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Discussion

RECONSIDERING THE TRANSITION PARADIGM

*Larry Diamond, Francis Fukuyama, Donald L. Horowitz, and
Marc F. Plattner*

This text is a condensed and lightly edited version of a panel discussion. For further information about the panel and the series of which it was a part, along with brief bios of the panelists, see the box on page 88. Another box, on page 90, contains a list of works mentioned during the discussion. Thanks are owed to Dean W. Jackson and Marlena Papavaritis for producing the initial transcription.

Marc F. Plattner: The concept of transitions has been central to discussions of democratization for more than three decades now. “Transition” has been the primary term used to describe the political changes that typified what Samuel P. Huntington labeled the “third wave” of democratization—the birth of new democracies in well over fifty countries that has made democracy the most common form of regime in the world today. The heyday of transitions was the 1980s and the 1990s. But by the turn of the twenty-first century, the birth of new democracies had slowed down, partly because so many countries had already become democratic. As a result, political scientists turned their attention to issues of democratic consolidation, and then to the quality of democracy.

In a widely discussed and influential essay in the January 2002 issue of the *Journal of Democracy*, Thomas Carothers called into question the continuing value of what he called “the transition paradigm.” For a moment it seemed as if the notion of transition might have become outdated or at least outlived its usefulness. But with the “color revolutions” in the former Soviet Union, and more recently and even more dramatically with the regime changes associated with the “Arab Spring” and the political opening in Burma, the question of democratic transitions has returned to center stage.

The use of the word “transition” to refer to a change in political regime is relatively new. A key role in introducing the term in this sense was played by a much-cited article written in 1970 by political scientist Dankwart Rustow, entitled “Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dy-

namic Model.” Writing before the beginning of the third wave, Rustow argues that most political scientists of his day focused on how democracy can be preserved and strengthened where it already exists, mainly in North America and Western Europe. Yet this is of little help to scholars studying developing countries, who are more interested in what he calls “the genetic question” of how a democracy comes into being in the first place.

Rustow’s article is cited as a source of inspiration by what is still the single most influential study of transitions, the four-volume work *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, edited by Guillermo O’Donnell, Philippe Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead and published in 1986. By then, of course, the third-wave transitions to democracy in Southern Europe and many of those in Latin America had already occurred. As the books’ title suggests, the phenomenon they are addressing is not the gradual evolution from oligarchy to democracy that Rustow had focused on, but the rapid fall and replacement of authoritarian regimes, which may lead either to the introduction of democracy or to some new form of authoritarianism. They define transition quite broadly as the interval between one political regime and another. Yet they emphasize one particular path for transitions, one that is neither violent nor revolutionary but proceeds through negotiation between the outgoing authoritarian regime and its democratic opposition, and often relies upon formal or informal pacts or agreements that provide security guarantees to both sides.

This template of transition, elaborated by O’Donnell and Schmitter on the basis of the southern European and Latin American experiences, came to be applied to other regions as well, though not without debate among scholars about how well it “traveled,” particularly to the post-communist cases. This model was also applied in a rather crude way by governments and democracy-assistance agencies, with every country where an authoritarian ruler had been ousted described as “in transition” to democracy, no matter how weak its claim to actually be moving toward democracy. This is what prompted Tom Carothers to call for an end to the transition paradigm, as he contended that there was no regular sequence of stages that countries go through following the fall of an authoritarian regime. Instead, he argued that many countries said to be undergoing a democratic transition were in fact stuck in what he called the “gray zone,” and there was no certainty that they would soon, or indeed ever, emerge as liberal democracies.

Although Carothers’s widely heralded article promoted a great deal of useful rethinking and greater caution in applying the transition paradigm, it clearly failed to bring about its demise. So with the color revolutions, and now even more prominently with the Arab Spring, political scientists and public officials once again have couched their analyses in terms of the old transition paradigm.

