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Democratic transition in Guatemala: Toward a consolidated democracy or a failed state?

Karol Derwich

Abstract

Since the late 1970s almost all Latin American and Caribbean countries have been experimenting with democracy. Some of them have succeeded in transitioning to a more democratic political regime, like Uruguay and Chile, while others are still trying to consolidate their democratic systems, such as Brazil and Mexico whereas others are encountering serious difficulties, like Bolivia and Ecuador. There are also states that have failed totally to build democratic systems, function confidently and accomplish basic assignments. In the most extreme cases, the failure of the democratization process has led to the total dysfunctioning of a state or even its collapse. The most significant example of this kind in the Western Hemisphere is Haiti. However, there are many more countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region that have serious problems with the proper adoption of democratic systems. This article is an attempt to analyze the problems with building a stable democratic system in Guatemala.

Palabras clave: Democratization, Latin America, the Caribbean

Resumen

LA TRANSICIÓN DEMOCRÁTICA EN GUATEMALA:
¿HACIA UNA DEMOCRACIA CONSOLIDADA O UN ESTADO FALLIDO?

Desde el fin de la década de 1970 todos los países de América Latina y el Caribe experimentan un régimen democrático. Algunos, como Uruguay y Chile, registraron éxito en sus procesos de democratización. Otros todavía están realizando esfuerzos para la consolidación de sus sistemas democráticos, como por ejemplo Brasil o México. Hay también un grupo de países los cuales sufren graves problemas en el proceso de construcción de la democracia. Al fin, hay también estados que se encuentran en caída, en los cuales no solo las reglas democráticas no funcionan propiamente sino que también la institución del Estado no tiene la capacidad de realizar sus propias funciones. Haití es un buen ejemplo de esta situación. Sin embargo, hay más países en la región de América Latina y el Caribe que tienen problemas muy graves con la aplicación propia de las reglas democráticas. Este artículo es una prueba de análisis de los problemas de Guatemala durante el proceso de formación de su sistema democrático.

Key words: Democratización, América Latina, El Caribe

«The state is useless» – affirmed Argentinean president Fernando de la Rúa in 2000. It was before the bankruptcy of Argentinean economy in the end of 2001. Also, it was about twenty years after the third wave of democratization erupted in Latin America. Since the end of the 1970s almost all Latin American and Caribbean countries were experimenting with democratic rules. Some of them succeeded in their process of democratization, like Uruguay or Chile, some of them still try to consolidate their democratic systems, like Brazil or Mexico and others encounter serious difficulties, just to mention Bolivia or Ecuador. There are also states that totally failed in their process of building democratic systems, functioning confidently and realizing its basic assignments. In the most extreme situations a failed process of democratization has conducted to the total dysfunction of a state or its collapse. The most significant example of this kind of situation in the Western Hemisphere is Haiti. However, there are much more countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region that have serious problems with proper adoption of democratic systems. This article is an attempt of analysis of the problems with building stable democratic system in Guatemala. The choice of Guatemala is not accidental. Almost twenty years after the beginning of democratization in this country we can observe that the process is «frozen». There have been made some significant political reforms, there can be observed some fundamental changes but simultaneously there are plenty of problems and occurrences that do not permit a next step toward building a consolidated democracy. It is not a coincidence that in the last decade there are more concerns about the future of the democratic transition in Guatemala than contentment from changes that are taking place. There can be observed some dangerous practices and phenomena that constitute considerable obstacles not only for building democracy but also for the real functioning of the Guatemalan state. In this article the author will try to analyze the difficulties of the Guatemalan democratic transition and to answer the question what influence they have on the functioning of the state. It is necessary to underline that there are some spheres that constitute a grave challenge for the state. There is a real danger that without serious political, economic and social actions Guatemala will fall into dysfunction.

