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**Of Wild and Cultivated Politics: Conflict and
Democracy in Argentina**

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This is a study of cultural change within democratization. It uses conflict theory to understand the culture of conflict escalation and management, taking Argentina as its example. Beginning with the most extreme dictatorships, The Dirty War and the Rosas period, and then looking at other periods of governance, the essay illustrates that Argentina has an authoritarian culture of conflict. The essay suggests why these patterns have developed in Argentina. It asks whether it is possible to change such cultural patterns and whether the current democratizing effort includes efforts at change. It concludes that the democratization efforts since 1983 have included attempts to change culture, as well as electoral and institutional movement toward democracy.

KEYWORDS: Argentina; democratization; conflict theory; culture; humanrights.

“... first we’re going to kill the subversives. Then we’re going to kill their collaborators. Then we’re going to kill their sympathizers and then those who are indifferent. Finally, we’re going to kill those who are afraid.”

General Iberico Saint Jean, upon the beginning of the Proceso military government, 1976

Democratic theorists have argued that it is possible to sustain and nurture democratic culture by facilitating democratic interpersonal behavior.²

For nations undergoing democratic development, the related question is whether it is possible to plant and cultivate democratic culture in settings where it is relatively unfamiliar, its appearance has been infrequent and its roots, even in the context of a formal democratic regime, may be shallow, indeed. Can a wild, violently conflictual, and nondemocratic culture gradually metamorphose toward restrained, democratic methods of political interaction and conflict resolution? This question lies at the heart of this essay.

To address this issue I have chosen a setting where the move from nondemocratic political patterns and history toward democratic behavior constitutes one of the longest steps any democratizing nation has faced: the example of Argentina. Known for violence and harsh authoritarianism, Argentina today boasts nineteen years of democratic process, even in the face of crisis. If Argentina can move from so harsh a past toward a democratic present, then we gain some sense of the possibilities of cultural change in other settings that have less brutal histories to overcome.

The Argentine example, of course, is still a political process underway, an incomplete and unconsolidated democratic transition. In Argentine politics one can still see wild and savage vestiges of authoritarianism struggling side by side with newer varieties of political and social behavior including mutual respect, dialogue, softened perceptions of “the other” and declining self-righteousness about any particular position. For that reason it offers an opportunity to look at the process of cultural change while major change is still occurring.

This essay is an exploratory study of one aspect of political culture in Argentina, what Marc Howard Ross has called “the culture of conflict.”³

It uncovers patterns and changes in cultural uses and understandings of violence, violent conflict, and authoritarian political methods in Argentina.

The essay uses historical comparison and contemporary data framed within theory about conflict to suggest some reasons why certain patterns of conflict developed historically in Argentina and why cultural change may be underway today.

Culture in the study of conflict

As modern social science has struggled to understand conflict, culture has taken a central explanatory role. This essay uses the understanding of culture defined by Clifford Geertz and Marc Howard Ross. Geertz defines culture as “an historically transmitted pattern of meaning : : : a system : : : by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life.”⁴ Ross says “culture is a framework for organizing the world : : : for making sense of the actions and interpreting motives of others.”⁵ All societies have a culture for dealing with conflict, a “culture of conflict.” In some societies the culture of conflict manages conflict nonviolently; in others culture allows conflict to escalate. Sociocultural explanations of conflict relate patterns of social relations to the cultural response to conflict.⁶

One of the most useful sociocultural approaches to the study of conflict is “cross-cutting ties” theory.⁷

It argues that societies with cross-cutting ties of interaction, belonging, and loyalty manage conflict more constructively than do societies that lack such ties.⁸ Societies in which individuals belong to several different groups along which bonds of mutual consideration develop are less prone to violent conflict and more likely to manage or resolve conflict before violence erupts.⁹ By contrast, societies that are segmented without cross cutting ties, or whose divisions follow the same lines and reinforce each other, are more prone to extreme conflict, more likely to escalate to violent conflict, and enjoy only a limited ability to restrain, manage, and deescalate conflict. An easier way of referring to “cross-cutting ties” theory is to stress reinforcing divisions within society. Societies whose divisions reinforce each other are more prone to extreme or violent conflict and less able to manage conflict constructively.¹⁰

An excellent example of a society suffering from reinforcing divisions is found in a study of the town and surrounding county of Ballybeg in northern Ireland.¹¹ As a result of extensive scrutiny of social relations in the town of Ballybeg and of the surrounding rural county, Harris concluded that members of this small society lived in a context in which almost all social, economic, and political divisions reinforced each other. Thus the most visible and widely-known division between Catholics and Protestants was reinforced by most other types of social, political, and economic divisions. Strong political differences also existed between the two religious groups. Divisions of economic class followed religious lines. And other social divisions also fell into Catholic and Protestant categories. For example, Protestants were inclined to play one type of sport while Catholics engaged in a different sport.

Neither group played the “other kind’s” game or even knew how to play the “other” game. Symbolically in sport as well as in reality, Catholics and Protestants did not, would not, and could not play with each other. A lack of cross-cutting ties deprived the Irish county of bonds of mutuality across religious lines. When violent conflict erupted, citizens had little incentive to restrain it and many reinforcing reasons to escalate it.

Another approach to understanding conflict relies upon a developmental perspective. It argues that societies begin as frontier societies where institutions through which to channel disagreement are, as yet, undeveloped.

Far removed from mechanisms of law and order, people give in to vendettas and feuds, resulting in relatively violent societies and limits upon any ability to control conflict within nonviolent limits. As nations develop stronger states, better channels for expressing disagreement, and more powerful law enforcement, they begin to avoid extreme violence and to settle disputes in a more cultivated fashion.¹² This type of development toward nonviolent conflict management is one that is accessible to all nations but is currently exemplified most clearly by the advanced, industrial democracies. A developmental perspective adds to the sociocultural approach a temporal outlook, enhancing our understanding of conflict management over time. A developmental perspective on conflict has the advantage of suggesting sequential stages that may help make sense of the experience of large, complex societies.

A sociocultural approach to studying conflict can be combined with a developmental approach by focusing upon sociocultural patterns over time and looking for similarities and changes within those patterns at different periods in a nation’s political history.

This essay combines a sociocultural and developmental approach to scrutinize Argentina’s historical culture of conflict and how that culture is changing today. Following Geertz’ position that culture is best understood in historical context, the essay begins with an historical comparison of two moments of political extremism in Argentina: the Rosas dictatorship of the early nineteenth century and the Dirty War of the late twentieth. This comparison of two extreme periods reveals patterns in the use of violence by authoritarian governments. Such patterns are most visible at these times.

The essay then scrutinizes less extreme moments of Argentine political history and finds that the same patterns of severe conflict, limited conflict management, and authoritarian governance have repeated themselves in milder degree at other times in Argentine political history. Moments of extremism provide a catalog of characteristics at times when they are easy to see because they are so pronounced. Once we know what patterns we are looking for, we find that they are present outside those extreme moments as well. The extreme governments are not fundamentally different from the less extreme ones; the difference is rather a matter of degree.

The discovery of patterns across extreme periods and less extreme times illustrates that Argentina has

had a violent culture of conflict in which conflict has often escalated to intense levels. Argentina's ability to resolve violent conflict, de-escalate away from violence, or prevent violence in the first place, has been quite limited. These cultural patterns of poor conflict management are due to the presence of reinforcing divisions in Argentine society that have given citizens few bonds of mutuality across the lines of conflict. They are also due to the weak nature of Argentina's political institutions and its geographic distance from regions of the world where institutionalized conflict management is common.

The final section of the essay turns to Argentina's contemporary political democracy and examines social responses to violence and authoritarian governance since 1983. It investigates the extent to which cultural patterns of violent conflict and authoritarianism are still present in today's democracy and ways that they are changing. Based upon a comparison of patterns of conflict management over time, the essay finds that Argentina's culture of conflict is evolving toward more moderate modes of disagreement, less extreme conflict, and more institutionalized conflict management. These changes toward more cultivated patterns of conflict management are due in part to the lessons of domestic experience, in part to an altered international context, and in part to developing institutions of the state and law enforcement.

By taking a cultural perspective on contemporary democratization the essay adds to the electoral and institutional approaches more commonly found in studies of democratization and captures more fully the magnitude of the democratizing task Argentina is currently undertaking. It also points toward generalizations about cultural change.

Extremes of authoritarianism

Moments of extreme authoritarianism and violence tell us something about culture. They highlight patterns in ways that more moderate moments cannot. Such patterns include cultural expectations about the use of violence and social attitudes about violence or authoritarianism in politics. Such insights are critical in allowing us to understand contemporary political development because they are a foil against which democracy struggles to develop.

They are the historical baggage a developing democratic culture must slough off and a standard against which to measure the democratic progress made.

The extreme moments I study here, the military dictatorship of 1976–1983 and the Rosas dictatorship of 1829–1852 are historically remote from one another.¹³ Yet each emerged after a period of conflict labeled a "war" by the ensuing dictatorial regime. In the face of that conflict, each dictatorship came to power with some popular acquiescence and each brought a kind of tranquility and political stability. Each today enjoys the dubious distinction of having been the most violent period of their respective century and each preceded a period of reform efforts to find more moderated methods of conflict management.

In March, 1976, the Argentine military used a coup d'état, to overthrow the elected government headed by Isabel Peron. The military maintained that Argentina was under attack from leftist subversion and military government was necessary to protect the nation. Thereafter ensued seven years of repression in which thousands of Argentines disappeared, victims of illegal arrest, torture, and murder,¹⁴ a clandestine war against the population in violation of Argentine laws, the national constitution, and international norms respecting human rights.¹⁵ In an effort to come to terms with this tragedy, scholars, politicians, and journalists have produced volumes of material on the Proceso, providing an excellent starting point for examining cultural patterns of conflict in Argentina. Yet such efforts have failed to produce a full understanding of where this capacity for state terror originated.