Before turning to our panelists, let me mention one final point. The

ABOUT THE DISCUSSION

The discussion published here is taken from the concluding panel of a yearlong series of roundtables organized by the National Endowment for Democracy's (NED) International Forum for Democratic Studies. The title of the series was "Reconsidering Democratic Transitions: The Arab Spring and the Color Revolutions." It began in December 2012 with a regional session on the former Soviet Union, followed by country panels on Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan. Next, a regional session on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) was held, followed by country sessions on Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya. The series concluded on 19 September 2013 with two panels. The first, entitled "The Arab Spring and the Color Revolutions," featured Barnard College professor Alexander Cooley, NED vice-president Nadia Diuk, *Wall Street Journal* editorial-board member Matthew Kaminski, and NED senior director for MENA Laith Kubba; International Forum executive director Christopher Walker moderated the panel.

The second panel, presented here in condensed form, featured Larry Diamond, Francis Fukuyama, and Donald L. Horowitz. Marc F. Plattner moderated the panel.

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For further information on this event series, including videos of the September 19 panels, visit: <http://www.ned.org/research/reconsidering-democratic-transitions-the-arab-spring-and-the-color-revolutions>.

term most readily available as an alternate to transition is "revolution." Now, there are many reasons why the idea of revolution is no longer as fashionable today as it was some decades ago, not least because of the bitter experience of the totalitarian revolutions of the twentieth century. Yet this assertion needs to be qualified, because although revolution may no longer be fashionable in the West or among scholars, it is still often the term preferred by those who overthrow dictatorial regimes. The protagonists of the successful North African uprisings of the past

few years tend to speak reverently of the revolution; in fact, the more violence and suffering that were inflicted upon an eventually victorious opposition, the stronger seems to be its attachment to the idea of revolution. Although we have learned the hard way that revolutions in the name of democracy often bring heavy costs and can make difficult the establishment of a stable democracy, there's also a counter-argument—namely, that nonviolent or gradual transitions, which tend to leave substantial parts of the old regime unreformed, also may pose substantial obstacles to democratic progress.

Donald L. Horowitz: The so-called concept of transitions to democracy is not really a concept, and it certainly wasn't a paradigm; it was just a category or a set of ideas about how democracy might happen. There were several versions of loose sequences and actors and stages that might be involved. As a matter of fact, in Rustow's original article there was very wide room postulated for individual agency on the part of the actors; it was far from deterministic. It is a kind of standard story in social science: Someone identifies a pattern or two associated with a phenomenon, othersglom onto it, and then it's discovered that the pattern is not universal. This shouldn't shock us, because it is so common, but it doesn't make the ideas utterly worthless. There are various paths to democracy, and it's worth trying to identify them. Carothers charged that the transition paradigm implied that elections were tantamount to the accomplishment of democracy. There, I think, he was on the money; that equation was perhaps pursued too far, especially by those giving democracy assistance. Elections are the *sine qua non* of democracy, but scholars quickly identified some missing elements even where you had more or less democratic elections. The term "illiberal democracy" was popularized by Fareed Zakaria, and similar notions were around in political science and still are. A few other elements were pushed much too far by academics; my favorite is "pactology," the notion that authoritarians and the democratic opposition must make pacts for reciprocal protection before democracy can proceed. Now, the fact that some pacts were made doesn't make them universal requirements; in Indonesia, for example, there were no pacts at all.

The same goes for the notion of "splits" between hard-liners and soft-liners both in the authoritarian government and in the democratic opposition, so that moderates on both sides can then negotiate the transition. Sometimes there are no credible negotiators, and therefore street demonstrations have to bring down the regime; or worse, real violence has to be employed for that purpose.

So we need a lot of room for variability in the process of democratization. But I want to emphasize two variables, which I would call the tyranny of starting conditions and the fortuity of early choices. I'll say more about the second later, but I want to give a few examples of the importance of diverging starting conditions, especially in the Arab Spring.

