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FORUM

THE FUTURE OF 'REAL-EXISTING' DEMOCRACY

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Philippe C. Schmitter's concept of 'Real-Existing' Democracy can serve as a useful analytical tool for political scientists. The future of such democracies however holds many uncertainties. Society and Economy has asked some leading Hungarian scholars to comment on the idea, based on a lecture delivered by Professor Schmitter at Institute of Political Sciences of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in February 2011. In the following, we reproduce the lecture, followed by comments from György Csepeli and István Murányi, Vera Gáthy, Elemér Hankiss, Jody Jensen, Ferenc Miszlivetz and Tibor Palánkai.

Keywords: democracy, future of democracy

INTRODUCTION

A 'Real-existing' Democracy (or RED in my terminology) has three characteristics: (1) it calls itself democratic; (2) it is recognized by other self-proclaimed democracies as being "one of them", and (3) most political scientists applying standard procedural criteria would code it as democratic.

Its relationship to democracy as advocated in theory or as described in many civics texts is coincidental. All REDs are the product of a complex sequence of historical compromises with such other ideas and practices as liberalism, socialism, monarchism, and, of course, capitalism. They are certainly *not* governments *"of"* or *"by"* the people, as is implied by the etymology of the generic term. It is even debatable whether many of them are governments *"for"* the people. However, in the immortal words of Winston Churchill, they are still more "of, by and for the people" than all alternative forms of government.

Back in the late 1960s, Robert Dahl classified only 26 polities as "full polyarchies" (to use his term for REDs), all of them in Western Europe or former British colonies – with only Costa Rica, Israel, Japan, Lebanon, Philippines and Uruguay as exceptions. Chile, Switzerland and the United States were placed in a sort of waiting room due to the prevalence of different forms of voting discrimination (Dahl 1971). Since the mid-1970s, this number has more than tripled and one can now find more or less consolidated REDs all around the world – even in such ostensibly inhospitable places as Albania, Mongolia and Mali.

The great political paradox of our times is that precisely at the moment when so many aspiring *neo*-REDs emerged these *archeo*-REDs entered into crisis. Their citizens have been questioning these very same "normal" institutions and practices that new democratizers have been trying so hard to imitate and finding them deficient – not to say, outright defective. The list of morbidity symptoms is well-known (if not well-understood): their citizens have become more likely to abstain from voting, less likely to join or even identify with political parties, trade unions or professional associations, more likely not to trust their elected officials or politicians in general and much less likely to be satisfied with the way in which they are being governed and the benefits they receive from public agencies.

Part of this malaise stems precisely from the demise of their only "systemic" competitor, so-called popular democracy. The political regimes of Communist or State Socialist systems had served as a reference in relation to which REDs could successfully claim to be "much better" – in both material and ethical performance. Much of the stability and self-assurance enjoyed by these polyarchies after World War II depended upon the existence of this "much worse" alternative. Now that this hardly exists any longer, it will not suffice for established democracies just to be better. Henceforth, their practices will have to be "good", when measured according the generic criteria for the quality of democracy. These impose much heavier burdens of argument and proof before existing institutions are legitimated, thereby, increasing the likelihood that citizens in seemingly well-entrenched democracies will grow "disenchanted" with their rulers and the way in which they got into power.

The celebrations that accompanied the shift from 'real-existing' autocracy to 'real-existing' democracy since 1974 have tended to obscure these dangers and dilemmas. Together, they presage a political future that, instead of embodying "the end of history", promises to be tumultuous, uncertain and very eventful. Far from being secure in its foundations and practices, modern, representative, liberal, constitutional, political democracies (i.e. REDs) will have to face serious and unprecedented challenges in the future.

THE CHALLENGES

Robert Dahl is famous (among many other things) for the observation that 'real-existing' democracy (or polyarchy) has radically transformed itself – re-designed itself, if you will – over the centuries. The same word, democracy, has prevailed while its rules and practices have changed greatly. In other words – those of de Lampedusa – only by changing has it remained the same. And Dahl does not even hesitate to label these changes as "revolutionary" – even if most of them came about without widespread violence or institutional discontinuity.

Dahl identifies three such revolutions in the past.

The first was in *size*. Initially, it was believed that RED was only suitable for very small polities, i.e. Greek city-states or Swiss cantons. The American constitution re-designed the practice of democracy by making extensive use of territorial representation and introducing federalism – thereby, irrevocably breaking the size barrier.

The second revolution was in *scale*. Early experiments with democracy were based on a limited conception of citizenship – severely restricting it to those who were male, free from slavery or servitude, mature in age, literate or well-educated, paid sufficient taxes and so forth. Over time – some times gradually, other times tumultuously — these restrictions were re-designed until, today, the criteria have become almost standard and include all adult "nationals" regardless of gender or other qualifications.

The third Dahlian revolution was in *scope*. REDs began with a very restricted range of government policies and state functions – mostly, external defense and internal order. Again, over time, they became responsible for governing a vast range of regulatory, distributive and re-distributive issues – so much so that a substantial proportion of gross domestic product is either consumed by them or passes through their processes.

Dahl makes a second important general observation about these revolutions. *Most of them occurred without those who were involved being aware that they were acting as "revolutionaries".* Democratic politicians most often responded to popular pressures, externally imposed circumstances or just everyday dilemmas of choice with incremental reforms and experimental modifications in existing policies and these accumulated over time until citizens and rulers eventually found themselves in a differently designed polity – while still using the same label (democracy) to identify it. Indeed, one could claim that this is the most distinctive and valuable characteristic of democracy: its ability to re-design itself consensually, without violence or discontinuity – even sometimes without explicitly diagnosing the need for such a 'radical' change in formal institutions and informal practices. The contemporary challenge is precisely to make that diagnosis

and, thereby, to guide the selection of future institutions and practices so that they will improve and not undermine the quality of RED.

I am convinced that we are (again) in the midst of a democratic revolution – in fact, in the midst of several simultaneous democratic revolutions. Two of them seem to have exhausted their innovative potential and already become well-entrenched (and irrevocable) features of politics – at least, in Europe and North America. Two others are still very active in their capacity to generate new challenges and opportunities, and have still to work their way into the process of re-designing contemporary polyarchies.

The first of these "post-Dahlian" revolutions concerns *the displacement of individuals by organizations as the effective citizens of REDs*. Beginning more or less in the latter third of the 19th century, new forms of collective action emerged to represent the interests and passions of individual citizens. James Madison and Alexis de Tocqueville had earlier observed the importance of a multiplicity of "factions" or "associations" within the American polity, but neither could have possibly imagined the extent to which these would become large, permanently organized and professionally run entities, continuously monitoring and intervening in the process of public decision-making. Moreover, whether or not these organizations of civil society are configured pluralistically or corporativistically, the interests and passions they represent cannot be reduced to a simple aggregation of the individuals who join or support them. They have massively introduced their own distinctive organizational interests and passions into the practice of REDs and become their most effective citizens.

The second "post-Dahlian" revolution has to do with *the professionalization of the role of politician*. Earlier liberal democratic theory presumed that elected representatives and rulers were amateurs – persons who might have been somewhat more affected by "civic" motives, but who were otherwise no different from ordinary citizens. They would (reluctantly) agree to serve in public office for a prescribed period of time and then return to their normal private lives and occupations. While it is difficult to place a date on it, at some time during the Twentieth Century, more and more democratic politicians began to live, not *for* politics, but *from* politics. They not only entered the role with the expectation of making it their life's work, but they also surrounded themselves with other professionals – campaign consultants, fund-raisers, public relations specialists, media experts, and – to use the latest term – "spin-doctors". Whether as cause or effect, this change in personnel has been accompanied by an astronomical increase in the cost of getting elected and of remaining in the public eye if one is so unfortunate as to become un-elected.

