

## **Clash of the Dictatorships**

By: Rob Hamilton

### Research Question:

How did the Uruguayan and Chilean transitions to democracy differ and how have these differences affected these countries socially, politically, and economically? From the late 60's all the way up into the early 90's most all Latin American countries saw periods of political oppression with similar characteristics such as military regimes, which eventually led to personalistic dictatorships, human rights violations, division between capitalist and communist economic policies, and the list goes on. With agreements such as Operation Condor between Chile, Uruguay, Argentina, and several other countries in and around the Southern Cone, it is obvious that many of them had similar goals, but what the comparison between Uruguay and Chile's transitions to democracy should show is that the different histories of these countries predisposed their societies to certain situations which made their transitions from militaristic dictatorships to democracy so different. These differences not only affected the periods during the dictatorships but have also continued to demonstrate themselves as being important in the current political systems of these countries.

### Theoretical Framework:

My theoretical framework is going to be based off of Historical Institutionalism, which uses institutions to find sequences in social behaviors over time (Wikipedia). I'm planning to base my research's framework off of works from various theorists of this discipline such as Barrington Moore, Paul Peirson, and Karl Polanyi who have produced several works on the theory.

### Case selection:

To choose the cases I am studying I have decided to go by a "most similar systems design" (Przeworski, .33). also known as a study of "concomitant variation" this type of research is constructed to compare two cases that are as similar as possible in order to search for the differences between them to explain as to what reason they had different outcomes. This will help create or support an existing theory which can then be better applied to other cases. Naroll claims that "systems as similar as possible with respect to as many features as possible constitute

the optimal samples for comparative inquiry” (Przeworski, .33). For the purpose of my study I have chosen Chile and Uruguay, because they are countries coming from the same region they share many cultural traits and their dictatorial regimes in the 1970's both resembled one another's in the sense that they were both justified by their coup leaders as being due to social, economic, and political injustices.

#### Hypothesis:

My hypothesis is that through historical institutionalism the different paths to democracy taken by Uruguay and Chile are because of their pasts. I believe this study will show that due to the historical developments of these countries the citizens were each predisposed to carry out the transitions to democracy they chose. Such as idea that the caudillismo of Uruguay led to the likelihood of its military being more prone to having factions, as well as its history with Jose Batlle lead to its country's developing not only into a democracy after its dictatorship, but rather a socialist democracy, providing its citizens with a free health care system, education, and a laptop for every child in the public school system.

#### Methodology:

For my methodology I first plan to look at the social, political, and economical histories of these countries leading up to their dictatorships. This will help explain why countries fell to dictatorships during the seventies. I will then research in depth the dictatorships themselves such as the types of leaders, Pinochet versus Bordaberry, and the different goals these military regimes set out for themselves, as well as their methods for carrying out these goals.

Next I will research the differences in these countries transitions back to democracy. I plan to research the voting trends on a local and national level of the countries. I will also be looking at literature about the issue, much of it in Spanish, and national databases to support my claims. I then will look at more current events to compare the policies and other forms of transition these young democracies have chosen.

## **Bibliography**

Przeworski, Adam, and Henry Teune. *Comparative Studies in Behavioral Science*. New York: Wiley-Interscience, n.d.

*Wikipedia*, s.v. "Historical Institutionalism," accessed September 15, 2011, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical\\_institutionalism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical_institutionalism).