and antagonistic sectors of a society are not organized, they cannot be effectively represented in a bargaining process of this kind. Thus, in our analysis, the extent to which social groups are organized and led by elites, and the ability of such elites to reach agreements on divisive issues and subsequently commit their respective groups of followers to the terms of those agreements, are crucial to democratic consolidation and stability.

Types of elites

Recent studies highlight two basic but parallel dimensions in the structure and functioning of elites: the extent of structural integration and the extent of value consensus. Structural integration involves the relative inclusiveness of formal and informal networks of communication and influence among elite persons, groups, and factions (Higley and Moore 1981; Kadushin 1968, 1979). Value consensus involves the relative agreement among elites on formal and informal rules and codes of political conduct and on the legitimacy of existing political institutions (Di Palma 1973; Prewitt and Stone 1973; Putnam 1976). Focusing on these dimensions, we can distinguish three basic types of national elites.

The first is a *disunified elite* in which structural integration and value consensus are minimal. Communication and influence networks do not cross factional lines in any large way, and factions disagree on the rules of political conduct and the worth of existing political institutions. Accordingly, they distrust one another deeply; they perceive political outcomes in "politics as war" or zero-sum terms; and they engage in unrestricted, often violent struggles for dominance. These features make regimes in countries with disunified elites fundamentally unstable, no matter whether they are authoritarian or formally democratic. Lacking the communication and influence networks that might give them a satisfactory amount of access to government decision making and disagreeing on the rules of the game and the worth of existing institutions, most factions in a disunified elite see the existing regime as the vehicle by which a dominant faction promotes its interests. To protect and promote their own interests, therefore, they must destroy or cripple the regime and the elites who operate it. Irregular and forcible power seizures, attempted seizures, or a widespread expectation that such seizures may occur are thus a routine by-product of elite disunity.

We next distinguish a *consensually unified elite* in which structural integration and value consensus are relatively inclusive. Overlapping and interconnected communication and influence networks encompass all or most elite factions; no single faction dominates these networks; and most elites therefore have substantial access to government decision making. Consequently, and in ways that Giovanni Sartori has detailed in his "decision-making theory of democracy," the factions making up a consensually unified elite tend to perceive political outcomes in "positive-sum" or "politics-as-bargaining" terms (Sartori 1987). Although they regularly and publicly oppose one another on ideological and policy questions, all important elite factions share an underlying consensus about rules of the game and the worth of existing political institutions. This underlying consensus is apparent in the "restrained partisanship" with which elites compete for mass support by downplaying or avoiding especially explosive issues and conflicts and by sharply limiting the costs of political defeats (Di Palma 1973).

These features of consensually unified elites make the regimes they operate stable and at least nominally democratic in character. With substantial access, at least informally, to decision making and with agreed rules of competition within a set of similarly agreed political institutions, few elites have incentives to bring down the existing regime by seizing power. Moreover, the competition through restrained partisanship that occurs among the elites means that political institutions function according to principles of political representation. Elite factions and coalitions seek to gain government executive power by appealing for the support of broader segments of the population, promising to represent their interests more effectively. Thus, where there is a consensually unified elite, political institutions are almost certain to be electorally based, although their operation may fall well short of the criteria of procedural democracy. All that one can say in general is that consensually unified elites are associated with stable regimes that exhibit different configurations of representative politics. Whether these regimes approximate consolidated democracies depends, at least in part, on the inclusiveness of elite consensus and unity. If this does not extend beyond a vital core of elites, with other factions remaining disaffected and possibly even disallegiant, then the resulting regime will be a relatively stable but limited democracy.

Finally, although it is irrelevant to the cases examined in this volume, we distinguish an *ideologically unified elite* in which structural integration and value consensus are seemingly monolithic. Communication and influence networks encompass all elite factions, but

they run through and are sharply centralized in a dominant faction and the party or movement it leads. Value consensus is uniform in the sense that elites publicly express no deep ideological or policy disagreements, but they instead conform their public utterances to a single, explicit ideology whose changing content and policy implications are officially construed by the uppermost leaders of the dominant faction, party, or movement. The resulting regime is stable in the sense that irregular, forcible seizures of power do not occur, and outwardly at least, executive power is transferred peacefully according to deliberations within some body containing the most senior elite people (though the observer often learns subsequently about ugly power struggles behind the scenes). This body and other political institutions may be formally democratic in their prescribed workings, but the absence of public competition for mass support among elites means that the criteria of procedural democracy are not even remotely approximated. Obviously, we are describing what has frequently been called a "totalitarian" elite and regime configuration.

Disunified, consensually unified, and ideologically unified elites are ideal or pure types that "represent the standards, parameters, or models against which . . . concrete instances can be compared in terms of greater or lesser proximity" (Sartori 1976, p. 145). Thus, elites in different countries can be thought of as clustering around these ideal types. In the disunified cluster, for example, are most European elites from the early modern period until after World War II (see Higley and Burton 1989), all Latin American elites during the nineteenth century and much of this century, and elites in the vast majority of African, Middle Eastern, and Asian countries today (see Diamond, Linz, and Lipset 1988). Countries with elites in the consensually unified cluster range from those with a tenuous consensus and unity (e.g., Malaysia and Tunisia), to those that have recently attained this condition (e.g., France, Italy, Japan), to countries in which elite consensual unity has long been apparent (Britain and the other Anglo-American democracies, the Netherlands, the Scandinavian democracies, and Switzerland). In the ideologically unified cluster are the monolithic Soviet, German, and North Korean elites under Stalin, Hitler, and Kim Il Sung, respectively, as well as the somewhat less unified elites of the Peoples Republic of China, the East European countries from the late 1940s until 1989, Cuba under Castro, and Iran under Khomeni.

Elites of all three types have most commonly originated in the formation of independent nation-states, a process that usually entails much inter-elite violence and that has as its residue deep elite enmities. This was the origin of elite disunity in European countries during the early modern period and in Latin American countries once they

broke away from Spain and Portugal in the nineteenth century, and it has been the origin of elite disunity in most African, Middle Eastern, and Asian countries that gained independence during the 1950s and later. But in a small number of countries, the combination of lengthy "home rule" under a colonial power and politically complex independence movements led by local elites has resulted in the creation of elite consensual unity upon attaining national independence – the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and other countries such as India and Malaysia that eventually broke away from British rule, as well as Tunisia once it broke from French control. In a few countries, ideologically unified elites have been the result of similar struggles for national independence involving wars against colonial or neocolonial regimes in which a doctrinaire elite faction has gotten the upper hand (China after 1949, North Vietnam after 1954, Cuba after 1959).