Part of the answer to that puzzle lies in history because the Proceso was a replay of a similar tragedy and earlier instance of extensive state cruelty and repression. Although the nation has a long history of dictatorship, between 1829 and 1852 Argentina was ruled by a particularly brutal dictatorship headed by Juan Manuel de Rosas. Rosas arrived in power after a war in which his forces, the Federalists, defeated the Unitarians and drove them into exile. His regime had a significant popular following, both in the war and in power. Rosas ruled Argentina for nearly a quarter century but never felt his government safe from Unitarian threat. Accordingly, he used state violence to frighten, silence, and eliminate any opposition. During his regime citizens were subjected to arbitrary arrest and murder or to decapitation without being

taken to jail.¹⁶ In the years after Rosas' regime, his period of "The Terror" received extensive attention from scholars, novelists, journalists, and poets of the mid-nineteenth century, again offering a chance to uncover cultural patterns in the use of violence.¹⁷

Response to Crisis

Each of these dictatorships followed a period of conflict where severe divisions reinforced each other. Prior to the Rosas period, Argentina was divided between Unitarians who sought to unify the nation under a central government and Federalists who preferred greater independence for the provinces. This political divide was reinforced by a geographical division:

Unitarians were concentrated in the area of the new capital, Buenos Aires, while the forces of Federalism were associated with rural areas beyond the city.¹⁸ The political and geographic division was further reinforced by cultural differences. The Unitarians were the more highly educated and cultured group, including in their ranks writers, thinkers, poets, and artists. The Federalists, by contrast, exhibited a more crude cultural background in keeping with their rural antecedents. In the pre-Rosas period, therefore, Argentina was divided politically, geographically, culturally, and along educational lines. Each of these divisions reinforced each other and there were few cross-cutting relationships to temper such divisional reinforcement.

Prior to the Proceso Argentina was again severely divided between Peronists and anti-Peronists. Many Peronists supported Isabel's government while anti-Peronists had always opposed all manifestations of Peronism. Reinforcing the political division were economic or class divisions: Peronists tended to come from low income or working class origin; many anti-Peronists belonged to Argentina's middle or upper classes, although university and professional Peronist supporters were exceptions to this class division. The political and economic divide also produced cultural and educational divisions.

Peronists often had limited education and limited exposure to cultural aspects of society; other Argentine classes had higher levels of education and more exposure to art, music, poetry and literature. Thus again in the pre-Proceso period we see multiple divisions within Argentine society each of which did more to reinforce the others than to temper tensions between groups. Few cross-cutting ties existed.

In the context of reinforcing divisions and escalated conflict, political leaders and citizens imagined that violence and repression constituted a solution to instability and conflict. Some elements of public opinion supported dictatorship as a solution to crisis. Rosas was able to win his war against the Unitarians because he enjoyed significant support from the gaucho class of the time.¹⁹ In fact, they constituted his troops and the military basis of his victory. Anti-Peronist sentiment from among business people and some elements of the middle and upper classes supported the 1976 military coup that ushered in the Proceso. In neither case did the dictatorship represent an occupying force supported by external power. In each case public opinion hoped that the dictatorship would bring a measure of stability and an end to conflict. In each case, the dictators delivered on that promise, although tranquility rested upon clandestine terror. In each case, public opinion turned against the dictatorship but by that time it was too late; authoritarianism had taken hold.

The Directive of Violence and the Rhetoric of Pretense

The shared understanding between leaders and citizens that violence could solve crisis led to a second shared characteristic between the two periods. Whereas many societies have suffered their most violent moments during social revolution when the target of violence was the state and upper classes, in these two periods violence was directed from the state toward the population. In each case citizens reacted passively at first. Eventually, however, each regime confronted so much public opposition that leaders felt compelled to conceal the extreme level of violence either by denying it altogether or by attributing it to nongovernmental forces. Let us consider both the violence itself and its covert nature. These patterns are visible thanks to the extensive subsequent research on the two periods.

The Proceso came at a moment of escalating violence from left and right and in its aftermath we have learned that the military government used small squads of unidentified men to kidnap citizens and take

them to clandestine prisons.²⁰ These squads were never officially associated with the dictatorship while it was in power. The government denied any connection between itself and these operative groups, even when that connection had become firmly established and widely known. Normally these groups operated at night, making it easier to disguise their identity.²¹ They arrived in green Ford Falcons, broke down doors, awakened frightened inhabitants and pulled apart families.²² They destroyed households, stole valuables, wrecked walls, doors, and windows, and took all or part of a family, regardless of age, gender or health. The activity of the squads was concentrated in the major cities and changed their character. Buenos Aires, for example, changed from a cosmopolitan metropolis by day to a “misty” land of death and terror by night.²³ Between 1976 and 1983 the military government pretended that these groups, if they existed at all, consisted entirely of leftist extremists who had no relation with the government which would, itself, never resort to such measures. The terrorism was owing to “unknown persons.”²⁴

Although the military government denied any involvement with the squads, invariably the citizens who disappeared fell within the categories defined by the government as “undesirable.” This included students, professors, young professionals, persons of Peronist political beliefs, union organizers, persons known to oppose the military government and the family, friends, and neighbors of all of the above. Thus, while the squads were not officially recognized as being associated with the government, it became increasingly apparent that their activities were in accordance with state political preferences.

Rosas’ terror was also conducted at night by small gangs who changed Buenos Aires from a vibrant, developing city to a place of fear and bloodshed after the sun went down.²⁵ These small gangs, who called themselves members of the Popular Society for Restoration, became so well-known that they gained another name: the Mazorca. The nickname was a Spanish pun referring in grotesque fashion to the way many victims died—having their throats cut.²⁶ The Mazorca differed from the Proceso squads in that the former frequently murdered their victims on the spot, leaving the mutilated bodies as a message of terror for families and neighbors. By contrast, the Proceso squads “disappeared” their victims without trace, using lies and and the unknown as a method of instilling fear in the population. Terror, it would seem, also modernizes.

Setting the pattern for the Proceso, Rosas denied all knowledge of or connection to the Mazorca. He insisted that his government neither sanctioned nor encouraged such groups. Instead he assigned responsibility to unknown persons, asserting that the Mazorca were the spontaneous result of popular expressions of anti-Unitarianism. By implication, the killings were expressions of support for his own government since Rosas had declared the Unitarians his principal enemies.²⁷ Rosas continued to deny connection to the Mazorca even when widespread popular belief began to hold him responsible for their actions.

As with the Proceso a century and a half later, the deaths inflicted by the Mazorca clearly singled out particular groups in the population. These groups were also the ones defined by Rosas as undesirable. These included Unitarians and those who disagreed with the Rosas government: writers, intellectuals, and the family and friends of these.²⁸ Thus, while Rosas denied any connection to the Mazorca, it became increasingly clear that the activities of the latter furthered the political purpose of the dictatorship.²⁹

Both regimes used extensive rhetoric to conceal their own involvement in the violence of their times and to convey a self-image that amounted to fantasy. In national speeches and to the international community both regimes condemned the violence and disclaimed any involvement with it.

Ultimately, for both regimes, this position was contradicted by facts and it became apparent that the government was behind the brutality. But by that time the dictatorship’s hold on power and its ability to govern by terror made it quite difficult to oust the regime. A pattern emerged in which deception was used to hold off challenges to the government until it became too late to make such challenges effective. We see this pattern for both the Proceso and Rosas.

When state responsibility for violence became impossible to deny, both governments proclaimed that, whatever their flaws, the alternative would be worse. When confronted by growing evidence that death squad violence was linked to the Proceso, the military government claimed that Argentina was on the verge of being overtaken by leftist subversion.³⁰ Similarly, confronted by accusations of violence, Rosas claimed Argentina was a dying nation being destroyed by unhealthy influences from Europe. Such

influences included the beginning of popular involvement in government. Rosas claimed this would only bring anarchy and destruction.³¹ Both governments claimed to represent the forces of law, order, and civilization against anarchy and barbarianism.

The ability of each regime to ignite fear of a worse scenario enabled these governments to remain in power despite dawning awareness of their true character but also uncovers a cultural tendency in Argentina's population.

While each regime enjoyed some popular support at the outset, now the transgressions of each received some toleration out of fear of something worse. In initial popular support for dictatorship and then popular failure to react more strongly against state violence we see a cultural tendency toward nondemocratic solutions to crisis and conflict.³² We see a popular willingness at least to consider that the rhetoric of a violent regime might be true rather than a popular commitment to democratic problem-solving whatever the risk. It is a choice of tranquility at high cost over respect for individual protection and human rights despite the potential cost in political and social disruption.³³

But the rhetoric of pretense and the reference to crisis also uncover another more optimistic element of shared cultural understandings about violence in Argentina. Leaders of both regimes and their nocturnal death squads clearly understood that the extremes of violence being used would not receive popular acquiescence if they became widely known. Some elements of Argentina's culture of conflict was averse to extreme violence at the levels it had reached under Rosas and the Proceso. These social elements would have challenged the legitimacy of the regimes had they known the full story.

Even in a society that perceived in violence a solution to crisis there was a point beyond which violence should not go. This unwritten but implicitly understood limit to violence will become more important when we turn to Argentina's current efforts to democratize.

The Contempt of Learning

Both the Proceso and Rosas governments rejected social spending in favor of military spending but nowhere was the social policy of the two more similar than on education. Both rejected education and particularly that aspect of it which encourages free thought. The Proceso weakened the nation's universities and particularly rejected the social sciences and humanities.³⁴

Students were more likely to be subjected to repression if their area of concentration lay outside the hard sciences.³⁵ The latter taught a workman-like practical skill without encouraging free thought or criticism that might be directed toward the regime itself. Argentina's universities have never yet recovered from the repression of the Proceso years, although subsequent democratic years have witnessed serious efforts to rejuvenate university education.³⁶

In a similar vein, Rosas himself was uneducated and dismissed book learning as wasteful. During his reign it was illegal to read books other than those designated by the regime or the Church. Rosas' policies began by denying state funding for education and later forced teachers into exile.

