POST-COMMUNIST PARTY SYSTEMS

Competition, Representation, and Inter-Party Cooperation

HERBERT KITSCHELT

ZDENKA MANSFELDOVA

RADOSLAW MARKOWSKI

GÁBOR TÓKA

Ústav mezinárodních vztahů
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1

HISTORICAL LEGACIES AND STRATEGIES OF DEMOCRATIZATION: PATHWAYS TOWARD POST-COMMUNIST POLITIES

The breakdown of political and economic regimes always offers new political actors opportunities to deal creatively with a highly contingent and open range of possibilities in order to craft new institutions and power relations. Nevertheless, the creativity of actors is also constrained by the experiences of the past and the patterns of economic and political resource distribution under the old regimes. Whereas historians are typically fascinated by the openness of choice in situations of regime breakdown and the idiosyncrasies of the actors who take advantage of them, sociologists and political scientists tend to focus more on the regularities and continuities that exercise a persistent influence on the pathways of social and political transformation in crisis situations, mediated by actors' rational pursuit of power, wealth, or ultimate cultural values. In this vein, the profound diversity of post-communist polities may not predominantly result from random variation of actors' choices when faced with the collapse of the existing communist political and economic regimes. Although regime breakdown may make some actors imagine an almost infinite range of choices among alternative new social and political orders, the former institutions and resource distributions, together with entrenched mutual expectations about likely or appropriate behavior generated under the old regime, still affect actors' aspirations and practical moves when building a new order and thus circumscribe the feasible set of outcomes.

Both historical legacies and actors' strategic choices matter in the path-dependent process of creating new polities and economies. Legacies at least initially shape the resources and expectations that help actors to define their interests and to select the ways and means to acquire political power. In order to account for the varying development of parties and party systems in post-communist democracies, in this chapter we detail a simple analytical model that characterizes

structural components of the diversity among the old communist regimes and associated pathways toward institutional change in the critical window of regime breakdown. In chapter 2, we then propose hypotheses explaining how diverse experiences and strategic configurations among actors before and during communist rule as well as in the transition to a new order affect the patterns of party competition and political representation that create qualitatively different processes of interest aggregation and collective decision making across the new democracies.

Accounts of political change that invoke path dependence often appear to command a compelling persuasiveness only because they seem to presuppose nothing more than a good narrative constructed around a linear chronology in which later events and institutional arrangements somehow follow from earlier ones. With the benefit of hindsight, a skilled storyteller may always identify attributes and episodes associated with the old regimes that foreshadow subsequent developments. In order to avoid such opportunistic theorizing and the related penchant toward idiosyncratic accounts geared to individual cases, arguments from path dependency must meet at least two standards to achieve explanatory bite. First, its advocates must formulate them at a level of sufficiently high conceptual generality to be testable against the experience of a variety of unexplored cases. This requires that we abstract from numerous historical particularities of each case and focus on attributes that vary systematically across classes of cases. Second, accounts based on path dependency must lay out a parsimonious logic detailing how and why actors with a capacity to process information, to define preferences, and to deliberate about alternative pathways choose particular strategies resulting in observable collective outcomes.

In this chapter, we propose such a logic for the subject of communist regime breakdown in three steps. First, we distinguish three variants of communist rule and discuss how these variants are themselves steeped in social and political-institutional antecedents, although we refrain from pursuing the causal chain further into the past, let alone explore the cultural correlates they are associated with. Next, we explore how these three configurations of communist rule opened up alternative strategic pathways of regime transition in the late 1980s. Finally, we sketch how the distinctive patterns of regime transition influenced the choice of new democratic rules of the game. After outlining the logic that connects resources, institutions, and political choices to alternative pathways of post-communist transformation, we discuss how our theoretical model applies to empirical cases in the communist hemisphere and justify the design of our empirical research in that light.

It is a matter of course that a logic of institutions and calculated strategic choices constructs an idealization not fully reflecting any particular historical case. Observers of political and economic regime change are therefore quite right to insist on the contingency of regime transitions in which actors must make choices under conditions of great uncertainty because unique constellations of institutions and actors, faced with a far-reaching breakdown of economic activity and political

order, make it difficult for participants to define their preferences and collective identities or to select strategies that advance their objectives in light of their opponents' choices. Nevertheless, theory involves the construction of logically connected generalizations about the causal linkages between actions, events, and macro-institutions. If we endorse this epistemology of social science, then theory aims at highlighting the non-contingent, least probabilistic connections among elements within political processes at the expense of purely contingent choices that can be reconstructed only by a historical narrative.[1]

THREE MODES OF COMMUNIST RULE AND THEIR HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS

While communist polities vary in many respects, two properties characterize alternative communist regime types that appear consequential for the transition to democracy and ultimately the quality of the democratic process in post-communist polities. The first dimension concerns the extent to which communist regimes rely on a formal-rational bureaucratic state apparatus that rules out corruption and clientelism, as opposed to a patrimonial administration based on personal networks of loyalty and mutual exchange, combined with patronage, corruption, and nepotism. The existence of formal bureaucracy may have lasting consequences for the construction of citizen-party linkages at the time of suffrage extension and on opportunities for rent seeking by members of the incumbent elite in the process of reassigning property rights. A good measure of formal-bureaucratic rule is the extent to which the state administration relied on corruption under communist rule. While a few scholars have attempted to determine practices of corruption under communism in comparative terms (Willerton 1992; Goetz 1995; Mildner 1995), we lack a broad and reliable data base in this regard. Nevertheless, comprehensive assessments of corruption in post-communist countries conducted by investment risk analysis firms may provide us with clues about administrative practices under the old regimes, as long as we accept the premise that such administrative practices are unlikely to have fallen simply out of the blue sky at the time of regime change in the late 1980s.[2]

The extent of communist systems' reliance on formal-bureaucratic rule depends on older patterns of state formation, economic development, and political mobilization. Where capitalist market economies had begun to take off before the advent of communism, they were intertwined with the development of more secure property rights hastened by and contributing to the development of a

[1]For this reason, authors such as Levine (1988), Remmer (1991, 1997), and Kitschelt (1992a, 1992b) have pointed out that the correct intuition of analysts who emphasize contingency – such as O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) or DiPalma (1990) – unfortunately does not help us to make theoretical advances.

[2]For expert assessments of corruption in twenty-six post-communist countries, see *Central European Economic Review*, December 1995–January 1996, p. 9.

predictable formal-bureaucratic state apparatus. Moreover, in the more industrial economies powerful socialist and communist parties formed outside the state apparatus. Particularly the radical, communist working-class organizations had no access to state patronage and developed practices of citizen-elite linkage without clientelist material rewards to constituencies (cf. Shefter 1994). Consistent with the Leninist vanguard party model, these practices favored formal-hierarchical and rational-bureaucratic governance structures later on when strong communist parties assumed political rule. Conversely, where market economies and radical socialist parties were feeble before the advent of communist rule and where the state apparatus relied on patrimonial governance, later governing communist parties could resort to patrimonial techniques in their own governance structures.

The second dimension of variability among communist regimes concerns the mechanisms communist parties employed to instill compliance in the population or the extent to which communist rulers after Stalin's death and during the "post-totalitarian" transformation tolerated a modicum of economic or political pluralism under communist tutelage.[3] The two main compliance mechanisms are repression (the stick) and co-optation (the carrot), negative or positive incentives to promote cooperative conduct. While all communist regimes relied on a mix of both, the emphasis on each varied contingent upon the *parties' bargaining power vis-à-vis actual or virtual opponents.* This bargaining power, in turn, is linked to the skills and experiences of different political forces in the pre-communist period that constituted a virtual threat potential to the new incumbents of state power, once communist rule had been installed. Political and economic conditions preceding communist rule thus began to shape the feasible strategies of communist politicians after Stalin's death.

Different propensities for communist rulers to rely on repression, co-optation, and toleration of dissent come in at least three configurations characterized by different balances in the distribution of organizational resources. First, where socialist and communist parties as well as their bourgeois opponents were well organized in mass parties before the advent of communist rule, later communist governments primarily relied on repression and tolerated little dissidence. Second, where the socialist-communist left was weak in numbers and organization, but bourgeois and agrarian opponents strong, communist governments from the 1950s onward relied on direct bargaining or indirect tacit trades with a virtual and sometimes real opposition to find a modus vivendi. Third, where both the socialist-communist left as well as bourgeois political organizations were weak and only agrarians were able to mobilize a mass following around civic associations in the

[3]In contrast to the pluralism debates in the sovietology of the 1970s and 1980s where the key question was whether organized economic special interests (firms, sectors, regions) articulate conflicting demands and shape the policy process (cf. Hough 1977; Skilling 1983), we are returning here to the classic notion of pluralism concerned with free and voluntary political mobilization and contestation of elite positions (cf. Dahl 1971, 1989).

pre-communist era, communist rulers employed both strict repression and inducements of co-optation but did not tolerate dissent. Based on our two dimensions – formal bureaucratic rule and the balance of power between communists and their adversaries in pre-communist political regimes – we can now characterize three different modes of communist rule and their historical origins.

The first type of communist rule is *patrimonial communism.* It relies on vertical chains of personal dependence between leaders in the state and party apparatus and their entourage, buttressed by extensive patronage and clientelist networks.[4] At the apex of patrimonial regimes, political power is concentrated around a small clique or an individual ruler worshiped by a personality cult. The level of rational-bureaucratic institutionalization in state and party remains low because the ruling clique penetrates the apparatus through nepotistic appointments. In extreme cases, such regimes give rise to the "sultanistic" rule of an individual and his family (cf. Linz and Stepan 1996: 51–54). In patrimonial systems, rulers firmly repress any stirring of opposition demanding rights to participation or they co-opt potentially resourceful challengers through selective incentives (office, material privilege).

Patrimonial communism was likely to emerge in historical settings where a traditional authoritarian regime,[5] assisted by compliant religious leaders, ruled over societies of poor peasants (whether they were freemen or serfs), weak cities, a thin layer of ethnic pariah immigrant entrepreneurs and merchants, a small and geographically concentrated industrial working class, and a corrupt coterie of administrators dependent on the personal whims of the ruler. In such settings, communist insurrectionists were political entrepreneurs without a proletarian mass following who built political power on the mobilization of dissatisfied elements of the intelligentsia whom they were able to recruit from the offspring of the political and economic elite. Moreover, they sought support from the poor peasantry by promising to break up large estates and to give property rights to the peasantry, or, where peasants were a class of poor smallholders, to redistribute resources to the countryside from the ruler's fiscal apparatus in the capital city.

Once having assumed power with or without foreign help, communist parties easily crushed weak urban middle-class organizations. Patrimonial communists then constructed an industrial society at an initially dizzying pace by squeezing the peasantry and subsidizing the emerging heavy industries.[6] Patrimonial com-

[4]On the significance of clientelism and patronage in communist bureaucracy, see Goetz (1995) and Mildner (1995). To gauge the extent of patronage and clientelist administration in communist times, the best guide may be to rely on current estimates of corruption in post-communist bureaucracies. Such corruption scores highly correlate with our three types of communist rule. See note 2.

[5]Such regimes often did not impose constitutional restraints on the ruler. In addition to regimes without constitution, this also applies to polities where constitutions de facto cannot limit the exercise of political power.

[6]This pattern of industrialization represents an extreme form of import substituting industrialization (ISI) which far exceeded the milder Latin American cases, where the peasantry and the rural landlords were weakened but not wiped out.

munism presided over a prolonged era during which the peasantry's offspring enjoyed upward mobility into industrial jobs and the technical-administrative strata. Rapid economic growth due to the substitution of low-productivity agricultural jobs by employment in higher-productivity industrial manufacturing generated the resources to co-opt these new societal groups into the communist power structure and reinforce clientelist networks, an administrative practice assimilated from previous regimes.

An important cognitive legacy of the political-economic modernization under patrimonial communism is the lack of a popular memory of an urban middle class or of a proletariat that would have played a decisive role in the advancement of economic welfare before the advent of a modern industrial order created by communist party rule. Thus, patrimonial communism never had to confront an alternative vision and practice of modernization whose carriers had been crushed by the communist takeover. Once firmly entrenched in power, the patrimonial communist parties' mixture of repression and clientelist co-optation kept the emerging new urban industrial and white-collar middle strata compliant and preempted the rise of opposition forces that could have cultivated a new vision of modernity and challenged the party's exclusive claim to represent the only viable path to progress. On the eve of the communist collapse, patrimonial regimes therefore faced no significant internal opposition movements, except dispersed, isolated dissident intellectuals, unable to produce a sustained discourse or organize a professional cadre advancing a new vision of political-economic modernity. As a consequence, communist parties enjoyed not only the support of the countryside and of the industrial working class, but also of many new urban industrial and administrative strata that looked back on a lifetime of upward social mobility and improving living standards, at least until the end of the 1970s.

The second type of communist rule, *national-accommodative communism,* produced regimes with more developed formal-rational bureaucratic governance structures that partially separated party rule and technical state administration. Moreover, such regimes evidenced a greater propensity to permit modest levels of civil rights and elite contestation at least episodically, while relying more on co-optation than repression as ways to instill citizens' compliance. When Soviet support for Stalin's direct representatives in the leadership of communist parties throughout Eastern Europe waned by the mid-1950s, a number of East European regimes discovered they could govern only by broadening their societal support base. As a consequence, after sometimes bloody internal confrontations and even Soviet military interventions, indigenous communist rulers attempted to craft a tacit political and economic accommodation with their domestic challengers. They conceded modest steps toward economic or political liberalization in the hope of eliciting a modicum of popular acceptance of single party rule. To make such arrangements more palatable, they intimated that tacit mutual accommodation between ruling party and potential civic challengers was the only way to preserve an element of national autonomy from the Soviet hegemon. This modus vivendi of somewhat relaxed party control entailed a good deal of patronage

politics and a sectorization of the state apparatus into competing interests vying for resources.