It is difficult to talk about success or collapse of democratic transition without explanation what does it mean democracy which is the aim of democratization. There is really rich bibliography about democracy and there are a lot of its definitions. There exist both general descriptions of democracy as well as very detailed ones. It is possible to say –like Abraham Lincoln did– that democracy «is the government of the people, by the people, and for the people». One of the simplest and most popular concepts of democracy has been formulated by Joseph Schumpeter. He underlined that the most fundamental process of democratic system is to elect in fair elections representatives of the masses that will govern in the name of the masses. According to that concept –which is often called «minimalist»– it can be said that the most important element of democratic system are free and fair

elections (Schumpeter 2008). According to the Schumpeter's concept democracy is an institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions, in which individuals acquire the power to decide through a competitive struggle for people's vote. There are important implications that results from this idea of democracy. First of all, a political system can be described as democratic if persons responsible for decisive process descended from fair elections; secondly, democracy is an institutional system in which the election of the representatives is the most important process and the source of the authorities' legitimacy. Meanwhile, Robert Dahl in its famous study about poliarchy noticed some minimal conditions that political systems must comply with. Among them he enumerated elected representatives, free and fair elections, and freedom of speech and diversity of sources of information (Dahl 1990, 2000). Other authors mention regular, free and competitive elections, broad participation, and finally rule of law and respect for civil and human rights (Diamond *et al.* 1989). In recent years especially the rule of law is an element that is underlined and required in describing political systems as democratic. For example the idea of liberal democracy is based on the concept of the rule of law and respect for human rights. Observing growing number of elected governments that do not care about the rule of law and sometimes they are the source of human rights violations, Fareed Zacharia formulated the idea of illiberal democracies, what means the governments elected in the elections but –simultaneously– violating human rights and do not abide the rule of law (Zakaria 1997, 2007). The element of political liberties and civil rights is underlined also by the other classic of modern theory of democracy and democratization – Guillermo O'Donnel. According to him it is essential for democratic systems to develop processes and institutions that would enforced political liberties among citizens. The development of institutions that would properly realize functions that a state should realize towards its citizens is the principal factor that permits analyzing condition of state's functioning. If a state does not realize its obligations toward citizens it can be described as dysfunctional. Some analysts uses the term «failed states» or «collapsed states» but those descriptions do not seem adequate to states that do not realize its functions instead of good development of state's institutions. The difficulties that some countries encounter during democratic transitions sometimes can lead to serious problems in realization of state's functions. It can be the result of various factors, as for example economic difficulties, institutional weakness, dominance of particular interests of various political, social or economic elites or organized crime.

The case of Guatemala is very interesting but also quite difficult. It was the first country in Central America –except Costa Rica– that launched process of democratization in the 1980s. Similarly to other countries of the isthmus Guatemala has symbolic experience of democratic governance. In its history the only period of democratic government was in the mid - 20th century. In 1952 Jacobo Arbenz won the presidency in the democratic elections. His ambiguous plans of reforms were in

contradiction with interests of big business, especially of the United Fruit Company. Accused of the proliferation of communist ideology, Arbenz was overthrown in 1954. Also, it is necessary to remember that democratic transition in Guatemala is deeply connected with the peace process that was launched together with the assignment of the Escupulas II. The peace process in Guatemala had its climax in December 1996 with the signature of Peace Accords. Now it is over fifteen years after this symbolic moment and there are as many problems with democratic transition in Guatemala as in the mid-1990s. After the explosion of euphoria connected to the end of decades of long armed conflict there appeared some significant problems with creating democratic order in the weak Guatemalan state. At present there are a lot of worries, not only about the future of democratic transition in Guatemala, but also about the future of Guatemalan state. The question about the possibilities of realizing its principal functions –as for example providing security to the citizens, ensuring the due application of law, the proper functioning of education system or respect of human rights– is fundamental and the answer is not unequivocally positive.

As the military rule in Guatemala had ended and the Peace Accords were signed the process of democratization in this country could really begin. Guatemala is the perfect example that illustrate the process of democratization. This process does not consist only of the establishing of civilian government and conducting elections. The ending of the military rule and the establishment of electoral democracy is a fundamental step in this process. However, a consolidated democracy is something much more complex than civil authorities and elections. An electoral democracy –how a system that includes regular election but nothing more is described– is insufficient to guarantee long-term democratic stability (Seligson 2005: 206). The consolidation of the democratic system requires not only these two essential elements but also the establishment of the state of law, guarantee of fundamental liberties, respect for human rights as well as political, economic and social pluralism. To comply those conditions it is necessary to create a strong institution of a state. That is, state institutions that could realize their obligations towards the citizens. If there are no stable and efficient institutions, there are huge problems with establishing and consolidating democratic regime. If democratization process is perceived as a kind of continuum, the case of Guatemala is an example of realizing the very first step and experiencing huge difficulties in further stages of building democratic regime.