In my view, these two revolutions seem to have run their course, but still pose serious normative challenges. There are signs of a reaction against them settling in

among mass publics. The usual permanent organizational representatives of class, sectoral and professional interests – especially, one has to admit, trade unions – have declined in membership and even in some cases in number and political influence. New social movements have emerged that proclaim less bureaucratic structures and a greater role for individual members – even some enhanced mechanisms for practicing internal democracy. Candidates for elected public office now frequently proclaim that they are not professional or partisan politicians and pretend as much as is possible to be "ordinary citizens". Movements have emerged in some countries, especially the USA, to limit the number of terms in office that a politician can serve. Whether these trends will be sufficient to stop or even invert these two "post-Dahlian" revolutions is dubious (to me), but they do signal an awareness of their existence and of their (negative) impact upon the quality of REDs.

And, now, let us turn to a diagnosis of the two more recent – indeed, contemporary and simultaneous – revolutions going on within REDs.

The first regards (again) the scope of decision-making in democracies. And, again, I can borrow a concept from Robert Dahl. Over the past twenty or more years – indeed, much longer in the case of the United States – REDs have ceded authority to what Dahl (1971) has called *"guardian institutions".* The expression is taken from Plato and refers to specialized agencies of the state – usually regulatory bodies – that have been assigned responsibility for making policy in areas which politicians have decided are too controversial or complex to be left to the vicissitudes of electoral competition or inter-party legislative struggle. The *locus classicus* in the contemporary period is the central bank, but earlier examples would be the general staffs of the military, anti-trust agencies or civil service commissions. In each case, it is feared that the intrusion of "politics" would prevent the institution from producing some generally desired public good. Only experts acting on the basis of (allegedly) neutral and scientific knowledge can be entrusted with such a responsibility. A more cynical view would stress that these are often policy areas where the party in power has reason to fear that if they have to hand over office in the future to their opponents, the latter will use these institutions to punish the former or to reward themselves.

The net effect of guardianship upon REDs is rather obvious – although usually well-concealed behind a rhetorical "veil of ignorance", interwoven with claims to "Pareto-Optimality" or scientific certainty, namely, that contemporary polyarchies have been increasingly deprived of discretionary action over issues that have a major impact upon their citizens. "Democracies without choice" is the expression that has emerged, especially in neo-REDs, to describe and to decry this situation. Even more potentially alienating is the fact that some of these guardians

are not even national, but operate at the regional or global level – *vide* the 'conditionality' imposed by the IMF or the EU.

Which brings me to the second contemporary revolution within REDs – or, better, with particular intensity among European REDs: *multi-level governance*. During the post-World War II period, initially in large measure due to a shared desire to avoid any possible repetition of that experience, European polities began experimenting with the scale or, better, level of aggregation at which collectively binding decisions would be made. The most visible manifestation of this is, of course, the EEC, EC and now European Union (EU). But paralleling this macro-experiment, there emerged a widespread meso-level one, namely, the devolution of various political responsibilities to sub-national units – *provinces, regioni, Länder,* or *estados autonómicos*. As a result, virtually all Europeans find themselves surrounded by a very complex set of authorities, each with vaguely defined or concurrently exercised policy *compétences*. The oft-repeated assurance that only national states can be democratic is no longer true in Europe, even though in practice it is often difficult to separate the various levels and determine which rulers should be held accountable for making specific policies. European politicians have become quite adept at "passing on the buck", especially at blaming the European Union (or the Euro) for unpopular decisions. New political parties and movements have even emerged blaming the EU for policies over which it has little or no control – for example, over the influx of migrants from non-EU countries.

Multi-level governance could, of course, be converted into something much more familiar, namely, a federal state, but resistance to this is likely to remain quite strong for the foreseeable future – *viz.* the rejection of the EU's draft Constitutional Treaty by referendums in France and the Netherlands and the Lisbon re-draft by the Irish citizenry. Which means that the confusion over which policy *compétences* and the ambiguity over which political institutions are appropriate for each of these multiple levels will persist. And, when it comes to the design question, there seems to be a general awareness that the rules and practices of real-existing democracy at each of these levels can not, should not be identical. Especially when it comes to ensuring the accountability of a polity of the size, scale, scope and diversity of the European Union. This demands a literal re-invention of democracy, a task that was not even attempted by the Convention that drafted the unsuccessful Constitutional Treaty or by the committee that produced the revised Lisbon version.[1]

[1] At the risk of overkill, there may well be a third contemporary revolution stalking the future of REDs, namely, (good) governance. It is too soon to judge whether the extraordinarily rapid and broad diffusion of this concept among practitioners and scholars is merely a reflection of

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

Faced with these insidious revolutions, my guiding presumption has been that the future of 'real-existing' democracy, especially in Europe, lies less in fortifying and perfecting existing formal institutions and informal practices – say, by increasing citizen participation or encouraging citizen deliberation within them – than in changing them. What is needed is not *more* of the same democracy, but a *different* type of democracy. "Whatever form it takes, the democracy of our successors will not and cannot be the democracy of our predecessors" (Robert Dahl). In other words, in order to remain the same, that is to sustain its legitimacy, democracy as we know it will have to change and to change significantly and this is likely to affect all of Europe's multiple levels of aggregation and sites of decision making.

In the book that we – Alexandre Trechsel, myself and a number of scholars and politicians – put together on *The Future of Democracy in Europe: Trends, Analyses and Reforms* for the Council of Europe (Schmitter – Trechsel 2004), we tried to use our collective imagination as theorists and practitioners of politics to come up with suggestions for reform that could cope with the simultaneous revolutions noted above, improve the quality of REDs in Europe and, thereby, make them more legitimate in the future. We came up with 28 suggestions. Some of these have already been introduced – usually on an experimental basis at the local level

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fashionable discourse (and their mutual desire to avoid mentioning (bad) government), or whether it actually signifies (and moreover contributes to) a profound modification in how decisions are being made in REDs. If the latter, this would have (at least) seven major implications: (1) "stakeholders" determined by functional effect would replace citizens grouped in territorial constituencies as the principal agents of participation; (2) political parties would have no recognized (and certainly no privileged) access to participation in governance arrangements and would be replaced by individual or collective stakeholders; (3) consensus formation among representatives with unequal functional capacities would replace various forms of voting by individuals or deputies with equal political rights as the usual decision-making mechanism; (4) executive or administrative authorities would normally take over the role of "chartering" such arrangements – delegating their scope and determining their composition – rather than the competitively and popularly elected representatives of the legislature; (5) the 'liberal' distinction between public and private actors would be deliberately blurred in terms of responsibility for making but also for implementing publicly binding decisions; (6) the substantive compromises that underly the process of consensus formation would have to be reached confidentially through opaque combinations of negotiation and deliberation between stakeholders – and only subsequently be legitimated publicly in terms of their (presumably beneficial) functional impact; (7) Elections would increasingly become "civic rituals" with less and less impact upon the substance of public policy and, presumably, less and less popular participation. Needless to say, all of these implications pose serious challenges to the legitimating principles of contemporary REDs.

– in a few polities; most, however, have never been tried. I admit that not all of these proposed reforms are equally urgent or feasible, and some may not even be desirable. It is the task of democratic rulers and citizens to decide collectively which are best for themselves and which deserve priority treatment.

