

RETROSPECTIVE WISDOM FROM TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF REFLECTION ON TRANSITIONS FROM AND CONSOLIDATIONS OF DEMOCRACY

Philippe C. Schmitter
European University Institute
And
Central European University

When Guillermo O'Donnell and I wrote Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusion about Uncertain Democracies (hereafter, LGB for "Little Green Book"), we had virtually no existing literature to draw upon and very few cases to exploit.(FN) For the most part we ransacked the monographic studies produced by the other participants in the Woodrow Wilson Center project and we reached back to the classics of political thought. I personally found a lot of inspiration in the work of Niccolò Machiavelli who, I discovered, had grappled some time ago with regime change in the opposite direction, i.e. from 'republican' to 'princely' rule.

Neither of us imagined that the fledgling efforts we were observing in Southern Europe and Latin America in the early 1980s would soon be followed by more than fifty other regime transformations all around the world. These *divine surprises*, especially the ones in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, presented us with an extraordinary scientific opportunity and a major intellectual risk – not to mention a great deal of personal normative satisfaction. To what extent could the assumptions, concepts, hypotheses and "tentative conclusions" that we had derived from the early cases be stretched to fit a much larger set of countries with very different starting points in terms of prior autocratic regimes, historical experiences, development patterns and cultural norms? What made this act of academic hubris particularly risky was that our approach to democratization was so diametrically opposed to most prevailing theories about established "real-existing"

democracies or polyarchies. For example, we inserted a clear distinction between liberalization and democratization. We explicitly refused to accept the notion of a fixed set of economic or cultural pre-requisites. We emphasized the key role of elite interaction and strategic choice during the transition and gave limited importance to mass mobilization from below in most cases. We pointed to the de-mobilizing effect of the electoral process and assigned only a temporally bounded (but nevertheless significant) role to civil society. We drew attention to the fact that most transitions began from within the previous autocratic regime and that its collapse or self-transformation by no means guaranteed the eventual success of democracy. Finally, and perhaps most subversively, we argued that it was possible (if not always probable) to make “democracy without democrats.” In other words, those favourable cultural and normative traits – the alleged “civic culture” – that had been measured by previous comparative survey research and found to be an essential component of all stable democracies was better conceived as the product rather than the producer of such an outcome.

As an inveterate comparativist, I welcomed the challenge of “stretching” our original work and applying it to such different cases. I found it gratifying to observe how often, how far away and even how controversially these “cross-regional” comparisons were attempted and I am convinced that they contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of the sorely neglected topic of democratization. What I found much less gratifying was when the consumers (and critics) of the LGB pretended that it could be applied to topics that were manifestly not within its purview. For example, it was no accident that Guillermo and I gave it the title of “Transitions **from** Authoritarian Rule” and not that of “Transitions **to** Democracy” and yet very many of those who (mis)used it seem to have assumed that the LGB pretended to contain some magic formula for success or even some lessons for the consolidation of democracy. Not only did we not presume a *telos* that would lead to such

a felicitous result, we were obsessed with the likelihood of regression to autocracy. Admittedly, we were concerned right from the beginning with the consequences that different transitional situations might have for the emergence and eventual persistence of democracy, but there is nothing in the LGB about what such an outcome might look like. Granted that Guillermo and I have subsequently written a good deal about this topic (and often in disagreement with each other),(FN?) but to infer from our original collective effort that voluntaristic, structurally under-determined action would continue to dominate the politics of these neo-democracies once they had moved beyond the highly uncertain transitional period or that intra- or inter-elite strategic machinations would continue to determine policy outcomes or regime stability without any role for the mobilization and participation of mass publics is simply an unwarranted assumption.

Over twenty years have passed since the LGB was published and much has occurred in the meantime. Also I have learned from participating in the burgeoning 'growth industry' of democratization studies, both as an initial "transitologist" and a subsequent "consolidologist." The editors of the Journal of Democracy have asked me to share this retrospective wisdom with its readers.

