



**ROADS TO DEMOCRACY.  
A TRIBUTE TO JUAN J. LINZ**

**Joan Marcet and José Ramón Montero (Ed.)**

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**2 Triumphs, Failures and Ambiguities in  
Democratization: Juan Linz and the  
Study of Regime Change**

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To sketch out, place in context—and reflect upon—the contributions of Juan Linz to the study of regime transitions is at once overwhelmingly challenging and extremely easy: The difficulty lies in the need to choose, for emphasis, relatively few points and themes. The ease, by the same token, lies in the great array of ideas, insights and arguments to be found in Linz's work, all of them providing a wealth of material for this essay. I will not attempt to cover all the important points found in Linz's contributions; to do so would be virtually impossible. Instead I will focus largely on what I take to be the basic organizing principles of the Linzian scholarship on regime change along with a few illustrative examples of the main themes emphasized in this essay's line of argument. I will close, in the spirit suggested by the organizers of the ICPS lectures and volume, by introducing a small amendment to one of Linz's arguments that I elaborate on the basis of my recent research.

## Weberian Methodology

More than one analyst of Juan Linz's contributions has emphasized the strongly Weberian orientation of his scholarship, arguing that this should be seen as one of its most fundamental, indeed constitutive, components. Linz himself has underscored this point on many occasions, perhaps most notably in his deeply interesting and extensive interview with Richard Snyder in the book *Passion, Craft and Method in Comparative Politics*, an examination of the intellectual biography and methodology of the field's scholarly giants<sup>1</sup>. Yet for the most part, those who insist on the distinctively Weberian cast of Linzian analysis point above all to *specific* concepts, themes or theoretical arguments—such as the theme of legitimacy, the role of leadership, the regime type of sultanism, and so forth—rather than the most basic methodological underpinnings of the Weberian approach to social science. In arguing for the Weberian core of Linz's scholarly work, I would like to draw attention *not to specific conceptual or theoretical claims, important as they are*; instead I emphasize the underlying methodological approach manifested in the work of Linz and earlier of Weber. What I take to be the central element of Weberian methodology is the simultaneous embrace of *both poles* in a series of interrelated scholarly tensions, most importantly, the following two intellectual oppositions: first, that which counterposes the search for generalizing concepts and theories to the pursuit of nuanced case-sensitive explanations acknowledging historical complexities and singularities, and secondly, that

which sets the commitment to an objective value-free social science against the practice of one thoroughly shaped by the values and subjectivity of scholars. Linz, like Weber before him, consistently and masterfully embraces the seemingly opposing poles characterizing these two intellectual tensions (and others related to them).

As I have argued elsewhere<sup>3</sup>, in his classic 1904 essay on objectivity in the social sciences, Weber argues for a form of analysis that highly values —indeed *requires*— the elaboration and use of general concepts and theories, but that nonetheless views those concepts and theories as mere *tools* in a broader enterprise committed above all to knowing the world as it *really is*, which Weber assumed to be quite different from the image of reality that one could mechanically derive from theories: He took theories and concepts to be a necessary yet highly inexact guide in studying underlying empirical reality; he assumed the world was, and always would be, constituted by historically individual and distinctive configurations<sup>4</sup> which could never be deduced —or perfectly predicted— from even the best theoretical formulations. Thus Weber's generalizing theories are constantly accompanied in his work by nuanced and historically specific qualifications. The resulting arguments, characterized by the point and counter-point<sup>5</sup> found throughout Weber's writings, include many elegant theorizations but they take such generalizing assertions as *only one element* in a complex social science that is thoroughly multi-causal and consistently committed to also knowing and discussing the specificities of individual cases. Thus Weber refused to choose between the pursuit of generalizing theory and the recognition of the many particularities and complexities of individual cases such as (for latter day Weberians) Catalonia in 2006, Spain in 2004 —or 1936— and so on. Instead he took the tension between the intellectual goals of 1) generalizing theoretical formulations and 2) historically specific explanation (and description) to form the foundation for the sort of social science he advocated.

