



Terrorism and Democratic Stability

Jennifer S. Holmes

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Perspectives on Democratic Practice

Shirin M. Rai and Wyn Grant, series editors

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To my husband Brian



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List of abbreviations

AAA	Alianza Apostólica Anticomunista
AP	Popular Alliance
APRA	Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana
APRODEH	Asociación pro Derechos Humanos
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
COMISEDH	Comisión de Derechos Humanos
CONAE	National Council on Education
COSENA	Consejo de Seguridad Nacional
CRF	Comando Rodrigo Franco
DEA	Drug Enforcement Agency
DSV	double simultaneous vote
EE	Euskadiko Eskerra
ELP	National Liberation Party
ETA	Euzkadi ta Askatasuna
ETA-m	ETA-militar
ETA-pm	ETA-político-militar
FBIS	Foreign Broadcast Information Service
FONCODES	Fondo Nacional de Compensación y Desarrollo Social
FREDEMO	Frente Democrático
GAL	Anti-Terrorist Groups of Liberation
GRAPO	Grupos de Resistencia Antifascista de Octubre (Antifascist Resistance Groups of the First of October)
HB	Herri Batasuna (People's Unity)
IMET	International Military Education and Training Programme
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPA	InterAmerican Police Academy
IU	United Left
JNE	National Electoral Board
JUEM	Joint Chief of Staffs
JUP	Juventud Uruguaya de Pie
MANO	Movimiento Armado Nacional Oriental
MIR	Movement of the Revolutionary Left

MPS	<i>medidas prontas de seguridad</i>
MRTA	Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaro
OAS	Organization of American States
PCE	Spanish Communist Party
PCP-SL	Communist Party of Peru in the Shining Path
PNV	Basque Nationalist Party
PPC	Popular Christian Party
PSOE	Spanish Socialist Worker Party
SIDE	Argentine Information Service
SIN	Servicio de Inteligencia Nacional
SINAMOS	National System of Support for Social Mobilization
UCD	Union of the Democratic Centre
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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Introduction

The question

Can terrorist and state violence cause democratic breakdown? Typically, the origins of violence are studied, but rarely are the consequences. For example, Ted Gurr states, 'on the basis of the record to date, the revolutionary potential of political terrorism is vastly overrated. Where it has had any impact at all, other powerful political forces were pushing in the same direction'.¹ When the consequences of violence are studied, its effects are usually limited to a reflection of the preexisting conflict that originally spawned the violence. In this study, the claim is made that to understand the consequences of violence on democratic stability, violence coming from terrorist groups and violence emanating from the state must be studied together. Instead of asking what unleashed the violence in Uruguay, Peru and Spain, the consequences of the violence are examined. Violence is considered as a cause of further instability, instead of merely a manifestation of preexisting conflict. In my initial examination of this question, the conventional social science concepts of legitimacy and order appeared to be inadequate for my analysis. Because of this, I shall proceed from what might seem an unusual starting point, Aristotle's political philosophy and contemporary proponents of his work. The use of these concepts in conjunction with the three case studies articulates both a persuasive defence of the usefulness of the Aristotelian framework and a greater understanding of the three case studies.

Organization of the book

The first part of the book will be conceptual. The reintroduction of Aristotle's political philosophy into current political thought by contemporary philosophers has introduced new concepts and questions for comparative politics. The pathways linking these two subjects, further explored in chapter 2, provide a framework of analysis to investigate the consequences of violence on democratic stability. The Aristotelian framework replaces 'legitimacy' with an evaluation of the state, and ultimately the constitution, based on its rudimentary purposes, and 'order' with the concept of the political community. Aristotelian concepts help to illuminate the effects of violence and its consequences on democratic stability, resulting in an approach that works well in a comparative analysis.