Democratization – that is, the passage through a transitional experience of differing length and mode to a regime that satisfies the minimal procedural conditions for a "real-existing" democracy¹ – **is much easier to accomplish in the contemporary historical context than I thought initially.** My primitive calculation back in the late 1970s was that

¹ A 'Real-existing' Democracy' (RED) in my terminology has three characteristics: (1) it calls itself democratic; (2) it is recognized by other self-proclaimed democracies as being "one of them;" and (3) most political scientists applying standard procedural criteria would code it as democratic.

roughly 2 out of every 3 efforts to democratize in Latin America since 1900 had failed and had relapsed manifestly (and usually violently) into some form of autocracy within 3 to 5 years. I wince when I come across the accusation that, by choosing to compare Southern European and Latin American cases, Guillermo and I had picked the “easy ones” and, therefore, our tentative conclusions about transition could not be valid for what were thought to be the manifestly more difficult ones elsewhere. Nothing could have then been further from my mind (especially, since I was personally involved in research on what at the time seemed to be the most tumultuous and uncertain of all the transitions, namely, the Portuguese *Revolução*!) It is certainly not our fault that none of the countries we chose has (yet) suffered a manifest or sudden regression to autocracy, although several spent a long time in transition, some did have close calls, and a few have developed symptoms of gradual deterioration.

This relative facility is all the more astonishing when one considers that many of the factors that theorists have claimed facilitate (if not act as prerequisites for) the consolidation for liberal democracy have not been present in many if not most of these cases. Economic growth and employment rates have not always been consistently higher than under autocracy; social equality and income distribution have not always improved significantly; trust in rulers has often deteriorated; critical items measuring the “civic culture” of mass publics have declined – and still the minimal institutions of REDs have not been displaced. They have survived, if not always been respected and enjoyed by their citizens.

Later, I will re-examine this “relative ease” proposition with regard to the allegedly more difficult cases of post-Communist Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, as well as

those of the Middle East and North Africa. Note, however, that it applies only to those cases in which a previous autocracy, for whatever reasons, actually undergoes an attempted transition to democracy, e.g. convokes and carries out free and fair “founding elections” between competing parties whose outcome is uncertain. This threshold condition disqualifies those cases in which the process of regime change is continuously controlled by some elite from the previous autocracy and, therefore, never reaches the transitional moment. Some degree of liberalization of practices may occur, but it never is allowed to generate sufficient pressures for democratization. To be specific, this means that all of the Central Asian cases should be excluded from the relevant universe and only Turkey and, more recently, Lebanon and Morocco would qualify in the MENA region.

Democratization may have been easier, but it has also been less consequential than anticipated. Considering not only the expectations of those struggling for democracy, but also those of academics trying to understand the consequences of such a transition, one would have expected – based largely on the consequences of previous efforts at democratization – that such a regime change would have brought about much more significant changes in power relations, property rights, policy entitlements, economic equality and social status. This is not to claim that “nothing changed.” In the realm of respect for human rights, more decent treatment by authorities and a sense of greater personal freedom, significant changes did occur and they are appreciated by citizens (even if they are often rapidly “discounted”). But in terms of those factors that are most likely to influence the longer term distribution of power and influence within the polity, recent democratizations have accomplished much less than in the past. In some cases – and paradoxically they are mostly in Central Europe and the republics of the former Soviet Union – even the personnel who run their neo-democracies today are the same or very closely related to those who ran the previous autocracy. Try to imagine that after the

French Revolution or the American Revolution or even the advent of the Weimar Republic, the parties and/or persons of the *ancien régime* had managed to return peacefully to power in the subsequent democracy within a few years!

Admittedly, the time frame for evaluating such consequences is “flat,” and the typical mode of transition has hardly been revolutionary. In what Terry Karl and I have called “pacted” or “imposed” transitions, there is every reason to expect less consequential changes.(FN?) Under such circumstances, major and irreversible shifts in the distribution of resources that can be converted into power and influence are more or less ruled out. Only after these transitional arrangements have ended by mutual agreement or been abrogated by one of the parties to them can one realistically expect that the sheer persistence of a RED would be able to produce some of these changes through the ‘normal’ operation of its competitive mechanisms for gaining public office or influencing public policy. The most charitable normative interpretation is that neo-democracies have bought time in order to consolidate their institutions and practices at the expense of satisfying the immediate expectations of their advocates -- but that, eventually, redistributive consequences will flow in response to competitive pressures.