National-accommodative communism prevailed in countries or Soviet republics that emerged from semi-democratic and semi-authoritarian inter-war polities with rather vibrant political mobilization around parties and interest groups. Such countries had already undertaken significant steps toward industrialization but were saddled with inefficient state bureaucracies over-staffed by the offspring of a state-centered educated middle stratum unable to find work in private business. In these settings, urban-rural conflicts were particularly salient and congealed around intense party divisions, while industrial class conflict played a comparatively minor role in the crystallization of political divides.[7] In the inter-war period communist parties were marginal operations led by urban intellectuals, whereas middle-class nationalist and pseudo-liberal parties, together with powerful peasant parties, vied for political power. These contests often took place under the tutelage of semi-authoritarian leaders who maintained power through rigged elections that sustained the dominance of the urban centers with its administrative middle class over the countryside. After the installation of communism, the new rulers lacked a strong working-class movement as a natural power base. At the same time, they faced potentially mutinous urban and peasant constituencies. The existence of Catholic or Protestant churches, which had always insisted on their internal autonomy from political meddling and had on occasion actively shaped inter-war politics, gave communist regimes another reason to seek mutual societal accommodation.

The cognitive legacy of national-accommodative communism is the experience of multiple conflicting visions of modernity, one represented by the anti-communist urban and rural elites of the inter-war period, another by the communists themselves. The communist ruling parties thus could never claim the exclusive capacity to promote modernity. They therefore never ascended to the same ideological hegemony as in the patrimonial communist countries. Instead, national-accommodative communist regimes tolerated low-level dissident activities and sometimes even networks of dissident communication that congealed around liberal, rural-populist, or Christian conceptions. Under national-accommodative regimes, the Marxist-Leninist ideology began to wither earlier than in other communist regimes.

In the third type of communist rule, *bureaucratic-authoritarian communism,* opposition forces encountered a much harsher and more hostile climate than in national-accommodative communism, but for different reasons than in patrimonial communism. Bureaucratic-authoritarian communism came closest to the

[7]Rogowski (1989: 84) is somewhat ambiguous in his characterization of the cleavage structures in inter-war Eastern Europe. He wishes to claim that the dominant division is a class cleavage between capitalists and landowners, on the one side, and workers, on the other. Yet the "workers" are mostly poor peasants who mobilize against urban elites that are often difficult to characterize as capitalist entrepreneurs.

totalitarian model of a party state with an all-powerful, rule-guided bureaucratic machine governed by a planning technocracy and a disciplined, hierarchically stratified communist party. It relied on a tier of sophisticated economic and administrative professionals who governed a planned economy that produced comparatively advanced industrial goods and services. Bureaucratic professionalism and strict party discipline, however, were inimical to political bargaining with and mutual interest accommodation to potential outside challengers. Bureaucratic authoritarian communism resorted more to the repression and exclusion of sometimes vocal opposition movements than national accommodative communism. Given these characteristics, we have consciously chosen the Latin Americanists' concept of bureaucratic-authoritarianism to characterize this variant of communist rule. In fact, bureaucratic authoritarianism may be a more adequate description of certain communist regimes than of most Latin American authoritarian polities.[8] It is a form of political rule that coincides with a relatively advanced stage of capital intensive industrialization and relies on a technocratic governance structure that tolerates no political diversity.

Bureaucratic-authoritarian communism occurred in countries with considerable liberal-democratic experience in the inter-war period, an early and comparatively advanced industrialization, and a simultaneous mobilization of bourgeois and proletarian political forces around class-based parties beginning in the late nineteenth century. In the inter-war and immediate post–World War II democracies, strong disciplined communist parties either directly organized the working class or eventually took over such organizations from rival social democratic parties when the latter ceased to lead an independent life with the subordination of the East European satellite countries under Stalin's Soviet Union. The discipline of a revolutionary party created outside of and against existing political institutions and the rise of a modern professional state machinery under pre-communist rule made the new communist regimes more resistant than other modes of communist rule to patronage and clientelist politics.[9]

Under bureaucratic-authoritarian communism, the ruling party's internal organizational strength and firm entrenchment in a broad industrial working class decreased its tolerance for political deviations. The balance of forces thus tilted in favor of repressive communist rule even in countries where pluralist civic and political mobilization in the inter-war period posed the potential challenge of an anti-communist insurrection later on. Whereas in patrimonial communism weak pre-communist pluralism, and above all the absence of urban political mobilization, accounts for the feebleness of the anti-communist opposition in the 1980s,

[8]We are building on O'Donnell's (1973) formulation and Collier's (1979) reconstruction of the concept, while recognizing that at least in Latin America many of its attributes never appear to have applied (Kaufman 1979) and therefore require revision of the theory (O'Donnell 1979).

[9]Our account is consistent with Shefter's (1994) finding that patronage and clientelist bureaucracies are less likely where political regimes rely on mass parties that were founded long before its supporters had access to the levers of the state.

in bureaucratic-authoritarian communism it is rather the organizational discipline and encapsulation of the working class that allowed ruling communist parties to prevail over a potentially strong challenge by opposition forces and to resist the temptation of seeking societal peace through accommodation with potential opposition forces.

In cognitive terms, the legacies of bureaucratic-authoritarian communism incorporate not a shortage but an abundance of competing models of socio-political modernization advanced by conflicting political actors in the inter-war period. Where declining growth rates showed the communist model of modernization to run into trouble, technocratic experimentation with economic reform, for example in the Prague Spring of 1968, were short-lived because they triggered an almost instant reawakening of a massive political opposition to communism. Unlike technocratic reformers under national-accommodative communism, the economic reformers under bureaucratic-authoritarian communism faced a party elite unwilling to make concessions for the sake of greater popular inclusiveness and economic efficiency. Communist parties in bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes remained more wedded to proletarian rhetoric and ideological orthodoxy than in national accommodative communism and, in some ways, even in patrimonial communism. Under the hegemony of orthodox Marxist-Leninist doctrines, bureaucratic authoritarian communist countries developed like pressure cookers with a muted and clandestine but potentially powerful opposition, building up steam that could blow the lid off the communist regime whenever the party's containment of opposition through repression showed signs of weakness.

Each of the three different communist regime types chose unique policy strategies to cope with the economic slowdown in the 1980s. These strategies had important consequences for economic liberalization and stabilization policies after 1989. Elites in national-accommodative communism had the strongest incentives to placate the population and maintain a modicum of political stability by increasing the supply of consumer goods. In these countries, foreign debt owed to Western banks and governments ballooned more than in other communist regimes in the 1970s and 1980s (cf. Comisso and Marer 1986; Poznanski 1986). In patrimonial or in bureaucratic-authoritarian communism, by contrast, the incumbent elites could afford to avoid major concessions to their citizens and therefore took fewer Western loans, kept tighter control of their external debt, and engaged in harsher economic retrenchment in the 1980s.[10]

At a superficial inspection, our argument concerning the origins and types of communist rule appears to invoke a model of political development very much akin to modernization theory, emphasizing the influence of economic affluence and growth as a determinant of political regime patterns. Indeed, we believe that modernization should not be considered merely a bad word, as long as theorists

[10]See for this comparison Tyson (1986: 258–80). Tyson refers to both bureaucratic-authoritarian and patrimonial systems (in our language) as "patrimonial" as opposed to the "collegial" systems of Hungary and Poland.

properly spell out the linkages between economic resource mobilization and institutional change. In the inter-war period, political regime forms and the development of civic political associations in Eastern Europe closely correlate with the relative size of the peasantry and the industrial sector. Differential industrial growth, however, may itself be grounded in institutional and cultural variations unexplored by modernization theory. Were we to pursue the origins of inter-war regional economic inequality in Eastern Europe backward before 1850 when most of the region was about equal in terms of poverty and dominated by agriculture, good candidates to explain subsequent differential growth rates would be the geographic incorporation into the divergent governance structures of the Prussian, Russian, Habsburg, or Ottoman empires, agrarian property rights, proximity to major trade routes, and even religious beliefs, together with associated practices of church-state relations (cf. Janos 1989; 1994; Schöpflin 1993; Offe 1994; Berglund and Aarebrot 1997).

More importantly for us, *there is no longer a close relationship between economic modernization and the type of communist rule by the 1970s or 1980s.* Patrimonial communist countries that began with a more "backward" economy in the 1940s often had pretty much caught up with their initially more advanced neighbors in national-accommodative or bureaucratic-authoritarian communist polities.[11] For this reason, the political institutions of communist rule, not levels of economic development, are the key determinants of political transformation strategies in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The resulting institutional differences in the post-communist polities may, however, influence subsequent differential pathways of economic reform and successful market liberalization in turn, thus translating institutional diversity again into varying levels of economic "modernity" (cf. Hellman 1996; Stark and Bruszt 1997).[12]

REGIME CHANGE BEYOND COMMUNIST RULE

A leading structural cause for the collapse of communism was the Eastern bloc's declining economic and technological performance throughout the 1970s and 1980s and its inability to stay abreast of an arms race with the United States paced by technological innovations difficult to nurture in a planned economy. Moreover, the Soviet Union's military defeat in a low-technology guerrilla war in Afghanistan weakened the governing elite. Once the dominant group of the Soviet elite began to opt for economic and institutional reform, its decision to abandon the Brezhnev doctrine of intervention in the domestic affairs of subsidiary communist countries and its willingness to grant more political autonomy to individual

[11]For a discussion of modernization theory and political change in Eastern Europe, see also Lewis (1997: 9–15).

[12]Our argument here is akin to Putnam's (1993: 152–62) in that we reverse the role of economic modernization and see it as a dependent variable affected by institutional and cultural arrangements.

Soviet republics profoundly altered the opportunities for regime change in the satellite countries and Soviet republics. Nevertheless, these changing external constraints on domestic power relations cannot explain the diverging pathways individual countries and former republics of the Soviet Union then chose to build new post-communist political orders. These pathways depend on the domestic distribution of political resources, mobilization capabilities, and cognitive orientations that grew out of their experiences with different modes of communist rule.

In the broader literature about "democratic transitions" it is quite controversial whether features of the old authoritarian regimes systematically relate to the pathways of political regime change. While some authors have postulated an association between modes of transition and the quality of the democratic outcomes,[13] few scholars have elaborated the connection between authoritarian regime form and the mode of transition itself.[14] Our own attempt to specify such a logic claims no more than to throw light on post-communist pathways of transition. We do not spell out a more general theory applicable to the strategic interaction between authoritarian regime incumbents and potential challengers in a wider range of authoritarian regimes.[15] Conceptually, our distinction among modes of transition from communist rule builds on existing typologies that characterize the alternative pathways by the varying resources and orientations of the competing actors shaping opponents' ability to challenge the incumbents and incumbents' propensity to make concessions to their challengers.[16]

First, where the incumbent communist elite continues to control most significant resources and public support while the democratic opposition remains weak, the elites maintain the political status quo *unless* an elite faction launches the transition by a *preemptive strike* because it expects to protect its long-term interests better by quick reform on its own terms than by passive resistance to weak opponents who are destined to grow stronger in a favorable international setting and eventually may sweep aside the entire ruling apparatus. The transitions literature refers to the preemptive strategies of incumbent elites also as imposition (Karl 1990), transformation (Huntington 1991: 124–42), transaction (Share and Mainwaring 1986), or agreed reform within the ruling bloc (Colomer 1991).

[13]See, for example, O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), Przeworski (1986), Karl (1990), and Shain and Linz (1995).

[14]But see Huntington (1991: 110–13) who adopts a rather ad hoc classification of authoritarian regimes and a similarly questionable coding of regime transitions and hence finds few linkages. A more careful coding of African cases by Bratton and Van de Walle (1994), however, reveals interesting patterns.

[15]If dictatorships are relatively short-lived interruptions of democratic or semi-democratic regimes amounting to less than ten or twenty years, the relationship between type of rule and process of transition may be quite random because the regime types themselves are not well established and may permit a variety of transition modes. For comparative Latin American politics, it may therefore be less promising to search for a linkage between regime form and mode of transition than for sets of countries with long-term entrenched authoritarian regimes.

[16]This general argument is made by numerous authors, such as Etzioni-Halevy (1993), Friedheim (1992), Mangott (1992: 94), and Wasilewski (1992: 116–17).

In the 1980s, lopsided power balances favoring the incumbent communist party over weak, dispersed opposition groups typically occurred in *patrimonial communist regimes.* Once changes in the international situation made it uncertain whether communist rule could survive anywhere, factions of the incumbent elites had strong incentives to seize the initiative, displace the discredited top communist leadership, and engineer regime change via preemptive reform with only minimal input from the emerging democratic opposition forces. Indeed, most of the time the reformist currents within communist parties did manage to protect vital organizational and material resources of the former ruling parties during and in the initial aftermath of transitions by preemptive strike. In other cases, patrimonial communist rulers were so well entrenched that they only changed the label, the public ideology, and the symbols associated with their regime, but maintained the status quo apparatus of power.

