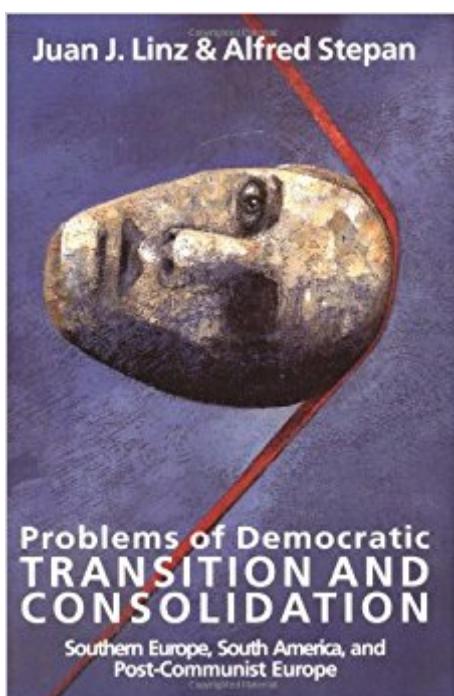


The book was found

Problems Of Democratic Transition And Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, And Post-Communist Europe



Synopsis

Since their classic volume *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes* was published in 1978, Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan have increasingly focused on the questions of how, in the modern world, nondemocratic regimes can be eroded and democratic regimes crafted. In *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, they break new ground in numerous areas. They reconceptualize the major types of modern nondemocratic regimes and point out for each type the available paths to democratic transition and the tasks of democratic consolidation. They argue that, although "nation-state" and "democracy" often have conflicting logics, multiple and complementary political identities are feasible under a common roof of state-guaranteed rights. They also illustrate how, without an effective state, there can be neither effective citizenship nor successful privatization. Further, they provide criteria and evidence for politicians and scholars alike to distinguish between democratic consolidation and pseudo-democratization, and they present conceptually driven survey data for the fourteen countries studied. *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation* contains the first systematic comparative analysis of the process of democratic consolidation in southern Europe and the southern cone of South America, and it is the first book to ground post-Communist Europe within the literature of comparative politics and democratic theory.

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Customer Reviews

"An absolutely major work that represents probably the most significant contribution to the burgeoning literature on democratization over the past decade and the most ambitious effort to

move the debate beyond the seminal work on transition, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Prospects for Democracy* by Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead (1986), by considering the problem of democratization in light of the dramatic regime changes in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union." (Gerardo L. Munck Slavic Review)"This is an important volume by two major scholars on a central topicÃ¢â ¸one of broad interest to people in comparative politics, to those interested in democracy, and to regional specialists on Southern Latin America and on Central and Eastern Europe. The book will unquestionably be a major contribution to the literature on constructing democratic governance." (Abraham F. Lowenthal University of Southern California)

Juan J. Linz is Sterling Professor of Political and Social Science at Yale University. Alfred Stepan, the first rector and president of the Central European University, is Gladstone Professor of Government and Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford University.

As the title suggests, Linz and Stepan examine democratic transition and consolidation. Linz and Stepan argue that a democratic transition is completed when the relevant actors agree on the "the rules of the game." These rules include those regarding elected government: when and how the government is formed through free and fair elections, when and how the government has de facto authority to create new policies, and when the branches of government no longer have to share power with other bodies. When the government abides by the rules developed, Linz and Stepan would argue that it has become a democracy. Consolidation is achieved when the democratic system is viewed as "the only game in town," and the majority of the public subscribes to those institutions. Additionally, Linz and Stepan see a consolidated democracy as not simply a regime, but rather a system of interaction parts. These parts include civil society, political society, rule of law, bureaucracy, and an institutionalization of economic society. The authors use a number of explanatory variables when examining democratic transition and consolidation. These variables are divided into three categories. The first, macrovariables, include stateness, and prior regime type. The second, actor variables, includes the leadership base of the prior regime type, and who initiates and controls oppositions. Lastly, context variables include international influences, the political economy of legitimacy, and the constitution-making environment. Linz and Stepan argue that "democracy requires statehood." Without a state' ability to use coercive force, tax, and implement a judicial system, the five arenas of a consolidated democracy will not be achieved. However, it must be noted that state and nation are two different concepts. If there is conflict between the state and

