Social scientists have rediscovered institutions. They have been increasingly concerned with the myriad ways in which social and political institutions shape the patterns of individual interactions which produce social phenomena. They are equally concerned with the ways in which those institutions emerge from such interactions.

This series is devoted to the exploration of the more normative aspects of these issues. What makes one set of institutions better than another? How, if at all, might we move from the less desirable set of institutions to a more desirable set? Alongside the questions of what institutions we would design, if we were designing them afresh, are pragmatic questions of how we can best get from here to there: from our present institutions to new revitalized ones.

*Theories of institutional design* is insistently multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary, both in the institutions on which it focuses, and in the methodologies used to study them. There are interesting sociological questions to be asked about legal institutions, interesting legal questions to be asked about economic institutions, and interesting social, economic, and legal questions to be asked about political institutions. By juxtaposing these approaches in print, this series aims to enrich normative discourse surrounding important issues of designing and redesigning, shaping and reshaping the social, political, and economic institutions of contemporary society.

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In 1989, the “Autumn of the People” ushered in high hopes concerning the possibilities for democratic transformation in the countries of the soon-to-be-post-communist world. Suddenly the Soviet bloc was no more — and within two years the Soviet Union itself would be gone too. While the revolution took different forms in different countries, in many ways 1989 was the hour of those who had labored in oppositional civil society, often underground, sometimes in prison. Suddenly they were joined on the streets by many others. This fine democratic hour seemed to hold lessons even for the more established liberal democracies in the West, which featured at that time a much less heroic kind of democratic politics, beholden to routine, ambition, material interest, and money. For a moment, democracy in its most inspirational form seemed to be found in the East rather than in the West.

Many of these high hopes have now withered. It is one thing to overthrow an exhausted system (or even just to walk into the vacuum left by its collapse), quite another to deal on a day-to-day basis with ethnic tensions, the legacy of economic stagnation, a global capitalist political economy that soon turns out to be ungenerous and unforgiving, severe environmental pollution, and inherited creaking state bureaucracies. Simultaneous negotiation of institutional, economic, and attitudinal transition has often proven extraordinarily difficult, especially in the presence of ethnic conflicts and controversies over borders and boundaries.¹ Moreover, each of these three

¹ For an argument that simultaneity can actually facilitate transition by focusing reformers’ attention on everything that needs to be done and how different aspects can and should be interrelated, see Di Palma, 1993. For a counterargument, see Binder, et al., 1971 (we were led to these sources by Ramet, 1997).
dimensions of transition has several aspects. Institutional transition refers to
to legal, social, and educational institutions, as well as governmental ones. Atti-
titudinal transition covers attitudes not only toward new institutions and laws,
but also toward changing class structures, identities, and international alle-
giances. Since 1989 the post-communist world has witnessed plenty in the
way of economic catastrophe, ethnic warfare, civil conflict, political insta-

er, and lingering and sometimes resurgent authoritarianism. Of course, some
countries have fared much better than others on the various dimens-
ons of transition; but whether or not there is light at the end of them, many
tunnels have had to be negotiated, and remain to be negotiated.

By now there exists a number of studies of the experience of political and
economic transition in post-communist societies. So why add another at
this juncture, more than a decade after those heady days of 1989? We believe
we do have something different, novel, and important to offer. We present
here a study that is based on the way democracy and democratization are
conceptualized and lived by ordinary people and political activists in the
post-communist world — including those for whom democracy is a negative
symbol — for democracy is not just, or perhaps even mainly, a matter of
introducing institutions such as a constitution, parliament, elections, a party
system, and a legal system. Such institutional hardware is vital, but so too
is the institutional software. That is, to understand if or how democracy
works, we must attend to what people make of it, and what they think
they are doing as they engage politics, or politics engages them. Here, a glance at a
different time and place is instructive. Attempts to parachute Westminster-
style institutions into ex-British colonies in Africa in the 1950s and 1960s
produced only parodies of the original, mainly because those involved with
these institutions had little or no exposure to the habits, traditions, and
dispositions necessary to make these particular institutions function.

