

Article

Leading a Successful Transition to Democracy:

A Qualitative Analysis of Political Leadership in Spain and Lithuania

Abstract

Any country embarking upon a political transition to democracy faces a complex period of change. While many factors influence successful democratisation, political leadership remains a relatively unexplored phenomenon. This research presents a theoretical framework that is corroborated with data gathered from 65 semi-structured interviews with people involved in the transition processes of Spain and Lithuania along with the main political leaders themselves: King Juan Carlos I, Adolfo Suárez, Algirdas Brazauskas and Vytautas Landsbergis. The four leaders presented a similar political leadership style – based on their vision, decision-making, negotiation and power – which positively influenced the success of each transition to democracy.

Keywords

Political leadership, qualitative research, transition to democracy, Spain, Lithuania

Introduction

In the 20th century, 100 states initiated a transition to democracy, yet estimates show that only 20% consolidated a democracy by the end of the century (Carothers, 2002). Political changes are multifaceted but examining the political *leadership* present during democratisation processes may greatly inform current understanding. While research recognizes that politics are inherent to organizations and leadership (Whittle, Mueller, Gilchrist, & Lenney, 2016), studies on political theory make up only 3% of leadership theories published in ten top-tier journals (Dinh et al., 2014). Moreover, such research tends to focus on power or influence dimensions of leadership (Dinh et al., 2014), rather than providing a more comprehensive understanding of how political leaders may manoeuvre a country through political transitions.

Political leadership may not have been previously examined because it tends to play a less decisive role in consolidated democracies (e.g. laws are established and political actors are publicly elected), but when a country embarks upon the *transition* from an autocratic regime to a democratic state, the political leaders become much more influential in determining how the situation will evolve (Huntington, 1991; and Linz & Stepan, 1996): any transition is intimately related to *uncertainty*, and history has seen failed democratisations under leaders who were not fully committed to democratic values (such as Asia, Africa, and the Middle East; Huntington, 1991).

Undergoing democratisation involves many factors, including economy, previous authoritarian regimes, features of the democratic opposition and the historical particularities of each country (Carothers, 2002; and Huntington, 1991); yet, political leadership has been less extensively examined (Lijphart, 2000; Lipset, 1959; Sorensen, 1993; and Vanhanen, 1997). Blondel (1987) explains that the influence of leadership was

previously ignored because these democratisation studies arose as a form of protest against absolutism and the monopoly of power. Understanding successful democratisation certainly involves a multitude of factors that reach beyond any single person, but given the political leader's direct influence in the country's transition process, could political leadership be another relevant factor to consider?

It is hence important to analyse political leadership within the context of democratisation, for which '...qualitative methods are ideally suited to uncovering leadership's many dimensions' (Conger, 1998, 10). By examining four main political leaders from two democratized European countries (Spain and Lithuania), we will compare and contrast their leadership styles. To accomplish this objective, a theoretical framework was elaborated and corroborated with 65 semi-structured interviews conducted with these main leaders and other implicated political actors. This theoretical framework can thus be applied to further cases of democratisation to continue elaborating our understanding of the political leadership phenomenon.

Theoretical framework

Defining political leadership

The first reference to political leadership in contemporary literature was made in 1922 by Weber (Weber, 1922/1964), and various lines of research have since opened up into disparate definitions of political leadership (Grint, 2005; Kellerman, 2008; Masciulli, Molchanov, & Knight, 2009; Nye, 2013; Peele, 2005; and Yukl, 2009). Previous studies have most frequently emphasized the leader's *personality* (e.g. 'Great Man' analyses of Churchill, Lenin, Stalin, or Hitler; Morán, 2002; Service, 2000; and Tucker, 1987), the

link between their *behaviour* and role (Blake & Mouton, 1962; Hemphill & Coons, 1957; House & Aditya, 1997; and McGregor, 1969), the mental processes of leaders' *followers* and potential voters (Burns, 1978; Haslam, Reicher, & Platow, 2011; Hollander, 1995; and Kellerman, 2008) or the influence of the *situation* as it interacts with the leader's personality and behaviour (elucidating why a leader may thrive in one situation but not in another; Fiedler, 1981; Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2013; and House & Aditya, 1997). While today research on charismatic leadership abounds (Dinh et al., 2014), charismatic political leaders are typically involved in revolutionary changes in response to crises, which does not seem imperative when a transition is incremental and deliberate, as in the case of reforms.

We adopted the political leadership definition of Burns (1978), which reflects the contingency approach to understanding leadership, for it permits analyses of the leader's personality and behavioural style, follower needs and values, and the situational parameters of the task, hierarchy and organizational-political environment. Thus, the political leader needs to *influence*, *mobilize* and *represent* the political community on both the macro level (the citizens and wider public) and the micro level (the political actors and groups of power) in order to align each group's ideologies with the ultimate goal of democratisation. These collectives likewise have political actors whose political leadership is important for successful democratisation, illustrating once more the complexity of political leadership.

The present study's objective is to analyse the psychosocial characteristics of the main political leaders and thus describe the influence of their leadership style during democratisation. To fulfil this objective, we focus on the micro level of how political leaders of top institutions (who were key mediators in the transition to democracy) influence, mobilize and represent their community. Stemming from a contingency

approach to understanding leadership (Fiedler, 1981; Hersey et al., 2013; and House & Aditya, 1997), we identified four main dimensions that have a direct influence on the effectiveness of a political leadership style during democratisation through reforms.

Communicating vision

Any change in a system of beliefs and values may incite tensions, which is why the *vision* of a political leader can help reassure the political community and orient action. The leader may avoid uprising revolutions by persuading others that their vision is the most beneficial for the country. Our main objective is to analyse how leaders *communicate* their vision on the micro level to guide others, legitimize their vision and gain support (Cornelissen, Holt, & Zundel, 2011; and Levin, 2000). Figure 1 summarises the dimension of vision during democratisation.

[Insert Figure 1]

When communicating vision to people who are against the change, proceeding with certain tact, sensibility or moderation could help avoid confrontations and unnecessary emotional bewilderment. Conversely, making misguided or empty promises can damage any political leader's credibility and trust from followers, making it important to consider how the vision is communicated in regard to establishing a clear direction towards democracy, incorporating a new political system, fostering reforms and presenting specific proposals for change (Kalpokaite, 2014). Since a vision shared by a significant majority may take time to emerge, a leader's vision could transform purpose into action – to be both inspirational and instrumental (Berson, Shamir, Avolio, & Popper, 2001; and Kirkpatrick, 2004) – and positively influence the outcome of the country's first public elections.