Even more than the Proceso, Rosas tried to control how people thought by telling them what to read and restricting access to education. People who broke the law by reading or selling unendorsed books could be subjected to capital punishment or Mazorca gang violence. Ramos Mejia claims that

Rosas sought to construct a particular kind of Argentine, a subject rather than a citizen.³⁷

Both regimes preyed upon the educated in disproportion to their numbers. The most likely victims of each regime were the students and intellectuals of the time. During the Proceso students and professors were suspect by virtue of their occupation, particularly if their concentration were in the humanities or social sciences.³⁸ Under Rosas, the ranks of the Unitarians included writers, thinkers, artists, and intellectuals. Rosas was suspicious of them and many fled to Uruguay to avoid the Mazorca. It is from their exile writings that we have some of our best historical reporting on the Rosas period.³⁹

This contemptuous treatment of learning and violence toward the learned reveals a cultural propensity related to the tendency toward nondemocratic solutions to crisis. In her study of *Democratic Education*, Amy Gutmann has argued that democracy and education, particularly higher education, are fundamental to each other and that each is difficult without the other.⁴⁰ By this she means that the full and free exchange of ideas by which *all* opinions are heard is most possible under democracy. In turn, such inclusive treatment of all others facilitates the flexible response to “the other” that democracy entails. A culture that responds readily to crisis with nondemocratic solutions is likely to have little regard for education and scant willingness to respect or protect the educated. The attitudes of the Proceso and Rosas governments toward education reflect a more subtle but equally suffocating manifestation of repression.

There are other similarities between these two dictatorships, including the support each received from the Catholic Church⁴¹ and the deteriorated foreign image each suffered. There are also limits to the similarities: Rosas could claim to be state-building while the Proceso could not. Additionally, some of Rosas’ followers were the low income gaucho class of the time and many of his victims were the more wealthy and cultivated Unitarians.

By contrast, the Proceso government did not favor Argentina’s working class and many of those who benefited most from its political and economic policies were the wealthy.

Yet the existence of differences that are primarily linked to the distinctiveness of each historical era, provides more reason to focus upon the large numbers of similarities that exist despite 150 years of historical distance.

Despite vastly different time frames and historical contexts, at these two historic points Argentina produced two similar regimes in reaction to severe domestic conflict. In both cases, significant popular opinion at the time felt that this type of nondemocratic approach would provide a solution to the crisis. And in each case, the extremes to which each regime was prepared to resort were atrocious, both relative to other regimes of the time and in their similarity to each other. The similarity of the two extreme regimes reveals patterns of reaction across time and in very different historical moments. These are patterns of *response to crisis* and patterns in the *use of power*.

Cultural patterns in less extreme moments

I suggested at the outset of this essay that a consideration of Argentina’s two most extreme dictatorships might allow us to uncover cultural patterns of conflict that stand out most starkly during crisis. The contrast of Rosas with the Proceso points toward similarities in political response to crisis and in state use of power in a crisis context. But were these patterns confined to extreme periods or do they emerge, perhaps less clearly etched but visible all the same, during less catastrophic moments in Argentina’s political life?

This section seeks to address that question by considering various epochs of Argentine political history. In that exploration, we will search for two patterns, one of which emanates from the state and the other from society.⁴²

These are: 1) response to crisis by resorting to authoritarianism and 2) uses of power similar to those exercised by Rosas or the Proceso government or both.

There is an interactive quality to the patterns laid out in Table 1. A society that responds to crisis by choosing forceful or violent leadership may condone a state that represses the opposition. A population that gravitates toward personalized leadership rather than toward institutions or process may prefer leaders who believe that their own ideals and principles are beyond dispute. Cultural patterns are interactive, flowing back and forth between different elements of national society. And yet, desegregating these patterns in this way allows us to scrutinize their various components more clearly and to discern if they exist at other points in Argentine history or among other leaders.

Rosas and the Proceso governments exhibited many of these qualities.

Each offered leadership based upon noninstitutionalized power gained through violence rather than institutionalized, accountable leadership chosen through democratic process. One Proceso leader, Emiliano Massera, used personalism as did Rosas. Each government promised to end turbulence and crisis and each delivered on that promise through the use of violence. In power, both repressed the opposition, rationalizing that repression on the basis of deeply-held principles and by portraying the opposition as fundamentally indecent and beyond considerations of humanity. Throughout their regimes and even after

Table 1. Patterns of Crisis Response and Power Use

Originating in state	Originating in society
1) Willingness to repress opposition	1) Response to crisis with force or violence
2) Tendency to antagonize rather compromise	2) Attraction to personalized leadership
3) Belief in one's own principles as unquestionably superior	3) Tendency to value order over change, esp turbulent change
4) Disbelief in loyalty or decency of opposition	

extensive repression, neither resorted to compromise or searched for common ground with opponents. Do these patterns appear in less exaggerated form at other points in Argentine history? Or were these extreme moments exceptional and their patterns absent at other times in Argentine history?

The Nineteenth Century Reformers

After Rosas Argentina had a series of reformers. Yet, despite their condemnation of him, Rosas' successors shared with him some cultural understandings about the expression of disagreement and the characteristics of leadership. Sarmiento, for example, eschewed Rosas' violence but adopted his personalism and disdain for popular representation. In midcentury Sarmiento became Argentina's president, emphasizing personalism as a basis of power, just as Rosas himself had done. Indeed, the power of Sarmiento's personal glamor was such that it has outlived him and foreclosed recognition of some of the more heavy-handed or authoritarian aspects of his governance.⁴³ Even in his reformism, Sarmiento confined his aspirations to seeking greater popular input into the selection of the presidency. He never advocated a legislature or institutionalized popular representation.⁴⁴

As president, Sarmiento made no effort to institutionalize processes that would leave the state more accountable to society. Indeed, when a popular uprising ensued during his presidency, he quashed the incident with troops.⁴⁵

Although revered for his devotion to education, Sarmiento actually saw education as a form of social control that taught the poor respect for social order more than as a path toward free thinking and potential opposition.⁴⁶

In his approach to education he shared with Rosas a cultural understanding that it be used to control rather than liberate.

While far less extreme than Rosas, these reformers shared with the dictator many cultural expectations about governance, personalism, moralism, and extremism. Also like Rosas, they were willing to use violence toward opponents and preferred personal to institutional loyalties. They were "quick to disagree... testy in the face of opposition... unable to compromise."⁴⁷

When Avellaneda won an election, supported by Sarmiento, Mitre declared fraud and launched a military revolt against him.

The Radicals

As the reformist era drew to a close, new, mass-based political parties began to emerge in the late 1890s. The best known was the Radical Party. In the Argentine political context, parties of broader mass appeal represented a positive step in an institutionalized direction. Yet significant elements of personalism

still prevailed and some of the cultural patterns discussed above reappeared in Radicalism. Founded on a platform of reform, the Radical Party began under the leadership of Leandro Alem. Alem was driven by deep moral principles and governed the party with a strong personal grip. He personally selected his successor, his nephew, Hipolito Yrigoyen, retaining party leadership within his family. But when Yrigoyen's leadership took the party in a new direction, Alem reacted in an uncompromising fashion. He committed suicide over political differences and left a note saying "... a man may break but he must not bend."

As the new Radical leader, Yrigoyen stressed moral principles such as honesty and developed a cult of personalized leadership. When the Radicals finally brought Argentina to a point of free elections based on universal manhood suffrage, Yrigoyen won easily. Yet despite the broad electoral support, as president he governed in an autocratic style, defining electoral support as a mandate for his personal style. Yrigoyen also resorted to repression against social movements he did not approve and particularly in provinces where Radicalism had not won an electoral majority. During his presidency he intervened in the interior provinces nineteen times, more than any other president before or since.⁴⁸

Radicalism represented a significant step toward more open politics and Yrigoyen conducted many reforms. However, his personalism kept the party from establishing a grassroots foundation that would have institutionalized it and broadened its support.⁴⁹ Instead, Radicalism remained more a social movement following a leader than an institutionalized party following a program. Due to its weak base and lack of institutionalization, the party was ultimately unable to carry out many of the social policies it advocated.⁵⁰

When conservative opposition emerged it had only to remove the leader to roll back the reforms. Personalism left the party vulnerable despite the widest electoral support any party had had up to that time.⁵¹ Like Alem, Yrigoyen personally selected his successor, Marcelo T. de Alvear, but then disagreed with him so vehemently that he decided to return to power himself.⁵² His heavy-handed personal style was more than conservative opposition was prepared to tolerate for a second term and he was ousted by a coup in the early 1930s. Again, the cultural response to crisis (the Depression) was violence (a coup).

Yrigoyen shared with his predecessors a cultural expectation about the use of power. Apart from personalism, his style was uncompromising, antagonistic, and moralistic in the extreme.⁵³ As president, he flouted the constitution and goaded the Congress, claiming that only he had electoral legitimacy.⁵⁴ He refused to grant symbolic respect to Congress or to dialogue with legislators.⁵⁵ He expected absolute personal loyalty and defined democracy as personal devotion to himself. He did not understand and did nothing to develop political institutions beyond himself and his personal mandate. Subsequent Radical leaders emulated Yrigoyen's personalistic, autocratic style. Frondizi was personalistic.⁵⁶ Absolutist, control, personalism, and moralism characterized Sabattini's leadership of the Cordoba branch of Radicalism.⁵⁷ And Balbin controlled the national party right up until the time of his death.⁵⁸

Peronism

No Argentine leader has ever been more personalistic than Peron who subordinated both institutions and the party to himself. Peron came to power on the basis of charismatic leadership and his relatively informal, paternalistic relations with Argentina's working class. Under his direction, Peronism never fully evolved from a social movement to a political party, in large part because Peron himself eschewed parties. Within Peronism, he maneuvered to perpetuate his preeminence by supporting second and third tier leaders against each other, switching sides whenever one group seemed to gain in power, and opposing any single individual who appeared to rise within the movement.⁵⁹ With society at large, Peron relied on his charisma and that of his wife, Eva, to produce clientelistic ties with the working class and to eclipse institutionalized process and policy with personality.