What people make of democratic institutions matters precisely because
what is at issue is democracy, unique among the political forms in human
history. Such a question is much less pressing for political systems in which
what the people think as they engage or are engaged by politics is mostly
irrelevant.

It is common to begin books about democracy with the observation
that democracy as a concept today meets something approaching universal
approval — provided that one does not inquire too closely into what democracy
actually means to all those who applaud it, for democracy is a contested
concept, especially in societies in the process of transition from an author-
itarian or totalitarian political economy. Political actors in these societies
often justify their projects and preferred political orders in the language of
democracy — even when these projects are directly opposed to one another, as
in the case of the violent confrontation between president and parliament in

Russia in 1993. But widespread appeal to the symbols of democracy should
not necessarily lead to cynicism about the language of democracy. Rather, it
suggests that we should pay close attention to the variety of meanings that
can be embedded in this language by political actors and ordinary people. It
is these meanings we propose to study, for they reveal what people can and do
make of democracy, and of the institutions with which they are confronted.

We show that in post-communist societies there prove to be many varied
interpretations of what constitutes the essence of democracy — though prob-
ably no more varied than within the more established liberal democracies. In
addition, as we shall see in this study, the generalization about universal
approval of the concept of democracy no longer holds. Within some (but not all) of these societies, there are indeed those who
ascribe negative connotations to the term itself. We intend to explain the
variety of positive and negative interpretations and accounts of democracy
through reference to the histories — both recent and more distant — and
contexts of each society, and examine their consequences for what is found
and what is possible in the way of political models and reform trajectories.

We shall develop an account of the discourses of democracy prevailing
in the mid- to late 1990s in Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, China, Czechia,
Georgia, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Ukraine, and
Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). For each country, this account re-
sembles what Bourdieu (1990, 1993) calls a "discursive field," constituted
by the positions that actors, often opposing one another, can occupy. The
structure of the field constrains what positions can be taken, but is itself
determined by the actions, interactions, and contestations of those taking
positions (for a good application of this idea to Soviet and Russian politics,
see Urban, 1997). In developing this account for each country, we deploy
methods that give full rein to individuals to express their own subjective
conceptualizations of what democracy and democratization mean. These
results are, then, firmly grounded in the way people think and so act po-
tically; it is these subjective dispositions and capabilities that we seek to
reconstruct. Of course, we cannot remove our own vantage point entirely:
we do not offer unmediated views from inside post-communist countries.

2 The relative proportions of the various interpretations might well differ between these two
kinds of society. However, even this should not be assumed, and requires empirical testing.
Individual countries in both groups might be closer to individual countries in the other
group than to their group's norm.

3 We tried to include Hungary in our analysis, but a severe glitch late in the project meant
that this aspiration was frustrated. Hungary's absence does not affect our basic argument.

4 Cumings (1999, p. 4) speaks of a "parallax view" that looks at both sides (in his case, the
United States and East Asia) from a point that is in neither, but rather "off center," such
that both sides are problematized.
INTRODUCTION

But we do not intend simply to report on the discursive field of democracy for each society. As just mentioned, we shall seek to explain the content and pattern of the discourses that we find through reference to both the deeper history and the contemporary circumstances of each country. This does not mean that we should expect to find simple congruence between these circumstances and prevailing discourses. Dissonance is also possible. For example, if there is little or no congruence between public policy on fundamental matters and popular discourses, then there is a risk of instability, protest, perhaps even violence. At any rate, whether it is stability, instability, breakdown, or reform that is at issue in a particular case, the extant discourses can shed explanatory light on political-economic situations and how they change.

We conceptualize the relationship between political development and discourses in interactive terms: discourses help condition what is possible and likely in terms of political development, while political development can change the terms of discourses. However, we believe discourses can be relatively stable over time, though dramatic events such as the revolutions of 1989 might occasionally change their configuration quite radically. We cannot prove this stability, because our empirical work was carried out at one time in the late 1990s. However, in drawing out connections between discourses and historical legacies, we try to render plausible the idea that discourses can endure over years, decades, possibly even (in Poland and China) centuries. Though their historical reach is quite variable, the discourses we identify represent more than passing reactions to events.

