

# URUGUAY, 1980–1981: An Unexpected Opening\*

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From mid-1980 to the present, Uruguay has experienced greater political change than during the previous seven years. This essay examines the salient political event that separates the two periods: the national plebiscite of November 1980. Its relevance, the causal conditions that might account for its unexpected results, and its probable short-range consequences will be explored. The argument assumes a general familiarity with Uruguayan politics of the last two decades, and particularly during the period 1974–80. It is also assumed that the Uruguayan political system of the last two decades fits O'Donnell's bureaucratic-authoritarian model, with the caveat that because of specific economic conditions, a feature of that model known as the "deepening" of the economy is not applicable to Uruguay, as has also been argued with respect to the case of Chile.<sup>1</sup>

In November of 1980, the military government of Uruguay held a plebiscite to obtain approval for a plan for constitutional reform. This plan was drafted by the Comisión de Asuntos Políticos de las Fuerzas Armadas (COMASPO). The text of the draft as well as the conditions under which the plebiscite was held have been subjected to extensive and critical discussion in a document of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the OAS.<sup>2</sup> While preserving the traditional two-party system, the plan places the state under the tutelage of the armed forces by setting up a National Security Council (Consejo de Seguridad Nacional or COSENA) controlled by the armed forces that is in charge of national security. The plan's text gives a very elastic definition of national security that includes the defense of the national patrimony "in all its forms," and defense of "the process of development toward national objectives" against internal or external "aggression or interference." This hybrid concept, which reflects both traditional notions and the doctrine of national security,<sup>3</sup> is in the case of Uruguay, the sole, explicit manifestation that comes close to what Garretón called the "foundational dimension" of bureaucratic authoritarianism.<sup>4</sup>

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The course of the plebiscite project was also very mixed. Before the plebiscite, a brief, but very intense, advertising campaign included massive official propaganda that identified rejection of the constitutional reform with communism and revived the old themes previously used in the electoral campaigns against Allende in Chile and against the Frente Amplio in Uruguay. During the final weeks, however, the government allowed the expression of contrary opinions and permitted the publication of a weekly directed by members of the *Colorado* opposition that was created to oppose the project of constitutional reform. Although subject to temporary closures, the weekly continues to be published.<sup>5</sup> While opposition efforts hardly equaled the volume of official propaganda, the appearance of a vocal opposition after seven years of enforced silence nevertheless generated a change in the political "climate."

As is well known, the voters rejected the proposed constitutional reform. Participation in the plebiscite reached 87 percent of the registered voters. Only 2 percent of the ballots were blank or defective. Of the ballots judged to be valid, 57 percent rejected the proposed constitutional reform. This outcome was the final surprise. After a long and essentially fraudulent process, the military government unhesitatingly admitted political defeat. No comparable precedents exist. The electorate thus rejected the institutionalization of the military government. Moreover, because the text of the project of constitutional reform included the "Actos Institucionales," it implicitly made the legitimacy of these government actions subject to a decision by the electorate. In other words, no basis of legitimacy other than the will of the people was reserved for any of the Acts of the *de facto* regime. The significance of the outcome lies less in whether or not it might have invalidated the juridical acts of the regime, a somewhat complex issue, than in the official recognition of the people's decision as the only legitimizing principle. Thus, the plebiscite was important both because the population rejected the institutionalization of an authoritarian regime and because of what the plebiscite revealed about the regime itself.

Most observers expected a different outcome. Most expected approval of the plebiscite either because of the unfairness of the preceding campaign, or because of simple fear, or because, all else failing, of the assumption of fraud.<sup>6</sup> It was a reasonable expectation; no comparable precedents existed of government defeat, and even if it were to happen, it hardly seemed reasonable to expect fair play in the final stage of a process that had never been fair. Nevertheless, the electoral process took place in normal fashion throughout the country. The small formal details were more reminiscent of Uruguayan traditions than of Chilean techniques. In Chile the government ballot displayed the Chilean flag, while in Uruguay both ballots had a similar neutral text and differed only in the large words "YES" or "NO." Consequently, the meaning of

the results of the plebiscite is clear, but its explanation depends upon the reasons why the people voted the way they voted as much as upon the reasons why the military acted the way they did.