But Peron and his movement shared other cultural expectations about the use of power with leaders who preceded him. These included disrespect for democratic institutions, contemptuous and repressive treatment of the opposition, efforts to curtail critical thinking and higher learning, and violence against opponents. In power, Peronism denigrated the Congress and opposition leaders, treating them as unworthy of respect. Peronist legislators worshiped Peron and turned the legislature into a rubber stamp and official forum of homage to their leader.⁶⁰ Peronism continually battled with the universities, intervening and micromanaging them to bring down opponents and disparaging the scholars and students within them,

particularly any who questioned Peronism.⁶¹ While Peron never officially sanctioned violence as Rosas and the Proceso did, his rhetoric sometimes appeared to elicit it⁶² and he turned a blind eye to it when it served his purpose. Examples include violence against critical journalists during his first two presidencies and violence between subdivisions of Peronism during his exile in Spain when he was trying to retain party control by encouraging internal division.⁶³ The nondemocratic tendencies of Peronism were remarkable since the movement had a vast electoral majority. Di Tella writes,

What is puzzling is that nondemocratic practices are usually implemented by minority parties which cannot win in any other way; the Peronists were able to win elections by substantial margins but also thought it necessary to take coercive measures quite unnecessary for electoral success.⁶⁴

Other observers have noted the extent to which Peronism antagonized unnecessarily, eschewed any search for common ground with opponents, stood on principles while maintaining that alternative perspectives were absolutely without value, and assumed these positions even when in power and while enjoying extensive voluntary support.⁶⁵ These observations suggest that Peronism absorbed cultural patterns ingrained in Argentine politics long before Peron's arrival and quite apart from the popular support his government had. Contemporary scholarship, for example, has begun to draw parallels between the personalized style of Yrigoyen and that of Peron.⁶⁶

These two important populist movements, Radicalism and Peronism, whose heirs have for decades stood in virulent opposition to each other, in fact shared more in common than either dared admit, particularly a common culture of conflict.

An authoritarian culture of conflict

This overview of Argentine history reveals that patterns of violent conflict reach across both the extreme moments of Rosas and the Proceso but also include less extreme periods as well. The similarities between Argentina's less extreme authoritarian periods, its periods of reform, and its two extreme dictatorships indicate that the nation has historically had a harsh or violent culture of conflict underlying all political eras regardless of whether they have some democratic traits, are entirely authoritarian or stand somewhere in between. While most did not exhibit the extremes of violence of Rosas and the Proceso, a shared culture of conflict caused many similarities of governance patterns with variations in degree and style. While the individual components of authoritarian governance emerged most clearly and in harshest form during the governments of Rosas and the Proceso, authoritarian characteristics are by no means confined to those periods. Nondemocratic governance patterns of strong-man personalism, paternalism, antagonistic moralism, unwillingness to compromise, disrespect for democratic institutions, denigration of opponents, and violent response to crisis, all appear repeatedly throughout Argentina's political history.

Where are the origins of Argentine authoritarian cultural patterns? The answer to this question goes to the heart of the mystery of Argentina. Long considered one of the most cosmopolitan and European of Latin American nations, Argentina nonetheless exhibits this type of authoritarian cultural pattern in its governance.

One answer to this question lies in reinforcing divisions in Argentina. Before and at independence Argentina already had severe divisions between Buenos Aires society and the raw, uncultured interior. Describing the contrast between Buenos Aires and the rural interior of the nation, Sarmiento wrote "The inhabitants of the city wear the European dress, live in a civilized manner, and possess laws, ideas of progress, means of instruction, regular forms of government, etc. Beyond the precincts of the city everything assumes a new aspect : : .The people composing these two distinct forms of society do not seem to belong to the same nation."⁶⁷ Sarmiento's words describe the urban/rural division but they also reveal the contempt on the two sides of the divide. Viewing "the other" as despicable often results in allowing conflict with that "other" to escalate once it erupts.

This urban/rural divide was also a division between the educated and the uneducated, the cultured and the parochial, the wealthy and the poor.

Such reinforcing divisions explain the violence of the Rosas period. Rosas saw himself as a

representative of the interior and a defender of the gaucho underclass. In response to the contempt that Sarmiento's words exemplify, Rosas used violence against the educated, cultured Unitarians whom he, in turn, despised. In the nineteenth century Argentina saw the arrival of waves of immigrants from southern Europe and the Slavic nations.⁶⁸ Immigration has caused conflict in many societies but in Argentina the situation was exacerbated by the relatively small size of the population before immigration began. Although precise figures do not exist, some sources have estimated that, by 1914, at least a third of all residents of Argentina were of foreign birth.⁶⁹ Other sources have placed that figure much higher.⁷⁰ The ratio of foreigners to native-born residents was much higher in Argentina than in the United States.

The divisions between the new arrivals and citizens already in Argentina reinforced the previous divisions. Many immigrants settled in La Boca, outside central Buenos Aires, adding to the divide between Buenos Aires and the rest of the nation. Immigration also brought divisions of ethnicity, language, country of origin, education, culture and sometimes even religion.⁷¹

These groups represented a diversity of European backgrounds versus a traditional landowning, Spanish, aristocratic culture of preindependence days.⁷² Laws against land ownership by newcomers then ensured that the latter remained in the underclass. In contrast to Canada and the United States, laws on political participation increased rather than decreased divisions, making it difficult for immigrants and their descendants to vote or participate politically. Other laws limited newcomers' access to education, property, and upward social mobility. By the early 1900s Argentina was divided socially, culturally, economically, educationally, and politically.

Politics throughout most of the nineteenth century accepted and reinforced these divisions. As an exclusive affair, politics did not need or create institutions to incorporate the newcomers and underclass, the masses and large numbers of citizens. Moreover, the geographical distance between Argentina and Europe's developing democracies made the contradiction between exclusionary, non-institutional political development and Argentina's cosmopolitanism appearance less obvious.

But as politics began to open up with the Radical party in the late nineteenth century, its exclusive nature caused conflict in the new democracy. The political system had no institutions to absorb and manage that conflict. Argentines were too distant from Europe to understand that similar conflict was being managed more skillfully there. Conflict in a context of reinforcing divisions and with the historical memory of Rosas' extremism made conflict management and resolution difficult. Patterns of harsh conflict and authoritarianism began to emerge even in the initial democratic period.

Radicalism came into being with a harsh, antagonistic attitude toward the upper classes, amply reflected in Yrigoyen's approach to the Congress which primarily reflected upper class interests. A culture of harsh conflict was shared in the society at large. Civilian society tolerated and sometimes encouraged authoritarian governance patterns because it was so divided by reinforcing divisions. But in its antagonism, Radicalism only encouraged Argentina's upper classes to reassume an exclusionary approach to the low income population, which then manifested itself in the coup ousting Yrigoyen. When Peron arrived, this same class antagonism reappeared, defined this time more starkly along working class lines. Again both sides of the divide behaved antagonistically toward each other, generating tension until the Proceso emerged as an apparent solution.⁷³ At the time of Peronism Argentina was still divided socially, culturally, geographically, economically, educationally, and politically. The Proceso etched those divisions more deeply with terror and harsh authoritarian practices because so many of the victims were Peronists and so many of those who benefited from the military regime came from Argentina's upper classes.

Reinforcing divisions provide a sociocultural explanation for violence because a lack of social contact across any dimension encouraged opponents to view and treat each other harshly. The nation's weak institutional structure offered few possibilities for conflict management. Geographic distance kept Argentina isolated from other industrializing societies experiencing similar domestic tension.

Yet violence and extreme views also help explain violence and extremism. Societies develop habits and patterns; culture reinforces itself. Just as behavior effects culture, so culture also helps determine behavior. This interaction is part of what makes culture so difficult to clarify, define, and study.

Thus the violence of the Rosas period encouraged conflictual extremism at the turn of the century and nascent Radicalism. Yrigoyen and Radicalism tried to depart from such patterns and succeeded to some extent. Early Radicalism never became as extreme in its conflict with “the other” as did Rosas.

But Radicalism’s success was only partial and early Radicalism nonetheless exhibited some of the same patterns of extreme conflict and harshness toward opponents. The extent to which Radicalism repeated cultural patterns then encouraged extreme conflict and harsh views of opponents later in the twentieth century.

The answer to a question about the origins of a capacity for state terror lies in shared expectations and understandings about the use of power, the legitimacy of violence, denigration of opponents and the resolution of crisis— a culture of conflict that allowed and perpetrated authoritarian abuses of power, harsh views of opponents and the use of violence against them, and an expectation that violence solves crisis. This authoritarian culture of conflict is evident throughout history and has been encouraged and exacerbated over time. It has been shared by both leaders and society.

Social psychology has argued that aggression is a learned behavior.⁷⁴ Individuals use styles and levels of aggression and conflict management that they have observed from those around them. Although studies of aggression that arrive at these conclusions are often focused upon personality development, it is not unreasonable to suggest that they might be present in the development of leadership styles as well. Thus, while Peron declared his movement in opposition to much that Radicalism represented, in governance patterns Peron imitated many of Yrigoyen’s patterns—and then worsened or exaggerated them still further. While Yrigoyen ignored and denigrated the Congress, Peronism turned it into a rubber stamp. In the first case the legislature was an institution trying to practice some of its constitutional functions but prohibited from doing so; in the second case the legislature as a whole did not even attempt to fulfill its democratic functions.⁷⁵ The example points toward a process of imitation and exaggeration from one leader to the next.⁷⁶

The result was escalated tension that became increasingly difficult to manage or control. In such circumstances tension can feed upon itself, with each side escalating further until an extreme moment, like Rosas or the Proceso, can develop and even appear initially as a welcome, tranquil solution!

Viewed from this perspective, Rosas and the Proceso were not aberrations, sudden departures from moderate political processes and peaceful conflict management. Rather, they were expressions of ongoing cultural phenomena, extreme manifestations of an authoritarian culture of conflict that has developed throughout most of Argentine history. The two dictatorships stand at the outset and at the tragic climax of that history, their contributions to such a culture and their connections to each other visible throughout.