These two items of retrospective wisdom are probably causally related. **Democratization has been easier than anticipated precisely because it has been less consequential than anticipated.** During the uncertainty of the initial transitions, no one could have known this – certainly I did not. The Portuguese case manifestly suggested the contrary. Only later was I to learn how exceptional it had been (and how ephemeral were its consequences). Spain, and later several Latin American cases, demonstrated that socially dominant and economically privileged classes and sectors had much less to fear from democratization than they might have initially presumed. If I was surprised, it is not difficult

to imagine how much more they were. Granted that the Soviet Union had not yet collapsed and Portugal demonstrated that increased class conflict, polarized party competition and freedom of association and assembly could lead (with the unlikely help of a radicalized faction of the armed forces) to abrupt state expropriation and extensive changes in ruling elites, but the plausibility of this scenario rapidly declined. Once “real-existing socialism” had disappeared as even a spectre, it must have become clear to virtually everyone that political freedoms and partisan competition for office under the constitutional & legal restrictions of RED did not have to lead either to “the tyranny of the majority” or “the radicalization of a minority.” Rotation in power did not have to produce wild fluctuations in either policies or the distribution of benefits. Indeed, the political parties involved rapidly came to differ only marginally from each other in their programs and supporters.

My hunch is that once these lessons were learned, the irreversibility of democratization in these countries became assured. Those who had previously supported autocracy began to realize that their class, sectoral and even corporate interests were better protected by a democratic government than an autocratic one. And, moreover, this could also serve to deflect increasing international pressures that had made resort to repression more expensive. As Lenin put it some time ago, liberal democracy had (once again) become the “best shell” for the bourgeoisie – national as well as international (FN?).

Democracy has been disappointing to both its intended beneficiaries, i.e. to citizens, as well as to us academics. There is widespread *desencanto* (disenchantment) with both the practices and products of RED in those countries that have democratized since 1974. Analysts have competed with each other to find the most deprecating adjective to place in front of neo-democracy: defective, electoral, partial,

pseudo, low intensity, partial, sham, *ersatz* and, of course, delegative. This effort has contributed to the general impression that most of the regime changes in the past twenty-five years have resulted in “poor quality regimes” that are unworthy of the struggles and sacrifices that went into bringing them about. And public opinion surveys in the countries involved seem to bear this out. But it should be noted that this *desencanto* is not just to be found in the neo-REDs. Well-established democracies in Western Europe and North America are displaying analogous “morbidity symptoms.” Almost everywhere, voter turnout has declined, as have trade union membership, the prestige of politicians, the perceived importance of parliaments, the strength of party identification, the stability of electoral preferences and the trust in most public institutions. Conversely, there has been a rise in resort to adjudication, in accusations (and convictions) of corruption and in populist, anti-party candidacies. While it certainly would be an exaggeration to call this a full-scale “crisis of legitimacy” of RED, the ubiquity of these symptoms is striking. Which suggests (but does not prove) that there may be something more generically” deficient its institutions and practices. The collapse of state communism and the spread of democracy has definitely not brought about “the end of history” rooted in the alleged imperfectability of liberal democratic institutions.(FN?) Instead of leading to the calm waters of political conformity, these changes seem to have unleashed a veritable *Tsunami* of criticism of existing REDs.

Democracy may be especially disappointing in those countries that attained it only recently, but the impact of this disaffection does not seem to be threatening to it.

No matter how large a proportion of citizens disapprove of ‘unpopular’ rulers and no matter how many choose not to participate in ‘contaminated’ politics, there is virtually no sign of mass support for any other form of domination and very few signs of growing support for avowedly un-democratic parties or politicians. Those agents who in the past frequently