Decision-making styles

When considering the role of political leadership during democratisation, communicating a vision well seems insufficient – it is essential to *make decisions* that facilitate the democratic reforms. Evidently, decision-making involves ambiguity and uncertainty, which makes this an even more difficult during democratisation: leaders may need to redefine the rules of the political game, and these decisions can be the determining factor in the outcome of the transition (Linz & Stepan, 1996).

We will specifically analyse how leaders made decisions fundamental to the political change, such as establishing laws for substantial reforms, carrying out procedures for the approval of fundamental laws and electing people for high-level political positions. Vroom (2004) provides a widely recognized taxonomy of decision-making, which we adopt to analyse four possible decision-making styles: unidirectional, consultative, facilitative and delegated decision-making. Figure 2 summarizes these decision-making styles.

[Insert Figure 2]

During democratisation, we do not consider *unidirectional decision-making* very appropriate, given that the leader is trying to move away from autocratic tendencies. *Facilitative decision-making* is a prolonged process which seems risky when political laws need to be re-established as soon as possible. While a certain degree of *delegated decision-making* is expected, it seems reasonable that crucial decisions for the change should be made by the leader. *Consultative decision-making* can provide cognitive and emotional support, benefit the leader's political legitimacy and foster genuine support

from the team, making this seem a particularly well-suited decision-making style during democratisation through reforms.

Negotiation strategies

One of the defining characteristics of peaceful democratisation through reforms are the *negotiations* between the different groups of power (Huntington, 1991). Pruitt (1981), one of the greatest contributors to negotiation theory, presents four basic strategies of negotiation: dominant, solution-seeking, flexible and avoidance strategies. Figure 3 summarizes these negotiation strategies.

[Insert Figure 3]

When the leader aims to persuade those against the reforms, *flexible* and *avoidance* strategies may be ineffective, as they could imply the leader giving less importance to achieving the ultimate goal of democracy. The *dominant strategy* may be useful for ensuring the leader's desired democratic outcomes and orienting political pressure towards the opposition forces. Conversely, the *solution-seeking strategy* could help foster mutual solutions and peaceful relations. Pruitt (1981) further explains the ideal of *firm flexibility*: remaining as flexible as possible, but firm in negotiations that are crucial to the change. Therefore, knowing how to combine dominant and solution-seeking strategies may help successfully manoeuvre negotiations, avoid escalating confrontations and move the democratic vision forward.

Exercising control through power

A crucial consideration of effective negotiations during democratisation is the use of *power*. The leader's power can be used to delegitimize the previous regime whilst legitimising the new regime and strengthening the support. Raven (2004) has elaborated a taxonomy of power that is widely accepted within the social sciences, which establishes six modalities of power: legitimate, coercive, reward, referent, expert and informational power. Figure 4 summarizes these types of power.

[Insert Figure 4]

During democratisation, a political leader's *legitimate* power could facilitate making structural changes 'from the top'. In the beginning of the transition, the political leader may have relative liberty in utilizing *coercive power*, as the previous, authoritarian regime was based on others' fear of punishment; once the new democratic rules are established, however, this power becomes much more limited. Political leaders may utilize *reward power* to foster support from others. *Referent power* can be effective for mobilizing the masses, although it is not imperative for political changes that occur 'from the top'. A political leader does not necessarily need to exercise *expert power*, but they could benefit from selecting team members with specific areas of expertise. Political leaders may also utilize *informational power* by presenting various arguments and ideas to bring a country together under the same objective of democratisation.

The combination of these different types of power can help the leader have more *control of the situation* (Fiedler, 1981; and Raven, 2004). While the exercise of power and control is pertinent to both autocratic and democratic regimes, autocratic leaders tend to use more coercive power to impose control (e.g. Franco or the USSR), while leaders of democratisation need to disseminate power from a single political actor to all the main public bodies, including citizens' rights to vote and elect their public representatives. Thus, a democratic leader may uphold control by utilizing diverse sources of power, such

as informational power to convince others to follow their vision, and legitimate power to bring the political reforms into effect.

Figure 5 integrates all of the previously outlined dimensions into an overarching theoretical framework.

[Insert Figure 5]

This framework was corroborated by analysing four political leaders' vision, decision-making, negotiation and power, to identify the political leadership style present in two cases of successful democratisation through reforms.

Methodology

This study aimed to analyse the psychosocial characteristics of the four main political leaders of two countries in order to understand how their leadership may have influenced the micro level of their respective (and ultimately successful) democratisation processes. To meet this objective, this research was conducted with an experiential approach to qualitative research, whereby the experiences of the participants are analysed and presented as meaningful contributions to understanding political leadership during democratisation upon which further research may build (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Conger, 1998; and Silverman, 2006).

Context

Spain and Lithuania were chosen for a comparative analysis because, despite their differences, both successfully consolidated a democracy through reforms. Table 1 outlines the relevant factors that informed this choice.

[Insert Table 1]

Although there are notable historical, ideological and geopolitical differences between Spain and Lithuania, the decisive objective of this study is to analyse *how* the political leaders traversed the unpredictable transition periods and peacefully established a democracy.

The Spanish transition. The Spanish transition to democracy initiated in 1975 with the end of the Franconian dictatorship (which began in 1939 after the Spanish Civil War). A process of change thus initiated that fully reached the political arena (including socio-economic, cultural and religious spheres; Soto Carmona, 2005). It was a change dynamic that, after the death of the dictator General Franco, would be catalysed through consensus between the political leaders and forces advocating political change and democratisation. The transition was certainly far from being a process as coherent and logical as its outcome could suggest. The immobility of Carlos Arias Navarro (Prime Minister during the Franconian dictatorship) aggravated political tensions, and the appointment of Adolfo Suárez as Prime Minister caused great disappointment in certain circles. It was a change that would ultimately be indissoluble from its context, due to the processes of political change towards democracy in the Mediterranean (e.g. Greece and Portugal) and the influence of the international environment after the Cold War.

Upon Franco's death, Juan Carlos was proclaimed King of Spain as the legal successor of Franco. King Juan Carlos I made it clear that he aimed to establish democracy in Spain, and although initial support from the government was not great, the wider Spanish public was hopeful; journalists and historians described King Juan Carlos I as the 'protective shield of the transition' (Tussell, 2000) and the 'pilot of change' (Powell, 1991). The King led the transition by changing Franconian laws and

implementing a schedule for reforms. His role during Spain's democratisation was widely praised for countering pro-Franconian movements and supporting the approval of the Spanish Constitution of 1978, which established Spain as a constitutional monarchy.