Weber also argued for a social science embracing both *subjective* and *objective* components of scholarship —with each of them occupying its own space in scientific practice. He argued that social science *should*, and in any case typically *would*, focus on those questions of genuine value relevance to scholars. In that sense Weberian social science *is* subjective. It is profoundly meaningful for actors who *care* about the world, who are *driven or at least seriously preoccupied* by their value commitments. But Weber also argued that the subjective component of social science must be strictly limited to the delineation of problems and questions for investigation. He insisted that all serious professional social scientists needed to share a commitment to pursuing objective value-free *answers to questions* driven by values, to finding not only *desired* conclusions but also the *inconvenient* conclusions revealed by rigorous empirical analysis. Weberians believe that the research questions they pose should, indeed *must*, reflect their subjective concerns, but that

their efforts to answer those questions, and thus their conclusions, must be objective. The Weberian social scientist, in this sense can be seen to pursue the simultaneous validation of his or her efforts in the professional arena of specialized scholars —with its concern for generalizing theory and objectivity— and in the world outside the academy with its extraordinary case-specific complexity and its value-based passions<sup>6</sup>.

In conventional contemporary social science this dual focus is all too often frowned upon; within many scholarly circles highly general and elegantly parsimonious theories are typically afforded scientific priority over nuanced and historically sensitive work emphasizing multi-causal complexity. Theory driven research of purely academic interest is often valued more highly than work that is clearly motivated by questions emanating from the passions and values of political actors, or from the problems that scholars observe in the world. Yet whatever view they hold on these themes, contemporary social scientists continue to confront these intellectual oppositions in one way or another. It is with respect to his perspective, and practice, on these essentially methodological issues that Juan Linz is most thoroughly Weberian. Indeed he is one of the most fully Weberian of contemporary scholars —although one must hasten to add that there are other prominent contemporary Weberians in this methodological sense, some of them longtime friends and associates of Linz such as Juan's close friend and frequent collaborator Alfred Stepan as well as Philippe Schmitter. Linz, along with other great latter day Weberians, is as committed as any social scientist to the search for theories and concepts of broadly comparative reach— often characterized by parsimonious elegance. But also following Weber, and unlike much contemporary mainstream social science, Linz's analysis is thoroughly imbued with a commitment to knowing and analyzing the extraordinary complexity of human action, to knowing and examining the nuances of specific cases. Moreover, as was true for Weber himself, but unlike what can be said of all but a handful of latter day Weberians, Linz's simultaneous embrace of generalizing claims and case-specific nuance is rooted in an extraordinary knowledge of countless cases and of a wide span of history. Linz is a genuine Weberian not only in method but also in breadth of knowledge.

Few scholars think of Linz as a parsimonious social scientist, but I argue that there are many elegantly parsimonious claims in his work on regime transitions —such as his proposition in *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown and Reequilibration* that the survival chances of new democracies are strongly enhanced by the *breadth* of the regime founding coalition and the *narrowness* of the regime founding agenda. However, in the tradition exemplified by Weber himself, that general theoretical claim —and others such as Linz's pioneering arguments on the dangers of presidentialism for democratic survival<sup>6</sup>— stand in his work alongside a great multi-causal array of highly qualified explanatory claims, many of

them historically specific in nature. Linz, like Weber, refuses to choose between generalizing theory and multi-causal complexity attuned to historical specificity. His work consistently and masterfully weaves together these two seemingly disparate intellectual strands or styles.

Equally Weberian is Linz's commitment to address questions that arise from the political passions and values of himself, his friends, his contemporaries. And in addressing those questions his work is constantly informed by the realization that things can go badly, that hopes can be dashed, that actions—in Weberian fashion—can generate tragically unintended consequences. The objective of his work is to help us *as actors* better understand the consequences of our action, to better understand a world of real meaning to us. Much of what Linz offers in his scholarship may strike some of his readers as what Weber would call *inconvenient* conclusions—which is to say knowledge that is disappointing for those who had been happily unaware of the ways in which their democratic aspirations or other hopes might fail. But having said that, the central point here is that Linzian social science—including of course its study of regime transitions—is intended to answer questions that matter very deeply to people who *care* about politics. This is why Juan has consistently drawn students from a wide array of political perspectives including many passionately committed to political activism on the left. Indeed one of Linz's Columbia University students, Al Szymanski, dedicated his first book jointly to Juan and the National Liberation Front of Vietnam—an organization that Linz himself has never identified with! Another of his students—himself a third world leftist—once put it to me this way: He insisted that Linz was one of the very few political science professors he knew who was deeply interested in politics itself—and not just in the professional *study* of politics. But of course Juan has also consistently attracted other students quite unlike these two whom I mention. Linzian social science, whether about democratic transitions or other themes, is a social science for people who care about the world, for people moved by genuine questions and uncertainties.