In putting together the volume, I became convinced the major generic problems of contemporary REDs concern declining citizen trust in politicians and the diminished status of representative institutions, especially political parties and elections. Therefore, those reforms that promise to increase voter turnout, stimulate membership in political parties, associations and movements and improve citizen confidence in the role of politicians as representatives and legislators deserve prior consideration, especially in those cases where they also make politics more attractive, even, entertaining, for citizens. The second most important problem concerns the increasing number of foreign residents and the ambiguous political status of these denizens in almost all European democracies. Measures to incorporate non-nationals within the political process should also be given a high priority.

Time prevents me from providing any details about the reform proposals. They can be found *gratis* online at the website of the Council of Europe under publications. All I can do is give you a flavour of some of those that we came up with:

- Lotteries to be attached to elections;
- Specialized elected councils for various minority group's;
- Democracy kiosks for voting electronically and conducting normal business with state agencies;
- Voting rights for resident foreigners (denizens);
- Incompatibility of electoral or administrative mandates;
- Electronic support for candidates and parliament ("smart voting");
- Electronic monitoring and online systems for deliberation;
- Discretionary voting systems;
- Universal citizenship from birth;
- Shared legislative mandates;
- Citizenship mentors for foreign residents;
- Inserting a "Right to Information" into the usual list of equal citizen rights;
- Participatory budgeting;
- Legislative guardians to monitor the regulatory guardians;
- A "yellow card" provision for legislatures in multi-layered systems;
- Variable thresholds for election to reduce incumbency advantage;
- Vouchers for financing political parties;
- Vouchers for funding organizations in civil society;
- Extended recourse to referendums & citizen initiatives;
- Extensive, even exclusive, use of postal and electronic voting;

– Financial incentives for intra-party democracy;
– A Citizen's Assembly with randomly selected deputies to accept or reject specific pieces of legislation.

CONCLUSIONS

I conclude: 'real-existing' democracies can be reformed and improved in conformity with its two enduring core principles: *the sovereign equality of citizens and the political accountability of rulers*. This has happened several times in the past and I see no reason to believe that it cannot happen again. For that is the true genius of democracy – the capacity to re-invent itself for the future by consensually using the rules of the present. Which is not to say that it will be easy. Trying to convince politicians who have won by one set of rules to change those rules has never been easy – although a crisis that threatens to make everyone worse off can help. And we have plenty of that at the present moment.

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COMMENTS

György Csepeli and István Murányi: Experimental Democracy Research

According to Philippe Schmitter, there is abundant evidence that the quality of democracy is in danger. Corrupt practices, dysfunctions of the electoral process, manipulative restriction of the basic freedoms and inability to be accountable to the citizens are threatening the well being of the democratic political regimes in Europe and elsewhere. In order to preserve democracy it will have to change. We need to know, however, how to change democracy in order to sustain its operation.

Social scientists define democracy in many different ways (Dahl 1971; Pennock 1979; Vanhanen 1990; Rueschemeyer – Stephens – Stephens 1992). Scholars of democratic theory often argue that, by considering two main principles, that is, popular sovereignty on the one hand, and the liberty of individual citizens on the other, democratic theories could be categorized into two types (Thomassen 1995: 385).

Despite the existence of different typologies of democratic theory and democratic systems however, scholars of democratic thought tend to agree that it is possible to identify certain necessary features which must be present for a political system to be described as a democracy. These include that fundamental human rights must be guaranteed by a legal system independent of the government, suffrage must be universal and equal, the state administration has to be accountable to the parliament whose members must be elected at free, fair and regularly held competitive elections. These are the indispensable requirements of democracy.

Democracy's birthplace is the Western part of Europe. Jenő Szűcs wrote an influential essay in 1980 on the problem of delineation of the three historical regions of Europe. The first historical region can be identified as Western Europe that borders at the rivers Elbe-Saale and Leitha. The second historical region is East-Central Europe that begins where Western Europe ends. The eastern borders of this region can be demonstrated on a map by the density of points indicating the presence of Romanesque, Gothic and Renaissance buildings. The third historical region emerged on the ruins of Byzantium and was to become part of the Russian and the Ottoman Empires. The three regions were not so much just places but ideas and ideals as well. Jenő Szűcs cites István Bibó who identified the Western-European model with motion as opposed to East-Central and Eastern Europe where according to Bibó 'immobility' ruled (Szűcs 1983: 138). The terms 'motion' and 'immobility' refer to human behaviors. People in motion act, mobilize others and accomplish a variety of different goals – either political, economic or ideological. In contrast, 'immobility' is the state of those who yielded to their fate and passively accepted their position, not having any ambition whatsoever to change it.

Previous investigations have confirmed that there is a significant overlap between the historical regions and the main features of the 'value-map' of different European countries, (Varga – Jegers – Losoncz 2009; Csepeli – Prazsák 2010). However, the full European Social Survey database has not been available until now. On the basis of the questions concerning basic values associated with the Western mode of social organizations Csepeli and Prazsak created three clusters. The clusters were identified as 'creators', 'sufferers' and 'rebels'. Creators can be associated most with the Western ideal of social organization. The ideal type of sufferers can be considered as continuing the legacy of Eastern ceremony of vas-

salage. Rebels do not fit into the categories of creators and sufferers. They are the ones who keep saying 'no'.

In *Figure 1* the individual European countries are shown according to their share of creators. *Figure 1* clearly proves the endurance of the three historical regions of Europe identified above. The percentage of creators is significantly higher in western-Europe, whereas in East-Central and Eastern-Europe the ratio of sufferers is considerably higher.

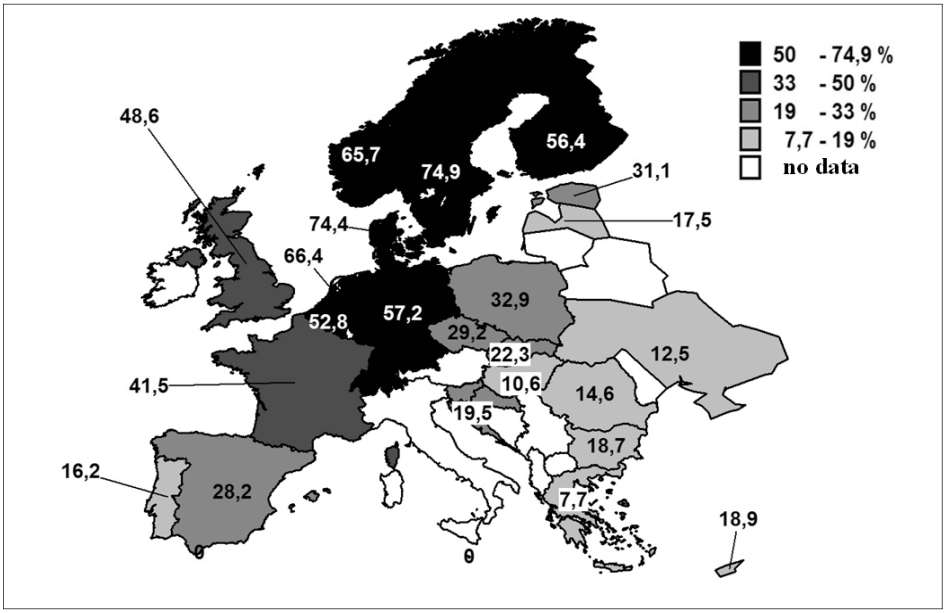

Figure 1. The percentage of 'creators' in Europe by country, 2008

Source: European Social Survey (2008)

The map confirms that the borders of the three historical regions in Europe still exist. We can conclude that the values of freedom and individualism that emerged in feudal Europe in the 12th–13th centuries had found their home in the 21th century in Northern-Europe. In contrast, in East of the Carolingian border in every country creator citizens are the minority. It seems that the historical lack of the network of the small circles of freedom in society resulted in lasting consequences in the East-Central and Eastern regions of Europe.