One of the King's first crucial decisions involved selecting the team which would aid him in enacting the necessary changes: The King made a pivotal choice when he appointed Adolfo Suárez as the Prime Minister of Spain in 1976. Suárez was committed to making the necessary democratic reforms, and, although he was not a very well-known political figure at the time, he had enough ties with the previous regime so that those against the change did not openly oppose him. He also led the Union of the Democratic Centre to victory in Spain's first free elections in 1977, and he became the first democratically-elected Prime Minister of the post-Franco regime. Suárez has hence been described as the 'leader who changed the history of Spain' (Prieto, 2014).

The Lithuanian transition. Lithuania was annexed to the USSR in 1940 and remained a soviet state for decades, until the USSR began undertaking political and economic changes with the *Perestroika* reform movement and the *glasnost* policy reform during the 1980s (which aimed to bring the USSR out of its economic crisis; Kučinskis, 1991). In the context of the end of the Cold War, the fall of the Berlin Wall and wider developments in Europe, the USSR's reforms facilitated many republics' nationalist movements and calls for independence (Laurinavicius & Sirutavicius, 2008). In August 1991, members of the Soviet Union government led a coup in an attempt to take control of the country from the Soviet President and General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev. The coup collapsed two days later following a short but effective campaign of civil resistance, led by Russian President Boris Yeltsin. This failed coup destabilised the Soviet Union and led to the definitive independence of Lithuania, which Moscow accepted in September 1991. Only

after this event did countries around the world dare to recognize Lithuania's independence.

Algirdas Brazauskas served as the first secretary of the Lithuanian Communist Party in 1988, and he led this party through the Lithuanian independence movement in which they broke away from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In 1993, he was elected the first President of the newly independent Lithuania with a majority vote (Čepaitienė, 2013).

Vytautas Landsbergis entered politics in 1988 as the leader of the democratic reform movement *Sąjūdis*, which emerged at the beginning of the transition. In the 1990 elections, *Sąjūdis* emerged victorious, and Landsbergis became the de jure Head of State of Lithuania as the Chairman of the Supreme Council of Lithuania. In 1990, he headed the *Seimas* parliamentary session during which the restoration of Lithuanian independence from the Soviet Union was declared, making it the first Soviet Republic to do so.

This transition period was intimately linked to establishing independence from the USSR, which generated even more uncertainty around not only political factors, but also economic and social considerations (Keller, 1990). Nonetheless, pro-independence movements in the Baltic countries were growing and hopeful, and in 1989, approximately two million people from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania formed the Baltic Chain, holding hands across three nations to demonstrate their united desired for independence (Laurinavičius & Sirutavičius, 2008; and Landsbergis, 2007).

In sum, both countries' contexts reflect a climate of great uncertainty, and there was no guarantee that the democratisation would be successful. As Huntington (1991) states, the two factors that determine the future expansion of democracy are economic

development and political leadership: economic development makes democracy possible, while political leadership makes it real.

Participants and data collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the four leaders, with questions based on our theoretical framework (Seidman, 2006); in the case of Suárez, though, the possibility to conduct an individual interview was limited due to an onset of Alzheimer's. Data was collected until each dimension was sufficiently saturated (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), resulting in 65 semi-structured interviews (of 1-3 hours) with a variety of participants to develop a global perspective of each leader's psychosocial profile. Participants included prime ministers, advisers, diplomats, lawyers, secretaries, actors of the previous regime with different ideologies, leaders of the opposition, members of the military, the leader's team members, ministry workers, ambassadors, journalists and tenured professors who actively participated in the transition process. The roles of the interviewees during their respective transitions to democracy can be seen in Appendix A.

All of the semi-structured interviews were carried out by the main author of this study who is bilingual in the native language of the participants (i.e., Spanish and Lithuanian). The interviews were conducted in environments proposed by the participant, to adapt to their busy schedules, and informed consent was obtained from each participant. Interviews were obtained through purposive sampling followed by snowball sampling: the main researcher attended relevant public events in Spain and Lithuania, spoke with organizers and journalists to ask for an introduction to the person of interest and, after nine months, the first interview was carried out in Spain with the Chief of the Spanish Royal House, Sabino Fernández Campo. After this first interview, obtaining the

rest was greatly facilitated by snowball sampling, as each participant could often recommend other individuals to interview and likewise put the researcher in touch with that person. The same process was followed in Lithuania; for example, the interview with Head of State Landsbergis was obtained only after several other participants who knew Landsbergis called and persuaded him. Interviews were thus carried out until the data was sufficiently saturated.

All interview questions were oriented towards obtaining information about the political leader with whom the participant had a relation. Prior to each interview, the participant's profile was analysed (e.g. their biography, latest publications, important achievements, etc.), with the objective of understanding their relation to the political leader (i.e. close team member, leader of the opposition, secretary, etc.). Thus, the wording of the questions varied according to each participant: for example, an opposition leader was asked more about how the political leader negotiated the reforms, while a team member was asked about how the leader tended to make decisions during the transition.

Qualitative data analysis

The analysis was conducted with an inductive-deductive approach, and all deductive dimensions were conceptualized and operationalized. Each audio-recorded interview was transcribed and analysed using ATLAS.ti. Table 2 outlines the iterative analysis cycles followed:

[Insert Table 2]

The transcribed interviews were first read in-depth and passages of interest were highlighted and reflected on in analytic memos (Saldaña, 2013). After the first reading, initial coding was carried out to code any emergent information identified in the data

segments and remain open to all possible theoretical directions (Charmaz, 2006). Following this, we re-read the data and used elaborative coding to analyse the data according to the previously-identified concepts from the literature review (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). The code list was then revised, and tentative categories were developed: focused coding involved re-examining the dataset to see how it “fits” with each developing category. Finally, the conceptual framework is elaborated through the Modelling Cycle, and the dataset is re-read to verify the conclusions (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

Given the extensive amount of analysed data, this paper synthesises the findings with only the most salient data excerpts presented (for a more extensive analysis, see Kalpokaite, 2014). Findings are presented in a series of semantic maps which display the groundedness and density of each concept; groundedness refers to the number of associated empirical evidences and density refers to the number of links to other concepts. This analysis informed the elaboration of a comprehensive theoretical framework that is based on previous literature and the empirical evidence from the cases of Spain and Lithuania.

Findings and discussion

Communicating vision

Participants’ testimonies confirmed that all four political leaders presented and implemented a clear democratic vision to those who supported the change, and, conversely, they gradually introduced their vision to those who were against the change

to avoid open confrontations – thus ensuring they did not lose credibility during the transition.