In addition, we will explore connections and conflicts between these discourses and particular models of democracy and democratization, for all democratic theories, be they liberal, participatory, republican, feminist, pluralist, or elitist, make claims about the capabilities and dispositions of individuals who compose any actual or potential political order. Our methodology can test such claims for particular times and places, and so illuminate the possibilities for congruence or dissonance between the various models of democracy and the particular cases to which they might apply.

Discourses and models of democracy

Among those who make it their business to study post-communist political transformations, there have, we think, been rather too many for whom an adequate model of democracy remains a minimalist or electoralist one. This model takes its bearings from Joseph Schumpeter’s (1942) depiction of realistic democracy as the electoral struggle between competing elites. Ordinary citizens have an occasional voter’s role in this model, but they are treated in general as uninformed and apathetic, and so incapable of exercising effective control over the content of public policy. This model fell from favor long ago among democratic theorists, but remains popular among transitologists (see, for example, Di Palma, 1990; Huntington, 1991; Mueller, 1996), most of whom have no interest in the efforts of democratic theorists. Contrasting the fortunes of democratic theorists’ ambitious models with what happens in the real world, Sartori (1991, p. 437) declares that “the winner is an entirely liberal democracy, not only popularly elected government, but also, and indivisibly, constitutional government; that is, the hitherto much belittled ‘formal model of democracy’ that controls the exercise of power.”

On the minimalist account, we should stop worrying about political transition or transformation once competitive elections have occurred. As John Mueller puts it,

> most of the postcommunist countries of central and eastern Europe have essentially completed their transition to democracy. . . what they now have is, pretty much, it. They are already full-fledged democracies if we use as models real Western countries (as opposed to some sort of vaporous ideal). . . In consequence, it may be sensible now to decrease the talk of “transition” and to put a quiet, dignified end to the new field of transitology. (Mueller, 1996, pp. 102–3)

Following this advice, once we stop worrying about transition, we can start to worry about consolidation, conceptualized simply as stabilization of regular competitive elections (Schedler, 1998). Here it may be especially important for both old (ex-communist) and new (nationalist) “counter-elites” to accept the electoral order (Kopecky and Mudde, 2000, p. 524). Huntington’s (1991, p. 267) two-election test (requiring a freely elected government to cede power after a subsequent electoral defeat) can be applied as an empirical indicator of (minimalist) consolidation.**

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5 One of the anonymous reviewers of our typescript suggested that we were setting up a straw man by stressing the influence of Huntington in this field. But corroborating our assessment, M. Steven Fish recently concluded that “Huntington-type views” predominate in the literature on post-communist transition and have been of “immense global influence” (Fish, 1999, pp. 796 and 821).

6 Beyond these brief comments, we do not consider it necessary for our purposes to enter the heated and sometimes precious debate concerning the appropriateness of the terms “transition,” “transformation,” and “consolidation.” For what it is worth, we see the whole stage between the collapse of one system and the crystallization and stabilization of another as transition. Typically, in the early stages, the transitional society is coming to terms with its past (the legacy); this stage can be called the transformation phase (Bryant and Mróz, 1994; for a reversal of this understanding of transition and transformation, see Schneider, 1997, p. 17). Later, the focus is more on perfecting the new institutions and practices through trial and error. This is the consolidation phase. Defining the point at which the consolidation stage has been completed (i.e., the new system is consolidated) is notoriously difficult (for a useful analysis, see the review article by Encarnación, 2000). Roughly, we
On the face of it, the minimalist model seems to imply that it hardly matters what people think about what they are doing as they participate (or indeed, choose not to participate) in democratic institutions. Yet closer examination reveals that even the minimalist model of democracy demands certain qualities in the political dispositions and capabilities of the masses, and somewhat different ones for elites. For the masses, the model requires a widespread attitude toward electoral politics that is apathetic yet supportive, accepting voting as the limit of participation. This attitude means leaving all important decision-making to be unquestioned, the preserve of elected elites (Zakaria, 1997 criticizes this minimalist approach as "illiberal democracy"). On this account, what O'Donnell describes and criticizes as "delegative democracy," emerging in some countries in Latin America and the post-communist world, passes the minimalist test. Under delegative democracy, "whoever wins election to the presidency is thereby entitled to govern as he or she sees fit, constrained only by the hard facts of existing power relations and by a constitutionally limited term of office" (O'Donnell, 1994, p. 57). To O'Donnell, this situation is not representative democracy because there is no accountability, no need for election promises to be remembered (for questioning of whether such an arrangement should even be called democracy, see A. Brown, 1999, especially p. 6).

