Government and Opposition, Vol. 49, No. 2, pp. 313–330, 2014
doi:10.1017/gov.2013.48
First published online 13 February 2014

Review Article

*Archie Brown:** **Alfred Stepan and the Study of Comparative Politics**

Douglas Chalmers and Scott Mainwaring (eds), *Problems Confronting Contemporary Democracies: Essays in Honor of Alfred Stepan* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012).

Alfred Stepan, Juan J. Linz and Yogendra Yadav, *Crafting State-Nations: India and Other Multinational Democracies* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011).

For the past half-century Alfred Stepan has been one of the world's most innovative and influential scholars in the field of comparative politics. His standing was acknowledged by the International Political Science Association when he received the Karl Deutsch Award in 2012 for achievement in political science which is handed out only once every three years. The most recent recipients before Stepan were his closest collaborator over several decades Juan Linz (in 2003), Charles Tilly (2006) and Giovanni Sartori (2009). Stepan's distinction as a comparativist has now been marked by an excellent volume in his honour, edited by Scott Mainwaring and Douglas Chalmers. In order to give the book intellectual coherence the editors limit the contributions to an examination of the problems confronting contemporary democracies.

That is very far from being a narrow theme, and yet it is only part (albeit a major one) of Stepan's own oeuvre. Stepan has also continued to publish profusely in the years since the conference in his honour in October 2007 that formed the basis for the Chalmers and Mainwaring volume. The important book, *Crafting State-Nations* (Stepan et al. 2011), was published too late to come within their ambit. I consider it below, for it is a subject on which Stepan feels strongly and has written eloquently. What unites his work, as Chalmers and Mainwaring note in their admirable overview of his

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writings, is a determination to concern himself with things that matter in the real world. As they put it, Stepan 'does not study minor issues, nor does he seek to make minor incremental contributions to arcane debates' (Chalmers and Mainwaring 2012: 15). The way he tackles the big issues is through rigorous, evidence-based argument, accompanied by first-hand knowledge of the polities and societies within his purview. The editors of the volume in Stepan's honour are surely right when they express their belief that 'no other political scientist has conducted serious fieldwork in so many parts of the world' (Chalmers and Mainwaring 2011: xi).

Among the more numerous major subjects on which Stepan has made outstanding contributions are (1) the military in politics; (2) transition from authoritarian rule; (3) federalism, nationalism, and the distinction between 'state-nations' and 'nation-states'; (4) the role of the state and the quality of democracy; and (5) religion and politics.

THE MILITARY IN POLITICS

Stepan began his academic career by studying authoritarian regimes. His first book was on the military in Brazilian politics (Stepan 1971) – an especially sensitive issue throughout Latin America, and one which Stepan examined also in the Peruvian context (Stepan 1978: esp. 117–57). In the years since then the threat of military coups on the American continent has receded. In the 1960s and 1970s only five out of twenty Latin American countries managed to avoid having military regimes, whereas today there are no military dictatorships in the Americas (Stepan 2009: 10). What is especially notable is that Stepan's analyses of the problem in the 1970s had a political as well as an academic impact. In his contribution to the Festschrift, Fernando Henrique Cardoso (2012) suggests that Stepan's study of the military in Brazil (and in authoritarian Latin American regimes more generally) helped political practitioners to analyse and tackle the problem. No one is better qualified than Cardoso, a scholar-turned-politician, to make such a judgement.