WORKS DISCUSSED

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The unspoken assumption that three unpopular Arab tyrannies, when overthrown, would somehow move in more or less the same direction was of course mistaken. But look at the variation at the start: You could have identified this variation early on. Tunisia didn't have to fight to oust its dictator; Libya did, and the result is that Libya is awash in arms (and there's a little bit of comparative evidence that democratic regimes that come to power through force of arms are less likely to be durable). Or consider the popular affection for the Egyptian army versus the popular hatred of the Tunisian army. So the Egyptian army could still be a major player, but the Tunisian transition has been civilian-dominated. Or the more even balance between Islamists and secularists in Tunisia and in Libya than in Egypt. Or the greater exposure to Western democratic ideas of Tunisia's Ennahda party, and especially its leader Rachid Ghannouchi, than of Muslim Brotherhood leaders in Egypt, which has fostered a lot more respect for the opposition in Tunisia's constitutional process. Or consider the great divisions among liberals in Egypt, often because the leader of each political party wanted to run for president; in this way presidentialism helped to fracture the liberal movement in Egypt. Or the intense regionalism that creates a major cleavage line that cuts across others in Libya, but doesn't exist in the other countries. So you've got divergent starting conditions, and therefore you can't expect a uniform process or a similar trajectory.

Larry Diamond: Just a few observations: I was struck when I went to Burma by just how stunningly relevant what's happening there is to the whole literature and debate on transitions. I think that the Burmese transition does feature hard-liners and soft-liners on each side. It is certainly involving negotiations right now. Burma can't get to democracy without constitutional change—and that's going to require a political pact or some kind of agreement at some point, because the constitution essentially gives the military a veto on constitutional change. The democracy that is born out of these negotiations—if it comes into being—in some ways is going to be a diminished democracy, or what Schmitter has called a democracy with birth defects, because it's inevitably going to make concessions to the military (though hopefully not as distorting of democracy as the ones embedded in the current constitution).

Second, let me offer a brief additional observation about Tom Carothers's seminal article on the transition paradigm. It was perhaps a bit overstated in order to stimulate debate, and it was one of the most remarkably successful articles that the *Journal of Democracy* has ever published. But as a student of Marty Lipset, I'd like to say something about the debate on preconditions: I think Carothers's article goes much too far in the opposite direction from Rustow and the genetic argument. It stresses the importance of starting conditions and the fact that not all countries have equal chances to make democracy work. Well, that's obviously true in the literal sense. But I think that we can fall into a specious deterministic argument: "Mali's an incredibly poor country; why are you wasting your money there and trying to generate democracy?" Lipset never intended his argument to be interpreted in this way; he entitled his original 1959 article "Some Social Requisites of Democracy," not social *prerequisites*, and he kept returning to this distinction. In my view, the only absolute precondition for achieving a democratic transition, aside from Rustow's background condition of a reasonably coherent state (which he labeled, going I think a bit too far, "national unity"), is a set of elites who decide for whatever reasons that democracy is in their interest. Yes, if you're as poor as Mali, it's tough to make it work and to sustain it, and one exogenous shock can destabilize everything. But we shouldn't discount the possibility of democratic transitions in unlikely places, even if the odds are against it.

Francis Fukuyama: Actually, I think that most of the transitions over the last decade are not very much like the third-wave transitions, and therefore that this literature is not all that helpful. I think the recent transitions are more like those of the first wave, which began with the French Revolution and continued up until the victory of universal suffrage in most of Europe. Unlike the late twentieth-century transitions in Latin America and Eastern Europe, which were primarily elite-driven, top-down affairs, the transitions in nineteenth-century Europe were

driven by popular mobilization, especially the pressures created by the revolutions of 1848, which were suppressed but then created the ground for the expansion of the franchise throughout Europe in the succeeding decades.