Recognizing these cultural patterns as endemic rather than as exceptional constitutes the first step toward changing an authoritarian culture by focusing our attention on these patterns even in their mildest form and allowing us to ask how they can be altered toward less violent and more democratic conflict management.

Implications for democratization

Argentina has now entered a new era of democracy. In December, 1983, the Proceso government permitted free presidential and legislative elections and these have reoccurred in 1989, 1995, and 1999. In addition to these presidential electoral years, a portion of the lower house of Congress has been elected every two years in between presidential elections. The Senate began direct elections in October, 2001. Even in the economic crisis of 2002, Argentine democracy still survives and its democratic institutions function.

Several years ago Argentina celebrated the passage of the day when the current democratic period surpassed in length the democracy of 1916–1930. Such longevity is remarkable in and of itself, given the nation’s history, but it also indicates that today’s democracy is different from previous democratic periods. Argentine leaders and citizens appear to be more serious about this era of democracy than about previous eras and more determined this time to make it work. Even in the face of prolonged economic crisis, Argentine citizens and leaders continue to try to solve the problem within democratic constraints.

Confronting crisis with democratic norms and using institutions to deal with emergency is a departure from historical responses to crisis.

I suggest that the difference this time lies in the brutal disaster of the DirtyWar which has now given the nation a greater incentive to learn to resolve differences peacefully. Conflict theory predicts that when contenders have reached the brink of disaster, they may subsequently learn to resolve conflict more peacefully.⁷⁷ Given this context, Argentina's democratization thus includes an effort to change culture as well as the initiation of electoral process and the slow development of democratic institutions. As the nation democratizes, shared understandings and expectations about the management of disagreement and conflict, the use of power and violence and the resolution of crisis are beginning to change. Let us consider some examples of the past eighteen years to see how this could be so.

A question about whether culture has changed or is changing is notoriously difficult to answer and the answer remains uncertain until the change is definite. But one place to start is by asking whether the authoritarian cultural patterns so extreme in the Rosas and Proceso periods and also present at other times have been moderated in the contemporary period. Has behavior changed? If today's leaders exhibit authoritarianism, is it more moderated than under Peronism or Yrigoyen Radicalism? Does society react differently now to violence and power abuse?

One place where Argentine conflict has historically escalated into repression is with the military. Violence was widely perceived as a solution to crisis; when crisis erupted, the military stepped in, imposing tranquility via repression. In keeping with such patterns, the Argentine military also tried three coups against the democracy. These were in response to the human rights trials which the military perceived as a crisis and partly in response to the inflationary crisis of Alfonsín's term. Thus authoritarian cultural patterns reappeared under democracy. Yet these most recent incidents of military violence differ from previous eras in key ways. First, none of these coups was successful and the democratic government survived them.⁷⁸ Second, with each coup, significant portions of the military were uninvolved and the coup impetus lay with subsections of the military. Third, in the last attempted coup the civilian government under Menem actually sent the army to put down the coup *and the army obeyed*. This last was an historical turning point since no such response had ever been made in Argentina to an attempted coup.

Moreover, the perpetrators of the last coup remain in jail today. Finally, the democratic government has made unprecedented efforts to subordinate the military to civilian control.⁷⁹ These have included trials of the military for Dirty War crimes, jailing the leaders of the last attempted coup, and, most importantly, selecting a Chief of the Army, General Balzas, who has worked with the government to place the military under civilian control.

These responses to attempted military violence have sent a different message to the military and given officers and soldiers a radically different set of expectations about social and state response to military violence. When the military attempted its first coup against Alfonsín in 1984, hundreds of thousands of Argentine citizens filled the Plaza de Mayo in support of the civilian government. The message was clear: violent expression of military disagreement with government policy was not acceptable. The passive, even acquiescent civilian response to the initial violence of the Rosas and Proceso periods was gone. Now the popular response was a resounding "no." And the military seem to have gotten the new message. There have been no attempted coups in Argentina for ten years. Now the shared expectation about military violence has changed: faced with a coup the civilian population will protest; the civilian government will punish the perpetrators; the military itself will put down the attempt. While we cannot know that a culture has definitively changed until years afterwards, initial indicators are that social and cultural expectations about military violence have changed in Argentina and violent coups d'état are no longer acceptable.

This social response to violence does not confine itself to events as visible as attempted coups. In the early 1990s a teenage girl, Maria Soledad Morales, was found murdered in the remote northern province of Catamarca. Initial official responses to the murder were ineffective: at first the case was left unsolved and evidence that the governor's son was involved was ignored at a mock trial that acquitted him. But popular opinion in Catamarca was not satisfied. Popular protests filled the provincial capital, first to demand a real investigation and second to insist upon an honest trial. The press followed the story doggedly and production of a major motion picture began. These more serious efforts to uncover the truth revealed both that the governor's son was involved in the incident and that the provincial Peronist government had engaged in

an elaborate cover-up involving both the police and the judicial system. Eventually popular outrage and civil unrest reached such a stage that the federal government had to send in troops to oversee an election that ousted the Peronist Saadi family from the provincial government entirely. A stronghold of Peronist and Saadi control from the 1940s, the Maria Soledad incident cost Peronism and the Saadis control of Catamarca; they have not regained office there.⁸⁰

As with the attempted coups, the social reaction to violence has changed. Gone are the days of silence in response to government-sanctioned murder, as under the Proceso and Rosas. Now murder provokes commentary, demands for investigation, and eventually popular protest. While the Catamarca story is the most dramatic such incident, other cases of murder also receive more press coverage and popular scrutiny than in previous eras. When murder includes an official sanction, popular response can be so vehement as to oust the government from power. Expectations about tolerance toward official violence are changing. In a nation where the official perpetrators could historically have expected to get away with murder, now that expectation has changed. The cultural message is different.

Violence is only Argentina's most extreme expression of authoritarianism. Even where it is absent, the nondemocratic characteristics of personalism, moralism and oppression of opponents are also evidence of nondemocratic modes of managing disagreement. These are visible today among Argentina's leaders even when they have been elected democratically and when they do not sanction outright violence. Although often considered a democrat, Raul Alfonsín ruled the Radical Party with an iron hand during and after his presidency, initially unwilling to permit new leadership. Still adhering to old patterns of leadership, Alfonsín maneuvered to weaken any new leader who began to ascend within the party, seeking to retain supreme power for himself.⁸¹ This continued until it produced a humiliating electoral defeat in 1995 and left commentators wondering if Radicalism would ever again compete electorally.⁸²

But internal dynamics within the Radical party gradually reduced Alfonsín's control until new, younger leadership was allowed to emerge in control of the party.⁸³ That new leadership led the party toward an electoral alliance with Frepaso that produced electoral success first in the 1997 midterm election and then in the 1999 presidential election. Today Alfonsín appears in public as the venerated elder statesman of the Radical Party but no longer exercises the iron-fisted control reminiscent of Yrigoyen or Peron.

Today Radicalism exhibits flexibility, pragmatism, and an ability to compromise and build coalitions, all characteristics of successful electoral parties.

Here a political party changed its behavior, first in internal practice and then its public message. Strong, inflexible, personal control of the Radical Party is no longer acceptable. Its potential to produce political defeat as it did under Yrigoyen is not tolerated today. Instead, flexibility and compromise characterize the party. Multiple leaders, leadership rotation, and, most recently, open, primary elections today characterize the Radical Party and the Alliance it has created with Frepaso. Where leadership exhibited several of the authoritarian traits listed above, the response was resistance rather than acceptance, even when the leader had not resorted to violence.

Far more than Alfonsín, President Menem displayed numerous examples of authoritarian behavior. A very few of these include his contempt for constitutional law, his behavior toward the Congress, and his treatment of his successor, Eduardo Duhalde. Openly defying the law, Menem maneuvered to change the Constitution.⁸⁴ Both the way in which he and Alfonsín made the change (an elitist pact made in secrecy, excluding the Congress) and the outcome of the change (an extended Menem presidency) were nondemocratic.

For most of his presidency, Menem did his utmost to bypass the Congress, ruling by presidential decree for large and small matters alike.⁸⁵

At one point he even announced that he had no intention of negotiating with the Congress.⁸⁶

This behavior continued for most of a decade, tolerated in part because Menem made the economy thrive and in part because Peronism has historically enjoyed greater social tolerance for authoritarianism than has Radicalism.

But eventually even Menem found himself thwarted by the growing culture of resistance to authoritarian leadership patterns. At first that resistance came from Congress. Menem found it increasingly difficult to override or bypass the Congress and incrementally more difficult to tell Congressional representatives how to vote, even when they were from his own party. By 1997 Menem could not even count on a supportive vote from the Peronist-controlled Senate. Menem found himself increasingly forced to negotiate with the Congress as the legislature, press, and public became gradually less willing to tolerate presidential governance by decree.

Subsequently, resistance to Menem's authoritarian style came from the public and even from his own party. Many voters had had enough of Menem by the late 1990s and Peronism lost majoritarian control of the lower chamber of Congress in 1997 and the presidency in 1999. The public message was one of resistance to extended personalistic control, even when these came from an elected president. In 1999 the Peronist party selected a new leader, Eduardo Duhalde, and onewhorefused to followMenem's orders. Responding in the old Peronist style of personalistic, strong-man control, Menem reacted by opposing Duhalde as ferociously as he did the opposition candidate from the Alliance, Fernando de la Rúa.⁸⁷ Like the Radicals in 1995, torn from within and still subject to personalistic control, Peronism in 1999 suffered a resounding electoral defeat. While Peronism has further to go in resisting personalism and internal authoritarian control than does Radicalism, the new public message in 1999 was the same as in 1995: failure to rotate in power and authoritarian internal party control will produce electoral defeat.

These examples provide initial evidence that political behavior is gradually changing in Argentina. From the public, the press, the parties, and the legislature a new resistance to authoritarianism is emerging. Increasingly, the expectation is that conflict be resolved peaceably, that violence is or at least should be punished, that corrupt, personalized, extended leadership is unacceptable, and that flexibility, compromise and rotation in power are expected.

