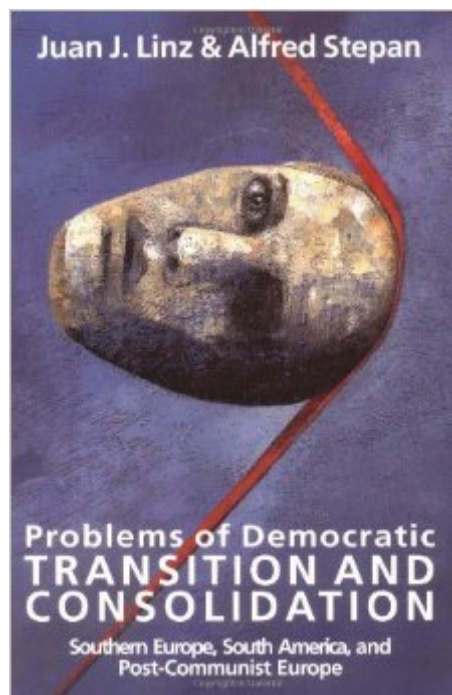


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Problems Of Democratic Transition And Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, And Post-Communist Europe



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

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's ability to use coercive force, tax, and implement a judicial system, the five arenas of a consolidated democracy will not be achieved.

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