As an academic social scientist, Cardoso made his own important contributions to understanding Latin American politics and societies. Then, during his two terms as Brazilian president from 1995 to 2003, he played a decisive role in bringing the military round to acceptance of democracy. He engaged in dialogue with the army, listening as well

as cajoling. Through cogent argument and patient persuasion, he won the armed forces over to compliance with democratic norms. That included their eventual acquiescence with the creation of a Ministry of Defence under civilian political leadership. Cardoso's chapter in the Chalmers and Mainwaring volume is fittingly entitled 'Reconciling the Brazilian Military with Democracy' and carries the subtitle, 'The Power of Alfred Stepan's Ideas'. Cardoso notes that, despite the dominant role that the military had played in Latin America, it was an institution that had been little studied by scholars in those countries. Accordingly, it was Stepan who drew the attention both of political activists and of scholars in that part of the world to questions that might appear more obvious in retrospect but were overlooked at the time. Among the most salient were: 'What are the inner dynamics of the military? How cohesive or fragmented are they? How can these differences favor or hinder processes of regime liberalization?' By addressing these issues, Cardoso (2012: 68) writes, 'Stepan's contribution enabled us to come to grips with the critical challenge of reconciling the military with society, thus paving the way for viable strategies of democratic change'.

Among the especially formidable obstacles to the military's acceptance of democracy which Stepan identified was the issue of past atrocities. Drawing a line under them would be to let down badly those who had suffered and it would deprive a democratizing regime of the support of the victims' families for the new order. However, prosecuting army officers for repressive acts under the previous regime carried the real risk of a strong military backlash and reversal of the democratization process. Cardoso, acknowledging the dilemma and recognizing the all-too-likely consequences of the latter course, chose an intermediate path. This was to set up a commission that would investigate all the human rights abuses, unearthing the facts and compensating the victims of torture and the families of people who had been killed. Yet those who had committed the abuses were not prosecuted. Cardoso (2012: 73) observes: 'My sense is that truth, as the precondition for peace and reconciliation, is the alternative to either outright impunity or the punishment of the many guilty of human rights abuses.'

TRANSITION FROM AUTHORITARIAN RULE

Very few scholars have made as great a contribution to 'transitology' as Alfred Stepan; he has laid particular emphasis not only on the

transition from authoritarianism to democracy but also on the longer-term problems of democratic consolidation. He has combined institutional analysis with attention to agency – an awareness of how much depends on the political skill and the values of leaders. Having noted some remarkable features of the Spanish transition from authoritarian rule – 'democracy was established there without a breakdown of the armed forces, without a purge of even the political police, without much apparent politicization, and with two major parties that sprang up almost overnight' (Stepan 1986: 61) – he accords great weight to the inclusionary and collegial style of the prime minister who led that transition, Adolfo Suárez. In that context, it is worth noting that Juan Linz, in one of the most insightful contributions to the Chalmers and Mainwaring book, observes that too little attention has been given in studies of democracy to rulers and leadership. In audits of democratic performance: 'the *demos* in a sense is being made the sole focus' whereas, in contrast, 'the *kratos*, the people who rule in a democracy are generally underanalyzed' (Linz 2012: 229).[1]

A decade after his contribution to the landmark volume edited by Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe Schmitter and Laurence Whitehead (1986), Stepan co-authored with Juan Linz what is even now the best single-volume analysis of democratic transition and consolidation worldwide (Linz and Stepan 1996). The authors compare the far more successful transition to democracy in Spain with that of post-Soviet Russia in which the limited nature of Boris Yeltsin's commitment to democracy and his winner-takes-all attitude to politics was a sad contrast with the role of Suárez (Linz and Stepan 1996: 391–4). Yeltsin showed little interest in democratic institution building but presided over the speedy development of a notably crooked capitalism. Both this, and Western leaders' unwise readiness to describe the emerging hybrid as democracy, served to discredit democratic ideas in the eyes of many Russians, including even some of those who had embraced those ideas in the final years of the Soviet Union.