used force or fraud to bring about the breakdown of democracy are astonishingly absent. Economic and social crises that previously almost certainly would have brought about a dramatic change in type of regime now produce rapid turnovers in power by electoral means or somewhat irregular depositions of elected officials and their replacement by others. According to comparative survey research, the reported levels of satisfaction with present rulers and of trust in existing institutions are abysmally low – and, here and there, one finds nostalgic traces of longing for the “good old days” of the certainty and security of authoritarian or totalitarian rule, but this bears little or no relation to the likelihood of regression. Even in countries that have done relatively well in objective economic performance, e.g. Brasil, Chile, Poland and Hungary, the subjective evaluation of democratic performance can be extremely low – and, yet, no one anticipates their returning to some form of autocracy. For a while in Latin America, the prospect of “*auto-golpes*” by which elected rulers extended their powers and perpetuated themselves in office by decree seemed a plausible threat, but these efforts failed in relatively short order. My hunch is that this is a product of what I have called elsewhere, “the Second Law of Political Dynamics,” namely, that no regime is ever displaced or replaced unless and until an alternative to it already exists.(FN) Since all those morbidity symptoms mentioned above have yet to coalesce into a credible, appealing and alternative form of legitimate political domination, “unloved” or “un-admired” RED remains “the only game in town.” Moreover, it is at least debatable whether this should be considered a sign of intrinsic inferiority. Democratic theorists (but not theorists of democratization) have tended to assume that stability depended on the presence of what they called a “civic culture.” The causality in this equation was always a bit fuzzy, but the correlation seemed undeniable. Only with high levels of inter-group tolerance, trust in institutions, and propensity for compromise could such regimes persist. What we seem to be observing in neo-democracies is a different type of political culture that is more “cynical” than “civic.”

Interestingly, this is precisely what the pioneering study by Almond and Verba discovered in Italy in the late 1960s.(FN) Italian RED may have been considerably more disorderly in its practices than its Anglo-American counterparts, but it has been just as persistent. My hunch is that the “cynical political culture” that is seems to be emerging in many, if not most neo-democracies may not be so corrosive or dangerous as was previously presumed. And my hope is that if their ruling elites can be tricked into playing an even defective game of competitive politics under unpopular rules and ineffectual policies for a long enough period – say, 15 to 20 years – then, the probability will become much greater that, when the inevitable crisis comes, it will be resolved by a shift to a different sub-type of democracy rather than to a different regime type. In other words, the response to disenchantment with democracy will most likely be different democracy and, perhaps, even more democracy.

Democratization has been different in “post-totalitarian” and “post-authoritarian” settings. This theme was most vigorously (and polemically) defended by American academic specialists working on previously communist autocracies.(FN?) “Since Communism was different; Post-Communism will also be different” seems to have been their slogan. No one could deny the major differences in point of departure. The sheer magnitude of what had to be accomplished was daunting. Newly liberated actors had not just to change the institutions of public authority, but also those of private ownership and social status. And the previous polity had (presumably) penetrated much more deeply into the consciousness and values of both masses and elites – and usually for a longer period of time – so that so-called “Marxist-Leninist” political cultures were expected to pose a serious challenge to the individualism, voluntarism and competitive nature of REDs. However, the wide-spread inference that “post-communist” democratization would be much more difficult, even logically impossible, has been proven wrong.(FN?) On the

contrary, in Central Eastern Europe and even in several of the more Western republics of the former Soviet Union, the transition from autocracy and the consolidation of democracy has proven to be easier – more rapid and more thorough – than in either Latin America or Southern Europe. Most of the horrors and dilemmas predicted for post-Communism have not happened. One could even argue that having so many changes to accomplish simultaneously actually turned out to be an advantage. It gave the new rulers an enlarged policy space in which compromises with powerful pre-existing elites could be negotiated – not the least of which was to trade off the right to rule for the right to make money.(FN) And where there were explosions of inter-ethnic violence they mainly occurred in and between the member states of the former Yugoslavia where Soviet style totalitarian rule and political culture had long been in decline. In those cases where non-democracy did install itself (e.g. in Belarus, Central Asia and Russia itself), it was not because of a failure of the transition as such, but because none was even attempted. The cadres of the former Communist Party managed to seize power, declare themselves Nationalist Democrats, win non-competitive elections, and subsequently exploit the pre-existing channels of organization to perpetuate themselves in power.