There's a literature on what I think is a really important question: Is democracy conquered or granted? Adam Przeworski actually has an article with that question in the title; he does a statistical analysis, and I think he shows pretty clearly that the bulk of the transitions in the first wave were conquered rather than granted. But the Eastern European and the Latin American ones of the third wave all took place in countries that had prior experience of democracy, and in a sense the imposition of either military rule or communism was seen by a lot of those populations as an aberration from what should have been their normal path of development. Therefore there was much more elite willingness to negotiate their way out of that particular form of authoritarianism; that's why you get all this pact-making, because the big problem is how do you get these elites to agree with one another and come to some peaceful path toward democracy? In some cases, such as Romania and the Czech Republic, there was popular mobilization once the thing got going, but the initial impetus came from Gorbachev and from within the elite. Similarly, the militaries in Latin America just got tired of ruling, so they were willing to give power back to civilians.

The Arab Spring was very different, and so were the color revolutions, because those were all based on popular mobilizations. That is something we should not lose sight of. You cannot have democracy unless you have the political mobilization of important social groups. This has happened throughout the Arab world, contradicting all the cultural stereotypes about Arab passivity. Of course, it's not going to lead to anything like Western liberal democracy anytime soon, but this is really how democracy happened in Europe in the nineteenth century: People just couldn't take it anymore; they got really mad, they went out on the streets, they risked their lives, and they overthrew regimes. That's something that by and large didn't happen in a lot of the early third-wave transitions.

And by the way, Larry, the only pacted, elite-driven transition among the recent cases is Burma, which is why you saw so many resonances there with that earlier transitions literature. The transitions in Libya, in Egypt, and in Tunisia didn't begin with cracks in the elites. They were really the result of very, very heavy pressure from people in the street, and that just didn't happen in Latin America or Eastern Europe.

Larry Diamond: I don't think your last sentence is true. There's a reason that the military got tired of ruling in Brazil and some other places. There was actually much more popular protest than some accounts of these transitions recognize, and I think that it's hard to make this kind of black-and-white distinction between the earlier transitions of the post-1974 period and the later ones. Clearly, the color revolutions

and the Arab Spring cases were based on popular upsurges, but in the Philippines in 1986 there was a “people power” revolution, and in South Korea and in some of the Latin American transitions there was a lot of popular mobilization as well.

Marc F. Plattner: One way of clarifying the concept of transition is to ask about what comes after it. The next stage, if one follows the usual sequence, is said to be consolidation. And while there is general agreement that it makes sense to talk about transitions, I think there is more disagreement about whether consolidation is a useful term, whether it means anything other than a democracy surviving, which could be due to a variety of causes. So is it useful to speak about a phase of consolidation?

Francis Fukuyama: I think it’s not helpful. Democracy is a complex set of institutions that involves accountability, rule of law, and an adequate state; they have to work in conjunction with one another, and successful democracy happens when you successfully institutionalize all of these different components. So the idea that there’s a ratchet effect—if you have two elections with turnover, that gets you to democracy for good and you’re not going to slip back—just doesn’t make sense theoretically, and it’s belied by what actually happens in some countries. Look at Hungary right now; it had several successful competitive elections in the 1990s and 2000s, and now it has a government that is slowly dismantling a lot of elements of Hungarian democracy. The ratchet metaphor is really misleading, because you can have political decay anywhere. There’s no reason to think there is a necessary one-way movement of history. All along we should have been focusing on the institutionalization of democracy much more than on the initial ending of autocracy.

Donald L. Horowitz: I don’t think that consolidation is necessarily at odds with institutionalization, although institutionalization is perhaps the higher standard. I think there are some probabilistic indicators that you can look at to see if democracy is in a process of consolidation: when the military is not able to take power because it’s discredited, demoralized, burned by experience, or highly factionalized; when there’s a balance among civilian political groups such that they would unite against an aspiring dictator; when elections are routinized; and when the courts have carved out a more or less independent arena that extends to cases with political overtones (and the test for this would be that even unpopular judicial decisions are accepted). If you use indicators like this—and I suspect you could make a longer and more useful list—you notice that having more than just two political groups that are at odds with one another is a facilitating condition for democracy, because if one group attempted to take power, others would unite against it. I don’t think consolidation is a totally useless

concept. I don't think any of these concepts necessarily get us very far, but they're categories of thought, containers if you like, into which you can pour a lot of useful content.

