has not always been grasped, as a result of which certain constitutions have been tailored in favor of an irremovable "chief," and others revised so as to ensure the durability of the regime in power and make it practically impossible for power to change hands. In this context, the institutionalization of political power means ensuring that leaders conform to regular and preestablished laws, with no provision for changes to suit their personal whims or dynastic ambitions. They are thus compelled to recognize that they are only the representatives of the nation, and that sovereignty is not something that belongs to them.

The Regional Environment

Democratic regimes are frail and cannot long survive in a hostile environment. In Africa, the regional spread of pluralism could help to strengthen them by rescuing them from dangerous isolation. Political pluralism may be consolidated all the more easily when it extends across several adjacent states. It may thus be strengthened by the emergence of politically homogeneous areas, initially formed of two or three democratic states and subsequently expanding gradually to include neighboring states.

Politicians and activists seeking this goal can draw on the support of international instruments guaranteeing human rights. The universality of human rights does not preclude the setting up of regional instruments genuinely aimed at their protection. These instruments would be modest in terms of the geographical area they covered, but this would make them all the more acceptable to Africans and therefore more effective. The establishment of regional or subregional bodies bringing together pluralistic and one-party regimes could also be contemplated, with a view to persuading the latter class of governments to undertake the transition toward democratic pluralism on a step-by-step basis.

The renewed interest in pluralistic democracy that many African countries are showing marks a turning point in the history of the continent. If they can achieve it, pluralistic democracy will set them on the path toward the comprehensive modernization of their political systems and make them competitive in international terms. At long last, their people would then have an opportunity to share in global economic and technological progress.

NOTES

1. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, ed. Roger D. Masters (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978), 85, 109-10.

2. Joseph de Maistre, *Considérations sur la France*, quoted in Imbert, Morel, and Dupuy, *La Pensée Politique des Origines à Nos Jours* (Paris: Presses Universitaires Françaises, 1969), 331-32.

DELEGATIVE DEMOCRACY

Guillermo O'Donnell

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Here I depict a "new species," a type of existing democracies that has yet to be theorized. As often happens, it has many similarities with other, already recognized species, with cases shading off between the former and some variety of the latter. Still, I believe that the differences are significant enough to warrant an attempt at such a depiction. The drawing of neater boundaries between these types of democracy depends on empirical research, as well as more refined analytical work that I am now undertaking. But if I really have found a new species (and not a member of an already recognized family, or a form too evanescent to merit conceptualization), it may be worth exploring its main features.

Scholars who have worked on democratic transitions and consolidation have repeatedly said that, since it would be wrong to assume that these processes all culminate in the same result, we need a typology of democracies. Some interesting efforts have been made, focused on the consequences, in terms of types of democracy and policy patterns, of various paths to democratization.[1] My own ongoing research suggests, however, that the more decisive factors for generating various kinds of democracy are not related to the characteristics of the preceding authoritarian regime or to the process of transition. Instead, I believe that we must focus upon various long-term historical factors, as well as the degree of severity of the socioeconomic problems that newly installed democratic governments inherit.

Let me briefly state the main points of my argument: 1) Existing theories and typologies of democracy refer to *representative* democracy as it exists, with all its variations and subtypes, in highly developed capitalist countries. 2) Some newly installed democracies (Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Philippines, Korea, and many postcommunist countries) *are* democracies, in the sense that they meet Robert Dahl's criteria for the definition of polyarchy.[2] 3) Yet these democracies are not—and do not seem to be on the path toward becoming—representative democracies; they present characteristics that prompt me to call them *delegative* democracies (DD). 4) DDs are not consolidated (i.e., institutionalized) democracies, but they may be *enduring*. In many cases, there is no sign either of any imminent threat of an authoritarian regression, or of advances toward representative democracy. 5) There is an important interaction effect: the deep social and economic crisis that most of these countries inherited from their authoritarian predecessors reinforces certain practices and conceptions about the proper exercise of political authority that lead in the direction of delegative, not representative democracy.

The following considerations underlie the argument presented above:[3]

A) The installation of a democratically elected government opens the way for a "second transition," often longer and more complex than the initial transition from authoritarian rule.

B) This second transition is supposed to be from a democratically elected *government* to an institutionalized, consolidated democratic *regime*.

C) Nothing guarantees, however, that this second transition will occur. New democracies may regress to authoritarian rule, or they may stall in a feeble, uncertain situation. This situation may endure without opening avenues for institutionalized forms of democracy.