The rest of the book is a comparative, empirical analysis of the effects of violence (terrorist and state) on democratic stability in three countries: Uruguay (1965–84), Peru (1980–92) and Spain (1975–86). Chapter 3 provides a short historical discussion of the challenges facing all three democracies, including terrorism and economic crisis. Chapter 4 examines the consequences of terrorism on democratic stability. It is theorized that terrorist violence threatens democratic stability by undermining both rudimentary purposes of the state: security and integration. As the purposes of the state are unfulfilled, then citizen confidence in the state should decline. As citizen confidence decreases, increases in democratic instability are expected. Chapter 5 examines the consequences of state repression and violence on democratic stability. It is hypothesized that state violence also undermines the rudimentary purposes of the state. A decrease in citizen confidence is expected to follow the decrease in the rudimentary purposes. Chapter 6 concludes the testing of the two hypotheses by examining changes in citizen confidence in the state and in democratic stability. Overall, this inquiry seeks to explain, with reference to Spain's successful democratic consolidation, the demise of Uruguayan and Peruvian democracies. Specifically it aims to understand the initial popular support for the military takeover in Uruguay and the support for Alberto Fujimori's *autogolpe* in Peru.

Chapter 7 presents the conclusion that although terrorism is a threat to democratic stability, the state reaction to that violence is at least as important to influencing the ultimate outcome of continued democracy or democratic breakdown. Alternative explanations are discussed. In addition, the conclusion of this study is presented in a brief comparison to the conventional wisdom on counter-terrorism policies.

Chapter 8 is an epilogue of the three cases. In this chapter, the cases are discussed up to May 2000. Moreover, the literature on democratic consolidation is engaged to decide whether or not 'consolidation' is a helpful concept, independent of democratic stability. In addition, the role of international influence on democratic stability after the attempted and successful coups is examined.

The case studies

Uruguay

Uruguay was 'one of the world's friendliest, most progressive, and most democratic countries' according to Russell Fitzgibbon.² Shockingly, in 1973 the peaceful, progressive country crumbled into authoritarian rule. Strategically located between Brazil and Argentina, Uruguay, the 'Switzerland of South America', was considered one of the most stable democracies in Latin America. The small, tranquil country of approximately three million people, which prior to the coup did not even have compulsory military service, became a victim of widespread, military-led torture and repression under authoritarian, military rule from 1973 to 1984. How did the military change from an institution that 'played only a marginal role in the public arena and were mildly despised and indulgently tolerated by a populace that considered them good only for disciplining the unruly sons of the middle classes or for providing relief during natural disasters' to an institution that assumed power with the support of the citizenry?³ In 1965 the Tupamaros began their violent protest, disrupting society and publicizing corruption. As early as 1966, the dismantling of democracy began, including severe censorship of the media. These first steps towards tyranny were mostly unchallenged by the

people. In 1973 the military directly assumed power by issuing communiqués and later by occupying the National Assembly (the Uruguayan legislature). Democracy was not restored until 1984. In a country with such a pervasive history of participatory democracy, why the absence of popular protest of the military takeover?

Peru

Unlike Uruguay, Peru experienced numerous changes of constitution in the twentieth century. Politics of the early part of the century were plagued by factions within the old oligarchy and shifting, unstable political alliances. The military was directly involved in many of these changes. Two early military interventions resulted in the relatively effective rules of President Benavides (1933–39) and President Odría (1948–56). When these leaders were elected by citizens, few Peruvians were eligible to vote. A majority of Peruvians remained excluded from any meaningful participation in politics. A revolutionary coup, led by General Velasco, replaced the elected President Belaúnde in 1968. Velasco attempted radically to reform Peruvian society. He succeeded in some agrarian reform but his proposals were opposed by many. Eventually he was ousted and replaced by General Morales Bermúdez in 1975. The country was returned to democratic rule in 1980. For the first time, illiterates were granted the right to vote.⁴ Newly democratic Peru faced economic crisis and rampant violence. Sendero Luminoso, or the Shining Path, emerged in 1980 and MRTA, the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement, began violent activities in 1984. In 1990 Alberto Fujimori was elected president in an atmosphere of public cynicism, economic crisis and widespread violence. On 6 April 1992, Fujimori, with the support of the military, committed an *autogolpe* or self-coup, dissolving Congress, dismissing the judiciary and restricting the press. His action was widely supported by the Peruvian people. What role did violence, both state and terrorist, play in preparing the people to support Fujimori's *autogolpe*?

