

Editorial

Democratic Transition, Transformation and Development in times of War and Peace: Conceptualisations and Observations

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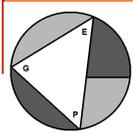
Introduction

Many post-colonial, post-communist and/or (other) post-separatist societies in the world today are in a perilous state, even if they do not face war or other forms of armed conflict and (political) violence or have not suffered such ills in recent years or decades. Too many of these societies within or across countries with recognized borders are still or at best in a fragile, even doubtful stage of formal transition—let alone true transformation—toward post-conflict, post-separatist (whether the separatist project is successful or not) societies with even minimal levels of democracy, pluralism and socio-economic wealth and wellbeing i.e. development.

This troubling state of affairs is of the highest importance to the multidisciplinary field of ethnogeopolitics, if only because most if not all of these societies are conflict-ridden, tense, poverty-stricken, corrupt or otherwise underdeveloped because of historically grown and recently aggravated animosities between ethnic groups. I believe this to generally hold true, even if have cautioned elsewhere that “one should not presume that all internal conflicts, or even all conflicts per se, are ethnic in character depending on one’s definition of ethnicity” (Ten Dam 2015c: 14).

Actually, even the most developed and established democracies in Europe are under pressure by increasing discontent, populism and consequent polarisation, mainly due to or at least enhanced by the 2008-2009 financial crisis sparked by the US credit crunch that still reverberates today, the continuing terrorist attacks by Islamist extremists in particular, and the more recent refugee crisis mainly born from the Syrian War and other intractable conflicts in the Middle East (partially caused and exacerbated by the same Islamist extremists).

Savvas Katsikides and Pavlos I. Koktsidis suggest that the financial crisis alone has led to an “increasing lack of confidence and trust in .. the governance of financial institutions and the free market overall” and in the “democratic institutions and politics at European, national or local levels” among Europe’s citizens (Katsikides & Koktsidis 2015: 1). At the same time, they stress that “East European states have remained particularly vulnerable to the fluctuations and shocks of the international economic system despite variable efforts to align their economies to match with EU standards” (Ibid: 2)—and I stress that this vulnerability is mainly due to the fact that practically all these states are former communist ones and thus still struggle with the legacies and after-effects of communism.



Therefore, studies within and beyond the field of ethnogeopolitics of democratic transition, pluralist transformation and socio-economic development, in both relatively peaceful and violence-ridden (war-ravaged) societies, should no longer exclusively or predominantly focus on so-called 'developing' countries in the so-called Third World or traditionally conceived 'South'. This biased focus seems to be still prevalent in the mainstream schools within the field of Development studies in particular.

Thus Babak Rezvani has lamented in the very first Editorial of the maiden issue of this journal that "Africa and Latin America get much attention from scholars in Europe and the USA. Also South, East and Southeast Asia get fair attention from scholars from the UK, the Netherlands and elsewhere. Nevertheless, Central Eurasia—i.e. the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Iranian Plateau—does not get sufficient attention, and the facilities to study it are very meager" (Rezvani 2013a: 5-6).

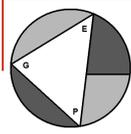
I myself have put the following question to the highly knowledgeable, skilled, experienced and practice-oriented members of the Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law during its annual conference in The Hague in June 2015:

Is the Platform's focus—and consequent expertise and knowledge—not too exclusively focused and limited to Africa, the Middle East and Central and Southern America, i.e. to primarily the South and the so-called Third World, at the expense of particularly South-Eastern Europe (Balkans) and Eurasia, i.e. those once belonging to or falling under the sphere of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, once known as the Second World? Thus would it not be wise and indeed urgent to compare the histories, deprivations and current fragilities of post-colonial countries in the (former) Third World and those of post-communist countries in the (former) Second World?¹

Transition and Transformation towards Democracy, Pluralism and Development

Arguably there are, or one could distinguish conceptually and theoretically, three types of 'progress' in any fragile societies, perhaps in conjunction to separatist, post-separatist and/or anti-separatist state-building efforts by the opposing communities concerned:

- 1) *transition* towards a functioning democracy with free and fair elections and other formal requirements of popular influence on and participation in decision-making (in a wider sense: formal change from one political system to another);
- 2) *transformation* towards a mature, tolerant and pluralist democracy with a vibrant civil society helping to ensure full civic and (other) human rights for all inhabitants (in a wider sense: durable change from one political system to another that signifies changes in society);
- 3) *development* towards a democracy or any other political system that is able to secure sustenance, safety, security, livelihood and a minimum of (equal, fair or reasonable distribution of) wealth amongst its citizens and other inhabitants.



According to my circumscriptions of these 'progress-concepts', development is the most overarching one of the three, incorporating both transition and transformation ²: without these, development arguably remains incomplete, even in the most enlightened autocracies and oligarchies—yet it almost invariably must include socio-economic rights, aspirations and achievements, irrespective of political rights and the political system.

As greater wealth, wellbeing and equitability including socio-economic equality presume basic and improving levels of survival and safety for and among people, one should also include security as a concept and phenomenon into that of development—above all bottom-up *human security* “based on (but not limited to) the basic freedoms “from want” and “from fear” ” (Ten Dam & Rezvani 2015: 5).

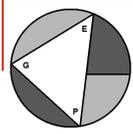
As Françoise Companjen points out in the 2015 Special Issue on Human Security of our journal, “security is growing more dependent on political, economic and social development, and concomitantly on issues of (dis)trust in local government and identity threats against transnational influences being part and parcel of feelings of (in)security” (Companjen 2015: 7).

Actually many scholars circumscribe and apply concepts like security and transition as (references to) negative i.e. reprehensible or at least troubling phenomena rather than positive i.e. commendable and sought-after ones, like a period of transition being one “in which the credibility of major ideological foundations and behavioral norms, essential to providing legitimacy to the previous type of social and political organization, are put into question, and to which all current misfortunes are attributed” (Katsikides & Koktsidis 2015: 5).

By implication, the 'previous type' of political system may be a democratic one and the transition in question may constitute a highly volatile and possibly violent process *away* from both formal and pluralist democracy. Thus transition in a wider sense may not involve democratisation at all, but rather the reverse—or a change from one non-democratic system to another, like from an oligarchic dictatorship to a communist one or *vice versa*.

I hereby basically adopt the concepts of transition and transformation which Companjen and other fellow scholars apply on regions like the North Caucasus including Chechnya, Dagestan and other autonomous republics in southern Russia, and the Transcaucasus i.e. Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan (Companjen, Marácz & Versteegh 2010; esp. Companjen Ibid 2010, Chapters 1,5).

The tenuous transitions and incomplete transitions (if at all) of these countries from communist to post-communist political systems and societies, seem to be part of a “third wave” of democracy as conceptualised by Samuel P. Huntington (1927-2008). Huntington has distinguished between three waves of democracy or democratisation in the world, regarding the number of countries answering at least the basic requirements of free and fair elections and peaceful transfers of power during and after elections: the first wave in the period



1820-1926; the second wave in 1945-1962; and the third wave which began in 1974 and arguably continues to this day. These waves were interspersed by periods of declining democracy or “reverse waves” which already began during the former periods, like the rise of Mussolini in 1922 in Italy (Huntington 1991a: esp. 12-13; Huntington 1991b).

Though Portugal’s April 1974 Carnation Revolution by military officers against the authoritarian *Estado Novo* (New State) regime is generally seen as the beginning of the third democracy wave, its continuation, depth, duration or end are highly contested issues. Huntington himself wondered, at the time when liberalisation and democratisation had just started in Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union but the communist regimes were just gone or still in place: “At what stage are we within the third wave? Early in a long wave, or at or near the end of a short one?” (Huntington 1991a: 12).