D) The crucial element determining the success of the second transition is the building of a set of institutions that become important decisional points in the flow of political power.

E) For such a successful outcome to occur, governmental policies and the political strategies of various agents must embody the recognition of a paramount shared interest in democratic institution building. The successful cases have featured a decisive coalition of broadly supported political leaders who take great care in creating and strengthening democratic political institutions. These institutions, in turn, have made it easier to cope with the social and economic problems inherited from the authoritarian regime. This was the case in Spain, Portugal (although not immediately after democratic installation), Uruguay, and Chile.

F) In contrast, the cases of delegative democracy mentioned earlier have achieved neither institutional progress nor much governmental effectiveness in dealing with their respective social and economic crises.

Before elaborating these themes in greater detail, I must make a brief excursus to explain more precisely what I mean by institutions and institutionalization, thereby bringing into sharper focus the patterns that fail to develop under delegative democracy.

On Institutions

Institutions are regularized patterns of interaction that are known, practiced, and regularly accepted (if not necessarily normatively approved) by social agents who expect to continue interacting under the rules and norms formally or informally embodied in those patterns. Sometimes, but not necessarily, institutions become formal organizations: they materialize in buildings, seals, rituals, and persons in roles that authorize them to "speak for" the organization.

I am concerned here with a subset: *democratic* institutions. Their definition is elusive, so I will delimit the concept by way of some approximations. To begin with, democratic institutions are political institutions. They have a recognizable, direct relationship with the main themes of politics: the making of decisions that are mandatory within a given territory, the channels of access to decision-making roles, and the shaping of the interests and identities that claim such access. The boundaries between what is and is not a political institution are blurred, and vary across time and countries.

We need a second approximation. Some political institutions are formal organizations belonging to the constitutional network of a polyarchy: these include congress, the judiciary, and political parties. Others, such as fair elections, have an intermittent organizational embodiment but are no less indispensable. The main question about all these institutions is how they work: are they really important decisional points in the flow of influence, power, and policy? If they are not, what are the consequences for the overall political process?

Other factors indispensable for the workings of democracy in contemporary societies—those that pertain to the formation and representation of collective identities and interests—may or may not be institutionalized, or they may be operative only for a part of the potentially relevant sectors. In representative democracies, those patterns are highly institutionalized and organizationally embodied through pluralist or neocorporatist arrangements.

The characteristics of a functioning institutional setting include the following:

1) *Institutions both incorporate and exclude.* They determine which agents, on the basis of which resources, claims, and procedures, are accepted as valid participants in their decision-making and implementation processes. These criteria are necessarily selective: they fit (and favor) some agents; they may lead others to reshape themselves in order to meet them; and for various reasons, they may be impossible

to meet, or unacceptable, for still others. The scope of an institution is the degree to which it incorporates and excludes its set of potentially relevant agents.

2) *Institutions shape the probability distribution of outcomes.* As Adam Przeworski has noted, institutions "process" only certain actors and resources, and do so under certain rules.[4] This predetermines the range of feasible outcomes, and their likelihood within that range. Democratic institutions, for example, preclude the use or threat of force and the outcomes that this would generate. On the other hand, the subset of democratic institutions based on the universality of the vote, as Philippe Schmitter and Wolfgang Streeck have argued, is not good at processing the intensity of preferences.[5] Institutions of interest representation are better at processing the intensity of preferences, although at the expense of the universalism of voting and citizenship and, often, of the "democraticness" of their decision making.

3) *Institutions tend to aggregate, and to stabilize the aggregation of, the level of action and organization of agents interacting with them.* The rules established by institutions influence strategic decisions by agents as to the degree of aggregation that is more efficacious for them in terms of the likelihood of favorable outcomes. Institutions, or rather the persons who occupy decision-making roles within them, have limited information-processing capabilities and attention spans. Consequently, those persons prefer to interact with relatively few agents and issues at a time.[6] This tendency toward aggregation is another reason for the exclusionary side of every institution.

4) *Institutions induce patterns of representation.* For the same reasons, institutions favor the transformation of the many potential voices of their constituencies into a few that can claim to speak as their representatives. Representation involves, on the one hand, the acknowledged right to speak for some relevant others and, on the other, the ability to deliver the compliance of those others with what the representative decides. Insofar as this capability is demonstrated and the given rules of the game are respected, institutions and their various representatives develop an interest in their mutual coexistence as interacting agents.

