

Juan J. Linz

## Conditions for Democracy



Born in Bonn on December 24, 1926; Spanish nationality. Licenciado in Political Science (1947) and Law (1948) at the University of Madrid; Ph. D. in Sociology, Columbia University (1959). Lectured at the Universities of Columbia, Stanford and Madrid. Max Weber Guest Professor in Heidelberg. Dr. h.c. of the Universidad de Granada; Premio Principe de Asturias de Ciencias Sociales. Current position: Sterling Professor of Political and Social Science at Yale University. Publications: *Breakdown and Crisis of Democratic Regimes; Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes; Conoicto en Euskadi*; Co-author *Informe sociológico sobre el cambio político en España, 1975-1981*; numerous articles in books on fascism, political parties, elites and lobbies in Spain, Spanish social structure and industrialists, nationality problems in Spain, the sociology of democracy, Robert Michels. At present he is working on a book on transitions to democracy in comparative perspective and a social history of Spain from 1930 to 1980. — Address: Department of Sociology, Yale University, Yale Station, Box 1965, New Haven, CT 06520, USA.

In 1988 I stated as topics on which I intended to work at the Kolleg (1) a book on *Transitions from Authoritarian Regimes to Democracy in Comparative Perspective*; (2) my contribution to work I was co-authoring with Larry Diamond and S. M. Lipset on the *Conditions for Democratic Government* particularly in developing countries; (3) a contribution to a multi-volume *History of Spain, the Spanish Society from 1930 to 1980*. I also hoped to work on a *Study of Economic Mentalities in Spain* and on a future book on *Religion and Politics in the Modern World in Comparative Perspective*.

In the year at the Kolleg I managed to work and make great progress on all these three planned books in addition to finishing a number of papers for publication.

The research and writing about the transitions to democracy took priority, particularly since the events in the former communist countries in 1989/90 made me include them into what was conceived initially, early in 1988, as a comparative study of Southern European and Latin American

transitions. The year at the Kolleg unexpectedly offered me an opportunity to expand the scope of my work to those countries. I was able to establish contacts with other fellows interested in the problem or coming from those countries, to organize with the support of the Kolleg a small conference with colleagues from former communist countries working on the subject and to participate in another conference organized by Fellows on the transitions to market economy in Eastern Europe. I also benefited from being invited to participate at the *Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin*, the *Max-Planck-Institut* and the *Freie Universität* in meetings on problems connected with the change of regime in former socialist countries. The central location of Berlin made it easy to travel to Moscow, Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, as well as to attend the *Soziologentag* in Leipzig. On those visits I collected materials otherwise difficult to obtain, talked with colleagues and politicians, and got a very different feeling for the distinctiveness of those transitions. As a result of my stay at the Kolleg I have a much more complex and richer perspective in my research than I ever could have expected. The invitation to the Kolleg could not have been more timely.

I was able to get together in Berlin with Alfred Stepan who is co-authoring the book on transitions with me. He has a special expertise on Latin America and recently visited Yugoslavia, Albania, and Romania, the countries I have not visited. We now have an advanced first draft of our book and we expect to revise it and finish it possibly by the end of the year.

Our book is a theoretical work to be focused on the similarities and differences between transitions from different types of states and regimes and different paths to democracy. We have also expanded our focus to the problem of consolidation of new democratic regimes and the problems connected with the consolidation process. It will therefore not be a collection of case studies as other works on the subject. A number of important books have been published with chapters on particular transitions; however, ours will be an attempt to incorporate into a single book insights derived from knowledge of the different countries that is currently being accumulated. Our hope is that by applying a theoretical framework derived from the study of the particular cases we will be able to illuminate the similarities as well as the uniqueness of this historical process of democratization. Certainly our work will owe very much to my stay at the Kolleg.

For the book on the conditions for democracy I am co-authoring, I have written several of the sixteen chapters and detailed comments and additions to the drafts of every other chapter. Like any co-authored book, this involves both difficulties and frustration, but I am confident that the theoretical effort to assess our knowledge on the subject is most timely and necessary. The volume planned will link with those already published on

democracy in Latin America, Asia, and Africa with contributions by specialists which we directed and edited. All the chapters were written on the basis of a theoretical outline and suggestions by the editors, and we all read each of the chapters, asking the authors to incorporate some of our suggestions.