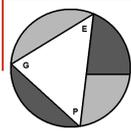
If the “third wave of the 1970s and 1980s was overwhelmingly a Catholic wave” (Huntington, 1991a: 13) in Southern Europe (Portugal and Spain) and Latin America, one could consider the democratisations in most of Central and Eastern Europe and the Eurasian continent as a *fourth* wave in primarily Christian-Orthodox, Muslim and mixed Orthodox-Muslim countries. This wave may be true and discernible on that continent, even during and despite the armed conflicts and the retrenchments by former and present authoritarian(-minded) rulers like Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia, Vladimir Putin in Russia and Islam Karimov in Uzbekistan. The Arab Spring, which started in December 2010 in Tunisia ³, could be considered part of this fourth wave, or even a distinct *fifth* wave for so far the fragile (semi-) democracies in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and elsewhere in the Middle East prove to be tenable.

Clearly, democratisation “after the Arab spring has not proceeded as successfully as many had wished and hoped”, as this, “particularly in circumstances of experimentation, tension and even violent conflict, is not—and can hardly ever be—a smooth and easy process which can succeed in a few years” (Rezvani 2013c: 4).

Alternatively, one could speak of a lengthy if unstable, fluctuating third wave of democracy ever since Portugal’s Carnation Revolution, that more or less continues with many ups and downs to the present day—if one includes formal yet ‘hollow’ democracies racked by clientelism and lacking true pluralism and civil societies.

Part of the confusion or uncertainty about the duration of the ‘third’ wave of democracy may lie in the lack of “major reverse waves” (Huntington 1991a: 17) i.e. undeniable, obvious reversals from democracy to authoritarianism. Such reverse waves characterised the ends of the first and second democracy waves, respectively the rise of Fascism in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s, and the proliferation of both right-wing and left-wing dictatorships in especially Latin America and Africa in the 1960s and 1970s.

Another, perhaps more important reason for the contestability of the third-wave concept, or even of the democracy-wave concept in general, lies in the challenge of defining and



identifying a 'real', durable, high-quality democracy in each and every case. Thus there seems to have been some confusion and lack of clarity—admittedly also on my part—on the precise distinction and differences between the concepts of transition and transformation (Ten Dam 2012b: 369-374, esp. 371).

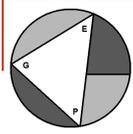
For now, I circumscribe transformation as involving far-reaching *changes in norms and values* that could or should accompany and underpin the transition from one political system to another, in this context from a non-democratic to a democratic one.

Like Companjen, I essentially agree with Thomas Carothers' critique on what he calls the *transition paradigm* and its "core assumptions" (Carothers 2002: esp. 6-8) that arguably have been dominant among Western and particularly American analysts and practitioners of democracy promotion, aid and assistance—ranging from advice on how to conduct free and fair elections, to supporting civil society groups, labour unions and new political parties—since the 1980s or even earlier. Companjen summarises the core assumptions underlying this transition paradigm as follows:

- 1) all post-communist and other post-dictatorial countries are moving towards democracy;
- 2) democratisation unfolds through a "set sequence of stages" (opening, breakthrough, consolidation);
- 3) elections are of "determinative importance";
- 4) structural, i.e. societal factors like political-ethnic, socio-cultural and socio-economic traditions and cleavages are "not major factors" affecting transition or its (un)successful outcome; and
- 5) democratisation [especially the one during the 'third wave'] implies and "improves" an already functioning state" (Companjen, in: Companjen, Marácz & Versteegh 2010: 112 (quotes)).⁴

Carothers shows that none or few of the five transition assumptions have transpired—rather the exact opposites of those—for most of the new democracies ever since Portugal's 1974 Carnation Revolution. He and other scholars (e.g. Collier & Levitsky 1997; Ottaway 2003; Ottaway & Choucair-Vizoso 2008) have shown that many countries have stayed or reverted to semi-autocracies or semi-democracies, falling into a wide "gray [grey] zone" covering variable political systems that lie somewhere between "outright dictatorship and well-established liberal democracy" (Carothers 2002: 9).⁵

Carothers has noted and criticised in many of his works (e.g. Carothers 1999, 2004) particularly America's transition-to-democracy premises, based on his extensive experience as a democracy promoter and programmer for many international and American organisations during the 1980s and 1990s, including USAID. Carother's conception of and



critique on the transition paradigm has gained some conditional support among some scholars. Thus Ghia Nodia at first seems to basically agree with him, observing that countries in the “gray zone” might “make progress toward greater democracy, or they might not. Neither eventuality should surprise us” (Nodia 2002: 14).