Spain

Early twentieth-century Spain was chaotic. In a short number of years, Spain had a constitutional monarchy, a benign

dictatorship, the re-establishment of a republic and a civil war. The victorious Nationalists, under the command of General Francisco Franco, imposed calm after the civil war. Franco's rule was sanctified by the Catholic Church in the 1953 Concordat and was supported by the military until his death in 1975. Under the guidance of Franco's successor, the new King Juan Carlos, Spain began a transition to democracy. Nonetheless, the military remained a potentially powerful institution. The new democracy was tested and challenged by violent attacks which spanned the ideological spectrum. In addition to the violent threat, Spain faced economic crisis. Violent activity increased between 1975 and 1980. However, the state largely refrained from a broad repressive response. During this time, military conspiracies and plots flourished within the barracks, culminating in an almost successful coup attempt on 23 February 1981. In response to this attempted coup, citizens demonstrated in favour of democracy.⁵ Why did Spaniards remain loyal to their democracy, in spite of such troubles?

Traditional explanations

There are three dominant explanations for democratic breakdown: economic, political and foreign. First, some scholars blame economic crisis and tension for democratic breakdown. Both Peru and Uruguay experienced prolonged economic crisis preceding democratic breakdown. Uruguay began having negative economic growth in the mid 1950s. Peru had declining growth from 1975–92 with a 50 per cent decline between 1988 and 1992. Both countries had high inflation, Peru experiencing hyperinflation of up to 7,650 per cent in 1991. Spain's economy also suffered from inflation and higher unemployment in the late 1970s. A sophisticated example of this type of argument can be found in Adam Przeworski, Michael Alvarez, José Cheibub and Fernando Limongi's 'What Makes Democracies Endure?'. They state:

democracy is more likely to survive in a growing economy with less than \$1,000 per capita income than in a country where per-capita income is between \$1,000 and \$4,000, but which is declining economically ... When poor countries

stagnate, whatever democracies happen to spring up tend to die quickly . . . we have found that once a country is sufficiently wealthy, with per-capita income of more than \$6,000 a year, democracy is certain to survive.⁶

Two years after the coup, in 1975, Uruguay had a per capita income of \$2,144. Two years before Fujimori's *autogolpe*, in 1990, Peru's level was \$849. Spain's level in 1980, one year before the attempted coup, was \$6,657.⁷ Indeed, at first glance this looks consistent with the economic situations of the three countries. In this study, I do not deny the importance of economic factors, nor do I claim violence to be a monocausal explanation of breakdown. However, an exclusive focus on economic factors cannot explain democratic breakdown or lack thereof. Economic problems need to be considered in a broader context to understand their effects on democratic stability.⁸

Second, others focus on explanations of leadership as a prime factor in democratic breakdown.⁹ Juan Linz focuses on leaders and their behaviour, stating that no regime is ever fated to fail from deterministic factors. Although he believes that the actions of leaders have a cumulative effect on the probability of regime survival, he claims that even to the end leaders have the opportunity to act meaningfully to save the regime. Leadership was important in the following cases. In Uruguay, many officials in the Bordaberry government and within the major parties courted military intervention. In Peru, Fujimori committed an *autogolpe* and dissolved Congress. In Spain, the King played a crucial role in the consolidation of democracy. The problem with this style of analysis is that it is very difficult to craft a definition of good leadership. Juan Linz's definition of good leadership is tautologic in the sense that good leadership is leadership that prevents breakdown, while poor leadership is leadership that results in breakdown.

Finally, other scholars have focused on the power of foreign intervention or demonstration effect to explain breakdown.¹⁰ In both Uruguay and Peru there was some foreign influence, but the evidence is contradictory. In Peru, beginning in 1983, the Peruvian army emulated the US army's strategic hamlet campaign plan used in Vietnam. However, this plan only succeeded in allowing Sendero to exploit the economic dislocation. Later, however, the United States

pressured for investigation of human rights violations. In Uruguay, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was involved in aid and training programmes in regard to the anti-communist National Security Doctrine; however these ended in 1973. Others argue that forces, such as the National Security Doctrine, in the Southern Cone countries, were so pervasive that Uruguay was unable to resist democratic breakdown; for example in Brazil in 1964, in Chile in 1973 and in Argentina in 1976. However, of all the countries it seems reasonable to expect that Uruguay, with its treasured history and tradition of participatory democracy, would have been able to withstand such pressures for change.