Linz and Stepan's *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation* has many outstanding qualities, not least its path-breaking chapter on 'Stateness, Nationalism, and Democratization', a theme to which the authors return (with Yogendra Yadav) in their *Crafting State-Nations* (Stepan et al. 2011). In the earlier book, the depth of their analysis of the process of change in southern Europe and

South America – parts of the world on which Linz and Stepan have many decades of almost unrivalled expertise – comes as no surprise. Less predictable but no less impressive has been their illuminating analysis of post-Communist Europe. Stepan, as has been his custom before writing about particular countries, spent a lot of time in Central Europe. This included three years as the first president and rector of the Central European University, during which time he was based mainly in Budapest, but with frequent working visits to Prague and Warsaw. He also travelled extensively in different countries of the former Soviet Union, including the Russian Federation, interviewing important political players and observers (with the assistance in Tatarstan and Bashkortostan of Shamil Yenikeyeff, who has contributed a chapter to the Chalmers and Mainwaring volume on the role of Russia's oil companies in centre-periphery relations).

Having been, along with O'Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead, one of the major contributors to elucidating the Third Wave of Democracy (Stepan 1986) – which occurred in southern Europe and Latin America in the 1970s – Stepan has thrown light, too, on the discrete Fourth Wave, which began in the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and was decisively important not only for the transformation of Eastern Europe but also for the transition to majority rule in South Africa, since the anti-Communist card of the apartheid regime had become a busted flush. The African National Congress (ANC), in turn, was influenced by the change in Soviet foreign policy from supporting armed struggle in Africa to encouraging conflict resolution and peaceful change.[2] Stepan and Linz rightly dismissed the view that when former Communists formed governments in Central Europe, this signified a 'return to Communism'. As they put it: 'Even if some of the reformed Communists might not actually have undergone profound changes in their mentality (and many, of course, have not) the external reality to which [they] must respond has changed profoundly. As long as democracy is the only game in town, the incentive structure of those who seek governmental power is derived from the democratic context' (Linz and Stepan 1996: 455).

The necessary conditions for the completion of transition from authoritarianism to democracy and of consolidation of the latter which Linz and Stepan specify are: the rule of law and freedom for civil society; the autonomy of political society, meaning especially free electoral competition between autonomous political parties;

constitutional rules to allocate power democratically; a state bureaucracy that has not been politicized but is professional and capable of serving democratic governments; and sufficient autonomy for economic society to prevent fusion or excessive concentration of political and economic power (although that last criterion is entirely compatible with a mixed ownership economy and regulation of the market). Only *after* Linz and Stepan completed their magnum opus on democratic transition and consolidation, wrote Stepan, 'were some things crystal clear to us. No state, no democracy. Free and fair elections are a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for democracy. A complete ''free market'' has never existed in a democracy and never can.' And, 'in much of the world that is not now democratic, more than one nation exists in the state. In these circumstances nation-state building and democracy-building are conflicting logics' (Stepan 2001: 18).

FEDERALISM,'STATE-NATIONS' AND 'NATION-STATES'

That last point about nation-state building has been a recurrent theme of Stepan's (and Linz's) work for some years, but its fullest elaboration is in the second of the two books at the head of this review article, *Crafting State-Nations* (Stepan et al. 2011). Stepan has written a great deal on federalism in multinational societies, nowhere more illuminatingly than in his chapter 'Toward a New Comparative Politics of Federalism, (Multi)Nationalism, and Democracy: Beyond Rikerian Federalism' (Stepan 2001: 315–61). In this body of work he has become increasingly critical of what he regards as the French notion of the nation-state and the constant talk even today of the need for 'nation-building' in states where this is liable to lead to disaster. His argument is that in countries with a variety of different languages and ethnic groups, state-building is appropriate, but the attempt to create a single nation in countries which have profound cultural diversity, with some of it territorially based and politically articulated by significant groups, can be a recipe for oppression and civil war. People have multiple identities, although they can sometimes be brainwashed into thinking they have only one. The process of state building should recognize the reality and legitimacy of the diversity, while attempting simultaneously to foster what the citizens have in common, consolidating

some of those shared identities. This has been done in India, which sensibly focused on state building as distinct from nation building. Political elites in Sri Lanka, Burma and Turkey chose the latter option and generated civil strife. Stepan and his co-authors do not, however, idealize India. They note:

> The anti-Muslim pogrom of 2002 in Gujarat reminds us that the success of a state-nation is contingent on continuous political practices. Creating a state-nation is not a one-shot affair but a continual effort. It also reminds us that what is made can also be unmade. As in the case of nation-states, a state-nation is also a politically imagined community that needs to be sustained through continuous contestation and re-creation in the realm of ideas, institutions, and political practices. (Stepan et al. 2011: 88)

Stepan's central argument is that 'the old wisdom' that 'holds that the territorial boundaries of a state must coincide with the perceived cultural boundaries of a nation' (Stepan et al. 2011: 1) is not only misguided but dangerous. Whereas there are some successful democracies which come close to the ideal type of the nation-state, among them not only unitary states such as Sweden, Japan and Portugal but even some federal states, notably Germany and Australia, such countries are in the minority. The United States is also not problematical in this respect, for although its citizens' ethnic origins are more than usually diverse, and the country has great sociocultural variegation, geographical dispersion of successive waves of immigrants has enabled the US to become a vibrant nation-state of an unusual type. (Latinos, it is true, as a rapidly growing segment of the American population, are much more heavily concentrated in a few states than in others, but they embrace both their Latino and American identities.) As we shall see, Stepan and Linz regard their country as having profound problems, but, notwithstanding the extreme coercion that was used in the past in the creation of this nation-state, the process of becoming American is now voluntary and still eagerly sought by would-be immigrants.

In the twentieth century few nation-states were created other than through coercion. And even an old state such as Spain has run into difficulties, for attempts to coercively achieve nation-statehood ultimately did not work. Its post-Franco asymmetrical federalism makes prudent concessions to Basque and Catalonian identities, which may be enough to hold Spain together as a state-nation, whereas any attempts to make it a nation-state could end only

in tears. Stepan et al. (2011) do not pay much attention to the United Kingdom in their book, but it, too, is surely an example of a state-nation.[3] Stepan and his co-authors write that in democratic societies 'the institutional safeguards constitutive of state-nation policies most likely take the form of federalism, often specifically *asymmetrical* federalism, or consociational practices' (Stepan et al. 2011: 5). In the UK it has taken the form of *asymmetrical devolution*, especially since the passing of the 1998 Scotland Act, although substantial administrative devolution long preceded that important transference of legislative power and the formation of a Scottish government. Whether the existing arrangements will be enough to hold the UK together as a state-nation remains to be seen. The next (and probably not the last) big test of its continuing viability will come with the Scottish referendum on independence in September 2014. Although politicians may carelessly refer to the United Kingdom as a nation-state, it clearly is not. And in the policies they have pursued, successive central governments in London have increasingly recognized that unity cannot be achieved other than on the basis of institutional recognition of the UK's national and cultural diversity.

As Stepan argues, a state-nation has to be crafted. It is not a matter of recognizing some pre-existing reality but a result of deliberate policies and design. A diverse polity, if it is to become a successful state-nation, will, notwithstanding the cultural variation among its citizens, achieve a high level of positive identification with the state; its assorted political identities and loyalties will be complementary and overlapping; and it will have a high degree of trust in the most important legal and administrative components of the state, including positive support for state-wide democratic institutions (Stepan et al. 2011: 7–8). Stepan and Linz classify states according to whether they come closer to the ideal type of the nation-state or the state-nation and they challenge the idea that '*only* a nation-state can generate the necessary degree of strong identity and pride in membership of the state that is necessary for a democracy'. They cite the findings of the World Values Survey which, in scores for 'strong pride' in belonging to one's country, produced results that were 'virtually indistinguishable between nation-states and state-nations, with the latter actually having marginally more pride' (Stepan et al. 2011: 38). *Crafting State-Nations* is a fundamentally important contribution to understanding the relationship between nationhood and democracy in the great

many states that are *not* composed of just one relatively homogeneous nation.