A vision that was implicitly and gradually communicated, along with clearly expressing democratic objectives, was considered key to the success of the political change. Also, a vision with a clear democratic objective was present twice as much as a gradual vision with an implicit message, because moderate visions were evoked only at the beginning of the transition. It is worth pointing out that a clearly democratic vision was associated with the opposition and the loyal team, since both were pursuing the democratic changes. Meanwhile, a gradual vision with an implicit message was intimately linked with followers of the previous regime and with public speeches at the dawn of the political change. Moreover, the data confirmed that a clear, democratic vision was one of the engines of the political change, both in Spain and in Lithuania, thus pointing to its transversal influence with the wider political leadership phenomenon.

Communicating vision in Spain. Prime Minister Suárez saw democracy as their one and only hope, and the King was adamant on establishing a democracy because he did not want to be ‘an authoritarian king’ (as repeatedly mentioned by several participants, including Miguel Herrero y Rodríguez de Miñón, one of the founders of the Spanish Constitution, and Alfonso Osorio, Minister of the Presidency). The leader of the Spanish Communist Party, Santiago Carrillo, stated that the King ‘made a very clear democratic commitment.’ Although Carrillo was initially sceptical of Suárez’s aims (along with Alfonso Guerra, leader of the Spanish Socialist Workers Party), both admitted that, after Suárez met privately with these parties, they realized that they shared common points with Suárez’s democratic vision. These opposition leaders provide powerful testimonies for the value of Suárez’s well-communicated vision, given that it is arguably more challenging, yet crucial, to align the opposition with the democratic vision – otherwise,

the chances of successful democratisation through reforms are slim.

Fernández Campo (Chief of the Spanish Royal House) confirmed that the King likewise met with the leaders of different political parties to establish the most adequate rhythm of change, and despite his clear objectives, the King also displayed certain prudence in public speeches by introducing his vision through implicit messages. For example, he made no mentions of ‘democracy’ in his coronation speech, but he did announce that ‘Today begins a new stage of the history of Spain. This stage, which we must travel together, begins in peace’ (Moraga, 2014). One year later, the King made his democratic goals explicit for the first time when speaking to the American Congress to request their support for Spain’s transition (Gijon, 1976), and the headline of the Spanish newspaper *El País* announced, ‘The King of Spain promises a democratic Monarchy’. In his speech to the Congress, the King concluded:

The Monarchy will ensure that, under the principles of democracy, social peace and political stability are maintained in Spain, while ensuring the orderly access to power of the different government alternatives, according to the freely expressed wishes of the people. The Monarchy symbolizes and maintains the unity of our nation... (Casqueiro, 2018).

Besides carefully timing their messages, both leaders likewise used their vision to orient action. For example, Landelino Lavilla (Minister of Justice and one of Suárez’s trusted team members) reflected on his work with Suárez:

It was an operation with a clear and linear objective... linear in terms of the steps that had to be taken to achieve the goal. As a whole, all the complexity yielded to the clarity of what we did and what we really wanted to do... We had clear ideas, and a schedule as well.

Communicating vision in Lithuania. Head of State Landsbergis was guided by his vision for ‘a free independent Lithuania, as is it should be and as is normal... to set up a normal European democratic state,’ and President Brazauskas likewise sought ‘real Lithuanian independence,’ but he was also aware that this necessitated a stable economy and ‘energy autonomy’ from their previous dependence on Russia. Interviewees perceived Landsbergis as more vehement about achieving his vision as soon as possible, while Brazauskas proceeded in a careful, step-by-step manner. Indeed, the goal of *Sajūdis* was to re-establish independence in Lithuania, and even though some perceived this as too ambitious or unrealistic, Landsbergis wanted nothing less than full independence (Taškūnas, 2008). Nonetheless, the wider Lithuanian public desired independence, and they were hopeful and prepared for the consequences this could incite from Moscow (Keller, 1990). Brazauskas seemed adept in timing and implementing the necessary changes, as he successfully led his political party through negotiations with Moscow, and he consistently won popularity polls (Keller, 1990). Vytenis Andriukaitis, a co-signatory of the Lithuanian Independence Reform Act, reflected on Brazauskas’ pragmatic thinking: he judged Brazauskas’ vision to not be geared as much towards democratisation per se as it was towards dealing with basic issues, such as what the people would eat and where they would sleep.

This difference between the two leaders may be explained by their distinct positions: Landsbergis was the head of the opposition while Brazauskas held the highest formal political position in Lithuania. This meant that Brazauskas’ actions were held particularly accountable by the powerful political forces in Moscow – who were constantly monitoring Lithuania’s progress of establishing independence – while Landsbergis’ position was not as susceptible to the USSR. Vytautas Astrauskas, President

of the Supreme Council of Lithuania (1987-1990), further confirmed that Brazauskas had the clear conviction — and vision — of restoring independence in Lithuania, but, at the same time, the leader recognized the benefit of respecting the time that was needed in order to avoid arousing any uneasiness in Moscow. Brazauskas was aware of Lithuania's dependence on Russia, and, although the question of independence had already been planted in his parliament, Brazauskas stated that for Moscow 'it was like poison.' Thus, Brazauskas' step-by-step vision reflected his recognition that successfully establishing a democracy was a multifaceted issue that first necessitated a stable, independent economy in Lithuania.

Nonetheless, Landsbergis likewise refrained from revealing a clear democratic objective when initially presenting *Sajūdis*' goals to the Vilnius community (on 8 July 1988): Landsbergis instead focused his message on economic and cultural autonomy, environmental awareness, educational reform, protection of their language and, ultimately, 'restoring Lithuania's history' (in the words of Romualdas Ozolas, deputy of the Presidium of the Soviet Supreme Council of Lithuania). Ozolas pointed out that this message put forth a gradual vision that was implicitly geared towards democratisation — as Lithuania had historically experienced independence and democracy — without openly declaring this primary objective. It seems that Landsbergis chose to transmit his vision moderately in that public event for it was likely to reach Mikhail Gorbachev, the General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party. This example once again underscores the importance of considering the context and timing of how a political leader communicates their vision during such a transition period.

Comparing Spain and Lithuania. Thus, in Spain, the principal objective was to move from the Franconian regime towards a democracy, while in Lithuania, they faced the

double task of recuperating their independence and establishing a democracy. Nonetheless, these findings confirm that the political leaders had to develop a clear, democratic vision, and this vision was thoughtfully communicated to the government and opposition. Naturally, the leader's vision influenced their actions, especially regarding how the leader made important decisions that led to the realization of their democratic vision.

Decision-making styles

The political leaders of both countries presented a clear preference for consultative decision-making, whereby they consulted with others but nonetheless held the ultimate decision-making power (in contrast to purely democratic decisions that are based on votes and consensus). A *reduced loyal team* emerged as an important factor closely related to consultative decision-making: all four leaders frequently consulted with a small loyal team, which allowed decisions to be made more quickly. This also highlights the importance of timing for decision-making, as there are often significant time pressures for implementing the democratic changes.

