Chapter 1 in Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier, Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

Critical Junctures and Historical Legacies

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.
—Robert Frost, "The Road Not Taken"

THE IDEA of crucial choices and their legacies, of which Robert Frost wrote, has long intrigued students of political change. Numerous scholars have focused on major watersheds in political life, arguing that these transitions establish certain directions of change and foreclose others in a way that shapes politics for years to come. Such transitions can, following Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, be called "critical junctures."[1]

The character of critical junctures and the perspective from which they are analyzed vary greatly. Some critical junctures, as in the choice of Robert Frost's wanderer, may entail considerable discretion, whereas with others the presumed choice appears deeply embedded in antecedent conditions. The critical juncture may involve a relatively brief period in which one direction or another is taken or an extended period of reorientation. Some analyses stress underlying societal cleavages or crises that lead up to the critical juncture, whereas others focus primarily on the critical juncture itself. Finally, some critical junctures may be seen as coming close to making "all the difference," as Frost boldly asserts in his poem. More commonly, the effect of the critical juncture is intertwined with other processes of change.

Yet underlying this diversity is a common understanding of change that is a cornerstone of comparative-historical research on development. It suggests what Paul A. David (1985:332) has called a "path dependent" pattern of change, in that outcomes during a crucial transition establish distinct trajectories within which, as he has engagingly put it, "one damn thing follows another." James Gleick (1987:8), in summarizing the version of this perspective known as "chaos" theory, captures a related feature of critical junctures in stressing the idea of "sensitive dependence on initial conditions."

To those who study revolutionary change, it comes as no surprise to suggest that political life exhibits the kind of discontinuities posited in analyses of critical junctures. What should be underlined is the extent to which this focus is widely employed in a diverse spectrum of research not concerned

[1] Lipset and Rokkan 1967:37ff.; Rokkan 1970:112ff.

exclusively, or even primarily, with revolutionary change. It plays a central role in Max Weber's analysis of the cyclical interplay between periods of continuity and sharp disjunctures—inspired by charismatic leadership—that reshape established social relations.[2] In major works of comparative-historical analysis of the 1960s, it is found in Barrington Moore's argument that within the process of modernization, different patterns of commercialization of agriculture were a historic watershed that set countries on different paths to the modern world; in Louis Hartz's comparisons of the founding of "fragment societies"; and in Alexander Gerschenkron's work on the "great spurt" in the industrialization process.[3] This perspective is central to research on the crises, sequence, and timing of development,[4] to recent studies of continuity and change in international and domestic political economy,[5] to older work on "institutionalization,"[6] to more recent work on the "new institutionalism,"[7] and to research on technological change.[8] Though the importance of this perspective is particularly evident in studies based on cross-national comparisons, it also plays a role in research on long-term patterns of change within individual countries and in studies of electoral realignment in the United States.[9] In rational-choice theory, a variant of this perspective is found in "threshold" models of collective behavior.[10]

Arguments about critical junctures have played an important role in research on labor politics. In their classic *Industrialism and Industrial Man*, Clark Kerr and his coauthors emphasize the long-term stability of the industrial relations system that was "crystallized by the leading elite at a relatively early stage" (1960:235). In Lipset and Rokkan's (1967) analysis, and to an even greater degree in the subsequent work of Carlos Waisman (1982, 1987), Gregory Luebbert (1986, 1987), and John Stephens (1986), the resolution of the working class cleavage has a profound effect in shaping national politics. Other studies have focused on critical junctures *within* the labor movement. Samuel Valenzuela (1979:esp. chap. 4) shows how the filling of "organizational space" during crucial phases of labor movement development "freezes" organizational alternatives within the labor sector; and Lipset (1983:1) analyzes how the "historic conditions under which the proletariat entered the political arena" shaped the subsequent emergence of reformist as opposed to revolutionary labor movements.