Instigated by Professor Schmitter's lecture, we would like to propose a research on the future technologies of democracy. This research will hopefully explore and identify some opportunities created by the practice of democracy in Hungary. We believe that we can provide new means of improving the quality of

democracy which will help Hungarian citizens to attain the social performance set by the Western democracies. Moreover, we believe, that our results will contribute to the improvement of democratic social practice in democracies throughout Europe. The expansion of the European Union in 2004 opened the road to the re-unification of Europe with the possibility to erase the historical, religious and cultural divides which have caused so much suffering and trouble in this continent. Our results can contribute to the future of democracy in Europe that lies in the change of the existing formal institutions and informal practices

An important experimental research on the quality of Hungarian democracy has been carried out in 2005 (Örkény – Székelyi 2007). In order to change the public attitudes toward the Roma minority Fishkin's method of deliberative polling was used (about the method see: Fishkin 2009). The results, however, were controversial and much is still to be done in order to improve the usage of the method in Hungary. Another experiment with deliberative polling was carried out in the area of Kaposvár by György Lengyel in January 2008 (Lengyel 2009). Nearly half of the participants mentioned the increase of motivation to participate in the public debate. Most of the participants felt that the deliberative weekend improved their skills of communication and enhanced the level of empathy. Both skills are important in democratic settings.

The evolution of democratic institutions cannot be discussed without referring to the work of Aristotle on politics. Ironically enough, according to Aristotle democracy cannot be considered as a system where the rulers are concerned with the public good. His ideals are the monarchy, aristocracy or polity. Nevertheless, European and North American social history has shown that the principles of modern democracy work. Two principles can be mentioned: equality of citizens and public accountability of rulers. As a result of evolution the scope of democratic institutions has increased from the "small circles of freedom" (Bibó) to a mass of citizens.

In light of the evolutionary process of the democratic institutions the novelty of the research is obvious. The guiding principle will be the recognition that the changes of democracy can be planned and tested. We believe that the future of democracy lies in changing optimally the existing formal institutions and informal practice

In order to appreciate the efficiency of the reforms testbeds would be needed. In the first stage Hungarian local self-governments would be recruited as participants of the experimental democracy research. Four proposals out of 28 listed by Professor Schmitter seem appropriate for testing.

In the second stage experimental research would begin among the willing participants. Each reform would be tested at least in two self-governments. The size of the population of the applicants should be around 10,000.

The list of proposals to be tested in real testbeds is as follows:

– Lotteries for electors
  Each person who votes would receive lottery tickets. The winning numbers would be drawn at the same time that the results are announced. The prizes should be sums of money. The winners could decide themselves what public programme they would like to support with their sums.
– Participatory budgeting by citizens
  There have already been experiments with participatory budgeting, but there were problems with the actual implementation of this reform. In order to explore the problems carefully designed experiments would be needed.
– Citizens' assembly
  A randomly selected sample of the citizenry would be the base of this institution of alternative democracy. A citizens' assembly would vote on the same issues as the assembly of the duly elected deputies. The dialogue between the two assemblies should be investigated. Public perception of the two assemblies should be compared.
– Online deliberation systems
  Citizens of the community would be enabled to vote online as if themselves were elected representatives of the local assembly. Moreover, ex-ante deliberations would be possible among citizens regularly.

The enlargement of Europe has resulted in an emergence of a democratic zone undisturbed by turbulence that was common in this zone in the past. Polities in this zone are expected to cope with their problems through negotiation, compromise and adjudication. Civil society has created wide networks of trans-European institutions as well. Conflicts cannot be avoided, but they are expected to be solved. The results of this research certainly will help to find new solutions. Generalizations made possible by the results of the Hungarian research will be hopefully tested in other regional contexts in Europe.

Immediate outcomes of the research could be expected in the area of democratic political socialization. Research of political socialization shows ample evidence of the fruitlessness of the traditional methods of political education processed in classrooms. Further empirical research results indicate a paradox situation that although young people do not reject the core democratic values in Hungary, they almost unanonimously reject the political parties represented in the parliament and the parliamentary politicians of the current political system. It is ironic that regarding the political system and politics in general the view of the majority of young people nowadays is very similar to that of the view of young people before the collapse of the political system of communism. Just as their pre-

decessors thought before 1989, young people today think that the current political system provides no real chance for influencing political decision making processes in Hungary (Murányi – Berényi 2010). Experimentation with democratic behaviour would demonstrate an unorthodox way of political education providing learning by doing.

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Vera Gáthy

As I was listening to Philippe Schmitter' lively, comprehensive and witty talk on the future of "existing" democracies, some terms and ideas particularly struck me. When I had the opportunity to say a few words, obviously I could not reflect upon everything he had said, and could only think of a few points. Hence any such brief comment was to be inevitably incoherent. Once there is an opportunity to put those wayward comments into writing it is practically impossible to resist some additions to what I had said.

My first point was on 'governance'. Understanding the term as a comprehensive one, intending to cover the 'management' of the entire state and society, and perhaps the best single word to communicate what it covers, one nevertheless, is under the impression that it is just humans, governed and governing that are missed by it. Hence I mentioned that it was a dehumanising term. The old maxim of 'government of the people by the people' is not reflected in it. A society, if it has a democratic political framework, has some means, though not always easily applicable, to get rid of the government of the day if it is dissatisfied with its' work. Yet, government consists of people, human beings, with a face, skills, behaviour, intentions, and output. But no one can get rid of governance. It has no face, no personality. The term suggests that politics and policy have nothing to do with those governed. It lacks people, their interests and wishes, abilities and intentions. It is a distant relative of the old Leviathan.

The term 'governance' seems to be a mirror of a society saturated by organizations, another phenomenon Philippe Schmitter had mentioned. Everything is being organized, and once it is done it also means that everything is regulated. People feel being fettered by regulations that seem to flow from everywhere, full of musts and prohibitions. The ceaseless flood of regulations strangulates free will and old customs that used to function fairly well. Perhaps, as Schmitter noted, it is partly due to the EU, but it may not necessarily be the case. Perhaps it is the result of an ever growing complexity of the modern or post-modern age. Yet it needs to be considered whether communities really need everything to be regulated. In addition, regulations are sometimes of retrospective effect, hurting the interests of people, their well established career and life, withdrawing rights and authorisations and, as a result, destroying existences. Some regulations are clearly nothing else but greed of a local authority, irrational and serving no interest of the inhabitants.

Governance has yet another drawback: It is difficult to see how it can be taken to task. In other words: where is its accountability, by whom, and to whom? A government may be removed, but governance remains in place (unless a revolution sweeps it away, which is unlikely in most of the cases).

True, the job of being a politician has become highly professionalized. As it was rightly said, today's politicians usually have worked in no other field ever. They may be surrounded by experts advising them, but since they usually do not understand the major part of an expert's advice they are mistrustful and hence misjudge what should be done. It is also true that with the enormous growth of knowledge in various fields of science, technology and everything else, it is unlikely that anyone loving his/her specialisation would be able to leave that field and would wish to become a politician. Yet, perhaps, it is easier to learn how to operate as a politician than for a politician to learn how international finances op-

erate, or how a motorway is built and at what cost. No wonder, that as early as in the 60s in some countries surveys were made about how people considered politicians and the result was that the politician's profession had a rather low prestige. I do not think that the situation has improved much.