Decision-making styles in Spain. Lavilla had an 'unconditional confidence in the good sense, in the "smell", in the intuition of Adolfo Suárez' throughout their consultations together. The same was found for King Juan Carlos I, as illuminated by Fernández Campo, who described their close collaboration throughout the transition period:

[I met with the King] daily in the office, but first thing in the morning I would already be in the King's office, we would attend to matters, and later he would frequently call me

to discuss things. Many times, we had to have lunch there, stay during the night until whatever time. The work was very intense but very interesting.

In light of the leaders' consistent collaboration with others, the *adequate selection of the loyal team* was an important emergent factor throughout the interview data. The leaders counted on a relatively neutral group of the new generation, as they were more likely to be open-minded, tolerant and have democratic ideas. Several participants, including Marcelino Oreja Aguirre (Minister of External Affairs), described one of the ways in which Prime Minister Suárez chose his team: in the beginning, he selected many people from the *Grupo Tácito*, a group of Spanish professionals, politicians and journalists who were dedicated to advancing information about the economic and political future of Spain. While other participants, such as Osorio, did not explicitly mention Suárez's reliance on the *Grupo Tácito*, they did agree that Suárez counted mostly on people who were trustworthy, had professional merits and shared the democratic vision for Spain. From the testimonies obtained, we can conclude that the nucleus of loyal ministers that Suárez counted on were Alfonso Osorio (Minister of Presidency and Vice-Prime Minister to Suárez), Landelino Lavilla (Minister of Justice), Martín Villa (Minister of the Interior) and Gutiérrez Mellado (Minister of Defence) – that is to say, only four of the twenty ministers of the government. George (1980) points out that crucial decisions in the real world tend to be formed by a small group of two to seven people. Whether the leader is consulting, delegating or simply informing others of their decisions, the leader's adequate selection of their team is a pertinent consideration for decision-making.

Gregorio Peces-Barba Martínez (one of the founders of the constitution) affirms that both Suárez and the King counted on a small loyal team for frequent consultations, but it was always the leader who ultimately made the decision. The King, for example, demonstrated this when he selected Suárez to be the Prime Minister: throughout several

interviews, participants explained how they initially had differing opinions, but with time the majority came to agree with the King's choice. Osorio explained that the King's close, small group consisted of Osorio himself and Suárez; Fernández Campo also played a very relevant role in consulting with the King. Oreja Aguirre positively valued the King's appointment of Suárez as the Prime Minister and Fernández-Miranda as the speaker of the legislature and president of the Council of the Kingdom – Oreja Aguirre felt that these three leaders formed a very good team, as Suárez represented sympathy, courage and skill, while Fernández-Miranda was responsible for the ideas. Participants affirmed that the King chose team members of the new generation that held the King's maximum trust and shared the democratic vision.

In the case of Suárez, the complex issue of legalizing the Spanish Communist Party provides an interesting example of one of the most crucial decisions he had to make: Suárez met with Mellado, and then decided to act without speaking with other members of the military, despite, according to some testimonies, having initially promised that the party would not be legalized. Fernández Campo, who was very close to the military authorities, explains that the military viewed this as treason. Moreover, Fernández Campo believes that if Suárez had met with the military before making his decision, he could have not only easily convinced them of this course of action, but he could have likewise avoided the attempted coup of February 1981. If this is true, then the government certainly benefited from the King's leadership as well, for he was the one who immediately stopped the coup. Moreover, Suárez announced his decision during the holidays of Spain's Holy Easter Week, and most participants (including Carrillo) believed that Suárez and his team took advantage of the Easter holidays to legalize this party. These personal accounts indicate that a political leader's decision-making processes are not only defined by what decisions they make, but also by the *planning of decisions*, another emergent factor from

our analysis: whether the leader has private meetings, informs others of the evolving decision and how they choose to finally announce their decision publicly.

Decision-making in Lithuania. When speaking of Head of State Landsbergis, there was agreement across the testimonies in line with what Ozolas remarked: Landsbergis often made decisions as he saw fit and rarely explained his reasons afterwards, which illustrates both how Landsbergis personally carried out his political work and also the fact that, even when consulting with others, the political leader still held the final decision-making power. President Brazauskas likewise frequently consulted with his team (as mentioned by several participants, including Egidijus Bičkauskas and Česlovas Juršėnas, both co-signatories of the Act of the Re-Establishment of the State of Lithuania). Bičkauskas emphasized that counting on a good team is essential for any political leader's success. Nonetheless, as remarked by Gediminas Ilgūnas (advisor to Brazauskas during his presidency), Brazauskas ultimately made decisions according to his own judgment rather than always following the consensus of his team, which Ilgūnas described as Brazauskas' very nature: contemplating the reality from a more ample and long-term point of view, and at times telling his team 'Thank you, but I am going to do the opposite.'

Various testimonies from those who worked with Brazauskas and Suárez highlighted their leader's *ability to listen* – another emergent factor. The members of each team felt their views were genuinely considered, and their ideas were generally accepted. Conversely, when the leader decided not to follow a suggested solution, the team member expressed frustration, displeasure or disappointment; interestingly, though, such negative feelings were only expressed by team members who were regularly consulted with, suggesting that such reactions are actually indicative of the leaders' genuinely

consultative nature, given that a non-consultative leader would not have fostered expectations for collaborators' ideas to be accepted in the first place.

When discussing Brazauskas' decision-making processes, participants almost unanimously spoke of his decision to reinstate the use of the Cathedral in Vilnius, to the Catholic Church – this was considered an especially transcendent moment in the beginning of the Lithuanian transition due to the hegemonic repression of the Church under Soviet Union communism. Brazauskas announced this on 22 October 1988, during the Constitutional Congress of the Reformist Movement *Sąjūdis*. Vytenis Andriukaitis, who energetically participated in the political activities of the transition, further explained that this decision was made seemingly spontaneously during this very meeting, when Lionginas Šepetys (Secretary of Ideology) passed Brazauskas a written note suggesting that it was time to bring the Cathedral back to its traditional religious use. From Andriukaitis' perspective, Brazauskas was adept at feeling the pulse of the context, knowing to what extent Šepetys' idea was valuable and judging the opportunity of the moment. After consulting with his close team member, Brazauskas announced his decision to reinstate the Church during the very meeting in which it emerged. This decision considerably contributed to the Lithuanian people gaining trust in Brazauskas, along with signalling to Gorbachev that Brazauskas – and Lithuania as a whole – chose a path different to the Soviet Union.

