Rethinking democratic transition: A culturalist critique and the Spanish case

LAURA DESFOR EDLES
University of Hawaii at Manoa

In the last few years, we have seen unprecedented shifts in the democratic world. The Soviet Union has ceased to exist, Germany has been reunited, and so many Eastern and Central European countries are now in transition that to call attention to this reality almost sounds trivial.[1] As these countries struggle with transition – and as struggles in some cases turn into outright civil war – it becomes increasingly clear that the transformation from authoritarianism to democracy is no easy task. Recent cases of stalled and failed transitions abound. In the Philippines in 1986 the authoritarian Marcos was replaced with "people power" with great fanfare. Today the Filipino democratic revolution is virtually at a complete stand-still. In China in 1989, a small democratic opening was abruptly reversed as we so dramatically saw in the events of Tiananmen Square. And of course, the history of Latin America is a history of democratic breakdowns and authoritarian reversals.

On-going events in Eastern Europe not only underscore that democratic transition is tremendously difficult; they also make it increasingly clear that our existing sociological paradigms of democratization are grossly inadequate. In the last ten years, the substantive area of transitions has been dominated by elite, corporatist, and rational actor models that actually owe more to political science than sociology. I will call these models "the pact school." This term includes elite-centered and rational choice models of transition that highlight the construction of elite "pacts" in "consensual" transitions (or "transitions from above" or "elite settlements"). Several different versions of the pact school exist, and there is significant debate among pactmen.[2] Nonetheless, pactmen share a specific theoretical logic and present a similar image of democratic transition. In the first part of this article I explain this theoretical orientation of the pact school and analyze it critically. I argue that the pact school has failed theoretically in two ways: (1) Pact-

Theory and Society **24**: 355–384, 1995.

men purport individual agency and "elite choice," but choice within the pact-school frame of reference gives way to determinism. (2) Pactmen purport objectivity, but "objectivity" within the pact-school frame of reference results in subjective residual categories.[3]

In the second part of this article I focus on one of the pact school's exemplars of "transition from above": the recent Spanish transition from Francoism to democracy. We will see that even in this "textbook" case, pactmen cannot explain how and why consensus and pacting *worked*. The pact school's theoretical framework prevents pactmen from explaining why the Spanish (or any other) democratic transition is relatively "peaceful" or "successful."[4]

Most importantly, despite this focus on a particular case (Spain), here I do not present an empirical, but a theoretical, refutation of the pact school. Empirical refutation is important (and it will be presented elsewhere), but here I challenge the theoretical commitments – and the legitimacy – of the pact school.[5]

Finally, although a full "positive" critique of the pact school is outside the scope of this article, I briefly discuss what alternative theoretical commitments in the area of democratic transition might be, and I briefly outline an alternative perspective of the Spanish transition from Francoism to democracy.

The pact school approach to transition

Every social theory implicitly contains specific presuppositions as to the rationality of action and the nature of social order. The central question that every social theory addresses is to what degree is action rational. Is action guided by ends of pure efficiency? Are goals calculated? Or are goals produced by the substantive ideal contents of norms themselves? The problem of order is the problem of how individual units, of whatever motivation, are arranged in nonrandom social patterns. Every theory must adopt a solution to the order problem just as it must also address the problem of action and motivation.[6]

As shown in Table 1, the pact school is based on rationalistic and individualistic presuppositions. Pactmen hold that beneath any substantive normative commitment the real motivating factor is the desire on the actor's part to maximize utility. In terms of order, pactmen explain

Table 1. Theoretical presuppositions of the pact school, structural sociology, and exchange theory

Approach	Action	Order	Empirical unit
Pact school Elite (Higley & Burton) Rational choice (Przeworski) Corporatist (O'Donnell & Schmitter)	Rational	Individual	Elite
Structural sociology (Skocpol, Tilly)	Rational	Collective	Interest group
Exchange theory (Homans)	Rational	Individual	Actor

social arrangements in any given historical moment as built up principally through the action of the individuals in that particular interaction.

As Table 1 also shows, the common denominator between the pact school and structural sociology is the presupposition of rationality. Both structural sociologists and pactmen reject "subjective" or "soft" cultural arguments, in favor of a more "objective" focus on material conditions. This theoretical logic, of course, is rooted in a rejection of functionalism. During the 1970s, both structural sociologists (e.g., Skocpol and Tilly) and corporatists (e.g., Schmitter) quite rightly challenged the normative assumptions of the 1950s and 1960s political cultural tradition (e.g., Lipset, Parsons, Almond and Verba).[7]

Unlike structural sociologists, however, pactmen assume an individual rather than a collective unit of analysis. Pactmen focus on the individual elite – and not the (collective) class or interest group because pactmen believe that *only* elites, defined as "the top leadership in all sectors," are able to effect national political outcomes.[8] In addition, pactmen emphasize elite *choice* rather than interest, in order to emphasize *agency*. Przeworski, for example, maintains that in the enormous literature following Moore's seminal work, "history goes on without anyone ever doing anything." Przeworski counters with "a micro approach [to transition], in which actors have choices and their choices matter."[9]

In conjunction with this emphasis on elite pragmatism and choice, pactmen focus not so much on social revolution (as do structural sociologists such as Moore, Skocpol, and Tilly) but on "transition through transaction" or "transition from above" – i.e., transitions in which "liberalization and democratization come about as choices made fun-

damentally by the regime."[10] Burton and Higley have systematized this focus by developing a new concept: elite settlements. "Elite settlements consist of broad compromises among previously warring elite factions" that result in political stability, and are a precondition for representative democracy.[11]

At the presuppositional level, then, pactmen are similar to exchange theorists (see Table 1). Both view institutions as built upon the conscious interests of inherently rational individuals. Both solve the problem of order through individualism. Cooperation, not community, is the intended model, something which can be achieved through individuals acting on the principle of, "I'll scratch your back if you scratch mine."[12]

Finally, as pactmen themselves state, the pact school image of transition is that of a "complex game." Przeworski formally adopts a "game theoretic perspective," and titles one of his papers, "The Games of Transition."[13] Other pactmen, most importantly, O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), simply adopt ad hoc game analogies (e.g., "playing coup poker"). Their "metaphor of the multi-layered chess game" takes up the entire conclusion of their book on transitions. This chess analogy has become so pervasive that a "chess" parlance has become accepted and enmeshed in the area of transition.[14] In accordance with this "game" image, pact school analyses of transition are post-hoc reconstructions of the *strategic* reasons that elites may have had for engaging in pacts or settlements and sometimes making extraordinary compromises in "transition from above" or "transition through transaction."

Critical assessment of the pact school approach to transition

The pact school has several interrelated problems, but all point to the fact that the pact school conceptualization of democratic transition is simply too narrow. These are cases of revolution – without revolution – and of regime self-dismantlement. These transitions are so fascinating and compelling because they involve inherent contradictions at all levels. Yet, pactmen minimize – rather than embrace – these paradoxes, by reducing the transitional process to strategic calculation.[15]

Put in another way, from the start pactmen are faced with an uphill battle. Pactmen maintain that pacting is a mutually rewarding (rational) strategy, and that "elites are disposed to compromise *if at all pos-*

sible."[16] But if elite settlements are such a mutually rewarding (rational) strategy, and elites are "disposed" toward compromise, why are consensual transitions so rare?[17] Why do they so often break down? Or never get started?