During the modern era, there has been an overwhelming tendency for the type of elite that emerged in the process of nation-state formation to persist for very long periods, irrespective of the many changes in social structure, socioeconomic fortunes, political culture, and much else that subsequently occurred. And because the great bulk of these elites have been "disunified," what might be called the "modal pattern" of politics in much of the world during the past several hundred years has consisted of regime instability involving irregular, usually violent oscillations between authoritarian and normally short-lived democratic regimes (Higley and Burton 1989). This remains the pattern in most countries of Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia today.

Modern history thus records relatively few elite transformations from one basic type to another. Such elite transformations appear to occur only in rare circumstances, and they take only a few forms. Because of our interest in the emergence of consolidated democracies, we are mainly concerned with elite transformations from disunity to consensual unity, which is a key feature of such democracies. How do elite transformations from disunity to consensual unity occur? What are the roles played by elites and mass publics in these processes? We contend that transformations from elite disunity to consensual unity take two principal forms: settlement and convergence. We shall describe each in some detail.

Elite settlement

Elite settlements are relatively rare events in which warring elite factions suddenly and deliberately reorganize their relations by negotiating compromises on their most basic disagreements (Burton and

Higley 1987a). Such settlements have two main consequences. First, they create patterns of open but peaceful competition among major elite factions, the result of which has historically been a stable limited democracy. Second, they can facilitate the eventual emergence of (though they do not guarantee) a consolidated democracy. Because they have such watershed effects, elite settlements are as consequential as social revolutions. Curiously, they have not received anything like the scholarly attention they deserve.

Four especially clear-cut instances of elite settlements are England in 1688–9, Sweden in 1809, Colombia in 1957–8, and Venezuela in 1958. Subsequent chapters in this volume explore settlements that occurred in Mexico in 1929, Costa Rica in 1948, Spain and the Dominican Republic in the late 1970s, and the contemporary legacies of the Colombian and Venezuelan settlements are also assessed. Here, we concentrate on the original English, Swedish, Colombian, and Venezuelan cases in order to illustrate the ways in which elite settlements can take place, and we examine how relationships between elites and mass publics facilitated or hindered them.

Two sets of circumstances appear to have fostered elite settlements. The first was the prior occurrence of a conflict in which all factions suffered heavy losses. In the wake of such conflicts, deeply divided elites tended to be more disposed to seek compromises than they otherwise would have been. The English civil wars of the 1640s, which entailed considerable elite fratricide but had no clear victor, and the wave of violence that began in Colombia in 1948, in which no elite faction clearly triumphed, are examples. Bloodied but not wholly bowed, the English Tories and Whigs and the Colombian Conservatives and Liberals had, for the moment at least, little desire for more fighting (Schwoerer 1981; Wilde 1978). Moreover, social leveling tendencies that surfaced in both conflagrations made the English and Colombian elites keenly aware that renewed fighting might well cost all of them their elite positions. Although no similar civil war preceded the elite settlements in Sweden and Venezuela, in both countries the elites had experienced several decades of intense but inconclusive struggles for factional ascendancy, also accompanied by indications of the potential for leveling tendencies to take control: a peasant uprising and march on Stockholm in 1743 during the ongoing conflict between the Hat and Cap elite factions; and in Venezuela, mass protests against the dictatorship of Marcos Pérez Jiménez during 1956–7, combined with an increasingly mobilized working class and peasantry.

The second circumstance that triggered settlements was a major crisis that threatened the resumption of widespread violence. Such

crises typically centered on the incumbent head of state and were the culmination of his or her policy failures, power abuses, and demonstrated personal weaknesses, made manifest by a particular action or event that brought elite discontents to a boil. In England this was the news that King James II would have a Catholic heir, a development that climaxed bitter resistance on the part of predominantly Protestant elites to James's aggressively pro-Catholic policies and that occurred in the context of growing elite alarm about the possibility of an alliance between the Catholic kings of England and France. The Swedish crisis involved the loss of Finland to Russia in 1808, impending Russian and Danish–French invasions of Sweden proper, and economic disarray, all of which were viewed by elites as outcomes of King Gustav IV Adolf's ill-considered policies and personal failings. The crises in Colombia and Venezuela were sharp economic downturns punctuated by efforts of the military dictators Rojas Pinilla and Pérez Jiménez, respectively, to extend their tenures. In short, a crisis partly brought about and made intolerable by the incumbent ruler's blunders and ambitions motivated elites in each country not only to remove him and his entourage, but, more important, to reduce drastically the elite enmities that produced the situation.

If these or similar sets of circumstances inclined elites toward a settlement, the ensuing processes had several distinct features. One was speed. It appears that elite settlements are accomplished quickly or not at all (see Share 1987). Facing a serious political crisis that threatens renewed elite warfare, a settlement involves intensive efforts to find a way out. Fear of the consequences of not doing so loosens the fixed positions and principles of various factions and disposes them to consider concessions that they would not countenance in other circumstances. Thus, the coming together of Tory and Whig factions in England began in earnest during the first half of 1688 with a conspiracy among key faction leaders and the Dutch *stadholder*, Prince William of Orange, to unseat King James II. The key components of the settlement were agreed to by the major factions less than a year later, in February 1689. The Swedish settlement was even more rapid, involving a similar elite conspiracy against the king during the winter of 1808–9, followed by the drafting and acceptance of a new constitution during May and June 1809. In Colombia, the overthrow of Rojas Pinilla was orchestrated by a coalition of Liberal and Conservative party leaders between July 1956 and the following May. The constitutional components of the Colombian settlement were negotiated by the same coalition from July to October 1957 and overwhelmingly approved in a plebiscite two months later. The Venezuelan settlement got under way with a meeting of the heads of the

three major parties and two business leaders in New York City in December 1957; the settlement agreements were made final exactly a year later.

This does not mean that elite settlements became complete and irreversible in such brief periods but only that their basic components were put together rapidly. It is important to distinguish between the initial settlement and a subsequent broadening of the scope of elite consensual unity. Factions seeking to undercut a settlement were usually present: Jacobites who wanted to return the Stuarts to the English throne; embittered supporters of the ousted Swedish king and of Rojas Pinilla in Colombia who attempted subsequent coups; a leftist guerrilla insurgency in Venezuela during the early 1960s. Extending over several years, even a generation, the sudden and deliberate elite cooperation that made settlements possible had to be sustained to thwart such challenges, and elites that were not part of the original settlement had to be incorporated. Success along these lines served to solidify the consensually unified elite structure.