One of the most pivotal decisions for the political transition in Lithuania was the restoration of independence: Landsbergis ultimately chose to declare independence on 11 March 1990. Stasys Lozoraitis (a friend of the leader who worked as chief diplomat in the United States during the transition period) explains that he called Landsbergis and told him 'now or never' after having met with President Bush, who assured him that Lithuania could count on the unofficial support of the United States if Lithuania were to

declare independence. Lozoraitis argued that this was now expected of Lithuania, and the longer they waited, the more this decision would lose value; Landsbergis affirmed that this argument was what ultimately convinced him to declare independence. Brazauskas likewise approved of Landsbergis making this decision without further negotiation, because the duration of such negotiations was unpredictable, but executing this decision was undeniably necessary. Participants' responses highlighted that Landsbergis made more unidirectional decisions than Brazauskas, affirming that a leader cannot use the same decision-making style in every situation – what is more important is that the leader knows when and how to apply each decision-making style.

Comparing Spain and Lithuania. Thus, while the political leaders made decisions crucial to the political change in a consultative manner, they also demonstrated that they had the ultimate word when choosing the best course of action. However, our analysis likewise made it clear that each country faced distinct challenges to their decision-making processes: in Lithuania, the political leaders had to confront many external problems that were related to pressures from their imposing neighbour, the Soviet Union, while in Spain, their resistances stemmed mostly from internal forces.

Participants testimonies showed that the political leaders made decisions that were crucial to the democratisation through consultations with a small group of trusted collaborators before choosing the most appropriate course of action. When peacefully reforming a political regime, it makes sense that the leader should consider others' perspectives to make effective decisions, but when it came to collaboratively deciding on a controversial matter, the political leaders' negotiation strategies also played a key role.

Negotiation strategies

The political leaders studied here established the democratic changes by negotiating with the many involved stakeholders, including the opposition, the military (as in Spain) and external forces (such as the USSR with Lithuania). The leaders presented a mixed style, alternating between dominant and solution-seeking negotiation strategies. Negotiations that were essential to the change (e.g. with the opposition) were mostly carried out *directly* by the leaders themselves in *private* settings during the beginning of the transition (to avoid undesired reactions from those opposing the change) which was an important emergent factor. In the beginning, the rules of the democratic game were not well defined, and prudence was therefore needed to avoid possible failed public negotiations and the undesired attention of the media. As the political rules were gradually redefined, the leaders moved towards *public negotiations*. Gelfand and Brett (2004) highlight that leaders should continuously study the public opinion to know whether a negotiation will be accepted and what strategies must be developed to continue gaining popular support. Participants also mentioned several *personality* factors that they felt positively influenced the leader's negotiation: dominant strategies were linked to 'stubborn' personality characteristics, and the *ability to listen* was pertinent to solution-seeking strategies.

Negotiation strategies in Spain. Interviewees perceived that both leaders always searched for the solution that was most satisfactory for all the groups of power involved. For example, Alfonso Osorio said that Prime Minister Suárez followed a 'give and take' strategy of negotiating, which harks to Pruitt's (1981) concept of firm flexibility. This was also illustrated in the example of Suárez meeting with Carrillo to negotiate the legalization of the Spanish Communist Party following Suárez's few but important

demands: the party would adopt the Spanish flag and accept the Spanish constitutional monarchy. Carrillo admitted that Suárez's arguments persuaded him to follow the democratic vision, and thanks to this 'give and take' strategy, Suárez was able to mitigate the risk of the extreme-right reacting with violence.

The Spanish King likewise searched for mutual solutions with Carrillo regarding the legalization of the party and recognition of the monarchy. However, participants did not specifically mention very many negotiations with the King, suggesting that, due to the high level of legitimate and formal power the King inherited from Franco, negotiations per se did not occur as frequently. It is also worth considering that Juan Carlos was still King at the time of the interviews, and participants' responses may have been filtered or withheld given the social delicacy of sharing information regarding the leader. Suárez was clearly more implicated in direct negotiations, and the King's support of Suárez's actions contributed to successfully carrying out the political changes.

Negotiation strategies in Lithuania. Both leaders presented clearly different negotiation profiles: President Brazauskas sought solutions to problems, while Head of State Landsbergis made demands according to his plans. As emphasized by many interviewees, however, both styles were necessary for the transition: for example, Vytenis Andriukaitis (a co-signatory of the Reestablishment Act of the State of Lithuania) spoke positively of Brazauskas' genuine concern for finding mutual solutions, but he said Landsbergis was never a good negotiator, as he tended to convert negotiations into a farce or humiliate the other side. Andriukaitis nonetheless recognized that Landsbergis' categorical approach was what ultimately brought the re-independence of Lithuania.

Perhaps, once again, these different profiles can be better understood by considering each leader's context: Brazauskas was the principal leader of Lithuania and

delegate of Moscow (with Gorbachev as the only person above him), while Landsbergis was the leader of the reformist group *Sajūdis*, with arguably fewer external pressures. Brazauskas' testimony highlights his awareness of the threat that the USSR posed should Lithuania take any wrong steps: he saw the KGB's list of Lithuanian people they could incarcerate, he knew they had installed microphones in his office to keep an eye on his actions and he was aware that the USSR military forces could have crushed Lithuania in one day should they have decided that violent action was necessary. Brazauskas viewed Landsbergis as incapable of understanding his situation, as he said, 'I could not strut on the streets with the Lithuanian flag, because the consequences of this would be tragic'. In efforts to control the situation, Brazauskas would privately meet with Landsbergis in the *Vingis* park of Vilnius to search for solutions to the problem created by Landsbergis' radical position: Brazauskas urged him to be more prudent and exercise patience with the economy, energy and petroleum projects. Yet, Landsbergis remained distrustful of Brazauskas' recommendations, and his actions continued to confront the USSR, which, in Brazauskas' perspective, directly led to the economic blockade from the USSR that Lithuania suffered.

Landsbergis himself recognized his tendency to use dominant negotiation strategies, as illustrated by one of his most important negotiations with Boris Yeltsin (chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet and first President of the Russian Federation), during which they established the agreement between Lithuania and Russia. In particular, the two leaders disagreed over the inclusion of two points in the document's introduction: the peace agreement of 1920 between Russia and Lithuania, and the subsequent occupation and annexation of Lithuania by the USSR. Yeltsin did not want these two points included, but Landsbergis argued for them, as he reasoned that these points implicated the USSR, not Russia, which now supported Lithuania and its independence;

therefore, Landsbergis felt that the document that would define the future relationship between Russia and Lithuania should recognize this unfortunate occupation by the USSR. While they negotiated to remove the first point, Landsbergis remained firm in insisting the second point be included, and they finally agreed to this. When Landsbergis later heard that Moscow sought to pressure him again to remove the second point, Landsbergis spoke to Yeltsin immediately to inquire whether their agreement continued, or Yeltsin preferred they go back to including the original two points – Yeltsin conformed to their agreement and the question was permanently closed.