Examining the Guatemalan democratic transition it is necessary to peer at the condition of the Guatemalan state. The chronic weakness of the state was and still is a great problem of Guatemala. Because of its weakness the state always was perceived as a measure for local elites to realize its particular aims. That is why the military often used the same argument for justification of gaining power: the state needs strong government to resolve its problems. But those strong military governments did not resolve Guatemala's problems. The strong state meant for them a strong

government, usually applying force to eliminate its opponents. Establishing civilian government in Guatemala was the first step toward democratic regime but, simultaneously, it created dangers for state institution. After the acceptance of the neoliberal reforms at the beginning of the 1990s and confirmation of this kind of economic policy the new challenges appeared. One of the assumption of the Washington Consensus and neoliberal economic thought in 1990s was creating a weak government. But «weak» in the sense of its engagement in economy, not «weak» in a sense that it is not able to do anything. Meanwhile, in Guatemala, the adoption of basic neoliberal assumptions followed the situation in which the weak civil government has been loosing its ability to function efficiently. One of the examples of this situation is the Guatemala's government revenues. Previously Guatemalan authorities had accumulated quite big deficit that created serious danger of indebtedness and problems with international financial institutions. It entailed, also, significant restrictions in public expenses (Azpuru *et al.* 2007: 334). This difficult economic situation was accompanied by the government that was devoid of economic instruments indispensable for proper functioning. For example the revenues of the government were at the impermissible low level. The government income worldwide averages 20.1 percent of GDP, meanwhile Guatemala's government income is only 8.7 percent of GNP. Only six countries in the world in 1997 had this proportion at lower level Seligson 2005: 216). It is closely related to the tax collection which in mid-1990s was very low. In 1998 the percentage of tax collection to GDP was 8.7. (Azpuru *et al.* 2007: 334). The inability of the government to increase its income and to change the tax structure in the country presents how weak and inefficient it is. This weakness affects other spheres of states activity. If there is no income or its level is extremely low, there is no funds for health care, education, judiciary or public security. This results in huge social problems but also causes grave difficulties in building democratic regime. It is almost impossible to consolidate democracy in a country that has low level of education, big inequalities or inefficient justice system. Meanwhile, Guatemala illiteracy rate in 2009 was about 25 percent of adult population and public spending on education comprises 3.2 of its GDP (in 2008). At the same time in Costa Rica it was 5.0, in Argentina and Brazil 5.4. The infant mortality in Guatemala in 2010 was 25. It was much lower than in 2008 (34) but in comparison with other Latin American countries it is still very high (World Bank 2012). These statistics describe how difficult are the conditions that exist in Guatemala for consolidating democracy. However, those difficulties to a high degree are the effect of weak state and its inefficiency. It is truth that Guatemala is a poor country and its democratic regime is emerging from the armed conflict but the example of El Salvador presents that it is possible to develop democratic regime in this type of conditions, despite great economic and social problems.

What kind of problems related to the process of democratization faces Guatemala at the present? First of all, it seems that the greatest challenge is to construct the rule of law. It is especially important in the case of Guatemala as in the past it

was the state that was responsible for massive violations of human rights and persecution of various groups of society, particularly members of different indigenous groups. In this study the rule of law is implied as a situation in which all kinds of power in the state respect the legal order. As a result a state in which there is a rule of law has to incorporate justice and the rules of checks and balances. The rule of law is indispensable element of building democratic regime as in consolidated democracy all state's officials have to respect law and they are responsible before the law. Simultaneously, all citizens are equal before the law. To assure all citizens of their rights is a fundamental goal of each state. And it seems that the Guatemalan government has serious problems with realization of this function. There is a huge problem in Guatemala with public security. It is related not only to the expansion of common delinquency and organized crime but also, and maybe principally, to the inefficiency of state's judicial system. In a democratic regime law has to be respected and when it is not the state must ensure the legal order. To do that it has to have the possibility of using an effective judicial system. It is truth that the reform of justice system has been initiated and it produced some positive effects. In reality, however, there is only the initiation of structural changes and deep reform in the area of judicial administration. Its impunity brings negative effects. Not only in the extensive wave of crime but predominantly in the lost of citizens' credibility in the justice system and the rule of law in general (Rodríguez *et al.* 1998: 139). State's inefficiency in law enforcement leads to phenomenon that questions its ability to realize state's basic functions. Its best exemplification is the lynching – a lawless act realized without due legal process, by which a community executes one accused of perpetrating a deed that aggravates the killers. Those who execute lynching do not represent any formal institutional authority. Nevertheless, some lynchings have been caused by state authorities or by people who were related to human rights violations in the past (Fernández García 2004). In fact, lynching is an illegal act of violence that constitutes a form of violation to human rights. Growing part of Guatemalan population accepts those acts, calling them «popular justice». Meanwhile, the rule of law that constitutes inseparable element of democracy presumes that justice cannot be anything else than imparted by the duly legitimized state organs to the effect, and within a legal framework. Worse still is that the number of lynching is slowly but regularly growing. Since the assignment of Peace Accords in the end of 1996 until 2000 there were about 300 lynchings in Guatemala. Meanwhile, only in 2009 there were registered about 250 lynch mob attacks that resulted in 42 deaths (Altschuler 2009). The growing number of lynchings in Guatemala is without doubt the result of low level of citizens' confidence in justice system.