Two other features of Linz's scholarship are also firmly rooted in the Weberian approach. Weber's theorizing, as Philippe Schmitter has pointed out<sup>7</sup>, is bounded by the typologies that he formulates: Weber elaborates institutional and social logics that he locates within given settings—but not others (where the institutional and social logics at play are, at least in certain respects, different ones). Thus Weber's explanatory theories of social action and his typologies, such as his elaboration of different forms of legitimate domination, are tightly interwoven. Linz, as we shall see below, does exactly the same and in this sense provides an approach to the study of regime change or continuity that is fundamentally different from at least one highly influential contemporary alternative. For Linz, the study of regime transitions—or stability—is bound up with his typology of regimes, thus offering a

strong example of the social scientific relevance of typological thinking, as Gerardo Munck has recently noted<sup>8</sup>.

Also worthy of note is Weber's tendency to theorize, simultaneously, at several different levels of generality including not only grand historical claims but also relatively specific insights—such as his discussion in *Economy and Society* of the legitimation of the signorie in medieval Italian city-states simply on the basis of the passage of time following their assumption of power<sup>9</sup>—which he did not incorporate within his most general theoretical claims. By design Weber formulated theories, typologies and concepts of quite broad ranging applicability, many of them interrelated with one another, alongside numerous more «free-standing» yet deep insights. Linz, like Weber (and other major theorists)<sup>10</sup>, has not allowed his ability to formulate generalizing theoretical claims to constrain his elaboration of relatively «free-standing» insights that also prove highly useful in the explanatory enterprise. Linz's analysis of regime transitions, in the Weberian tradition, offers a systematic theoretical approach with relatively parsimonious claims alongside a wealth of more free-standing insights and arguments of great usefulness to all those who, like Weber, wish to understand why the world is «*so* and not *otherwise*»<sup>11</sup>.

## **The Linzian Approach to Regime Change: Pioneering Insights and Parsimonious Claims; Contrasts with Huntington**

There is a case to be made that Linz's most pioneering work on democratic transitions is actually his study of the *breakdown* of democratic regimes, although it is virtually impossible to single out one book as more important than others in his vast writings on transitions, given the enormous contribution of the more recent and thoroughly comparative volume co-authored with his close friend and longtime collaborator Alfred Stepan<sup>12</sup> and the significance of essays such as his deeply insightful «Time and Regime Change», recently made available in English in a volume edited by Linz's friend and former student H.E. Chehabi<sup>13</sup>. The significance of the breakdown book for the study of transitions to democracy rests in part, if rather obviously so, on Linz's fundamental assumption in studying democratic transitions—and democracy—namely that democracy can collapse, it can fail, as history has proven all too often. Democratic transitions can end in success—or in failure, as I have emphasized with the title of this essay. But the importance of Linz's breakdown book for the study of transitions to democracy extends well beyond that most basic point. I will turn to that book—and his broader study of transitions in the important 1996 book he co-authored with Alfred Stepan and in other works—but first I want to make a very general and

fundamental point about how Linz's approach to the study of democratic transitions should be placed in the overall intellectual map one can draw of this field.