Philippe Schmitter also mentioned guardianship institutions. Here distinction should be made between international and national ones. From the narrow perspective of a small country what is known better is the national, local ones. They appear to be weak, mostly because they were set up by the state, or legislation. As such they are often at the mercy of the finance minister of the day, who may strike out their resources from the state budget with reference to austerity measures. Thus the stability and activity of guardianship institutions greatly depend on their resources and may be better positioned if they are fully independent of any public resources. Yet, the question remains unanswered how far they be part of the checks and balances system that would control and restrict the activities of a government (or, for that matter governance) run amok.

The fashionable concept of the 'stakeholder' also appeared in Schmitter's talk. It is rather difficult to delineate the boundaries of this term. In a political democracy one may be inclined to imagine that every citizen is a stakeholder. However, this is clearly not true. Those are stakeholders who can articulate some of their interests. There may be single-purpose stakeholders forming an alliance with people of the same interest, but not everyone can do so for the lack of power, ability, contacts, social network, or even skills. The problem with this term is how it relates to democracy as such, to some fundamental principles of democracy, such as the equality of opportunity, or equality even before the law. With disillusionment in political parties and the largely weakened trade unions stakeholders may very well be the articulate strata of society but those may constitute only a minority of citizenry. Hence, the concept of 'stakeholder' seems to be a hazy one with largely unspecified content and dimension.

There was no time to reflect much upon what derives from the concept of 'stakeholder', namely the extent of democracy. Political science cannot be blamed for focusing on political structures, principles, and operations. However, all this is meant to serve the democracy of societies. This is a threshold which, when overcome, political science needs the assistance of, or should hand over the terrain to other social sciences understood broadly. I wish to quote the example of India, which advocates itself as the largest democracy of the world. It is true. Elections are regularly held, party politics flourishes, defeated parties peacefully hand over power to the winners, the constitution is full of equalities in all walks of life, the armed forces have always been kept inside their barracks; lot has been done for uplifting weaker sections of the society. All is well and good, but no one denies that Indian society is one of the least democratic ones. The actual conditions, how-

ever, can be analysed only by a complexity of disciplines. Surely, this is far more difficult, a task almost impossible to do. Yet, apparently democracy deficits are traceable almost in any society, due to the given social structure, levels of education, income and a plethora of other components. This being the reality, political science badly needs the assistance of other disciplines (economics, sociology, demography, ethnography, and even – and very much so – of history).

Finally, Philippe Schmitter spoke about a conference and also showed the resulting publication sponsored, or convoked by the Council of Europe. He also referred to the fact that no one was particularly keen on what had been said by outstanding personalities of political and social sciences. His experience reminded me of an old and true story in Hungary, going back to the Communist period but with a lesson worth remembering even today. When the Institute of Sociology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences conducted the first mayor survey on Hungarian society, trying to find out real living conditions and standards of life, the results had to be presented first to the headquarters of the one and only party. What happened to the results was something that still has a message: it was locked up in a safe and its publication was prohibited. Not that the party authorities had utilised anything of it. What followed was silence. That was a dictatorship. But what usually happens to surveys and conclusions of social scientists outside dictatorships? Not much. Politicians usually do not listen to scholars and social scientists, who usually say things that are unpleasant to hear.

Yet, there is change. Societies do change, the Indian as well. And citizens find ways of active contribution, even if it is fragmented, sometimes inefficient, and weak. What was mentioned at the end of the workshop is an important new development: and it is the use and effect of the web. Let us hope that it is used for the benefit of many more people globally.

Elemér Hankiss

Reading Philippe's paper I am amazed to see that the evolution of democracy is only slightly less complex and complicated than that of the Darwinian or Lamarckian evolution of life on this planet.

If I understand well his argument, democracy went through a series of gradual or radical changes during its rather short history. It had to be adapted to the emerging new economic and social situations. People (people in general, or the main economic and political actors) had to invent and introduce new institutions that were likely to be able to cope with the new environments.

Philippe focuses on five radical changes in the history of democracy. Using the terminology of Robert Dahl, he calls these changes "revolutions". And here we

have to stop for a moment because "revolution" is a vague and controversial concept. Were they acts of "creative destruction" of old, petrified economic and social structures (Schumpeter)? Were they major jumps of progress in the economic and social history of humankind (Marx)? Were they largely unnecessary interruptions of a more or less peaceful evolution of economic and social institutions (George Furet)? Or were they deeply contradictory historical events, solving problems and creating not less difficult new problems?

I think that this last definition comes closest to the "revolutions" Philippe is describing in his paper. And if this is the case, a question arises about the role they may have played in the history of democracy. Have they brought what Philippe calls "real existing democracy" (RED) closer to an "ideal", or at least optimal democracy (OD), or, on the contrary, have they distanced, farther and farther, REDs from OD?

To be able to answer this question we should first define what ideal or optimal democracy is meant to be. Philippe's stand is clear and adamant on this point. His notion of an ideal democracy is a polity based on *participation* and *accountability.* I.e. democracy is a political system in which

- citizens are as close as possible to the center(s) of decision making and, as a consequence, they have full participation in making decisions that concern their lives;
- they possess all the necessary information and means to control those in power.

Taking this definition of democracy as our benchmark, have the Dahlian and Philippian "revolutions" brought REDs closer to OD, or have they gradually distanced them from this ideal? Or have they simultaneously done both of these? These questions are justified since the democratic system has to adapt itself to changing historical situations and this pressure may jeopardize its ability to ensure optimal participation and accountability. And, as a consequence, it may drive REDs father and farther from OD.

In the course of centuries, for instance, with the growing size of communities and the citizenry, the direct participation of people in decision making became less and less feasible. Power had to be delegated to elected representatives. This kept the democratic system working but at the same time, it increased the distance between the individual citizen and the fora of decision making. Later, the appearance of collective actors, or the emergence of the multilevel system of democracy was a historical necessity, but again, citizens' participation and the control of the office holders became even more indirect.

Have we lost on the roundabouts what we have gained on the swings?

And the problem is even more complex. Beside ensuring participation and accountability, democracy, as a political/social system has two further functions.

a) *Interest intermediation*. It has to successfully intermediate and harmonize in an optimal way various social interests.
b) *Governance.* It must help (and not impede) the optimal working of the country as a whole.

There is no one to one correspondence between these functions. High participation does not automatically guarantee either an optimal interest intermediation, or the promotion of the social and economic development of a country. Or even more: efficiency (i.e. the ability to solve social and economic problems) may clash with the basic principles of an ideal democracy. And, on the other hand, low participation may, sooner or later, distort the whole social, political and economic system.

And here I should like to address a few questions to Philippe.

1. What to do with a well-known contradiction inherent in the relationship of our ideals and history? I.e. in the case of democracy, how to handle the fact that something may be historically necessary but, at the same time, it may drive society farther from the ideal form of democracy?
2. What is the balance sheet of the historical process mentioned above? What have we lost and what have we gained by the system of democracy becoming more and more indirect?
3. How could an optimal synthesis be developed of these three functions: optimal participation, a working system of interest intermediation, and successful governance on the national level?
4. Does the experimentation with "postmodern", "discursive" types of democracy promise reliable solutions of these problems?