Pactmen broach this paradox in several ways. First, pactmen bow out of it with an "atheoretical" stance, saying that all social change is somehow "abnormal." According to Higley, Burton, and Field, "settlements are highly contingent events that depend on such factors as the skills and choices of elite persons who happen to be in place, and they cannot be fully "explained" in the usual social scientific sense." Similarly, O'Donnell and Schmitter maintain that "normal social science methodology" is "inappropriate in rapidly changing situations" such as transitions to democracy.[18]

Yet, it is theoretically untenable to suppose that (normal) elite disunity is a function of "structures" while (abnormal) elite settlement is a function of "individuals." To engage such a position is to contradict oneself as to the *nature* of order and action. It makes order (or change) a gross residual category. Moreover, as Cammack notes, that the elite settlement concept explains how "in extraordinary circumstances" elites "overcome" structural factors is not only contradictory, but circular: elite interests are "irreconcilable" and "organizational constraints" are paramount if there is no consensual unity; if there *have* been elite settlements, however, these forces are deemed negligible.[19]

A second way that pactmen contend with the paradox that (successful) democratic transition is both "the most rational alternative" and exceedingly rare is by emphasizing the "tremendous uncertainty" of transition. Uncertainty allows for choice, and choice allows for rapid social change. But this same uncertainty inevitably leads to "mistakes," and mistakes can lead to democratic breakdown.[20]

But to acknowledge "uncertainty" and "mistakes" is to open pactmen up to a subjectivity they would do best to avoid – because they lack the theoretical equipment to account for subjectivity. For example, in order to explain why "disunity is the generic condition of national elites," Higley and Burton point out the "rational" reasons elites may have for engaging in civil war (and presumably brutality and torture). They state:

> The basic situation [of disunified elite] is one of deep insecurity – the fear, usually rooted in experience, that all is lost if some other person or faction

> gets the upper hand. Accordingly, members of a disunified elite routinely take extreme measures to protect themselves and their interest: killing, imprisoning, or banishing opponents, fomenting rebellions against ascendant factions, expropriating opponents' resources, and so on. In the context of elite disunity, these actions are often the most rational ones available.[21]

This conceptualization of "insecurity" reveals the fundamental theoretical problem of the pact school. On one hand, pactmen suppose that feelings and subjective inclinations are formed by calculations about profit. Hence whether an experience such as civil war induces "fear" and "insecurity" and thus revenge, or whether it induces a desire for national reconciliation, depends on the costs/benefits of this interpretation. According to this logic, human beings do not "really" act in reference to a "moral" realm at all. Actors' "internal" experiences are shaped by the *external* situation.[22]

On the other hand, however, pactmen contend that subjective inclinations such as "fear" and "insecurity" are not the result of rational calculation, but are rooted in "experience." Again, however, "experience" is an external situation, not dependent on interpretation. It lacks an active internal component; it is merely an adaptation to material conditions. Thus the problem is not only that pactmen present an impoverished perspective on human beings. The problem is that this instrumentalization of action necessarily results in determinism. This is why, despite the fact that pactmen quite rightly seek to correct "deterministic" structural paradigms by highlighting individual agency, pactmen are caught saying that elites had "no other alternative" than compromise, or that pacting was "the only possible formula."[23]

Most pactmen, however, realize they must somehow account for subjectivity. So they attempt to shore up their theory. This leads to contradictions and residual categories because any systematic revision would undermine pact school integrity.[24] For example, O'Donnell and Schmitter abandon the super-rationalistic (chess) image of transition they themselves present, and state:

> the transition process [is not] an orderly and cerebral game played by decorous and mild-mannered gentlemen. We ask the reader to conjure up a more tumultuous and impulsive version of the contest, with people challenging the rules on every move, pushing and shoving to get to the board, shouting out advice and threats from the sidelines, trying to cheat whenever they can – but nevertheless becoming progressively mesmerized by the drama they are participating in or watching, and gradually becoming committed to playing more decorously and loyally to the rules they themselves have elaborated.[25]

The theoretical problems here are grave: O'Donnell and Schmitter contradict themselves on their central tenets as to the nature of order and action! First, in direct contrast to their own earlier assertion that elite actions are a function of (individualistic, rationalistic) elite pragmatism, here elite actions are based on a nonrational, collectivistic internal "commitment" to the rules of the game. Ironically, this commitment is not based on a strategic or even an altruistic *choice* at all. It is produced by some sort of mysterious (irrational) collective "mesmerization."

Secondly, in direct contrast to their own earlier assertion that pacting is based on "mutual interdependence,"[26] here it is not interdependence but *force* ("pushing and shoving") that determines who "gets to the board" and plays and stays in the game. This means that the mesmerization and internal commitment of elites are absolutely crucial to negotiational success, since without it the game would break down into complete anarchy.

Thus O'Donnell and Schmitter eschew subjective variables – but here they acknowledge that anger, suspicion, and internal commitment demarcate the process of transition. The tight link between a person's sentiments and his contemporary activities has not only been lost, but completely abandoned. We are pushed back from a theory of observable realities to an interpretive theory about states of mind.[27]

Most significantly, it is precisely these subjective states that, according to O'Donnell and Schmitter, prevent us from ever "really" explaining rapid social change, including transitions to democracy.[28] In other words, human behavior is so complicated because of the subjective states that pactmen are so intent on leaving out. Formally, pactmen give up and simply call this complexity 'individual contingency." In practice, pactmen end up with subjective residual categories.[29]

Neuhouser has recently challenged the propriety of the elite consensus model in the case of Venezuela.[30] In the next section, I challenge the propriety of the pact school model in the case of Spain.

The case of Spain

Parliamentary government in Spain has both a long history and a weak record. Spain twice proclaimed republics. But the First Republic fell before it could write a constitution in 1873; and the Second Republic

survived five tumultuous years before breaking down in the Civil War in 1936.[31] The Civil War ended with the Nationalists as victor in 1939 and General Francisco Franco set up a traditional dictatorship that lasted until his death in 1975.

Yet, despite the notorious Spanish Civil War and nearly four decades of an authoritarian regime, Spain has recently transformed itself into a democracy. Moreover, the transition was achieved through a remarkably quiescent process of reform and "strategy of consensus." The 1976 Law for Political Reform paved the way for the legal abolition of the chief Francoist institutions. Other reforms followed, and the first democratic elections were held in 1977 without major incident. The elections were the first moment of a "period of consensus" that culminated in the ratification of the 1978 Constitution – "the first constitution in Spanish history that is neither the unilateral imposition of a particular party nor the expression of a single ideology."[32]

For pactmen, the case of Spain is "the very model of modern elite settlement."[33] Przeworski maintains that "Spain is the country to be studied"; Maravall and Santamaría assert that Spain exemplifies the "significance of agreement, consent, or compromise" that permits "the substitution of one regime for another."[34]

Pactmen *explain* Spanish consensus by suggesting that Spanish elites, "had in fact an *interest* in achieving consensus,"[35] and that Spanish elites were particularly pragmatic and skillful. Bonime Blanc, e.g., commends Spanish elites for their "politically pragmatic and responsible attitude" and goes on to suggest that "as long as such accommodational behavior continues to be the core of Spanish democracy, its institutions and practices should become firmly footed."[36]

In addition, pactmen maintain that Spanish elites were *able* to pact because they were relatively free from mass pressures. In a most extreme version of this argument, López Pintor suggests that the masses were an "absent majority" or "a soft cushion" over which Government and opposition elites could negotiate. According to López Pintor, "the majority of Spaniards were to be *witnesses* – not without fear or anxiety – to how the Government and opposition put themselves more or less peacefully in agreement in order to sign the social contract" (emphasis added).[37]

In summary, whether the strategic rationality of pacting, elite autonomy, or the particular personality of key elites is stressed, pactmen concur that elite *pragmatism* enabled *pacting*, which engendered the successful Spanish transition to democracy.

Critical assessment of the pact school approach to the Spanish transition

Pactmen are quite right to point out the centrality of consensus in the Spanish transition. The Spanish transition was carried out through what the Spanish people themselves called the "politics of consensus" during what was called the "period of consensus." The constitutional drafting committee was labeled in a similarly revealing way: it was called the "consensus coalition."[38] Never before in Spanish history had polarized elites even attempted to enact a strategy of consensus, yet politicians, journalists, and the masses alike discussed the recent transition in these terms.

However, though pactmen correctly *identify* the Spanish case, several problems arise in their *explanation* of the Spanish transition. Pactmen cannot explain either where Spanish consensus came from or why it worked without succumbing to contradictions and residual categories.

The motivation for pacting

First, let's explore Spanish elites' *motivation* for pacting. Pactmen maintain that Spanish elites had an "interest" in achieving consensus. Pacting enabled elites to get what they wanted. But if consensus was just a means to an end, what did Spanish elites *want*? How was it that polarized elites (whose ideologies ranged from fascism to communism and who fought on opposite sides of the Spanish Civil War) could all get what they wanted through pacting?

What we see when we attempt to answer this question is that it is *not* that regime and opposition elites' external interests were both met through consensus. Rather, Spanish elites came to define their interests (and the appropriate means with which to attain them) in a new way during the transition. As pactmen themselves state, Spanish elites "defined their *goals* not as the maximization of the interests of their respective clienteles, but rather the creation of a legitimate and stable

regime within which their supporters' interests would merely be 'satisficed' "; Spanish consensus was based on a "general moderation in respect to the traditional political demands of the radicals and a commitment to a minimum of welfare state policies by the conservatives."[39] In other words, both regime and opposition elites came to define *democracy* as their most important goal, and both regime and opposition elites – and the masses – came to define violence as an *inappropriate* means to achieve it.

