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**Title:** Ritual Sacrifices? Transitional Justice and the Fate of Post-Authoritarian Democracies

**Abstract:** Transitional Justice, that is the act of reckoning with a former authoritarian regime after it has ceased to exist, has direct implications for democratic processes. It influences who decides to go into politics, shapes politicians' behavior while in office, and, finally, influences how they delegate policy decisions. That is why mechanisms of transitional justice far from being the epilogue of an outgoing authoritarian regime are a constitutive part of the new democratic order. How successful these democracies become at staying democracies and their overall quality is a direct consequence of transitional justice. This book distinguishes within transitional justice between transparency mechanisms ---the revelation of authoritarian legacies that were concealed---and purges---the firing of open collaborators of the ancien régime. This distinction throws into stark relief the contrasting effects they have on sustaining and shaping the quality of democratic processes. While transparency regimes unequivocally reduce corruption and improve the programmatic representation political parties can offer, the effect of purges is more ambiguous and contingent on features of the former authoritarian regime as well as current circumstances. At the same time, not all new states are equally well-positioned to carry out purges in the first place. Hence the availability of transitional justice as remedy is not uniformly available. A highly disaggregated global transitional justice dataset allows readers to evaluate these theoretical claims and underscores that the choice between democracy and justice that scholars have for decades presented newly transitioned societies with is misconstrued.