Jody Jensen

It is important to be reminded that only by changing has democracy not become anachronistic. One of the most distinctive features of democracy is its ability to re-design itself consensually, sometimes without the need for radical change in formal institutions or informal practices. Dahl says: "Whatever form it takes, the democracy of our successors will not and cannot be the democracy of our predecessors". New contexts require new conceptualizations of social scientific concepts like democracy, civil society, governance. Part of the particular appeal of

these concepts is their vagueness which can be used or abused by politicians and social scientists. Just as the Velvet Revolutions of 1989 informed a new discourse on civil society, the Jasmine Revolutions today are challenging us to redefine democracy in an Arab context of revolt against authoritarian rule. There is also a crisis of democracy in what are termed "RED" (Real Existing Democracies) countries by Schmitter today. The crisis is composed of distrust in democratic institutions, relinquishing national sovereignty in part to multi-level governance mechanisms like the EU, and to the increasing difficulty of holding major stakeholders accountable (banks, intergovernmental institutions, etc.) Therefore, it is helpful to look at more concrete aspects of what we term "democracy" today in order to review, recalibrate and redefine contemporary notions of, among other things, democracy. Professor Schmitter provides us with that opportunity in his article.

In addressing the challenges of democracy in REDs, one point of discussion lists "morbidity symptoms" described as, e.g., abstinence from voting, less political party affiliation or membership, less identification with traditional trade unions or associations, etc. In many ways these traditional forms of political participation have become outdated and relate to an outdated definition of democracy. As democracy transforms or is redefined, new instruments of participation are invented in a globalized, IT age. New concepts and tools like political consumerism, petitions, demonstrations, blogs, Facebook revolutions are experimented with and new, non-traditional forms of political engagement emerge and transform.

I think one of the key issues for critical analysis and discussion that is brought up in the paper is the quality of democracy. What are the "generic criteria for the quality of democracy"? Discussions on the quality of democracy must take into consideration the varieties of capitalism and types of democracy that require complementary institutions. If organizations have replaced individuals/citizens and saturate democracies what meaning do elections provide anymore? Schmitter asserts that there has been a professionalization of the role of politicians which results in the exertion of control not in elections, but in the monitoring of their behaviour and denouncing it if need be. If, as the author points out guardianship institutions have been created not to be democratic, how are they held accountable and how are they transparent?

It is true that REDs are facing serious and new challenges as a result of the changed context that globalization has wrought. This changes the parameters of the nation state, and what it means and its role, as well as redefines political engagement and activism – civil society, if you will; it also necessitates a remodelling of the role of markets and the interfaces created between states, societies and markets. The world was always complicated, but the difference I believe today is that individuals and societies are more embedded in that complexity as a result of globalization, both in terms of perception and engagement.

Complexity can be found in the fact that traditional categories of state, market and society are dramatically changing, the process I call hybridization: states are no longer fully public, but not fully private either; markets are clearly not fully private; civil society's role has expanded across territories and competencies. This all needs social scientific study.

Maybe the next revolution (after *size, scale* and *scope*) will be one of *depth,* depth of processes which encompass the new players and interfaces. But in some sense, these former democratic revolutions have focused on nation states. Maybe the study of democratization today needs to be more focused on regions or civil societies, as the events in Egypt and the Middle East show. In Dahl's analysis revolutions are viewed as sequential, whereas the revolutions we are witnessing today are not.

We also have to recognize the asymmetry of democratization – while, e.g., in the west we may have a professionalization of the role of the politician, in other regions this is not at all clear. In East and Central Europe, for example, we have some kind of hybrid of professionalization and earlier autocratic rule.

What are regarded as "guardian institutions" in REDs (or current regional and global guardian institutions) are clearly unable to meet the challenges of the globalized politics and are unable to manage actions over issues that have major impact upon their citizens. These developments beg the question of what constitutes sovereignty in a post-national constellation. The intensity of multi-level governance has developed the conversation towards global governance and cosmopolitanism. There is, admittedly, a problem with the perhaps overused and indefinable term "governance" which entails a multi-stakeholder, multi-level approach to democracy and decision-making, but which is weak in terms of transparency and accountability. Another question that arises is who defines who is a stakeholder?

New EU members, in particular lately Hungary, may act more democratically in Europe, but less democratically at home. The re-invention of democracy also implies and necessitates a re-invention of accountability and transparency.

The declining trust in REDs for traditional representative institutions and practises also reflects a decline in nation state-based politics. At the European level, transnational political parties and elections could provide a path towards a better constellation of politics and polities in a post-national period. Redefinition of citizenship at national and regional levels needs to be addressed, specially considering demographic changes, displaced persons and increasing numbers of economic, political and environmental refugees. Are we experiencing in the REDs "Democracy without choice" as national sovereignty is increasingly losing predominance to multi-level governing structures (like the EU) and global processes?

The journey towards democracy is incomplete in every country and it is an endless process. Democracy has meaning in specific historical contexts and when those contexts change needs redefinition. Democracy also needs an endogenous fabric to work – even when imposed (like in Germany, Italy or Japan) after WW2. It only took hold because reconstruction of the social fabric within these countries ensured the acceptance of democratic principles and practice.

Since Robert Dahl was mentioned a lot in this paper, it is worth asking the question he addresses about the role of social sciences in the emergence and recognition of system complexity. One observation is that disciplinary cores are shifting and social science has spread its boundaries. We need to recognize the richness and complexity of the world we deal with, especially in the field of democracy just in terms of sheer numbers and varieties.

According to Dahl social science should reflect the richness and variety of the types of inquiry that are undertaken. The cost of specialization is that it becomes more and more difficult to grasp broad areas of the field and we may become less sensitive to aspects of the world outside our speciality. One approach alone cannot encompass the empirical complexity of the world.

We must also heed the warning that George Orwell voiced in his essay "Politics and the English Language" from 1946:

> The words democracy, socialism, freedom, patriotic, realistic, justice, have each of them several meanings, not only is there no agreed definition, but the attempt to make one is resisted from all sides. In the case of a word like democracy, not only is there no agreed definition, but the attempt to make one is resisted from all sides. It is almost universally felt that when we call a country democratic we are praising it: consequently the defenders of every kind of régime claim that it is a democracy, and fear that they might have to stop using the word if it were tied down to any one meaning. Words of this kind are often used in a consciously dishonest way …

Political speech and writing, Orwell argues, is "largely the defence of the indefensible". But, he continues, "if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought. A bad usage can spread by tradition and imitation, even among people who should and do know better". Should we and do we, as social scientists know better? We need to be careful with the language and concepts we use as tools of our trade. We need to act responsibly, beginning by advancing the discussion, as Schmitter has here, of notions we have too long taken for granted.

Ferenc Miszlivetz: The Infinite Process of Democratizing Democracy

Philippe Schmitter raised a number of highly relevant questions about the future of (as he calls them) 'REDs', that is real, existing democracies.

The first one concerns the expression RED itself which includes further questions of definitions. There is little to no consensus among political scientists, experts and practitioners about the definition of democracy. As Larry Diamond (2008: 21) formulated it in one of his recent books "defining democracy is a bit like interpreting Talmud (or any religious text): ask a room of ten rabbis (or political scientists) for the meaning, and you are likely to get eleven different answers". Avoiding hopeless academic hurdles of definition games, Schmitter talks straight about reality, that is about democracies recognized as such by themselves and by others (mostly by politicians, political scientists and political experts). The number of such entities has increased dramatically during the past half a century which can be seen as a result of both changing values and growing choice and freedom aspirations globally as well as the consequence of hazy rules and vague and abstract criteria. Except for China, North Korea and perhaps Cuba, very few countries have remained in the world without aspirations for being called democracies. This opens the way in two directions: both for almost limitless governmental cynicism and arbitrariness of self-interpretation and for ever growing popular, bottom-up, freedom and choice aspirations of self-organizing and mobilizing civil societies worldwide. The growing gap between aspirations and realities can be interpreted as a "crisis of democracy".