I argue that the most fundamental contrast between Linz and other major scholars of regime change *or continuity* is to be found in one major difference between the Linzian approach and that of Sam Huntington. In a sense, Linz's many contributions to the study of regimes and regime change and Huntington's much celebrated 1968 volume, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, can be seen as two very different answers to the *same large theoretical question*, namely the following: Can one identifiable causal process or dynamic account for the survival—or collapse—of *all types* of political regimes, or do given types of regimes survive, or fall, for particular reasons linked to their distinctive survival requirements (understood, then, to be dissimilar to those characterizing other types of regime)? To put the matter somewhat differently: Do democracies and non-democratic regimes survive or fall for the same set of reasons—or for fundamentally different ones? Of course, one could also ask whether different types of non-democratic regimes survive or fail for the same set of reasons—or different ones.

In what was likely his most influential book, *Political Order*, Samuel Huntington answered these questions with the forceful and clearly stated theoretical claim that all regimes *do* share the same fundamental challenge if they are to survive, namely to build strong institutions. Indeed Huntington began that book with the assertion that the Soviet Union and the United States shared the most fundamentally important characteristic of political systems, namely strong institutions and thus, he reasoned, political stability. Huntington very explicitly argued that, from the standpoint of stability, the difference between democratic and non-democratic regimes was essentially irrelevant, a perspective contributing to Huntington's famous—if soon to be proven wrong—1984 skepticism over the possibility that more countries would become democratic<sup>14</sup>. In the elegant Huntingtonian formulation of his influential 1968 volume, the strength of specific institutions—be they political parties, armies, courts or what have you—was held to be equivalent to overall systemic «institutionalization» and this in turn was understood to be highly predictive of the political system's survivability.

The Linzian perspective on regime survivability—and on the factors providing for successful democratic transitions—is thoroughly different, start to finish. Strong institutions—the key to regime stability in Huntington—are not necessarily a guarantee of democratic survival in the Linzian framework. Strong parties, a strong army and a strong presidency, to name just three examples, are all—under some circumstances—capable of undermining democratic stability. Chilean democracy in the early 1970s<sup>15</sup> is just one example of a democracy that was overthrown even though many of its component institutions were, if viewed from their own standards, strong

ones. And a number of democracies, including Spain in the 1980s and Italy in the 1990s, have remained stable despite major episodes of weakness and transformation in crucially important political institutions such as parties and party systems<sup>16</sup>.

It is worth noting, albeit parenthetically, that for Linz the flexibility of institutional arrangements in a democracy may paradoxically emerge as a source of regime stability. This is the assertion presented in his analysis of the *reequilibration* of some crisis-ridden democracies, a formulation in which he draws on Pareto. In the cases which Linz conceptualizes as instances of reequilibration, one institutional constellation is exhausted but actors succeed in forging another one that maintains democratic authenticity—thus avoiding a full regime breakdown and the emergence of non-democratic rule. For Linz, France's passage from the Fourth to the Fifth Republic is the paradigmatic instance of reequilibration.

In a broader vein, in Linz's analysis, the issue of system survival—or collapse—takes on a number of distinctive features in democratic, as opposed to non-democratic regimes. When contrasted to non-democratic regimes, democracies in the Linzian perspective have some sources of special strength and other characteristic vulnerabilities. The dynamics leading them to survive or fall are in considerable measure different than those shaping the destiny of non-democracies (despite the obvious existence of some points in common). Democracies may enjoy a protective legitimacy allowing them to survive even when their effectiveness and efficacy, two notions that Linz differentiates, recede. In this sense they typically<sup>17</sup> hold survival advantages over most modern non-democratic regimes, and their risk profile in the face of exogenous shocks is, in certain respects, different from that of non-democratic regimes—as important quantitative work by Adam Przeworski and his collaborators has established<sup>18</sup>. Regime legitimacy, as Linz has theorized, does allow some democracies to survive even when citizens rate their performance as quite disappointing and democracies are substantially more likely than non-democratic regimes to enjoy the protective influence of perceived legitimacy on system survival. Democracies, in Linz's analysis, also hold a survival advantage in that their legitimation formula—unlike those of many non-democratic regimes—can be filled with fundamentally different policies, thus permitting the system to survive through policy change in times of crisis or poor performance. The Linzian conceptual distinction between legitimacy, efficacy and effectiveness, initially formulated in the search for determinants of democratic stability or breakdown, more recently proves to be of considerable relevance for contemporary political scientists such as Larry Diamond, Pedro Magalhaes, José Ramón Montero, Leonardo Morlino, Mariano Torcal and others interested in analyzing democratic disaffection, democratic dissatisfaction and democratic quality<sup>19</sup>.