In a second configuration of regime change, communist elites show signs of an increasing rift between hard-liners and reformers and have to reckon with an embryonic opposition with considerable capacity to network and appropriate resources for an eventual democratic mobilization. This situation prepares a regime transition based on *negotiation* between incumbents and opposition representatives. The ruling elites are too weak and divided to impose reform on their own initiative, but still sufficiently powerful to demand concessions from the challengers in exchange for a democratic opening. Eventually, the interaction of reformers in the regime camp and moderates within the opposition camp brings about a democratic transition by elite compacts rather than mass mobilization (Przeworski 1991: chap. 1). The literature refers to negotiated transitions also as democratization through pacts (Karl 1990), transplacement (Huntington 1991: 151–63), extrication (Share and Mainwaring 1986), or controlled opening to the opposition (Colomer 1991).

This second configuration of forces prevailed most clearly in the *national-accommodative communist regimes.* The regime incumbents were already weakened on the eve of the transition and in part predisposed to bargaining with an opposition that had comparatively strong resources, organizational skills, and public support. In the ensuing negotiated transitions, the counter-elites acquired the right to compete for positions of government power, but the previous communist incumbents did not lose all political and economic assets. Indeed, their willingness to embrace the new democratic order made them acceptable as fully recognized players in the new democratic order. Their rapidly changing reputation and popular appeal, together with their residual organizational strength, quickly enabled them to become serious democratic alternatives to the former dissidents' parties and to make another bid to win executive office by democratic means.

In the third configuration of regime transition, intransigent communist elites cling to power and apply repressive strategies until the bitter end. Opposition forces remain mostly submerged, but they network and control cognitive and cultural capacities that enable them to stage a short and sharp jolt of mass mobilization when the international situation becomes sufficiently favorable to

wipe out the incumbent regime almost instantly (Kuran 1991; Lohmann 1994). In this case, regime change occurs by *implosion of the old order,* a process scholars have also called replacement (Huntington 1991: 142–51), breakdown (Share and Mainwaring 1986), or sudden collapse of the authoritarian regime (Colomer 1991). Where implosions take place, the former elites have the least bargaining power in the transition and are shunted aside by opposition forces that quickly gain organizational and ideological predominance. The former communist incumbents enjoy little opportunity to change their political appeal or to regain popular confidence under the new rules of democracy. It is unlikely that they become recognized as the leading opposition force to the new democratic polity.

Regime change by implosion characterizes *bureaucratic-authoritarian communism,* where the elites, based on the monolithic coherence of the communist party machines and long-standing support from the working class, intransigently refused to bargain for change, thus delaying any reform that would have enabled them to rescue some of their resources into a post-communist order. When the international domino effect in Eastern Europe triggered the generalized crisis of communism all around them in neighboring countries, the ruling parties swiftly succumbed to a sudden acceleration of mass protest in which the now liberated civic counter-elites, in conjunction with segments of the technical-administrative personnel in the bureaucratic-authoritarian state, took power. The new governments stripped the assets and dismantled the organizational apparatus of the former communist elite much faster and more thoroughly than their counter-parts in countries that had gone through preemptive or negotiated transitions.

None of the former communist countries experienced a fourth mode of democratic transition conventional terminology would associate with the classic case of regime change through *revolution.* Revolutions involve a sustained, accelerating political organization and mobilization of regime opponents from below who challenge a weakening, intransigent status quo elite. Revolutions bring about an open contest for power with a dual power structure ("revolutionary situation") and eventually displace the incumbents by the challengers' violent takeover of the executive and the coercive state machinery. The absence of revolutions in the demise of communist regimes may be due to the high concentration and coherence of the means of coercion in the communist state apparatus. The continued integrity of the military and the police made a direct violent challenge of the incumbent elites futile and compelled challengers to resort to softer and more incremental techniques of undermining the status quo.

THE CHOICE OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS IN POST-COMMUNIST POLITICAL REGIMES

As a first approximation, we assume that rational actors prefer to choose political institutions that lock in permanent gains and impose lasting losses on their adversaries (Knight 1992; Przeworski 1991). Institutions cement power relations

because they create high transaction costs for potential challengers intent to change. Dominant forces in the transition try to lock in their initial advantages through institutions that improve their expected chance to pursue important objectives, such as winning and maintaining political office. Placed in the context of path-dependent political change after communism, this distributive political rationale has a systematic and a random term. The choice of rules should be systematically associated with the varying resource endowments of the actors emerging from different types of communist regimes and transition processes. But at the same time, a host of idiosyncrasies ensures that institutional choice is not entirely endogenous to the logic of path dependency. Some of this non-endogeneity is consistent with rational institutional choice, some of it is not.

The expected popular strength of former communist incumbents is greatest after patrimonial communist regimes, followed by national-accommodative and bureaucratic-authoritarian polities. In polities emerging from patrimonial communism, the former ruling parties are generally likely to demand and often have sufficient leverage to obtain new democratic political rules that emphasize majoritarian principles, rewarding the strongest and most unified political actor with a disproportionate share of political power. To that end, communist successor parties may advocate single-member district plurality voting laws and a strong presidency with wide decree powers, a presidential veto difficult to override by the legislature, and presidential discretion in nominating, appointing, or dismissing members of the political executive. Communist successor parties may opt for the personalization of political office promoted by majoritarian electoral rules and personalized presidential power also because it enables them to gloss over their discredited ideology and instead direct voters' attention to the popularity, trustworthiness, and reliability of their candidates in electoral campaigns. Finally, they might hope that the power of their party apparatus has the greatest payoff in plurality elections. After patrimonial communism, however, even liberal-democratic forces may favor a constitutional arrangement with personalist representation and executive control. In these settings, liberal democrats are typically weak, with volatile, thinly organized and faction-ridden parties configured around individual personalities. Such parties may embrace a constitutional design with a strong executive presidency, if they believe one of their politicians has a chance to win it.

In formerly bureaucratic-authoritarian polities, the incumbent communists command little support and are rapidly sidelined by a host of electorally popular new liberal-democratic contenders who are likely to advocate and obtain depersonalizing institutional rules that incorporate the proportional representation of electoral lists in legislatures and a parliamentary system that makes the chief executive dependent on parliamentary coalitions. A rational logic underlies the institutional choice. The new liberal-democratic contenders typically run under competing party labels and often lack well-known politicians. They therefore expect to gain more power by instituting rules of proportional representation and a depersonalizing choice of the executive.

In former national-accommodative communist countries, where communist successor parties have maintained some bargaining power and popularity based on their willingness to embrace reform, constitutional arrangements are likely to combine elements of proportional and plurality electoral systems or of parliamentary and presidential power. Here reform communists often hope to be electorally successful, based on their conciliatory approach to regime transition, and therefore advocate strong majoritarian democratic institutions. But the emerging field of dissident groups and parties mobilizes sufficient bargaining power to force the political incumbents to negotiate more proportional political rules and limits on presidential powers. Once defeated in founding elections and converted into quasi-social democratic parties, the communist successor parties then themselves embrace a parliamentary form of governance with proportional representation in the legislature.

Closer empirical inspection indeed reveals a moderate but robust association between communist regime type and critical institutional design choices. Yet new political institutions are not entirely endogenous to former communist power configurations and modes of political transition. Although this association illuminates the underlying "deep structure" of political resource distribution and power relations, it does not take into account the openness and vagaries of the transition and bargaining process that makes the idiosyncrasies of the political actors, their frequent miscalculations in single-shot bargaining games based on no prior experience, and matters of timing and sequence so important for the outcomes. Finally, the ideological bent of the actors may lead them to interpret their strategic prospects inaccurately and support institutional rules that may be at cross-purposes with their short- and long-term power strategies.

This is not the place to engage the subtleties of institutional choice in post-communist polities, a task that has yet to be attempted in a comprehensive comparative fashion.[17] Let us therefore simply indicate some of the reasons why the adoption of democratic institutions may diverge from the simple logic of communist regime–driven path dependency just sketched. First, all actors may act on myopic self-interest to obtain political power as quickly as possible, but conjunctural events in the transition process put power into different hands than the simple path-dependent model anticipates. Thus, in formerly patrimonial communist systems, where communist incumbents have no convincing personality to fill the presidential office but face a popular contender advanced by the regime dissidents, they may withdraw from constitutional proposals for a strong presidency. Conversely, politicians belonging to the anti-communist opposition may realize that they command only limited support in legislative elections, but nevertheless they favor a strong presidency if their man has the greatest opportunities to win the contest.

Second, the assumption of a myopic rationality of short-term office seeking itself may be inadequate to reconstruct the propensities of some actors involved in

[17]For elements of such an analysis, see Frye (1997), Elster (1993–94), Kitschelt (1994b), Lijphart (1992), Przeworski (1991), and Shugart (1993, 1996).

the bargaining game and to account for the eventual institutional choices that follow from it. On the one hand, actors may simply make errors in assessing their prospective strength in an open democratic contest. Thus, time and again, communist successor parties have overestimated their vote-getting capabilities and consequently advocated the adoption of the "wrong" electoral system (e.g., Hungary, Poland). On the other, parties may take long-term detrimental consequences of institutional choice into account even if such institutions look advantageous in the short run. Dominant parties in ethnically plural societies may refrain from imposing majoritarian institutions because of their long-term consequences on the support of disempowered minorities for the polity.

More generally, where parties have considerable organizational and programmatic coherence or command a crushing lead over competitors at least at the initial founding of democracy, they may develop a longer time horizon of office maximization that makes them prefer institutions even though they look quite irrational by criteria of short-term office seeking. For example, an initially dominant communist successor party may not wish to adopt a majoritarian electoral system because that would give the opposition very little legislative representation and could trigger a backlash in subsequent elections. In a similar vein, neither liberal-democratic nor socialist parties may see it in their interest to adopt personalizing electoral institutions – such as strong presidencies, plurality voting systems, or other electoral rules making the candidate rather than the party the focus of competition – because they tend to undermine the organizational coherence of the parties.

Parties representing sectional socio-cultural appeals, running under religious, peasant, nationalist, or ethno-cultural (minority or majority) labels, tend to prefer personalistic electoral systems, but usually with proportional representation, multi-member districts if they represent minorities. Nationalists may opt even for a strong presidency regardless of their initial chances to control it. Socio-cultural and sectional parties tend to *lack a theoretical conceptualization of the imperatives of economic reform that is highly salient on the post-communist legislative agenda* (see chapter 2). They shun firm commitments on economic policy making for fear of dividing their socio-cultural constituencies. Because they cannot build comprehensive socio-economic programs, they prefer personalistic electoral contests.

Third, a major problem in the negotiation of institutional rules is that the actors who participate in the design of the democratic polity often know they will change their "identity" through splits and mergers once the new rules come into effect. Moreover, there are often conflicts *within* collective bargaining units over the locus of interests that are to be satisfied. For example, are representatives of post-communist parties in constitutional negotiations acting in the office-maximizing interests of their parties or just their own presidential ambitions? Given these ambiguities about the identity of bargaining units, it is difficult to specify the articulation of interests and the resulting bargaining game a priori. And ex posteriori, it is always easy to read some kind of self-interested rationality back into the bargaining process, because observers reconstruct the identities of

the relevant bargaining units from the ultimate outcomes of institutional choice. Where ambiguities about actors' identities and payoffs are great, psychological explanations based on focal points, past precedent, and the dissemination of foreign models ("learning") are often more plausible than rational self-interest reconstructions of bargaining situations.

The upshot of our brief discussion of institutional design in post-communist polities is to advance an argument based on structural path dependency *and* rationality, but to remain sensitive to the explanatory limits of this parsimonious approach. Contingent opportunities modify the circumstances under which actors formulate their myopically rational bargaining strategies. Some actors and circumstances promote hyperopic rationality of office seeking. And cognitive ambiguities about the expected payoffs of alternative institutional designs as well as the identity of the actors themselves make it sometimes difficult to apply a straightforward logic of rational self-interest at all. While institutional choice is partially path dependent, the new democratic institutions have sufficient autonomy to become determinants of party system features in their own right, a point we discuss in chapter 2.