And this leads us to what Schmitter calls the "great political paradox of our times": exactly in the historic moment of the blossoming of new democratic aspirations old established democracies – "archeo-REDs" – are facing deepening crises.

Following the path of Robert Dahl, Schmitter rightly emphasizes the ever changing forms and contents of democracies in terms of size, scale and scope. Some of these "revolutionary" changes – like the professionalization of politics or the "associational revolution" – have become commonplace today, whereas others still pose great challenges vis-à-vis the everyday functioning of democracies.

One of the great challenges of our times is the growing importance of mostly international "guardian institutions" such as the World Bank, the IMF, the EU or the European Central Bank. Especially new democracies with often weak and exposed economies like the post-Soviet and post-Communist countries can be seen as "no choice democracies" by their respected constituencies. Local and national politicians, the only ones who can be made accountable for their decisions refer to the faraway and unaccountable guardian institutions as leaving them no choice in decision making in cases of fundamental importance. This tendency has serious and far reaching consequences:

– first of all it empties out national sovereignty and delegitimizes democracies on the national level;

– it adds up to a general feeling of "nobody can be made accountable";
– and consequently further strengthens the tendency of growing mistrust of democratic institutions, political parties and politicians.

The decreasing public trust in politics and democratic institutions is a worldwide tendency which has an extraordinary appearance in certain neo-REDs, like Hungary. According to a most recent opinion poll, more than 80% of respondents do not trust politicians and political parties and not even the parliament despite the fact that the present ruling coalition has a vast and unprecedented – more than two-thirds – majority. People trust NGOs, or civil society, the police or the Church more than they do the political class.

In close connection with emptying out democracies and weakening the nation state another important "revolutionary" change in the scope of democracies is multilevel governance.

Obvious weaknesses of the nation state could be well compensated for by introducing new levels of aggregate decision making. This was the case, first of all, in post-WW2 Europe where the process of integration produced concepts and policies in order to delegate political responsibilities and decision making on interconnected but separable sub-national, national and transnational levels.

Expectations were high in the early 90s about introducing and empowering new players on the mezo-level. Regional decision making, however, was taken over by member states pursuing overwhelmingly centralized national interests and these efforts have not yet been materialized.

This has created a second, in my words "European paradox" of existing democracies.

While nation states became member states of a larger supranational entity, delegating decision making and as a consequence part of their sovereignty upon a freely chosen supranational level, they are emptying out their own democratic legitimacy without fully legitimizing the new entity.

Voters can only hold their elected politicians accountable at the national level for decisions being brought by the collective sovereign, not at the supranational level. This discrepancy in the process of the European construction of multilevel governance offers the opportunity for national politicians to blame the EU for unpopular decisions which in turn further alienates citizens from EU institutions and contributes to the lack of public trust in supranational "guardian institutions".

Similarly, there is a tendency among political scientists and analysts of European integration to believe that the EU itself is responsible for the crisis of democracy at the national level. They claim that transnational decision making weakens the functioning of democratic institutions on the nation state level and, at the same time, does not lead to automatic democratization at the transnational/European

level. There is an undeniable element of truth in this observation. Presumably we need to dig deeper if we want to find the core of the problem and remember where the very roots of creating multinational governance stem from. One has to remember the wise but often neglected warning of Jean Monnet about the undetermined nature of transnational European political power.

Jean Monnet emphasised that European democracies have yet to invent and build up a new kind of hitherto unprecedented political power. It is rather the capability (or lack of capability) of European democracies to construct such a new political power that is at stake.

Obviously, to create multilevel decision making and governance is not an easy job, as Schmitter observes, especially not under circumstances of a deepening and expanding, complex "hydra headed" crisis and the accompanied erosion of public trust in political institutions. This is certainly a task which would need more time, more serious and concerted efforts, insight and inspiration from stakeholders and even good luck and political courage to seize the right momentum for action.

Taking the larger picture, outside of the European orbit, there is no doubt that we are again in a new phase of global turmoil. 2011 reminds many of the observers and analysts of 1989. Indeed, there are some similarities: although there were plenty of signs of escalating social and political discontent, both the revolutions were seen as unexpected surprises. Superpower and big power interests for keeping the geopolitical status quo that played an important role were in collision in both cases with bottom up social movements and self-mobilizing civil society aspirations.

There are of course many important differences and special characteristics of the Arab Spring. Just to mention a few: the pulling effect of the West is far less obvious in 2011 as it was in 1989, where European peace movements and cross-border networking for East-West dialogue played a significant role in mobilizing democratic dissent within the former Soviet bloc. Although there was a strong media presence in 1989 in East Central Europe, ICT and social media plays a new and unprecedented role in organizing demonstrations and sharing information with the largest possible public in 2011. Using the new technology in creative ways contributes to a large extent to the emergence of a global public. This might have unforeseeable and far reaching consequences for the future of democracy on the global and regional as well as local level.

1989 signalled a paradigm shift in the history of democracies: civil society became an indispensible agent and dynamizing engine of democratization. It heralded the twilight of the exclusive "grand narrative". It integrated some characteristics of the alternative social movements such as self-mobilization, civil autonomy, self-limitation, non-violence, the pluralist understanding of sovereignty and the ethics of disagreement. Altogether the "Velvet Revolutions" differed in many

ways from previous revolutions. The emergence and self-assertion of civil society has far richer consequences than mainstream social and political sciences have ever recognized.

Although the process of cross-border/regional/transnational democratization processes as well as the establishment of effective and democratic multilevel governance have been held back, the democratization of democracy might gain new momentum with the awakening in the Arab countries.

The Arab Spring started by the Jasmine Revolution had an unstoppable domino effect through the entire Middle East. Unexpected freedom and choice aspirations surfaced one after the other from Tunisia through Egypt, to Bahrain, Yemen, Jordan, Syria and Libya. Political change has not yet crystallized and violence could not be avoided. It is obviously too early a stage to predict the outcome of the eruption of freedom.

But it has been proved crystal clear that democracy has an undeniable and growing global appeal and the *democratization of democracy* or rather *reinventing of democracy* is unavoidable on all possible levels.

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Tibor Palánkai

I found the paper and the discussion extremely interesting, instructive and current. It raises some of the major issues and dilemmas of the present crisis of the democratic structures, and tries to indicate some "revolutionary" changes and solutions to them. I am an economist, so those remarks, which I try to make, focus rather on the economic aspects, while may neglect some of the basics of the related political science literature.

I find a little euphemistic to speak about "professionalization of the role of politicians". Clearly, modern politics requires professionalism, and that is growingly a criterion of success. The politician should understand a broad range of problems and should be able to formulate adequate answers and solutions. That is particularly true, as the complexity of problems and processes have greatly increased, and that particularly applies to the development and operation of the economy, and in fact, to all other fields of social life. But I feel that the position of a politician has become rather a job or more precisely a business, and it is an exception when we can speak about a professional politician. Quite mediocre people could

be successful politicians, beyond some sort of talent only a good team of "spin doctors" is needed. Therefore, the financial background is crucial.