This question is closely related to the public security. It is not rare that in societies where the level of insecurity is quite high, the confidence in the state institutions and in democracy in general is rather low. And the problem of security is one of the most important ones in contemporary Guatemala. According to US

data, the number of homicides tallied at 5960 in 2010 (according to official police statistics). The persecution rate, however, has remained between 2 and 3 percent (Overseas Security Advisory Council 2011). The homicide rate was 38 per 100 000 inhabitants in 2011. There is a declining tendency and it is much lower than in neighboring El Salvador (69,2) but it still represents a high level (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2011). This is usually attributed to widespread impunity, drug trafficking, organized crime, gang violence and availability of firearms. The Guatemalan difficulties or it is better to say incapacity to effectively combating delinquency and extremely ineffective judicial system are the obvious example of state's weakness. Also it is huge obstacle in the process of democratization as people who are afraid of their personal security and cannot count on state's help in this field are looking for strong authority that would guarantee the public security. Often the price for security is an approval of human rights abuses. There are several examples of looking for strong leader that could effectively fight insecurity. In the 2007 general elections, one of the bloodiest ballot in Guatemala's history with over 50 candidates and activists slain, Otto Pérez Molina ran against Álvaro Colom for the presidency. He advocated a strong hand policy against the country's criminals (Deibert 2009). Despite numbers of accusations of human rights violations during the Efraín Ríos Montt dictatorship he gained pretty much votes. However, he lost 2007 elections but he successfully campaigned in 2011 and gained presidency that year. This example shows that Guatemalan society is determined in looking for authorities that would successfully combat organized crime and significantly raise the level of public security. This brings important consequences for democratic transition. The high level of insecurity can considerably reduce confidence in democracy as the most required form of government. The other implication is the emerging of «parallel institutions» – extra legal institutions that realize functions the State is unable to fulfill. The above-mentioned lynching can be perceived as an attempt to fulfill the vacuum created by the State's inability to prosecute those who are accused for crimes. Also, the growing number of private security units is an example of existing parallel institutions. The situation when the number of private security units several times outnumbered national police it is pretty dangerous for the proper functioning of democracy. Especially, when the great number of individuals connected to those private security units are suspected of human rights abuses in the past.

Rule of law that is a condition *sine qua non* of democratic regime includes also respect for basic rights of citizens. There is no democratic regime without freedom of speech, freedom of assembly or respect for the right to elect representatives in the authorities. There can be observed quite broad improvement. Some legislative acts that guarantee basic citizen and political rights have been adopted, as for example Facultative Protocol of International Pact on Human and Political Rights adopted in March 1996. Also, the freedom of election is broadened. It permitted leftist guerilla units to participate in elections. The incorporation of the leftist groups

to the party system fulfilled the requirement of political pluralism in democratic regime. However, the weakness of Guatemalan State makes those advances limited. Its weak institutions some times are not able to guarantee de facto basic rights and liberties. An access to the judicial system as well as the effective separation of powers do not function properly.