5) *Institutions stabilize agents/representatives and their expectations.* Institutional leaders and representatives come to expect behaviors within a relatively narrow range of possibilities from a set of actors that they expect to meet again in the next round of interactions. Certain agents may not like the narrowing of expected behaviors, but they anticipate that deviations from such expectations are likely to be counterproductive. This is the point at which it may be said that an institution (which probably has become a formal organization) is strong. The institution is in equilibrium; it is in nobody's interest to change it, except in incremental and basically consensual ways.

6) *Institutions lengthen the time-horizons of actors.* The stabilization of agents and expectations entails a time dimension: institutionalized interactions are expected to continue into the future among the same (or a slowly and rather predictably changing) set of agents. This, together with a high level of aggregation of representation and of control of their constituencies, is the foundation for the "competitive cooperation" that characterizes institutionalized democracies: one-shot prisoner's dilemmas can be overcome,[7] bargaining (including logrolling) is facilitated, various trade-offs over time become feasible, and sequential attention to issues makes it possible to accommodate an otherwise unmanageable agenda. The establishment of these practices further strengthens the willingness of all relevant agents to recognize one another as valid interlocutors, and enhances the value that they attach to the institution that shapes their interrelationships. This virtuous circle is completed when most democratic institutions achieve not only reasonable scope and strength but also a high density of multiple and stabilized interrelationships. This makes these institutions important points of decision in the overall political process, and a consolidated, institutionalized democracy thus emerges.

A way to summarize what I have said is that, in the functioning of contemporary, complex societies, democratic political institutions provide a crucial level of mediation and aggregation between, on one side, structural factors and, on the other, not only individuals but also the diverse groupings under which society organizes its multiple interests and identities. This intermediate—i.e., institutional—level has an important impact on the patterns of organization of society, bestowing representation upon some participants in the political process and excluding others. Institutionalization undeniably entails heavy costs—not only exclusion but also the recurring, and all too real, nightmares of bureaucratization and boredom. The alternative, however, submerges social and political life in the hell of a colossal prisoner's dilemma.

This is, of course, an ideal typical description, but I find it useful for tracing, by way of contrast, the peculiarities of a situation where there is a dearth of democratic institutions. A noninstitutionalized democracy is characterized by the restricted scope, the weakness, and the low density of whatever political institutions exist. The place of well-functioning institutions is taken by other nonformalized but strongly operative practices—clientelism, patrimonialism, and corruption.

Characterizing Delegative Democracy

Delegative democracies rest on the premise that whoever wins election to the presidency is thereby entitled to govern as he or she sees fit, constrained only by the hard facts of existing power relations and by a constitutionally limited term of office. The president is taken to be the embodiment of the nation and the main custodian and definer of its interests. The policies of his government need bear no resemblance to the promises of his campaign—has not the president been authorized to govern as he (or she) thinks best? Since this paternal figure is supposed to take care of the whole nation, his political base must be a movement, the supposedly vibrant overcoming of the factionalism and conflicts associated with parties. Typically, winning presidential candidates in DDs present themselves as above both political parties and organized interests. How could it be otherwise for somebody who claims to embody the whole of the nation? In this view, other institutions—courts and legislatures, for instance—are nuisances that come attached to the domestic and international advantages of being a democratically elected president. Accountability to such institutions appears as a mere impediment to the full authority that the president has been delegated to exercise.

Delegative democracy is not alien to the democratic tradition. It is more democratic, but less liberal, than representative democracy. DD is strongly majoritarian. It consists in constituting, through clean elections, a majority that empowers someone to become, for a given number of years, the embodiment and interpreter of the high interests of the nation. Often, DDs use devices such as runoff elections if the first round of elections does not generate a clear-cut majority.[8] This majority must be created to support the myth of legitimate delegation. Furthermore, DD is strongly individualistic, but more in a Hobbesian than a Lockean way: voters are supposed to choose, irrespective of their identities and affiliations, the individual who is most fit to take responsibility for the destiny of the country. Elections in DDs are a very emotional and high-stakes event: candidates compete for a chance to rule virtually free of all constraints save those imposed by naked, noninstitutionalized power relations. After the election, voters/delegators are expected to become a passive but cheering audience of what the president does.