The minimalist model does not require much in the way of political literacy or tolerance of those with different points of view. Political literacy and would argue that it has been reached when most members of the polity have accepted that the broad parameters of the system are settled — when, to paraphrase O'Leary, there are no longer major debates about the basic rules, but only under them (or, in Przeworski's [1991] terms, the new system has become "the only game in town"). One way to test this empirically would be to survey people on whether or not they believe that the basic system — as distinct from a particular regime (a leadership team) — will still be in place a decade hence. Of course, as Russia in the late 1990s warned us, the wording of the questionnaire would have to distinguish between normative acceptance of a system and a feeling that everything is likely to be basically the same — chaotic! — ten years hence. Clear explanation of what is understood as a system should largely overcome this problem. For us, however, the problem would remain that we see democracy as an ongoing interactive process, rather than some clearly defined end goal. In this sense, it is impossible to be entirely satisfied with the very concept of "consolidated:" which implies completion as a form of closure. Yet we want to be able to continue with our argument without being accused of being unaware of a very important theoretical debate that others might believe we should engage. To return to the opening point of this footnote, we are not interested in becoming embroiled in an argument we believe can only go around in circles. For one of the most heated debates on "transition" and "consolidation," which considers the appropriateness of comparing different macro-regions of the world as well as these concepts, see (in this order) Schmitter and Karl, 1994; Bunce, 1995a; Karl and Schmitter, 1995; and Bunce, 1995b. For an early, rather cantankerous rejection of the notion of transition, see Jowitt, 1992, who believes that transition necessarily implies transition to democracy. His belief that the prospects for this in many countries of the region were slim explains his rejection of the term.
of possibilities opens up. This opening enables some fruitful connections to theories of democracy, as well as more nuanced interpretation of the paths that democratization can take. Such possibilities can be arrayed along the following dimensions, among others.7

Social democracy to libertarianism. Social democrats, in whose ranks may now be found a fair number of reformed communists, believe in substantial state intervention in the market economy along with governmental provision of welfare programs. Thus a democratic system should do more than allow citizens to make demands and representations (inputs); it should also ensure that citizens' needs are met (outputs). In contrast, libertarians believe that civil society and the economy can and should assume many of the tasks social democrats assign to the state. Libertarians believe in a small state and maximal scope for the market. True libertarians believe this arrangement is appropriate anywhere and at any time. Advocates of "shock therapy," applied most famously in Poland after 1989,8 borrow some libertarian prescriptions for a limited transition period, but also require a very interventionist state to design the new market order.

Authoritarianism to open society. Authoritarianism can be exercised in the service of either a planned or market economy. One school of thought argues that effective marketization cannot proceed under democratic auspices. For example, Przeworski (1991, p. 183) argues that market-oriented reforms "are based on a model of economic efficiency that is highly technical. They involve choices that are not easy to explain to the general public and decisions that do not always make sense to popular opinion." Thus "A reform policy is not one that emerges from broad participation, from a consensus among all the affected interests, from compromises" (Brucan, 1992, p. 24; for a more comparative argument that too much democracy in developing and underdeveloped economies causes poor economic performance, see Gasiorekowsi, 2000). In contrast, advocates of the open society believe that political and economic liberalization can and should proceed hand in hand, for only an experimental, trial-and-error approach enables mistakes to be recognized and corrected, a process impossible under authoritarianism (Pickel, 1993).