The military

In each of the three cases, the military played an important role. In Uruguay, the military directed dismantled democracy. In Peru, Fujimori conducted his *autogolpe* with the support of the military. In Spain, the military remained a threat to the new democracy throughout the democratic consolidation. Historically, a major issue in Latin American politics has been figuring out how to stop politicians from 'knocking on the barrack doors' and how to convince the military that they are not the ultimate protectors of the constitution, as they interpret it.

The problem of military intervention is not limited to Latin America or to the Iberian Peninsula. This has been the subject of discussion since antiquity and the issue remains salient today. What motivates a military institution or particular officer to move against the state and to seize power? I recognize that the framing of the debate on stability in terms of internal military factors is important, although it is not my main concern. In Uruguay, Peru and Spain, some military officers viewed the armed forces as a source of power to be used to assume control of the country or to promote someone who could. This propensity towards power among some in the military was present in all three cases and should not account for the differences in outcome among the cases. Instead of analysing internal factors within the military to explain military intervention,

this study asks what makes public support for military intervention possible, by focusing on the problems facing the state which could undermine citizen support for democracy. In the cases of authoritarian takeovers of democracies, the military entered the political scene because the officers believed the civilian politicians to be incompetent. Something about the performance of the previous state was unacceptable.¹¹ Considering that many interventions are popularly supported, it appears that some citizens also believed that the performance of the state was lacking. The successful coups in Uruguay and Peru were supported, at least initially, by the people. Instead of merely focusing on the actors in the destruction of a state, it is also necessary to ask why they lost the support of a large number of citizens.

Case selection

The design incorporates two types of analysis: the parallel demonstration of theory and a most different design. In the parallel demonstration of theory, it is my intention to show the usefulness of my concept of citizen support in understanding these cases. In the most different design, the questions are examined in Uruguay and Peru. There are three main similarities between the two. First, both countries experienced violence followed by a change of constitution. In Uruguay, the Tupamaros began their violent protest in 1965. In 1973, the military assumed power. Democracy was not restored until 1984. In Peru, the most recent violent political movement is Sendero Luminoso (the Shining Path), which emerged in 1980. President Fujimori conducted his *autogolpe* in 1992. Second, neither country had extensive United States intervention in their national politics. Third, both states responded to the threat with repression. In spite of these similarities, the two countries differ in respect to features that are speculated by some to be related to stability. The violent movement in Uruguay was mostly urban, whereas in Peru it was mostly rural. Uruguay has had a much more stable history of democratic governance than Peru. The level of industrialization in Uruguay was higher than in Peru. The Uruguayan population includes the original

Spanish settlers, plus a large proportion of later Spanish and Italian immigrants, creating a generally homogeneous population.¹² On the other hand, Peru has a large population of indigenous Indians, in addition to people of African and Chinese descent, creating a heterogeneous population. Not only is the country heterogeneous, but it is geographically divided. Twelve per cent of the population is white, Catholic and lives on the coast. Of the remaining population, in general 45 per cent is Indian, 37 per cent is mestizo and 6 per cent is black. Two-thirds of the population lives in the Andean mountains and consists mostly of non-Spanish-speaking, impoverished peasants who adhere to Incan faiths.¹³ In total, there are fifty-seven ethnic groups¹⁴ and approximately thirty-one spoken languages.¹⁵ Uruguay has had a very well-established, almost consociational, two-party system of the Colorados and Blancos since 1904. Peru has an extensive history of military intervention and unstable political parties. Its most popular party, APRA, was excluded from electoral competition for much of the twentieth century. In addition, the coup and *autogolpe* occurred in very different time periods.

Spain is introduced as an exploratory case. Spain, like Uruguay and Peru, faced terrorist violence. However, the outcome was different. Spain's democracy was consolidated. The case of Spain is important for illustrating an alternative state response to terrorist violence. The new democracy was challenged by a plethora of violent groups from across the ideological spectrum. Spain did not implement policies of indiscriminate state violence and repression. Spain has a high level of industrialization and literacy. The country is composed of different autonomous regions, many of which are historically recognized regions with their own culture and language. In addition to a threat from violence, Spain faced an economic crisis and a politicized military. Nonetheless, Spanish democracy survived.