Extreme individualism in constituting executive power combines well with the organicism of the Leviathan. The nation and its "authentic" political expression, the leader and his "Movement," are postulated as living organisms.[9] The leader has to heal the nation by uniting its dispersed fragments into a harmonious whole. Since the body politic is in disarray, and since its existing voices only reproduce its fragmentation, delegation includes the right (and the duty) of administering the unpleasant medicines that will restore the health of the nation. For this view, it seems obvious that only the head really knows: the president and his most trusted advisors are the alpha and the omega of politics. Furthermore, some of the problems of the nation can only be solved by highly technical criteria. *Técnicos*, especially in economic policy, must be politically shielded by the president against the manifold resistance of society. In the meantime, it is "obvious" that resistance—be it from congress, political parties, interest groups, or crowds in the streets—has to be ignored. This organicistic discourse fits poorly with the dry arguments of the technocrats, and the myth of delegation is consummated: the president isolates himself from most political institutions and organized interests, and bears sole responsibility for the successes and failures of "his" policies.

This curious blend of organicistic and technocratic conceptions was present in recent bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes. Although the language (but not the organicistic metaphors) was different, those conceptions were also present in communist regimes. But there are important differences between these regimes and DDs. In DDs, parties, the congress, and the press are generally free to voice their criticisms. Sometimes the courts, citing what the executive typically dismisses as "legalistic, formalistic reasons," block unconstitutional policies. Workers' and capitalists' associations often complain loudly. The party (or coalition) that elected the president despairs about its loss of popularity, and refuses parliamentary support for the policies he has "foisted" on them. This increases the political isolation of the president, his difficulties in forming a stable legislative coalition, and his propensity to sidestep, ignore, or corrupt the congress and other institutions.

Here it is necessary to elaborate on what makes representative democracy different from its delegative cousin. Representation necessarily involves an element of delegation: through some procedure, a collectivity authorizes some individuals to speak for it, and eventually to commit the collectivity to what the representative decides. Consequently, representation and delegation are not polar opposites. It is not always easy to make a sharp distinction between the type of democracy which is organized around "representative delegation" and the type where the delegative element overshadows the representative one.

Representation entails accountability: somehow representatives are held responsible for their actions by those they claim to be entitled to speak for. In institutionalized democracies, accountability runs not only vertically, making elected officials answerable to the ballot box, but also horizontally, across a network of relatively autonomous powers (i.e., other institutions) that can call into question, and eventually punish, improper ways of discharging the responsibilities of a given official. Representation and accountability entail the republican dimension of democracy: the existence and enforcement of a careful distinction between the public and the private interests of office holders. Vertical accountability, along with the freedom to form parties and to try to influence public opinion, exists in both representative and delegative democracies. But the horizontal accountability characteristic of representative democracy is extremely weak or nonexistent in delegative democracies. Furthermore, since the institutions that make horizontal accountability effective are seen by delegative presidents as unnecessary encumbrances to their "mission," they make strenuous efforts to hamper the development of such institutions.

Notice that what matters is not only the values and beliefs of officials (whether elected or not) but also the fact that they are embedded in a network of institutionalized power relations. Since those relations may be mobilized to impose punishment, rational actors will calculate the likely costs when they consider undertaking improper behavior. Of course, the workings of this system of mutual responsibility leave much to be desired everywhere. Still, it seems clear that the rule-like force of certain codes of conduct shapes the behavior of relevant agents in representative democracies much more than in delegative democracies. Institutions do matter, particularly when the comparison is not among different sets of strong institutions but between strong institutions and extremely weak or nonexistent ones.

Because policies are carried out by a series of relatively autonomous powers, decision making in representative democracies tends to be slow and incremental and sometimes prone to gridlock. But, by this same token, those policies are usually vaccinated against gross mistakes, and they have a reasonably good chance of being implemented; moreover, responsibility for mistakes tends to be widely shared. As noted, DD implies weak institutionalization and, at best, is indifferent toward strengthening it. DD gives the president the apparent advantage of having practically no horizontal accountability. DD has the additional apparent advantage of allowing swift policy making, but at the expense of a higher likelihood of gross mistakes, of hazardous implementation, and of concentrating responsibility for the outcomes on the president. Not surprisingly, presidents in DDs tend to suffer wild swings in popularity: one day they are acclaimed as providential saviors, and the next they are cursed as only fallen gods can be.