Following this tradition, the present study applies the idea of critical junctures and their legacies to the evolution of 20th century politics in Latin America, focusing on a period of fundamental change in the relationship between the state and the labor movement. This change responded to two sets of cleavages: that between workers and owners and that between workers and the state, expressed in the emergence of worker organization and protest beginning in the late 19th century; and that between the middle sectors and the oligarchy, expressed in the emergence of major reform movements in the first decades of the 20th century. Growing out of this new worker activation and these reform periods, there eventually emerged in each country the policy period we refer to as the "initial incorporation of the labor movement." This book argues that the incorporation periods constituted a critical juncture that occurred in distinct ways in different countries, and that these differences played a central role in shaping the national political arena in the following decades.

[2] E.g., Weber 1968:1111–1133.
[3] Moore 1966; Hartz 1964; and Gerschenkron 1962.
[4] Huntington 1968; Binder 1971; Grew 1978; Dahl 1971:chap. 3; Almond et al. 1973.
[5] See Krasner (1982, 1983, 1984, 1988); Katzenstein (1985); and Gourevitch 1986.
[6] Selznick 1957 and Huntington 1968.
[7] March and Olsen 1984, 1989.
[8] David 1985, 1987.
[9] Key 1955; Burnham 1965, 1970, 1974; Converse 1972, 1974; Rusk 1974; Brady 1988.
[10] See Schelling (1978:chaps. 3, 6), Granovetter (1978), and Przeworski (1986).

Historical studies of the eight countries analyzed in this book have routinely argued that the years corresponding to the incorporation periods were of great historical importance and had a major impact on the subsequent evolution of politics.[11] Yet this literature has lacked consistent criteria for identifying and comparing these periods, and the specific claims concerning their legacies vary greatly—since these studies obviously were not conducted within a common analytic framework. To date, no analysis has systematically compared these incorporation periods across a number of cases or pieced together the complex interactions among the characteristics of the antecedent political system, the incorporation period itself, and the legacy of incorporation.

This chapter establishes a common framework for analyzing critical junctures. The need for such a framework derives from the surprising lack of attention to the problems that arise in assessing arguments about critical junctures and their legacies, given how widely used this perspective is in the development literature.[12] It is easy to initially hypothesize that a set of countries passed through a crucial period of transition and that the transition occurred in distinct ways that had a profound impact on subsequent patterns of change. Yet many pitfalls are encountered in assessing the descriptive and explanatory claims contained in such an hypothesis. This chapter provides a framework for dealing with these pitfalls.

Building Blocks of the Critical Juncture Framework

A critical juncture may be defined as a period of significant change, which typically occurs in distinct ways in different countries (or in other units of analysis)[13] and which is hypothesized to produce distinct legacies.

[11] See note 1 in the Overview.
[12] Exceptions to the lack of attention to these methodological problems are found in the writing of Harsanyi (1960), Gerschenkron (1968), Verba (1971), and Krasner (1984).
[13] As noted above, this kind of framework is also used in the analysis of single countries, as in the literature on realigning elections in the United States. In single-country analyses, systematic comparisons are sometimes made; or less systematic (or implicit) comparisons

The elements in this definition may be illustrated with an example. In Barrington Moore's *Lord and Peasant*, the period of basic change is the commercialization of agriculture; the contrasts involve the varied role of different class and sectoral groups in this transition, particularly lord and peasant; and the legacy consists of different "routes to the modern world": bourgeois revolution and Western democracy, revolution from above, and fascism and peasant revolution and communism (1966:xvii, chaps. 7–9, e.g., pp. 413–14).

Thus, the concept of a critical juncture contains three components: the claim that a significant change occurred within each case, the claim that this change took place in distinct ways in different cases, and the explanatory hypothesis about its consequences. If the explanatory hypothesis proves to be false—that is, the hypothesized critical juncture did not produce the legacy—then one would assert that it was not, in fact, a critical juncture.