The most obvious, and perhaps most important, of the factors to be considered in explaining the conduct of the armed forces is the impact of national political culture on the officer corps, quite apart from the specifics of their professional socialization. In the words of a qualified witness, then-President Juan María Bordaberry, "In general there is resistance to institutionalizing the presence of the armed forces; in the case of Uruguay, this resistance is valued by the armed forces themselves. In my long conversations with them, when I was attempting to spread such ideas, they rejected the possibility of assigning institutional power to themselves, even when I told them that this was the reality of the current situation, although the Constitution would say something different."<sup>7</sup> That is to say, the officers rejected Bordaberry's position on institutionalization. Bordaberry maintains that this situation occurred in Uruguay because "after many years under a liberal democracy [Uruguayans] cannot conceive of another political philosophy that might serve as the basis for different political institutions." Herein lies the problem according to Bordaberry, who believes that the only viable solution is to recognize that "the locus of political power is in the armed forces."<sup>8</sup>

On the other hand, various characteristics of the Uruguayan military government that distinguish it from its regional counterparts point in the same direction. The notion that military leadership is exceptional and transitory is not exclusive to the Uruguayan officer corps. But since 1976, they have outlined fairly well-defined temporal stages and a timetable for the return of power to civilian hands through electoral competition between the traditional political parties, although under the supervision of the armed forces. The result of the plebiscite destroyed the timetable, but a substitute is already in place that calls for primary elections in 1982, national elections in 1984, and the full transition to civilian rule to be completed by March of 1985. The differences from the Chilean and Argentine cases are obvious, as is clearly demonstrated by the Argentine military government's pet slogan, "the process [of return to civilian rule] has objectives but no timetable."

The same "legal-civilian" preoccupation can be seen in the various forms of military leadership. Unlike the Chilean and Argentine cases, the visible heads of the Uruguayan administration have been civilians. This arrangement, however, fooled no one as to who held the real power, not even the least-informed sectors of the population. From June 1973 to August 1981, all presidents have been civilians. The current president, General Gregorio Álvarez, is a former commander-in-chief of the army, who retired four years before his election. This situation con-

trasts with the Argentine practice of officers "retiring" in order to become president. The first of the civilian presidents was Bordaberry, who simply continued in the office to which he had been elected in 1971. The reasons behind his ouster in 1976 are also illustrative. The former president was sponsoring an "institutionalizing" project that included the definitive destruction of all political parties. When the armed forces removed him from his post, they issued a communiqué that underlined their past differences with Bordaberry and ended by saying that the armed forces could not and did not want to take on the historic responsibility for having eliminated traditional political parties.

Civilians have also headed most government departments or ministries. The two exceptions have been the heads of the Ministry of the Interior (a general on active duty) and of Defense (whether a civilian or a retired officer, either one for all practical purposes has purely ceremonial duties). The real military control is exercised through officers (usually colonels) in decision-making positions of far more importance than the official hierarchy would normally lead them to expect (for example, as heads of personnel). The only place in the administration where the military exercise direct control is in the management of regional departments (positions equivalent in rank, but less powerful than Argentine provincial governorships). The governors or intendants are colonels on active duty (the same holds for the provincial chiefs of police). Strictly speaking, their immediate superiors are the chiefs of the particular military region within whose jurisdiction a given province or department is located.

The influence of Uruguayan legal and civilian traditions on the armed forces should also be evaluated by examining the "good conscience" of the military.<sup>9</sup> The military corporation exercises power as a service, as the ultimate custodian of the social order. The definition of the situation prior to the military intervention (the "inaugural crisis") is such that the military can keep their good conscience without having to avoid harshness, given the magnitude of the values threatened by subversion. Thus, documents made public by the armed forces can speak without embarrassment of the "harsh treatment" given to political prisoners as one of the factors of military success. The armed forces, in their own view, had not only the right but the duty to intervene as they did, and their actions were taken not for the benefit of particular groups but for the entire nation. In a sense this is true. Those who lost the conflict are excluded from this bureaucratic-authoritarian government; however, those who presumably won the conflict are also not represented other than in the generic (and trivial) sense that a reestablishment of social order is of a priori benefit to socially privileged groups. The various sectors of the bourgeoisie have expressed their disagreement with the economic policies of the government at some time or other, and sometimes