How and why did Spanish elites come to define their means and ends in this way during the transition? First, pactmen simply maintain that the "experience" of civil war "taught" Spanish elites to "avoid block action and majoritarian principles in making basic decisions about political institutions."[40] For Morlino, the case of Spain (as well as Greece) demonstrates that the experience of civil war "tends to have a moderating impact on the behavior of the elites of the future democracy."[41]

Yet, the pact school notion that Spanish elites learned moderation from the "experience" of the civil war is deterministic. The notion that moderation was just *one* possible lesson of the civil war opens up pactmen to a subjectivity they seek to avoid. Then pactmen have to explain why Spanish elites learned *this* particular lesson.

Not surprisingly, most pactmen simply credit Spanish elites with an exceptional *ability* to learn that violence not only begets violence, but that violence can lead to an even worse situation. According to Share, the "exemplary elite behavior" of the transition was a function of "the widespread awareness of [Spain's history of extremism and violence] and the ability to learn historical lessons from it."[42] Says Medhurst, " 'a learning process' was at work. On all sides there was a determination to avoid the violence that had given rise to Franco's regime and the oppressive rigidity characteristic of his brand of stability."[43]

But of course, there is no a priori reason for "fear" or "memories as to the horrors of civil war" to "teach" moderation and/or national reconciliation at all – even if elites had an "exceptional ability" to learn this lesson. "Memories of civil war" can just as easily be used to call for revenge, not reconciliation, and this is precisely how the term "civil war" had previously been symbolized in Spain (and this is probably the most common symbolization of "civil war" throughout history). In emphasizing the strategic dimension of civil war, pactmen disconnect it from the cultural realm. Thus pactmen cannot explain *how* and *why*

key Spanish elites came to view "the civil war" in the same (or similar) ways, and what prevented less moderate politicians of left and right from taking over the Spanish transition.

Moreover, because pactmen introduce subjective variables ad hoc, they inevitably come up with inconsistent and contradictory assessments of elite motivation. For instance, on one hand pactmen such as Maravall, Santamaría, and Przeworski maintain that Spanish elites were pushed toward consensus by "fear of hardliners" and "threats from extremists." In direct contrast, however, Higley, Burton and Share maintain that the "security" of Spanish elites enabled consensual bargaining. As Share states, "transition through transaction is most likely to be successfully implemented from relatively strong and secure authoritarian regimes, and not in regimes that fear for their very survival."[44] The point is that once again "objectivity" within a rationalistic and individualistic frame of reference gives way to subjective residual categories.

The pact school reliance on contradictory, subjective residual categories is most evident, however, in that pact school arguments as to why Spanish Communists embraced consensus contradict pact school arguments as to why Basque Nationalists failed to embrace consensual bargaining. Consider first the case of the Spanish Communists.

The Spanish Communist Party (PCE)

The Spanish Communist Party (PCE) practiced guerilla warfare against the Franco regime from 1941 until the early 1950s. But beginning in the late 1950s, the PCE became increasingly moderate. In 1956, the general secretary of the PCE, Santiago Carrillo, placed the "Policy of National Reconciliation" before the executive committee as a strategy of "replacing Franco by peaceful means."[45] In 1976, the PCE replaced the Marxist-Leninist goal of "dictatorship of the proletariat" with the Eurocommunist goal of "*democracy*." In the first democratic elections of June 1977, the PCE electoral program consisted of five points, all pointing toward the democratic goal, and the principal campaign slogan of the PCE was, "to vote communist, is to vote democracy."[46]

Pactmen maintain that the moderation of the PCE was expressly tactical. Przeworski, for example, maintains that the "moderation" of the PCE was not "really" an ideological change at all, but merely a type of

"risk aversion."[47] Nevertheless, what pactmen ignore, is that for the first time in its history, the Spanish Communist Party placed democracy first, not communism.

In other words, to investigate only the complex strategies that actors employ without investigating the complexes of meanings and feelings to which they refer, limits and distorts our understanding of both action in general and the process of democratic transition. Pactmen fail to appreciate that the official PCE strategy of "moderation and national reconciliation" was a complex melding of core transitional (democratic) symbols and traditional communist ideology – and that this is precisely the type of symbolic classification that enables successful transition to democracy.

Moreover, though the moderation of the PCE was absolutely crucial to the success of the Spanish transition,[48] it led to the split and *decline* of the Spanish Communist Party.[49] The PCE became increasingly divided between those who embraced the strategy of moderation and reconciliation (most importantly, the general secretary of the PCE, Santiago Carrillo), and those, (most importantly, the president of the PCE, Dolores Ibarruri), who were reluctant to abandon Marxism-Leninism. Pactmen maintain either that the official policy of moderation allowed the PCE to play a role ("no matter how small") in the Spanish transition; or that Carrillo simply did not "foresee" his party's demise.[50] In either case, this is "post hoc hypothetical reconstruction" – not actor sensitive interpretation.[51]

The Basque parties

In direct contrast to the Spanish communists, Basque parties became not more moderate – but more radical – throughout the transition. None of the Basque parties – including the ideologically moderate Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV) – ever embraced consensual bargaining. The PNV delegation walked out of the Congress of Deputies just before that body approved the existing text of the Constitution, abstained from the final Cortes vote on the Constitution, and the party campaigned for abstention in the Constitutional referendum. The more radical Euskadiko Ezkerra (EE) voted against the Constitution and campaigned against its ratification in the referendum. As a result of the efforts of EE and the PNV, less than half of the Basque electorate voted in that referendum, compared with a turnout of 68 percent throughout Spain.[52]

Pact school explanations of Basque elites' reluctance to pact are circular and contradictory – if the Basque exception is even acknowledged.[53] First, pactmen maintain that disunity among Basque elites made pacting virtually impossible. Gilmour states that "the difficulty with the PNV was that it was still divided – as it had been ever since the end of the nineteenth century – into moderate regionalists and extreme nationalists." Similarly, Gunther, Sani, and Shabad maintain that "intense divisions made it extremely difficult for the largest and the historic Basque party, the PNV, to make binding commitments."[54]

Yet, every major political party suffered serious internal schisms between its more radical and conservative members during the Spanish transition. Divisions in the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) were discussed above, divisions in the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) will be discussed below, and the government "party," the UCD, was a coalition rather than a genuine party.[55] If elites agree to pact (as did Spanish communists, socialists, and centrists as well as Catalans), pactmen maintain that elites put aside their internal divisions in order to achieve their "ultimate" aims. Elites are said to act in accordance with their "perceptions of success, as well as their interest."[56] If elites do *not* pact (as in the case of the Basques), however, pactmen suggest that elites' interests were simply *irreconcilable.*

Secondly, pactmen maintain that Basque elites simply lacked the "personality," "ability," "character," or "will" to embrace consensual bargaining. Gilmour, for example, maintains that PNV leaders were not prepared "to accept political responsibility," and that, "on nationalist questions there was very little difference between this group of highly reactionary people and the 'maoist,' 'third world' leaders of ETA":

> The PNV leadership was hampered all along by the attitude of the party's radicals.... The intransigence of the *sabiniano* group in the PNV made it practically impossible for the party to take an unambiguous stance on anything other than police brutality. Arzallus was a fine orator and an able man, but he did not have the character, and perhaps not the will, to fashion a coherent programme for his party. Throughout the critical period of the transition, the PNV leadership lacked the courage to state unambiguously where it stood on the vital issues of terrorism and eventual independence.[57]

Gunther, Sani, and Shabad more subtly argue that the problem was one of leadership *selection.* In contrast to other opposition elites, who explicitly took the "personality characteristic" of "pragmatism" into account in the appointment of representatives to the constitutional

drafting committee, the PNV chose the former Jesuit Xabier Arzallus, "reputed to be one of the least moderate, least flexible members of the party hierarchy." For Gunther et al., these and other "departures from the politics of consensus" explain the failure of the Basque-government negotiations.[58]

Yet, whether they focus on elite personality or leadership selection, these arguments are patently circular. Why did Basque elites fail to learn (or lack the ability to learn) the "lesson" of pragmatism from the Civil War – especially given that Basque "costs" in the war (and the aftermath of the war) were so "enormous"? *Why* did Basques select the "nonpragmatic" Arzallus as their representative? This same circularity is also evident in Gunther et al.'s comment that, while other elites sought to secure a constitutional consensus, "conversely, representatives of the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) did not regard endorsement of the Constitution by consensus as an important political objective." "Departures" from the politics of consensus are symptomatic of – they do not *explain* – the failure of Basque elites to embrace consensual bargaining.[59]

This circularity turns into outright contradiction, however, when pactmen attempt to (more equitably) blame Basque *and* government elite for the failed negotiations. For instance, Maravall and Santamaría state:

> Neither the government nor the nationalists were clear in spelling out the ultimate logical and temporal limits to the process. Lingering negotiations between them led frequently during 1979 to changing strategies, alternating and "unnatural" alliances, blackmail, deadlock and confusion.[60]

Though they eschew subjective variables, here Maravall and Santamaría maintain that "unnatural alliances" (i.e., alliances *not* based on common interest), as well as "blackmail, deadlock and confusion" demarcate Basque-government negotiations. This not only contradicts Maravall and Santamaría's own earlier assertion that Spanish elites "learned" "pragmatism" from the civil war (see above); it calls into question their earlier assertion that "pressure" from extremists induces compromise (since both the government and moderate Basque elites experienced enormous "pressure" from both "intransigent" Basque radicals, e.g., ETA, and right wing extremists).

