The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes

Europe

edited by Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan

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The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown, and Reequilibration by Juan J. Linz

The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Europe edited by Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan

The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Latin America edited by Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan

The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Chile by Arturo Valenzuela

Editors' Preface and Acknowledgments

How and why democratic regimes break down are the central questions addressed by the contributors to this volume.¹ Such breakdowns have long preoccupied social scientists. However, much of the existing literature on the
subject has focused attention on the emergence of nondemocratic political
forces or the underlying structural strains that lead to the collapse of democratic institutions.² Implicitly if not explicitly, the impression often given by
such works is that of the virtual inevitability of the breakdown of the democratic regimes under discussion. While recognizing the scholarly legitimacy
and analytic utility of studying antidemocratic movements and structural
strains, we have addressed a somewhat different aspect of the breakdown of
democratic regimes.

Given the tragic consequences of the breakdown of democracy in countries such as Germany, Spain, and Chile, we believe it intellectually and politically worthwhile to direct systematic attention to the dynamics of the political process of breakdown. In particular, we felt it important to analyze the behavior of those committed to democracy, especially the behavior of the incumbent democratic leaders, and to ask in what ways the actions or nonactions of the incumbents contributed to the breakdown under analysis. Did the prodemocratic forces have available to them other options that might have alleviated the crisis of democracy? Was the breakdown of democracy indeed inevitable? A closely related concern of the participants was the endeavor to abstract from the historical record recurrent patterns, sequences, and crises involved in the dynamic process of breakdown.

This publication has a long and complex history. Juan J. Linz's involvement with the question of the breakdown of democracy began with his concern with the fate of Spanish democracy, a fate that affected him as a child in Spain and as a citizen. Linz's reading of the monumental work on the breakdown of the Weimar Republic by Karl Dietrich Bracher led him to ask broad theoretical questions, which he explored with Daniel Bell at Columbia University in the mid-1960s. Linz and Alfred Stepan met at Columbia during this period, when Stepan was beginning to write a dissertation on the breakdown of democracy in Brazil, a process he had seen at first hand while writing articles in Latin America for the *Economist*. Other contributors who were at

Columbia University at the same time included Paolo Farneti, Peter Smith, Arturo Valenzuela, and Alexander Wilde.

In order to encourage scholarly exchange on the political aspects of the breakdown of democracy, a panel was organized under the auspices of the Committee on Political Sociology. This panel met at a number of sessions at the Seventh World Congress of Sociology, held at Varna, Bulgaria, in 1970. Before the congress, Linz circulated a short paper titled "The Breakdown of Competitive Democracies: Elements for a Model," which became the focus of discussion by the members of the panel engaged in studies of individual countries and attending the congress. Among the contributors to the complete hardcover edition of this volume presenting initial drafts of the papers at Varna were Erik Allardt on Finland, Paolo Farneti on Italy, Rainer Lepsius on Weimar Germany, Juan Linz on Spain, Walter Simon on Austria, Peter Smith on Argentina, Alfred Stepan on Brazil, and Alexander Wilde on Colombia. Arend Lijphart was a stimulating commentator.³

After fruitful exchanges at Varna, we dispersed, with the firm commitment to continue working on the project and to hold a conference in a few years focusing on the comparative and theoretical aspects of our work. In order to introduce other important cases and different perspectives, Stepan encouraged Guillermo O'Donnell to write on the crisis of democracy in Argentina in the decade after the fall of Perón, and Julio Cotler and Daniel Levine to discuss the Peruvian and Venezuelan cases. After the overthrow of Allende in Chile, the editors invited Arturo Valenzuela to analyze the tragic events leading to the end of democracy in Chile.

With the generous support of the Concilium of International and Area Studies of Yale University, and the Joint Committee on Latin America of the Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies, the augmented group met at Yale University in December 1973, at a conference chaired by Linz and Stepan, by then both members of the Yale faculty. At this meeting the papers presented benefited from the able suggestions of Douglas Chalmers, Edward Malefakis, and Eric Nordlinger, who acted as discussants. At the end of the conference the participants decided to revise their work in the light of one another's findings and the collective discussion of areas of similarity and dissimilarity. A year at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton allowed Linz to revise his introduction and maintain contact with the co-authors.

Despite the group's interest in underlying, recurrent patterns of breakdown, there has been no attempt to force individual contributors into the procrustean bed of the editors' own thinking. The reader will discover important differences in the authors' intellectual orientations, which grew in part out of the diversity of the democracies studied and reflect in part genuine differences of opinion on the relative weight to be attached to political forces, even after these forces had been given due consideration by all contributors.