Pactos negotiated between elite factions of the *ancien régime* and opposition groups do seem to have made a difference in the short to medium run and they have facilitated a successful transition to democracy. This is a theme that Guillermo and I gleaned from the chapter by Terry Karl on Venezuela in the LGB and that dominated the analysis of the Spanish transition then going on. In a purely quantitative sense, they were by no means the most frequent mode of transition since 1974 – that honor went to what Terry and I later called “imposed transitions” in which ruling elites were capable of controlling the initiation, pace and content of regime change without the need to strike a compromise with opponents.(FN) Historically, democratization had been driven more

often by revolution (e.g. France – repeatedly) or by reform (e.g. Great Britain – sequentially). With only a few exceptions – the Philippines, South Korea, Peru and Czechoslovakia – such violent or non-violent mass mobilizations were rare during this period. But these *pactos* were not uniquely successful. Many imposed transitions also led to RED. And their longer run impact may not be as beneficial as we supposed. There can be no doubt that these two dominant modes of transition have contributed to the perception (and reality) of lesser consequentiality. Both have a tendency to lock in inherited resources and established privileges and to make redistributive reforms more difficult. What is particularly noxious for the future of democracy about such pacts is the temptation to prolong the inter-elite agreement beyond the period of uncertain transition for which they were designed and to entrench a pattern of collusion between political parties that generates corruption and citizen disillusionment with politics in general, *viz* Venezuela.

Political parties do matter, even if they usually play an insignificant role in bringing about the transition. No democratization can afford to do without them, especially once elections are convoked. For better or worse, parties seem to be indispensable in structuring competition for representation within territorially defined constituencies. For “founding elections” to have their effect, the full range of potential parties has to be allowed to participate and to select their candidates without exclusions. Subsequent elections will reduce their number – depending, of course, on the rules adopted – but the effect of these initial contests (Guillermo and I called them “civic orgies”) will be persistent. In earlier waves of democratization, the mode of transition from below by reform or revolution tended to produce a single dominant party that governed for a substantial period and played a key role in crafting the new rules of the regime. In the contemporary cases, as mentioned, the pacted and imposed transitions have been much more common and they are associated with quite different short term outcomes. The former tends to result in a

collusive two-party system; the latter in a much more fragmented one – at least among those political forces that opposed the former autocracy. The unexpected outcome is that both modes seem to work in preventing regression to autocracy and in consolidating democracy. What makes this all the more puzzling is that this has happened despite the remarkable weakness of these new parties. Unless the transition follows a relatively short period of autocracy and is thus able to rely on historically well-entrenched parties, *vide* Greece, Uruguay and Chile, the recently formed ones have been markedly less successful in recruiting members, identifiers or even regular voters than their predecessors. Their material existence depends almost exclusively upon public subsidies (and corruption in public contracts) with virtually nothing coming from voluntary dues by members or participation by militants. Public opinion polls are almost universal in their findings of mistrust in party politicians and citizen incapacity to identify with existing parties. Both in Latin America and Eastern Europe, neo-democracies have had record-breaking levels of volatility from one election to another, as well as relatively high rates of formation and dissolution of parties. Citizens seem to have a strong generic interest in politics and relatively clear preferences, but a great deal of difficulty in translating these into stable partisan identifications. As a result of this, at least since 1974, the initial winning parties have only rarely sustained themselves in power for a second consecutive term, and some have even disappeared in short order. Turnover in power has become the rule, rather than the exception. This is quite unexpected given the belief of many political scientists that the consolidation of democracy would be assured if only one could continue to hold “free and fair elections” and, thereby, “get the parties right.” In other words, many neo-democracies have been consolidated themselves without having consolidated their party systems.