vigorously. Even the banking association, the group that seems to have benefited most, has publicly disagreed with the military government. Even when the interests of one sector are systematically favored (speaking only of short-range interests because any views about the more long-range effects of economic policy are polemical), it cannot be said that the military government is “representative” of its interests. This was the case with the financial sector. There is no necessary connection between the objectively favored status of a group and the eventual “representation” of its interests by the armed forces. Furthermore, to suggest that a given group is the “true” power behind the throne is to lose sight of the real protagonist and to invert the real sequence of decision-making. The military decided on a given economic policy, probably without intending to favor any given group, and the results of this policy favored the financial sector. To understand why the military followed a given policy is a difficult problem, but to deny this problem is not the same as solving it.<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand, with regard to those whose interests have suffered, the policies of the military resulted in a severe reduction of real wages that at least shows that the armed forces were willing to wait several years for the presumably favorable tangible results of their economic policies and that they had sufficient power to do so.<sup>11</sup> The armed forces are antilabor to the extent that they destroyed the labor unions. But from the military point of view, this course was unavoidable because the labor unions were a power-base for the left.

The “good conscience” of the military, then, is understood to be their self-image as defenders of the entire nation and not as defenders of any particular interests whatsoever, which is difficult to reconcile with their *permanent* ignorance of the popular will, and even less with their attempts to falsify the popular will once it has been determined. It is possible to attempt to convince the public or to “educate” it, even with outright crude “teaching” methods (the government propaganda campaign prior to the plebiscite could be described in these terms). But it was considerably more difficult to postpone electoral consultation indefinitely and even harder to distort its results.

Such ideological factors may well be present in other Latin American contexts, but they seem to find a particularly favorable setting in Uruguay, a small, compact country that is geographically, ethnically, and culturally homogeneous. Uruguay has no significant social cleavages, but rather a social structure that more than any other in South America approximates the ideal type of “class” (as opposed to ideal type of “caste”) with social mobility that is legitimate and fluid. Throughout the social spectrum, its population shares common cultural values and a strong sense of identity and national unity.<sup>12</sup> These elements undoubtedly are associated to some extent with a polyarchic political culture,

but they can vary independently of each other. In the case of Uruguay, the broadly social and specifically political components are present to a maximum degree, relative to the Latin American context.<sup>13</sup> Size alone is a relevant variable; for example, the enormous size of Brazil easily can give rise to “perverse” effects among its armed forces—as Cardoso observes when referring to the Brazilian armed forces as the bearers of an ideology that “sees Brazil as a Great Power (and which is unequivocally similar to fascism).”<sup>14</sup> In contrast, one readily can imagine that the military planning of the Uruguayan high command would do well to include a game plan for guerrilla resistance against an invading army occupying the nation (whether a neighbor or not).

There is another military variable whose importance can best be grasped in a comparative context: the various forms of “institutional” compromise among the Uruguayan armed forces. On the one hand, these variations reflect different ideological emphases on the legitimacy of decision-making procedures at a national level. On the other hand, these differences have objective consequences on the outcome of those same processes of decision-making. The institutional origin of military bureaucratic-authoritarianism leaves no room for decisive personal leadership. It is the military corporation that acts, not the armed followers of a leader. But historical differences have crystalized over time so that now, in the 1980s, clearly distinguishable patterns have emerged. Chile and Uruguay are, precisely, the polar examples. Pinochet is not Franco, but he alone resembles him in some significant way. In contrast, the command structure of the Uruguayan armed forces may be a pyramid, but it is a truncated pyramid. There is a “false” apex (the commander-in-chief), who is by definition the first among equals, and below him is a “true” horizontal platform made up of generals (and probably also of colonels in direct command of troops). This collegial group is the real decision-maker. The principle of vertical command operates without breaks only below this platform.