There is at least one other side to the distinctiveness of democracy in facing the legitimacy hurdle. In Linz's analysis, democracies may encounter difficulties even when they are seen as legitimate by most citizens because, to state the most basic point, unlike non-democratic regimes, democracies offer minorities representation and, in some cases, a place within governmental institutions. In some historical contexts anti-democratic minorities have been able to do much to undermine democracy and hasten its demise but —and here we find one of Linz's most extraordinary theoretical achievements— such disloyal oppositions have typically not been able to do so on their own. The Linzian theory of democratic breakdown provides a relatively counter-intuitive contribution in its specification of the actors contributing to democratic failure —where it has occurred.

Linz's analysis of the process leading to the demise of those democracies that have collapsed places special emphasis on the role of ambiguity and ambivalence that contribute to what he calls *semi-loyalty*. In this line of analysis, the semi-loyalty of political forces that adopt an ambiguous posture vis-à-vis democracy tends to do even more than outright disloyalty to propel democracies toward crisis and breakdown. Linz's formulation of the process leading from semi-loyalty to breakdown is dynamic and subtle but it is also very clearly specified and theorized. I wish to stress one point about the emphasis which Linz places on political ambiguity and ambivalence in democratic breakdowns. *This impact of ambiguity and semi-loyalty on regime survivability —in his framework— is specific to democracy*. It should also be stressed that Linz's theoretical claims leave —in his own view— certain open questions requiring future work by other scholars. He argues that one major way in which semi-loyal actors may contribute to the collapse of democracy is by inviting disloyal actors to join governmental coalitions. Nonetheless, in his own view<sup>20</sup>, this leaves unresolved when the effort to «domesticate» disloyal oppositions will prove effective and when it will contribute to breakdown. Linz's scholarship makes many strong theoretical claims but it also does not shy away from recognizing the need —and offering encouragement— for future work by others.

Ambivalence and political ambiguity toward the existing regime and its fundamental organizing principles lead to very different consequences in different *types* of regimes as theorized by Linz<sup>21</sup>. Whereas ambiguity vis-à-vis fundamental regime principles can thoroughly undermine democracy, the consequences are very different in his formulation of totalitarian and authoritarian regimes. In the Linzian theory of regimes no claim is made that authoritarian regimes are less repressive than totalitarian regimes. Far from it. But the *logic* of repression —and the selection of its victims— works differently in these two non-democratic cases. Totalitarian regimes —in the Linzian formulation— tend to be especially severe with those who move from an initial position of strong support to a more ambivalent or critical

posture, as is exemplified by Stalin's treatment of Bolshevik dissidents —most famously in the case of Trotsky. But authoritarian regimes, many of which were brutally (and massively) repressive toward their strongest and most clearcut opponents, have a substantially greater tendency to tolerate certain forms of political ambiguity toward the regime —especially where such instances of limited opposition emerge from the ranks of those with a history of past support for the regime. Thus in this framework, postures of ambiguity and ambivalence toward fundamental regime-defining principles may severely undermine regime survivability in democracies, they are brutally repressed (but not capable of preventing system continuity) in totalitarian regimes, but they may be partially tolerated in some authoritarian regimes without undermining regime survival. Whether what Linz calls «semi-oppositions» under authoritarian regimes can effectively contribute to the demise of anti-democratic rule and systemic democratization may well vary among authoritarian regimes —as is highlighted in recent work by Tiago Fernandes<sup>22</sup>— but the more general point requiring emphasis is that the Linzian approach theorizes the existence of fundamental differences in the impact of political ambiguity on regime survivability (and repression) in different *types* of regimes. For Linz the effective theorization of processes leading to regime change or survival must be bounded by types of regime.

In this sense, both Linz's emphasis on the specific requirements for democratic regime survival and his analysis of differences between totalitarian and authoritarian regimes represent a fundamental rejection of the Huntingtonian perspective which asserts that in studying regime survival or collapse, one theory fits all regime types. In the Linzian theory, the survival requirements of political systems vary quite substantially by regime type.