Civil society to a strong state. Civil society conceived of in terms of political association not encompassed by the state or the economy played a large part in the revolutions of 1989. Many commentators were quick to write off civil society in this heroic guise, and some lament the persistence of the attitudes associated with it (Linz and Stepan, 1996), but it has its advocates as a continuing inspiration for post-communist societies (for example, Arato, 1993). A different, more prosaic version of the civil society model emphasizes the organization of interests, especially those with economic roots such as businesses and unions. Along these lines, Ost (1993) laments the weakness of civil society organizations in post-communist Eastern Europe, which leaves the field clear for a politics of identity that emphasizes religion and nationalism, together with a strong state (for further discussion of the weakness of post-communist civil society, see Bernhard, 1996; Pickvance, 1999). But a strong state may be a necessity where civil society is weak, and it does not have to be tied to the politics of identity. While it might at first sight seem paradoxical to argue that the consolidation of democracy requires firm central leadership, post-communist societies often lack not only the civil society (in the prosaic sense) but also the institutions, civic traditions, and culture of compromise that can make liberal democracy work, and can avoid a slide into political chaos and/or dictatorship. In this light, the key to democratic consolidation is effective state leadership committed to democratic and constitutionalist principles. Here, a strong state is one with the capacity to establish frameworks and laws, implement policies, and keep political development on a democratic course until civil society can assume more political responsibilities (L. Holmes, 1998). Of course, strong states can be put to very different uses by those not committed to such principles. Authoritarian states can be strong states, especially in the sense of being intrusive into citizens' lives and possessing large coercive apparatuses. Here we consider only the case for the strong state within a democratic context. This state is a capable state, which can establish effective democratic institutions and legal frameworks in the early post-authoritarian era and promote democratic political culture. It is strong enough to collect the taxes to fund democratization,9 and capable of resisting both authoritarianism and anarchy. It does not have to be large; the Russian state machinery under Yeltsin was large but not very capable, hence not strong in this sense.

Pluralism to republicanism. Pluralists, indeed most liberals, believe that politics is properly about the reconciliation and aggregation of partial

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7 For a simpler but useful typology of kinds of democracy in the post-communist world, see Commissio, 1997, esp. pp. 1–15.
8 Thoough Murrell (1993) has persuasively challenged the notion that it was implemented very extensively in Poland.
9 This problem of adequate funding of democracy is not confined to transition countries. Much of the recent political corruption in Western Europe – notably Germany – relates to inadequate legitimate funding of political parties. In today's world, there is no such thing as a free lunch, and no cost-free democracy.
This dialogue itself can be seen as integral to democracy.

Integrationist and civic forms of nationalism are in the longer term more compatible with democracy than are ethnic and divisive forms. But the former must be sensitive to ethnic difference where it exists, promoting dialogue between the two or more groups. This dialogue itself can be seen as integral to democracy.

Elitism to participation. Proponents of participatory democracy, and populism in a non-pejorative sense, believe that as many citizens as possible should join in effective exercise of political power. Participatory democrats distrust any elite domination of democracy. Others believe even democratic politics is inevitably, and perhaps properly, for elites. The elite in question might be a republican elite committed to citizen virtue, it might be an elite committed to democratic guidance, or it could be a plural elite, composed for example of the leaders of different parties.

Nationalism to cosmopolitanism. One of the uglier aspects of some – but not most – of the countries we study is resurgent ethnic nationalism that in some cases has meant violence, even ethnic cleansing and genocide. Of course, nationalism comes in many variations, some of which abhor violence. What all nationalisms share is the belief that full membership in the political community is reserved for people with particular characteristics, and this principle can apply to democratic community too. Thus it is possible to be both a nationalist and a democrat. Auer (2000) argues that nationalism can sometimes promote liberal democratization in contemporary Central and Eastern Europe. This argument is consistent with deeper European history, where nationalism and democracy have occasionally reinforced each other – especially when nation could be defined in opposition to empire. National governments could be more responsive than imperial ones. Cosmopolitans are those who deny the importance of ethnicity and nationality in establishing claims to full citizenship. Real cosmopolitans have little use for national boundaries. An intermediate position on the nationalism–cosmopolitan continuum would emphasize state citizenship, and so state boundaries, but interpret citizenship in constitutional terms, for which anyone living within the boundaries of the state is fully eligible.