Non-elites in the Spanish transition: the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE)

Finally, pactmen maintain that Spanish elites "were able to pact" because they were relatively free from mass pressures. But were Spanish non-elites as passive as pactmen claim? Were Spanish elites indeed "relatively autonomous"?

First, though pactmen portray the Spanish masses as "apathetic" and "demobilized" and thus *irrelevant* to the transition, they also maintain that the "extraordinary moderation" of the masses "facilitated" the Spanish transitional process.[61] And just as we saw post-hoc hypothetical reconstruction lead to contradictions about *elite* motivation, inconsistencies abound as to *why* Spanish nonelites were "moderate" or "demobilized." For example, while López Pintor and McDonough and López Pina both describe the Spanish masses as *demobilized* during the Spanish transition, López Pintor locates apathy in the economic *prosperity* and consumerism of the 1960s, while McDonough and López Pina trace it to the economic *insecurity* caused by the 1970s world-wide economic crisis. Meanwhile, Fishman challenges the demobilization thesis but concurs that the world-wide economic crisis of the late 1970s made workers "fearful,"[62] and Przeworski maintains that prosperity followed by economic stagnation causes the masses to *mobilize*.[63]

Once again, the point is not whether Spanish nonelites were "apathetic," "moderate," "fearful," or "insecure" during the transition, or even whether or not this attitude influenced elite pacting. The point is that while the instrumental element of calculation must be considered part of every human act, subjective considerations pervade every calculation.[64]

In addition, the case of the Spanish socialists challenges the pact school notion of elite autonomy. Crucial Spanish socialist elites were not "disposed" to compromise at all; they *became* moderate, in large part *because of* pressure from the masses.

Specifically, the Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE) emerged in 1974 as a Marxist mass mobilization party. It rejected "any path of accommodation with capitalism," or the Francoist system.[65] Throughout the transition, however, the PSOE became increasingly moderate. Socialist leader Felipe González maintains that the abandonment of mass mobilization by the PSOE was dictated by "the very moderation of the

Spanish populace."[66] In his study of working-class organizations, Fishman also found that, "the impetus for restraint came from below, from the rank-and-file workers, with the workplace leaders participating reluctantly in the limitation of conflict rather than serving as the lieutenants of a politically orchestrated demobilization from above."[67]

Yet, though Fishman distinguishes himself from fellow pactmen by acknowledging the role of "rank and file workers" in the Spanish transition, Fishman does not challenge the presuppositions of the pact school.[68] On the contrary, Fishman embraces pact school atheoreticism – which he calls the "Weberian tradition" of "answering broad analytical questions" with "historically specific conclusions" – and, not surprisingly, ends up relying on the same subjective residual categories seen previously in the pact school.[69] In classic pact school fashion, Fishman acknowledges that his "lack of general explanation might prove disappointing to some investigators," but deems it "inevitable in a style of social science that attempts to make sense out of the choices and difficulties encountered by major socio-political actors."[70]

A culturalist perspective of the Spanish transition

From a culturalist perspective, the distinction between elites and non-elites is inherently blurred. It is not just that elites need "legitimacy" in order to attain and maintain power; both elites and non-elites are part and parcel of the same historical "reality," or *drama*. As Pérez-Díaz states:

> The Spanish civil war was the national drama, ever present in the public mind, and the pacts have been part of the symbolic ceremony which has nullified that experience – an anti-civil war, pro-class reconciliation ceremony. The political class and the social leaders have been the main agents and officiators at this ceremony with the country acting as spectator, chorus and accompaniment.[71]

In precisely the same manner, elites are able to manipulate and create symbols in ways that non-elites are not; but (consciously or unconsciously) political elites attempt to link themselves (and their parties) to salient symbols and themes, and therefore elites *reflect* more than create symbolic patterns.

Thus a culturalist perspective takes "sense-making" seriously, and systematically explores the "subjective" as well as "objective" dimensions

of motivation and action. In the case of democratic transition, a cultural analysis would seek to 1) identify the prevailing symbols and themes of critical transitional moments, 2) explain where this symbolic framework came from, and 3) show how this framework(s) shapes (or does not shape) action.

In the case of Spain, analysts, lay-people, and actors themselves concur that the "theme" of the Spanish transition was that Spain must overcome the divisiveness and brutality of the Spanish Civil War, and embark on a "new beginning" of democracy and national reconciliation.[72] For some, this theme became so pervasive in the years after Franco's death that the transition to democracy itself seemed *inevitable*. Indeed, del Aguila and Montoro maintain that it was not "democracy" and "reconciliation" ("surpassing the two Spains," etc.), but "the *inevitability of the process* that we can call the first consensus of the transition."[73] One could even argue that it was this feeling of inevitability that led *pactmen* (among others) to perceive and portray Spanish reconciliation and democracy as arising "naturally" or "logically" from the ashes of the Civil War – forty years previously.[74]

From a cultural perspective, the Spanish normalization of democracy was a crucial, mobilizing *myth*. It was not normative epiphenomena, i.e., a byproduct of the structural condition of democratization. In other words, the Spanish transition was a "success" *because* a democratic, reconciliatory symbolic framework came to emerge and, even more importantly, *sustain* itself throughout the Spanish transition.[75]

Where did this transitional myth come from? How and why did it become so pervasive? This transitional myth became transcendent precisely because its origins are so complex and multifarious. It was generated by an "elective affinity" between various internal as well as global symbolic and institutional patterns. While it is outside the scope of this article to discuss the entire range of political, economic, and cultural factors, which culminated in this particular symbolic construction, here I briefly touch on just a few of the most obvious.

First, in the fifteen or twenty years prior to Franco's death, democratic and reconciliatory ideas and habits had been emerging from various political, cultural, and economic arenas. As indicated previously, the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) changed radically in the fifteen or twenty years before Franco's death, in large part because Spanish communist leader Santiago Carillo, exiled in France, was greatly influenced

by European unionism and Eurocommunism. In other words, regardless of whether his motivation was tactical or ideological (it was undoubtedly both) or his goal was entirely strategic, the Policy of National Reconciliation of 1956 first presented to the public an image of a peaceful, reconciliatory, democratic transition ("replacing Franco by peaceful means").

Over the same period of time, crucial Church leaders as well as the majority of the Catholic episcopacy, greatly influenced by Vatican II, came to support religious pluralism and estrangement from Francoism. This gradual change culminated in 1971 with the nomination of Archbishop Enrique y Tarancón as president of the Conferencia Episcopal. From then on, the collective documents of the episcopacy, and the declarations of Tarancón himself carefully alluded to the desirability of a democratic regime. Most importantly, the Church's position also rested on a reconsideration of the Spanish Civil War. In a 1971 joint assembly, ecclesiastics proclaimed that "we have sinned ... and we ask for pardon ... since at the time we did not know how to be true ministers of reconciliation in the bosom of our nation, divided by a war between brothers."[76]

At the same time, but in a more mundane way, the great majority of Spaniards, better educated than in the past but out of touch with ideological politics, had been taking part in social institutions such as markets and voluntary associations. These new habits and consumer patterns, combined with more long-standing Western images, meant that by the time of Franco's death, authoritarianism itself had come to seem "exotic" or "different" – and Western democracy was the taken-for-granted standard. Thus, as Pérez Díaz points out, from the beginning to the end of Franco's reign, Spain experienced nearly a complete "*reversal* of normality and abnormality."[77]

Most importantly, this symbolic framework allowed the whole notion of "the politics of consensus" to emerge; it was this symbolic framework that made pacting *strategic*. Spanish political elites "were successful not because they were able to lead the public but rather because they were able to learn from and follow the public mood,"[78] which, by the time of Franco's death in 1975, was both reconciliatory, and predominantly liberal democratic.[79]

In addition, a new national identity was "invented" or ritualized *during* the Spanish transition itself. In every "consensual" moment – e.g. the

first democratic elections of 1977, the drafting of the Monclova Pacts, the drafting of the Spanish constitution – Spanish elites acted out, or ritualized, the shared symbolic framework in which [evil] fratricidal, confrontational civil war symbolically opposed [sacred] democracy and national reconciliation. Similarly, the newly emerging Spanish press, especially *El Pais*, explicitly sought to educate the public in a new and democratic way, and affirm democratic and reconciliatory understandings.[80] The point is that this public drama of transition was both symbolic and structural, conscious and unconscious. It affirmed and sustained the extraordinary symbolic framework of democracy and national reconciliation, while at the same time institutionalizing democracy.