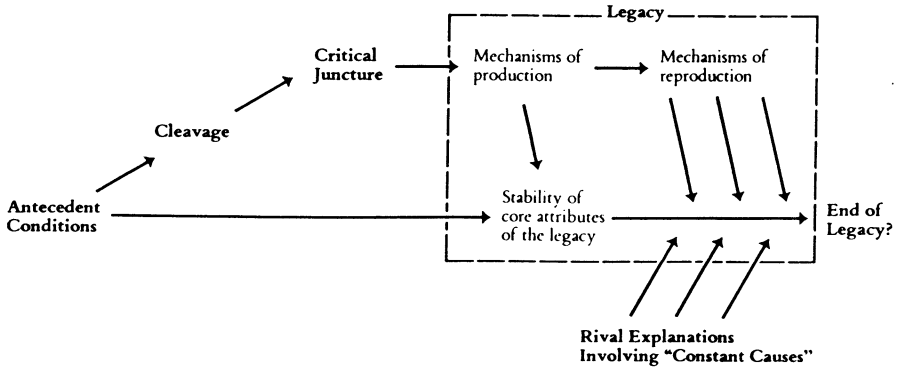
In addition to the three components contained in the definition, a number of further elements must be considered (see Figure 1.1).

1. The *antecedent conditions* that represent a "base line" against which the critical juncture and the legacy are assessed. In Figure 1.1, the arrow from the antecedent conditions to the legacy is intended to suggest the potential rival hypothesis that important attributes of the legacy may in fact involve considerable continuity and/or direct causal links with the preexisting system that are not mediated by the critical juncture.

2. The *cleavage* (or crisis)[14] that emerges out of the antecedent conditions and in turn triggers the critical juncture.

3. Three components of the *legacy*: a. *Mechanisms of production* of the

Figure 1.1 Building Blocks of the Critical Juncture Framework



are made either with other countries, with earlier historical episodes in the same country, or with "counterfactual" alternative versions of how the critical juncture under study might have occurred.

[14] In general, a crisis occurs in a delimited period of time, whereas a cleavage may exist for a long time, simply to be exacerbated in a particular period in a way that produces a crisis and a critical juncture. However, in the present analysis the emergence of the crisis and the emergence of the cleavage more nearly coincide in that the crisis regarding the role of the working class accompanied the appearance of the worker-owner, worker-state cleavage that was produced by the initial appearance of a significant working class.

legacy. The legacy often does not crystallize immediately after the critical juncture, but rather is shaped through a series of intervening steps. b. *Mechanisms of reproduction* of the legacy. The stability of the legacy is not an automatic outcome, but rather is perpetuated through ongoing institutional and political processes. c. The *stability of the core attributes of the legacy*—that is, the basic attributes produced as an outcome of the critical juncture, such as the different constellations of union-party-regime relationships analyzed in the present book.

4. *Rival explanations involving "constant causes,"* which, as we argue below, represent one of several types of rival explanation that must be considered.

5. The eventual *end of the legacy*, which inevitably must occur at some point.

Issues in Analyzing Critical Junctures

Within the framework of these elements, we will now explore basic issues that arise in the analysis of critical junctures and their relevance to the present study.

1. *Identifying Hypothesized Critical Juncture and Variations in How It Occurs.* Because it is essential to the concept of a critical juncture that it occurs in different ways in different cases, issues of establishing analytic equivalence, that are standard problems in comparative-historical research, are abundantly present in this type of analysis. The differences in how it occurred have to be large enough to produce interesting "variance," yet this variance must not be so great as to undermine the idea that it really involves the *same* critical juncture.[15]

If the critical juncture is an immediate response to an external shock—such as the depression of the 1930s, the debt crisis of the 1980s, an international wave of social protest, or a war—it may occur more or less simultaneously across a number of countries and hence may be relatively easy to identify. However, the political response even to such well-defined external events may occur quickly in some cases and be long delayed in others. Further, when the critical juncture is triggered by external forces that impinge on different countries at different times, or by internal forces that may manifest themselves at different times, the result is again that the juncture occurs in different historical contexts, among which it may not be easy to establish analytic equivalence.