It should be stressed that this volume is an initial social scientific effort at middle-level generalizations about complex historical reality. Such a work is, of course, never a substitute for fundamental historical studies of individual cases; rather, it builds upon such studies and, we hope, draws the attention of historians to more generalized propositions, propositions they can in turn pursue further in their own work. Although we are concerned with middlelevel generalizations, it is the editors' view that the historicity of macropolitical processes precludes the highly abstract generalizing of ahistorical social scientific models of the type susceptible to computer simulations and applicable to all past and any future cases. It is our hope, nevertheless, that scholars interested in developing more formal models may build on our work and incorporate into their models the complex realities here discussed. At this stage of the analysis our collective attention to the political dynamics of the breakdown of democracies has brought to light a number of recurring elements which are discussed at length in Linz's introductory essay. The independent contributions made to breakdowns by political incumbents is a theme that emerges in almost all the papers and has justified our attention to this aspect of the problem, an aspect all too often overlooked. Indeed, in reference to the democratic breakdown in many if not most of the cases analyzed, the editors concur with the remark made by the great German historian, Friedrich Meinecke, upon hearing of the appointment of Hitler to the chancellorship: "This was not necessary."

The individual studies shed new light on some of the most historically important cases of breakdown of democracy, such as Germany, Italy, Spain, and Chile. In addition, some of the less well-known cases forcefully illustrate hitherto neglected aspects of the question of the survival of democracy. Daniel Levine's study of Venezuela examines a fascinating case of political learning. Ten years after the breakdown in Venezuela in 1948, many of the institutional participants in the breakdown—the church, the army, the political parties consciously and successfully devised strategies to avoid such a breakdown when a new attempt to forge democratic institutions began in 1958. Alexander Wilde's discussion of the reequilibration of Colombian democray in the 1950s also shows how political learning was crucial for the construction of a consociational democracy. The chapter by Risto Alapuro and Erik Allardt discusses the little-known case of Finland, in which, despite intense conflict, the process of breakdown described in other chapters was avoided. The analysis of nonoccurrence as well as of occurrence increased our understanding of the breakdown process.

With the publication of this project, many of the contributors are turning their attention to closely related issues that loom large on the scholarly agenda. High priority for further work along these lines should now be given to the analysis of the conditions that lead to the breakdown of authoritarian regimes, to the process of transition from authoritarian to democratic regimes,

and especially to the political dynamics of the consolidation of postauthoritarian democracies.

The editors want to thank The Johns Hopkins University Press for its help in publishing a project of such large intellectual scope and sheer physical size as this one. We want to give special thanks to Henry Tom, the social sciences editor of the Press, for his great assistance. The project would not have arrived in the reader's hands without extensive copy editing. Jean Savage and Victoria Suddard helped in the early stages of copy editing.

Yale University

JUAN J. LINZ ALFRED STEPAN

NOTES

- An extensive discussion of the definition of democracy and the criteria for the selection of cases is found in Juan Linz's introductory essay, entitled *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown, and Reequilibration*. This essay is also available separately as a Johns Hopkins University Press paperback.
- 2. Much of this literature is discussed in the work by Linz just cited.
- 3. The crisis of democracy in Portugal in the 1920s, France in the 1950s, Peru and Greece in the 1960s, and the continuing conflict in Northern Ireland were also discussed in papers presented by Herminio Martins, Steven Cohn, David Chaplin, Charles Moskos, and Richard Rose, respectively. Conflicting obligations did not permit them to continue with the project. Richard Rose developed his paper in a somewhat different direction and published it separately as a book, Governing without Consensus: An Irish Perspective (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971).

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1.

Social Conflict, Parliamentary Fragmentation, Institutional Shift, and the Rise of Fascism: Italy

Paolo Farneti

Introduction

The working of a parliamentary system can be viewed as based on a "division of labor" between civil society, political society, and institutional set. By the first we mean the set of cleavages such as Center-periphery, city-countryside, etc., including class cleavages and their political expressions, that give rise to conditions of interest or solidarity. By the second we mean those groups (from clubs to mass parties and labor unions) that are based on the principles of association or organization. By the third we mean those structures, mostly regulated by legal order, that can be analyzed primarily in terms of consent or force.

To be sure, while these three structures define the complexity of any political system, they are particularly visible as determinants of the complexity of parliamentary systems. As such, they are the results of distinct historical processes. The civil society is the outcome of the industrial revolution; the institutional set is the outcome of the bureaucratic rationalization and centralization performed by the monarchies of the *ancien régime*. The political society is the outcome of the democratic revolution, that is, the democratic development of the principles stated in 1789, through the 1848 revolution and the political and social struggles of the second half of the nineteenth and the first decades of the twentieth centuries.