It is important to note that the process of behavioral change I believe to be evolving in Argentina is an incomplete process. There are still incidents of violence that go uninvestigated and unpunished. The Peronist Party is still engaged in a struggle against old-style, personalistic control. The institutions of state, particularly the judiciary, are inadequately independent of the President, and the Senate was still indirectly elected until 2001. But change is underway. While it is easier to see democratic change in the form of elections and the behavior of institutions, I suggest that cultural change is also happening in Argentina and that such change is as much a part of the nation's democratization as is the electoral process or the changes to formal institutions. In its movement toward milder and milder authoritarianism and toward a new message of resistance to power abuses we see gradual cultural change.

No democracy has developed overnight nor does culture change suddenly.

The characteristics described here appeared in the nondemocratic histories of Spain, other Latin American nations, and in the religious conflict of seventeenth-century Britain. No established democracy began at the level of inclusion and democratic process it displays today. Rather, democracy has always developed gradually, moving incrementally toward more inclusion and more democratic process. The same is true of Argentina. Alfonsín's presidency displayed some authoritarian practices; Menem's presidency constituted a step backward toward greater authoritarianism. But the last elected president, Fernando de la Rúa, at least for the moment, is probably the least personalistic and least charismatic president Argentine democracy has yet had. Far from being liabilities, these are assets that could allow institutions and process to assume center stage while personality becomes less important. This would be an important step forward for Argentine democracy.⁸⁸

Causes of natural change: domestic and international factors

At the outset of this essay I asked whether engaging in democratic behavior in an historically authoritarian setting can cause culture to metamorphose in a more democratic direction. The previous section shows how behavior has changed or is changing in Argentina. Conflict theory showed why certain social characteristics cause escalated conflict. Let us see whether conflict theory can also explain how changed behavior produces changes in the way conflict is managed.

In the history given above we saw how social, political, and economic divisions in Argentina often reinforced each other, as they did in Northern Ireland. I suggest that divisions in Argentina are gradually becoming less mutually reinforcing and more cross-cutting. Compromise, cooperation, and alliances between previously antagonistic groups have begun to emerge in Argentine politics. Such alliances between small parties like Frepaso and the Frente Grande in the mid 1990s brought together left Peronists with non-Peronists in an alliance that was path-breaking at the time. The effort at creating alliances and cross-cutting ties became broader still in 1997 when Frepaso joined with Radicalism to create the Alliance Party. That coalition did very well in the 1997 midterm elections, illustrating that coalitions could win and foretelling the 1999 Peronist presidential defeat. Finally in 1999 the Alliance won the presidency, demonstrating that ties across old divisions could hold together long enough to carry out a campaign and win an election.⁸⁹

Additionally, both rhetoric and reporting from Argentina speak a language of cooperation, coalition-building and common ground more than in any previous era. In 1999, the rallying cry for De la Rúa's campaign was "solidarity," an effort to address both the concerns of the working class and those of the middle class. While this is an alliance of cross-cutting class ties that has served the left-of-center well in many other nations, until recently such a cross-class alliance has eluded Argentina. De la Rúa's government may change that. International reporting on the new government speaks about coalitions in Congress, compromise among and within parties, and dialogue, all words that would not have described Argentina's government throughout most of history.⁹⁰

Cross-cutting ties, alliances and compromise are also underway in the Congress. Nowhere more than in a legislature is the need for group cooperation more evident. In both Congressional chambers members of all parties are learning that effective legislation demands cooperation. Moreover, the institution as a whole has come to realize that effective restraint of the executive requires cooperation.⁹¹ In the 2002 crisis, the legislature and executive are working together, strengthening both institutions.

Conflict theory helps understand behavioral changes in Argentina and how they effect conflict management. It suggests that approaches to conflict can change in the aftermath of disaster.⁹² When contenders realize that conflict may destroy everyone but produce no winners, then the incentive to resolve conflict peaceably increases. Disaster can produce a fundamental break with the past. I suggest that the Proceso was the kind of disaster conflict theory describes and has given Argentina a motive to break away from cultural patterns of the past. With the Dirty War, Argentina experienced the worst and most extreme results of authoritarianism that the nation had ever had. With the Proceso government and the numbers of people murdered in that period, Argentina went to the brink of disaster and looked over. The nation now knows that it can destroy itself. With the Proceso, it nearly did.

The memory of that violence may now act as a brake that is conducive to conflict management and democratic development today. Conflict theory also explains behavior changes with regard to cooperation. It teaches that a joint task mutually beneficial to all may reduce conflict and substitute cooperation in its stead.⁹³ In choosing to democratize and seeking to avoid another Proceso, Argentines have changed their behavior and set a new task for themselves. If Argentina can democratize citizens may save their nation from another authoritarian experience and one that could be even worse. No previous effort at democratization in Argentina had ever looked disaster so fully in the face as today's effort does. The extreme of authoritarianism that the Proceso represented has provided a level of motivation to change authoritarian practices that may well exceed anything Argentina has experienced before.

Conflict theory says that societies responding negatively to conflict escalation are conflict resistant.⁹⁴ Argentine society may be becoming more conflict resistant. The society that supported Rosas and that initially tolerated the military coup of 1976 is today much more vigilant against authoritarianism and violent expressions of difference. The public itself resisted the attempted coups and protested the murder in Catamarca. Society itself represented the first line of resistance to Menem's transgressions against democracy. The Argentine public gradually became increasingly disillusioned with his threatening rhetoric, his efforts to stay in power endlessly, and his willingness to bypass the Congress. Public disgust with Menem's nondemocratic behavior contributed to the rise of electoral support for other parties.

Finally, Argentina's changed domestic context is itself part of a changed international context less tolerant of violence and more insistent upon democratization.

In studying Argentina's return to democracy, Alison Brysk has argued that pressure for democracy came from above and below—from an international context of human rights norms as well as from domestic pressure against the regime.⁹⁵ Argentina's continuing democratization efforts are receiving support from the international context in addition to the domestic changes discussed so far. Today there is broad global support for democratic governments and wide resistance to authoritarianism. Historically, the United States has been unconcerned about authoritarianism in Latin America; today it is placing pressure on presidents who seek to extend their terms in power.⁹⁶ Additionally, Argentina is less isolated than before.

Modern technology and electronic mail have made communication easy and immediate. It is far more difficult for Argentine leaders to practice repression undiscovered at the southern end of the earth. Moreover, Argentina is involved in regional and global agreements that require its continuation as a democracy. These include its Mercosur economic arrangements with neighbors and the participation of its military forces in peacekeeping tasks worldwide.⁹⁷ Conflict theory suggests that escalation is more likely in remote, frontier societies where social pressure and control are weaker.⁹⁸ Modern technology has made Argentina less remote than ever and international social pressures weigh more heavily than they might have even ten years ago.

The lessons here are about the importance of human agency and the flexibility of human culture. The changes in behavior described above are gradually changing culture. Chambers argues that norms and culture can change if behavior is changed first and democratic culture will strengthen simply by engaging in democratic behavior.⁹⁹ Conflict theory tells us why behavior is changing in Argentina. Behavioral changes are then changing culture.

The answer to the question at the outset of the essay is "yes." Where democratic culture has not existed, it is possible to install it by using democratic process even where significant elements of society still do not believe in democracy. Where society and its leaders are sufficiently motivated, deliberate efforts and specific kinds of leadership can change culture, if only gradually. Moreover, if leaders and other opinion creators like the media understand that they are changing culture as well as political institutions and processes, they may deliberately adopt the kind of rhetoric the Alliance used in its 1999 campaign: "solidarity," "cooperation," "togetherness," "alliances." In such a context, democratic process and institutional development are outward manifestations of underlying changes in cultural patterns, habits, expectations, and perceptions. People who had long perceived each other in suspicious, hostile, or antagonistic fashion change such views through dialogue and repeated interaction. In fact, these cultural views *must* change if democracy is to develop.

This essay illustrates that the process of cultural change underway within democratization may be more difficult to study than the outward manifestations of such change found in institutions and elections. The process of cultural change is less tangible, more difficult to judge. Moreover, culture is always changing, although perhaps more slowly at some times than at others.

A question about how far a culture has changed is hard to answer and perhaps impossible to measure. And yet it is a process worth watching and a question worth answering because its answer is central to democratization.

Faced with an authoritarian history like Argentina's, a culture must change, and possibly a great deal, before we can say that democratization is well underway in a newly democratizing nation.

