

Dealing with the Legacy of Authoritarianism

In recent years the agenda of how to 'deal with the past' has become a central dimension of the quality of contemporary democracies. Many years after the process of authoritarian breakdown, consolidated democracies revisit the past either symbolically or to punish the elites associated with the previous authoritarian regimes. New factors, like international environment, conditionality, party cleavages, memory cycles and commemorations or politics of apologies, do sometimes bring the past back into the political arena.

This book addresses such themes by dealing with two dimensions of authoritarian legacies in Southern European democracies: repressive institutions and human rights abuses. The thrust of this book is that we should view transitional justice as part of a broader 'politics of the past': an ongoing process in which elites and society under democratic rule revise the meaning of the past in terms of what they hope to achieve in the present.

This book was published as a special issue of *South European Society and Politics*.

António Costa Pinto is a professor of politics and contemporary European history at the Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon. He is presently the President of the Portuguese Political Science Association. He has published extensively on fascism, authoritarianism, democratisation and transitional justice in Southern Europe.

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This is an especially valuable contribution to our thinking on how elites and institutions reflect, reconstruct and reconcile authoritarian pasts in new democracies. From its introduction to its conclusion, the collection teaches us important lessons that extend beyond southern Europe and even beyond comparative politics.

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Dealing with the Legacy of Authoritarianism

The “Politics of the Past” in Southern European
Democracies

Edited by

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