THE VARIABILITY OF COMMUNIST RULE AND ITS LEGACIES

Table 1.1 summarizes the logic of the argument we have developed in the previous sections and advances a few amendments and specifications. The political-economic developmentalism that underlies the historically first "stage" of the model is captured by the antecedents of communism, the role of agriculture, and the nature of inter-war polities that shape the bargaining power of different actual or virtual actors over the communist regime form in the aftermath of the Stalinist "freeze" (1948–53). The diverse power balances within communist polities of the 1960s through 1980s, in turn, shape the trajectory of regime change in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Our reconstruction of differences among communist regimes is entirely driven by *domestic politics,* but can be extended by incorporating the role of *the international political hegemony of the Soviet Union.* In that perspective, bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes emerge at the "front line" of the Iron Curtain where the Soviet empire constructed a hard shield against the capitalist world (GDR, Czech Republic). National-accommodative communism becomes possible only in the region of "logistic supply" (Poland, Hungary), and patrimonial communism prevails in the heartland of the Soviet Union (Berglund and Aarebrot 1997: 102). The internationalist argument is mostly collinear with the domestic politics argument and suggests one plausible additional causal chain that contributes to regime diversity in the communist bloc. Nevertheless, upon close inspection, the domestic explanation of diverse power structures has more explanatory bite, where one can disentangle geopolitical location from path-dependent institu-

Table 1.1. *Antecedents and consequences of three types of communist rule*

	Bureaucratic-authoritarian communism	National-accommodative communism	Patrimonial communism
Antecedents of communist rule			
Pre-communist political economy	Industrial capitalism, agriculture < 40% of employment	Partially industrialized market economy, agriculture > 40% and < 60% of employment	Agricultural pre-capitalist economy, agriculture > 60% of employment
Pre-communist political regime	Competitive representative democracy	Semi-authoritarian rule with "managed" party competition	Traditional authoritarian or absolutist rule
Mobilization of political forces	Highly mobilized urban middle strata, highly mobilized working class, agrarian pressure groups	Highly mobilized urban middle strata, unmobilized working class, strong agrarian mobilization	Demobilized urban middle strata, unmobilized working class, strong agrarian mobilization
Modes of communist rule			
Formal bureaucratization of the state apparatus	High levels of formal professional bureaucratization, low corruption	Intermediate levels of formal professional bureaucratization, low-medium corruption	Low levels of formal professional bureaucratization, high corruption
Methods to induce popular compliance with party authority	Repression: intense, co-optation: secondary	Repression: secondary, co-optation: intense	Repression: intense, co-optation: intense
Modes of transition from communism			
Incumbents	United, intransigent	Predominantly ready to offer concessions	Divided, personalist cliques
Challengers	Strong liberal democrats, weak nationalist groups	Strong liberal democrats and nationalists	Weak liberal democrats, strong nationalists
Transition process	Implosion of regime, short but sharp protest wave	Protracted negotiations between challenger and incumbent elites	Preemptive reform by incumbent elite faction
Consequences for democratic institutions			
Electoral laws	Proportional representation (PR), closed list	Mixed PR/plurality systems, open-list features	Plurality/majoritarian rules, open-list features in PR systems
Executive-legislative design	Parliamentary system with weak presidential powers	Cabinet with parliamentary responsibility, medium presidential powers	Strong presidential powers, weak parliaments

tional choice and power alignments. With its borders on capitalist Austria and "renegade" Yugoslavia, Hungary was not unambiguously situated in the region of logistic supply behind the front lines of the communist camp. Conversely, Bulgaria, as a Southeast European front-line state, develops a communist regime very different from that of the Czech Republic or the German Democratic Republic. In a similar vein, Romania is situated in the logistic supply region and has produced a national-patrimonial, yet not an accommodative form of communism. Finally, there is too much diversity among the successor states of the Soviet Union to make the international argument entirely convincing.

Different types of communist rule also correspond to the differential strength and orientation of anti-communist dissident forces in the transition, an observation that leads us to the subject of party system formation addressed in the next chapter. The organization, support, and ideological clarity of these forces and of their communist counter-parts, in turn, affects the institutional choices that configure the new polities. Liberal-democratic forces are stronger in formerly bureaucratic-authoritarian and national-accommodative communisms that had been preceded by episodes of democratic or semi-democratic rule. By contrast, in the patrimonial communist regimes, nationalist and ethno-cultural demands often appear divorced from liberal democratic aspirations. The contrasting features of regime legacies may tempt us to hazard a guess about the persistence and resilience of post-communist democracies. These opportunities appear greater in formerly bureaucratic-authoritarian and national-accommodative communist regimes than after patrimonialism. We do not directly discuss the stability of post-communist regimes in our study. But in subsequent chapters our characterization of the quality of the democratic process that emerges in most patrimonial communist countries would allow us to flesh out an argument that pathways from communist patrimonialism involve greater regime volatility.

To conclude this chapter, it is now time to associate concrete historical polities with the three logics of path-dependent transition and justify our selection of cases for the empirical analysis of this book. The four-volume set of country reports on the transition from communism covering the entire post-communist region, edited by Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott (1997), provides a useful introduction to pass judgment on the classification of cases in light of our typology. Given that our own expertise varies from country to country and that the case studies in Dawisha and Parrott's book series were not written with our analytical scheme in mind, table 1.2 should be read more as a set of descriptive hypotheses about the fit of countries rather than as a conclusive assessment of countries' communist regime forms and transition processes. Its heuristic value is to indicate how the theoretical argument about party system formation we develop in chapter 2 can be tested against cases not included in the present study.

Table 1.2 distinguishes among communist regime types, measured by repression, co-optation, and levels of corruption and among modes of transition from communist rule. Not surprisingly, we claim a strong association between regime type and mode of transition. Because we found it difficult to score a number of

Table 1.2. *Communist rule, mode of transition, and post-communist regime form*

	Bureaucratic-authoritarian communism	Mix of both	National-accommodative communism	Mix of both	Patrimonial communism
Transition by implosion	Czech Republic[a] German Democratic Republic[a]			Slovakia[a]	
Transition by negotiation		Poland[a]	Hungary[a] Slovenia[a] Croatia (1971)[b]	Estonia[a] Latvia[a] Lithuania[a]	Moldova[a] Armenia[b] Georgia[b] Macedonia[a]
Transition by preemptive reform					Bulgaria[a] Romania[a] Russia[a] Ukraine[a] Albania[b]
Regime continuity under new label and new personnel				Serbia[c]	Azerbaijan[c] Belarus[c] Kazakhstan[c] Kyrgyzstan[c] Tajikistan[c] Turkmenistan[c] Uzbekistan[c]

[a]Democratic.
[b]Semi-authoritarian.
[c]Authoritarian.

countries unambiguously, a problem encountered by almost any abstract classification scheme, let us explain a few entries in the table.

The single purest case of bureaucratic-authoritarian communism is the Czech Republic with a vibrant democratic pluralism in the inter-war period and a long history of working-class mobilization spearheaded by popular socialist and communist parties. In many ways, also the German Democratic Republic fits into this category, although the national question affected its internal dynamic of repression and resistance to change and finally in 1989–90 precipitated the quick demise of the entity's political independence. In those two countries, the "implosions" of fall 1989 clearly follow from regimes characterized by high repression, little co-optation, and low corruption. Civil society could rarely ever rise against communist rule. In the GDR, such efforts were confined to the uprising of 1953. In the Czech Republic, the Prague Spring of 1968 had quite a different character than the contestations of communist rule in national-accommodative communisms such as in Hungary, Poland, or even the Baltic republics of the Soviet Union. Whereas in the latter contestation came from below and outside the communist apparatus, the Czech reform was orchestrated from above by a technocratic reform current in the ruling party itself.

In the national-accommodative category we primarily find Hungary and Slovenia, which relied on co-optation more than repression and corruption as inducements to popular compliance with the communist regime. Also Poland fits this category, but it employed more repression against open dissident movements, though of an intermittent nature, than the other two countries.

A number of countries fit rather unambiguously into the patrimonial communist category of high repression, but also rampant corruption and co-optation. In at least four of them, above all Russia/Soviet Union, and later Bulgaria, Romania, and finally Albania, a preemptive strike of elements within the political elites engineered the political regime change of the late 1980s and early 1990s. In the others, the critical moment was the disintegration of the Soviet Union when the Russian political leadership headed by Yeltsin began to challenge the Soviet communist party and precipitated the coup attempt of August 1991. In those republics where the communist party leaders encountered only weak or moderate anti-communist nationalist challenges, they could either suppress these groups or co-opt them into what remained essentially unreformed power structures. The critical difference to the old regime is the new nationalist legitimation of political authority that displaces the communist rhetoric. It is no accident that none of the patrimonial communist countries where the old political apparatus could essentially maintain its control can be unambiguously classified as democratic by the late 1990s. The Ukraine is the only case where the mix of national and democratic challenges to communist rule has opened up the possibility of democratic consolidation. Also one former Yugoslav republic with a moderately strong nationalist challenge, Macedonia, offers similar prospects.

Within our scheme, it is hardest to classify those newly independent states formerly subjected to Soviet, Serbian, or Czech authority with very strong national sovereignty. Let us divide them into three sub-catgories. First, there are the three Baltic republics that were democratic and semi-authoritarian independent states with highly mobilized political associations in the inter-war period and a record of armed and unarmed opposition against Soviet authority from the 1940s to the 1980s. Here, the Soviet communist party's leadership at the republic level oscillated between heavy-handed repression and subtle efforts to craft inter-ethnic accommodation (cf. Misiunas and Taagpera 1993). In all three countries, important communist party leaders embraced the struggle for national independence in the late 1980s and engineered an essentially negotiated transition that allowed former communists to compete credibly within the new democratic frameworks.

The second set of newly independent countries includes Croatia and Slovakia. Here republic-level communist party leaderships fought with greater or lesser success for autonomy within a federalist framework and attempted to obtain backing for their strategies by national-accommodationist arrangements within their republics. At the same time, however, neither case has a civil society and a stock of pre-communist political experiences that could have propelled forward the elite's accommodation process from below. In both republics, therefore, the communist polities and their displacement display attributes that characterize patrimonial communism and its regime change through preemptive reform from above. As a consequence, the process features of new political regimes in the 1990s therefore are likely to share more with those emerging from patrimonial communism than others developing against the backdrop of bureaucratic-authoritarian or national-accommodative communism.

This argument applies with even greater force to a third set of new post-Soviet countries that had clearly patrimonial governance structures under the old regimes and no historical background of mobilization in civic political associations within what had been essentially agrarian societies. Here in the early 1990s non-communist nationalists initially prevailed over the ruling communist parties, whose leaders did too little, too late to seek accommodation with the new challengers. But the failure of Moldovan, Armenian, and Georgian nationalists to organize the new polities while finding a solution to the internal and external challenges of ethnic pluralism enabled politicians of the old party apparatuses to try their hand once more at organizing inter-ethnic accommodation within the realities of the new configuration of sovereign states.

CONCLUSION: EMPIRICAL RESEARCH STRATEGY

In order to explore the consequences of communist regime legacies and transition processes for the quality of democratic governance in the new post-communist polities, it is obviously critical to choose cases that exemplify a variety of pathways and constellations. In 1991–92 when we began to design our study, only a small

free founding election with open party competition, let alone a second election. This constrained our choices. With regard to bureaucratic-authoritarian communism, the Czech Republic was the logical reference case. Although the disappearance of the German Democratic Republic has rendered the Czech Republic the singular historical case that exemplifies this type of communist rule, its uniqueness does not discredit our theoretical framework. Following Sidney Verba (1967: 114–15), also unique historical events must be considered as conceptual classes for the purposes of comparative analysis, even if they occur only once in reality. In light of recent work on the comparative method (Ragin 1987; Fearon 1991), one could go even further. Logical rigor requires the construction of a complete set of types, *even if no empirically observable referents can be found to study some of the types thus constructed* ("counter-factuals"). All comparative and statistical reasoning involves counter-factuals in this sense. It is thus not so surprising that there may be "types" for which only one empirical referent can be detected.

The class of national-accommodative communist regimes in 1991 offered Poland and Hungary as the cases in which processes of party system formation could already be studied. Both are included in the empirical analysis of this book. Were we to replicate this study in the future, we would also want to include the three Baltic countries, Slovenia, and the two complex "mixed" cases of Croatia and Slovakia.

With regard to patrimonial communist systems, our choices in 1991–92 were seriously constrained. By then, only Bulgaria had gone through two essentially free elections, and we incorporated that country in our comparison. Romania constituted a borderline case with a founding election in 1990 that gave the anti-communist opposition little chance to mobilize effectively and a semi-authoritarian presidential regime headed by a former communist who only gradually inched toward the acceptance of the rules of democratic competition. Elections in Albania could be characterized in a similar fashion. All other patrimonial communist countries had not even attempted free multi-party elections by the time we began our study. Again, a replication of our analysis should include those countries that subsequently established democratic or semi-democratic rule, such as Albania, Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, Russia, and the Ukraine, but this was not a feasible research strategy from the vantage point of 1992.

Due to the historical realities of democratization in the early 1990s, our study cannot analyze the independent effect of ethnic pluralism and new state formation on the quality of democratic processes and party competition in post-communist regimes. Both ethnic pluralism and new state building may disorganize and crosscut divisions of competition emerging in more homogeneous countries. But because we could not study these alignments empirically in our current work, we sketch only a couple of related hypotheses in the next chapter, but leave an analysis of these problems to a future, more comprehensive comparative project with twelve to fourteen rather than only four post-communist democracies. In our sample, Bulgaria is the only country in which ethnic pluralism plays out in a limited fashion within the context of patrimonial communist legacies.

2

THE QUALITY OF POST-COMMUNIST DEMOCRACY: PATTERNS OF PARTY COMPETITION, REPRESENTATION, AND INTER-PARTY COLLABORATION

Democracy requires that all competent members of society enjoy essential civil and political rights to free, equal participation in the election of legislative representatives who control the government executive. The laws and constitutional stipulations about the election and the inter-play of legislative and executive branches shape relations of *representation* between citizens and political elites. From the bottom up, citizens are able to hold elected representatives *accountable* for their actions by endorsing or rejecting their reelection. From the top down, periodic elections make decision makers anticipate public accountability and encourage them to become *responsive* to citizens' demands. While even non-democratic regimes de facto involve some modicum of accountability and responsiveness between subjects and rulers, only democratic governance structures stipulate institutions with the explicit purpose to nurture relations of representation.