10 Integrationist and civic forms of nationalism are in the longer term more compatible with liberal democratization than are ethnic and divisive forms. But the former must be sensitive to ethnic difference where it exists, promoting dialogue between the two or more groups. This dialogue itself can be seen as integral to democracy.
Throughout, we will follow a comparative approach: we are interested not just in discourses, events, and possibilities within each country, but also in what can be learned by examining crosspolity patterns. We will even make comparisons with more established liberal democracies at some points.

Each of the substantive chapters will report results for a particular country, relating these results to the political-economic experience of that country, with the emphasis on the period since 1989. We seek to develop an analysis of what transition has meant in terms of the lived experience of people in the country in question. We will build to crossnational comparisons and generalizations about the problems and prospects associated with post-communist democratization.

**Freedom and necessity in democratization**

We intend, then, to explore the variety of meanings of democracy and democratization—more precisely, the discourses of democracy—that can be found in the post-communist world. We approach this issue as social scientists, and will deploy some social scientific tools in our mapping of discourses of democracy. But we care about this issue because we are democrats. We are democrats not just in the bland sense in which just about anyone can so categorize themselves, but in a commitment to democracy as a project that must itself be pursued through democratic means. Some of the main resources for (as well as constraints upon) this project can be found in the discourses about democracy that are found in particular societies. This commitment sets us apart from those minimalists who believe that democracy is something that is either absent or present, rather than a matter of degree and variety.

In further contrast to minimalists, we care a great deal about the degree to which democratic control is authentic as distinct from symbolic, and engaged by critical and competent actors. We can really only speak of successful democratic transition to the degree such authenticity is achieved, for if we stay with the minimalists and address popular conceptions of democracy only in terms of degree of acceptance of the new order, it is in the end impossible to distinguish between normative commitment and simple acceptance of a status quo, between reflective approval and mere socialization. The latter in turn reveals some disconcerting continuity between old and new systems, at least in terms of the normalization that both can seek. Such normalization assumes different forms under state socialism and nascent liberal democracy, but in both cases is the silencing of critical voices that is sought. Under state socialism, criticism is equated with subversion; potential opponents of the regime must be convinced that there is ultimately no alternative to it. Under the new democratic order, criticism of the institutional status quo can be interpreted by minimalists only as anti-democratic feeling, rather than possibly representing desires for a different, perhaps more authentic, democracy (Powers, 1998).

Our focus on discourses means that we believe it matters what democracy and democratization mean to people. Certainly there are those who believe it does not matter much. To some, democracy is, in Przeworski's terms, "only a system of processing conflicts without killing one another" (1991, p. 95). In this light, acceptance of democratic rules is a result of strategic calculations on the part of key actors, who conclude that their expected long-term net material gain from accepting democratic rules (notably, free elections) is greater than that which would be obtained from (say) trying to seize or hold on to power through coercive means. If, as rational choice theorists tell us, the political world is made up only of rational egoists ( homo economicus ), then it matters not at all what key political actors think democracy is or should be, let alone what nonelites think. Such "elite pact" accounts of transition take nonelites into account only in terms of their potential for upsetting the pact: for example, by engaging in protests that induce an authoritarian reaction on the part of the old regime signatories.

From a very different direction, neoinstitutional macro-sociologists such as Skocpol (1979) and Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens (1992), who consider that political development is the remorseless working out of structural forces, would see discourses of democracy as being as irrelevant as all other human ideas in explaining the course of history. Different again, development (or what Fish, 1998, pp. 233-4, calls "strong modernization") theorists who believe that successful liberal democracy is positively associated with prosperity, mainly because economic growth produces a middle class that possesses the necessary democratic virtues, would direct our attention away from discourses (except as intervening variables, determined by economic development) and toward the influence and interaction of economics and social structures (i.e., classes—see, e.g., Lipset, 1959; Pye, 1966; Moore, 1967; Rostow, 1971). Those more skeptical about the impact of the transnational capitalist political economy on democracy—believing that there is no scope for popular control of collective decisions, that all governments must in the end please financial and capital markets (see, for example, Block, 1977)—might also think that popular discourses about democracy cannot make much difference. Relatedly, world systems theorists such as Wallerstein (1974) would see a country's location in a particular zone of the world economic system as the key determinant of its public policies.