THE STATE AND THE QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY

In Russia in the 1990s a simplistic ideology of 'the less state the better' provided a spurious pretext for insider privatization and the development of cosy relationships between enterprising speculators and accommodating bureaucrats as many of Russia's rich natural resources were sold to preselected buyers at knock-down prices. Since then the state has been strengthened and those who were 'appointed billionaires' during the Yeltsin presidency have, in most cases, been allowed to keep their vast wealth, provided they show loyalty to the country's political rulers and provide funds for them or their favoured projects whenever called upon to do so. What has *not* been strengthened is a democratic state. More generally, the point is made by Stepan that 'if there is no usable state with a democratically controlled coercive apparatus, citizens' rights cannot be effectively defended in a new democracy'. Very little attention, he adds, was given in the transitological literature to what should be done with the military, police and intelligence services in new democracies (Stepan 2009: 6). Linz and Stepan have been acutely aware that even transition to something approximating much more closely to democracy than Russia attained during the 1990s is no guarantee against reversal. Their edited volume in the 1970s, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes* (Linz and Stepan 1978), was a major examination of the most important historical cases of such democratic breakdown in twentieth-century Europe and Latin America.

Apart from states such as Russia, which has experienced a creeping authoritarianism that began under Yeltsin and has been taken further by Putin, there are many countries where the quality of democracy – which everywhere, it goes without saying, is necessarily imperfect – raises real concern. Not shirking controversy, Stepan and Linz have expressed strong disquiet about the quality of democracy in the United States, looking at the country through the eyes of comparativists (Stepan and Linz 2011). In an important article – called a 'review essay', but it is much more than that – Stepan and Linz complain about the 'splendid isolation' in which the United States is so often studied. Using a wealth of data, they

point out that the US is 'now the most unequal longstanding democracy in a developed country in the world' and that the preoccupation of many Americanists with Congress, the presidency and the Supreme Court obscures this important fact and its implications for the US political system (Stepan and Linz 2011: 841).

They make important points both about the quality of American political science so far as its study of the US is concerned and about the quality of American democracy. They point to the fading of a tradition which saw some of the most important contributions to an understanding of American politics being made by scholars who combined comparative research with work on the US – from Robert Dahl and Seymour Martin Lipset to Ira Katznelson today. Although Dahl at one time was attacked for taking too uncritical a view of American politics, it was never a just aspersion, and his own concerns about the quality of US democracy, which drew upon a very well-informed comparative perspective, have become still more overt in his later work (Dahl 2003). Stepan and Linz note that two generations ago 'all of the best Ph.D. programs in political science required the demonstration of at least a reading ability in one (or two) foreign languages,' whereas now most programmes allow doctoral candidates to substitute quantitative or formal modelling skills, with academic career incentives perversely promoting monolingualism. Of the 25 top PhD programmes in political science in the US, now only New York University 'retains an explicit language requirement for all of its Ph.D. candidates' (Stepan and Linz 2011: 842). One result of this is that many American specialists on American politics are among the world's narrowest 'area specialists'.

In their substantive observations on American politics and society, Stepan and Linz focus on two issues in particular – the degree of inequality and the system's 'majority-constraining features'. The US, as a result of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, the Civil Rights movement and, not least, Lyndon Johnson's Great Society reforms, achieved in 1968 its best-ever Gini index of inequality (that is, its least unequal). Even then, Stepan and Linz point out, 'during the heyday of income *equality* in the United States', no other democracy for which comparable data are available was as *unequal* as the United States. Since the early 1970s inequality in the US has widened and 'by 2009 the US Census Bureau had put the US Gini at .469, America's worst Gini index in many decades' (Stepan and Linz 2011: 843–4).