Civic and political rights determine a minimum floor for the operation of democratic representation. The *quality of democratic accountability and responsiveness*, however, hinges on the resources, skills, and dispositions of citizens and politicians as well as the specific design of constitutional and electoral rules that govern the inter-play between electoral constituencies and their representatives. Institutions shape the conversion of social preferences into political bargaining positions and binding allocations of valuable resources ("policies"). Neither societal re-

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THE DIVERSITY OF POST-COMMUNIST DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

In the Third Wave of democratization, political scientists first studied the conditions under which polities shifted from authoritarian rule to competitive democracy. Next, they investigated the processes and institutional commitments that turn a volatile, open situation of democratic regime choice into a routinized political process, configured around institutions most citizens and politicians treat as the "only game in town." Most recently, analysts have begun to explore the *quality of the democratic experience* in the new polities, both with regard to the features that characterize the process of democratic competition as well as with regard to the policy outputs that shape people's life chances. Our study of four East Central European post-communist polities is a contribution to the emerging literature on the procedural quality of new democratic polities. It focuses on one central and indispensable aspect of any democracy, the dynamics of party competition, and accounts for cross-national divergence of the democratic experiences in terms of historical legacies and the emerging framework of new electoral, legislative, and executive institutions. Of course, we do not pretend to provide a complete and determinist explanation of the quality of democracy in each of our countries. Political science models do not reflect the full complexity of political life and thus never provide necessary and sufficient explanations. As a consequence, we do not anticipate major political changes, because our models lack sufficient specificity.

If at least one of the following three propositions proves empirically robust in future research, our study will ultimately have been successful. *First,* democratic experience in post-communist democracies varies with regime legacies and institutions. The different resources and strategic orientations of political actors under bureaucratic-authoritarian, national-accommodative, and patrimonial communism affect the transition process to democracy, the choice of new democratic institutions, and the patterns of party competition. The present study of only four

democracies does more to illustrate and make plausible this proposition than to test it in a rigorous fashion. Only a future replication of our study with a larger set of countries will tell whether our analysis has broader significance. There will always be cases that defy the logic we have laid out, but our argument is useful if it demonstrates some "carrying capacity" by throwing light on the quality of democratic procedures and party competition in other post-communist countries than our four East Central European reference cases.

Second, citizens and politicians learn to act on well-understood self-interests in new democracies quite rapidly. Even though these democracies are unlikely to have reached lasting equilibrium states in the first five years of democratic competition, politicians' and citizens' political practices reveal a trajectory of practical learning that does point forward toward durable features shaping the new polities for some time to come. Initially, the uncertainties of political action in the new democracies are high, but political actors explore the new setting not simply in a randomized trial-and-error mode but in a directed fashion that makes rational use of information. With each additional round of competition, the actors gain a better understanding of their strategic options within a system of historical and institutional constraints that shape the range of permissible and potentially rewarding moves. If political learning is rational and path-dependent rather than purely random, then empirical observations about the quality of democracy roughly four to five years after the end of communism capture not just a fleeting transitional moment of political flux but potentially lasting and cross-nationally diverging attributes of each country's democratic process. The new political institutions put in place during the transition increasingly structure such patterns. Our analysis, of course, compares the development of these new democratic polities only at a single time point. The dynamic change of post-communist polities, however, can only be satisfactorily captured, if we multiply time points of observation and study the evolution of these democracies in a longitudinal fashion. Thus, our analysis does not pretend to identify equilibrium positions of post-communist democracies, but it treats the cross-national diversity we observe among our four countries as a tracer of a widely varying quality of democratic procedures that articulate themselves in different patterns of learning and institutionalization.

Third, democratic processes leave an imprint on political-economic outcomes. Our study has made this claim in an implicit fashion by showing how the potential for economic liberalization, articulated by liberal democrats within the system of party competition, varies across countries with diverging regime legacies. It may currently be too early to test hypotheses about the causal impact of democratic competition on post-communist political economies in a comprehensive way. Nevertheless, our propositions about the linkage between regime legacies, democratic institutions, and political competition also encourage students of comparative political economy to relate cross-nationally varying pathways of market liberalization, privatization, and economic performance to features of the democratic process. The association between democratic procedures and political performance is, of course, not just a matter of political economy but affects socio-cultural areas of policy making as well. For example, we would advance the hypothesis that linguistic and ethnic conflicts will be most difficult to pacify in democracies emerging from a patrimonial communist experience, because here probabilities are highest that voters and politicians crystallize around mutually reinforcing socio-economic and cultural divides in the arena of party competition. In formerly national-accommodative communist countries, it is more likely that such lines of conflict crosscut.

In this concluding chapter, we first restate major findings of our investigation and then debate what we consider to be one key challenge to the thrust of our analysis in the current field of comparative post-communist studies, the tabula rasa theory of post-communist democracy. In the final section, we speculate about the possible linkages between democratic procedures and political outcomes as a way to probe into the future research agenda on the politics of post-communist democracies.

EXPLAINING THE DIVERGING QUALITY OF DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES IN POST-COMMUNIST DEMOCRACY

Political legacies, mediated by the rational strategies of political actors who share an interest in wealth and political office but vary in terms of their resource endowments and cognitive frameworks, do matter for the emerging patterns of accountability and responsiveness and thus ultimately for the procedural quality of post-communist democracies. Our study illustrated these linkages in five respects: the programmatic crystallization of parties and party systems; the political divisions between parties' programmatic appeals; the competitive dimensions on which parties place their appeals; constituency-party configurations of absolute and relative representation; and finally the capacity of parties to solve problems of political governance. Contingent upon the nature of what the former rulers called "real existing socialism" in the past and the associated mode of transition to democracy, the new East Central European party systems in the 1990s have developed different profiles of competition and representation.

The Czech Republic is our example for a democratic polity on the pathway from *bureaucratic-authoritarian communism,* a type of communist rule that grows out of strong working-class and bourgeois mobilization in an industrialized society and inter-war democracy. Here, a resourceful and intransigent communist ruling party tenaciously held on to power until the sudden collapse of its rule in November 1989, while new liberal-democratic and social democratic parties mushroomed quickly and established themselves around highly crystallized rival programmatic agendas that divide the most significant electoral contenders and their voter constituencies primarily over economic issues. These issues become the most salient problems of inter-party competition and policy making. The close

association of citizens' and politicians' use of the left-right semantics with economic policy alternatives is testimony to this straightforward alignment of forces in the political landscape. The simplicity and transparency of the political agenda and of ideological party alternatives on offer affect the process of representation. Parties tend to overstate their electorates' proclivities in either direction on the economic social-protectionist versus market-liberal dimension. This undercuts the proximity between party politicians and their voters on salient issues ("absolute" representation) but boosts politicians' electoral responsiveness to differential preferences in the electorate ("relative" representation, relations of polarizing trusteeship). Because the surviving intransigent post-communist party is weak and cornered into a clearly identifiable extreme position on the salient competitive dimension, democratic governance and coalition building among the relevant parties in the legislature are rarely impaired by issueless inter-party conflicts over the assessment of the communist past or the desire to avenge the wrongs of the old regime.

In countries developing democracy after a *national-accommodative communism,* such as Hungary and, to a lesser but still significant extent, Poland, the democratic process develops somewhat different properties. In Hungary, the propensity of the ruling communist party to push toward economic reform created a broad consensus among incumbents and challengers in the late 1980s that a move to some type of market capitalism was desirable. As a consequence, compared with the Czech Republic, Hungary has produced a much less pronounced programmatic crystallization of party alternatives around economic policy packages after the advent of democracy in 1990. Economic issues tend to structure party alternatives weakly, and politicians as well as voters associate the meaning of the left-right semantics less with economic policy than with socio-cultural issues.

At the same time, the socio-cultural foundations and the political dynamic of national-accommodative communism in Hungary gave rise to a pronounced political-cultural division among party elites over questions of national autonomy, traditional moral values, and religion, which crosscut the primary economic issue dimension. Although economic issues are more salient for politicians and particularly for the voters at large, parties develop sharper programmatic contours around socio-cultural issues. This feature has consequences for political representation and governability. On economics, the Hungarian party system tends to represent voters in absolute but not relative terms, whereas on socio-cultural affairs it is the other way round. All parties gravitate toward "centrist" economic positions on social welfare, privatization, and market liberalization and thus are close to the general tendency of the Hungarian public opinion distribution. At the same time, parties do little to reflect the differential economic preferences and policy conflicts among electoral constituencies. Parties' responsiveness to and relative representation of distinct electoral constituencies suffer under the impact of this centripetal tendency. Instead, parties dramatically overstate opinion differences of electoral constituencies on issues of socio-cultural politics (religion, morality, family, nationalism) and here emphasize relations of polarizing trusteeship as their model of representation. While Hungary's party system thus has a problem of economic policy representativeness that results in high inter-bloc volatility of the electorate, there is little evidence of problems of governance. Given the negotiated transition, an issueless, passionate divide over the evaluation of the communist past is sufficiently weak among Hungarian parties that the post-communists managed to enter a government coalition with a leading former opposition party. The policy distance between parties on economic and socio-cultural issues is a fairly good predictor of their propensities to collaborate in legislative or executive coalitions.

In a number of respects, the Polish profile of party alignments and competition is situated somewhere between the Czech and the Hungarian patterns. Like Hungary, Poland experienced a negotiated transition against the backdrop of a moderately conciliatory communist regime ready to tolerate some opposition activity and permitting a modicum of economic and political liberalization at least throughout the second half of the 1980s after the lifting of martial law. Also in line with Hungary, Poland looks back on a semi-authoritarian inter-war polity with a rather strong peasant and urban middle-class political mobilization that forced the ascending communist rulers to make concessions after 1956. At the same time, however, Poland has a history of repeated violent clashes between the regime and a phalanx of opposition forces, the climax of which was reached during the fifteen-month Solidarność mobilization in 1980–81 and the martial law period in its aftermath. This experience structured a more intense antagonism between communists and anti-communists than in Hungary.

In terms of its post-communist party system, Poland shows a rather sharp programmatic crystallization around both economic and political-cultural issues resulting in crosscutting divisions, both of which have some consequence for party competition. Because of the relatively greater programmatic structuring around economic issues than in Hungary, Polish parties provide more relative representation of their constituencies on such issues than their Hungarian counter-parts. In Poland, politicians' and voters' formal left-right conceptions of their own and the competing parties' positions are informed by *both* economic and socio-cultural issues.

In contrast to the Czech Republic and Hungary, however, Poland faces more serious problems of political governance. On the one hand, an issueless regime divide between the principal agents and collaborators of the communist regime and those who rallied to the Solidarność camp is moderately pronounced and may make it difficult to engineer coalitions among parties with similar stances in the two-dimensional issue space but different historical roots in these alternative camps. On the other hand, divisions among the parties that emerged from the Solidarność camp and are now located in the Christian-national sector of the policy space often derive not from policy disagreements but from personal animosities and organizational rivalries. These were initially fueled by the relatively unstructured politics of a labor *movement* and anti-communist umbrella organization against communist rule. Later the strategies of a president with roots in the Solidarność movement who could employ the institutional levers of his office for

the purpose of undercutting durable legislative coalitions hobbled the effectiveness of governance in the new Polish democracy. Institutional changes both in the Polish electoral law as well as in executive-legislative relations have reduced these problems since 1993.

Bulgaria, finally, constitutes our example of a country emerging from *patrimonial communism.* Here liberal-democratic forces were weak at the time of the democratic regime transition. Historically, such countries had never experienced a strong urban middle-class or working-class mobilization prior to the advent of communism but had been governed by traditional authoritarian elites who encountered a serious threat only from radical peasant movements. The communist regime created a servile salariat and stratum of intellectuals who were dissuaded from opposition activities by carrot-and-stick practices. At the moment of the democratic regime transition in 1989–90, the more dissatisfied and future-oriented elements of the communist elite themselves instigated a preemptive reform before anti-communist forces could mobilize for a liberal-democratic order. The legacies of patrimonialism and preemptive reform contributed to considerable internal programmatic heterogeneity *both* within the formerly ruling bloc and within the emerging weak, internally divisive, and programmatically embryonic anti-communist camp of proto-parties and factions organized around rival politicians and their personal entourage.

Nevertheless, while the post-communist and the anti-communist blocs produced weak programmatic crystallization, their fuzzy appeals configured around mutually reinforcing political-economic and socio-cultural issue divides that feed into a single overriding dimension of inter-party competition rooted in the antagonism between apologists and opponents of the former communist regime. Parties of the economic social-protectionist "left" also endorse more traditionalist socio-cultural conceptions of moral order and collectivist conformity and appeal to particularist ethno-cultural collective identities. Parties of the economic liberal "right" support more individualist morality and personal autonomy and more universalist ethno-cultural politics.

Because of the organizational polarization between two major rival camps, despite their internal heterogeneity and diffuseness, citizens have little difficulty in recognizing the major alternatives. Hence, politicians tend to pronounce relative representation (responsiveness), often more in symbolic than in substantive terms, as is evidenced by the problems of affective governance encountered by Bulgarian democracy. Because of Bulgaria's deep regime divide that crystallizes intense political emotions around coping with the past and settling open scores resulting from experiences under communist rule, however, Bulgarian politics encounters serious problems of political governance. Parties' dispositions toward mutual collaboration often have more to do with how they see each other relate to the communist past than with the compatibility of their current policy appeals on salient political-economic or ethno-cultural issues. Parties with similar policy positions, but disparate origins inside or outside the communist regime, cannot collaborate with each other, while alliances among parties with disparate policy

positions, but similar views of the past, prove fragile and ineffective. This problem surfaced in the short-lived alliance between SDS and DPS in 1991–92 and has also beset the four-party governing coalition that won a legislative majority in the spring 1997 legislative election. Even among SDS politicians, mutual suspicions about each other's role in the communist past and ties to the communist party have fueled internal conflict.

Table 11.1 summarizes our major findings about profiles of party competition and political divisions in the four new East Central European democracies. Future research has to probe into the temporal resilience and the generalizability of such patterns across a broader set of formerly national-accommodative or patrimonial communist countries. With regard to bureaucratic-authoritarian communism, the one other "case," the former German Democratic Republic, is now heavily overdetermined by politics in capitalist Western Germany and thus difficult to compare with the independent post-communist polities.