A second feature of the settlement process was face-to-face, largely secret, negotiations among leaders of the major elite factions. Through a combination of skill, desperation, and accident, impasses were broken and crucial compromises were struck. The number of negotiating sessions involved in elite settlements was probably in the hundreds, as they required not only compromises between major factions but also agreements within them. After William's engineered invasion of England in November 1688, for example, secret meetings among the principal Tory and Whig leaders produced the decision to hold a special parliamentary convention to address unresolved issues. This three-week convention, itself a flurry of secret meetings, resulted in the Declaration of Rights, the formal expression of the English elite settlement, which William and Mary accepted along with the crown on February 13, 1689. In Sweden, two weeks of intensive, secret deliberations among a fifteen-man committee, plus its pivotal secretary Hans Jarta, produced the concessions and draft constitution that were then ratified in three more weeks of discussion by the estates of nobles, clergy, merchants, and free farmers. One of the earliest important meetings in the Colombian settlement occurred in Spain in July 1956 between just two people: Laureano Gómez, the exiled former president who remained leader of a major Conservative party faction, and Alberto Lleras, a former president and leader of the Liberal party. The two met again in Spain in July 1957 and signed the Pact of Sitges, which set the framework for a succession of talks between and within party factions from July to October 1957. The

result was the National Front platform for constitutional reform, which was overwhelmingly approved in the December 1957 plebescite. Similarly, the broad outlines of the Venezuelan settlement were shaped in the New York City meeting of December 1957, among five party and business leaders, and the written expressions of the settlement – the Pact of Punto Fijo and the Statement of Principles and Minimum Program of Government – were fashioned in meetings at the home of a party leader, Rafael Caldera of the Christian Social party, during the fall of 1958.

Such formal, written agreements constituted another feature of elite settlements. Written agreements committed elite factions publicly to the concessions and guarantees made privately. But formal agreements and constitutions by themselves hardly sufficed to produce common elite acceptance of a new code of political conduct, which was the most fundamental and lasting consequence of the elite settlement. Behind such agreements there must be a great deal of forbearance and conciliatory behavior among the most central elite actors. By their nature, such subtle retreats from intransigence and enmity are sometimes difficult for outside observers to detect. Nevertheless, some observable behavioral patterns indicate the sea change in elite conduct that these settlements involved.

As the newly crowned king of England, for example, William could have ignored the restrictions that the Declaration of Rights placed on his authority. Yet he honored them and acquiesced to further restrictions in late 1689. Very importantly, he also distributed offices so as to achieve a balance between Tories and Whigs. Continuing to act in the spirit of the settlement, William accepted additional restrictions during his reign: Annual parliamentary sessions became the norm, even though not required by law, and the House of Commons gradually assumed a significant role in foreign policy, though this was traditionally the Crown's prerogative. Similarly, in Sweden the interim king regent, Karl XIII, uncle of the deposed Gustav IV Adolf, refused to support efforts to organize a royalist countercoup in 1810, thereby giving leaders of the 1809 settlement vital time to consolidate the new regime. And the crown prince, Bernadotte, recruited from France to become Sweden's new king, agreed to delay his ascent to the throne for a full eight years so as to ensure a gradual and peaceful transition from the old order to the new. In Colombia, the pressing question of whether the Liberal–Conservative coalition, which had agreed to a fifty–fifty split of all government offices for sixteen years, should have a Conservative or a Liberal as its presidential candidate was resolved through informal agreements among the factions just ten days before the 1958 election. In Venezuela, almost three years

passed before the terms of the elite settlement were given legal status in the constitution. But though not legally bound to do so, Rómulo Betancourt, the new president, immediately showed his commitment to power sharing by appointing members of the two major opposition parties to his cabinet, and he moved in other ways to create a climate favorable to those parties.

Another notable feature of past elite settlements was the predominance of experienced political leaders; "new men" played only peripheral roles. In the English case, for example, the instigators of Prince William's invasion, the members of the parliamentary rights committees, and William and his advisers all were political veterans. In Sweden, Hans Jarta and the members of the fifteen-man constitutional committee had been politically active for several decades. In Colombia, both the leading negotiators of the settlement, Laureano Gómez and Alberto Lleras, were former presidents; they and most other principal actors had been involved in the failed effort to form a Liberal–Conservative coalition a decade earlier. In Venezuela, the central negotiators were the Democratic Action, Christian Social, and Democratic Republican Union party leaders, each with at least twenty years of political experience and standing.

This predominance of experienced leaders in settlements was probably a key to their success. Usually, it is only established leaders who have the skill and standing to impose unpalatable concessions and compromises on their followers. Their superior knowledge of issues and of how politics are played enables them to see what has to be done and how to do it. Moreover, long political experience often entails political learning: Recollections of costly previous conflicts appear to have induced leaders in the cases we are considering to avoid the risks inherent in a resumption of unrestrained conflict (Levine 1978).

In addition to these procedural features of elite settlements – speed, face-to-face secret negotiations, formal agreements, and informal forbearance among experienced leaders – did previous elite settlements display structural similarities? It may be significant that at the time English, Swedish, Colombian, and Venezuelan elites achieved settlements, each of their countries was at a relatively low level of socioeconomic development. England and Sweden were predominantly agrarian societies. Although Colombia and Venezuela were substantially more urbanized by the time of their settlements in the 1950s, neither was highly industrialized. This suggests that all four national elites enjoyed considerable autonomy from mass followings and pressures. Elite factions and leaders

could compromise on questions of principle without strong pressures to stand firm. Members of traditional oligarchies rather than leaders of large and complex mass organizations and movements, the four elites were comparatively free to make the concessions and deals that settlements require.

Outwardly at least, Colombian and Venezuelan elites seem to have possessed less autonomy than did the elites of preindustrial England and Sweden. Most key Colombian and Venezuelan actors led organized political parties, and they were presumably constrained by calculations of electoral costs, party splits, and the like. Yet, under the dictatorial regimes of both countries during the 1950s, those parties were hardly vital, full-bodied mass organizations. Indeed, several party leaders were in exile at the time, and it is probably of no small consequence that some of the meetings that produced the Colombian and Venezuelan settlements took place abroad – in Spain, in Puerto Rico, in New York City. In short, the absence of full-scale industrialization in Colombia and Venezuela, combined with the partially repressed situation of parties and other mass organizations in those countries, meant that like their English and Swedish counterparts of an earlier period, elites in Colombia and Venezuela enjoyed substantial autonomy. The importance of elite autonomy in fashioning settlements can also be seen in the secrecy of the negotiations they involve; settlements, it would appear, cannot be arranged in a democratic or mass-media fishbowl.