Yet such differences in timing are often crucial to the analysis, since they are one of the types of variations in critical junctures that are used to account for variations in the legacy, as in Alexander Gerschenkron's (1962) analysis

[15] Przeworski and Teune (1970, pt. 2) and Sartori (1970) remain the most incisive analyses of how variations in a phenomenon can become sufficiently large as to undermine the analytic equivalence of observations across a number of cases.

of the timing of industrialization. More broadly, the challenge is to establish a definition that effectively demonstrates that potentially major *differences* among cases in the critical juncture, in its timing or in other characteristics, in fact occurred in an analytically *equivalent* period—that is, that they represent *different* values on the *same* variable.

This dilemma arose in the research for this book, since some of the presumed incorporation periods were sufficiently different from one another that we were led to examine them carefully before concluding that they should all be viewed as analytically equivalent transitions. Relevant contrasts included the difference between the corporatist incorporation periods of most countries as opposed to the pluralistic incorporation period in Uruguay. We also encountered differences in the international and historical context of the incorporation periods due to major contrasts in timing, in that the onset of these periods varied over four decades, from 1904 to 1943. Our questioning led to the extended discussion of the definition of incorporation presented in the glossary and to the close attention in the analysis of individual countries to the issue of identifying the appropriate period.

2. *How Long Do Critical Junctures Last?* Critical junctures may range from relatively quick transitions—for example, "*moments* of significant structural change"[16]—to an extended period that might correspond to one or more presidential administrations, a long "policy period," or a prolonged "regime period."[17] Such variations in duration depend in part on the immediate causal mechanisms involved, which may produce a type of change that crystallizes rapidly or gradually. A dramatic political upheaval may produce rapid change. On the other hand, some changes may be the result of the sustained application of a government policy, involving an extended period of time.

The issue of wide variations in duration is important in the present analysis. Not surprisingly, in focusing on the historical episode in which a given set of public policies is actively applied for the first time, it turns out—due to the differing political dynamics of particular countries—that the government or a series of linked governments that first sustain these policies may in some cases be in power for only a few years and in others for much longer. In the countries considered here, the duration of the incorporation period ranges from nine years in Peru to 23 years in Mexico. As long as this policy period fits the definition of the particular critical juncture—in this case, the initial incorporation period—this poses no problem for the analysis, but the issue of this fit must be examined closely.

3. *Cleavage or Crisis.* An important part of the literature on critical junctures views them from the perspective of cleavages or crises, thereby placing particular emphasis on the tensions that lead up to the critical juncture. Since these cleavages are seen as producing or generating the critical juncture, Valenzuela and Valenzuela (1981:15) refer to them as "generative" cleavages.[18] The argument of this book is that the working class mobilization and conflicts between the middle sectors and the oligarchy in the first decades of the 20th century represented generative cleavages.

If a cleavage is a central concern of the analysis, a careful examination of the cleavage itself is essential. Before testing hypotheses about the links among the cleavage, the critical juncture, and the legacy, it is useful to contextualize the analysis by exploring the meaning of the cleavage within the particular setting, raising the question of why it should be so important. In this spirit, Chapter 2 explores the social and political meaning of worker-owner and worker-state conflicts in Latin America, probing the question of why they tend to reverberate so deeply within the larger polity.

4. *Specifying the Historical Legacy.* The importance or lack of importance of a critical juncture cannot be established in general, but only with reference to a specific historical legacy. It is hardly novel to assert that one should not debate the importance of a hypothesized explanation without first identifying the outcome to be explained, yet it merits emphasis that inconsistencies in the identification of the outcome can lead to divergent assessments of the importance of the critical juncture.[19] In the present analysis, the incorporation periods are intended to explain the specific set of contrasts explored in Chapter 7 concerning party systems, associated constellations of political coalitions, and related issues of regime dynamics. In the framework of the discussion of similarities and differences among countries presented in the Overview, the fact that the countries with a similar heritage of incorporation in this specific sense differ profoundly on many other characteristics should not be taken as evidence that the incorporation periods were not highly consequential.

5. *Duration of the Legacy.* In analyzing the legacy of the critical juncture, it is important to recognize that no legacy lasts forever. One must have ex-

[16] Cardoso and Faletto 1979:xiv.

[17] These variations in duration can raise the issue of appropriate labeling. With regard to the overall label, we retain the expression critical juncture as a reasonable compromise between alternatives such as founding moments or choice points, on the one hand, and period of transition, on the other.