Whether it is due to culture, tradition, or historically-structured learning, the plebiscitary tendencies of delegative democracy were detectable in most Latin American (and, for that matter, many post-communist, Asian, and African) countries long before the present social and economic crisis. This kind of rule has been analyzed as a chapter in the study of authoritarianism, under such names as caesarism, bonapartism, *caudillismo*, populism, and the like. But it should also be seen as a peculiar type of democracy that overlaps with and differs from those authoritarian forms in interesting ways. Even if DD belongs to the democratic genus, however, it could hardly be less congenial to the building and strengthening of democratic political institutions.

Comparisons with the Past

The great wave of democratization prior to the one we are now witnessing occurred after World War II, as an imposition by the Allied powers on defeated Germany, Italy, Japan, and to some extent Austria. The resulting conditions were remarkably different from the ones faced today by Latin America and the postcommunist countries: 1) In the wake of the destruction wrought by the war, the economic expectations of the people probably were very moderate. 2) There were massive injections of capital, principally but not exclusively (e.g., the forgiving of Germany's foreign debt) through the Marshall Plan. 3) As a consequence, and helped by an expanding world economy, the former Axis powers soon achieved rapid rates of economic growth. These were not the only factors at work, but they greatly aided in the consolidation of democracy in those countries. Furthermore, these same factors contributed to political stability and to stable public policy coalitions: it took about 20 years for a change of the governing party in Germany, and the dominant parties in Italy and Japan held sway for nearly half a century.

In contrast, in the transitions of the 1970s and 1980s, reflecting the much less congenial context in which they occurred, victory in the first election after the demise of the authoritarian regime guaranteed that the winning party would be defeated, if not virtually disappear, in the next election. This happened in Spain, Portugal, Greece, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay, Korea, and the Philippines. But this pattern appears together with important variations in the social and economic performance of the new governments. Most of these countries inherited serious socioeconomic difficulties from the preceding authoritarian regimes, and were severely affected by the worldwide economic troubles of the 1970s and early 1980s. In all of them, the socioeconomic problems at some point reached crisis proportions and were seen to require decisive government action. Yet however serious the economic problems of the 1970s in Southern Europe may have been, they appear mild when compared to those besetting the newly democratized postcommunist and Latin American countries (with Chile as a partial exception). Very high inflation, economic stagnation, a severe financial crisis of the state, a huge foreign and domestic public debt, increased inequality, and a sharp deterioration of social policies and welfare provisions are all aspects of this crisis.

Again, however, important differences emerge among the Latin American countries. During its first democratic government under President Sanguinetti, the Uruguayan economy performed quite well: the annual rate of inflation dropped from three to two digits, while GNP, investment, and real wages registered gradual increases. The government pursued incremental economic policies, most of them negotiated with congress and various organized interests. Chile under President Aylwin has followed the same path. By contrast, Argentina, Brazil, and Peru opted for drastic and surprising economic stabilization "packages": the Austral Plan in Argentina, the Cruzado Plan in Brazil, and the Inti Plan in Peru. Bolivia, too, adopted this kind of stabilization package in the 1980s. Although this program—closer than the previously mentioned ones to the prescriptions of the international financial organizations—has been praised for its success in controlling inflation, GNP and investment growth remain anemic. Moreover, the brutality with which worker protests against the program were suppressed hardly qualifies as democratic.

These "packages" have been disastrous. They did not solve any of the inherited problems; rather, it is difficult to find a single one that they did not worsen. Disagreement lingers about whether these programs were intrinsically flawed, or suffered from corrigible defects, or were sound but undone by "exogenous" political factors. However that may be, it is clear that the experience of these failures reinforced the decision by the democratic leaders of Chile to avoid this ruinous road. This makes Uruguay—a country that inherited from the authoritarian regime a situation that was every bit as bad as Argentina's or Brazil's—a very interesting case. Why did the Uruguayan government not adopt its own stabilization package, especially during the euphoria that followed the first stages of the Austral and the Cruzado plans? Was it because President Sanguinetti and his collaborators were wiser or better informed than their Argentinean, Brazilian, and Peruvian counterparts? Probably not. The difference is that Uruguay is a case of *redemocratization*, where Congress went to work effectively as soon as democracy was restored. Facing a strongly institutionalized legislature and a series of constitutional restrictions and historically embedded practices, no Uruguayan president could have gotten away with decreeing a drastic stabilization package. In Uruguay, for the enactment of many of the policies typically contained in those packages, the president must go through Congress. Furthermore, going through Congress means having to negotiate not only with parties and legislators, but also with various organized interests. Consequently, against the presumed preferences of some of its top members, the economic policies of the Uruguayan government were "condemned" to be incremental and limited to quite modest goals—such as achieving the decent performance we have seen. Looking at Uruguay—and, more recently, Chile—one learns about the difference between having or not having a network of institutionalized powers that gives texture to the policy-making process. Or, in other words, about the difference between representative and delegative democracy.