This does not mean, however, that elite settlements unfold without regard to mass publics. We have already mentioned elite fears of leveling sentiments as a spur to quick action. In addition, a degree of mass mobilization may be necessary to bring down a ruling clique and to defend particular positions as elites jockey toward compromises on their most basic disputes. Even in their day, the English elites who plotted William's invasion and subsequently worked out the rules under which he would be king felt compelled to mount a public relations campaign announcing and defending their actions. Their opponents, the royalist faction around James II, responded with their own campaign for public support. Public discussion of the settlement process was further informed by leaks about who took what position. Similar patterns appear in the other settlements we have summarized. This public aspect of elite settlements is also seen in the promulgation of eminently public documents, especially constitutions, in all four countries. In short, although settlements are primarily the result of private negotiations among relatively autonomous elites, they have an important public, or mass, aspect. The significance of

this aspect has probably increased with the expansion of information about elite activities disseminated by the modern news media and with the development of opinion polling.

But mass involvement presents a tricky problem for elites who would fashion a settlement. On one hand, it is essential that compromising moderates be able to mobilize mass support against intransigent leaders and factions. On the other hand, these compromisers run the risk of losing mass support if they are perceived as selling out their followers. Their leadership positions must be sufficiently strong that they can negotiate away important concessions to traditional enemies without being ousted. Taken with the other features we have noted, this delicate balancing act helps explain why elite settlements have been so rare in modern history and in the contemporary world. The triggering circumstances, subsequent processes, elite autonomy, and limited mass mobilization that appear to have been crucial are rarely all present. This is an important reason that disunified elites and unstable political regimes are such persistent features of today's developing countries, no matter how much change occurs in other aspects of their social structures or in their economic and international situations.

Elite settlements and democratic consolidation

Stable limited democracies have historically been the direct and fairly immediate result of elite settlements. Thus, the direct result of the English settlement of 1688–9 was an accepted set of representative parliamentary and competitive-partisan institutions. Parliament quickly became the arena in which political conflicts were played out according to detailed rules governing factional competition, and it became the principal locus of governmental authority. Nonetheless, given the sharp restrictions on the suffrage that persisted for another two hundred years, the English regime only much later began to approximate a consolidated democracy. Likewise in Sweden, an entire century passed between the creation of a stable, basically representative political regime (the immediate product of the 1809 settlement) and the flowering of democracy. Thus in history, elite settlements stabilized political environments and regulated conflicts between rival elites, but they did not produce full-blown democratic regimes in any immediate way.

It is important to examine the time lags between elite settlements and consolidated democracies because they reveal the linkages between mass- and elite-level elements in our theoretical perspective. Social scientists have long noted a strong correlation between a society's level of socioeconomic development and the extent of mass

participation in democratic politics (e.g., Almond and Verba 1963; Deutsch 1953; Lerner 1958; Lipset 1960, 1981). Subsistence economies are normally associated with populations that are illiterate, geographically isolated, deferential to local elites, and uninvolved in national politics. None of these features is conducive to the independent but restrained mass participation in politics that characterizes democracies. As societies modernize economically, however, populations become politically "mobilized" in terms of participatory values and expectations, and they play larger roles in national politics.

Mass mobilization and demands for participation constitute an important variable that may intervene between elite settlements and the attainment of consolidated democracies. Where settlements precede industrialization and modernization, the manner in which newly mobilized mass publics are subsequently incorporated into politics is crucial. As the English and Swedish cases illustrate, consensually unified elites that are formed in settlements may gradually include and coopt the elites that later emerge from the mass parties and movements spawned by industrialization and modernization. Progressive extensions of the suffrage to the mass public may go hand in hand with this process of elite inclusion and cooptation. In England and Sweden, consolidated democracies were the long-term result.

What would have happened if the elites that made those settlements had decided instead to block effective participation by newly mobilized mass publics and their elites? The fledgling representative regimes of Southern Europe in the late nineteenth century suggest an answer. In Spain, a pact in 1876 between Cánovas, the Conservative party leader, and Sagasta, the Liberal party leader, provided for a regular alternation in government between the two parties. But after the introduction of universal male suffrage in 1889, the electoral outcomes that had been carefully orchestrated in this "Turno pacífico" elite pact could be achieved only through the intercession of local notables (*caciques*), who used their positions of power and influence to induce voters in their districts to support Conservatives or Liberals, while denying support to emerging groups such as the Socialists. This reliance on *caciquil* domination of a dependent peasantry, as well as the use of outright corruption and intimidation, enabled Conservative and Liberal elites to maintain parliamentary majorities for four decades, but the result was an unconsolidated rather than a consolidated democracy. In 1923, the Spanish regime was easily toppled by a military coup. Our point is that the pact between Cánovas and Sagasta in 1876 fell short of an elite settlement and was instead a convenient

device by which two entrenched elites sought to prevent emerging elites from displacing them. But by making this arrangement and enforcing it over several decades, Conservative and Liberal elites succeeded only in ensuring the regime's rejection by the excluded elites and the increasingly mobilized mass publics they led. As the analysis of Italy in Chapter 5 shows, an altogether similar pattern, with the same result, occurred in that country between 1876 and 1922. Moreover, something like this pattern has unfolded in Colombia during the past ten to fifteen years, and it suggests a reversal of the democratic consolidation that began with the Colombian elite settlement in 1956–7 (see Chapter 3).