[18] Two alternative relationships between the cleavage and the critical juncture should be noted. First, the cleavage may be important because the activation or exacerbation of the cleavage creates new actors or groups and the critical juncture consists of their emergence. An example would be the emergence of the urban class and the organization of labor unions within the working class. Second, the cleavage may be important not because it leads to the emergence of new organized actors, but because it raises political issues so compelling as to trigger some kind of larger reorganization of political relationships. Both outcomes can, of course, occur, as in the analysis presented in this book, where the appearance of an organized working class played a central role in precipitating the critical juncture, but the critical juncture itself is identified with the state response, consisting of the initial incorporation of the labor movement.

[19] An example can be found in analyses of the critical juncture associated with the worker-owner cleavage in Europe in the first decades of the 20th century. Luebbert and Stephens place great emphasis on this cleavage, whereas Lipset and Rokkan deemphasize it and give greater causal importance to a series of prior cleavages. This discrepancy appears to be due in part to the fact that Lipset and Rokkan are explaining the emergence of modern party systems, whereas Luebbert and Stephens are concerned with explaining different trajectories of national regime evolution. The explanation of a somewhat distinct legacy leads to a contrasting assessment of this critical juncture.

plicit criteria for determining when it ends but must also be open to ambiguities about the end points. For instance, in assessing the heritage of incorporation in Brazil, Argentina, Peru, and Uruguay, we took as an end point for the analysis their military coups of the 1960s and 1970s. These coups unquestionably represent a major discontinuity in national politics in all five countries. Yet in the postmilitary periods in the 1980s, important elements of the heritage of incorporation persisted. The choice about the end point is best viewed as a matter for ongoing analysis, a theme which we address in the final chapter.

The challenge of explaining the varied duration of the legacy is also a central concern. The legacies of some critical junctures are stable, institutionalized regimes, whereas others produce a political dynamic that prevents or mitigates against stable patterns. In these cases, the "self-destruction" of the legacy may be predictable from the critical juncture, though the length of time before this occurs may vary greatly and is influenced by other factors as well. The issues raised in the Overview concerning choices between control and support mobilization in the incorporation periods, and their implications for different patterns of radicalization or co-optation in the heritage periods are basic to the stability of the legacy and represent a central concern of the analysis.

6. *Comparing the Legacy with the Antecedent System: Assessing Continuity and Change.* In addition to carefully identifying the legacy, it is essential to compare it explicitly with the antecedent system. Even in revolutions, political systems are never completely transformed, and in the study of revolution debates about continuity and change can be of great importance. The discontinuities that accompany the less drastic critical junctures of concern here are at least as ambiguous, and there is the risk that the enthusiast of the critical juncture framework may be too readily disposed to find such discontinuities. The analysis of Uruguay and Colombia well illustrates the need to consider these issues of continuity.

In some instances, one may be dealing with apparent continuities that conceal significant changes. For example, before the incorporation period Uruguay and Colombia were characterized by two-party systems with deep roots in the 19th century, in which class divisions tended to be blurred and each party had relatively stable patterns of regional and sectoral support. In the legacy of incorporation, one finds the same party system with similar characteristics. The argument is obviously not that the incorporation period created this party system. Rather, it focuses on how the existence of this type of party system shaped the incorporation period and on the specific ways in which the incorporation experience in part perpetuated, and in part modified, the party system.

Alternatively, one may find apparent differences that conceal continuities. For instance, beginning in the 1940s the Argentine labor movement was overwhelmingly Peronist, whereas previously it was predominantly socialist and communist, a major change that was the immediate consequence of the incorporation period. Yet for many decades after the 1940s, Peronism had an

ephemeral existence as a political party and consisted basically of a grouping of unions and federations that were perhaps the strongest in Latin America, but that were poorly articulated with the party system. Interestingly, this specific characterization of the post-1940s period could in fact also be applied to the pre-1940s period, when precisely these attributes were present. What is crucial about the latter period is that this outcome *followed* the incorporation period and hence reflected the failure, in contrast to the postincorporation experience of some other countries, to establish a stable political role for the labor movement.