Linz's breakdown book offers several relatively parsimonious theories alongside a wealth of multi-causal and case sensitive qualifications. In analyzing why attempts to establish new democratic regimes succeed or fail one vital determinant, as I have emphasized above, is the presence or absence of semi-loyalty —which is to say ambivalence and ambiguity— on the part of major political actors. But there are many other important and pioneering claims to be found in that book. Linz's formulations include clearly institutionalist propositions, such as his argument on the dangers of presidentialism, but his analysis cannot be reduced to an institutionalist perspective. Instead, he focuses on social structure and political action, political choices and contingency, the dynamic interactive quality of politics and its inescapable imbeddedness in the sequentially specific chronology of historical processes in which it always matters what happens first. In all of these ways, the essential thrust of Juan's approach in the breakdown book anticipates many ideas and arguments that would later be more fully developed by himself and other leading scholars of regime change such as Philippe Schmitter and Guillermo O'Donnell.



One of the most parsimonious Linzian claims presented in the breakdown book concerns the importance of regime founding coalitions and regime founding agendas in determining the survival probabilities of a new democracy. With his cautious concern for avoiding the danger of excessive polarization leading to democratic breakdown, Linz argues strongly for regime-founding coalitions as broad as possible and regime-founding agendas as narrow as possible. In the interest of increasing the survivability of democracy, Linz's formulation argues that the installation of a new democracy should be all about *and only about* establishing democratic rules of the game that can serve equally well those social and political forces that disagree with one another on other matters. Juan's argument is to put off or block out, at the time of a democratic transition, the effort to address important socio-structural questions and indeed *all great hopes for profound transformations extending beyond the basic establishment of democratic political institutions*. Juan's theoretical (and practical) plea is for a democracy that fits as many political forces as possible, a democracy that *as a regime is only about* democracy.

This theoretical argument is in one sense a deeply historical one. The Linzian formulation is strongly shaped by Juan's analysis of the process leading to democratic breakdown during the interwar years in Spain and Germany. If this argument *appears* relatively conservative, or at least centrist, in the analysis of interwar Europe, it takes on a rather different hue in the analysis of post-communist transitions, where it can be taken to argue *against* the effort to thoroughly transform and universally privatize state-owned economies in the initial regime founding years of newly democratic systems. The important 1996 volume co-authored by Linz and Stepan does, in fact, argue explicitly against the most militantly private-enterprise-only recommendations for post-communist democratization. In historical contexts unlike those of interwar Europe, Linz's elegant generalizing proposition on regime-founding coalitions and agendas may take on a very different political hue than what has often been assumed. This is general theory that is informed by historical specificity but which—in its implications—also transcends any given set of such specificities.

## A Friendly Amendment on Regime Founding Agendas

Thus the Linzian formulation on regime founding coalitions and agendas is not only a historically grounded assertion. It is an elegantly simple theoretical claim that deserves to be taken as such. The broader the regime founding coalition and the narrower the regime founding agenda, the greater the likelihood of democratic survival in a newly established regime. I wish

to offer a friendly amendment to this theoretical claim; if one accepts the amendment, its consequences are of real significance. I argue that socially ambitious, even radical, regime founding agendas may be compatible with—indeed may contribute to—democratic survival, but only under certain circumstances. The most simple causal rule I wish to suggest is the following: The broader and the more open to fundamental social change the regime-founding coalition, the more ambitious the regime founding agenda can be without undermining the survival prospects of democracy. New democracies in which virtually all of the politically relevant actors and social forces are committed to democracy and willing to accept major social reform are viable contexts for ambitious regime-founding agendas. By the same token, new democracies in which the center-right or major actors further to the right could defect from democracy—if it is taken to imply an ambitious socially progressive regime-founding agenda—offer an *inhospitable* environment for ambitious regime-defining agendas. Of course, challenges to democracy have emerged historically not only from the right but also from the left—especially in contexts of social revolution where some sectors place the goal of profound structural transformation above the guarantee of universal political rights. For a sustainable democracy to emerge from a socially progressive regime founding agenda it is clearly necessary for the dominant coalition to be committed to both social transformation and democracy.