The Basque exception

Yet, it is also equally evident that the "transcendent" theme of democracy and national reconciliation never prevailed in the Basque country during the transition. One could even argue that it has yet to prevail in the Basque provinces. On-going events in Europe (as well as Spanish history) attest to the difficulty of attaining and maintaining fragile democratic identities in the face of regional nationalism. A cultural perspective embraces, rather than denies, these ambiguities and contradictions because it is this very ambiguity that ensures voluntarism.[81]

In other words, the case of the Basques underscores that while there was a coherence to the democratic and reconciliatory cultural framework that emerged in post-Franco Spain, it was neither random nor inevitable. Democratic rhetoric and symbols emerged and persisted *despite* conflicting "evidence," and *alongside*, even intertwined in, neo-authoritarian images and symbols. For example, according to Rodriguez Ibañez, a "neo-authoritarian conception of democracy" persisted in the public life of post-Franco Spain, in which politics was viewed as "salvation Administration."[82]

Specifically, while anti-state violence became linked to intransigence and civil war in the dominant transitional symbolic framework (thus enabling both Spanish socialists and communists acceptably to abandon mass mobilization rhetoric and strategies), "violence" has a more complicated symbolic construction in the Basque country. According to Pérez Agote, in the intimate space of the family and friends under Franco, anti-state violence became understood as the only public

expression of Basque identity available. Thus even today, a taken-for-granted affection (*"adhesion afectiva"*) for even the most "intransigent" Basque radicals is evident. Pérez Agote defines the Basque country as "a place in which a symbolic center of orientation for action that is socially shared or taken-for-granted does not exist." The symbols perceived to be "Basque" were *defined* by their transgression against and rejection of the Franco regime in the early Franco period, but this symbolization bore little value for the younger generation (born after 1960) and it was not replaced by a public, totalizing ideology.[83]

That the transition succeeded despite the lack of consensus in the Basque country demonstrates the tremendous force of the dominant cultural patterns. Left and right wing "extremists" were used as antitheses in the transition (as was "the civil war") – a symbolic exemplar of non-consensual processes and attitudes. Of course, at any moment this fragile symbolic construction could have broken down – as is happening in so many current attempts at transition.

Conclusion

Today's complicated, tumultuous democratic world sharply contrasts with the simple, reductionistic paradigms that have dominated the substantive area of democratic transition. In this article I argue that elite, corporatist, and rational choice models, which I call the pact school, are not equipped to explain the paradoxical phenomena of "consensual" transition from authoritarianism to democracy. The central problems are twofold. First, pactmen insist on "elite choice," but voluntarism within an objective frame of reference necessarily gives way to determinism. Secondly, despite their insistence on objectivity, pactmen end up relying on subjective residual categories. What this indicates is that, whether or not pactmen choose to acknowledge it, the process of democratic transition *is* embedded in subjectivity.

I have also argued that although pactmen consider Spain an "exemplar" of "transition from above," the Spanish transition cannot be explained by the pact school model. Pact school arguments about why Spanish communists embraced consensus contradict pact school arguments about why Basque nationalists did not; and the case of the Spanish socialists – where non-elites pushed elites *toward* moderation – contradicts the whole of elite theory.

Finally, I have briefly suggested a cultural alternative that highlights the complex redefinition of reality that constitutes the Spanish transition. The Spanish transition is phenomenal precisely because symbols that could have evoked, have historically evoked and *did* evoke confrontation and division (e.g., "Civil War") were used over and over again in a new way to affirm consensus. In summary, Spain is an exemplar – not simply of elite pacting – but of the creation and maintenance of an extraordinarily powerful transitional symbolic framework.

Acknowledgments

Portions of this article were presented at the 1991 meeting of the Pacific Sociological Association, Irvine, California and the 1991 meeting of the American Sociological Association, Cincinnati, Ohio. I thank Jeffrey C. Alexander for his comments and suggestions on various drafts of this article.

Notes

1. A similar point was made by Valeri Karavayev in "Eastern Europe is opening itself to the world," *International Affairs* (April, 1990).
2. There are a handful of pactwomen (e.g. Nancy Bermeo and Eva Etzioni-Halevy), but I continue to use the term "pactmen" instead of pactmen and pactwomen or pactpeople for brevity, and because – although it is outside the scope of this article to discuss it here – in Western society the rationalistic and individualistic theoretical orientation (and rejection of subjectivity) is linked to masculinity.
3. According to Jeffrey Alexander, residual categories are ad hoc constructs called up to "explain" contradictory empirical evidence without surrendering more general explanations. See *Theoretical Logic in Sociology*, Vol. 1 (Berkeley: University of California, 1982).
4. By "relatively peaceful" or "uneventful" transition, I mean that, unlike other moments of transition in Spanish history, the death of Franco did not result in a civil war, military coup, or even the purging of Francoists. By the "success" of the democratic transition I mean that the Francoist authoritarian system was effectively replaced by a self-sustaining democracy. By self-sustaining democracy, I mean one in which there is 1) a real possibility of partisan alternation in office, 2) a real possibility of reversible policy changes resulting from alternation in office, and 3) effective civilian control over the military. See Przeworski, "The games of transition," Paper presented at the Center for Social Theory and Comparative History Colloquium Series, (UCLA, 1990). The crucial exception in terms of Spain's "successful," "peaceful," "uneventful" transition to democracy is the Basque nationalist (and corresponding centralist) violence and terrorism which plagued the new regime and continues to be the most threatening and divisive issue in Spain.
5. As Jeffrey Alexander and Paul Colomy have pointed out, falsification does not

occur simply because theoretical commitments are falsified in the narrow sense. Falsification occurs when these commitments become delegitimated in the eyes of the scientific community. See "Traditions and competition: Preface to a post-positivist approach to knowledge accumulation," in George Ritzer, editor, *Metatheorizing* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1992).

6. See Alexander, *Theoretical Logic in Sociology.*
7. While structural sociologists and pactmen provide important criticisms of the 1950s and 1960s political cultural tradition, theirs is a very narrow understanding of "culture." Neither Tilly nor Schmitter, for example, perceive that cultural elements can change in content and intensity over time, and produce diversity in values, practices, and consequences. Schmitter criticizes political cultural "pseudo-explanations" for not explaining "why similar configurations and behavior in interest politics have emerged and persist in a great variety of cultural settings," why an ethos "wax[es] and wane[s] during different historical periods," and why "societies supposedly sharing the same general ethos exhibit such wide diversity in interest-group values, practices and consequences." Asks Schmitter, "are we to believe that political culture is a sort of "spigot variable" which gets turned on every once in a while to produce a different system of functional representation?" In a similar vein, Tilly maintains that according the "Durkheimian" model, shared beliefs are diametrically opposed to differentiation. See Philippe Schmitter, "Still the century of corporatism?" in Schmitter and Lehmbruch, editors, *Trends Toward Corporatist Intermediation* (London: Sage, 1979), 11, and Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1978), 19.
8. John Higley and Michael Burton, "The elite variable in democratic transitions and breakdowns," *American Sociological Review* 54 (1989): 17–32. Cammack notes that Higley and Burton have different definitions for "elites," and that these different definitions remove any sharp differentiation between elites and nonelites over time. For example, at times Higley and Burton include in their definition of elites "authoritative positions in ... movements of whatever kind" that may affect national outcomes. But by defining elites in this way, they destroy the distinction they otherwise carefully maintain between elites and nonelites. See Paul Cammack, "A critical assessment of the new elite paradigm," *American Sociological Review* 55 (1990): 415–420. In this article, I use "elites" to mean "the top leadership in all sectors," unless otherwise indicated.
9. Przeworski, "The games of transition," 2–3. Similarly, O'Donnell and Schmitter maintain that their work "involves an effort to capture the extraordinary uncertainty of the transition...." Their's an inquiry "into the problem of 'underdetermined' social change, of large-scale transformations which occur when there are insufficient structural or behavioral parameters to guide and predict the outcome." See *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 3.
10. Donald Share and Scott M. Mainwaring, "Transitions through transaction: Democratization in Brazil and Spain," Working Paper # 32, Berkeley, California, 1984.
11. Michael Burton and John Higley, "Elite settlements," *American Sociological Review* 52 (1987): 295–307.
12. See Jeffrey Alexander, *Twenty Lectures in Sociology* (New York: Columbia, 1987), 162.
13. See Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); and "The games of transition."
14. For example, Baylora and Share discuss the "opening moves" and "end game" of

transition. See Enrique Baylora, editor, *Comparing New Democracies: Transition and Consolidation in Mediterranean Europe and the Southern Cone* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987); and Donald Share, *The Making of Spanish Democracy* (New York: Praeger, 1986).