The Cycle of Crisis

Now I will focus on some South American cases of delegative democracy—Argentina, Brazil, and Peru. There is no need to detail the depth of the crisis that these countries inherited from their respective

authoritarian regimes. Such a crisis generates a strong sense of urgency and provides fertile terrain for unleashing the delegative propensities that may be present in a given country. Problems and demands mount up before inexperienced governments that must operate through a weak and disarticulated (if not disloyal) bureaucracy. Presidents get elected by promising that they—being strong, courageous, above parties and interests, *machos*—will save the country. Theirs is a "government of saviors" (*salvadores de la patria*). This leads to a "magical" style of policy making: the delegative "mandate" supposedly bestowed by the majority, strong political will, and technical knowledge should suffice to fulfill the savior's mission—the "packages" follow as a corollary.

The longer and deeper the crisis, and the less the confidence that the government will be able to solve it, the more rational it becomes for everyone to act: 1) in a highly disaggregated manner, especially in relation to state agencies that may help to alleviate the consequences of the crisis for a given group or sector (thus further weakening and corrupting the state apparatus); 2) with extremely short time-horizons; and 3) with the assumption that everyone else will do the same. In short, there is a general scramble for narrow, short-term advantage. This prisoner's dilemma is the exact opposite of the conditions that foster both strong democratic institutions and reasonably effective ways of dealing with pressing national problems.

Once the initial hopes are dashed and the first packages have failed, cynicism about politics, politicians, and government becomes the pervading mood. If such governments wish to retain some popular support, they must both control inflation and implement social policies which show that, even though they cannot rapidly solve most of the underlying problems, they do care about the fate of the poor and (politically more important) of the recently impoverished segments of the middle class. But minimal though it may be, this is a very tall order. These two goals are extremely difficult to harmonize, at least in the short run—and for such flimsy governments little other than the short run counts.

Governments like to enjoy sustained popular support, and politicians want to be reelected. Only if the predicaments described above were solvable within the brief compass of a presidential term would electoral success be a triumph instead of a curse. How does one win election and how, once elected, does one govern in this type of situation? Quite obviously—and most destructively in terms of the building of public trust that helps a democracy to consolidate—by saying one thing during the campaign and doing the contrary when in office. Of course, institutionalized democracies are not immune to this trick, but the consequences are more devastating when there are few and weak institutions and a deep socioeconomic crisis afflicts the country. Presidents have gained election in Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru by promising expansionist economic policies and many other good things to come with them, only to enact severe stabilization packages immediately or shortly after entering office. Whatever the merits of such policies for a given country at a given time, their surprise adoption does nothing to promote public trust, particularly if their immediate and most visible impact further depresses the already low standard of living of most of the population.

Moreover, the virtual exclusion of parties and congress from such momentous decisions has several malign consequences. First, when the executive finally, and inevitably, needs legislative support, he is bound to find a congress that is resentful and feels no responsibility for policies it had no hand in making. Second, the congress is further weakened by its own hostile and aloof attitude, combined with the executive's public condemnations of its slowness and "irresponsibility." Third, these squabbles promote a sharp decline in the prestige of *all* parties and politicians, as opinion polls from many Latin American and postcommunist countries abundantly show. Finally, the resulting institutional weakness makes it ever more difficult to achieve the other magical solution when the packages fail: the socioeconomic pact.

From Omnipotence to Impotence

If we consider that the logic of delegation also means that the executive does nothing to strengthen the judiciary, the resulting dearth of effective and autonomous institutions places immense responsibility on the president. Remember that the typical incumbent in a DD has won election by promising to save the country without much cost to anyone, yet soon gambles the fate of his government on policies that entail substantial costs for many parts of the population. This results in policy making under conditions of despair: the shift from wide popularity to general vilification can be as rapid as it is dramatic. The result is a curious mixture of governmental omnipotence and impotence. Omnipotence begins with the spectacular enactment of the first policy packages and continues with a flurry of decisions aimed at complementing those packages and, unavoidably, correcting their numerous unwanted consequences. This accentuates the anti-institutional bias of DDs and ratifies traditions of high personalization and concentration of power in the executive. The other side of the coin is extreme weakness in making those decisions into effective long-term regulations of societal life.