I am confident that the book will become a basic reference for anyone interested in the problem of democracy and will bring new theoretical perspectives into the debate. It should lead to the questioning of monocausal approaches stressing the multiplicity of factors contributing to the stability and crises of democracies. It is a logical follow-up to my earlier work on the *Breakdown of Democratic Regimes* and on the comparison of non-democratic regimes; totalitarian, authoritarian, sultanistic and post-totalitarian. Our hope is that it will be a step beyond the classic *Polyarchy* by Robert Dahl and the extensive literature on stability and crisis of democracy in particular regions of the world.

About one-third of my time was taken up by a book on *Spanish Society from 1930 to 1980*. This is an historical sociological study of the period in which Spain experienced the greatest social change in its modern history. It covers the evolution of society under the Republic 1931-1936 and during the course of the Civil War 1936-1939, the Franco regime in its different phases 1939—1975, the transition to democracy 1976-1978, and the start of the new democratic regime. It involves a complex analysis of the interplay between political and economic factors in accounting for continuities and discontinuities in Spanish society. It covers changes ranging from democracy and the demographic to patterns in social relations, mentalities, and values. The transformation of what was fundamentally a rural and poor country into an industrial society and, more recently, a service society is the central theme. It includes a detailed analysis of the changes in the Church and the armed forces, and their role in society. The circulation of elites and their recruitment, parties, trade unions and interest groups are among the many aspects studied. Given the Civil War and the years of dictatorship, it is natural that social conflict, political violence and repression occupy an important place in the social history of this period. It has not been easy to separate a history of society from the political, economic and cultural history of the period. However, this approach has some advantages since it breaks with the traditional political history of Spain and highlights how social changes are not only the result of political changes, of regimes, but also of economic factors and an autonomous social dynamic.

This work is a synthesis of a large volume of literature, but I also hope to have incorporated new perspectives and questions that might influence future research. The project has been a time-consuming effort and, unfortunately, I have only been able to complete two-thirds of the text.

## New Perspectives in my Work

The year at the Kolleg and the research I have been doing have brought me even closer than before to the center of the intellectual debate on democracy, the processes that make it possible and contribute to its stability or instability. The most important theme for my work in future years will be focused on the quality of democratic politics. There are likely to be failures and crises in democracies, the old and particularly the new, that will not lead to their breakdown but show the limitations of democratic political institutions which we need to understand better. Now that there is no immediate and appealing alternative to democratic government, we have to give much more thought to the question of the quality of existing democracies, the differences between old and new democracies, and attempt to construct meaningful typologies of democratic regimes. The new democracies have been born in a very different historical and social context. It would be a mistake to think that they will be like those established and consolidated in the past. With the erosion of ideological cleavages, the much greater difficulty to articulate politics around class conflict, the impact of television, of leisure on political activity, public financing of parties, etc. etc., the emerging political parties and leadership in many new democracies will be very different from the old European and Anglo-American democracies. We have to start asking new questions. One of the problems on which I have been working is the implications of presidentialism and parliamentarism for democratic politics in comparative perspective. Another theme that will be increasingly important in my work (as a result of my earlier interest in peripheral nationalisms in Spain and the events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union) is the relationship between nationalism and democracy, the tension between self-determination and the conception of the nation state and democratic stability. This is a problem that has not yet been fully explored. During my stay at the Kolleg I had the opportunity to participate in a large conference on nationalism at the *Zentrum für interdisziplinäre Forschung* in Bielefeld on types of European national movements in the 19th and 20th century which has reinforced my interest in this subject.

I see myself working on a comparative institutional, sociological and historical study of democracies, somewhat like I did years ago in my comparative book on the whole range of non-democratic regimes. This is obviously a project that will extend over a number of years and which will require contact and collaboration with many scholars in different parts of the world. I am sure that my year at the Kolleg will be enormously helpful in that endeavour and be reflected in it.