Such a scenario can be readily perceived, and understood, through the lens provided by the Linzian formulation on regime founding agendas and coalitions, if one simply accepts the minor change that I propose. This simple amendment has an element of the obvious but it is worth stating in explicit terms, nonetheless. In some historical settings, unlike those that are potentially hospitable to socially progressive democratization, a relatively narrowly based regime-founding coalition may launch the democratic experience with an ambitious agenda despite enjoying only limited support for that endeavor. Linz sees this scenario as a sure recipe for difficulty—as he emphasizes in his analysis of historical cases of democratic breakdown. But where circumstances instead create a broad coalitional basis for a fairly expansive regime founding agenda I argue that it would be mistaken to take that expansive agenda as negative for democratic prospects.

The Portuguese democracy, established by a broad (if sometimes internally divided) political coalition in the wake of the April 25, 1974 Revolution of the Carnations, is a clear instance of a new democracy resting on a very ambitious regime-founding agenda and a wide regime founding coalition. A complex set of historical circumstances that provided for the fusion of a process of social revolution with a multi-actor process of democratization made it possible for the Portuguese to install a lasting and socially progressive democracy<sup>23</sup>. In my ongoing work on that political system<sup>24</sup>, I find much

evidence in favor of the continuing relevance of that socially expansive initial agenda. In one telling recent episode of radical social protest, immigrants living in formally illegal housing slated for destruction have blocked bulldozers and demanded the «*direito a habitação*» under banners calling for the implementation of the constitutional guarantee to the right to housing. For social protestors in Portugal the regime's founding constitution is a fundamental point of reference, a basis for much of their discourse. Yet the left-oriented initial agenda of that regime has not placed in question its survivability. The breadth of the regime-founding coalition, and other defining characteristics of the regime's founding moment (most importantly the state crisis, emanating from the failed colonial war, and reflected in the collapse of the *Estado Novo* and the emergence of social revolution)<sup>25</sup> have made it possible, in that historic setting, to sustain a viable democratic regime with some empirically unusual features rooted in the socially expansive agenda of the path taken to democracy.

The historically proximate but thoroughly dissimilar democratic transition across the Iberian border in Spain took place under fundamentally different circumstances and could not have sustained a regime-founding agenda remotely similar to the Portuguese one without deeply endangering democratic survival. Crucial differences between the two neighboring cases include not only the socio-political make-up of the democratizing coalition but also the presence in 1970s Portugal and absence in 1970s Spain of a crisis of authoritarian failure and —partially as a result— the extraordinary contrast between the two cases in the dynamics which transpired within the state apparatus at the time of the regime changeover<sup>26</sup>.

Thus my amendment adds one small formal feature to the Linzian claim, namely that the viability of an expansive initial agenda depends on the breadth of the regime founding coalition, and as a result it leads to a more historically varied set of expectations about the prospects for democratic survival in regimes launched with a socially ambitious agenda. The failure of the Second Republic in Spain in the 1930s<sup>27</sup>, in this reading, should not be taken as evidence that all new democratic regimes need be socially cautious and restrained. Socially progressive new democracies with expansive founding agendas are viable in some, but not other, historical settings —and social science in the Linzian tradition can help us understand when an ambitious regime founding agenda is compatible with, or dangerous for, democratic survival.

In this sense, democratic triumphs and successes are to be found not only in cases, such as Spain in the 1970s and early 1980s, in which workers and others on the left contributed to democratic consolidation by showing substantial self-restraint<sup>28</sup>. The revolutionary demands and actions of Portuguese workers on the land and in urban workplaces proved as compatible with democracy as the restraint of Spanish workers<sup>29</sup> due to substantial differences

between the two contexts. Democratic successes may be found in those cases in which political and social conditions made it possible for democrats to formulate an expansive initial agenda without placing in danger democratic survival. In democratic transitions, as in all politics, case-specific conditions play a crucial role in determining what is —and is not— possible, just as Linz and those influenced by him would expect.