As noted above, institutionalized democracies are slow at making decisions. But once those decisions are made, they are relatively more likely to be implemented. In DDs, in contrast, we witness a decision-making frenzy, what in Latin America we call *decretismo*. Because such hasty, unilateral executive orders are likely to offend important and politically mobilized interests, they are unlikely to be implemented. In the midst of a severe crisis and increasing popular impatience, the upshot is usually new flurries of decisions which, because of the experience many sectors have had in resisting the previous ones, are even less likely to be implemented. Furthermore, because of the way those decisions are made, most political, social, and economic agents can disclaim responsibility. Power was delegated to the president, and he did what he deemed best. As failures accumulate, the country finds itself stuck with a widely reviled president whose goal is just to hang on until the end of his term. The resulting period of passivity and disarray of public policy does nothing to help the situation of the country.

Given this scenario, the "natural" outcome in Latin America in the past would have been a successful coup d'etat. Clearly, DDs, because of their institutional weaknesses and erratic patterns of policy making, are more prone to interruption and breakdown than representative democracies. At the moment, however—for reasons mostly linked to the international context, which I cannot discuss here—DDs exhibit a rather remarkable capacity for endurance. With the partial exception of Peru, where the constitutional breakdown was led by its delegative president, no successful coups d'etat have taken place.

The economic policy undertaken by DDs is not always condemned to be widely perceived as a failure, particularly in the aftermath of hyperinflation or long periods of extremely high inflation.[10] This is the case in Argentina today under President Menem, although it is not clear how sustainable the improved economic situation is. But such economic achievements, as well as the more short-lived ones of Collor (Brazil), Alfonsín (Argentina), and García (Peru) at the height of the apparent successes of their economic packages, can lead a president to give the ultimate proof of the existence of a delegative democracy. As long as their policies are recognized as successful by electorally weighty segments of the population, delegative presidents find it simply abhorrent that their terms should be constitutionally limited; how could these "formal limitations" preclude the continuation of their providential mission? Consequently, they promote—by means that further weaken whatever horizontal accountability still exists—constitutional reforms that would allow their reelection or, failing this, their continuation at the apex of government as prime ministers in a parliamentary regime. Oddly enough, successful delegative presidents, at least while they believe they are successful, may become proponents of some form of parliamentarism. In contrast, this kind of maneuver was out of the question in the cases of the quite successful President Sanguinetti of Uruguay and the very successful President Aylwin of Chile, however much they might have liked to continue in power. Again, we find a crucial difference between representative and delegative democracy.[11]

As noted, among the recently democratized countries of Latin America only Uruguay and Chile, as soon as they *re*democratized, revived earlier political institutions that the other Latin American countries (as well as most postcommunist ones) lack. This is the rub: effective institutions and congenial practices cannot be built in a day. As consolidated democracies show, the emergence, strengthening, and legitimation of these practices and institutions take time, during which a complex process of positive learning occurs. On the other hand, to deal effectively with the tremendous economic and social crisis faced by most newly democratized countries would require that such institutions already be in place. Yet the crisis itself severely hinders the arduous task of institutionalization.

This is the drama of countries bereft of a democratic tradition: like all emerging democracies, past and present, they must cope with the manifold negative legacies of their authoritarian past, while wrestling with the kind of extraordinarily severe social and economic problems that few if any of the older democracies faced at their inception.

Although this essay has been confined largely to a typological exercise, I believe that there is some value in identifying a new species, especially since in some crucial dimensions it does not behave as other types of democracy do. Elsewhere I have further elaborated on the relationship between DDs and socioeconomic crisis and on related theoretical issues,[12] and I intend to present more comprehensive views in the future. Here I can only add that an optimist viewing the cycles I have described would find that they possess a degree of predictability, thus supplying some ground on which longer-term perspectives could be built. Such a view, however, begs the question of how long the bulk of the population will be willing to play this sort of game. Another optimistic scenario would have a decisive segment of the political leadership recognizing the self-destructive quality of those cycles, and agreeing to change the terms on which they compete and govern. This seems to me practically the only way out of the problem, but the obstacles to such a roundabout but ultimately happy outcome are many.