One aspect of this problem is the so called "diploma democracy" or "graduate democracy". It refers to a world wide phenomenon, namely that most of the politicians and parliamentary deputies have certain diploma degrees. Lawyers and economists are overwhelming among them. The issue is interestingly presented by a book of David van Reybrouck, titled "In defence of populism", which was recently published in Hungarian. The problem is that the politicians are preoccupied with dealing with a wide range of questions, but they fail to make them understood and to communicate them to the ordinary peoples, to their electors. This leads to a growing alienation of masses from politics, and it gives ground to populist politicians, often giving simplified answers and offering irresponsible promises. The issue is raised and analysed by the political science literature (including Philippe Schmitter), but the Dutch journalist gives interesting empirical evidences in relation to recent politics of his country.

The professionalization of governance is a totally different question. The creation of a wide range of regulatory institutions and mechanisms is a world wide phenomenon and in the "post-Dahlian" revolution is defined as displacement of citizens by organizations. They are parts of national democratic structures, but in the last decades we see their explosion also on regional (EU) and global levels. In the integration literature this is called "regulatory integration". The process means the creation of a great number of institutions, and the related rules of the games, norms and standards, methods and ways of dealing with problems, or principles and values. Globally, they cover world trade or international monetary relations (WTO or IMF), but there are dozens of others in wide ranging fields. They introduce the elements of regulation of complex processes, but with great deficits, both in terms of complexity and efficiency. The problem was dramatically demonstrated by the recent global financial crisis.

The other shortcomings of professional governance are related to the fact that it is still largely subordinated to narrow interest of party politics and short-term election successes. By that, the professional considerations and rationalities are broadly neglected and easily overwritten by populist expectations.

In the last decades the dangers of that type of politicization have greatly increased, and sometimes it may threaten with catastrophic consequences. The present global crisis again is a good example, when incompetent and irresponsible policies and politicians can be clearly identified as one of main reasons.

It would be complicated to analyse all the aspects of "revolutionary changes" of our present times, which created totally new circumstances and challenges. Probably one is the so called knowledge based society. It means, among others, that the scientific methods have become integral parts not only of research and in-

novations, but also the operation of technologies and production. And this applies growingly also for working of the society, which means that social sciences also got new and crucially important practical roles. As far as economy is concerned that is particularly striking.

In the last half a century, we could experience quite revolutionary changes that particularly affected private business. The traditional individual instinctive or intuitive management (sometimes represented by extraordinary talented peoples, like Henry Ford) was dramatically replaced by professional managers, and such new scientific fields (theories and methods) emerged and got to be broadly applied as management, marketing, corporate planning, system analysis etc. (the range would be long), which were hardly known and practiced before.

The complexity and new mechanisms of public economy (just one example: gold standard replaced by monetarism), call for new methods of analysis and regulation, and a "scientific" approach cannot be avoided in these fields either. But public economy still largely remained dominated by short-term and party policy based considerations and "management". The requirements for "professional governance" are largely neglected, and the consequences are catastrophic from time to time. Some elements of de-politicization have already gained ground, but they are still weak and far from complete. Some public policy benchmarks and fiscal rules have already been accepted (it is not desirable to have more than 3% of budget deficit compared to GDP, or financial sustainability assume less than 60% of debt to GDP, the "desirable inflation" is around 2–3%, etc.), and the same applies to institutional set ups. These later are represented by the notion of independent National Banks or Budgetary Councils, which are established already in many countries of the world. In the Dahlian definition these may be called as "guardian institutions". Efficient and good public management would need a separation from politics, particularly as daily and competing party politics are concerned. The negligence of elementary rules (laws) of economy and rationality necessarily leads to serious crises and losses. As the examples of Greece or even Ireland proves, the membership in the Euro-zone does not mean any guarantee, and based on complex interconnections and interdependence they may have broad international repercussions.

The other aspects of professionalization are connected to the new relation between politics and business. Politics has increasingly become a business, and business is increasingly dependent on politics. It applies in a broad sense, but also in personal and institutional terms. Politicians consider their carrier in business terms, and they use often their political positions for business advantages of their own or their supporters. Corruption is a daily phenomenon, and sometimes the criminalisation of politics takes broad dimensions. In the turnarounds after parliamentary elections, corruption is one of the number one reasons, and it is rare even

in a highly democratic country that a governing party or coalition is elected for more than two terms. It applies to old and new democracies (our region) as well. Of course, it is a welcome development in the new democracies of the East that governments are rotating without a limitation, but in the light of corrupt political structures, this is hardly an indicator of good quality and stability of their democracies.

There is a large literature about these phenomena and broad discussions about the possible solutions. It would be hard to summarize them, and particularly to make a list about what should be done. Probably we can, however, conclude that more than some reforms are needed. We live in an age of a "great transformation" (I mean it in Polányi's definition, and it does not matter whether we call it "global transformation" or anything else). That assumes broad and radical changes, which can be defined as "revolutionary" ones, even if we often call them simply as "structural reforms". In these contexts, I raise only some points.

1. First of all, a general remark: In order to get rid of present over-politicization of economic and social life and corrupt political and business relations, the creation and establishment of independent, professional governance would be needed. Often it is raised that the present "transformation" should affect also the idea, values and a new view of our world, namely we would need a new "enlightenment". One of the original main issues of enlightenment was the separation of religion and politics, or the church and the state. To my opinion, the present enlightenment should aim at separation the politics or the state and the business. The corresponding democratic structures would be worth discussing.
2. I would pay more attention to the analysis of processes, which we could call as a cyber, Facebook or internet revolution. I am not an expert of that, but even an outsider could note that it offers fundamentally new opportunities and ways of democratization, and not only in the developed countries (the Jasmine Revolutions in the Arab world). One point, which could be mentioned is, that new information technologies give new possibilities for transparency for the public surveillance, and not last for the individual citizens as well. That could be one of the efficient instruments of fighting against corruption.
3. Independent and professional governance should be put under strict democratic control. New ways and forms should be found. They should be much less party centred, and the role of NGOs or civil organisations should be extended. The role of state intervention and regulation should be replaced by social ones, probably redefining such institutions and functions as trade unions, employer organizations, or formations representing environmental,

social and cultural sustainability. The control and regulation of transnational corporations, both on national and global levels should be discussed. The same applies to a great number of regulatory bodies, which are often beyond any democratic control.

4. The issue of direct and representative democracy should be reconsidered in these new contexts. Professional governance fits rather to representative democracy than to a direct one. Judgement of complex issues and their professional solution need information and expertise, which average people are lacking. Referenda prove that individuals make decisions according to their feelings and interests, which can be aggregated into results, which have nothing to do with the real issues. This type of synthesis of individual views could add up in decisions, which seriously hurt public interests, and are detrimental for the whole society and nation. Surveys showed quite clearly, that results of most referenda in European countries reflected rather the emotions toward the actual governments than to the given question. Peoples easily vote about free beer, but they would not endorse any taxes. The problem does not change even if we assume increasing political intelligence and awareness of the people. Relevance of decisions and policies need indirect channels of democracy as well. The interaction and coordination between the public and the "representatives" could be, however, improved in many ways.
5. In the twentieth century, besides horrific regimes (fortunately they disappeared from the scene of history), the Western societies, experienced a spectacular democratic revolution, and our political systems are hardly comparable with what was hundred years ago (universal suffrage, rights of woman, divorce, etc.). We have to further them, and the new revolution will be not easier and not without tough fighting against the established forces of the past. The research on the new democratic structures, therefore, is highly important and a highly responsible task. The agenda for discussion should be carefully set, and our role should be defined realistically, in order to fulfil our tasks successfully.