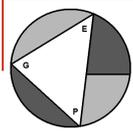
Still, Carother’s critique, against the often ideologically driven assumptions of Western and especially American democracy promotion, aid and assistance, remains surprisingly controversial and contested to this day.

Even Nodia disagrees with some parts of Carother’s analysis, such as the latter’s contention that the “most common political patterns to date among the “transitional countries”—feckless pluralism and dominant-power politics—include elements of democracy but should be understood as alternative directions, not way stations to liberal democracy” (Carothers 2002: 14): “any given “gray zone” country may or may not become a liberal democracy eventually, but the conditions in which these countries find themselves still can only be understood in terms of how near or far they are from democracy” (Nodia 2002: 16).

In the *normative* sense, and thus also in the sense of conceptually framing and empirically categorising countries along the authoritarian-democratic continuum, the transition paradigm “remains valid” (Nodia 2002: 16)—at least according to Nodia and (many) others: “unless and until such [transitional, grey-zone i.e. hybrid, semi-democratic and semi-authoritarian] countries come up with some kind of systemic alternative to democracy, it remains correct to try to understand their experience within the framework of democratic transition” (Ibid: 17).⁶

However, not all scholars endorse or depart from the democracy-transition paradigm or even from the democracy paradigm per se. Provocatively, Huntington insists that the “primary problem is not liberty but the creation of a legitimate public order” (Huntington 1968: 7). Even if Communism is as bad as (or worse than) Capitalism in “maximizing welfare”, “the one thing communist governments can do is to govern: they do provide effective authority” (Ibid: 8). This implies that Communist aid to developing countries have helped the latter to establish minimally stable polities more than Western (neo-)liberal aid ever did to their recipients.

The long-term effectiveness, viability and legitimacy of communist states and state-building projects can be called into question—remember the gradual and perhaps inexorable systemic declines of the Soviet Union since the early 1970s and Yugoslavia since the early 1980s. Still, it may well be true that developing countries in Africa, Latin America and elsewhere have been better served by the nationalisation and state-building advice from the Communist East, than from the privatisation and liberalisation advice from the Capitalist West: perhaps the former helped to strengthen state functions however inefficiently, while the latter undermined these however efficiently.



To this day, scholars continue to explicitly or implicitly lambast the apparently corrosive effects of (neo-)liberal modernisation on the nascent state in the developing world.⁷ Even many NGOs, often dependent on subsidies from Western and other rich countries, “have their own ideological agenda (e.g. supporting a political ideology or faction, or self-described democratisation, liberalisation, emancipation, etcetera) and count these as “developmental cooperation and aid”. ... They often go to countries with a weak state. Worryingly, the NGOs interference in these weak states tends to take the form of deliberately or effectively sidelining or even further weakening the state and thereby serve global capitalism and neo-liberalism” (Rezvani 2013d: 50).

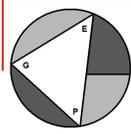
Babak Rezvani observes that the “statebuilding process has been rudimentary in many “Third World” countries. These are usually countries which are repeatedly affected by many types of internal conflict. The best remedial strategy would be to strengthen state structures and to encourage good governance and democratisation at the same time” (Rezvani 2013d: 51).

Essentially, a transformation paradigm as true and durable democratisation “reverses the transition paradigm’s fourth assumption, by hypothesising [instead] that societal traditions and cleavages are major factors determining and above all hampering (the degree of) democratisation, thereby “problematizing” all the paradigm’s other assumptions” (Ten Dam 2012b: 371). Indeed, as Companjen points out, these structural, societal features “do play a role in the onset and outcome of the transition process, or after twenty years ... Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia would have been more democratic, viable states than they are today” (Companjen, in: Companjen *et al.* 2010: 126).