Civil Society has figured prominently in analyses of both the transition to and the consolidation of RED – and virtually always in a favorable light. Its presence and protagonism has been regarded as an indispensable element in the success of either process. In the ‘classical’ mode of transition, the self-organization of excluded or marginalized groups and their threatening (but non-violent) expression provided the key motive for reformist concessions by ruling elites. And the subsequent willingness of these organizations to play according to the new rules was supposed to ensure regime stability. As I have argued above, this has not been the most prominent mode in recent democratization attempts. The Philippines, South Korea, Peru and Czechoslovakia, followed by the later “Colored Revolutions” in Ukraine and Georgia, were relevant instances in which civil society organizations played an especially prominent role in bringing about the transition (although a less obvious and successful one during the process of consolidation). Most of the others corresponded more closely to the “pacted” or “imposed” modes in which the “protagonistic” role of such organizations was more ambiguous. At best, they were indirectly responsible for bringing autocratic “soft-liners” and “moderate opponents” to the negotiating table or for convincing autocratic rulers of the rising cost of repression and, therefore, the need to impose a new set of more inclusive and tolerant rules. In either case, however, they were not able to determine the timing or the nature of the change process. Civil society did, however, mobilize itself **after** the transition began and played a key role in pushing initially reluctant rulers to move beyond mere liberalization of political rights or holding highly restrictive elections. In the case of Yugoslavia, once the prospect of democratization became real, the “discovery” that this federal state contained many rival and intolerant civil societies led not to a consensual change in regime but to protracted violence. Something similar, if less violent, occurred with the breakup of the Soviet Union when the Baltic Republics, Georgia and Armenia mobilized their distinctive national civil societies. And Chechnya (not to mention other

North Caucasus political units) has yet to resolve the problem of mutually exclusive conceptions of civil society. So, civil society may not be such an unmitigated blessing as the literature presumes. Its mobilization can make it more, not less, difficult for actors to come up with a mutually acceptable set of rules and the members of its organizations may become less, not more, willing to play by those that are chosen.

Parliamentarism, especially when combined with the decentralization of public authority (“federalism”) and the insertion of extensive checks and balances (“horizontal accountability”) was thought to be the magic package that would ensure successful consolidation. Presidentialism, at least as practiced in Latin America, supposedly would lead to “delegative democracy” which would in turn degenerate into a hybrid form of autocracy.^(FN) Territorial concentrations of power made it much more difficult to share power among political parties or to ensure the rights of conflicting ethno-linguistic groups. And the absence of constitutional review, juridical independence, independent regulatory agencies, electoral commissions, general accounting offices, *e così via* would undermine the rule of law (regarded as an absolutely essential element of RED) and lead to arbitrary (if not autocratic) rule. If I have learned one thing about institutions during the last 30 years, it is that there is no such magic formula that will work everywhere. Latin American polities have not done so badly this time with presidentialism;² and I see no evidence that either corruption or ethnic conflict is significantly greater in the more centralized ones. The Eastern European post-communist regimes have not done so badly with either parliamentarism or semi-presidentialism.

Federalism in this part of the world disintegrated with the change in regime (Yugoslavia,

² The revival of “delegative democracy” or “hyper-presidentialism” in Latin America with the recent spate of regimes imitating that of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela does not seem (to me) to be the result of failed transitions, but rather a reaction to practices of consolidated democracies that were excessively collusive (Venezuela) or that were insensitive to the demands of excluded ethnic groups (Bolivia and Ecuador). Only in the case of Nicaragua can it be said to be the product of a protracted (and corrupted) transition.

Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union). Those with access to the European Union have been compelled to create regional-level administrative units and to adopt a series of institutions of horizontal accountability, but it is difficult to assess the independent effect of these externally imposed reforms – independent of the more general (and definitely favorable) impact of EU membership itself. Where hyper-presidentialism, centralized government and absence of checks-and-balances have been associated with failures in democratization, e.g. Russia, Belarus, Armenia and all of the Central Asian Republics, it was the result of an excessive continuity of dominant elites from the *ancien régime*. The selection of this institutional format was the product of non-democracy not its producer. So, I conclude that the choice of core political institutions can make a difference (and is related to the mode of transition – or its absence), but it does not make the same difference in all instances of regime change.