Of course, with the ongoing learning of democratic practices both by politicians and voters, we expect the quality of democratic procedures to evolve across Eastern Europe. Historical legacies may fade into the past, while the impact of constitutional rules of the game and current political-economic power relations on the arena of party competition takes center stage. These institutions and power relations, however, in part reflect legacies of the communist regimes themselves.

Our analysis emphasizes the *structured diversity* and the *non-randomness* of the post-communist trajectory toward democratic politics and party competition. Rival theories would challenge one or both of these assertions. We take up the challenge of the stronger claim that patterns of post-communist democracy evidence randomness shortly. As with regard to the weaker claim that democratic procedures in post-communist democracies exhibit more similarities than differences, we would be willing to accept the claim that in spite of the many attributes that divide post-communist countries, there are also some elements of the democratic process and the arena of political conflicts most post-communist countries share. In this regard, the *centrality of conflict over economic reform,* the divide between social protectionists and market liberalizers, is common to all post-communist democracies.[1] Everywhere, citizens' policy preferences over the economic alternatives derive from personal self-interests, grounded in their asset endowments and abilities to take advantage of market liberalization. As we have shown in chapter 8, market liberalizers tend to be younger, better-educated, situated in the private sector, and working as professionals or entrepreneurs. Social protectionists, in turn, are older, less educated, more often in public enterprise and working in manual or clerical jobs. Educational, sectoral, and class divisions explain about the same share of variance in respondents' economic policy preferences in all four countries. While it is unlikely that class parties, in the emphatic Marxist sense of proletarian organizations struggling for the abolition or re-

[1]Kitschelt (1992a) emphasized the centrality of economic reform but downplayed the diversity of post-communist democracies.

Table 11.1. *Procedural quality of party competition, representation, and cooperation in East Central Europe*

	Bulgaria	Czech Republic	Hungary	Poland
Programmatic crystallization of party appeals (chapter 5)	Weak	Strong	Moderate	Moderately strong
Political divisions (chapters 7 and 8)	Dominant economic and minor reinforcing cultural	Dominant economic and minor crosscutting cultural	Dominant cultural and minor crosscutting economic	Equally strong economic and crosscutting cultural
Competitive dimensions (chapter 7)	Economics	Economics	Culture and economics	Economics and culture
Modes of political representation (chapter 9)				
Absolute representation	Economics weak, culture medium	Economics weak, culture weak	Economics strong, culture weak	Economics weak, culture medium
Relative representation	Economics strong, culture medium	Economics strong, culture weak	Economics weak, culture strong	Economics medium, culture medium
Capacities for political governance: Balance of supply and demand for inter-party cooperation (chapter 10)	Not favorable	Favorable	Favorable	Intermediate favorable

distribution of private property rights in favor of skilled and unskilled blue-collar workers, could ever regain credibility in post-communist countries, the salience of economic-distributive conflict pervades the dynamic of party formation in all of these polities.

Although post-communist countries thus share essential political-economic challenges that influence their politics, these observations should not lead us to overstate the convergence of post-communist polities across Eastern Europe. As we have shown, economic-distributive conflict is embedded in alignments of democratic competition, relations of representation and governance structures that profoundly differ across our four countries.

THE TABULA RASA VIEW OF POST-COMMUNIST PARTY FORMATION

One interpretive frame that is diametrically opposed to our analysis and has gained wide currency among Western analysts and Eastern intellectuals who reflect on the development of post-communist polities is the so-called tabula rasa view of post-communist democracy. This view denies structured diversity and non-randomness in the articulation of post-communist regimes. It postulates that a host of conditions makes unlikely the creation of parties that engage in programmatic competition, represent and shape conflicts of interest in society, and coalesce with competing parties with the objective of bringing about effective political governance. Tabula rasa theorists put forth a number of arguments to support this expectation. First of all, communist societies are said to have left behind relatively homogeneous, leveled, egalitarian social structures that prevent social actors from formulating individual and collective economic interests. People do not know what their material interests in an evolving capitalist market economy might be, and even if they identify such interests, they do not know how to pursue them. An atomization of society (Schöpflin 1991b: 237) and a lack of social class relations (Ost 1993) undercut the constitution of group interests from the bottom of society up. At the same time, from the top of political elites down, imperatives of fiscal and monetary stabilization policies, imposed and enforced by the International Monetary Fund and a host of foreign country governments, lending institutions, and potential private investors, make it impossible for post-communist political elites to propose economic policy alternatives tailored to the demands of distinct domestic voter groups and to act on such packages when in government. Hence parties cannot credibly compete with alternative economic programs so that voters discount whatever appeals politicians make in electoral campaigns.

Second, tabula rasa theorists are skeptical about the speed at which citizens and politicians are able to learn to articulate interests and act upon them in the fluid environment of post-communist society because interests and interest associations, including parties, have to be constructed from scratch and the new

polities face too many challenges at once. Post-communist democracies are often called upon to address the cumulative challenges of state building, nation building, political participation, and economic reform. They would do so with greater chances of success if they had strong vehicles of interest aggregation. But such vehicles are unlikely to emerge, because politicians and voters have feeble cognitive capacities for defining political interests and lack the skills and resources to create effective modes of group representation. Like painters facing an empty white canvas, politicians must build collective organizations in a tabula rasa environment. The only politicians who can rely on pre-existing interest groups and social movements are those affiliated with the successor organizations of the communist regime. The new constitutional system of political rules of the game, moreover, is not a fixed, exogenous, and unalterable framework that could guide the construction of vehicles of interest representation, but is endogenous to the process of political mobilization itself. The very same actors who make the rules are also supposed to compete under them and construct collective actors. This reflexivity of rules and actors yields highly unstable democratic polities, as actors attempt to rewrite the rules of the game whenever power relations change (Mair 1995).

Third, on the cultural level of citizens' beliefs and dispositions, the legacies of the communist system are said to have created orientations amounting to a "civilizational incompetence" that prevents people from participating in the democratic polity: political apathy, schematic friend/foe thinking, disregard for formal rules of conduct, and intense envy rather than the self-regarding pursuit of interests endanger the emergence of a democratic order built on the acceptance of formal constitutional stipulations, majority rule, as well as a respect for minority rights, and a spirit of tolerance for diversity and disagreement (cf. Sztompka 1991). This lack of "cultural capital" conducive to the construction of a civil society that buttresses a competitive polity is likely to endow people with only weak dispositions to participate in democratic party competition.

The political practice of communist rule contributes to a popular revulsion against political parties. In the aftermath of a communist party dictatorship, people turn away from anything that claims to be a political party in disgust and consider such forms of political involvement as remote constructs of intellectuals who cannot put their ears to the ground (Schöpflin 1991b: 239). The political vacuum created by the demise of communist rule may in fact revive fond memories of a happier pre-communist and usually authoritarian past and reinvigorate political practices that were distinctly anti-party and anti-democratic.[2]

[2]Rather than treating the pre-communist legacies as a source of diversity in the trajectory of post-communist politics, tabula rasa theorists tend to generalize in vague ways about East European countries' inter-war experiences. Thus Roskin (1993: 60) writes: "The nascent party systems of Central and Eastern Europe bear striking resemblance to those of the interwar years, almost as if the region had awakened in 1990 from a sleep of more than half a century. The earlier period was characterized by extreme fractionalization of the party system, difficulty in forming and maintaining coalitions, immoderate ideological infighting, and general chaos that ended in authoritarian rule."

Tabula rasa theorists have claimed that since the inception of democratic competition in Eastern Europe in 1989–90, the evidence confirms the extraordinary difficulty to found stable parties and party systems in the post-communist environment.[3] Those organizations that register as parties are often no more than "sofa parties," all of whose members could easily fit into a single living room. Parties command only a tiny membership relative to the size of their electorates and develop few organized linkages to civic associations. Moreover, they have no track record that would permit voters to predict their conduct in the formation of government coalitions or the enactment of public policies. What is most confusing for voters, large crowds of political entrepreneurs found rival parties whose messages are vague and all but impossible to discern and compare. Ironically, the only parties that appear to have the organizational and ideological features enabling them to participate in a competitive democratic polity are the successors of the old communist parties and their allies.

The presence of organizationally and programmatically weak "framework" parties is said to have several consequences for the process of electoral competition and citizens' participation. First, party systems tend to be extremely fragmented and lack programmatic structuring, as political entrepreneurs in competing parties announce the same empty political formula but cannot relate it to operational policy alternatives. On a highly abstract ideological level, party systems may sometimes exhibit strong polarization, as politicians engage in a race to outbid the promises of their competitors with ever more outrageous claims to know the recipe for a restoration of social order, security, and wealth. But because they cannot relate these claims to operational policy programs, they fail to establish their credibility in the eyes of the voters. Second, these patterns of electoral competition contribute to a lack of voter identification with parties and a high level of confusion and disappointment with democratic politics, resulting in low voter turnout and a large proportion of the electorate unable to develop distinct party preferences. Third, fragmentation, polarization, and low voter identification and turnout produce high volatility in the electoral support of parties over time, as measured by the change of parties' voter support from the first "founding" democratic election to subsequent second and third legislative or presidential elections.[4] Electoral volatility demonstrates the absence of a close alignment of voters and parties and delays the consolidation of party alternatives.

Many of these alleged characteristics of East European party systems in the immediate aftermath of the old systems' collapse have also been diagnosed as typical of "founding elections" held after the departure of authoritarian rulers elsewhere in the world as well (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986: 61–3). Because

[3]Within the sizable literature that emphasizes the problem of building parties in a post-communist societal and political vacuum, see especially Agh (1992, 1993, 1994, 1995a), Cirtautas (1993), Mair (1995), Rose (1995), and Wesołowski (1995).

[4]Mair (1995) and Rose (1995) find much higher volatility in the first East European pair of elections than in comparable elections in Western Europe or Southern Europe.

voters and political entrepreneurs have little democratic experience and face great uncertainties, party identification and party-group linkages usually play only a minor role in creating bonds of accountability and responsiveness between citizens and their representatives. And in post-communist polities that become democratic after many decades without party competition, the obstacles to a consolidation of party-led interest intermediation are likely to be particularly formidable.

In our study, we have empirically refuted many of the arguments that inspire tabula rasa interpretations of post-communist democracy. Social structure, for example, is far less leveled than such arguments presume and citizens' structural positions do help us to predict their policy preferences and – mediated by such preferences – their electoral choices among competing parties. Moreover, our analysis reveals striking patterns of political representation. What is probably most important, we have made sense of some important cross-national patterns of variance in the political divisions, modes of representation, and challenges of governance that come to the fore in a comparison of post-communist democracies. The tabula rasa view may permit the random variation of democratic experiences across the entire cohort of post-communist countries, but not the presence of systematically diverging patterns of democratic competition, as we have observed them in our four East Central European countries and, if we are correct, as they are likely to exist in many of the other post-communist polities as well.

Rather than rehashing points of our empirical evidence that unambiguously refute the tabula rasa interpretation of post-communist politics, let us focus on a number of observations that, at first sight, appear consistent with the tabula rasa view but inconsistent with our own perspective. These controversial pieces of evidence are (1) the high volatility of party support together with (2) an absence of mass membership parties and (3) the parties' lack of responsibility and responsiveness vis-à-vis their voters after elections.

Tabula rasa theories often see a causal linkage between these three phenomena. Voters and parties have little knowledge about each other, because they have failed to build mass organizations that institutionalize a solid citizen-party linkage. The absence of mass organizations, in turn, explains why incumbent politicians can easily abandon their pre-election promises and pursue unexpected policies after coming to office. Weak inter-temporal representation, in turn, accounts for the extreme volatility of party support from one election to the next in post-communist polities and thus ultimately for the unsettled, erratic character of democratic governance, which may give rise to an authoritarian relapse. With regard to each of these three observations and propositions, we will attempt to show that (1) the phenomena said to support tabula rasa theories are not uniformly distributed across post-communist democracies and that (2) tabula rasa theories overestimate the significance of the phenomena on which they focus for assessing the quality of the democratic experience in Eastern Europe. Even some durable Western democracies exhibit many of the features and attributes of party systems

that are said to undermine democratic stability in the new Eastern democratic polities.

MASS MEMBERSHIP PARTIES

Parties in post-communist democracies attract few members relative to the size of their electorate. Member-voter ratios tend to be above .02 only for a few Christian democratic parties, such as the Czech KDU and the Hungarian KDNP, some peasant parties, such as the Polish PSL and the Hungarian FKGP, and those post-communist parties that have not thrown their old ideology overboard. Thus, in the mid-1990s the Czech and Bulgarian successor parties still had rather substantial member-voter ratios above .10, while their Hungarian and Polish counterparts had shrunk dramatically to extremely low member-voter ratios in spite of their electoral successes in 1993 and 1994.[5] Liberal-democratic parties everywhere have low voter-member ratios with the partial exception of the Czech ODS. Do such low membership enrollment figures signal a weakness of democratic allegiance that sets the new democracies apart from West European parliamentary democracies?