Analyzing democratic transition and its connection with State's functioning it is necessary to look at the question of representation. At 1995 took place the last elections organized during the armed conflict. As Peace Accords were signed in the end of 1996 it had a great impact on the electoral process. Political pluralism that followed the peace process ensured full ideological spectrum of parties and the possibility for the citizens to elect their representatives that would reflect their views in the best way. Positive changes in electoral process and in representation are noticed by the Guatemalan society. According to the researches, Guatemalans have positive opinions about those changes. The majority of respondents consider that there are significant positive changes in realization of elections, in electoral pluralism and in electoral participation. Also, the majority has positive opinion about the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (Azpuru *et al.* 2007: 396). This is worth to underline, as the Tribunal is one of the very few state's institutions that have positive estimates among the citizens. The same research proves that political parties and party system have the worst estimates among citizens (Azpuru *et al.* 2007: 396). Despite a broad ideological spectrum of political parties, from right, through center and leftists ones, voters do not identify with them. Political parties are still perceived as groups of elitists interests. The same opinions relates to political leaders. The low level of party identification is not a positive symptom during the process of democratization and it is quite difficult to consolidate democratic regime without stable party system. It can result in some negative effects. If there is low identification of voters with political parties citizens can be not interested in participation in the elections, that would lead to low levels of electoral attendance. Also, if the level of party identification is low, voters may elect accidental politicians that could produce a rapid grow of political discontent. Finally, like in the case of public insecurity, weak party system can produce in the future overall disappointment from democracy in general. Very poor estimates of political parties reflect on low evaluation of the Congress as one of the State's institutions. In this situation, strengthening of multiparty system is one of the top necessities for Guatemalan political system. It means not only creation of political parties representing broader spectrum of ideological views but also democratization of political parties and their institutionalization.

A stronger party system would definitely improved political representation of various groups. This is very urgent issue due to extremely complicated character of Guatemalan society as Guatemalans represent not only different social groups but also various ethnic and language communities. And the principal problem of political representation in Guatemalan politics is de facto under-representation

of indigenous peoples. Since the Guatemalan political system for decades was based on the exclusion and repression of the indigenous population, its participation during the peace process and democratic transition is fundamental for successful democratization (Aviles y Kalleklev 2010: 19). The election participation among indigenous people is low, as less than half of the indigenous population are registered to vote. It is the result of several factors. First, the lack of electoral documents is the largest one which hinders them from voting. Further, many indigenous people migrate and move around looking for a job during the time of elections. Finally, the illiteracy rate is a huge problem among indigenous population. There is also a problem of access to information and access to a polling station, as many indigenous people live in rural areas (Aviles y Kalleklev 2010: 19). There is necessity of big effort to enhance – but predominantly to enable – participation of the indigenous population in the electoral process. That is the obligation of government but also of the civil society sector. That would lead not only to broader participation and improve representation but also to the development of civil society organizations that would represent interests of various groups, including ethnic and gender minorities. However, to realize that goal there is necessity of strong State. Only in the conditions of strong and efficient State's institutions there can be created stable party system and a broad spectrum of civil society organizations. If there is a lack of those elements than there is a real danger of political turmoils that can elevate to power outsiders or populist leaders. There are several examples of this kind of situation, just to mention Alberto Fujimori's victory in Peru in 1992 or Hugo Chávez electoral success in 1998. Also, the attempt of autocoup taken up by Jorge Serrano Elías in Guatemala at 1993. Therefore, there is a huge necessity of strong State's institutions that are responsible for ensuring proper conditions and the rule of law for citizens' political and social activity.

To ensure efficient functioning of civil State's authorities it is necessary to restrain the role of military in public life and, particularly, in politics. It is especially important in the country like Guatemala, where the role of military was for decades extremely important. Despite the fact that the presidents were civil, they were usually closely related to the military that had crucial impact on the political life in Guatemala. The limitation of the military's role cannot be restricted to the reduction of its number. There can be observed significant reduction in number of the Guatemalan armed forces from over 50 000 in the end of the 1990s to slightly above 15 000 at the present (The International Institute for Strategic Studies 2010). Also, the Guatemalan authorities reduced the country's military spending. In 2007 it was about 883 millions quetzals while in 2002 it amounted over 1,23 billion quetzals (United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs 2011). The quantitative reductions in the Guatemalan military took place principally during the Oscar Berger administration, after his presidential victory in 2003. It is very interesting to observe how will look like the present president's military policy as he is closely related to