The maintenance of elite settlements over time requires adaptability on the part of founding elites and the institutions they create. Insofar as social change mobilizes new groups for active participation in politics, those groups must be brought under the umbrella of the settlement and accepted as full participants in the democratic game of politics. This suggests a causal ordering among the key concepts in our theory to account for two different kinds of outcome, as summarized in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1. Elite settlement precedes modernization
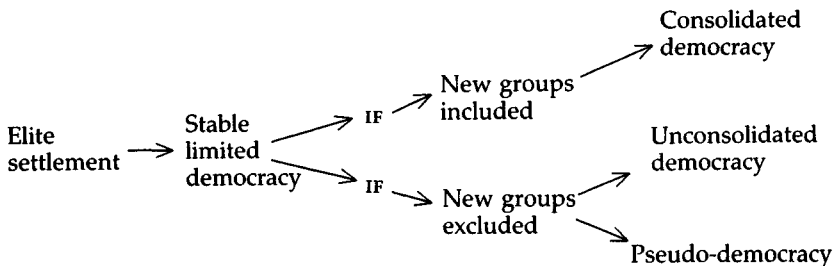
Most countries have by now crossed the modernization threshold necessary for mass participation. Hence, the model based on the British, Swedish, and other earlier examples may no longer be applicable. Nonetheless, the pervasiveness of elite disunity and regime instability in today's developing countries, together with spreading mass-level violence in them, make elite settlements more important than ever. Thus, a second diagram, in which a settlement occurs in the course of a regime transition from authoritarian to democratic rule within an already politically mobilized society, is needed (Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2. Democratic transitions with/without elite settlements
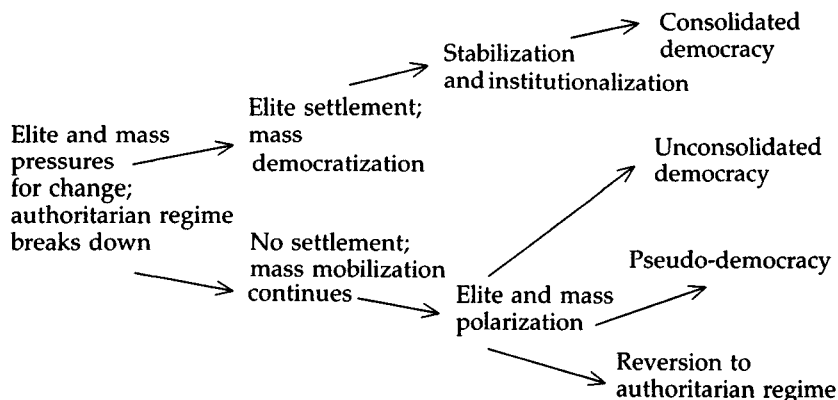
The collapse or impending collapse of an authoritarian regime is most commonly accompanied by frequent and often large-scale mass mobilizations. However, as O'Donnell and Schmitter have observed, although "an active, militant and highly mobilized popular upsurge may be an efficacious instrument for bringing down a dictatorship, [it] may make subsequent democratic consolidation difficult, and under some circumstances may provide an important motive of regression to an even more brutal form of authoritarian rule" (1986, p. 65). This typically involves a self-reinforcing cycle of mass action and state reaction, in which street mobilizations provoke repressive regime responses that, in turn, generate even more bitter mobilizations and protests. The resulting dialectic of rocks, clubs, and tear gas exacerbates antagonisms and further polarizes groups. Relations among elites are characterized by hatred and distrust, and they engage in a no-holds-barred struggle for power. The sequence depicted in the lower part of Figure 1.2 is therefore all too likely.

The sequence depicted in the upper part of Figure 1.2 is more favorable for democratic consolidation. In this instance, there is a settlement that, as we have argued, serves to stabilize the political environment by establishing a procedural consensus, institutionalizing behavioral norms that restrain expressions of conflict, and encouraging patterns of elite interaction that reduce animosities across traditionally divisive lines of cleavage. In addition, elites demobilize their supporters, thereby reducing the possibility that polarizing incidents of mass violence will break out. Democratic transitions in Spain at the end of the 1970s (see Chapter 2), Costa Rica in 1948, and

Venezuela in 1958 (see Chapter 3) followed this pattern rather closely, and Uruguay's democratic transition in the mid-1980s also displayed some of its features (see Chapter 6).

Engineering elite settlements in contemporary societies is a daunting task, however, and the fact that they have occurred in a mere handful of countries is not surprising. Yet, settlements may well constitute the only direct and rapid route to consolidated democracy that is available in today's world. Key factions in a number of disunified national elites appear to sense this. Chile's democratic transition in 1989 involved protracted, secret negotiations aimed at forging a broad elite front that would reassure the Pinochet regime while marginalizing elites on the extreme right and left (see Chapter 7). In South Africa, the release of Nelson Mandela and the legalization of the African National Congress followed lengthy behind-the-scenes discussions among opposing elites and led to the opening of previously unthinkable negotiations between white and black leaders. In Poland and some other East European countries, a "roundtable" model was adopted that facilitated private discussions between elites representing the old communist regimes and elites leading popular forces. These and similar attempts at settlements may fail because the process is very difficult, but they attest to the perceived relevance and importance of settlement-like negotiations among elites during democratic transitions today.

Elite convergence

A second kind of elite transformation from disunity to consensual unity is what we call an *elite convergence*. It is a fundamental change that takes place within unconsolidated democracies, and it is initiated when some of the opposing factions in the disunified elites that characterize such democracies discover that by forming a broad electoral coalition they can mobilize a reliable majority of voters, win elections repeatedly, and thereby protect their interests by dominating government executive power. The elite convergence continues once successive electoral defeats convince major dissident and hostile elites that to avoid permanent exclusion from executive office they must beat the newly formed dominant coalition at its own electoral game. This requires that they acknowledge the legitimacy of existing democratic institutions and promise adherence to democratic rules of the game. In short, it requires that opposition groups abandon antisystem or semiloyal stances and become trustworthy competitors for electoral support. The completion of an elite convergence is most clearly signaled by the electoral victory of the previously dissident elite or elites,

followed by their governing in a way that is fully respectful of established institutions and the rules of the game. As in the case of elite settlements, elite consensual unity is achieved, consolidating the democratic system.

In most modern societies (whose electorates are usually characterized by low levels of ideological or class polarization), an elite convergence commonly involves an additional change. In order to compete more effectively for support from predominantly centrist voters, polarized elites must moderate their distinctive ideological and policy positions (see Dahl 1966, p. 373; Downs 1959; Gunther, Sani, and Shabad 1986, chaps. 4, 8). This moderation gradually bridges the deep ideological chasms that mark elite disunity, and it narrows the scope and intensity of conflict over government policy, further reinforcing regime stability.

The paradigmatic case of an elite convergence is probably France, beginning with the founding of the Fifth Republic and culminating in the successful 1986–8 "cohabitation" between rival factions that at the outset of the convergence had been deeply and bitterly opposed. Other elite convergences can be seen in the gradual coming together of socialist and nonsocialist elites in Norway and Denmark during the first third of this century (see Higley, Field, and Groholt 1976) and in the gradual diminution of elite antagonisms in Italy, Japan, and Greece over the last decade or two. The way in which the Italian convergence took place between about 1960 and the early 1980s is described in Chapter 5. Here we can best bring out the main features of elite convergences by summarizing the French case.