15. The terms "elite settlement," "transition from above," "transition through transaction" as well as "consensual transition" are problematic precisely because they derive from and elicit the narrow, individualistic, and rationalistic presuppositions of the pact school (especially the reductionistic emphasis on elite pragmatism). Przeworski quite rightly points out that the term "transition" itself is an unfortunate label, since it suggests that the outcome of this type of situation is predetermined. See *Democracy and the Market*, 37. The term coined in the Czechoslovakian case, "velvet revolution," better reflects the paradoxes of this type of socio-political process. Nevertheless, like Przeworski, I continue here to follow common usage ("democratic transition," "consensual transition," etc.).
16. Burton and Higley, "Elite settlements," 295. Similarly, Higley and Burton maintain that "over time, most elites achieve their most basic aims and are therefore inclined to view the totality of decisional outcomes as positive-sum" ("The elite variable in democratic transitions and breakdowns," 19). See also Giovanni Sartori, *The Theory of Democracy Revisited: The Contemporary Debate*, Vol. 1. (Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House, 1987), 229.
17. Burton and Higley maintain that elite settlements are "relatively rare events" ("Elite settlements," 295). Similarly, O'Donnell and Schmitter consider (consensual) democratic transitions "abnormal" (*Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*, 3).
18. See John Higley, Michael G. Burton, and Lowell Field, "Elite theory defended," *American Sociological Review* 55 (1990): 421–426, and O'Donnell and Schmitter, *Transitions From Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions*, 3–4. Ironically, elsewhere Higley and Burton criticize previous elite-centered work (e.g., O'Donnell and Schmitter, López-Pintor, Malloy) for their "large element of indeterminacy." See Higley and Burton, "The elite variable in democratic transitions," 17.
19. Paul Cammack, "A critical assessment of the new elite paradigm," *American Sociological Review* 55 (1990): 415–420. The present article goes beyond Cammack's in two ways. First, it places the elite paradigm in theoretical perspective: here we see the similarity of elite, rational choice, and corporatist models, and compare this theoretical orientation with that of structural sociology. Secondly, whereas Cammack seeks to show that "the proponents of the new elite paradigm fail to establish the priority of political explanations over social structural explanations," I argue that (1) the pact school cannot be revised without undermining its own central tenets, and (2) we must formally incorporate the subjective realm eschewed by *both* structural sociology and the pact school into our model of democratic transition.
20. See O'Donnell and Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions*, 3; and Adam Przeworski, "Some problems in the study of the transition to democracy," in O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead, editors, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Southern Europe* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 47–63.
21. "The elite variable in democratic transitions and breakdowns," 19.
22. This same instrumentalization of subjectivity plagues the pact school discussion of "normative commitments" or "legitimacy." For example, Diamond and Linz state: "the option for a democratic regime was a matter of pragmatic, calculated strategy by conservative forces who ... *correctly perceived* that representative institutions

were in their best interest ... at the elite level, deep normative commitments to democracy appear to have followed these rational choices.... [For both elites and nonelites] values of tolerance, participation and commitment to democratic principles and procedures developed as a *result* of practice and experience with democratic institutions" (Larry Diamond and Juan J. Linz, "Introduction: Politics, society and democracy in Latin America," in L. Diamond et al., editors, *Democracy in Developing Countries: Latin America* [Boulder: Lynn Reiner, 1988], 10–11; emphases added). See also Przeworski, "Some problems in the study of transitions," 53; Giuseppe DiPalma, "Government performance: An issue and three cases in search of theory," in Geoffrey Pridham, editor, *The New Mediterranean Democracies: Regime Transition in Spain, Greece and Portugal* (London: Frank Cass, 1984); Carlos Huneeus, "From diarchy to polyarchy: Prospects for democracy in Chile," in E. Baylora, editor, *Comparing New Democracies: Transition and Consolidation in Mediterranean Europe and the Southern Cone* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987).

23. See Carlos Huneeus, "La transición a la democrácia en España: Dimensiones de una polîitica consociacional," in J. Santamaría, editor, *Transición a la Democrácia en el sur de Europa y America Latina* (Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 1981), 267; and Julián Santamaría, *Transición a la Democrácia en el sur de Europa y America Latina*, 405.
24. See Jeffrey C. Alexander, *Twenty Lectures* (New York: Columbia, 1987), 174–176.
25. *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions*, 66.
26. Specifically, O'Donnell and Schmitter maintain that, "the general scenario for negotiating a pact is fairly clear: it is a situation in which conflicting or competing groups are interdependent, in that they can neither do without each other nor unilaterally impose their preferred solution on each other if they are to satisfy their respective divergent interests," (*Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions*, 38).
27. Alexander makes this point regarding Homans (*Twenty Lectures*, 176). This reliance on subjective residual categories is also evident in Pridham's attempt to explain stability "despite declines in system output" by calling up Easton's "thesis of diffuse support," which proposes that a regime "may accumulate a 'reserve of goodwill' that can be drawn upon in times of crisis or low performance." But "a reserve of goodwill" is nothing more than an unexplained internal commitment to the regime, and/or the ideals of the regime – i.e., an *admitted* subjective residual category. See Geoffrey Pridham, "Comparative perspectives on the new Mediterranean democracies: A model of regime transition?" in Pridham, editor, *The New Mediterranean Democracies: Regime Transition in Spain, Greece and Portugal* (London: Frank Cass, 1984): 1–29; and David Easton, *A Systems Analysis of Political Life* (New York: John Wiley, 1965). Similarly, Diamond and Linz maintain that democracy in Costa Rica and Venezuela is "culturally sustained at the mass level by broad and deep normative commitments to tolerance, moderation, and civil liberties, and by unusually high levels of citizen participation in associational life outside the state, motivated and structured by democratic norms" ("Introduction: Politics, society and democracy in Latin America," 13). But this contradicts Diamond and Linz's own earlier claims that normative commitments are "really" just a function of a regime's "success" and efficiency (see ff. 22).
28. Indeed, O'Donnell and Schmitter conclude that "transition toward democracy is by no means a linear or a rational process. There is simply too much uncertainty about capabilities and too much suspicion about intentions for that" (*Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions*, 72).