Once the multiple economic and cultural pre-requisites have been set aside (or assigned only “facilitative” causal status), there still remains one that still commands attention: prior agreement on national identity and borders.³ The notion that democratization is intrinsically dangerous because it will have a tendency to bring out, mobilize and radicalize whatever ethno-linguistic disputes existed previously is widespread – and is occasionally used to argue that it should not even be attempted in such cases. What is definitely the case is that the mechanisms of democracy cannot be used to discover who is a member of the *demos* and only very rarely to decide on contested borders. In order to hold such a plebiscite, one must first decide who is eligible to participate in it and that is precisely what is in dispute. This is something that we in the LGB did not pay attention to. In Southern Europe (with the major exception of the

³ Rustow

Basques in Spain and the minor one of the Açoreanos in Portugal) and in Latin America, neither national identity nor borders were the object of serious contention during the transition. Afterwards (and I admit to my surprise), ethnically based mobilizations became a major feature in the politics of several highly centralized Andean countries. These may have made their politics tumultuous, but they have yet to threaten RED itself. It was in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union that this identity/boundary issue became most salient. However, leaving aside Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Chechnya and the dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagora-Kharabak, even in those cases where ethno-linguistic disputes caused the most violence, the consolidation of democracy has progressed, and identities and 'agreeable' borders have been established. The tensions are, no doubt, still there, but it has turned out that democracy may be useless to decide initially what the *demos* is, but it can subsequently be a powerful force to produce a national *demos* if it is practiced long enough and, moreover, that *demos* may be composed of multiple identities with different and relatively autonomous internal borders.

Despite the neo-liberal enthusiasm for financial and trade liberalization, privatization and de-regulation (“the Washington Consensus”), democratization rests on a political unit with a capacity for exercising legitimate coercion and implementing collective decisions within a distinct territory, i.e. a state. While it is an exaggeration to claim that without a state there can be no democracy,⁴ in the contemporary context, citizens are likely to demand some reasonably coherent, resourceful and permanent administrative apparatus to protect them and to satisfy their demands. All regimes in the contemporary world – democratic or autocratic, legitimate or illegitimate – require some degree of stateness in order to survive (and autocratic or illegitimate ones require

considerably more of it). What is especially problematic for neo-democracies in the short term is the likelihood of a perception of dramatic decline in stateness during the transition. Some newly enfranchised citizens will confuse the attempted change in regime with freedom not to pay taxes or obey laws; others will see this period of high uncertainty as an opportunity to commit crimes and engage in corruption given a collapse in the coercive power of the previous regime. And the impression of decline in state capacity will seem even greater than it is since crime and corruption typically pass underreported in autocracies. Virtually all neo-democracies will pass through such a period (although less so in the case of imposed transitions), but most will recover from it. As a rule, crime and corruption are lower in consolidated democracies than in all types of autocracy and some of them have even demonstrated an extraordinary capacity to extract resources from their respective citizenries. What then becomes a key issue is not stateness itself, but the desirable extent of it and this is an issue that provides much of the grist for the mill of competing political parties, interest associations and social movements in REDs.

Liberalization may still precede democratization in most cases, but it is less and less a determinant of its outcome. Guillermo and I stressed the role of a revived civil society as the mechanism for making this connection. Even in post-communist experiences, this sequence largely obtained. By the time of transition, most of them were no longer “totalitarian” but “partialitarian” due to a decline in the monopoly power of their communist parties and increased respect for the individual rights of their citizens. Romania, Czechoslovakia and some of the Republics of the former Soviet Union seem to have been exceptions and their modes of transition were according different. What has called into question this linkage has been a repeated pattern in the Middle East and North

⁴ Linz and Stepan (look for exact quote) many sub-national units can be more democratic than national ones and there are legions of associations, movements, even churches and

Africa where autocratic rulers have periodically experimented with liberalization, but when this resulted in unexpected or unwanted results, they have simply retracted their policies – without suffering the sort of consequences we imagined that a revived civil society should have produced. In that part of the world, liberalization has been a sort of “spigot” variable rather than the precursor to a system-transforming flood. Why Arab-Islamic civil societies have proven to be so docile remains a bit of a mystery (to me), but it could be due either to the presence of suppressed religious or ethnic cleavages that liberalization makes dangerously threatening to incumbent rulers or to the dependent and fragile nature of their middle classes since this is where most of the potential for mobilization has its social origin. Whatever the cause (or causes) the dynamic relation between liberalization and democratization deserves to be re-examined.

Democratization requires not just amateur citizens but also professional politicians.