Another kind of determinism that figures large in analyses of the post-communist world emphasizes culture rather than structure. For example, Hellén, Berglund, and Aarebrot (1998, esp. pp. 365-6) distinguish between the Baltic states and the Central and East European states on the one hand,
and Romania and Bulgaria on the other. Like many analysts (for example, Vachudová and Snyder, 1997), they identify a "North–South divide" in CEE, and argue that "There is, in fact, a good case to be made for the notion that the resilience of authoritarian features in the Balkans has much to do with the clientelistic heritage in that particular region."

We agree that deep history can influence current politics and, as mentioned above, deploy it ourselves in order to understand differences in discourse configurations from country to country. However, we have three criticisms of cultural determinism. First, cultural determinists too often treat a complex society in overly monolithic terms. As we will demonstrate, different groups can in fact recall very different periods and events in their society’s history. Thus we address histories in the plural when considering the influence of the past (though we do occasionally speak of “deep history” in a generic and aggregated sense). Second, cultural determinism is too reductionist and monocausal. Not only deep histories but also contemporary experiences influence attitudes, discourses, and developments. The relative importance of these factors can vary from one individual or group to another. Third, and most important, cultural determinism can condemn a society to nondemocracy because that society has allegedly had the “wrong” experiences. We reject this sort of stereotyping, arrogance, and lack of political imagination when it comes from observers from comfortable Western societies. Some of the worst culprits here do however hail from the countries we are considering – especially those seeking to establish their own country’s Western credentials. Our findings ought to lead to the reconsideration of such positions. Empirically, our study will demonstrate the point we have just made about diversity; there are one or two surprises in store (as there were for us when the results began to arrive). Also, it is a truism that none of the existing established democracies would exist if a prerequisite for democracy is prior democratic experience.

A further kind of determinism that we reject is advanced by some of those who share our emphasis on discourses and their causal force. Most notable among discourse analysts, Michel Foucault has demonstrated that discourses surrounding sexuality, mental health, criminality, and the like exercise an essentially normalizing function: they construct human subjects in particular ways. Thus the idea of an autonomous human subject begins to look suspect, though not wholly inconceivable. Foucault himself deployed a notion of “governmentality” to argue that political discourses in modern societies have constructed individuals in particular ways that make them amenable and easy to govern. Foucauldians such as Barry Hindess (2000) extend this idea to democracy: discourses of democracy are just another means of disciplining individuals, making them compliant subjects of the liberal democratic state. Liberal constitutionalists would of course applaud such discourses, and not recognize the kind of coercive potential emphasized by Foucault. Along these lines, Francis Fukuyama (1989, 1992) argues that the “end of history” represents the global triumph of a particular discourse – liberal democracy plus capitalism – over all others. Fukuyama is hardly a Foucauldian; he believes that there is an essential human nature consisting of the desire for recognition (thynzos) plus material self-interest which capitalist democracy is uniquely able to satisfy. But if one sees the desire for recognition plus rational egoism as historically contingent rather than human essences, or at least as aspects of humanity that are invoked much more by liberal society than by its predecessors, it is easy to reconcile Fukuyama’s argument with a notion that discourses are mainly sources of constraint. The end of history is in this light simply a discursive closure. Indeed, Fukuyama recognizes as much at the end of the book, where he bemoans the “men without chests” who populate the end of history, where there is nothing noble left for people to fight for.

While our conception of discourses owes something to Foucault, our treatment is actually closer to Bourdieu’s notion of a discursive field. As we pointed out earlier, our results for each country model such a field. Political actors are constrained (and in part constituted) by the structure of this field. But these actors in turn, via their own interventions, contests, and interactions, can affect the boundaries and structure of the field, as well as the particular positions (discourses) that exist within it. We believe, then, that discourses offer resources as well as constraints: that intelligent individuals can, if only sometimes, reflect upon the content of the discourses in which they move, and make good choices within and across discourses. (Arguably, Foucault himself moved closer to this position late in his life.) We do not maintain that this happens all the time: if it did, the whole concept of discourses would lose its force, as individuals would not be subject to them in the slightest. But such reflection and choice can happen some of the time, and especially at important times. It is especially likely in societies with unsettled political and economic orders – and all post-communist societies still fall into this category (even allowing for the substantial differences between a Hungary or Slovenia at one end of the spectrum and an Albania or Serbia at the other). Moreover, it can be argued that one characteristic of today’s world is that traditions, established authority, and discourses are questioned.
INTRODUCTION