These two examples underline the importance, throughout the analysis, of the careful assessment of continuity and change.

7. *Type of Explanation: Constant Causes versus Historical Causes.* The distinctive contribution of the critical juncture framework is its approach to explanation. It focuses on what, following Stinchcombe (1968:101–29), may be called "historical causes." Arthur Stinchcombe explains this approach by comparing two types of explanations of continuity or stability in social life: "constant causes" and "historical causes."

A constant cause operates year after year, with the result that one may observe relative continuity in the outcome produced by this cause. For instance, it has been observed that Latin American workers employed in isolated export "enclaves" commonly have a high propensity to strike, due to certain attributes of the enclave (Di Tella 1968). To the degree that there is continuity in this propensity to strike, it may be hypothesized that it is in important measure due to the *continuing* influence on workers' strike behavior of these same attributes. This is *not* the pattern of causation posited by the critical juncture framework.

By contrast, Stinchcombe's depiction of an historical cause corresponds to the intuitive understanding of critical junctures. In this case, a given set of causes shapes a particular outcome or legacy at one point or period, and subsequently the pattern that is established reproduces itself *without* the recurrence of the original cause.[20] Stinchcombe refers to the type of explanation that accounts for such a pattern of persistence as "historicist," and uses the expression "historical cause" to refer to the event or transition that sets this pattern into motion (1968:103, 118).

In addition to distinguishing between constant and historical causes, Stinchcombe emphasizes the importance of the processes that reproduce the legacy of the historical cause. These mechanisms of reproduction involve in part the fact that, once founded, a given set of institutions creates vested interests, and power holders within these institutions seek to perpetuate their own position (Stinchcombe 1968:108–18; Verba 1971:308). Stinchcombe also emphasizes the role of "sunk costs" that make the continuation of an established institutional pattern a less "expensive" option than creat-

[20] Stinchcombe (1968:102) uses the example of the emergence and persistence of Protestantism in Northern Europe. Once the events of the Reformation had occurred, Protestantism perpetuated itself and did not have to be created or caused all over again by subsequent reformations.

ing new patterns (1968:120–21). As Stephen Krasner puts it, "once a given set of institutional structures is in place, it embodies capital stock that cannot be recovered. This [capital] stock takes primarily the form of information trust and shared expectations" whose availability and familiarity reinforce the vested interests noted above (1984:235). In fact, these mechanisms of reproduction become a type of constant cause—but one that is distinctively a legacy of the critical juncture.[21]

For the purpose of our analysis, four issues concerning these mechanisms of reproduction should be underlined. First, to the extent that the outcome or legacy involves political institutions, this emphasis on mechanisms of reproduction raises issues central to current discussions of the "new institutionalism" (March and Olsen 1984, 1989) and to debates on the relative autonomy of politics. In fact, as Krasner emphasizes (1982, 1984), political autonomy is an important theme in the analysis of critical junctures.

Second, the existence of these mechanisms of reproduction and the possibility of the relative autonomy of politics—or of specific political institutions—underscores why it is appropriate to construct a critical juncture framework to begin with. This framework is concerned with a type of discontinuous political change in which critical junctures "dislodge" older institutional patterns. If these processes of reproduction and autonomy did not make institutions resistant to change, models of incremental change would be adequate. It is precisely because political structures often tenaciously resist change that we turn to the analysis of critical junctures.

[21] In addition to explicating the relationship between historical causes and constant causes, it is also appropriate to note the place of historical causes in broader typologies of different approaches to explanation, such as the distinction between deductive, probabilistic, functional, and historical or "genetic" explanation proposed by Nagel (1979:chap. 2).