29. Elkins and Simeon actually advocate using "political culture" as a "second order explanation" (read residual category): "we suggest that it [political culture] be reserved for explaining political differences between collectivities when structural and institutional explanations can be shown to be deficient." See David Elkins and Richard Simeon, "A cause in search of its effect, or what does political culture explain?" *Comparative Politics* 11 (1979): 127–145.
30. Neuhouser makes two important points. First Neuhouser quite rightly challenges the pact school supposition that Venezuelan elites simply "learned" from the "mistakes" of the trienio (1945–48), and hence instituted the "Pact of Punto Fijo" to ensure democratization. Secondly, Neuhouser correctly points out that the elite framework fails to identify those macro-economic structures that differentially constrain political processes across regions of the capitalist world economy. But without a cultural framework, Neuhouser's "class compromise" argument reeks of economic determinism. Neuhouser argues that "democratic stability occurs when state managers are able to balance capital accumulation and consumption policies. Democratic instability occurs when state managers lack sufficient resources to satisfy the consumption demands of a mobilized working class without threatening the accumulation interests of capitalists." In other words, Neuhouser finds a correlation between government income, government income from petroleum, and percent of centrist parties, and argues that the post-1958 democratic regime in Venezuela stabilized only after the oil price increases of the early 1970s generated a huge upsurge in government revenues. But nowhere does Neuhouser suggest that the oil revenues enabled *democratic legitimation*. And without legitimation a democratic regime is unstable. See Kevin Neuhouser, "Democratic stability in Venezuela: Elite consensus or class compromise," *American Sociological Review* 57: 1 (1992): 117–135.
31. See Stanley Payne, "Representative government in Spain: The historical background," in H. Penniman and E. Mujal-León, editors, *Spain at the Polls, 1977, 1979, and 1982* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1985): 1–29.
32. Raymond Carr and Juan Pablo Fusi, *Spain: Dictatorship to Democracy* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1979), 244.
33. Richard Gunther, "Spain: The very model of the modern elite settlement," in J. Higley and R. Gunther, editors, *Elites and Democratic Consolidation in Latin America and Southern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992): 38–80.
34. Przeworski, "Some problems in the study of transitions," 61; José M. Maravall and Julián Santamaría, "Political change in Spain and the prospects for democracy," in G. O'Donnell, P. Schmitter, and L. Whitehead, editors, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Southern Europe* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 73. Similarly, Share maintains that the case of Spain demonstrates that "in the end, it is up to political elites to square the circle of transition through transaction" (Donald Share, "Transitions to democracy and transition through transaction," *Comparative Political Studies* 19 [1987]: 525–548). And DiPalma asserts that in the case of Spain "calculus, choice and leadership prove[d] more decisive" than "objective circumstances" (DiPalma, "Government Performance: An Issue and Three Cases in Search of Theory," 173).
35. José Wert Ortega, "The transition from below: Public opinion among the Spanish population from 1977–1979," in H. Penniman and E. Mujal-León, editors, *Spain at the Polls, 1977, 1979, and 1982* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1985): 73–87.
36. Andrea Bonime Blanc, *Spain's Transition to Democracy* (Boulder: Westview, 1987), 54–60.

37. Rafael López Pintor, *La opinión publica española: Del franquismo a la democrácia* (Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 1982), 17 and 52. Gunther, Sani, and Shabad more subtly argue that there were several "procedural features" of the Spanish politics of consensus "conducive to conflict regulation," including the fact that the negotiations "took place in private, and not in public arenas." "Privacy shields party representatives from the scrutiny of their respective supporters and electoral clienteles, and thus facilitates the making of concessions central to compromise agreements" (Richard Gunther, Giacomo Sani, and Goldie Shabad, *Spain After Franco: The Making of a Competitive Party System* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986], 116–117).
38. Significantly, while the terms "period of consensus," "strategy of consensus," "politics of consensus," and "consensus coalition" were used by the Spanish people themselves, they did not utilize the term "consensual transition." "Consensual transition" falsely implies that everything is consensual. Akin to the terms "elite settlement," "transition through transaction," etc. discussed previously, it does not reflect the precariousness and fragility inherent in this type of situation.
39. See Gunther, Sani, and Shabad, *Spain After Franco*, 118–119 (emphasis added); and Salvador Giner, "Political economy, legitimation, and the state in Southern Europe" in G. O'Donnell, P. Schmitter, and L. Whitehead, editors, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Southern Europe* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 14.
40. Maravall and Santamaría, "Political change in Spain and the prospects for democracy," 86.
41. Leonardo Morlino, "Democratic establishments: A dimensional analysis," in E. Baylora, editor, *Comparing New Democracies: Transition and Consolidation in Mediterranean Europe and the Southern Cone* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), 65. This conceptualization of "experience" is so common, it is taken-for-granted and generalized in the pact school. For example, Medhurst maintains that "the shared experience of *dictatorship*" as well as the civil war "left its mark on the quest for consensus" (Kenneth Medhurst, "Spain's evolutionary pathway from dictatorship to democracy," in G. Pridham, editor, *The New Mediterranean Democracies: Regime Transition in Spain, Greece and Portugal* [London: Frank Cass, 1984], 40, emphasis added).
42. Share, *The Making of Spanish Democracy*, 120.
43. Medhurst, "Spain's evolutionary pathway from dictatorship to democracy," 40.
44. Maravall and Santamaría, "Political change in Spain and the prospects for democracy," 86; Przeworski, "The games of transition," 16; Higley and Burton, "The elite variable in democratic transitions and breakdowns"; and Share, "Transitions to democracy and transition through transaction," 544.
45. See Gunther, Sani, and Shabad, *Spain After Franco*, 60–61.
46. These points were: 1) "The democratic vote is the guaranteee of stability and the peaceful *convivencia* of Spaniards in the future"; 2) "to vote communist is a vote for the democracy"; 3) the elements of the Constitutional Pact, including civil rights and liberties, democratization of politics, separation of Church and State and autonomy for national communities; 4) that "in order to confront the economic crisis the workers must occupy the space that corresponds to them"; and 5) "a plan to bring health to the economy and new forms of democratic economic development." See *Mundo Obrero* April 20, 1977, 4–5. For an informative discussion of party emergence and development in the era of consensus, see Gunther, Sani, and Shabad, *Spain After Franco*, chs. 3 and 4.

47. "The Games of Transition," 16.
48. As Gunther, Sani, and Shabad maintain, "it would be difficult to overstate the importance for the transition of the fact that the leaders of the largest party of clandestine opposition to the former regime adopted and implemented a policy of national reconciliation and firmly rejected rancorous and uncompromising behavior during this critical constituent period." See *Spain After Franco*, 118.
49. The showing of the PCE in the first democratic elections of 1977 was poor (and even worse in 1979), despite considerable electoral advantages: e.g., a large number of enthusiastic activists, an appreciable intellectual backing, a large union organization (the Comisiones Obreras, CCOO), a fully funded organization, and some kind of organization in virtually all Spanish provinces. See *Spain After Franco*, 70; Bell, *Democratic Politics in Spain* (New York: St. Martins, 1983), 68.
50. Wert Ortega, "The transition from below," 78.
51. Alexander makes this same point about James Coleman in *Twenty Lectures*.
52. The PNV was founded in 1893 by Sabino de Arana as a nationalist, clerical, and bourgeois party. Toward the end of the century, a group of liberal, anti-carlist industrialists who had formed the *Sociedad Euskalherria* (the Basque society) joined the PNV and confirmed its moderate ideology. Euskadiko Ezkerra (EE) was one of many regional political parties to emerge after the death of Franco. EE is more leftist and separatist than the PNV; certain elements of EE are avowedly Marxist. EE is affiliated with the Basque separatist organization Euzkadi ta Askatasuna (ETA), which was formed in 1959 by young radical PNV members who broke off from the party. Prior to the 1979 election, a schism within EE resulted in the formation of the more extreme Herri Batasuna (HB). Support for the more extreme nationalist groups, Euskadiko Ezkerra (EE) and Herri Batasuna (HB), increased substantially between the elections of 1977 and 1979. While in the first electoral contest EE obtained only 6.5 percent of the regional vote, the combined vote total for EE and HB exceeded 25 percent in 1979. See Gunther, Sani, and Shabad, 123–124, 181. The issue of Basque nationalism is obviously complex and outside the scope of this article. See Juan Díez Medrano, "Patterns of development and nationalism," *Theory and Society* 23/4 (August 1994): 541–570; and Alfonso Pérez-Agote, *La reproducción del nacionalismo vasco* (Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 1984), for two excellent works on the structural and symbolic bases of Basque nationalism.
53. Share, for example, ignores the Basque issue in *The Making of Spanish Democracy*.
54. David Gilmour, *The Transformation of Spain* (London: Quartet Books, 1985), 221; and Gunther, Sani, and Shabad, *Spain After Franco*, 338.
55. See Gunther, Sani, and Shabad, *Spain After Franco*, 104.
56. Przeworski, "The games of transition," 16.
57. Gilmour, *The Transformation of Spain*, 221–222. *Sabinianos* refers to the followers of the founder of the PNV, Sabino de Arana. Sabino believed there was no racial connection between Basques and Spaniards. He sought to preserve the Basque race as well as the Basque language (Euskera).
58. Nevertheless, Gunther, Sani, and Shabad insinuate the irrationality of the Basques by recounting "the rancorous rhetoric and disruptive behavior of PNV elites during the constituent process." See *Spain After Franco*, 338.
59. When Gunther et al. broach the issue from the other side (and attempt to explain the *success* of the Spanish politics of consensus), they realize that their argument borders on tautology: "The most important ingredients of the politics of consensus were the historical memories, basic values, political objectives and behavioral styles

of the relevant sets of party elites. Care must be given to avoid tautological arguments involving these kinds of variables, but it can be stated in the abstract that negotiations involving pragmatic political figures, whose historical memories lead them to perceive potential threats to system survival and who wish to preserve important features of that system, are more likely to culminate in satisfactory conflict resolutions than will negotiations among dogmatic individuals, who are unaware of the fragility of the system or who have no stake in its preservation" (*Spain After Franco*, 117–118).