Multiple tensions are generated by the existence of this collegial group as a deliberating body, on the one hand, and the often expressed need for institutional unity among the armed forces to assure “the success of the enterprise,” on the other hand. The very existence of the collegial body legitimates the existence within it of factions that are not necessarily monolithic and therefore compete with each other. The need for unity forces them to negotiate and compromise, and thus prevents a situation in which a given faction might find itself cornered and have to fight for its survival. This arena, in which various factions hold bargaining positions, is broader than any specific area of public policy, including economic policy. It is intimately interwoven with the internal politics of the military institution, which constitutes the “main game” because it

awards the major prizes, thus subordinating other considerations. From a functional point of view, this has the effect of “feudalizing” government administration because the different positions of decision-making in government enterprises have, in addition to their functional responsibilities, a power role to play in the competing arena of the collegial group (by providing access to important resources), thus becoming objects of dispute.

The military heads of the government enterprises are equal members of the collegial group, but they also identify with the specific interests of their own enterprises (because this strengthens their position) and the final result is the above-mentioned “feudalization.” Each faction controls a relatively autonomous area that it tries to manipulate according to its interests or inclinations. The division may be found between the military services (where, for obvious reasons, “the catch belongs to the navy”) or it might be simply factional (and result in contradictory policies being followed by the Bank of the Republic and the Central Bank, to give an actual example). In the domain of economic policy, this state of affairs gives rise to heterodox policies, often tied up with military politics. The navy might indeed develop a plan to promote the fishing industry and participate in the implementation of its various stages. In different ways, this plan will influence its policy of acquisitions and what the navy defines as its operative priorities in relation to areas of maritime jurisdiction and similar problems. As a result, if difficulties arise with the fishing plan, these threaten not only a few private enterprises but the entire “package.” If this difficulty requires subsidies, then there will be subsidies, even if these harm the basic economic policy that the government is trying to implement.

On the level of military politics, this situation led to a very precise definition of procedural rules to be respected for the sake of unity. Rules on promotions and removals are followed scrupulously, and retirements follow the organic military law without exceptions. Once again, the considerable contrast to the Chilean situation is notable.<sup>15</sup> The Uruguayan practice demonstrates both the type of procedures considered legitimate for making relevant decisions and the care invested in avoiding “caudillismos” and succession conflicts.<sup>16</sup> This arrangement also has important consequences for the potential role of the electorate vis-à-vis the military collegial ruling group. It is highly improbable that the officers of the collegial group as a whole share well-defined common views on the political problems associated with institutionalization. The little information available on this subject suggests that there are, in fact, important differences among the ruling officers. Under such conditions, and taking into account what has already been discussed, the electorate can play the role of a legitimate arbiter accepted by all contenders, and one whose deci-

sion would be difficult to ignore. It is possible to pressure the electorate and try to bribe it, but if all parties are in previous agreement, the verdict can hardly be ignored.<sup>17</sup>

The last military variable to be considered here is the relative prestige of the military institution. All other factors being equal, it seems reasonable to infer that the lower the prestige of the military institution, the greater the probability that the electorate might play—at the very least—the role of “legitimate arbiter” mentioned above. In more general terms, the lower the military prestige, the greater the importance of civil society in the formulation of solutions. Here, too, the Uruguayan military is at the bottom of the scale. First and foremost is the fact that the Uruguayan armed forces are *not* a relevant instrument of foreign policy, as they are in the case of Argentina, Brazil, or Chile.<sup>18</sup> They never had the chance to acquire prestige of a specifically military nature as the Chilean military did as a result of their victory in the War of the Pacific.<sup>19</sup> In Uruguay, there is no military draft and the Uruguayan armed forces have been absent from national politics since the nineteenth century. Perhaps partly as a consequence of these factors, the officer corps was relatively underpaid until the early 1970s. Thus, even though the social origins of the officers in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay are comparable (mostly middle and lower-middle class), the Uruguayan officer corps undoubtedly is in the lower end of the prestige scale.