We would argue that mass party membership is no longer a critical feature that affects the quality of a democracy (cf. Katz 1990). The role party membership has played in the development of democracies must be put in historical perspective. In Western democracies most party members were never active participants in the political discourse of their parties but silent contributors of finance or labor for electoral campaigns. These instrumental activities have not become altogether irrelevant in contemporary democracies, but they are complemented and partially displaced by other resources (public party finance and private donations) and parties now advertise their positions primarily through the mass media. It may not be farfetched to claim that attentive voters today learn more about the parties from easily accessible media than most party members ever learned through membership and instrumental contributions in the first decades of this century. At the same time, the ratio of a party's voters to core activists who participate in the process of interest aggregation, strategic choice, and recruitment of leadership personnel in many parties may not be significantly different from what it was in the past.[6] If citizen-elite linkages involve voter participation in democratic politi-

[5]In Poland, the SdRP organizes about 60,000 to 65,000 members, about 2 percent of the party's voters. In Hungary, the MSzP membership is in the neighborhood of 30,000 to 40,000, also translating into a member-voter ratio of about .02.

[6]This does not rule out, of course, that parties and party families experience a rise and decline in the intensity of internal participation and debates responding to changes in societal cleavage mobilization and in their competitive positions. Thus, without a shadow of a doubt Northern European social democratic parties had more active participants in the aftermath of the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s than either in the first two post–World War II decades or since the middle of the 1980s.

cal deliberation, then the procedural quality of democracy may have hardly *suffered* with the decay of mass party organizations. The decline of mass parties, however, may have intensified the strategic challenges politicians face in their quest for votes and political office. When membership ceases to constitute the glue that binds citizens to parties, then party leaders can no longer take the support of large blocs of voters for granted. A larger share of the electorate becomes available for competing party appeals and forces politicians to remain responsive to new constituency demands.

Thus, substantial cross-national and inter-temporal variance in the party member-voter ratios of West European democracies may indicate differences in the quality of democracy, but not necessarily in terms of the level of public deliberation over policy alternatives. Furthermore, the proven durability of democracies with very different voter-member ratios undercuts the claim that democratic consolidation requires substantial proportions of the electorate to become party members. Today, some of the new East European democracies such as the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland, may have overall higher member-voter ratios than such established democracies as the Netherlands, Britain, France, or Denmark in the 1990s (cf. Plasser and Ulram 1992: 33). The absence of mass party membership in Eastern Europe, by itself, is not an indicator that the post-communist democracies lack relations of accountability and responsiveness, but may simply be a result of the fact that these democracies have come into existence in an era of "post-modern" politics. In this period, markets and polities continue to stratify people's access to wealth and power, but citizens' growing physical and cultural mobility, enhanced by decreasing costs of transportation and communication, lead to an individualization of social conduct that undercuts the organization of political discourses through large permanent collectivities.[7] In this environment, the remnants of encompassing mass-membership party organizations easily turn into political deadweight[8] when politicians must show strategic mobility to cope with citizens' dispositions to participate in loose, intermittent political causes and to craft new electoral coalitions in a more complicated political landscape, where parties, interest groups, and social movements pursue not closely connected but highly differentiated goals.[9] The absence of sunk costs in large membership organizations enables East European democracies to enjoy the "advantages of backwardness" and frees its politicians from devoting their energies to

[7]Not by accident, also the most "post-modern" cohorts of Western parties, particularly the left-libertarian parties, have refrained from building mass organizations.

[8]This applies particularly to mass membership organizations based on clientelist linkages. Such practices find little approval in societies whose citizens have comparatively high education and individualist orientation.

[9]In the West European mobilization of religious and class divisions up to the two world wars, for example, social movements, interest groups, and party building were often practically indistinguishable. Since that time, these modes of political interest intermediation have become increasingly independent from each other (cf. Hellemans 1990; Kitschelt 1993a).

fighting armies of party functionaries who attend to empty organizational shells devoid of substantive political relevance. It is thus reasonable to expect that framework or "cadre" parties rather than mass parties will dominate the East European arenas of party competition (cf. Lewis and Gortat 1995: 602).

PROBLEMS OF INTER-TEMPORAL REPRESENTATION

Tabula rasa theorists may claim that politicians in the new post-communist democracies appear to represent electoral constituency interests during political campaigns, but then ignore such commitments after having been elected to government office. This lack of parties' accountability to their voters generates citizens' cynicism about and defection from democracy, phenomena that manifest themselves in low party loyalty and declining voter turnout. In post-communist democracies parties cannot credibly diversify their programmatic stances because the economic imperatives of market liberalization compel whatever parties are voted into executive office to pursue more or less identical economic policies. Thus, while parties may engage in programmatic posturing *before* elections, they must abandon promises that conflict with indispensable reform trajectories *after* elections. As a consequence, the new democracies incur a problem of *inter-temporal representation.* The lack of differentiated class and sectoral interests in the electorate and the weak linkage between socio-economic groups and political parties encourages politicians to engage in opportunistic strategies.

The tabula rasa argument thus involves two interconnected claims. First, government policies in post-communist countries cannot vary on key economic and social policy issues. Second, where politicians promise policies that diverge from the imperatives of economic liberalization they fall victim to problems of inter-temporal representation and have to abandon their campaign commitments.

A comparison of post-communist government policies requires another book, but empirical evidence suggests that economic stabilization policies and privatization strategies vary substantially both across countries and over time between governments characterized by different partisan stripes and coalitional composition (cf. Aslund et al., 1996; Fish 1998; Hellman 1998). Looking closer at our four countries, two of them approximate a model of responsible party government in economic policy making (Bulgaria, Czech Republic), whereas the other two show more continuity across governments of different partisan composition (Hungary and Poland). Communist regime legacies and democratic institutions explain where economics becomes a competitive dimension on which politicians differentiate their electoral appeals. By extension, it is countries where economics is the dominant competitive dimension that show the greatest propensity toward responsible party government.

In the Czech Republic, market liberals have pursued a strategy of responsible party government that overstates underlying variations in the preferences of

partisan electoral constituencies (chapter 9), although some enacted policies have made concessions to social-protectionist demands.[10] In Bulgaria, government economic policies have flip-flopped with the partisan stripes of the incumbents from social-protectionist to market-liberal policies in 1992, back to social-protectionism in 1993 and particularly after the BSP victory in 1994, and then again forward to market-liberal reform in 1997. These policies were similar only with regard to their ineffectiveness in turning around the Bulgarian economy. At the other extreme, in Hungary, after national-accommodative communism and a negotiated transition, partisan stripes are less visible in the governments' conduct of economic policy, although the picture is far from unambiguous. The first non-communist government pursued a middle-of-the-road economic policy of gradual liberalization quite consistent with its campaign commitments. The socialist-liberal government in the second electoral term consisted of two parties with rather conflicting economic policy programs. Government policy practically tilted toward the campaign promises of the liberal coalition partner, particularly when the government adopted a decisively market-liberal reform policy about one year into the electoral term. Even in the 1994 campaign, however, the Hungarian socialists expressed social protectionist appeals only in a rather muted fashion and underlined their firm commitment to market liberalization. Moreover, with only a third of the vote, but an absolute majority of the parliamentary seats, socialist politicians found it too risky for their own future electoral prospects to act on the social-protectionist hopes of many voters in their electoral constituency.

Also in Poland, a history of national-accommodative communism and a negotiated transition provide the backdrop against which the gravitation of government parties toward economic reform policies and thus the effective dilution of responsible party government must be interpreted. After 1993, the new government led by post-communist and peasant parties continued basic market-oriented economic policies that had been adopted since 1989 by various Solidarność governments under Finance Minister Balcerowicz. Nevertheless, the socialist-agrarian coalition acted on campaign promises to improve pensions and maintain social services. Furthermore, it embarked only quite slowly on a program of further privatizing state companies and exposing agriculture to market competition. In the 1997 electoral campaign, it was precisely the government parties' reluctance to push economic reform and thus their willingness to abide by their voters' preferences that the market-liberal opposition party, led by economic reformer Leszek Balcerowicz, criticized throughout the campaign.

Even in Hungary where the governing socialists, but not their liberal coali-

[10]The lack of financial sector privatization and of an effective enforcement of bankruptcy laws against loss-making industrial enterprises is a case in point. At the same time, the crisis of the Czech financial sector in 1996–97 is a consequence of extreme underregulation of financial institutions, such as investment funds, and thus an example for a highly ideological market-liberal policy.

tion partner, appear to have abandoned pre-election commitments on economic and social policy, the problem of inter-temporal representation involves a further complication. Politicians and voters may consider the *instruments* or the *outcomes* of policy making, when they evaluate inter-temporal representation. If voters are outcome-oriented and assess governments at the time of reelection, responsive politicians may well find it consistent with the imperative of democratic constituency representation to abandon policy instruments they deem to be unsuitable to reach the long-term outcomes desired by their voters, *even if* their campaign promises initially endorsed such instruments. Consistent with a trusteeship conception of representation, politicians may inflict temporary pain on their own electoral constituencies in the hope that bitter economic medicine may benefit their voters eventually and thus their own reelection chances before they face the next election.[11]

In light of these complications, it would be misleading to claim that post-communist governments cannot and will not pursue partisan-oriented economic policies or that a particularly wide gap between promises and actual policies undercuts political representation in the new East European democracies. Government popularity and perception of its voter representativeness depends on a variety of factors. Economic performance affects governments' reelection chances in post-communist democracies just as in the West (Pacek 1994). Voters' cynicism about their own personal effectiveness in influencing politics is high in East Central Europe, but not higher than in many West European democracies such as Austria or Germany.[12] At the same time, mass support for multi-party democracy, and thus a belief in the capacity of democratic regimes to forge a representative linkage, is high in Central European post-communist countries, medium high in Southeastern Europe, and generally more precarious in the successor states of the former Soviet Union (cf. Rose and Haerpfer 1994; Wessels and Klingemann 1994; Wyman et al. 1995). Legacies of communist rule, the nature of the new non-communist political forces, the vigor of economic reform, and the results of such reforms are interdependent factors that shape the mass public's views of democracy. But it is certainly not some uniform problem of inter-temporal representation that impedes the democratic political process and the public perception of the legitimacy of democracy in post-communist countries.

[11]For an initial exploration of the extent to which voters are sufficiently sophisticated to understand problems of inter-temporal representation, compare Stokes (1996) and Przeworski (1996). Even if voters do not understand the logic of trusteeship and abandon governments when they enact unpopular measures, as evidenced by opinion polls, economic improvements at the time of reelection still may help the incumbents. The reelection of several Latin American presidents in the early 1990s (Menem, Fujimori) shows this process at work.

[12]This, at least, is Plasser and Ulram's (1992) result early on in the East Central European countries' experience with democracy. For similar findings, see Tóka (1995: table 11). There is little doubt that satisfaction with democratic institutions is likely to vary more with economic performance in the new democracies than in established Western democracies.

ELECTORAL VOLATILITY

Observers have interpreted Eastern Europe as a democratic tabula rasa because elections in the region exhibit very high electoral volatility, as measured by the net percentage of voters who change their party preference from one election to the next (Mair 1995). High volatility is said to indicate fluid, unstructured relations between parties and electorates that defy linkages of accountability and responsiveness between citizens and politicians. Compared with that in Western Europe (Bartolini and Mair 1990), volatility has been extraordinarily high indeed in post-communist polities. The electorate appears free-floating and "available" to just about any party contender. Before we jump to such conclusions, however, it is important to explore different patterns and causes of volatility.

Following Bartolini and Mair (1990), we should distinguish between volatility *within* blocs of parties that have similar programmatic appeals and volatility *across* party blocs. Furthermore, volatility may occur *among "established" parties* with a track record of legislative presence or *between established and new parties.* Finally, it is important to track trends of electoral volatility from founding elections through subsequent elections. Volatility generates the most chaotic dynamic of party systems where a large proportion of voters moves *across* blocs and *between* established and new parties ("deep volatility"), particularly if this volatility does not subside over time. In this pattern, the electorate is indeed available to a wide range of appeals and does not engage in structured relations to parties. But deep volatility rarely is the prevailing pattern in Eastern Europe and certainly not among the four countries we have examined in this study.

In the Czech Republic, as the most structured party system in our comparison group, electoral volatility from 1992 to 1996 almost exclusively occurred *within* the "leftist" bloc *among* established parties. Also in Poland, much of the electoral volatility in 1991–93 took place within the three major party blocs – the leftist, the liberal, and the Christian-national sector. The same applies to the 1995 presidential and the 1997 legislative elections. The leftist bloc remains by and large stable and experiences relatively little internal volatility. Much of the overall high volatility in these two elections is accounted for by the internal instability of the Christian-national bloc that may have been papered over only temporarily by the success of the AWS in the 1997 legislative election.

Whereas in Poland volatility tends to be intra-bloc but across new parties, in Hungary from 1990 to 1994 volatility primarily occurred between blocs but *among established parties.* In the comparison of the Hungarian elections of 1994 and 1998, the left bloc remains relatively stable, while much of the volatility occurs within the Christian-national camp, now under the leadership of a former liberal party, Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Party.

The only country in which rising electoral volatility suggests a rather highly available electorate across blocs and possibly among new parties is Bulgaria. Here total electoral volatility increased from the 1991–94 elections to the 1994–97 elections. Moreover, a large share of the volatility is across blocs, not just intra-

bloc. Whether it also involves new parties is harder to say, given the umbrella character of the anti-communist forces in Bulgarian politics. Whereas the Central European countries show an institutionalization of the party alternatives around five or six durable contenders, Bulgaria exhibits more tenuous and fleeting parties and alliances even in the late 1990s. At least in the three East Central European countries, electoral volatility therefore tends to be "shallow" rather than "deep." Greater depth of volatility and thus less institutionalization of party alternatives appears to be mostly a problem of former patrimonial communist regimes, particularly in those polities that emerge from the former Soviet Union (e.g., Russia or Ukraine).