During his interview, Algimantas Čekuolis (one of the most famous journalists of Lithuania) compared both leaders to the strong, unbending oak and the flexible, resilient cane – he insists that both were essential for the success of the political transition. This metaphor reaffirms the importance of firm flexibility (Pruitt, 1981) during negotiation, and shows that these opposite, yet complementary, negotiation profiles were necessary for instigating the Lithuanian democracy of today.

Comparing Spain and Lithuania. Overall, there was a clear tendency for leaders to negotiate with firm flexibility: using dominant, direct and private negotiation strategies for topics that were crucial to the change (especially during the beginning), meanwhile solution-seeking strategies were used in negotiations of less importance to the change, thus fostering a peaceful transition to democracy. To understand how the political leaders ultimately manoeuvred these crucial negotiations, it was essential to consider their use of power.

Controlling through power

Testimonies confirmed that the political leaders' success depended on their capacity to adequately exercise different types of power across different situations. Participants affirmed that the four political leaders had high levels of formal and legitimate power, which proved essential during democratisation 'from the top' as it permitted considerable liberty when enforcing certain actions. The leaders used more legitimate and coercive power at the beginning of the transition while uncertainty was abounding, the opposition was strong, and the government was coming from an authoritarian regime. Gradually, the leaders moved much of this power away from the individual and towards the people and government. Nonetheless, informational power was most notably present in both Spain and Lithuania, as it facilitated seeking solutions during negotiations, and it was most often present when dealing with the opposition or groups of power that came from the previous regime, for which a vision with a clear democratic objective likewise emerged.

Controlling through power in Spain. When influencing the military's opinion, for example, Prime Minister Suárez counted on informational power: Osorio explained how 'Adolfo, who had an enormous power of conviction, explained very well to the Spanish people what he wanted to do and how he would do it.' Osorio's statement underscores the persuasive intersection of Suárez's vision and informational power: Suárez argued the need for democracy but at the same time expressed that they needed the military's support in order to succeed. Suárez's convincing arguments about the change and the situation in Western Europe likewise led to the approval of the Political Reform Law in Spain, which ultimately had 425 (out of 497) votes in favour. Finally, many participants also foregrounded Suárez's referent power as they almost unanimously described him as a

charismatic person, which contributed to his persuading and ‘seducing’ the communist leader Carrillo (in the words of Fernando Suárez, Minister of Labour).

The King was most prominently referred to in terms of his legitimate power, which is understandable given that he held the highest position of formal power and, moreover, he was the legal successor to Franco. Several interviewees, including the King’s close friend Jaime Carvajal, believed Spain’s transition was successful partly because the military viewed the King as the heir to Franco. This was most notable during the attempted coup of 23 February 1981, which the King effectively ended when he ‘put on his General Capitan uniform and ordered the military to go back to their quarters,’ in the words of Luis María Ansón (Director of the Spanish daily newspaper *ABC* and close friend to the royal family). From Ansón’s perspective, this act saved the democracy and liberty in Spain. Moreover, Oreja Aguirre defined the King as the motor of change, without whom this ‘would not have happened, because the reform had to occur from the Head of State.’

Controlling through power in Lithuania. Participants described a similar trend of legitimate, informational and referent power. Ilgūnas explained that President Brazauskas’ legitimate power was invaluable for leading Lithuania through the USSR’s economic blockade, while other interviewees reflected Brazauskas’ referent power through their feelings of respect, admiration, confidence and loyalty towards the leader (likewise showing that referent power is closely related to charisma). Brazauskas’ most prominent type of power, however, was informational power. The leader himself explained that he always tried to use a variety of arguments – economic, ideological and emotional – especially when negotiating with Head of State Landsbergis. Brazauskas tried to persuade him to be patient before adopting any irrevocable decisions and to be

prudent with the Russians, as Brazauskas told him, 'Don't play with the lion's ears.' His informational power also worked to reassure the Soviet Union when the Lithuanian flag and national anthem were legalized: Brazauskas explained to Gorbachev that the flag and anthem were only symbols of Lithuania – even translating the entire Lithuanian anthem to assure Gorbachev that it contained nothing unfavourable against the Soviet Union. Brazauskas further used ideological arguments to convince Gorbachev that the Lithuanian Communist Party was not seeking to break their relations with the Soviet Communist Party, but rather that they were acting in accordance to the democratic votes of the Lithuanian people. Vladimiras Beriozovas (member of the Lithuanian Supreme Council and present in the re-independence act of Lithuania), explained one of Brazauskas' arguments: when the USSR 'liberated' Lithuania from the Nazi occupation, they first hoisted the Lithuanian flag – if the flag being raised then produced no problems, there was no reason to fear that it would now. This argument was particularly well-placed, because the Soviets relied on the salvation of the Nazi occupation to justify their own occupation of Lithuania. Thus, Brazauskas proved to be adept in convincing others based on the information he presented and argued, and this was crucial for showing Moscow that Lithuania meant them no harm in their pursuit for democracy.

While participants' responses clearly attributed the exercise of informational power more to Brazauskas, Landsbergis himself also stated that he utilized this type of power, especially when arguing for the approval of the Temporary Principal Law of Lithuania with Yeltsin. One of Landsbergis' most salient uses of power was when he became President of the Lithuanian Council (in 1990) and began pushing out his political opponent, Brazauskas, by using coercive power and ignoring Brazauskas. The participants' responses, however, illustrated that Landsbergis' vehemence and unbending dominance were very valuable for bringing Lithuania through the transition.

Comparing Spain and Lithuania. The cases of Lithuania and Spain confirm the close interrelationship of power, control of the situation and another important emergent factor: establishing a national and international *network of support*. For example, control over the situation is not very present in revolutions, as these changes are rarely gradual or planned from within (Huntington, 1991). Conversely, when democratisation is being realized through reforms, the political leader's formal power and network of support provide the necessary control for convincing the majority to follow them and ultimately establish a democracy. Brazauskas and Suárez focused more on the support they could gain within their respective countries, while King Juan Carlos I and Landsbergis oriented their efforts towards establishing international networks of support, focusing on countries that could have geopolitical interests in Lithuania and Spain (e.g. the European Union, the United Kingdom, Germany and France). In his interview, Landsbergis pointed out that society's support provides more power than being able to count on tanks or indiscriminate violence.