60. Maravall and Santamaría, "Political change in Spain and the prospects for democracy," 91.
61. See Share, "Transitions to democracy and transition through transaction," 536.
62. Fishman points to an important problem in the demobilization thesis: the peak of strike activity in Spain was actually attained in 1979, *"after the alleged demobilization had already taken place" (Working Class Organization and the Return to Democracy in Spain* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990], 217: emphasis in original).
63. See López Pintor, *La opinión publica española: Del franquismo a la democrácia*; McDonough and López Pina, "Continuity and change in Spanish politics," in Dalton, Flanagan, and Beck, editors, *Electoral Change in Industrial Democracies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 365–396; Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market.*
64. See Alexander, *Theoretical Logic in Sociology*, Vol. 3 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 24.
65. In 1976, the term "Marxist" appeared in the PSOE's self-description for the first time, and the PSOE's principle objective was "the overcoming of the capitalist means of production through the seizure of economic and political power and socialization of the means of production, distribution and exchange by the working class." See Gunther, Sani, and Shabad, *Spain After Franco*, 74.
66. Quoted in Gunther, Sani, and Shabad, *Spain After Franco*, 167.
67. Fishman, *Working Class Organization and the Return to Democracy in Spain*, 227. Foweraker also argues that the Spanish democratic project *began* with, and continued because of, the labor movement. See Foweraker, *The Making of Democracy in Spain*, 1989.
68. Like Fishman, Foweraker skirts, rather than confronts, the theoretical implications of his argument: "my intention is not to contest or confirm extant accounts of the [Spanish] transition per se ... [though] I confess my dissatisfaction with studies ... which limit democratic achievement to changes of regime at government level" (*The Making of Democracy in Spain*, 2). The problem with Lachmann's "elite conflict theory" is different: Lachmann bridges elite and conflict concerns, while demonstrating that both elite and conflict theory lack a coherent conceptualization of culture. See Richard Lachmann, "Class formation without class struggle: An elite conflict theory of the transition to capitalism," *American Sociological Review* 55 (1990): 398–414.
69. For example, Fishman maintains: "A constellation of numerous factors – most prominently the links between the political parties and the union movement, the commitment to democracy and acceptance of the legitimacy of the state by the plant-level leaders themselves, and the economic crisis along with the associated moderation or caution of rank and file workers – led the labor movement to conduct its efforts in a fashion that probably helped consolidate the new democracy and certainly did not appreciably destabilize it" (*Working Class Organization and the Return to Democracy in Spain*, 248). Of course, while corporatism may in fact

have Weberian roots, clearly Fishman's argument exemplifies the pact school much more so than Max Weber. Weber sought generality through the construction of "ideal-types" and through comparison, and realized that material and normative order at least should be interrelated. See Alexander, *Theoretical Logic In Sociology*, 16–17.

70. *Working Class Organization and the Return to Democracy in Spain*, 5–6.
71. Victor Pérez-Díaz, *The Return of Civil Society* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 234. *The Return of Civil Society* provides a refreshing look at transitional Spain, and an important alternative to the pact school. But Pérez-Díaz explores civil society by focusing on "institutions" (i.e. "markets and voluntary associations") and "traditions" ("a set of beliefs, rules and values and an institutional setting") rather than symbols. Thus even though he emphasizes the "invention of tradition," Pérez Díaz presents an image of civil society that is too rationalistic and structural. Most importantly, because he minimizes agency and interpretation, Pérez-Díaz tends to succumb to the circular, deterministic reasoning seen previously in the pact school, in which (seemingly objective) "experiences" and "efficiency" determine whether or not a new tradition will be utilized. For example, Pérez-Díaz states: "Spaniards were exposed to institutions and cultures ... which were simply far more efficient than their own in achieving some of their traditional objectives as well as other objectives which they were rapidly learning to appreciate.... In this way, Spaniards learned from, imitated, and wound up identifying with the people of western Europe" (13). (See also p. 36.)
72. For more on Spanish symbolization during the transition see, Laura Edles, "The sacred and the Spanish transition," *Social Compass* 40: 3 (1993): 399–414; Carlos Forment, "Group formation in the political sphere: An interpretive approach to democratic transitions" (unpublished paper, Princeton University, 1991); Rafael del Aguila and Ricardo Montoro, *El Discurso Politico de la Transición Española* (Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 1984), and Victor Pérez-Díaz, *The Return of Civil Society* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).
73. Del Aguila and Ricardo Montoro, *El Discurso Politico de la Transición Española*, 36–37. Del Aguila and Montoro provide perhaps the most important empirical analysis of Spanish transitional symbolization. But because they simply assume that political discourse "reflects" social reality, del Aguila and Montoro lack what pactmen lack: an understanding of how culture works in the *shaping* of politics and history. In an even larger and more obvious way, essays on "public opinion" "during" the transition purport to sidestep theoretical issues, but implicitly make culture epiphenomenal in the manner typical of the pact school. See for example, Juan Linz, Manuel Gómez-Reino, Francisco Orizo, and Darío Vila, *Informe sociológico sobre el cambio político en España, 1975–1981* (Madrid: Fundación FOESSA, 1981); P. McDonough, A. López Pina, and S. Barnes, "The Spanish public in political transition," *British Journal of Political Science* 11 (1981): 49–79; and López Pintor, *La Opinion Publica Española*.
74. The importance of seeming inevitability is also confirmed by Huntington who advises democratizers to "create a sense of inevitability about the process of democracy so that it becomes widely accepted as a necessary and natural course of development even if to some people it remains an undesirable one." While this may be excellent advice, Huntington does not explain – theoretically and empirically he is not equipped to explain – *how* democratizers can "create" this "sense." See Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 142.
75. While many countries exhibit a tremendous symbolic effervescence at the inception

of a transition, it is much more difficult (and rare) for complex transitional symbolic networks to be *sustained* throughout the transition.

76. Pérez-Díaz, *The Return of Civil Society*, 168. Yet, akin to other social groups (e.g., the PCE), rear-guard actions by conservative sectors of the church continued right up to the last moments of Francoism.
77. *The Return of Civil Society*, 35, emphasis added.
78. *The Return of Civil Society*, 29.
79. Little evidence exists that the Spanish public was "apathetic" about the democratic transition. As Pérez Díaz notes, pactmen equate civil society with social movements, and assume that if strikes and movements do not occur, societies are passive and atomized. See *Return of Civil Society*, 314 ff.
80. See Edles, "The sacred and the Spanish transition to democracy," 404.
81. The failure to acknowledge cultural complexity is exemplified in recent works that question the "completion" of the Spanish democratic transition, because of evidence of a residual authoritarianism. For example, Wiarda quite rightly notes that early works on the Spanish and Portuguese transitions were somewhat euphoric: "We *want* very much for Spain and Portugal to succeed as democracies; all our literature and theoretical models, as well as our emotions, bias us toward hope that the democratic transition will be lasting and permanent"; and he may be quite right that some of this literature "tends to be celebratory rather than analytical." But that neo-authoritarian or authoritarian attitudes or structures exist in Portugal and Spain does not mean that "the Spanish and Portuguese transitions are still incomplete." Even if Spanish democracy is overthrown today, the transition from Francoism to democracy is nevertheless over (and in my view, still phenomenal). See Howard Wiarda, *The Transition to Democracy in Spain and Portugal* (Washington D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1989), ix.
82. José Rodriguez Ibañez, *Despúes de una dictadura: cultura autoritaria y transición política en España* (Madrid: Centro de estudios constitucionales, 1987), 125. Despite his emphasis on "political culture," Rodriguez Ibañez instrumentalizes subjectivity in the manner typical of the pact school. For example, Rodriguez Ibañez states that this "erroneous perception of democracy was dissolved once the negative consequences of generalized apathy were seen." This not only implies that democratic perceptions are "really" just calculations about *utility*, but again, results in determinism.
83. See *La reproducción del nacionalismo vasco*, 12.