Conclusion

This study is a comparative study of the consequences of state and terrorist violence on democratic stability in Uruguay,

Peru and Spain. How do people react to attacks and threats of state and terrorist violence? Does violence affect the citizen support of democracies? What is the basis of the citizen support of democracies? These are compelling questions. The Aristotelian approach I will sketch in the following chapter promises to illuminate these issues in ways that other approaches to violence have not. The Aristotelian approach can explain how state and terrorist violence has effects more insidious and long lasting than previously thought, by referring to the purposes of the state and to the importance of the political community.

Notes

- 1 Ted Gurr, 'Some Characteristics of Political Terrorism in the 1960s', in Michael Stohl (ed.), *The Politics of Terrorism* (West Lafayette: Purdue University, 1988), p. 51.
- 2 Russell Fitzgibbon, *Uruguay: Portrait of a Democracy* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1954), p. vii.
- 3 Carina Perelli, 'From Counterrevolutionary Warfare to Political Awakening: The Uruguayan and Argentine Armed Forces in the 1970's', *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 20, No. 1, Autumn 1993, p. 35.
- 4 David Scott Palmer, 'Rebellion in Rural Peru', *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 18, No. 2, January 1986, p. 130.
- 5 Most of the literature on the early years of the current Spanish democracy focuses on the successful transition to democracy. Little attention is paid to why Spanish citizens did not support the attempted coup in 1981. Most credit for the successful transition to democracy is given to political factors, good leadership, modernization and foreign influence.
- 6 Adam Przeworski, Michael Alvarez, José Cheibub and Fernando Limongi, 'What Makes Democracies Endure?', *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 7, No. 1, January 1996, p. 49.
- 7 United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 1999* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 151–2.
- 8 Kurt Weyland, in 'Latin America's Four Political Models', *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 6, No. 4, October 1995, p. 137, highlights this connection. 'Poverty and inequality thus pose more urgent problems for democratic stability ... The quality of democracy and indeed its very survival in the long run may require that poverty be reduced and popular hopes for social improvements be satisfied'. Nancy Bermeo concurs, stating, 'economic crises might be a necessary though not sufficient incentive for the breakdown of authoritarian regimes'. Nancy Bermeo, 'Rethinking Regime Change', *Comparative Politics*, April 1990, p. 366.
- 9 Juan Linz, *Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown and Equilibration* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1978).

- 10 See Richard Millet, 'Beyond Sovereignty: International Efforts to Support Latin American Democracy', *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, Vol. 36, No. 3, Autumn 1994, pp. 1–23.
- 11 An excellent, recent example of a study of military intervention is Peter Calvert and Susan Milibank, 'The Ebb and Flow of Military Government in Latin America', in William Gutteridge (ed.), *Latin America and the Caribbean: Prospects for Democracy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997).
- 12 In Uruguay, approximately 90 per cent of Uruguayans are of either Spanish or Italian heritage. The original Indian population fled or was killed off during colonization; no pure Churrúa and Chana Indians were left by 1850. Approximately 5–8 per cent of the population is mestizo, and this population is clustered along the northern border. Another small ethnic group of about forty to sixty thousand blacks live in the north and are employed mainly in the meat packing 'Cerro' area. Martin Weinstein, *Uruguay: Democracy at the Crossroads* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), p. 3.
- 13 Cynthia McClintock, 'The Prospects for Democratic Consolidation in a "Least Likely" Case: Peru', *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 21, No. 2, January 1989, p. 129. See also Peter Klaren, 'Peru's Great Divide', *The Wilson Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 3, Summer 1990, p. 29.
- 14 Alberto Adrianzén, *Democracia, etnicidad y violencia política en los países andinos* (Lima: IEP, 1993), p. 111.
- 15 *Statistical Abstract of Latin America*, Vol. 23. Edited by James W. Wilke (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications), p. 151.