Political leadership, political action and processes that recur in identifiable ways across cases are, in Linz's perspective, decisively important but so too are the case-specific conditions that determine whether political action leads to consequences consistent with *or counter to* the motivations generating that action. Linzian social science and the Linzian analysis of transitions are, like their Weberian roots, always necessary and always current, for they offer an approach that theorizes with extraordinary intellectual force across cases without losing sight of empirical *reality* and its unavoidable specificity and complexity. This is reflected not only in Linz's well known scholarly works but also in his acute insights into contemporary events, reflected in his strong opposition to the Iraq War beginning well before the onset of war, and his carefully formulated argument —written in collaboration with Alfred Stepan prior to the invasion— that it would *not* lead to a viable democratic regime and that claims to the contrary were based on a false analogy to Germany and Japan. Linzian analysis, as this and many other examples underscore, holds great relevance for a rapidly changing world.

## Notes

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1. See Munck and Snyder (2007).
2. See Fishman (2007).
3. In this sense the influential perspective of Ragin should be seen as essentially Weberian. See Ragin (1987).
4. This is the formulation of anthropologist James Boon (2007).
5. For a major recent formulation on the importance of constituting social science as an engagement with both the scholarly arena and the world itself, see Skocpol (2003).
6. Linz's initial formulation on this theme generated a great deal of scholarship on the topic. See his widely circulated 1984 unpublished essay, «Democracy: Presidential or Parliamentary: Does it Make a Difference?» MS, Department of Sociology, Yale University. In 1990 he published two articles on this theme in the *Journal of Democracy*. See also Linz and Valenzuela (1994) and Mainwaring and Shugart (1997).

7. I am indebted to Philippe Schmitter for making this observation in his comments on my contribution to *Revisiting Weber's 'Objectivity'*.

8. See Munck (2004), especially page 111. On this point see also Collier, Brady and Seawright (2004), especially page 203.

9. Weber presents this important argument in *Economy and Society*, Part Two, Chapter XVI, «The City (Non-Legitimate Domination)», section iv. 9, «The Pacification of the Burghers and the Legitimation of the Signoria».

10. Linz, who also draws on theorists other than Weber, has emphasized how Simmel, Mannheim and others incorporate many such «free-standing» insights into their theoretical works.

11. This is Weber's formulation in his essay on objectivity.

12. See Linz and Stepan (1996).

13. See Linz (2006).

14. See Huntington (1984).

15. See the excellent book by Valenzuela (1978).

16. For an important analysis of these cases see Morlino (1998).

17. Linz argues that democracies may vary in the magnitude of their initial, historically determined, legitimacy and that this dimension of variation helps to explain why some democracies survive in the face of economic crises which—in other national contexts—have contributed to democratic breakdown.

18. See the important study of Przeworski *et al.* (2000).

19. See Pedro C. Magalhaes (2005); Torcal and Montero (2006), and Diamond and Morlino (2005).

20. I am indebted to Linz for underscoring this point in comments offered on an earlier draft of this essay.

21. See Linz (1970, 1973 and 2000).

22. See Fernandes (2006a and 2006b).

23. Granted, in certain periods of time such as the 1980s the welfare state was less well developed than in neighboring Spain. On this point see Maravall (1993). The subsequent growth of the Portuguese welfare state and its linkage to the political system's founding agenda are discussed in the working paper cited in the following footnote.

24. For an early paper in this project see Fishman (2005). Available online at ics.ul.pt.

25. I have written on this point in Fishman (1990b). This is not the place to cite or review the wealth of excellent scholarship on the Portuguese case.

26. For recent scholarship on this theme see Costa Pinto (2006).

27. In his scholarly work on the Spanish case, following the excellent work on the agrarian reform by his friend historian Edward Malefakis, Linz argues that technical failures in the elaboration of social reform measures and political miscalculations about the numbers of people negatively impacted by reforms both contributed to the process leading toward the ultimate failure of the Republic.

28. On the restraint of Spanish labor during the transition to democracy see Fishman (1990a).

29. See Bermeo (1986) and Durán Muñoz (2000).

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### 3 The Electoral Systems of the Spanish Democracies

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