Endnotes

1. I am grateful to the following scholars who have read and commented on this manuscript: Larry Dodd, John Samuel Fitch, Fani Godfried, Daniel Levine, Guillermo O'Donnell, Marc Howard Ross, Kathryn Sikkink, Guillermina Seri, and several anonymous reviewers for the *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*.
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6. Ross, *The Culture of Conflict*, 1993.
7. Cross-cutting ties theory has been used and explored by many authors. For an early description of it, contrasting it with other theories of conflict see Robert A. Levine and Donald T. Campbell, *Ethnocentrism: Theories of Conflict, Ethnic Attitudes, and Group Behavior*, (New York, John Wiley and Sons, 1972). Levine and Campbell contrast cross-cutting ties methods of describing social divisions with "pyramidal segmentation," arrangements where social members are segmented into separate divisions in hierarchical order. Levine and Campbell note that pyramidal segmentation is related to higher levels of conflict than are cross-cutting ties. See esp chap 4. See also Dean G. Pruitt and Jeffrey Z. Rubin, *Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate and Settlement*, (New York, Random House, 1986) p 68.
8. For an earlier study of the role of loyalty in creating social bonds see Harold Guetzkow, *Multiple Loyalties: Theoretical Approaches to a Problem in International Organization*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1955).
9. Studies from political science that are not oriented toward conflict but, rather, concentrate on the maintenance of democratic stability make a related argument. Douglas W. Rae and Michael Taylor, for example, argue that societies where there are "cross-cutting cleavages" (the inverse of cross-cutting ties) are those more likely to retain democratic stability. Similarly, where cleavages are not cross-cutting, democracy will be unstable and conflict more likely. See *The Analysis of Political Cleavages*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1970), esp chap 4. Relatedly, Robert A. Dahl argues that cross-cutting social contacts and checks are essential in making democracy possible. See *A Preface to Democratic Theory*, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1956).
10. Ross, *The Culture of Conflict*, 1993.
11. Rosemary Harris, *Prejudice and Tolerance in Ulster: A Study of Neighbors and Strangers in a Border Community*, (Manchester, Manchester Press, 1972).
12. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1983).
13. Tulio Halperin Donghi has also explored a comparison between these two periods. See "El Presente Transforma el Pasado: El Impacto del Reciente Terror en la Imagen de la Historia Argentina," in Daniel Balderston, *Ficción y política: la narrativa argentina durante el proceso militar*, (Buenos Aires: Alianza Editorial, 1987) translated and published in English (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, Institute for the Study of Ideologies and Literature, 1987).
14. Argentina's National Commission on Disappeared People, *Nunca Mas*, (London, Faber and Faber, 1986).
15. Argentina's National Commission on Disappeared People, 1986; Gary Wynia, *Argentina, Illusions and Realities*, (New York, Holmes and Meier, 1986); Mauricio Cohen Salama, *Tumbas Anonimas: Informe Sobre la Identificación de Restos de Víctimas de la Represión Ilegal*, (Buenos Aires, Catalogos Editora, 1992); Simon Lazara, *Poder Militar: Origin, Apogeo y Transición*, (Buenos Aires, Legasa, 1988); Donald Hodges, *Argentina's "Dirty War": An Intellectual Biography*, (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1991).
16. John Lynch, *Argentine Dictator, Juan Manuel de Rosas, 1829–1852*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1981); Fleur Coweles, *Bloody Precedent*, (New York, Random House, 1952).
17. Juan Bajarlea, *Rosas y los Asesinatos de su Epoca*, (Buenos Aires, Editorial Araujo, 1942); Jose De Espana, *Psicología de Rosas*, (Buenos Aires, Editor M. Gleizer, 1926); Eduardo Gutierrez, *Juan Manuel de Rosas: Los Dramas del Terror*, (Buenos Aires, Harpon 1993); Carlos Ibarguren, *Juan Manuel de Rosas: Su Vida – Su Tiempo – Su Drama*, (Buenos Aires, Libreria La Facultad de Juan Roldan y Cia, 1931); Jose Maria Ramos Mejia, *Rosas y su Tiempo*, (Buenos Aires, Editorial Cientifica y Literaria Argentina, 1927). For a novel on the Rosas era see Jose Marmol, *Amalia*, Tomo I y II, (Buenos Aires, Centro Editor de America Latina, 1967). For a consideration of the impact of Rosas

- on Argentine literature generally see Anastasio Martinez, *Proyeccion del Rosismo en la Literatura Argentina*, Seminario del Instituto de Letras, (Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina, Universidad Nacional del Litoral. Instituto de Letras, 1959).
18. Robert D. Crassweller maintains that this divide between urban Buenos Aires and the rural rest of Argentina constitutes one of the most fundamental and influential divisions in the nation's history and one that plays itself out politically, socially, and economically. See *Peron and the Enigmas of Argentina*, (New York, W.W. Norton, 1987).
 19. Jeremy Adelman, *Republic of Capital: Buenos Aires and the Legal Transformation of the Atlantic World*, (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1999).
 20. Argentina's National Commission on Disappeared People, 1986; Jo Fisher, *Mothers of the Disappeared*, (Boston, South End Press, 1989). Rodolfo Walsh reports on military violence just before the Proceso took power. See *Operacion Masacre*. (Buenos Aires, Ediciones de la Flor, 1984).
 21. *La Nacion*, 1977–1979.
 22. Fisher, 1989, pp 60–66; interview with Rosa Roisinblit, Buenos Aires, 1992, interview with Estela Carloto, Buenos Aires, 1992.
 23. Like the Rosas period, the Proceso has been considered from a literary perspective as well as from social science. The term “misty” comes from Lawrence Thornton, *Imagining Argentina*, (New York, Bantam Books, 1987).
 24. *La Nacion*, 1977–1979. *La Opinion*, June 1977–June, 1978. *La Opinion*, edited by internationally-renowned author and journalist, Jacobo Timmerman, had been one of the most visible opposition newspapers in the months immediately after the 1976 military coup. In June 1977, however, the newspaper was confiscated by the military and thereafter published the junta's perspective on political events. *La Opinion* staff were murdered or forced into exile, interview with Jacobo Timmerman, Buenos Aires, 1992.
 25. Lynch, 1981: 201, 209; Gutierrez, 1944:33. The nocturnal activity of the gangs increased their power to terrorize, even to the point that it became the subject of novels on the epoch. See, for example, the opening to the most famous novel of the period, Jose Marmol's *Amalia*, as well as Gutierrez, 1944.
 26. Gutierrez, 1944:36.
 27. Ramos Mejia, 1927:31.
 28. Lynch, 1981; Gutierrez, 1944; Ramos Mejia, 1927.
 29. Lynch claims that the Mazorca death squads were actually on the government payroll. (1981:216)
 30. The junta reiterated this position repeatedly in the major newspapers after 1978. In particular, see *La Nacion* and *La Prensa*, Buenos Aires.
 31. Lynch, 1981: 117, 222, 237.
 32. A reaction to crisis that eschews democratic solutions in favor of authoritarian ones and a failure to retain confidence in democracy's ability to solve crisis is not confined to Argentina. A similar nondemocratic response to crisis emerged between the World Wars in the nations that ultimately embraced fascism. For the German case, see Hans Mommsen, *The Rise and Fall of the Weimar Republic*, (Frankfurt, Propylaen, Verlag im Verlag Ullstein CumbH, 1986) translated and published in English, (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1989) and Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism 1914–1945*, (Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), esp chaps 4, 6. For the Italian case see Frank Snowden, *The Fascist Revolution in Tuscany, 1919–1926*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989).
 33. Guillermo O'Donnell has conducted a soul-searching study into individual silence during the Proceso years. See his “Democracia en la Argentina: micro y macro,” Working Paper # 2, (Notre Dame, IN., The Hellen Kellogg Institute for International Studies, December, 1983).
 34. The impact of such policies was greater since Argentine universities are centralized under federal control, as in Britain, rather than being separately financed and overseen by state governments, as in the United States. Such centralism, of course, began with Rosas.
 35. Interviews with Jorge Sabato, Minister of Education under the first democratic administration, Raul Alfonsin's, Buenos Aires, 1993 and with Jacobo Timmerman, Buenos Aires, 1992.
 36. During the Alfonsin years the new democratic government tried to recover the former academic strength of Argentina's universities. Some progress began but was later halted by hyperinflation during the later Alfonsin years. Interview with Jorge Sabato, Buenos Aires, 1993.
 37. Ramos Mejia, 1927:67, 88, 91, 133.
 38. Interviews with Rosa Roisinblit and Estela Carloto, Buenos Aires, 1992.
 39. Perhaps the most famous exile was Domingo Faustino Sarmiento who waged a war of words from Chile throughout most of the Rosas years. He was quite conscious of his role as the bearer of ideas

- standing against a dictatorship opposed to ideas. Upon fleeing the Argentine border with Rosas' troops hard on his heels Sarmiento is said to have called back from the Chilean side "On ne tue pas les idées!" Rosas vowed to arrest Sarmiento and demanded his extradition from Chile. Chile refused. Tulio Halperin Donghi, Ivan Jaksic, Gwen Kirkpatrick, and Francine Masiello, *Sarmiento: Author of a Nation*, (Berkeley, University of California Press 1994), esp. chapters 2, 5.
40. (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1987). See also Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement*, (Cambridge, MA, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press 1996).
 41. Emilio F. Mignone, *Iglesia y Dictadura: el papel de la iglesia en la luz de sus relaciones con el regimen militar*, (Buenos Aires, Ediciones del Pensamiento Nacional, 1986), pp 109–132, 167–210. There were also dissident clerics in each epoch opposed to the regime and to church support for it. Emilio Mignone, a former priest, encouraged clerical opposition during the Proceso and Camila O'Gorman married a priest who came to symbolize clerical opposition to Rosas and the dictator's ruthless response to it.
 42. An important study of crime from a cross-national perspective finds that violence by the state often produces increased domestic crime in its aftermath. In a sense, citizens learn violence by watching it practiced by their own government. Such findings would appear to support the contention that extreme violence by the Argentine state during one epoch would serve to heighten the chances of violence, including by future leaders, in another epoch. See Dane Archer and Rosemary Gartner, *Violence and Crime in Cross-National Perspective*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1989), esp chap 4.
 43. One important exception to this generalization is the recent edited collection by Halperin Donghi, et al, *Sarmiento* 1994.
 44. Botana, Natalio, "Sarmiento and Political Order," in Halperin Donghi et al, *Sarmiento*, 1994:110.
 45. Ktra, William, "Rereading Viajes: Race, Identity and National Destiny," in Tulio Halperin Donghi, et al, *Sarmiento*, 1994: 95.
 46. Ktra, 1994:81–83.
 47. Crassweller, *The Enigmas*, 1987:43.
 48. Mustapic, 1984:99.
 49. Rock, 1975; Felix Luna, *Alvear*, (Buenos Aires, Hyspanamerica 1958).
 50. Rock, 1975:51,55.
 51. Scott Mainwaring and Timothy Scully, *Introduction: Party Systems in Latin America*, Ch 1 in Scott Mainwaring and Timothy Scully, *Building Democratic Institutions: Party Systems in Latin America*, (Stanford, Stanford University Press 1995).
 52. Luna, 1958.
 53. Crassweller, 1987:59; Ana Maria Mustapic, "Conflictos Institucionales Durante el Primer Gobierno Radical: 1916–1922" *Desarrollo Economico*, 24, no. 94, abril-junio, 1984, pp 85–108.
 54. Mustapic, 1984:98–99.
 55. The Transcript of Sessions (Diario de Sesiones) from the Argentine Congress between 1916 and 1922 contains numerous examples of dismissive messages sent from Yrigoyen to the Congress. For a particularly antagonistic example see June 24, 1918, Diario de Sesiones de Diputados, Tomo 11, p 455. On that date the lower chamber was questioning one of Yrigoyen's interventions into one of the interior provinces (Cordoba), including his takeover of the University of Cordoba and his imposition of an "overseer" to manage that institution. Drawing upon its constitutional privilege of appellation (somewhat like the British Parliamentary weekly Question and Answer session) the Chamber of Deputies had summoned the Minister of Instruction, a member of Yrigoyen's cabinet. Despite constitutional rules to the contrary, the Minister refused to appear. Instead Yrigoyen sent a curt message to the Congress saying that the Cordoba situation was none of their concern and that the Congress had no standing to challenge the President or his administration in any way. Yrigoyen informed the Congress that if it wished to ask the President's instructions, he (Yrigoyen) would be happy to oblige but that he had no intention of giving the Congress any explanations of any kind. In response to Yrigoyen's treatment of the Congress thus, Deputy Juan Justa, (Conservative) concluded that Yrigoyen did not understand the Constitution. See Justa's speech on the floor of the lower chamber, Diario de Sesiones, Camara de Diputados, Tomo I, July 24, 1918, pp 475–479. 56. Rock, 1975.
 57. Cesar Tcach, *Sabattinismo y Peronism: Partidos Politicos en Cordoba, 1943–55*, (Buenos Aires, Editorial Sudamericana, 1991).
 58. Interview with Raul Alfonsin, Buenos Aires, 1992.
 59. James McGuire, *Peronism Without Peron*, (Stanford, Stanford University Press 1997).
 60. See, for example, transcripts for 1946–1948, Diario de Sesiones, Camara de Diputados, Congreso de la Nacion.
 61. One of the most visible victim's of Peronism's crushing of academic freedom and intellectual opposition