An historical cause, in the sense intended here, is a particular type of genetic explanation that has a relatively "law-like" probabilistic character. Nagel defines a genetic explanation as one which "set[s] out the sequence of major events through which some earlier system has been transformed into a later one" (1979:25). In assessing genetic explanations, he rejects the idea of viewing them primarily as idiographic (concerned with unique events), as opposed to nomothetic (concerned with general laws) (25, 547–48). He observes that in genetic explanations, "not every past event in the career of the system will be mentioned," and that "those events that are mentioned are selected on the basis of assumptions . . . as to what sorts of events are causally relevant to the development of the system." At times these may be "tacit" assumptions, as in the more idiographic tradition of historical writing. Alternatively, in a more nomothetic tradition, they may involve "fairly precise developmental laws" (25). Genetic explanations may thus encompass a spectrum from more idiographic to more nomothetic approaches.

The models we are concerned with here often contain a fairly self-conscious and conceptually elaborate specification of the nature of the transition involved in the critical juncture that is open to extension to other countries or contexts. These models seek thereby to establish a pattern of explanation that, loosely speaking, may be called "law-like." Hence, the analysis of critical junctures involves a type of genetic explanation that falls more toward the nomothetic end of this spectrum. Since the laws or patterns they identify involve statements about the conditions under which given outcomes are more likely, rather than the conditions under which they are necessary consequences, this involves probabilistic explanation (26).

Third, in applying the critical juncture framework to a particular domain of analysis, it is useful to specify distinctive features of these mechanisms of reproduction in that domain. For instance, the traditional understanding of trade union politics and state-union relations suggests it is an area where a given constellation of political relationships, once institutionalized, has a strong tendency to persist. This tendency is directly discussed or strongly implied by a wide range of analyses. Familiar examples are Michels's (1959/1915) classic observations on the co-optation of labor-based socialist parties and the iron law of oligarchy; Olson's (1968) analysis of the collective action problems involved in union formation, which make coercion and state sanctions an important element in the creation and viability of trade unions; and the widely observed tendency of corporatist structures to perpetuate given patterns of union organization and of state-union relationships. These examples suggest how powerful, vested, self-perpetuating interests, embedded in sunk costs, can crystallize around prevailing patterns of union organization and state-union relations. The great importance of such elements suggests that a critical juncture framework is particularly appropriate in the analysis of trade-union politics.

Fourth, it is useful to distinguish between the mechanisms of the *reproduction* and the *production* of the legacy. There often occurs a significant interval between the critical juncture and the period of continuity that is explained by these mechanisms of reproduction. To the extent that the critical juncture is a polarizing event that produces intense political reactions and counterreactions, the crystallization of the legacy does not necessarily occur immediately, but rather may consist of a sequence of intervening steps that respond to these reactions and counterreactions. Because these intervening steps occur within the political sphere and because they follow the critical juncture, which is the point of differentiation among the cases, we consider them part of the legacy.

We therefore find it useful to refer to the dual processes of (1) the production of the legacy—involving its crystallization, often through such a sequence of reaction and counterreaction; and (2) the reproduction of the legacy, involving the process analyzed by Stinchcombe. This distinction corresponds to the contrast between the aftermath of incorporation discussed in Chapter 6 and the heritage of incorporation analyzed in Chapter 7.

8. *Rival Explanations: Constant Causes.* The core hypothesis is that critical junctures occur in different ways in different contexts and that these differences produce distinct legacies. Obviously, the assessment of this hypothesis must be attentive to rival explanations. One of the most important types of rival explanations consists of the "constant causes" discussed above, that is, attributes of the system that may contribute to the presumed stability of the legacy, but that are not the product of the critical juncture.[22] This issue arises in the present book in assessing the legacy of incorporation, an

[22] Thus, within the framework of the discussion of constant versus historical causes above, they do not include the constant causes that are part of the legacy itself.

important example being found in the explanation of the political stalemate in Argentina during the 1950s and 1960s. It is common to argue that this stalemate was a legacy of the convulsive rise of Peronism in the 1940s—that is, of the incorporation period. Alternatively, it may be due to underlying structural attributes of Argentine society and economy that both before and after the incorporation period were an ongoing, "constant cause" of the stalemate, and hence represented a rival explanation to the incorporation hypothesis. Thus, O'Donnell (1978) has argued that the particular type of primary products that Argentina exports are conducive to zero-sum policy conflicts between the rural and urban sectors, which in turn can contribute to political stalemate. Though it is difficult in any one study to evaluate a broad range of such rival explanations, this book attempts to address them when they seem particularly important.