The results of the plebiscite show, among other things, the very weak influence of the mass media. Most of the newspapers and television stations in the capital came out in favor of the proposed constitutional reform, while the rest did not declare themselves for either side. The sole opposition came from the previously mentioned Colorado weekly. Even the old established newspaper *El Día* (Colorado and Batllista), which had expressed cautious opposition since the military government’s installation, neutralized its influence thanks to internal disagreements among the members of its editorial board. According to what dividing lines, then, did the population vote?

There are at least three alternative interpretations of the voting results. If any one of these interpretations is correct, that fact alone would have major future implications. The only interpretation linked to structural variables holds that while the military government destroyed all leftist organizations, it actually enlarged the possible leftist social support base. Specifically, those who were recruited from the “modern” sector of the nation voted against the proposed constitutional reform, but on a scale far broader than that of the original leftist support base. The second hypothesis holds that partly because of political loyalties and partly as a reaction against the barrage of one-sided official information, the electorate paid especially close attention to the pronouncements



made by its political leaders. Although these leaders were not allowed to express their views formally in public, their views were nevertheless well known to the population. The third hypothesis calls attention to the classical right-center-left political spectrum (as expressed in the presidential elections of 1971). It holds that only the right voted for the constitutional reform, while the center and the left joined forces to vote against it.

The first hypothesis is compatible with the government propaganda campaign that systematically tried to identify a vote against the proposed constitutional reform with communism—equating it with the left. The second and third hypotheses lead to the same empirical prognosis because, with the exception of Aguerondo, the candidate of the right-wing National party in the 1971 elections who died before the plebiscite, the political leaders went on record as being in agreement with the interpretation of the third hypothesis. The difference among these hypotheses, then, boils down to the degree of autonomy attributed to the electorate.<sup>20</sup> To attempt an empirical evaluation of these hypotheses is no simple task. The few public-opinion polls that exist include a very high percentage (30 to 40 percent) of “no response.” Furthermore, these polls are probably considerably more reliable for Montevideo than for the rest of the country.

The Gallup poll, for example, only gives percentages and limits itself to variables that are much too crude to permit an evaluation of the first hypothesis.<sup>21</sup> This source is also inadequate to evaluate properly the other two hypotheses because it groups together all the followers of the Colorado party on one side, and all the followers of the Blanco party on the other, without distinguishing the internal factions.<sup>22</sup> The only remaining possibility is to examine the aggregate results for each of the nineteen departments (states or provinces) of the nation. Here the additional factor of new voters must be taken into account. Gallup finds that 17 percent are first-time voters, a figure close to estimates of the relative proportion of the population age 18 to 26 (measured against the total population age 18 and over) for November 1980.<sup>23</sup>

The left, consistent with the basic bureaucratic-authoritarian model, is indeed the modern sector of the country. A simple model to this effect, such as that which follows, shows a relatively high explanatory power (t values are given in parentheses):

$$\text{Left} = -15.65 (4.66) + .19 \text{ urbanized} (4.44) + .27 \text{ middle and upper urban occupational strata} (2.85) + .65 \text{ blue-collar workers} (5.67) \\ [R^2 = .88]$$

The units of this analysis are the nineteen departments of the country. The model estimates the coefficient of lineal regression of the vote cast

on behalf of the Frente Amplio in 1971 (in percentages) over the percentages of (1) the population in each department that lives in cities of more than two thousand inhabitants as a proportion of the total population of the department; (2) middle and upper urban occupational strata as a proportion of the economically active population of each department; and (3) the proportion of the economically active population of each department that is made up of industrial workers. The equation can be interpreted in terms of the probability that an individual will vote a given way (which involves the risks associated with the ecological fallacy); or it can be interpreted simply in structural terms, without risking the ecological fallacy: the leftist vote advances along with urbanization and its accompanying growth of the industrial working class and middle and upper urban occupational strata. Considering the simplicity of this model, the fact that 88 percent of the variation in the leftist vote can be explained by the regression coefficients is a satisfactory result.<sup>24</sup> Now, if the first hypothesis were true, then the regression of the negative vote in 1980, on the same independent variables, should yield satisfactorily adjusted results, although with different regression coefficients. This is not the case. The results yield an adjusted  $R^2$  of barely .19 (as opposed to an initial .85), and only one of the coefficients (industrial workers) is statistically significant. Therefore, one must conclude that the data does not support the first hypothesis.