Disunity was the condition of French elites throughout France's modern history. Fueled by bitter memories of the Revolution, which itself originated in and manifested deep elite disunity, incessant power struggles among French elites caused several regime upsets during the nineteenth century and made the long-lasting Third Republic a very precarious affair until its downfall in 1940. The disunity of French elites persisted during the Fourth Republic after World War II, as indicated by the existence of important and powerful antisystem parties and movements at both ends of the political spectrum. Conservatives supporting General Charles de Gaulle withheld support from the Fourth Republic on the grounds that the weakness and division inherent in its "assembly government" betrayed the basic interests of the French nation by denying it strong leadership. They favored replacing the Fourth Republic with a new regime along lines articulated by de Gaulle in 1946 (see Harrison 1969, pp. 24–8). A second antisystem movement on the right burst forth in the form of a "flash party" in 1956: the Poujadist movement, which combined

"hostility to the wealthy with anti-industrialism, anti-parliamentarism and anti-Semitism" (Safran 1985, p. 68), received 12 percent of the vote and elected fifty-three deputies to the last parliament of the Fourth Republic. And on the other end of the spectrum was the Stalinist Parti communiste français (PCF), which regularly received over a quarter of the votes cast in Fourth Republic elections.

Nearly half of all seats in the National Assembly during the 1950s were occupied by representatives of these and other antisystem parties. This meant that governing majorities could be formed only by coalitions of virtually all the other parties in the assembly – ranging from the Marxist Section française de l'internationale ouvrière (SFIO) on the left to Conservatives on the right, and from the anticlerical Radical Socialists to the Catholic Mouvement républicain populaire. These ideological and programmatic differences, combined with partisan fragmentation within various *tendances* and with the unrestrained pursuit of personal ambitions by many deputies meant that the average government would not survive for more than about eight months.

The Algerian crisis of 1958 was a turning point for French elites. Its outcome was de Gaulle's return to power under circumstances that facilitated the consolidation of what had previously been only a de facto, disorganized alignment of right-wing and centrist elite factions. Upon becoming prime minister in 1958, de Gaulle promptly set about replacing the regime with the semipresidential Fifth Republic, along the lines he had envisioned a decade earlier and in which he, as president, would occupy a dominant position. At the same time, his associates rapidly organized a wide-ranging political party, the Union pour la nouvelle république (UNR), to support him. During the next few years he took important steps toward strengthening the new regime, most significantly by resolving the Algerian decolonization crisis that had triggered the Fourth Republic's collapse and by subduing rebellious segments of the French military.

The period between de Gaulle's return to power in June 1958 and the winning of an absolute majority by the pro-Gaullist coalition in the National Assembly elections of November 1962 should be seen as the time when the French elite convergence began. During those years, right-wing and centrist elite factions that had previously been at odds became persuaded that their interests could best be protected through electoral cooperation against the left. The center–right elite coalition that dominated French politics for the next twenty years took shape.

From the early 1960s, therefore, French elites were increasingly divided into two broad camps. On the one side was the electorally

dominant coalition of centrist and right-wing factions who defended the new regime, as well as an essentially capitalist economic system. For some time, they occupied most of the powerful positions in politics and society: They held the key posts in cabinets, the higher civil service, business firms and associations, and in a variety of public bodies such as the bourgeois parties, the church and its affiliated organizations, the media, and some trade unions. Arrayed against this coalition were Communist and Socialist party leaders, most trade union officials, as well as many prominent intellectuals and celebrities affiliated with the Communist and Socialist parties and movements. This camp held a basically Marxist perspective on economic and social matters, as well as a weak opposition status in the political system.

Over the next twenty years, the parties on the left underwent substantial changes that opened the way to the consensual unification of all major elite factions. From the perspective of democratic consolidation, the Communist elite underwent the most significant change. By the late 1960s, it had begun to abandon many of the tenets of Marxism-Leninism, replacing them with an inconsistent but predominantly Eurocommunist orientation. In repudiating the concept of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" and in agreeing with the Socialists to share posts in a future leftist government, the Communist elite abandoned its antisystem stance and committed itself to working within established institutions and to playing the game of politics according to the rules laid down by the elites who established and dominated the Fifth Republic. This commitment was formalized in the Common Governmental Program of 1972, in which the Communists explicitly endorsed the concept of a multiparty system, the sovereignty of the suffrage and alternations of power, as well as the protection of basic individual liberties. It is important to note that this major shift was motivated largely by the logic of the ongoing elite convergence: Realizing the impossibility of coming to power by "storming the Winter Palace" and tiring of the futility of opposition to the ensconced Gaullist majority, the Communist leaders concluded that only an explicit break with their previous antisystem stance would give a majority of French voters sufficient confidence to support a Socialist–Communist electoral coalition.

The socialist bloc also underwent a significant change. Several formerly independent socialist factions merged with the old and organizationally inadequate SFIO to form a new Socialist party. Party institutions were rebuilt so as to pose a more credible electoral challenge to the dominant center–right coalition. In the course of bargaining with the Communists over the Common Governmental Program, the Socialists modified many of their policies to make them

compatible with those of the Communists. This amounted to a shift to the left by the Socialists. But by 1978, when the Communists withdrew from the Common Governmental Program, the Socialists had become the major opposition party.

The successful transformation of the Socialist party was registered in its great electoral victories of 1981, in which it won both the presidency and an absolute majority in the National Assembly. These triumphs enabled François Mitterrand's first government to implement many of the Socialists' policies, particularly the nationalizations of a significant number of banks and industrial conglomerates, as well as the use of stimulative fiscal measures to halt an economic recession. Within two years, however, these policies had clearly failed: The reflationary fiscal measures did not stave off recession and instead contributed to the collapse of the franc, and the nationalizations proved to be much more costly than originally anticipated. In order to avoid a devastating defeat in the 1984 elections, the Socialist government made an abrupt about-face in economic policy, abandoning maximalist socialism for moderate social democratic policies that have characterized the Socialists ever since.

Over a period of twenty-five years, then, French elites underwent substantial convergence. Partial elite unification first occurred on the right. The formerly antisystem Gaullists used the Algerian crisis of 1958 to dismantle the Fourth Republic and create in its place a regime they could support. This was accompanied by the construction of a strong and durable coalition among previously feuding centrist and right-wing factions. The electoral dominance of this coalition gradually forced the leftist elites to reexamine their strategies, policies, and ideologies. The Communist party's abandonment of its previously antisystem stance, made explicit in the 1972 Common Governmental Program with the Socialists, meant that the new Fifth Republic would not be seriously challenged by a major elite grouping on the left. Consensual unity among all important elites was from that point at least a tacit feature of French politics. This was followed by an ideological and programmatic convergence, as the PCF was displaced by the Socialists as the largest party on the left and, more directly, by the pronounced moderation of the Socialists from that time on. (It is interesting to note that the French Socialists reversed the usual order in which socialist ideologies are moderated and government posts are won. More typical are the cases of the Spanish Partido socialista obrero espãnol [PSOE] and the West German Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands [SPD], in which a dramatic party congress – a "Bad Godesberg" – usually moderates the party's basic stands well before

the party is perceived as acceptable by a majority of voters, and is thereby able to win a victory at the polls.)