And the latter will tend to form a “political class” with distinctive rules of behavior, recruitment and career patterns and, hopefully, practices of tolerance and civility as the polity consolidates itself. The myth persists, not just in theories of non-existing democracy (NED), but also in popular conceptions of RED that elected representatives and rulers are just normal people who “lend” themselves temporarily to public service. These amateurs may lead the struggle against autocracy and occupy prominent positions in the early phases of transition, but they are soon replaced by those who live not “for politics,” but “from politics.” Contemporary politicians require much more party and personal resources in order to get elected; they have to acquire specialized forms of knowledge if they are to hold technocrats accountable; and they need to surround themselves with a wide range of other specialists: pollsters, consultants and, lately, “spin-doctors” if they are to remain popular. This increased professionalization of the role of politician may be an irresistible

political parties that practice RED of some sort –

trend in both new and old REDs, but it is also one of the most serious sources of citizen *desencanto* with its practice. It has increased their social and cultural distance from the citizens and constituencies these politicians claim to represent and made them increasingly dependent on raising funds from resented sources – whether from taxpayers through public subsidies or from dubious contributors with private wealth. Rather than being covered for some time with glory and affection for having liberated them from autocracy, politicians in neo-democracies quite quickly become distrusted by their ungrateful citizens.

The international context has become an increasingly significant determinant of both the timing and mode of transition as well as its outcome. Guillermo and I asserted as one of our ‘tentative conclusions’ that "domestic factors play a predominant role in the transition".(FN) For the cases we were then studying in Southern Europe and Latin America, I would stick by our assertion of endogeneity but admit that those that occurred later in Eastern Europe and the Baltic Republics would have been unimaginable without a prior change in the hegemonic pretensions of the Soviet Union and would not have gone as far and as fast as they did without the incentives offered by membership in the European Union. Moreover, once the post-communist transitions started in Poland, a strong process of diffusion and imitation set in among them. Who could have conceived of a regime change in Albania -- a polity virtually without a domestic opposition -- in the absence of the collapse of the neighboring communist regimes?

The international context is a variable that is notoriously difficult to pin down. It is almost by definition omnipresent since very few polities in the contemporary world are completely isolated from each other. However, its causal impact is often indirect, working in opaque and unintended ways through ostensibly national agents. It varies greatly according to the size, resource base, regional context, geo-strategic location, and alliance structure of the

countries involved. Two of its aspects, however, are novel and were unanticipated in the LGB because they only emerged after it was published: (1) the formation of a vast number and variety of non-governmental or quasi-government organizations devoted to democracy and human rights promotion across national borders; and (2) the assumption by a specific regional organization, the European Union, of a responsibility to assist neighboring neo-democracies materially and its willingness to use the prospect of membership to make this commitment credible. A whole new world "beneath and beyond the nation-state" opened up and literally enveloped transitional polities, first in Eastern Europe and subsequently in Asia and Africa. Private associations, movements, foundations, consultancies, and party internationals provided ideas, contacts, and/or minor financial support. National governments, regional and global organizations provided much more substantial funds and, in the case of the EU, literally invented a new form of external intervention, namely, "political conditionality." While something resembling it had already existed in the practices of the International Monetary Fund that made its loans contingent on satisfying pre-established economic goals, what made the EU's political version more compelling was that eventual membership was tied to something called the *acquis communautaire*, i.e. the entire set of rules and decisions that it had accumulated since its foundation in 1958, along with a new set of political norms, the Copenhagen Criteria, that had been literally invented for the explicit purpose of conditioning the choices and behaviors of candidate states. Its offshoot, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, was especially "up front" about imposing very specific political criteria before loans will be granted. A toned down version of conditionality has been inserted into all trade agreements with the so-called ACP (Africa-Caribbean-Pacific) countries and is supposed to guide the EU's "Neighborhood" and "Mediterranean" policies" with regard to countries further to its East and South. While its strict practice seems largely confined to Europe, there are signs that other regional organizations such as the Organization of American

States, the (British) Commonwealth and, even, the Organization for African Unity have adopted formal agreements committing their members to respond collectively in the event of "unconstitutional" regime changes.

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Since 'real-existing democracy' is a perpetually unfinished product, democratization will always be on the research agenda of political scientists. And since nothing seems to work well everywhere, they will have plenty of explaining to do.