nations under its control, achieving democracy will be difficult. This leads to problems of legitimacy for the state. In order to address this, the concept of citizenship is imperative. The author's write, "there can be no complex modern democracy without voting, no voting without citizenship, and no official membership in the community of citizens without a state to certify membership" (28). The authors also suggest that the role played by prior regime type shape the paths available for transition, and what tasks remain to achieve consolidation. The authors move beyond the classic three regime typology and examine authoritarian, totalitarian, post-totalitarian, and sultanistic regimes. L & S argue that the ways in which the previous regimes structured pluralism, ideology, leadership, and mobilization affect the paths available to democratic transition. Linz and Stepan see five paths with can be taken towards democratic transition: the formation of pacts, defeat in war, interim government created after regime termination but not brought forth by the old regime, a military led coup, and some regime specific transition paths. Depending on the previous regime type, some paths are more likely than others. Additionally L & S suggest that the character of the state elite affects democratic transition and consolidation. They examine four types of elites: hierachal military, nonhierachal military, civilian elite, and sultanistic elites. A hierachal military (authoritarian) may be usurped by the military-as-institution who views extrication from the military government as in their best interests - a return to civilian rule. However, during the consolidation phase, the old regime elite may enforce "reserve domains" of control which will not allow the new regime to consolidate. A nonhierachal military elite is better for both transition and consolidation. They are likely to fall to a democratic transition when they come into problems running the country. Also, they are likely to be seen as operating outside the military sphere which means they are likely to be punished by the state/military hierarchy. In the case of civilian leadership (post-totalitarian), they are in possession of the symbolic and institutional capacities to initiate and manage ad democratic transition. In the consolidation phase, they are likely to see the benefit of working within the new system as opposed to fighting it. In sultanistic leadership, the regime is so personalized, that the overthrow of the sultan quickly destroys the regime. However, unless democratic elections are held quickly, and democratic institutions developed, the chances of consolidation are weak. Under the actor variable category, L & S examine the impact of who initiates and controls the transition on democratic transition and consolidation. Transitions initiated by civil society, armed revolution, or a nonhierachal military led coup tend to see the ruling institutions taken over by an interim government. This interim government can either have a democratic or nondemocratic agenda. If elections are held quickly, democracy can arise. If the interim government simply makes decreases based on an assumed mandate, democracy is unlikely. Because interim governments

often don't appear from a hierachal military, or through regime led changes, democracy is unlikely to appear.Linz and Stepan also examine the context within which the transition occurs. Of particular interest are various international influences. One international factor which can influence transition and consolidation is the use of force. A nondemocratic country can militarily overthrow a weaker democratic state, or a regional hegemon can crush democratic uprisings in its periphery. The hegemon (democratic or nondemocratic) can also use incentives or sanctions to shape the political path nations in the periphery undertake. Outside of force, the "spirit of the times," i.e. democracy / communism, or diffusion can shape political transitions.The political economic context can also shape transition and consolidation. For example, extended periods of economic prosperity can weaken nondemocratic regimes. Prosperity may make the coercive system unnecessary. Also, economic prosperity expands the middle class which leads to increased political demands. Although economic prosperity doesn't weaken the democratic regimes, economic downturns affect both. Still, because the democratic regime has a greater level of legitimacy than the nondemocratic regimes, it is more insulated from down turns.Lastly, Linz and Stepan see the constitution-making environment leads to the success or failure of democratic transition and consolidation.

Excellent writing on civil-military and transition to democracy

GOOD

Perfect

Great book.

i need this book for class. great book to keep in your collection if your into academia. its a good read.

When reading this book, two concerns immediately struck me. First, on what were Linz and Stepan basing their analysis? They provide definitions about consolidated democracy, types of authoritarian regimes, and the effects of various types of transitions, but it's not clear from what evidence they draw their conclusions. In fact, they seem to be pulling some of their conclusions out of thin air. This might be OK for one or two definitions, but it's hard to follow a book that ranges so wide and far without being able to see or follow their logic.Second, the book focuses on Europe and South

America. I presume those are the authors' areas of expertise. However, this focus is both too wide and too limited. It's too wide in the sense that the regions aren't similar so comparisons are sometimes strained too far. After all, the totalitarian cases come primarily from one region (Europe) while the military juntas from another (South America). The case selection is too narrow in that there are plenty of cases outside these regions which undermine the authors' theories (such as China and Vietnam). Overall, this is yet another example of how unfocused analysis leads to unfocused answers. There are some useful portions of the book worth skimming through, and I like the use of charts to summarize the theories. This might be worth skimming through to get ideas for future research, but read it with skepticism and a questioning mind.

Having read this book, I understand why Linz has gained international reputation. (As an example, he was made honorary doctor at The Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Oslo, Norway, 2000.) This book is written in an engaging way, with lots of interesting information. Its clear structure and quite simple language also makes it easy to read. Those believing that political science is "heavy, dry and dull" will probably change their minds if they read "Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation". Personally, I found the chapters on South America very enlightening. The book gives information about how citizens view "democracy" in the respective countries, and the challenges each country faces in terms of democratic transition and consolidation. I agree with the first reviewer that this book is a must-have for all interested in the countries in question or political science in general. (Having just finished my dissertation in political science, I've read my share of less interesting and poorly written works!)

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