If the second or third hypotheses were true, then the regression of the negative vote in 1980 on the corresponding independent variables should yield good results; that is, the coefficients would show directly what proportion of which group voted no.<sup>25</sup> In this case, the sole reasonable interpretation of each model would be in terms of individual voting probability, and therefore even satisfactory models would not necessarily validate the hypothesis because of the problems associated with the ecological fallacy. But if the models are clearly unsatisfactory, then the hypotheses cannot be sustained. This is indeed what happens. The adjusted  $R^2$  are very poor. (If we take the five most important groups as coefficients of regression, we get .24. If we use right, center-right, center-left, and left, we get .21.) The only coefficients that are statistically significant are those of the left (in both cases), Aguerrondo (the right-wing of the Blanco party), and the right-wing (in the second model). The results fail to sustain the hypotheses and suggest that the only sector of the electorate that voted in the expected direction was the left.

Within a comparative perspective, our previous discussion has suggested some hypotheses that attempt to explain the behavior of the military government in relation to the plebiscite of 1980. What is happening might be labelled a qualified "opening," because it is an opening

“in process” and not a result. It is also the outcome of the new direction determined by the plebiscite. If, on the other hand, the vote had favored the proposed constitutional reform, this scenario would have determined the institutionalization of an authoritarian state, although it would have retained the play of the traditional political parties. But the results of the plebiscite were totally unexpected by the absolute majority of observers, in part because this outcome was a historical novelty. Thus, it follows that the most fitting label for the Uruguayan political process of the last year and a half is precisely an unexpected opening.

Our examination of the results of the plebiscite suggests that the cleavage between “yes” and “no” cuts across all political groups with the exception of the left. A clear majority rejected military authoritarianism, but it was a heterogeneous majority. Its common denominator was being in favor of more liberal political institutions than those offered by the military, but this majority also included traditional and conservative groups. In other words, in terms of the traditional Uruguayan political spectrum, the antimilitary opposition also recruits followers from the political center and the right-wing. This situation, in relation to the future (and together with unavoidable military vetoes), can determine important regroupings of the electorate. If, as seems to be the case, the new law on political parties continues to allow the accumulation of votes by *sublemas* (a system in which the winner is the candidate who gets the largest number of votes from the party that gets the largest number of votes), it could bring about again, in an aggravated form, the situation of 1971 in which a country more liberal than authoritarian elects a president more authoritarian than liberal.

## NOTES

1. Tomás Molián y Pilar Vergara, “Estado, ideología y políticas económicas en Chile: 1973–1978,” p. 82 in *Estudios CIEPLAN* 3 (June 1980). A classical text by O’Donnell and a further development of the discussions may be found in *The New Authoritarianism in Latin America*, David Collier, ed. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979). The two most recent books on the Uruguayan political process are Martin Weinstein, *Uruguay: The Politics of Failure* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1975), and Edy Kaufman, *Uruguay in Transition* (New Brunswick, N.J.: 1979). For the period before the military takeover, the best article is Carlos Real de Azúa, “Política, poder y partidos en el Uruguay de hoy,” in Luis C. Benvenuto et al., *Uruguay hoy* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 1971). A general view of the first four years of military rule can be found in François Lerin and Cristina Torres, “Les transformations institutionnelles de l’Uruguay (1973–1978),” in *Problèmes d’Amérique Latine*, Nos. 4485–86 (November 1978) Notes et études documentaires, La Documentation Française.
2. OAS, Doc. 1229/80, October 1980.
3. María del Huerto Amarillo, *El proceso de militarización del Estado en el Uruguay*, (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Constitucionales, August 1981), p. 126ff; Jorge Lanzaro, “La constitución nonata,” in *Cuadernos de Marcha* 2, 9 (October 1980).
4. Manuel Antonio Garretón, “Procesos políticos en un régimen autoritario: dinámicas de institucionalización y oposición en Chile, 1973–1980.” FLACSO Santiago, Documento de Trabajo No. 104, December 1980.