Finally, any interpretation of the extraordinary levels of electoral volatility in the early years of post-communist democracy must take into account the profound economic crisis with which ordinary citizens in these countries had to cope. Compared with crises in Eastern Europe, in Western Europe the changes in economic performance that create the common swings associated with retrospective economic voting are extremely mild. Moreover, retrospective economic voting varies across time periods, countries, and governments' coalitional configurations (cf. Lewis-Beck 1988; Anderson 1995). Only as a counter-factual can we imagine the level of electoral volatility Western entrenched party systems might face if they suffered through declines of income and surges of unemployment equivalent to those in Eastern Europe after 1989. Alternatively, we can compare East European electoral volatility with that experienced by Western countries during the Great Depression after 1929. Such counter-factual reasoning and historical comparison suggests that in many post-communist democracies electoral volatility is not unexpectedly high and might also occur in democracies that have existed for long periods of time, if they were only exposed to the socio-economic stress and dislocation encountered by post-communist polities in their first decade of democracy.

EAST CENTRAL EUROPEAN PARTY COMPETITION AND WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTER-PARTS

There is no question that East European democracies are undergoing a process of learning, both on the part of politicians as well as that of voters. This process takes place within a rather tumultuous environment of far-reaching macro-economic stabilization and micro-economic institutional reform policies, including a fundamental transfer of property rights. In some cases, the exigencies of state and nation building further increase the complexity of policy making. It is not surprising that the uncertainties generated by these processes give rise to some false starts and trial-and-error politics. Amazingly, these conditions in many instances do not lead to a picture of party competition that is consistent with the tabula rasa interpretation. Particularly the East Central European countries we have analyzed in this book appear to develop post-communist party systems with a limited set of

permanent players who have rather well-understood appeals and reputations. The actual electoral strength of parties then depends on the interaction between government status and economic performance, together with the politicians' ability to fine-tune their parties' appeals within the one- or two-dimensional competitive issue spaces monitored by a segment of rather sophisticated and attentive electoral constituencies.

From this perspective, many features of the East European party systems resemble attributes of established Western democracies. First, democratic competition takes place within a low-dimensionality space. Second, the basic policy alternatives expressed on the most salient competitive dimensions are rather similar to those in Western democracies. They involve issues of income distribution and economic governance structures or socio-cultural issues dealing with the authority of the collective or individual autonomy to choose life-styles and social affiliates. Two attributes of the party systems, however, set East Central and Western European democracies apart: first, the concrete issues voters and politicians map on these dimensions and, second, the way politicians combine positions on the two dimensions in their political appeals. Whereas in Western Europe in the 1980s and 1990s economic social protectionism typically goes with libertarian political-cultural positions, the relationship between the two dimensions is less determinate in Eastern Europe where it varies cross-nationally. In democracies succeeding bureaucratic-authoritarian or patrimonial communism, the overriding competitive dimension tends to combine economic market liberalism with socio-cultural libertarian individualism at one pole, and social protectionism with traditional collectivism, if not authoritarianism, at the other pole. In these countries, we encounter a single dominant division or mutually reinforcing divisions feeding into the same competitive dimension. In the two democracies emerging from national-accommodative communism, the economic and the political-cultural issue divides generate crosscutting competitive dimensions that constitute three of four competing camps of political parties.

As in Western Europe, voters' socio-demographic position in society influences their ideological outlook in ways systematically related to their material economic self-interests. At the same time, socio-demographic positions influence voters' electoral choice only indirectly, because they are mediated by their issue positions. A similar trend can be observed in advanced industrial democracies, where social structure has a declining independent influence on electoral choice. But whereas in Western Europe the increasing importance of voters' issue positions for their electoral choice results from an erosion of affective party identifications and cultural milieu-based subconscious commitments to a party, in Eastern Europe issue positions count because voter identifications and party-affiliated socio-cultural milieus had rather little chance to emerge.

Also with regard to modes of representation and patterns of governance, the post-communist experience discussed in this book does not strike us as completely foreign to what participants in Western democracies may have encountered. Also in Western democracies, politicians may engage in relations of *polarizing trusteeship*, going beyond the preferences of their electorates for policy reform, as exemplified by politicians from Margaret Thatcher to Helmut Kohl. Government formation and stability in both Western and Eastern democracies build to a large exent on the programmatic compatibility of the coalition partners. Of course, the particular complications that result from the recent regime transition in Eastern Europe constitute unique features of post-communist coalition politics, but equivalents probably could be studied in the conduct of parties after democratic transitions in Southern Europe.

Overall, we find a great deal of structure and only limited randomness in the patterns of representation and governance of East Central European countries. The democratic process evolves not primarily according to chance or pure trial-and-error variation, but according to intelligible patterns of action chosen by rationally deliberating politicians and by voters, many of whom have a rather firm understanding of their preferences and how to map them onto the menu of party alternatives. We interpret our findings as powerful evidence suggesting that political reasoning and conscious deliberation play a significant role both for the strategic conduct of political elites as well as for the preferences and choices of significant segments of East European mass publics.

DEMOCRATIC PROCESS AND POLITICAL ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE: A CRITICAL RESEARCH FRONTIER

Our study has analyzed process features of the emerging East Central European democracies at a rather early stage in their development, less than five years after the collapse of communist rule. By the mid-1990s, in all four countries, the relevant political forces consider political democracy as the "only game in town." No party, movement, or state institution, such as the military, has seriously proposed a non-democratic governance structure to replace democracy. While these East Central European democracies have thus consolidated their support base in a very short period of time, citizens experience qualitatively different policy processes in each of the four democracies. Whereas Hungary, and to some extent Poland, develop a *consensual democracy with centripetal competition* around key issues of economic policy making but highly polarizing inter-party competition around socio-cultural issues, the Czech Republic produces a more *competitive democracy* with significant party divisions over economics but also incentives for parties to collaborate and form coalitions that moderate the government output of enacted policies. Bulgaria, finally, is caught up in a process of creating a more polarized, centrifugal polity with sharply antagonistic but internally diffuse party camps that clash over mutually reinforcing issues of socio-economic reform, the regime divide, and socio-cultural arrangements.

The main task of our study has been to describe and explain these democratic process features. While the procedural quality of democracy is an intrinsically

important topic of comparative analysis, political science may be ultimately interested in the *consequences* such features have for the subjective sense of well-being and the material life chances of their citizens. On the one hand, democratic procedures themselves may instill a greater or lesser sense of satisfaction with the political order in the population. Endorsement of the political order, in turn, may affect people's life satisfaction more broadly conceived at least in a modest way. On the other hand, citizens' satisfaction with democracy depends on the *outputs* and *outcomes* of the political process – the production of individual and collective goods and the (re)distribution of power and wealth in society. This linkage directs political scientists to explore how democratic process features shape the ways in which polities allocate scarce resources, produce new wealth, confer power, and thus affect popular perceptions of the legitimacy of the core institutions of social order.

It is beyond the scope of our current study and maybe even too soon after the collapse of communist regimes to address these big questions of empirical democratic theory with respect to the performance of East European democracies. Nevertheless, our study provides conceptual tools and systematic descriptions that should enable future research, preferably based on a more comprehensive set of post-communist countries, to probe into the linkages between the organization and perception of democratic processes and the political-economic effectiveness as well as the normative justification of the political order. Let us therefore devote the final paragraphs of our study to a few speculations about the interaction between processes and performance in post-communist polities. Even if our hypotheses turn out to be wrong, they illustrate the kinds of research questions we deem fruitful to pursue in the future.

At this time, it is empirically controversial whether basic political freedoms and democratic governance boost economic growth when compared with the economic capacity of authoritarian regimes.[13] Not all democratic polities incorporate institutions and power alignments conducive to the enactment of public policies that secure property rights, produce collective goods, and thus encourage private citizens to make long-term investments likely to result in economic growth and a broad-based improvement of the quality of life. Nevertheless, the experience of the four East Central European democracies gives us some confidence in the proposition that the regime form of the communist past, mediated through current institutions, procedures, and alignments in the new democratic polities, do affect the performance of post-communist regimes in instrumental economic as well as symbolic cultural respects. Among the three legacies and communist regime types we have distinguished, formerly patrimonial communist rule offers the least promise to deliver strong democratic performance. It tends to

[13]For a review of the burgeoning literature on this topic and an empirical analysis that finds no independent effect of democratic regimes on economic growth, see Davis and Wu (1996).

produce feeble, internally divided liberal-democratic forces, a landscape of programmatically diffuse political parties, and a deep regime divide between former agents and antagonists of the old communist system. These features tend to undercut the performance of the emerging democratic polities both in terms of popular legitimacy as well as political-economic effectiveness. In our four-country comparison, these attributes characterize the Bulgarian case, but we expect similar conditions to hold in other post-patrimonial communist polities. Weak liberal-democratic forces make it difficult to enact a consistent and comprehensive package of political-economic reforms. Where liberals control government power, they may lack the skills, competence, and organizational networks to bring about reform effectively and displace the old rent-seeking elites. Indecisive incrementalism, in turn, may give reform a bad name altogether and may drive many citizens back to a defense of the status quo rather than a radicalization of the reform process. When communist successor parties come back to power, they may abide by democratic rules, but exploit their control of the policy process to (re)build clientelist networks and to funnel public assets into the hands of rent-seeking groups affiliated with the party. As Hellman (1998) has argued persuasively, partial economic reform creates anti-reform constituencies not only among the losers of the reform process, but also among the winners who try to lock in their gains through institutions that perpetuate their rent-seeking activities and block further liberalization. This halfway house of reform is most likely where patrimonial communist parties remain powerful political actors that can channel reform such as to benefit the old elite stratum of communist regimes.

A deep regime divide complicates conditions of effective political governance, thus further reducing the chances of decisive reform because even those politicians who share economic policy objectives may fall out over ways to right the wrongs of the past (chapter 10). Moreover, where the regime divide orients politicians toward revenge and retribution, they tend to regard economic policy making as a zero-sum game over the allocation of existing wealth, rather than as an effort to design novel institutions that maximize the production of new wealth, regardless of how those who held most of the assets under communist rule may be faring under the terms of the new practices. Concerns with redistribution tend to serve rent-seeking groups that invoke the past to appropriate current resources.

Threats to democratic legitimacy and effectiveness intensify in formerly patrimonial communist countries, if politicians find it advantageous to construct competitive dimensions that combine multiple reinforcing political-economic and socio-cultural divides. This is particularly likely where politicians invoke questions of collective national autonomy or ethno-cultural relations within the arena of party competition. Ethno-cultural politics increases the chances that policy making evolves into zero-sum games among rent-seeking groups (cf. Horowitz 1985).

Democratic polities emerging from patrimonial communism may attempt to sidestep some of these problems by building voter-elite linkages based not on

programmatic appeals but on clientelist electoral relations. In principle, clientelist democracies may constitute an equilibrium, but we are skeptical that any of the post-communist countries meet the pre-conditions it takes to entrench a clientelist system of elite-voter relations for very long periods of time. Clientelist politics works best where poverty and low education depress the level of political mobilization and where the domestic economy is protected from external competitive forces that make rent-seeking politics costly. Clientelist polities tend not to produce the collective goods (education, health care, infrastructure) that improve the productivity and competitiveness of domestic industries. As a consequence, those post-communist countries that lock in clientelist politics will find themselves at a progressively greater disadvantage vis-à-vis competitors that embrace different institutional arrangements.

Compared with former patrimonial communist countries, democracies emerging from bureaucratic-authoritarian or national-accommodative communism grow out of settings that promote stronger liberal-democratic forces, greater programmatic structuring of parties, and a weaker crystallization of political passions around the regime divide. Furthermore, salient socio-cultural divides have greater chances to cross-cut rather than reinforce economic group conflict or to be sidelined altogether. In such settings, politicians and their constituencies express not only greater propensities to pursue political economic reform, but they are also more likely to develop cooperative dispositions that facilitate effective governance.

Advocates of liberal democratic reform in formerly patrimonial communist regimes have sometimes argued that their only chance to overcome the weakness of public support for liberalism and the disorganization of liberal-democratic parties is to ensure that a reformer is elected to the presidential office and manages to endow it with far-reaching executive and legislative powers that can undercut societal and political veto groups. But an extremely powerful presidency that can block, if not overrule, legislative action is a two-edged sword. No one can guarantee that the officeholder will back liberal-democratic reforms for a time period sufficiently long to make them irreversible. The semi-dictatorial powers of the presidency may too soon revert to a protagonist of the political economic status quo. Moreover, the very institutional arrangement of a strong presidency may give incentives to the incumbent to weaken the cohesiveness of political parties, including those of the liberal-democratic camp, and to govern with the aid of personal clientelist networks. Such arrangements may fuel popular cynicism and disaffection with the legitimacy of democratic governance structures and may undercut the operational efficiency of economic reform.

It goes without saying that the empirical evidence about the dynamic of East Central European party systems we have assembled in this book cannot bear out the speculations we have offered in the preceding paragraphs. Comparisons of democratic performance require information on long periods of time in which features of the policy process and its outputs can be tracked. Moreover, such studies must include a wider variation in the institutional arrangements of

democratic politics than we have incorporated in our current study. In the not too distant future, however, a longer performance record of post-communist democracies and more information about their democratic procedures will make it an attractive research project to explore the linkage between the procedural quality of party systems and democratic institutions, on the one hand, and the economic and political-cultural performance of the new post-communist polities, on the other.