Throughout the analysis, another unanticipated factor emerged across participants' testimonies: *personality*. Although no questions were explicitly asked about the political leaders' personalities, the majority of participants described each leader's personality as directly interrelated with how the leader carried out negotiations, made decisions, communicated their vision and used their resources of power. For example, most participants described how Brazauskas controlled the situation with a personality that was charismatic, brave and moderate, while Landsbergis exhibited control with a personality that was vehement, inflexible and dominant. Interviewees likewise centred on the personality traits they considered essential for establishing the new rules of the political game, from bravery and stubbornness to proactivity and flexibility. These emergent

findings demonstrate that each leader's personality shaped their distinct negotiation strategies and uses of power in realizing decisions towards their vision of democracy, which suggests there may be important factors from previous 'Great Man' analyses that could be integrated into a framework for successful political leadership during democratisation through reforms (Morán, 2002; Service, 2000; and Tucker, 1987).

Finally, the interrelationship of the two political leaders of each country also merits further consideration. The cases of Spain and Lithuania foreground the balance between dominant and flexible behaviour, or vehement, drastic behaviour with gradual, measured behaviour (please see Appendix B for an overview of all four political leaders). In Spain, this balance was met *within* each leader, while, in Lithuania, this balance was struck *between* the two leaders. This dynamic reflects the influence of each leader's role: both Spanish leaders worked on the same team, while the Lithuanian leaders had different starting points which shaped how they worked towards reaching their overall common goal. In other words, the two Spanish leaders displayed different leadership styles depending on the situation (e.g. the King ordering the military to dismiss the coup, or Suárez's convincing arguments that led to the approval of the Spanish Reform Law), while in Lithuania, the two leaders were constantly contrasted for their distinct leadership styles (e.g. Landsbergis always pushing for independence, and Brazauskas taking careful, measured steps to restore Lithuania's economy and quality of living). This reflects the contingency approach to leadership, elucidating the importance of the *situation* in determining which leadership style would be most effective (Fiedler, 1981; Hersey et al., 2013; and House & Aditya, 1997). This reaffirms that no single strategy is better or worse than another, but rather that an effective leader is one who knows how and when to utilize their different sources of power, decision-making styles, vision statements or negotiation strategies, and effectively balance these to establish a democracy.

Conclusions and suggestions for further research

This paper outlines a theoretical framework that is based on the four main dimensions identified from the literature review and integrates the emergent concepts from the cases of Spain and Lithuania, thus describing political leadership during a successful transition to democracy through reforms. The interaction of these four dimensions emerged throughout the analysis, as leaders needed a clear vision to advance in the necessary decision-making to make the political changes. Vision and decision-making implied entering into negotiations with certain political groups. Effective negotiation necessitated the use of different types of power that would facilitate control of the situation. Each of these were indispensable elements for fostering an ample network of support (nationally and internationally), which was necessary for successfully carrying out the transition to democracy. After examining these cases individually and holistically, we can affirm that the leadership style of the four political leaders positively influenced the political change. The main findings are synthesized in Figure 6.

[Insert Figure 6]

These findings foreground the emergent interaction of these dimensions: not only are they relevant to effective political leadership, but the interplay of these dimensions may be the decisive factor in determining whether or not a particular leadership style is ultimately successful. One of the most apparent relations was between direct negotiations and legitimate power, for this facilitated negotiating crucial reforms during the political change. A clear democratic vision informed negotiation with the opposition, which were primarily carried out in private environments to ensure that the transition was carried out peacefully. During the beginning of a transition period, the leaders refrained from carrying out public negotiations as this was particularly risky for escalating conflicts.

Informational power was intricately linked to solution-seeking negotiation strategies, as persuasive arguments were central to mutually resolving a negotiation. Informational power was likewise linked to having a clear vision – especially when working with the opposition and the leader’s own team – because this involved the control and distribution of information that was relevant to the leader’s democratic direction.

The leader’s vision also guided the selection of their loyal team, who facilitated the realization of the leader’s objectives as well as the construction of a shared vision. Moreover, leaders predominantly employed consultative decision-making, which meant counting on a good team was fundamental. Each team was indispensable for recollecting information on issues essential to the change, and they likewise worked to satisfy the political leader’s cognitive needs, offer emotional support and permit the leader to personally get to know different points of view. Therefore, the interplay of the main dimensions of leadership significantly helped each leader in implementing the optimum course of action throughout the transition.

Future research could apply this theoretical model to other cases of consolidated and failed democracies to further corroborate this model and discern the influence of the political leadership style described here during democratisation. Moreover, there are also many other political leaders who are influential during democratisation, such as the political leaders of the different groups of power involved. Their narratives are often neglected in analyses which focus solely on leaders of top institutional roles, and our analysis likewise unveils this neglect of the “unsung heroes” of political transition periods. Further research could expand current understanding by examining this model in relation to how other political leaders also contributed to the successful transition process.

To conclude, we would like to point out the similarities between the two transition processes studied here. Although a comparison of the democratisation processes of Spain

and Lithuania may not seem viable at first glance, a profound analysis of the internal and external change dynamics illuminated the nature of each political system. Would the Lithuanian transition have been possible without the collapse of socialism? Did the great social changes of Spain in 1940 and 1975 condition its transition to democracy to a greater extent than the capabilities of the King and Suárez? Would the transition to democracy have been possible without the previous changes in Spain and Europe? To address these doubts, it is worth mentioning the findings of Pincus' (2006) research on the English revolution of 1688: although certain political change processes may have seemed to have been instigated by revolutionary movements external to the present regime, they were actually nothing more than the result of internal re-adaptation processes of pre-existing political structures to changes that had previously occurred in these regimes. Rather than occurring spontaneously, these changes are the result of the political leadership of a myriad of collectives on both the government side and the civil society side. The essential idea is that these processes are hardly ever 'ruptures,' but rather 'reforms' that are in keeping with and legalized by the conditions of the previous regime. From this basis emanates the decisive importance of the factors analysed here: the uses of formal, legitimate and informational power, dominant and solution-seeking negotiation strategies, consultative decision-making styles, and the communication of a vision at the beginning of these processes.

The democratic transitions of Spain and Lithuania informed the search for descriptive and interpretive social models that further our understanding of the present time and, likewise, incorporate the interpretation of both societies as a key reference in debates and historiographical approaches to the democratisation of both countries. These transitions are a part of recent European memory and its social construction, in which the nation interweaves with other identifying beliefs in a transnational nature. These two

countries, on opposite ends of the European continent, shared a similar political leadership profile in responding to the great historical processes that invigorate European life today.

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Appendix A

Appendix B

[Insert Table 3]