Revealingly, Nodia is sceptical about promoting and strengthening democracy through political party formation—thereby ironically agreeing with Carothers’ essential argument that structural i.e. socio-cultural and socio-economic factors do play vital, determinative roles:

The first Western political consultants who came among us after post-Soviet Georgia announced its plans to democratize took on the task of helping to develop proper political parties. These consultants failed spectacularly. Why? Most likely because, to borrow an image from Jonathan Swift’s account of the Academy of Projectors in *Gulliver’s Travels*, trying to build parties artificially with almost nothing but outside help is like trying to build a house from the roof downward. I am at an even greater loss to understand what “bridging the gap” between citizens and formal polities through outside assistance would mean in specific terms (Nodia 2002: 18-19).

Nevertheless, I apply the term transition as formal democratisation—or formal change to any other political system—in a broader sense than many other scholars. Thus I do not necessarily imply with it (all) the presuppositions contained in Carothers’ delineation of the transition paradigm. As I have stressed before, successful, durable “transition plausibly hinges on true transformation, i.e. a fuller sense and realisation of democracy through



societal pluralism, i.e. a vibrant civil society, not just the superficial procedures and trappings of democracy through (a set sequence of) electoral, constitutional, and judicial reforms and procedures” (Ten Dam 2012b: 372).

Conditions and Legacies of Conflict affecting Democracy, Pluralism and Development

Most if not all post-colonial, post-communist, post-conflict and/or post-separatist societies are in the midst of a fragile, contested, even reversible *transition* towards a formally functioning democracy, let alone a *transformation* towards a true i.e. genuinely pluralist democracy—and *development* towards a democracy or any other political system able to secure sustenance, safety, livelihood and wealth amongst its citizens and other inhabitants.

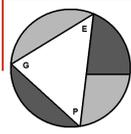
For instance, both Chechen and Albanian communities continue to struggle with the legacies of the post-communist, separatist conflicts in Chechnya (1994-1996, 1999-present (if counting the bouts of low-intensity conflict after 2000)) and Kosovo (1997-1999), as do other, often opposing communities such as those of the Serbs and Russians.

Corrosive processes of *brutalisation* i.e. increasing resort to terrorism and other forms of violence violating local and/or international norms (see for definitions Ten Dam 2015a: Appendix) limit the prospects and chances of democratisation and development after the (high-intensity) armed conflict or a state of tension between different (ethnic) communities, even the chances of (inter)community survival and peaceful (co)existence (see on my Brutalisation theory and research, and the theory’s variables violence-values, combat-stresses, grievances, avarices, interests and ideologies: Ten Dam 2010, 2011, 2012, 2015b, 2015c).

Therefore, the prospects of a durable resolution of the simmering conflict in Chechnya and the frozen conflict in Kosovo remain challenging if not bleak, given the historic animosities and grievances between the different ethnicities, and the mutually exclusive aspirations of self-determination and territorial integrity. This may lead to renewed armed conflicts in the more distant or even immediate future, perhaps more brutal than the preceding ones.

Consequently, one must assess the saliencies of *internal factors* that have affected such conflicts and post-conflict situations in different fashions and degrees, like significant ‘Islamic extremism’ (Salafism) among Chechen rebels—and the almost complete lack of such extremism among their Kosovar counterparts. One also needs to account for such factors, i.e. identify the factors-behind-the-factors, to explain for instance “why an ethno-nationalist conflict emerged in Chechnya, and diffused and transformed [to a considerable degree] into a Wahhabi/Salafi religious conflict” (Rezvani 2014: 871).

Thus Babak Rezvani has found that, at least on the Eurasian continent and in the Caucasus and Central Asia in particular, a “so-called *mosaic* type of ethno-geographic configuration” of “highly homogeneous pockets of ethnic concentration” in a certain circumscribed territory



or area, is the most important *necessary, conflict-inducing* condition accounting for the occurrence of ethno-territorial conflict (Rezvani 2013b: 15).