Larry Diamond: I think the principal focus needs to be on the depth and quality of democracy and its ability to perform and deliver. So I agree with Frank on that, and I think that Frank's work is really seminal in returning our attention to the quality of the state—not just of the representative institutions of democracy but the “output” institutions of the state. If you think about consolidation as the crossing of some threshold of stability, of solidity, of consensus, then I think that the concept is useful. And it is observable, not only in the indicators that Don just articulated, but also in public opinion when, whatever the cynicism about politicians or dissatisfaction with the way democracy is working, commitment to democracy as the best form of government remains high.

Second, most of the literature on consolidation does not say what some simplistic renderings of it suggest: that consolidation means irreversibility. There is some sort of process by which democracies can be consolidated through institutional or normative changes that occur during a period of time beyond the transition. I think the transition simply ends when the basic definition of democracy is achieved: a regime in which people can choose and replace their leaders in reasonably free and fair elections, with a minimal surrounding climate of freedoms as well as accountability in between elections.

Two more points: There is a very close relationship between consolidation and the achievement of a high quality of democracy. You don't see many consolidated democracies that haven't crossed some threshold in terms of capacity, institutionalization, and the like.

Finally, there is something we can call the *deconsolidation* of democracy. If you see political decay, then what does it look like and how can we recognize it? We should not be too sanguine that, just because Greece (or Hungary, for that matter) is part of the EU, democracy is stable for all time there. A process of political decay is going on when you get a neo-Nazi party getting seven percent of the vote in Greece. You can't just look the other way and say, “Well, they're just frustrated with their economic situation.” That's part of taking seriously Tom Carothers's appeal not to think teleologically.

Marc F. Plattner: I would just add that there is a clear temporal dimension to the notion of transition. O'Donnell and Schmitter define it as the interval between one political regime and another. In cases like Tunisia or Libya or Egypt, where an old regime has fallen and there's some sort of interim structure that explicitly claims to be a stepping stone toward a new regime, it does seem to make sense to define that interim period as a transition. During that period NED and other democracy-assistance

organizations try to help groups that are supporting the transition. But if that transition is successful, at some point the government says, “All right, now we have a democratically elected government, and not an interim or temporary structure.” At that point, external assistance is no longer supporting a transition, it is trying to aid the strengthening, deepening, or stabilizing of democracy—in other words, democratic consolidation.

Larry Diamond: There is a critique of the consolidation literature implicit in this discussion that’s very valid and has big implications for democracy assistance and how NED does its work. If there is some threshold that gets crossed, and there’s reasonable stability, public buy-in, and some degree of consolidation, there may still be massive problems of weak institutions, poor democratic performance, and fragility in a lot of respects. I think the democracy-assistance community is making a huge mistake when it looks at places like South Africa and says, “Well, they’ve crossed the threshold; now we can put our resources and attention elsewhere.” These places remain very fragile, very subject to reversal. I don’t think democracy is consolidated there or virtually anywhere else in sub-Saharan Africa, and this implies some serious rethinking about the choices we’re making.

Marc F. Plattner: Why don’t we now move to the question of whether there’s a future for democratic transitions. Obviously, we’re in the midst of some continuing (or derailed) transitions in the Arab world. Are these fated to fail? Can they still be rescued? Larry’s already discussed Burma—is there some hope that a transition there will succeed? And then looking at the longer term, what about key authoritarian countries such as China, Russia, and Iran? Are they plausible candidates for a transition to democracy in the foreseeable future?

Donald L. Horowitz: I want to talk a little bit more about the Arab Spring countries. I mentioned earlier the fortuity of early decisions. I’m not making a case for the inevitability of path dependence, but I want to emphasize that early decisions with respect to institutional architecture can have a very large impact. Let me tick off just a few.