the armed forces. However, what troubles more is the fact that the Guatemalan military still has privileges that cannot exist in a democratic regime. First of all, the Guatemalan constitution gives the military responsibility not only for maintaining external security but also internal. «The Armed Forces of Guatemala is an institution destined to maintain independence, sovereignty and honor of Guatemala, its territorial integrity, internal and external peace and security» says article 244 of the Constitution» (Organization of American States 2012). During the peace negotiations at the beginning of the 1990s the then-president Álvaro Arzú agreed to offer a constitutional modification of the military's status but the constitutional amendments were rejected in the referendum in 1999. The armed forces thus continue to play a large internal – security role (Ruhl 2004: 145). That stands in contradiction with democratic rules. However, the presence of military in public life in Guatemala is definitely smaller, there is still a lot of preoccupation about its role. There are ideas according to which armed forces should be utilized for defending natural resources or for combating narco trafficking (Solís Rivera 1993: 102) but these are not resolutions that would significantly change the position of armed forces among other institutions of the State. It is worth to underline that the demilitarization –that is quite successful in Guatemala– does not signify an automatic strengthening of civil authorities with reference to armed forces. There is still not enough reforms that would restrain the military's impact on public life. Taking into account the authoritarian and militaristic tradition and culture in Guatemala it is very important to create institutional restrictions that would limit the impact of armed forces on the spheres other than securing independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Especially as the armed forces are the institution that is evaluated much more positively than for example the Congress. And this is despite a black card of human rights abuses during the armed conflict. In this situation, the absence of institutional and legal restrictions is gravely dangerous as the disappointed by the democratic rule part of Guatemalan society can look one more time for a military tutelage, especially in case of high insecurity level.

In the context of the democratization process and the condition of State it should be mentioned one more factor that –on one hand– is a great obstacle to build efficient democratic regime, and on the other – is the next example of weakness and inefficiency of Guatemalan State. In the Corruption Perceptions Index (Transparency International 2012) prepared by Transparency International Guatemala is among countries with very high level of corruption. In the Index it gains 2.7 points. The least corrupted countries can gain 9.0-10.0 points. This record places Guatemala in the same group with other Central American states – except Costa Rica and Panama. The similar level of corruption is noted for example in Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Russia or Bangladesh (Transparency International 2012). Corruption decisively deteriorates the quality of State's institutions. In case when there is a chronic weakness of those institutions, corruption can lead to

their complete dysfunction and collapse. Meanwhile, in the process of democratization there is a great need of establishing strong institutions that would become a base for creating democratic procedures and broadening democratic values.

After the explication of several most serious problems of the democratic transition in Guatemala what is the answer for the question formulated in the title of this article, does the process of democratization tends to consolidation of democratic regime or rather Guatemala is on the way to become weak and dysfunctional state? What can be stated decidedly is that over a decade after the assignment of Peace Accords there are very few changes that significantly helped in building stable democratic regime in Guatemala. Some analysts see the problem in the Peace Accords that are very broad and do not concentrate on the political aspect of peace building and creating conditions for further democratization (for example: Seligson 2005). There is a lot of reason for that kind of thesis. Nevertheless the Peace Accords do not constitute a useful base for democratic consolidation there are different ways of creating advantageous conditions for this process. The Peace Accords are not but also cannot be the source of institutional reforms. And this is the most urgent question for the Guatemalan democratic transition. Without this, it is incredibly difficult to establish democratic order. There is thus the necessity to strengthen party system. This would permit for broader representation but also participation of citizens in political and public life in general. One of the gravest contemporary dangers for Guatemala is the lack of security. This is the obvious effect of weak State's institutions that are unable to realize State's fundamental obligation toward its citizens – to provide them security. Also, the stronger institutions, the greater guarantee of respecting human rights and civil and political rights and liberties. The weak State do not ensure proper conditions for minority rights and can lead to the majority dictatorship.

Guatemalan problems with building effective democratic regimes are not unique in Latin American region, especially in Central America. However, in Guatemala difficulties in creating democracy that functions well are great. Like some other Latin American countries, Guatemala remained stuck at low-quality democracy that is unable to protect civil and human rights and has weak mechanisms of intrastate accountability (Mainwaring y Scully 2010: 366). The alarming tone of one of human rights activist who says that «Guatemala is already a weak, almost non-existent, state that does not guarantee security or justice or health or education» (Deibert 2009) is the black reality. The government is losing control on political process and is unable to match peoples expectations and demands. One of the result of this weakness and inefficiency is the number of peoples living in poverty (Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative 2011). At the present especially dangerous is State's inability to combat organized crime. It has fundamental meaning as there can be observed growing activity of Mexican drug cartels in Guatemala (Jose Luiz Ruiz). Guatemalans expressed their concern and disappointment from the le-

vel of public security in the last presidential election when the majority voted for the «mano dura» style Otto Perez Molina, the old military suspected for human rights abuses during the armed conflict.

As a result, the consolidation of Guatemalan democracy will be possible only in conjunction with significant strengthening of the State. The lack or weakness of strong and stable institutions not only can lead to the antidemocratic practices but also can produce grave crisis of the State.

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