Indeed, this mosaic can best explain such conflicts in combination with other, typically *sufficient-making, conflict-triggering* conditions, above all the “possession of territorial autonomy” (Ibid: 327)—especially if it makes and privileges one ethnic group into a ‘titular nation’ at the expense of other ethnicities in the territory, as was fatefully encouraged and enshrined in the “hierarchical ethno-territorial federalism” of the Soviet Union (Ibid: 327 (quotes)).⁸ Yet such factors only make any conflict truly likely, in a time of interethnic tensions and state fragmentation, when the ethnicities concerned live next to each other in concentrated pockets (mosaic configuration) within ethno-politically constructed territories.

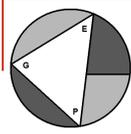
Be that as it may, it would be interesting to see whether these “explaining conditions” (Rezvani 2013b: 281) of armed conflict in general and ethno-territorial conflict in particular can also account for the occurrence or absence of significant and durable transition, transformation and development in the post-conflict phases of the societies in question—though it would be more difficult to identify these conditions in slow, incremental, fluctuating and often all-too fuzzy *processes* of democratisation and socio-economic development.

Apart from the kinds and degrees of brutalisation and radicalisation, the apparent success (Kosovo) and failure (Chechnya) of separatist state-building projects, are also due to the local impact of *environmental or external* factors like globalisation in general, and the still-continuing War on Terror and the still ongoing financial-economic crisis in particular.

Arguably, these factors are at least as important in shaping the fate of societies such as those in Kosovo and Chechnya as the internal factors of culture, brutality, grievance, greed and selfish interest, and (consequent) national-separatist aspiration. These factors continue to simmer in Chechnya for instance, just below the surface of apparent ‘stability’.

As Donna Winslow, René Moelker and Françoise Companjen point out, “Russian-style reconstruction does alleviate living conditions, but does not remediate the frozen conflict character of the present situation” (Winslow, Moelker & Companjen 2013: 129). They are among scholars who have shown the mutual feedbacks of internal and external factors in fragile conflict-affected societies such as the one in Chechnya, through the *globalisation* and *glocalisation* concepts of Roland Robertson (Robertson, apud Featherstone *et al.* 1995; Robertson *et al.* 2014)⁹ to capture the interplay between “globalizing forces from below and above” (Winslow, Moelker & Companjen 2013: 129).

These forces from above range from the “transnational economic and political interests” (Ibid: 136) of governments, multinationals and (inter)governmental organisations in oil, other resources and the mass media, to the same kinds of interests from below of separatist rebel movements and other non-state actors to get access to oil, money and other resources through the “worldwide criminal economy” (Ibid: 139) and above all the internet to



gain and maintain support and attention. These global and local factors do affect the prospects of democracy, pluralism and economic wealth in those societies; that may seem rather obvious, but these factors have been long neglected in mainstream, neoliberal development and democratisation studies, as discussed earlier.

Conclusion

Transition is not simply or necessarily a precondition for transformation, nor the latter a precondition for development. In many countries, any progress may depend on a reverse order: first socio-economic development in a non- or semi-democratic state, then transformation towards a civil society, and only thereafter the attainment of all the trappings of democracy and civil liberties.

However, such an incremental process may be drawn out indefinitely, and used as an excuse by authoritarian leaders to delay (formal) democratisation indefinitely, arguing that “the people are not ready” for participatory responsibilities. In that regard, the proponents of ‘shock democracy’ do have a point when they warn about indefinitely delaying necessary political reforms, if only because self-interested actors may manipulate and misuse arguments for incremental reform or indefinitely delayed reform—so as to effectively forestall and kill off any (such) reform.

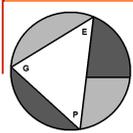
Therefore, a careful, case-by-case analysis and application of the transition-transformation-development sequence seems the best course to take. One must avoid adopting the neoliberal doctrine of democratisation-and-privatisation which arguably underpins Carother’s criticised transition paradigm, which has created so many disasters and near-disasters in post-colonial and/or post-communist countries.