For many states, especially in Europe, the process of state building has been one through which the tensions and the conflicts arising from the basic cleavages of nineteenth-century societies found a provisional mediation, if not a

solution. With the progressive democratization of politics, with the institution of elected parliaments, and with the entrance of new groups into the political arena, this basic function of conflict mediation was taken over by the political society and by an elected political elite composed of professional politicians rather than state functionaries. This process meant the emancipation of the realm of politics and policy-making from both civil and institutional forces. And in effect the "division of labor" stems from the relationships between mutually emancipated structures: civil, political, and institutional. As a relatively emancipated structure, the political society finds its basic resource in redefining the cleavages emerging from the civil society—transforming them into specifically political cleavages and political issues. In fact, an issue becomes political when it is able to aggregate the society into a basic cleavage of pro and contra the alternative solutions. Of course, it is also part of the art of politics to prevent issues from becoming political. This means that the relationships between civil, political, and institutional structures are in continuous tension. In fact, civil and institutional structures tend to become "politicized," that is, to become part of political society and to transform their own cleavages into political cleavages. The political society tends to monopolize the practice of politics and political issue-making, thereby absorbing into its own structure and logic of performance both civil and institutional forces. In all these cases there is a disruption of the division of labor of the political system in general, and of parliamentary systems in particular.

A crisis of parliamentary system can therefore be analyzed as a failure of the political society to maintain the rules of this division of labor, a balance that demands a restraint on itself and a systematic effort to deter the civil and institutional forces from any attempt at disrupting this balance. When this does not happen, a loss of autonomy of the political society marks the initial stage of a crisis process, together with a polarization of politics and issuemaking to civil and institutional forces; this polarization results in the "politics of the streets" and the "politics of the barracks."

Neither the first nor the second kind of politics, however, is a long-term political project, unless it is a "planned" revolution or coup d'état. When neither revolution nor coup d'état is the outcome, the loss of autonomy of the political society is followed by a stalemate situation or a "power vacuum": the situation is defined by small groups and few persons. The diffusion of the political arena that characterizes the first crisis phase is followed by a shrinking of the political arena during this second phase. Any political project able to aggregate enough forces to resolve the loss of autonomy and overcome the stalemate is likely to take over the political power.

In the case of Italian fascism, this aggregation of forces happened neither through revolutionary outbreak nor purely institutional force (coup d'état), but essentially through the use of private violence.

Political and Socioeconomic Structure

In the framework of a diffusion of the political arena, loss of autonomy of the political society, and a consequent reduction in the number of workable solutions within the rules of the division of labor, we can verify the existence of critical elements that have been suggested in the introductory essay by Juan Linz. In the process of the political society's loss of autonomy we can understand the emergence of issues that cannot be solved within the rules of the division of labor (Linz's "unsolvable problems") but demand a new arrangement of relationships between civil, political, and institutional forces. We can also understand the tendency of the political forces in the existing alignment to lose their identities in favor of civil and institutional forces and therefore to question both their "loyalty" toward the existing arrangement ("semiloyalty" and open "disloyalty") and their own willingness to assume responsibility in it.

In the reduction of the political arena, and above all in the number of possible solutions within the rules of the game, we see the "fragmentation" of the political forces and their "polarization" around one dominant cleavage: for or against the existing institutional arrangement. When one pole of the alignment is supported through private violence, "crisis strata" become decisive for the political balance. It must be emphasized that the use of violence cannot be considered to be at the same level as the other critical elements. It is much more essential to and decisive in fostering the crisis, for at least two reasons. First, if the modern state is defined by the achievement of internal pacification and the reduction of maintenance of public order to a function performed by professional administrators, then the use of private violence and its acceptance is a break with an essential element. Second, if the political alignment is polarized, and one pole of the alignment has the capacity for the use of violence, then the weight of that one pole is such that no contractual relationship is any longer feasible.

This focus on a specific political mechanism should not make us overlook the economic and social determinants of the crisis process, and in particular, their timing. They are significant in a market economy when powerful minority interests succeed in aggregating a larger and larger part of the population—in a word, when the crisis fosters a solidarity otherwise very difficult to achieve. In particular, this happens when the traditional cleavage between "property classes"—based on rent—and "acquisition classes"—based on profit—is blurred by the rise of a common interest on the part of both classes in the dismissal of the existing institutional arrangement, and whenever the "safety of contracts" is threatened. From this point of view, changes in the structure of the property classes and the acquisition classes are of momentous importance, because they can contribute to the formation of

this common interest. Therefore, economic crises are of little importance as long as they do not bring about a change within and between the two class systems of a partially industrialized market economy. This change can be a rearticulation of interest in which the role of political forces, as much as political emergency procedures (such as early elections and so forth), can be decisive.