9. *The Problem of Partial Explanations.* Some problems in the study of critical junctures are relatively standard issues in the field of comparative-historical analysis yet are of such importance in the present assessment of incorporation periods as to merit attention here. One of these concerns the issue of assessing partial explanations. This, indeed, is all that one normally expects to find in social research.

Compared to scholars who engage in multivariate analysis based on quantitative data, researchers who do multivariate analysis based on the systematic yet qualitative comparison of historical events face an interesting problem in assessing partial explanations and in making the assessment convincing. In quantitative analysis, there is no expectation that a given explanation will entirely account for a given set of outcomes, and quantitative techniques offer straightforward procedures for assessing what portion of the "variance" in the outcome is explained. Even if this is a quarter, or a fifth, or even a tenth, it is often considered a meaningful finding.

In comparative-historical analysis that deals with "whole countries,"[23] this kind of assessment runs into some of the same problems of assessing similarities and differences among cases discussed in the Overview. If two countries "look" similar in the incorporation period, the expectation in assessing the legacy of incorporation is that they should also "look" similar in the heritage period. Yet this expectation may pose an unrealistic standard that interferes with the adequate assessment of the hypothesis. If the incorporation period explains a quarter of the variation in the legacy—a substantial finding by many standards of analysis—the cases would in fact look quite different in the heritage period, and there could be risk of an erroneous rejection of the hypothesis. Thus, the criterion must be that they look sufficiently similar to suggest that the hypothesis has partial explanatory power. Employing this criterion is particularly important in the context of the most different systems design discussed in the Overview, which is based on the deliberate juxtaposition of pairs of cases that are different, such as Chile and Brazil, and Peru and Argentina.

[23] For a comment on what it means to compare "whole countries," see footnote 15 in the Overview.

10. *Other Rival Explanations: The Example of Suppressor Variables.* These problems of dealing with partial explanations in comparative-historical analysis also arise in addressing rival explanations. An example of particular importance to this study involves the potential role of "suppressor" variables (Rosenberg 1968) that conceal the relationship that one is assessing. For example, we hypothesize that the initial incorporation period in Brazil occurred in a way that weakened the role of parties in controlling and channeling the political participation of the labor movement, thus potentially leading to higher levels of worker politicization and radicalization. Yet Brazilian social and economic structure (e.g., the labor surplus economy and the minimal role of isolated, highly modernized export enclaves) was not conducive to a strong labor movement. Hence, it could be argued that the level of worker politicization was likely to be low, and the assessment of our hypothesis must focus on whether, given this low level, it was nonetheless *higher* than it would otherwise have been, due to the type of incorporation period. In multivariate quantitative analysis the effect of these different factors can be sorted out in a relatively straightforward manner. In comparative-historical analysis, a more subtle and subjective assessment is required, which includes the procedure of process tracing discussed in the Overview.

Conclusion

Our goal has been to identify issues commonly encountered in the analysis of critical junctures. Though it makes sense intuitively that societies go through periods of basic reorientation that shape their subsequent development, too little attention has been devoted to the problems that arise in assessing claims about the scope and nature of this impact. To make this assessment more adequate, one must devote careful attention to the identification of the critical juncture and the legacy, the comparison with the antecedent system, the distinction between constant and historical causes, the mechanisms of production and reproduction of the legacy, various kinds of rival explanations, and special problems of assessing the impact of critical junctures in the context of comparative-historical analysis.

Finally, a basic point should be reiterated. In an analytic framework that contains many elements, it is essential that these elements be examined with care. At the same time, it is also crucial that the main idea not slip from view. The goal of presenting these several criteria of assessment is to strengthen the test of the core hypothesis: that the critical juncture occurred in different ways and that these differences were highly consequential. In the present book, this hypothesis concerns the long-term impact of different types of incorporation periods. The goal of providing this framework for the analysis of critical junctures is to better assess this core argument about the transformation of Latin American politics.