Consider the Egyptian decision to use the French-style presidential run-off where there was likely to be a highly fragmented field. This allowed Mohamed Morsi, with 25 percent of the vote in the first round, to make it to the second round on the basis of a pretty thin plurality and then to win the presidency. I think that wasn’t a great institutional choice given the fragmentation of political alignments. Or consider Libya’s July 2012 elections for the General National Congress, in which the western part of the country got far more seats than the eastern part on the basis of purported population ratios. There was tremendous disappointment in the East, and some violence as a result. Subsequently, Libya

wisely opted for a 60-member elected body to draft a new constitution, with 20 members from each of its three regions regardless of population, just as it had done in 1951. Note, by the way, that historical memory plays a big role in institutional choices.

There are two kinds of historical memory: good recollections and recollections of what you'd like to avoid. The latter were very powerful in Indonesia, and they narrowed choices considerably. Libyans, however, had a good recollection of the 1951 process. For the forthcoming constituent assembly election, they have opted (unwisely, I think) for first-past-the-post elections for each of the 60 seats, with only a hundred signatures required to nominate a candidate. Presumably, many candidates will run, nearly 700 at last count, and many delegates will be elected by very, very small pluralities, far short of fifty percent. When you add that together with a very tight deadline to produce a constitution—and there shouldn't be tight deadlines to deliberate on a constitution if you can avoid them—it can really undermine the legitimacy of the product.

The details of the institutional architecture really matter for the prospects for democratization. They will matter in Burma too, which will need a very carefully designed federalism to bring minorities along, and a skillful program to induce the military to withdraw from politics. There are many other cases from which the Burmese can learn about both these questions. There are plenty of badly designed federations around: Consider Nigeria's first republic or Pakistan between 1947 and 1971 (and even now). Federal schemes have lots of hazards. Demands for the proliferation of states are very common, as is discrimination against non-natives of the new state components of federations. These are very big problems that need to be attended to at the outset.

There are many lessons about getting the military out of politics; the Indonesians, as it happens, did a very good job of this. But institutional designers often pick the wrong examples; they look to the most successful democracies rather than to countries with problems similar to their own that seem to have made progress; or they look to the institutions of the ex-colonial power. So it's important to help them find appropriate examples, and international advisors haven't always been very good at this.

Larry Diamond: Another issue of institutional design that is often ignored is how to limit the potential accumulation of power, so that the stakes of elections are lowered and there are some institutions capable of checking and constraining monopolistic tendencies early on. You need a strong judiciary, a stronger legislative power, and institutions of horizontal accountability.

Despite all China's innovations in using nondemocratic methods to get accountability and better governance, its system is in a very advanced state of decay. I think they are one financial crisis away from the collapse of the Chinese Communist Party because the hatred of the party and of its

corruption is now gathering so much steam. I wish that Xi Jinping would launch an incremental process of transition of the kind that took place across the strait in Taiwan; otherwise, I think there is a real danger. The PRC [People's Republic of China] looks strong, confident, and dynamic, but there is a lot of rot in the foundations and in public attitudes, and if they don't get going with incremental reform, things could unfold in a lot of interesting ways, including a sudden Soviet-style collapse. I don't think we should wish for this because there'd be a vacuum. There are no institutions, no opposition, no national parties, nor even any effective civic networks yet. The outcome could fall into the category of "Be careful what you wish for"—not a breakthrough to democracy but military rule or some kind of ugly, nationalistic, noncommunist, Putin-style leadership, which might make military moves on the disputed offshore islands to divert public attention from all its domestic frustrations. China will be a place to watch in the next ten to fifteen years.