However, this does not mean that one should wholeheartedly embrace the alternative neo-Marxist doctrine of developmental incrementalism, however successful it may seem on the surface in China and other ‘post-developmental’ countries with an authoritarian regime. In the end, redistribution toward socio-economic equality without participation in the political process will always be incomplete and tenuous i.e. reversible, so long as people cannot claim and fall back on guaranteed rights.

Caspar ten Dam, Executive Editor Leiden, January 2017

Endnotes

1. See Caspar ten Dam, comments on the ‘Annual Conference 2015 of the Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law’, www.ctdamconsultancy.com/uncategorized/invited-participant-at-annual-conference-of-the-knowledge-platform-security-rule-of-law/ (posted 25 June 2015).
2. Katsikides and Koktsidis appear to apply development as an overarching concept as well in their co-edited study on “the nexus of economic, political and security repercussions on social transformation” in Europe (Katsikides & Koktsidis 2015: 2), though they appear to apply the terms



(and thereby concepts) of transition and transformation interchangeably. I will assess in a planned book review their definitions (if any) and applications of these terms in more detail, as well as those by the contributors to their *Societies in Transition*.

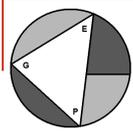
3. The Arabic Spring “started in Tunisia, when people took to the streets to demand the resignation of President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali ... after the suicide of the fruit-seller Mohamed Bouazizi in December 2010 due to relentless harassment and humiliation by the police After numerous protests and over 300 fatalities, Ben Ali’s regime fell in January 2011, followed by free elections in October of the same year” (Ten Dam 2013: 21 & note 6; Groothuis 2013: 4-5).
4. Companjen criticises these transition assumptions accordingly, by “showing their non-validity in the three Transcaucasian states” (Companjen, in: Companjen, Marácz & Versteegh 2010: 112).
5. However, according to Carothers the tendency by numerous scholars to describe “countries in the gray [grey] zone as types of democracies”—like “semi-democracy, ... façade democracy, pseudo-democracy” and so on—show that “analysts are in effect trying to apply the transition paradigm to the very countries whose political evolution is calling that paradigm into question” (Carothers 2002: 10). Indeed, Ghia Nodia points out that “the very term “gray zone” suggests our problem in understanding the nature of such regimes” (Nodia 2002: 15).
6. Carothers rightly “wants us to be modest in our expectations and skeptical about a positivist interpretation of the transition paradigm ... but .. does not offer a new paradigm” (Nodia 2002: 17).
7. Some scholars note the apparent correlation between democratic transition attempts and weak states, without specifying whether this is due to neoliberal or other ideological thinking. Thus “faltering transformations often exist against the backdrop of failing or structurally weak states. Indeed, in some cases it is extremely difficult to tell whether the failure of democracy or the failure of the state itself is the more basic difficulty (I am inclined to think it is more often the latter)” (Nodia 2002: 18).
8. Rezvani acknowledges the relevance of multiple factors accounting for internal armed conflicts—particularly grievances of severe deprivations in the past and demographical size and dominance of the initiating (rebellious) party—as well (see Rezvani 2013b: esp. 227-249 (Chechnya); Rezvani 2014 (on Chechnya); Rezvani 2015 (updated, shortened and improved version of Rezvani 2013b)).
9. Roberston has coined the ‘globalisation’ concept as well, or at least helped to introduce it as an alternative to the more clumsy expression “ ‘modernization of the whole world’ ” (Robertson *et al.* 2014: 447): “Consciously, I first heard it from my own mouth” in 1979 (Ibid). I still am ambiguous and skeptical about globalisation as a usable concept, testable theory, or even true phenomenon. I find most discourses using and applying the term rather abstract and obtuse—no doubt due to the concept’s typical blandness. I would prefer to more narrowly and concretely circumscribe it, if one can.

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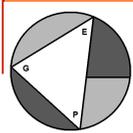
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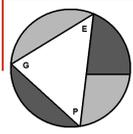
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