

CAPSULE REVIEW

Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe

By Juan J. Linz And Alfred Stepan

Reviewed By Francis Fukuyama March/April 1997



This magisterial book represents the culmination of the authors' lifelong efforts to understand democratic breakdown, transition, and consolidation. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the authors, who had previously concentrated on democracy in Latin America and southern and Western Europe, began to look seriously at Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union to see if they could be fitted into any of their analytical categories. The answer is that they can, albeit with some difficulty. The five "arenas" the authors say are necessary for the consolidation of democracy -- civil society, political society, rule of law, state bureaucracy, and economic society -- and their broader analytical categories such as "post-totalitarian" are likely to become the standard framework, and their work on the former communist world marks the beginning of the return of Sovietology to mainstream comparative politics. 🌐

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