Stepan and Linz see a link between the 'inequality inducing' and 'majority constraining' aspects of American politics. This is partly based on the argument that 'the more veto players there are in a political system, the more difficult it is to construct a win-set to alter the political status quo' (Stepan and Linz 2011: 844). The US has, of course, two powerful chambers of its legislature with different compositions at any one time, a Supreme Court which passes judgement on issues which in most countries would not run the risk of veto by judges, as well as the 50 states of the Union, also enjoying constitutionally embedded powers. A combination of the last two came close to scuppering President Obama's healthcare reform, even after it had been greatly watered down and made more complicated by Congress. Thirteen states challenged the constitutionality of the 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and it was only by the narrow margin of 5:4 (with Chief Justice Roberts on this occasion *not* voting with the conservatives) that the Supreme Court deemed it in June 2012 to be not in violation of the Constitution.

For various reasons, not least the power of the states, the US Constitution itself is by far the most difficult constitution of a democracy to amend. Minorities possess exceptional powers to block the wishes of majorities. This is nowhere more clearly manifested than in the equal representation of every state in a political institution as powerful as the Senate. The value of a vote in California has close to 70 times less weight than a vote for a senator in Wyoming, making the US Senate the most malapportioned upper house of any democratic federal state. Furthermore, Stepan and Linz point out, the stipulation in Article 5 of the US Constitution that 'no State, without its Consent, shall be deprived of its equal Suffrage in the Senate' means that this is not just a quite normal requirement for an exceptional majority to change a constitution but 'a unanimity requirement'. They concur with Dahl that to change the two-senators-per-state rule would require a new US constitution, and when the blocking power of minorities is combined with the prestige of the existing constitution, it is hard to see how this could ever happen (Stepan and Linz 2011: 844–6).

Yet, in the face of these obstacles, Stepan and Linz argue that both citizens and academics should dispense with their 'unthinking acceptance of America's founding institutions'. They take no comfort from the extent of US inequality and the veto power of

minorities ready to sustain social injustice. They advocate more 'politically focused, comparative research . . . to reexamine the reasons for such persistent inequality' and to 'explore new ways to transcend the pattern' (Stepan and Linz 2011: 853–4). Stepan has always recognized the importance of ideas in politics, and more critical analyses of the kind he and Linz provide might do something to puncture academic and political complacency. To these authors' institutional points it is necessary to add that there is an important link between the extreme economic inequality and political inequality in the shape of lavishly financed lobbies in support of entrenched interests, not to mention the unusually great role (by comparative standards) played by money in American elections. Academic analyses can go just so far in addressing these issues. Ultimately, only serious social movements and more radical political leadership are capable of redefining public policy and American institutions.

RELIGION AND POLITICS

In 2006 Alfred Stepan became the founder and director of the Center for the Study of Democracy, Tolerance and Religion at Columbia University, a post he holds to the present day. Once again, nothing could be clearer than the relevance of his intellectual pursuits to problems that matter in the real world – a world in which inter-communal and intra-communal conflict on religious lines and pretexts is pervasive. Stepan has, in several places, elaborated his argument about the 'twin tolerations' that are needed if religion and democracy are to coexist harmoniously within a given society (Stepan 2000, and in a fuller version in Stepan 2001). These tolerations are 'the minimal boundaries of freedom of action that must somehow be crafted for political institutions vis-à-vis religious authorities, and for religious individuals and groups vis-à-vis political institutions' (Stepan 2000: 37). Since democracy is, among other things, 'a system of conflict regulation that allows open competition over the values and goals that citizens want to advance', this means that 'as long as groups do not use violence, do not violate the rights of other citizens, and stay within the rules of the democratic game, *all* groups are granted the right to advance their interests, both in civil society and in political society' (Stepan 2001: 216). Not only,

therefore, must individuals and groups be granted religious freedom and the right to worship privately, they should also be able to articulate their values publicly and be entitled 'to sponsor organizations and movements in political society, as long as their public advancement of these beliefs does not impinge negatively on the liberties of other citizens, or violate democracy and the law, by violence' (Stepan 2001: 217).