Francis Fukuyama: I don't disagree that you need all these checks on power when you're designing institutions; I just think that formally specifying them isn't going to help very much. You may say, "OK, you're going to have an independent constitutional court," and then the president just appoints one of his cronies to head it because there isn't a deep tradition of judicial independence. Too much attention to the formal rules obscures the fact that things are so fluid in these early democracies that everything really depends on the ability of the underlying social groups to mobilize and to get their way. That might be the most important aspect to think about. At the time of the Glorious Revolution, for example, why is it that the new king finally agreed to a constitution? Our Stanford colleague Barry Weingast thinks that it's because they designed this brilliant, game-theoretic, stable pact, but the formal agreement didn't create stability by itself. The key is that the parliamentary side had guns, and the king knew that if he violated the pact, they'd take their guns out of their cabinets and try to chop off a royal head again.

Marc F. Plattner: Before moving on to the question of lessons for democracy assistance, I want to add a word about legitimacy. It's very striking that, even though people may be dubious about whether there will be democratic transitions in countries like China or Russia or Iran, the prospect somehow seems not wholly unrealistic. In *The Spirit of Democracy*, Larry makes this point in comparing India and China: India scores much worse on all kinds of indicators, but people would be shocked if fifteen years from now India had a different kind of regime, whereas no one would really be shocked if China's authoritarian regime were to fall during that time period. I think that helps explain why the whole notion of transitions has caught on. For decades now, authoritarian regimes have been dropping like flies, often without being confronted by the kind of mobilization one

would think is necessary to make authoritarian rulers give up their grip on power. I think that has something to do with the superior legitimacy that democracy still enjoys compared to authoritarian regimes.

Having promised that we'll get to the question of democracy assistance, let me move on then and ask what implications emerge from our discussion that might provide guidance to organizations like NED and many others that are engaged in assisting democracy abroad. Frank, you indicated that you thought lots of things were being done the wrong way.

Francis Fukuyama: I can put it really simply. I think we pay too much attention to civil society, and not enough to political parties or to helping democratic groups come up with programmatic ways of governing. If you want to have a democracy, there are really three stages you have to go through. First, you need to have the initial mobilization that gets rid of the old authoritarian regime. Second, you have to hold the first free election, which means that you have to learn how to organize a political party. To this day, I don't think anyone has come up with an alternative to the political party as a means of electoral mobilization. That is why political parties exist. Civil society cannot substitute for them in taking on that function.

Finally, once you get through the first election and you have a new democratically elected government, it has to be able to deliver public services, public goods, and all the things people are hoping for from democracy. It's at the second and third stages that democratic activists often mess up. Samuel Huntington said that students and young people are terrible at organizing things. They can organize demonstrations and protests, but to organize a political party that can get out the vote in rural areas and in every single precinct in the country is something really beyond their ability. Of course, teaching these skills is the stock and trade of organizations like NDI and IRI, but I think that even more assistance is needed to help civil society activists make the transition to becoming a well-oiled political machine.

And then comes the governing part. Larry and I were just in Ukraine at a meeting of alumni of CDDRL's Draper Hills Summer Fellows program who live in the former Soviet Union. There was a large Georgian delegation there, and we had some very interesting discussions about what's gone on in Georgia. I think that the big difference between the Rose and the Orange Revolutions can be found in that third stage—what you actually do once you have come to power in a democratic revolution. The Ukrainians basically turned the state over to a bunch of old political hacks that had come out of the *nomenklatura*. Yushchenko was one of these people, even though he came to represent the face of the Orange Revolution; Yulia Tymoshenko was another such hero of this democratic revolution. Yet neither of them made any effort to deal with the thorough corruption of the state in Ukraine or to make it deliver

more effectively. The Georgians under Saakashvili undertook a reform of their bureaucracy, beginning with the security services. They were committed to seeing to it that you wouldn't have to bribe the police in order to get them to protect you. And they worked to introduce "one-stop shopping," where you can go to a government agency for a license or registration of a business and get it right away. They were remarkably successful in these efforts. They went a little bit too far, arresting too many people and engaging in some very questionable practices, but they are in a much better situation than Ukraine is right now. After they had their transition and then their initial elections, they figured out how to make their state run a little better, whereas Ukraine got bogged down at this third stage. So we need to pay more attention to stages two and three if we really want to make sure that these revolutions don't get reversed.