5. The "Colorado" party is one of the two traditional political parties in Uruguay. Further on, the position taken by its different factions vis-à-vis the referendum will be examined.
6. There are innumerable examples here. For Carlos Martínez Moreno, a prestigious Uruguayan criminologist who lives in Mexico, "as far as the results go, there is no mystery. If the dictatorship does not have enough [votes] with those obtained, it will change them to suit its taste." "Ni el sí ni el no abren el camino," *Cuadernos de Marcha* 2, 9 (October 1980), p. 59. In general, the informed opposition in Montevideo was pessimistic and was surprised by the results of the plebiscite.
7. Juan María Bordaberry, who was elected president in 1971 and was de facto president 1973–76, in *Las opciones* (Montevideo: Imprenta Rosgal, 1980), p. 44. Bordaberry's thought has close affinities with the "organic" ideal type described by Alfred Stepan in *The State and Society: Peru in Comparative Perspective* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978).
8. Bordaberry, *Las opciones*, pp. 15, 45.
9. This is a theme that Guillermo O'Donnell developed in an unpublished comparative essay on the economic policies of the military governments of the Southern Cone.
10. In "Economic Policy and Elite Pressures in Uruguay," American Universities Field Staff Reports 1979, No. 27, South America, Howard Handelman defends a similar viewpoint (p. 12). Divergent opinions can be found in Samuel Lichensztejn, "Le Bloc Financier dominant en Uruguay," *Amérique Latine* No. 5, CETRAL (Spring 1981): 72; and in Gerónimo De Sierra, "Uruguay 1973–1980: Éléments pour un bilan des rapports entre politique économique et régime politique," *Amérique Latine* No. 7, CETRAL (Fall 1981): 10. On politics and economic policy during this period, see Danilo Astori, *Tendencias recientes de la economía uruguaya* (Montevideo: Fundación de Cultura Universitaria, 1981); Luis E. González and Jorge Notaro, "Alcances de una política estabilizadora heterodoxa" (Washington, D.C.: Wilson Center, *Latin American Working Papers* No. 45, 1980; Luis Macadar, "Un nuevo ensayo de reajuste económico: Uruguay 1974–1979" (Montevideo: CINVE, 1980); M. H. J. Finch, *A Political Economy of Uruguay since 1870* (London: 1980); and the collection of essays *Uruguay: dictadura y realidad nacional* (Mexico: ERESU, Unidad de Investigación Latinoamericana, 1981).
11. But patience is not without limits. Since 1980, military concern about the general economic situation has been noticeable, particularly with regard to real wages. The situation has become very difficult in the last few months.
12. The identity of "we" is positive ("shared benefits") rather than negative ("something bad shared by 'them'"). Popular culture is not in the least chauvinistic.
13. The differences with Chile are obvious and are linked to the far more authoritarian and antidemocratic attitudes of the Chilean elites. The observation concerning the considerable difference in attitude between Chilean and Uruguayan elites with regard to a political opening is Alfred Stepan's.
14. Fernando Henrique Cardoso, "The Authoritarian Regime at the Crossroads: The Brazilian Case" (mimeo, 1981), p. 10.
15. This kind of "generals' democracy" is not the least bit disguised. Some of the results can be surprising: during the last round of promotions and appointments, a newspaper in Montevideo came out with the headline "The Navy Made Its Choice; Now the Army," *La Mañana* (Montevideo), 19 January 1982. This statement meant that the admirals had reached a determination concerning their new peers and that now the generals would do the same (including the selection of the new *primus inter pares*) on the given date. Official rules automatically employ the criteria of age and time in rank to determine retirement, which insures that succession will be orderly. The format mentioned in the newspaper article is exactly the same as that which describes the activities of any important collegial group that gathers to collect candidates for key positions: photographs of the electors arriving and leaving, details about the location and other aspects of the gathering, photographs of the elected, their vitae, and so forth. The only difference is that the article lists themes discussed and decisions taken, but gives no details on the actual discussions, even though these may have lasted for more than a day.
16. Finch comments that Bordaberry "was retained as president, possibly, to disguise the

unconstitutional nature of the regime but more probably to inhibit the emergence of presidential ambition within the ranks of the military high command." *Political Economy*, p. 248.