Having set out in principle what he means by the 'twin tolerations', Stepan is able to show that these have been respected at various times (including those we are living through) and in various places by each of the world's major religions, even though every one of these religions has been on other occasions brutally intolerant. He is sharply critical of Samuel Huntington's 'civilizational' approach, summarized as: in Islam God is Caesar, in Confucianism Caesar is God, and in Orthodoxy God is Caesar's junior partner. Stepan argues that a closer look at the relationships between religious and political institutions in particular states – an institutional perspective – is liable to lead to a much less gloomy view of the probable cultural boundaries of democracy than that suggested by Huntington (1996). Stepan has been a vigorous contributor to the debate on whether or not Islam is compatible with democracy. His general answer is that all of the world's great religions are, as he puts it, 'multivocal'. They all harbour some diversity of belief and practices. Some strands of Islam are at odds with democracy but there are other strands which are compatible with democratic rule.

Stepan's more particular, and empirical, answer to the question is to point to the fact that several hundred million people have experienced democracy in countries in which the main religion has been Islam. For practical purposes, he considers a Muslim-majority country to be plausibly considered a democracy if it has received in the last 10 consecutive years a score of +7 on Polity IV's 21-point scale of democracy, and at least 3 for political rights on the seven-point Freedom House scale, in which 1 is the top rating. Four countries (albeit *only* four out of 45 countries with a Muslim majority) meet both of these criteria: Indonesia, Turkey (where there are, indeed, still tensions between secularism and political Islam), Senegal and Albania (Stepan 2012: 390). The number of Muslims living in a democracy is, of course, greatly boosted if India's 161 million Muslims are counted. Although they constitute a minority in India, the only countries with a larger Islamic population

are Indonesia and Pakistan. Using survey data from India, which indeed provides an interesting laboratory of coexistence of major religions with large numbers of believers and followers, Stepan found high – and remarkably similar – levels of support for democracy among Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Sikh respondents. Interestingly, in all four of India's major religions, 'the greater the intensity of religious practice, the greater support for democracy'. A similarly high correlation between intensity of religious practice and support for democracy has been found in Indonesia (Stepan 2011: 136–7).

Stepan rejects the argument, sometimes advanced, that for a state to have an 'established religion' is incompatible with democracy. He observes that some of the most firmly consolidated democracies in Europe have established churches. In the United Kingdom they include different national churches – Anglican and Presbyterian – in England and Scotland. Particular support for his argument is the fact that all of the Scandinavian states – Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland – have had 'constitutionally embedded Evangelical Lutheranism as their established religion' (Stepan in Calhoun et al. 2011: 121). It is evident, then, that a complete separation of church and state is not a necessary condition of democracy. What *is* incompatible with democracy is religious leaders giving instructions to elected governments and state authorities on what they must do, although they remain entitled to exhort them to follow one course of action rather than another.

At one time there was a widespread belief, certainly among Protestants, that if Catholicism was the main religion within a state, the country's chances of becoming a democracy were negligible. Although the Catholic Church has, indeed, often been allied closely with authoritarian right-wing regimes, there are now too many examples of predominantly Catholic countries which have become democracies for the notion that it cannot accommodate itself to this form of government to be taken seriously. Orthodoxy has been associated with political subservience to the state (Huntington was not wrong about that), even if that state is authoritarian. The corollary, however, is that the Church attunes itself also to the powers-that-be in a democratic state, as has been demonstrated in Greece over the past four decades. (Greece's severe social and political turmoil of late has socioeconomic rather than religious roots.) A more widespread contention until recently was that the

Confucian tradition was irreconcilable with democracy and that countries within the 'Confucian civilization' (in Huntington's terms) were ill-equipped to make a transition from authoritarian rule. China is regularly cited as an example, but other countries of Confucian tradition – South Korea, Japan, Taiwan – are today quite vibrant democracies.