Donald L. Horowitz: I agree with Frank, and I want to carry it even further and in a different direction. I think external involvement matters, and if you're looking for proof, there's a very easy case. The OSCE was operating in Eastern Europe to raise the standards for the treatment of minorities. It used a lot of carrots and sticks, and it essentially demanded things that Western European countries would never have tolerated at home, particularly quotas for minorities in various institutions.

There are a lot of ironies in external involvement. A lot of outside organizations—I'm thinking of International IDEA, UNDP, and some others—have been developing a consensus on standard prescriptions regarding both the substance and the process of institutional design for new democracies. But if I'm right about the tyranny of starting conditions, then following standard practices is generally a bad idea. Let me give you an idea of what some of the elements of that consensus are. There's an emerging consensus that parliamentary democracy is always better than presidential democracy; but the literature isn't unanimous on this, and there are often reasons to favor presidentialism. With regard to electoral systems, there's a very strong consensus that proportional representation (PR) is best, especially for achieving minority representation. Yet there now are studies that show that geographically concentrated minorities actually do better under first-past-the-post than they do under PR. Sometimes PR is an especially apt system; it can reinforce multipolarity, for example. But sometimes it's not; it can reinforce fragmentation where that's a problem, and it can retard the growth of broadly based parties that can aggregate diverse interests.

As for the process of making new institutions, the consensus is strongly in favor of complete transparency in constitutional deliberations. But it is well known that politicians find it difficult to reach compromises when everybody's watching. Jon Elster has said, I think quite rightly, that you need secrecy in negotiation and openness about results. But that subtlety has been lost on those who favor transparency at all stages. The

consensus also favors extensive popular participation in constitution-making so that the public “takes ownership” of the process. That is to say, the constitution makers have to educate the public on what a constitution is about and get the public’s feedback about what ought to be in the constitution. But this is likely to come at the expense of deliberation and consensus-formation among the elected members of the constituent assembly or the politicians who are going to have to make the new institutions work. Despite these very strong recommendations for extensive popular participation, there is not even a scintilla of evidence that it improves the durability or the democratic content of constitutions. And there are costs. Educating the public on the details of a constitution requires a lot of time and effort that could be spent soliciting good advice and evaluating it carefully in the light of starting conditions.

So my bottom line is that practitioners should avoid *a priori* standard formulas, because very small differences in the context from one country to another can be surprisingly important. What they really ought to do is start reading the *Journal of Democracy*.

Larry Diamond: Yes, and if they do, “The End of the Transition Paradigm” is one of the things they would read, and they would see in Tom Carothers’s analysis a reflection of what Don has just said: It’s very important to get the political analysis right in each country; there’s got to be a meeting in some way between our comparative and theoretical knowledge and the facts on the ground.

I just want to make a final point. I think everything Frank said about parties and institutions is unassailable, but I think that the international-assistance community also makes a mistake by abandoning civil society after the transition. I hate to keep coming back to South Africa, but I have to call attention to the death of that country’s seminal institution in building a democratic civil society, IDASA [the Institute for Democracy in Africa, which shut down in March 2013]. Whatever other specific reasons may have been involved, its closure was due in significant part to the fact that international financial support for its work in South Africa simply dried up. People said, “Come on, it’s South Africa, an established democracy in a middle-income country; they don’t need help. There are all these rich South African businessmen, many of them liberal, and they should support institutions like this.” Well, these businessmen are all worried about offending the ANC by overtly supporting independent civil society institutions like IDASA, so they’re not going to do so. So where is this kind of institution supposed to get funding? If we say, “Civil society doesn’t need to be a priority anymore; let’s focus just on political institutions,” we risk harming both. Often the energy for institutional innovation and reform comes from civil society, and partnerships between civil society and political parties or between civil society and the state can yield significant benefits. It’s very important not to lose sight of that.