- was its treatment of Emiliano Ravignani. Ravignani was both a scholar and a member of the Chamber of Deputies (lower house) during the early years of Peronism. He was repeatedly ridiculed and humiliated publicly until he left politics entirely. Interview with Eduardo Horacio Passalacqua, Buenos Aires, 1997.
62. Robert Potash, 1980, *The Army and Politics in Argentina, 1945–1962: Peron to Frondizi*, (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1980), pp 141–142. At times, the rhetoric of Eva Peron moved even closer to sanctioning violence, as seen, for example, in her May Day speech of 1952, Otelo Bononi and Roberto Vacca, *La Vida de Eva Peron*, (Buenos Aires, Editorial Galerna, 1979), pp 278.
 63. McGuire, 1997.
 64. *Argentina Under Peron 1973–1976*, (London, Macmillan, 1983), pp 18–21, 207; Wynia, 1978:75–80.
 65. For examples of Peronist political positions that exhibited this type of intransigence, see the transcripts for 1946–1948, *Diario de Sesiones, Camara de Diputados, Congreso de la Nacion*.
 66. Enrique Peruzzotti, “Civil Society and the Modern Constitutional Complex: The Argentine Experience,” *Constellations*, 4, no. 1, (January, 1997), pp 94–104.
 67. Domingo F. Sarmiento, *Life in the Argentine Republic in the Days of the Tyrants*, (New York, Hafner Press Translation of Facundo, originally published 1848), p 14.
 68. Ronaldo Munck illustrates that, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as many as half of Buenos Aires residents were foreign-born. See his work, with Ricardo Falcon and Bernardo Galitelli, *Argentina From Anarchism to Peronism: Workers, Unions, and Politics, 1855–1985*, (London, Zed Books, 1987), esp chaps 1–3.
 69. *Lalnmigracion enLaArgentina*, (Tucuman, Argentina, Universidad Nacional deTucuman, Facultad de Filosofia y Letras, Centro de Historial y Pensamiento Argentinos, 1979).
 70. McGuire, 1997.
 71. While arrivals from Southern Europe were often Catholic, like Argentina’s earlier population, immigrants from Slavic countries were not. Some East Europeans were Christian but many were Jewish.
 72. Some students of conflict have argued that ethnic divisions or mutual hostility manifested along ethnic lines is *the* principal cause of warfare in the modern world. Such a perspective draws particularly upon examples drawn from Africa. See R. Paul Shaw and YuwaWong, *Genetic Seeds ofWarfare: Evolution, Nationalism, and Patriotism*, (Boston, Unwin Hyman, 1989).
 73. In each case, those on the receiving end of the oppression may also experience it in exaggerated fashion, leading them to retaliate with even harsher oppression than they originally received.
 74. Ross, 1993, Albert Bandura, *Aggression: A Social Learning Analysis*, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice Hall 1993).
 75. Although the opposition within the legislature certainly tried to use the institution to place a brake on Peron or to check his powers, they lacked the votes to succeed.
 76. For a study of the centrality of leadership in conflict development and escalation, see David J. Finlay, Ole R. Holsti and Richard R. Fagen. *Enemies in Politics*, (Chicago, Rand McNally, 1967).
 77. Pruitt and Rubin, *Social Conflict*: 68 This work shows that Argentina also shares characteristics with many other social settings prone to conflict. These include a lack of identification across groups, (p 70), a lack of confidence in the opposition (p 71) and the lack of a common, external enemy (p 73).
 78. Although it made serious compromises in due process of law in trying military officers for human rights violations.
 79. J. Samuel Fitch, *The Armed Forces and Democracy in Latin America: Context, Ideology and Institutions*, (Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), esp Chap 5. See also Andres Fontana, “La politica militar en un contexto de transicion: Argentina 1983–1989,” paper presented to the CEDES-Schell Center for Human Rights conference on “Transicion a la Democracia en Argentina,” Yale University, March 1990.
 80. Adrian Escribano, MA Thesis, University of Catamarca, 1998.
 81. Personal observation and interviews with Radical leaders, 1992–1995, Buenos Aires, Argentina. In an interview in 1993 Alfonsin gave as a reason for opposing the presidential candidacy of a Radical leader “Because he moved against me, against me!”
 82. The electoral defeat of Masacessi in 1995 was the poorest electoral showing of the Radical Party since the return of democracy in 1983.
 83. Interviews with Radical leaders and Congressional Deputies, 1992–1995, Buenos Aires, Argentina.
 84. Disregard for the law by an elected president is not confined either to Menem or to Argentina. In fact, a weak rule of law, particularly as regards civil rights, is characteristic of developing Latin American democracies and constitutes one of the principal problems such nations need to solve to deepen democracy and make it more real. See Guillermo O’Donnell, “Polyarchies and the (Un)Rule of Law

- in Latin America: A Partial Conclusion,” in eds., Juan Mendez, Guillermo O’Donnell, and Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, *The (Un)Rule of Law and the Underprivileged in Latin America*, (Notre Dame, IN, University of Notre Dame Press, 1999).
85. At one point Menem used a presidential decree to authorize selling cement to Bolivia. The sale hardly seemed to warrant such strong presidential involvement and was evidence of the president’s willingness to rule single-handedly in small matters as well as large.
 86. Ana Maria Mustapic and Natalia Ferretti, “El Veto Presidencial bajo Alfonsín y Menem, 1983–1995,” in process.
 87. For a discussion of Peron’s efforts to play new and emerging leaders off against one another, weakening any alternative leader in the process, see McGuire, 1997, esp chaps 4 and 5.
 88. Ian Budge has argued that a range within which disagreement confines itself is essential to stable democracy. Thus politicians may disagree with each other over specifics of policy but fundamentally agree with each other that adherence to democratic procedure is desirable and that policies far outside the range of disagreement are unacceptable. See *Agreement and the Stability of Democracy*, (Chicago, Markham Publishing Company, 1970), esp pp 171–2, 175, 178.
 89. The democratic role of politicians is essential here since they have been the leaders most central in spearheading the movement toward political alliances. Robert A. Dahl has argued that politicians are frequently the group most likely to play the role of upholding democratic procedures. In Argentina, they have been the group most central in establishing cross-cutting ties that support democratic procedures. Moreover, says Dahl, politicians, by virtue of the nature of their job, are the persons most capable of undertaking this task. See *Who Governs?*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1961), pp 321–24. Pruitt and Rubin also suggest that if societies can establish more social bonds and broad group membership, conflict will decrease. See *Social Conflict*, 1986:68–73.
 90. See, for example, *The Economist*, Feb 5–11th, 2000, p 29; *The Economist*, May 6–12th, 2000, Survey Insert, p 16.
 91. Interviews with legislators, Buenos Aires, 1997, 1999.
 92. Pruitt and Rubin, 1986:68.
 93. In an important experimental study of intergroup cooperation and conflict where conflict could be deliberately constructed and reduced Sherif et al found that groups which had been in conflict could begin to cooperate when they were given a joint, intergroup task to accomplish that clearly benefited all the groups. See Muzafer Sherif, O.J. Harvey, B. Jack White, William R. Hood, Carolyn W. Sherif, *The Robbers Cave Experiment: Intergroup Conflict and Cooperation*, (Middletown, CT, Wesleyan University Press, 1988).
 94. Pruitt and Rubin, *Social Conflict*, p 65.
 95. *The Politics of Human Rights in Argentina: Protest, Change and Democratization*, (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1993). For an excellent study of the international influence of social activism see Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, (Ithaca, N.Y. Cornell University Press, 1997).
 96. *The Economist*, June 2–9, 2000.
 97. *La Nación*, October 19, 1999 p A13.
 98. In examining the relationship between democracy in society broadly defined, or culture, and institutions, Harry Eckstein argues that a key element in stable democracy is “congruence of authority,” namely that the rule of law be followed at all points of authority within society, as well as within state authority itself. See his *Division and Cohesion in Democracy: A Study of Norway*, Princeton, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1966), esp. Appendix B: A Theory of Stable Democracy.
 99. *Reasonable Democracy*, 1996.