Several of the contributors to the Chalmers and Mainwaring (2011) volume in Stepan's honour underscore his insistence on the 'multivocality' of each major religion. Within them all there are authoritarian currents (much stronger in some than others), but in each there are also formulations and groups providing 'critical moral support for democratic processes' and constituting independent sources of influence within the state (Smith 2012: 341). Within European communist states Christian churches were important sources of alternative values and beliefs to those being promoted by the entire panoply of institutions under the control of the party-state. The Protestant Church in East Germany (the background from which Angela Merkel emerged) was a particular case in point, and the Catholic Church in Poland played a still greater role, having many more adherents than the Communist party and far higher prestige as the major symbol of continuity of Polish nationhood.

In Europe, where religious observance is in long-term decline and atheists may occupy the highest posts in government without this causing a fuss (whereas in the US it is a reasonable assumption that there will be a woman president before an atheist occupies the highest office), a focus on religion and politics may seem a marginally less salient topic than some of the other themes which Stepan has addressed in his long and fruitful career. Yet, even in Europe the presence of Islamic minorities, in particular, has raised many of the traditional conundrums of the relationship between religious communities and the state. Brian H. Smith, in the Chalmers and Mainwaring volume, writes that four-fifths of the world's population identifies with a religious tradition and that the majority of them claim that their moral values are shaped primarily by it (Smith 2012: 347). That figure could only be arrived at by making some big assumptions – among them counting Confucianism as a religion, whereas it is probably better considered as an ethical philosophy, and by including the very tenuous connections with religion of the majority of the population in much of Europe. Nevertheless, the relationship between religion and politics remains an important topic for research

and reflection, even in more secular times. And the times, when it comes to religiosity, are undoubtedly different in different places – far from the same in most of Europe as they are in the Middle East, India, Pakistan or even the United States of America.

Stepan has persuasively argued that all of the world's major religions are potentially compatible with democracy and at times they have demonstrated this in practice. But they have all, in greatly varying degrees, displayed also highly authoritarian proclivities. Each must be examined within the context of the history of particular states rather than as a 'civilization'. Stepan's work, taken as a whole, is characterized, as Chalmers and Mainwaring (2012: 18) observe, both by recognition of the strength of the imprint of past experience and institutional inheritance and by an emphasis on the possibility of bringing about profound change – in other words, a combination of path dependence and historical openness. A realist who cautions that social scientists and policymakers 'should not deceive themselves that all problems are solvable' (Stepan et al. 2011: 275), Stepan yet remains at heart an optimist, and one always on the lookout for ways to turn his deep academic knowledge to practical use.

NOTES

[1] Linz and Stepan stimulated and elaborated each other's ideas throughout most of the former's academic career and during the whole of the latter's trajectory as a political scientist. Linz reflects on the 'endless days and nights arguing, writing, in many different places in America and Europe mostly centered on the fate of democracy, up to the present crises in Tunis, Egypt, and Libya', adding that his contribution to the Festschrift is 'in gratitude for our many hours of intellectual exchange and our friendship' (Linz 2012: 250). After I had submitted this review article to the journal, the sad news came of the death of Juan Linz on 1 October 2013 at the age of 86. Linz was intellectually active right up to the end of his life and his passing is a great loss to the study and better understanding of politics.

[2] Although Stepan rarely, if ever, uses the concept of the Fourth Wave (for elaboration of the significance and discreteness of the phenomenon, see Brown 2007: 216–23), he is well aware that the change inaugurated by Mikhail Gorbachev, especially from 1987 onwards, was quite unconnected with what happened in southern Europe or Latin America in the 1970s, even though the Spanish Socialist Prime Minister Felipe González became Gorbachev's favourite foreign interlocutor.

[3] UK Labour Party leader Ed Miliband's well-intentioned borrowing of Disraeli's 'one nation' rhetoric was probably unwise. It is meant to address the issues of privilege, poverty and extremes of inequality, but it somewhat muddies the waters in a multinational state.

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