The consensual unity of French elites was evident in the comparative ease with which they managed the "cohabitation" of 1986–8 when prime ministerial and cabinet positions were held by center–right leaders and the presidency was still occupied by Mitterrand. At any other time in French history, the opportunities that this awkward circumstance presented for undermining opponents and inciting a regime crisis would have been eagerly seized by antagonistic elites. But the cohabitation of a Socialist president and a conservative government unfolded without any major crisis. Still further evidence of the consensus and unity that now characterize French elites can be found in the formation of a Socialist–centrist coalition government after the 1988 elections. In the view of Stanley Hoffmann, the 1980s thus witnessed the consolidation of the Fifth Republic, a meltdown of the Communist left, the transformation of the Socialists into garden-variety social democrats, and electoral contests that have centered on policy differences of degree, not of kind (Hoffmann 1987, pp. 347–9). France has become a consolidated democracy as a consequence of the elite convergence we have described.

Because elite convergences may be taking place in several unconsolidated democracies today, it is worth abstracting from the French case what appear to be key facilitating circumstances. One, already noted, is the achievement of a relatively high level of socioeconomic development. Economic prosperity must be sufficiently widespread that an electoral majority prepared to support appeals to defend established institutions – essentially the status quo – is at least latent. This makes possible the formation of a winning center–right elite coalition whose repeated electoral victories eventually force dissident elites to emulate its appeals and to accept established institutions and procedures. A fairly large number of countries in Latin America, Southern Europe, and East Asia have achieved this development level, and although their elites remain disunified and their democratic regimes unconsolidated, they are candidates for the convergence process. However, a successful convergence may also depend on the appearance of a dynamic, popular leader analogous to General de Gaulle, who alone is able to forge a winning coalition among previously feuding center–right elites. The emergence of such a leader is not inevitable, of course, and his or her success may in turn depend on the occurrence of some dire crisis, such as France experienced in 1958. Finally, even where a latent electoral majority is available for center–right mobilization and a leader able to fashion the requisite

electoral coalition appears, a considerable measure of good fortune, economic and otherwise, may also be necessary: Mass- and elite-level moderation were certainly facilitated in France, Italy, and Japan by highly favorable economic conditions. Whether countries in less fortunate circumstances can undergo elite convergences thus remains an open question, to be addressed in analyses of Argentina, Peru, and Brazil (Chapters 7, 8, and 9).

Some concluding observations

A central argument in this chapter has been that the stability and long-term prospects for survival of democratic regimes are greatly enhanced when consolidation has been achieved – that is, when broad elite consensual unity exists within a regime that is fully democratic. We have described the two principal ways in which consensual unity can be achieved in the contemporary world – elite settlements and convergences. Let us conclude by summarizing the relationship between consolidation and stability and by contrasting our analysis with some similar approaches.

Democratic consolidation is conducive to long-term stability for several reasons. First, acknowledging the legitimacy of democratic institutions and respecting rules of democratic procedure discourage governing elites in new democracies from trampling on the rights of opposition groups. A lack of such commitment, on the other hand, could be compatible with a progressive abridgment of democracy that might ultimately culminate in its transformation into a limited democracy or an authoritarian regime. In short, because governing elites share the consensus supporting a democratic regime, respect for its norms and institutions serves as a check on abuses of executive power.

Democratic consolidation also contributes to stability by reducing the intensity of the expression of conflict and by restricting conflict to peaceful institutionalized channels. Acknowledgment of a common set of democratic norms of behavior reduces uncertainty about what constitutes proper or improper political behavior and contributes to the routinization of nonviolent and mutually respectful expressions of political conflict. Insofar as these norms eschew violence, intimidation, and the like, their widespread acceptance reduces mutual fears and suspicions. And insofar as losing in a political conflict is not usually perceived as posing a direct threat to the physical or material well-being of either side, the intensity of the conflict is mitigated, and incumbents who lose an election are more willing to step down, confident that they will survive and perhaps return to power at some point in the future. Acknowledgment of the legitimacy of govern-

mental institutions in a new democracy, moreover, also increases the probability that conflict will be channeled as a matter of choice through democratic, representative institutions, rather than into unregulated extraparliamentary arenas.

The dynamics of political conflict in unconsolidated democratic regimes are qualitatively different. Important and powerful elites deny the legitimacy of the existing regime, and they seek to overthrow it. Challenges to regime legitimacy and the absence of consensual acceptance of democratic norms of behavior also contribute a tenuous, conditional, and mutually suspicious quality to expressions of political conflict. Few political actors are prepared to stake their futures on the workings of democratic institutions; they look for other, frequently illegal and antidemocratic ways to shore up their positions, engaging in democratic processes only as long as their interests are not threatened thereby. And because they also perceive rival political parties as conditional in their support for democracy and equivocal in their commitment to democratic rules of the game, political competition and conflict are fraught with suspicion and distrust. Insofar as mass mobilizations in the streets take the place of bargaining among representative elites as the principal form of "dialogue" between government and opposition (or even between rival opposition groups), a self-reinforcing cycle of protest–repression–protest may be set in motion that progressively polarizes relations among groups and raises the overall level of violence within the polity. It is therefore unlikely that the existing regime will survive the next serious political crisis.

In sum, democratic consolidation – elite consensual unity within a fully democratic system – contributes greatly to regime stability. We further contend that a stable limited democracy – a regime that is generally representative but not widely democratic, in which elite consensual unity has been established – can set the stage for a progressive expansion of the suffrage and expansion of the scope of elite consensual unity (incorporating newly emerging elites) that culminates in a consolidated and stable democratic regime.

A number of scholars have recognized the general importance of elite accommodation and consensus in the functioning of stable democratic regimes. In particular, Arend Lijphart's concept of consociationalism shares with our theoretical perspective an appreciation of the importance of relatively inclusive, behind-the-scenes negotiations among competing elites (Lijphart 1968, 1977). Lijphart also shares our contention that elite awareness of the potential for destructive political conflict, usually motivated by memories of past conflicts, is an important factor that induces elites to take extraordinary steps to restrain current and future conflicts. He observes that "the essential charac-

teristic of consociational democracy is not so much any particular institutional arrangement as the deliberate joint effort by the elites to stabilize the system" (Lijphart 1969, p. 213). Nevertheless, most analyses of consociational democracies pay relatively little attention to the elite bargaining that initiates and underlies them, and they instead concentrate on the consociational pattern of governance in which political inputs and outputs are distributed proportionately among culturally distinct elites and the population segments they lead. A protracted debate over the workings and merits of "majoritarian" and "consociational" institutional arrangements has resulted (see especially, Lijphart 1984; Sartori 1987).