NOTES

This essay is a revised and abridged version of a text of the same title published in Portuguese by *Novos Estudos CEBRAP* 31 (October 1991): 25-40, and as Kellogg Institute Working Paper No. 172 (March 1992). Some of the ideas in this essay originated in conversations I had in the 1980s with Luis Pásara concerning the emerging patterns of rule in several Latin American countries. For the preparation of the present version I was privileged to receive detailed comments and suggestions from David Collier.

1. Terry Lynn Karl and Philippe C. Schmitter, "Modes of Transition and Types of Democracy in Latin America, Southern and Eastern Europe," *International Social Science Journal* 128 (May 1991): 269-84.

2. See Robert A. Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971); and idem., *Democracy and Its Critics* (New Haven: Yale

University Press, 1989). I draw further distinctions concerning various characteristics of polyarchies in a recent paper entitled "On the State, Democratization and Some Conceptual Problems (A Latin American View with Glances at Some Post-Communist Countries)," *World Development* 21 (1993): 1355-69 (also published as Kellogg Institute Working Paper No. 192 (April 1993).

3. For a more detailed discussion, see my essay "Transitions, Continuities and Paradoxes" in Scott Mainwaring, Guillermo O'Donnell, and J. Samuel Valenzuela, eds., *Issues in Democratic Consolidation: The New South American Democracies in Comparative Perspective* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 17-56.

4. Adam Przeworski, "Democracy as a Contingent Outcome of Conflicts," in Jon Elster and Rune Slagstad, eds., *Constitutionalism and Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 59-80.

5. Wolfgang Streeck and Philippe C. Schmitter, "Community, Market, State—and Associations? The Prospective Contribution of Interest Governance to Social Order," in Wolfgang Streeck and Philippe C. Schmitter, eds., *Private Interest Government: Beyond Market and State* (London: Sage Publications, 1985), 1-29.

6. See James March and Johan Olsen, *Rediscovering Institutions: The Organizational Basis of Politics* (New York: The Free Press, 1989).

7. A prisoner's dilemma exists when, even if all of the agents involved could make themselves better off by cooperating among themselves, it nonetheless proves rational for each of them, irrespective of what the others decide, not to cooperate. In this sense, institutions may be seen as social inventions that serve to make cooperation the rational preference.

8. Arturo Valenzuela, "Latin America: Presidentialism in Crisis," *Journal of Democracy* 4 (October 1993): 17, notes that "all of the countries (except for Paraguay) that drafted new constitutions in the 1980s and early 1990s (Guatemala, El Salvador, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, and Brazil) instituted the French system of a *ballotage*, or second round, for presidential races." Of these countries, Guatemala and El Salvador did not qualify as polyarchies, Chile's constitution was a product of the Pinochet regime, and Ecuador, Peru, and Brazil are among the purest cases of DD.

9. Giorgio Alberti has insisted on the importance of *movimientismo* as a dominant feature of politics in many Latin American countries. See his "Democracy by Default, Economic Crisis, and Social Anomie in Latin America" (Paper presented to the Twenty-fifth World Congress of Political Science, Buenos Aires, 1991).

10. I discuss these themes in my essay "On the State, Democratization, and Some Conceptual Problems," cited in note 2 above.

11. I do not ignore the important discussions currently underway about various forms of presidentialism and parliamentarism, of which recent and interesting expressions are Scott Mainwaring and Matthew Shugart, "Juan Linz, Presidentialism, and Democracy: A Critical Appraisal," Kellogg Institute Working Paper No. 200 (July 1993); Alfred Stepan and Cindy Skach, "Constitutional Frameworks and Democratic Consolidation: Parliamentarism versus Presidentialism," *World Politics* 46 (October 1993): 1-22; and Arturo Valenzuela, "Latin America: Presidentialism in Crisis," cited in note 8 above. In the present text I discuss patterns that are independent of those institutional factors, although they may be convergent in their consequences. Clearly, presidentialism has more affinity with DD than parliamentarism. However, if delegative propensities are strong in a given country, the workings of a parliamentary system could be rather easily subverted or lead to impasses even worse than the ones discussed here.

12. I must refer again to my essay "On the State, Democratization, and Some Conceptual Problems," cited in note 2 above.