as they never have been before. Social theorists such as Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens (Beck, 1992; Beck, Giddens, and Lash, 1994) describe such developments under the headings of "detradi
tionalization" and "reflexive modernization." Reflexive modernization is development become
conscious of itself. Modernization was once thought of in terms of a path on which all societi
ties were embarked; choice came only in whether to move or stand still, to walk faster or slower, and to go via the route marked democracy or via the one labeled dictatorship. Reflexive modernization questions the des
tination of the path, and is ready to question and even reject aspects of its content — for example, risks associated with biotechnology or chemical pollution.

While our intent here is not to demonstrate that these concepts work as empirical accounts of contemporary post-communist societies in particular, notions of reflexive modernization and detradi
tionalization help provide a context for our inquiry, because we believe that democratic de
development should proceed in reflexive fashion; indeed, that this is a large part of what makes it democratic. To the extent this can happen, the ra
tional choice theorists, neoinstitutional macro-sociologists, development theorists, and economic determinists we mentioned earlier provide partial
and so ultimately unsatisfactory accounts of democratization and its possibil
ities. This is not the same as saying that they are devoid of insight or completely wrong, but merely that they highlight the influence of necessity
and so miss the influence of freedom in democratic innovation (for a cri
tique of development theorists who imply that there are no choices to be made, see Di Palma, 1990). Here we seek to redress the balance in favor of freedom. (For an attempt to work out the balance of freedom and neces
sity in democratic innovation in developed liberal democracies, see Dryzek, 1996a.)

Like all political theories, theories of democracy necessarily rest on as
sumptions about the dispositions and capabilities of the persons who will make up any political order. Many democratic theorists have sought univer
sal applicability, and so have made assumptions about the essence of what it means to be a human being: be it the liberal's model of an individual capable of exercising choice, the republican's model of individuals who can find fulfillment only in public life, the public choice theorist's homo econ
omicus, the conservative's model of ordinary people driven mostly by passion and prejudice rather than by reason, the feminist's model of a nurturing and connected (female) person, or the Marxist's model of new socialist person. We prefer to treat such matters of disposition and capability as contingent on particular times and places — hence as questions to be studied empirically, rather than stipulated theoretically. Thus our inquiries are grounded in the way people in post-communist societies think about themselves, about

politics and democracy, and about how they and others can (or cannot) engage in political action.

We have argued in this chapter against several existing determinisms. We are happy to report that a number of analysts had by the late 1990s begun to reassess their earlier positions (compare for example the tone of Jones, 1993, 1997, and 2000, as changes in Georgia led him to more optimistic prognoses). But we are not only concerned about arguments in the scholarly literature. Precisely because, as democrats ourselves, we are interested in what ordinary citizens believe and do, we are concerned about images created in the mass media, which often have far more influence on public attitudes than do scholarly analyses. Unfortunately, while stereotyping (particularly cultural determinism) appears to be on the wane among scholars, this cannot be said so readily of the mass media. It would take at least another full-scale project systematically to analyze the presentation of our thirteen countries in the Western mass media. We believe that many readers will recognize the stereotyping to which we refer (and we do cite various examples throughout the book). Still, our primary objective is not to discredit the analyses of others, but rather the constructive one of presenting an alternative way of looking at democracy and democratization.

Before turning to our countrystudies, we need to say alittle about method
ology: specifically, how we have utilized Q methodology and political dis
course analysis in producing the map of discourses of democracy for each country. This methodological discussion constitutes chapter 2; readers more
interested in the substance of what we have found and what we have to say about discourses of democracy and democratization in post-communist
societies may be forgiven for passing lightly over chapter 2.