17. A significant question, then, is, Why is Chile ruled by a single military figure while Uruguay is ruled by a military college? Or in other words, What explains the difference at the top of their armed forces? It is likely that structural and contextual variables give rise to "differential probabilities." But circumstantial factors (and directly, the personalities of the actors involved) must also play an important role. According to some observers of the Uruguayan case, the only candidate who from the beginning perhaps could have become a lasting leader was General Cristi. He was head of the First Military Region (the most important one in the country) during the most intense period of the struggle against the Tupamaros.
18. This is an obvious consequence of size and context. If war is an imaginable recourse (whether more or less remote), the instrument used to wage war becomes far more important than when war is inconceivable.
19. During its entire professional history, the only war has been the War of the Triple Alliance, in which Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay fought against Paraguay. Quite aside from the role of Uruguayan troops, the political context of this war as well as the consequences that it had for Paraguay made it preferably forgotten. Even today, although the defeat of the Tupamaros was a military success, it is considered a "dirty war." This is not the kind of conflict that produces heroic legends for future generations.
20. Commentaries published just after the plebiscite generally examine the figures in terms of the second and third hypotheses. See María del Huerto Amarillo, *El proceso*, pp. 131ff; Carlos Quijano in "Sí o no, siempre no," *Cuadernos de Marcha* 2, 9 (October 1980); Luis Rico, "Uruguay, un plébiscite insolite," *Amérique Latine*, No. 5, CETRAL (Spring 1981).
21. *Índice Gallup de opinión pública*, Op. No. 315, January 1981.
22. This is a key point that cannot be developed here for lack of space. From the mid-nineteenth century on, the political life of Uruguay has been dominated by two major traditional parties: the Colorado party and the Nacional (Blanco) party. Until 1971, these two major parties had the support of over 90 percent of the electorate. But these two are catch-all parties, dividing the Uruguayan class structure vertically rather than horizontally. Electoral legislation always allowed them to put forward more than one presidential candidate, and these candidates could gather votes within the same party (the "lema"). The winner, then, is the candidate who gets the most votes (the "sublema") from the party that gets the most votes (the "lema"), not just the candidate who obtains a plurality of votes. In 1971 the candidate who obtained the largest number of votes was Ferreira Aldunate (440,000 votes), but the winner was Bordaberry (380,000 votes) because the Colorado party got 681,000 votes compared with 669,000 votes for the Nacional (Blanco) party. It is often the case that there is greater ideological distance among rivals from the same party than among "enemies" from different parties. In practice, all major political initiatives were carried out through an agreement between the two major parties and had to overcome opposition within each party. In the elections of 1971, for the first time an independent coalition (the Frente Amplio or Wide Front) obtained 18 percent of the national electorate and 30 percent of the electorate in Montevideo. The Frente Amplio was a version of Chile's Unidad Popular, but it was located nearer the center of the political spectrum. It included the Christian Democrats, dissidents from the traditional parties, and the entire parliamentary left.
23. Estimates based on the 1975 census give somewhat higher values. The percentages vary from 18 percent (Rocha Department) to 24 percent (Artigas Department). Montevideo (and the national average) gets 19 percent. The population of ages 18–26 was the one that could vote in the 1980 plebiscite, but had been too young to vote in the previous national election of 1971.
24.  $R^2$  adjusted for degrees of freedom is .85. Bivariate relationships between voting for the left and each one of the regressors (controlling the effect of the others) is clearly linear for industrial workers and urbanization, and acceptably linear for the other factors. There is no multi-collinearity (the highest of the auxiliary  $R^2$  has a value of .16)

and the residuals do not suggest heteroscedasticity. The data on the 1971 vote come from Julio T. Fabregat, *Elecciones uruguayas* (Montevideo: Cámara de Senadores, 1972); and the independent variables are from Carlos H. Filgueira, "Indicadores comparativos de los departamentos del Uruguay," *Cuadernos CIESU* 13 (1976). They are all calculated on data from the 1963 national census.

25. Expressing all variables as percentages. The data on the plebiscite used here are the results of the final tally of ballots published in *Opinar*, Montevideo, 22 January 1981.