By contrast, the focus of this chapter and volume is on elite interactions per se in democratic transitions and consolidations. We are interested in how national elites sometimes transcend their disunity through settlements and convergences, and we regard the specific institutional arrangements that follow these events as secondary matters. What is most important, we argue, is to understand the circumstances and processes that foster elite transformations from disunity to consensual unity. If such transformations occur, a stable limited democracy can be established, and the emergence of a consolidated democracy is greatly facilitated, irrespective of the specific institutional arrangements that may be adopted. Indeed, the British elite settlement of 1688 culminated in establishment of what Lijphart regards as the model "majoritarian" system. Although an elite settlement may lead to a consociational form of government, such an outcome is not required by our concept.

Another difference between the concept of consociational democracy and our concepts of elite settlement and convergence is that the former has a substantive component, whereas the latter may be entirely procedural. Consociational democracy is conceived as an arrangement for sharing material goods and other substantive benefits among all sectors of a society on a proportional basis, and it uses a procedural mechanism – the mutual veto – for ensuring this. Elite settlements and convergences, by contrast, are concerned mainly with establishing political institutions and rules of the game that elites can live with. Whether broader population categories benefit substantively from settlements and convergences is not part of their conceptualization. In most historic instances, indeed, it is doubtful that anyone other than elites and their close associates derived immediate substantive benefits.

Our approach also differs from Lijphart's consociational concept in that it applies to a much wider range of societies. Consociational democracy requires a society's clear segmentation into culturally de-

fined groups whose identities, mores, and folkways are distinct, and in which, furthermore, no single group is overwhelmingly dominant. By contrast, our concepts can be applied to all modern and modernizing societies, not just those that are highly segmented. Settlements and convergences do require a degree of hierarchical organization in a society (without which there would be no elites with acknowledged authority to bargain on behalf of specific clienteles), but there is a significant difference between our concept and Lijphart's concerning the extent to which this organization represents a compartmentalization of society.

The concept of "elite pacts" is also closely similar to our concepts of elite settlements and convergences. As defined by O'Donnell and Schmitter, an elite pact is "an explicit, but not always publicly explicated or justified, agreement among a select set of actors which seeks to define (or, better, to redefine) rules governing the exercise of power on the basis of mutual guarantees for the 'vital interests' of those entering into it" (1986, p. 37). They argue that pacts play an important role in the establishment of stable democracies, and they note that two of the three Latin American democracies that survived the wave of authoritarianism that swept the continent during the 1960s and 1970s – Colombia and Venezuela – originated in pacts. They treat Costa Rica, the third democracy that survived, as simply anomalous because no pact occurred at its outset in 1948. In our perspective, by contrast, all three of those democracies originated in elite settlements or partial settlements. The contention that the Mexican regime originated in an elite settlement also helps account for that regime's survival during the turbulent 1960s and 1970s.

Elite settlements differ from pacts in several important ways. First, pacts are more specific and less inclusive of all major elites. Drawing on Antonio Gramsci, Schmitter and O'Donnell (1986) contend that democratic transitions involve a "military moment," a "political moment," and an "economic moment" and that there should be a different pact for each moment. Similarly, Karl argues that a "foundational pact . . . necessarily includes an agreement between the military and civilians over the conditions for establishing civilian rule, . . . and a 'social contract' between state agencies, business associations and trade unions regarding property rights, market arrangements and the distribution of benefits" (1990, p. 11). By contrast, our concept of elite settlements focuses on the so-called political moment. We do not share the idea that economic and military pacts are essential components of all successful regime transitions. In some instances, a civilian–military pact my play an important role in getting a military regime to step aside (e.g., Uruguay, see Chapter 6; Peru, see Chapter

8). In other instances, economic agreements may figure prominently in a democratic transition (e.g., Venezuela, see Chapter 3). But these are not necessary components of elite settlements.

Elite pacts and elite settlements also differ in their practical and normative implications. Pacts are often a means by which economic elites continue their domination and exploitation of the "popular classes." Thus, Karl argues that foundational pacts

are antidemocratic mechanisms, bargained by elites, which seek to create a deliberate socioeconomic and political contract that demobilizes emerging mass actors while delineating the extent to which all actors can participate or wield power in the future. They may accomplish this task by restricting contestation . . . , by restricting the policy agenda itself . . . , or by restricting the franchise. . . . Regardless of which strategic option is chosen, the net effect of these options is the same: the nature and parameters of the initial democracy that results is markedly circumscribed. (Karl 1990, pp. 11–12)

In an earlier analysis, Karl added that such pacts can "institutionalize a conservative bias into the polity, creating a new status quo which can block further progress toward political, social and economic democracy" and that "this is a logical outcome since pact-making among elites, often conducted in secrecy, represents the construction of democracy by antidemocratic means" (Karl 1986, p. 198). Our approach differs in two respects. First, only the concept of "direct democracy" requires that decisions be made in public forums. If a procedural conception of democracy is adopted, private negotiations among elites are an acceptable, even routine feature of democratic governance, as long as the elites involved are held publicly accountable through the elections and other processes that the procedural conception specifies. Second, to the extent that "pacts" deliberately exclude and seek to marginalize important elites and social groups, they are anti-democratic in their thrust; in our terminology, they culminate in the creation of "limited democracies" or pseudo-democracies. But not all elite agreements are so exclusionary or restrictive. It is important to recognize the occurrence of much more comprehensive elite settlements which, as in the case of Spain (see Chapter 2), can lead directly to a consolidated democracy or, as in the cases of Sweden and Britain, establish stable limited democracies that eventually evolve into consolidated democracies. Our main claim about elite settlements is that by virtue of their breadth and the procedural guarantees of security that they give to all important elites, they can open the way to consolidated democracies. To borrow some formulations from Adam Przeworski, we regard an elite settlement as "a contingent institutional comprise," whereas an elite pact may

well be a "substantive compromise"; only the former, he argues, is consistent with democracy (Przeworski 1986, pp. 59–60).

The following case studies focus on our contention that the key to the consolidation of new democratic regimes lies in the transformation of political elites from disunity to consensual unity via elite settlements or elite convergences. Which of the recent democratic transitions in Latin America and Southern Europe involved such transformations? How did they occur? And what have been the consequences for democratic consolidation so far? And in those countries where there was no elite transformation, what prevented it, and what are the prospects for the survival of their democratic regimes? In the final chapter, we will assess the extent to which the answers that emerge from the case studies bear out our theoretical propositions.

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