There is, however, in the framework of the model proposed here, a slightly different way to consider the relationship between socioeconomic structure and political structure in a critical situation. We defined the model of relationships between civil, political, and institutional structures as a division of labor because in effect it is based on differentiated role performances. From this point of view, a crisis, i.e., a redefinition of roles, can be seen as paralleled by the introduction of a new technical discovery in the technical division of labor, which also demands a redefinition of roles. A new piece of machinery or a new technical device creates new jobs and eliminates old jobs. Similarly, a profound economic and social crisis can be seen as creating and eliminating jobs in a system of division of labor between civil, political, and institutional tasks. The result is, as in the case of the introduction of a new device, not necessarily a further differentiation of roles: it can very well be a consolidation of roles and therefore a return to a less differentiated condition in the relationship between the three structures, depending on the nature of the socioeconomic crisis and the specific historical situation.

The two perspectives do not contradict each other. The first one is, in effect, a case of the second one, because it depends on at least two conditions: a market economy with a sizable business class, and a partially industrialized economy with the consequent coexistence of acquisition classes and property classes. It is one of the tasks of this discussion to verify the hypothesis in the Italian case of the early twenties.

An Outline of the Italian Crisis of the Early Twenties

In the pages to follow we will try to give evidence of the three phases as they existed in postwar Italy: *loss of autonomy* of the political society ("loss of power," "power deflation," and "fragmentation," are used as synonyms); *exhaustion of legitimate political alternatives* (or "reduction of the political arena," "stalemate situation," etc.); and *takeover of power*. We start from one major assumption: the reshuffling of political cleavages as a result of the issue of participation in the war, and the crisis of relationships between property and acquisition classes consequent to the war mobilization. In the specific Italian case, therefore, the war is accountable for (1) the potential for political and social crisis and (2) for their *convergence* and consequent disruption of an already shaky parliamentary system.

During the first phase the old alignment of Right, Center, and Left is broken up by the dual cleavage of interventionism and neutralism, the international situation being, at least in part, accountable for the persistence of this cleavage after the end of the war. The loss of autonomy of the political society, i.e., of the political parties in the postwar Parliament, is made visible by a diffusion of the political arena in the politics of the streets (the wave of strikes of 1919 and 1920) and in the political mobilization of institutions, namely the army, during the Fiume adventure (also 1919–20). In this phase the aggregation of old interventionist liberalism begins, in a political space soon to be filled by the Fascist movement.

During the second phase, the game seems to be in the hands of the old Neutralist alignment: Giolittian Liberals, Socialists, particularly the Reformist wing of the Socialists—led by Filippo Turati—and the Popolari—led by Luigi Sturzo. Internal contradictions prevent an aggregation of these forces, thereby creating a stalemate: a visible exhaustion of political alternatives within the framework of the existing institutional structure. The silence of the streets at this point encourages the exercise of political violence on the side of the Fascist squads. The silence is paralleled by the withdrawal of the army and the police forces, whose loyalty toward the existing arrangement is more and more questionable.

During the third phase, starting with the resignation of Giovanni Giolitti from the cabinet in the twenties, the political alignment is in effect displaced both by the politics of the Fascist parliamentary group and by the restless Fascist violence all over the country. Step by step, the issue becomes the exercise of force and violence on two sides: the institutional side (represented by the army and the crown) and the Fascist side. Late attempts to control the situation, through last-minute agreements on the side of the political forces loyal to the parliamentary system, are ineffective, and end on the night of 27-28 October 1922.

The fragmentation of political forces, as the result of the war and the war-commitment of the country, is in sharp contrast with the aggregation of social forces consequent to the war mobilization. There are at least three key factors that in our view account for a joining of property and acquisition classes in a common struggle and for their political relevance. The wave of strikes in the first postwar years (1919–20) marked, for the first time in the history of the country, a common and relatively homogeneous mobilization of both industrial workers and peasants (agricultural daily workers and small peasants). This meant a mobilization of "negatively privileged classes," according to Weber's definition, both in the system of acquisition classes (industrial workers) and in the system of property classes (peasants).

The energy mobilized by the strikes was finally exhausted, but considerable improvements in labor legislation had been achieved, both for industrial