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2012

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Democracy and Economic Demands in Russia and Ukraine: Lessons for Democratic
Theory.

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Political Science

by

Mayia Anatoliivna Shulga

December 2012

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2012

The Dissertation of Mayia Anatoliivna Shulga is approved:

Committee Chairperson

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Democracy and Economic Demands in Russia and Ukraine: Lessons for Democratic Theory.

by

Mayia Anatoliivna Shulga

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Political Science
University of California, Riverside, December 2012
Dr. John Medearis, Chairperson

My dissertation makes the case that learning from and critically engaging with lay political thinking should be an integral part of democratic theory. Specifically, I explore how democratic theory can engage critically with lay Ukrainian and Russian beliefs about democracy that feature a strong emphasis on economic demands, which is unusual from the standpoint of leading scholarly conceptions. I suggest that such lay expectations are about gaining what T.H. Marshall called social citizenship and autonomy. These economic demands are democratic because they encompass attempts to gain power and collective control over crucial social institutions and forces in the economy that affect people's lives. I highlight several aspects of democratic theory that point to the need to take seriously lay people's own ideas about politics. Democratic theorists should take the rational and deliberative capacity of lay actors seriously because democracy involves collective popular control over crucial social institutions and forces, inclusion, full citizenship, the free exchange of ideas, and equality among listeners and speakers. In a

democracy, rights and laws should not be an imposition but rather authorized by the people themselves. As a form of government that rests on popular power, democracy broadly encompasses a principle of participation of constituents in the direction of political life. One way to understand participation, I argue, is by thinking about it as an opportunity for individual and collective self-expression, where lay actors contribute to interpreting their social world by stating their grievances, demands, hopes, or aspirations. Moreover, historically democracy has been contested and redefined not only by experts and elites, but often by lay actors themselves through social movements.

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Introduction

My dissertation makes the case that learning from and critically engaging with lay political thinking should be an integral part of democratic theory. Specifically, I explore how democratic theory can engage critically with lay Ukrainian and Russian beliefs about democracy that feature a strong emphasis on ‘economic demands’, which is unusual from the standpoint of leading scholarly conceptions. I highlight several aspects of democratic theory that point to the need to take seriously lay people’s own ideas about politics. Democratic theorists should take the rational and deliberative capacity of lay actors seriously because democracy involves collective popular control over crucial social institutions and forces, inclusion, full citizenship, the free exchange of ideas, and equality among listeners and speakers. In a democracy, rights and laws should not be an imposition but rather authorized by the people themselves. As a form of government that rests on popular power, democracy broadly encompasses a principle of participation of constituents in the direction of political life. One way to understand participation, I argue, is by thinking about it as an opportunity for individual and collective self-expression, where lay actors contribute to interpreting their social world by stating their grievances, demands, hopes, or aspirations. Moreover, historically democracy has been contested and redefined not only by experts and elites, but often by lay actors themselves through social movements.

In chapter 1 I identify some conspicuous themes in lay democratic thinking in Russia and Ukraine. As a starting point of discussion, I draw attention to ambivalence where lay evaluations of democracy are sometimes positive and sometimes negative, and

where views of democracy often intertwine with ‘economic demands’. I point out how in some instances lay Ukrainians and Russians define democracy as economic welfare, more specifically, as various socio-economic safety nets, protections, and guarantees. Many also associate democracy with gaining economic rights such as a right to employment, healthcare, education, and pensions. I also demonstrate how lay Russian and Ukrainian positive views of democracy as well as skepticism about democracy encompass economic conceptions of freedom, equality, state, power, and efficacy. Less frequently, lay actors also define democracy as workers collective self-management regarding working hours, shifts, production, pension funds, wages, and benefits. Moreover, in this exposition I indicate that scholars who come across such unusual views have difficulty interpreting, understanding, and relating them to questions of democracy. I point to an apparent scholarly inability to accommodate these lay beliefs and a tendency to label them as apolitical, materialistic, and non-democratic.

In chapter 2 I begin to explore the methodological and conceptual problems that must be overcome in order to engage lay beliefs about democracy critically. I provide a reading of Schumpeter’s elite competitive model of democracy because his work is quite influential in democratic studies, particularly in post-communist studies. I build on critical studies of Schumpeter’s work that stress how Schumpeter’s conception is deeply embedded in his conservative social ontology. I add to these criticisms by stating that the elite competitive model is fundamentally inhospitable to taking lay ideas seriously, particularly when these ideas feature an emphasis on economic dimensions of democracy.

In Schumpeter's social vision, I argue, two ontological notions are especially prominent. First, it is a view that the 'socio-economic realm' has little to do with the impetus of democratic politics. Second, it is a view that mass political capacities are inherently limited and that the masses are unfit for responsible political thought and action. In the elite competitive framework, elite leadership in politics is the only realistic and desirable social arrangement, and choosing political leadership is the only thing that democracy can possibly be about. Such a fixed and narrow view of democracy coupled with Schumpeter's deep disdain for non-elite influence in public affairs makes the scope of democracy, i.e. popular rule, closed to reinterpretation and contestation by lay actors themselves. I also demonstrate that although Robert Dahl differs from Schumpeter in a number of important respects, his work was influenced by Schumpeter. Like Schumpeter's, Dahl's framework remains explicitly inhospitable to serious engagement with concrete lay ideas about society and democracy. Dahl's framework also assumes that democracy does not have to involve democratization of social and economic life. I specifically bring attention to Dahl because many junior scholars who study democratization may draw on Dahl rather than Schumpeter.

In chapter 3 I demonstrate that insofar as scholars continue to use the vocabulary of Schumpeter's elite competitive model of democracy, they are unlikely to consider lay people's conceptions of democracy and take them seriously, particularly when lay views feature economic demands. I stress that it is the unreflective use of the conceptual vocabulary rather than scholars' ideological motivations that lead to such research outcomes. Based on the example of post-Soviet survey and interview studies, I

demonstrate that the vocabulary of the elite competitive model of democracy prevents scholars from even looking into lay definitions of democracy. I also show that this framework is inadequate for understanding what are often grouped to be simply ‘economic’ concerns in lay reflections. The Schumpeterian framework prevents scholars from comprehending instances of political powerlessness, inequality, and unfreedom in the ‘economic’ realm that many lay actors point to. This should be a concern for scholarship on democracy because its mainstream assumptions turn out to be fundamentally undemocratic as they silence people’s voices and foreclose the democratic critique of political economy in Ukraine and Russia. Democratization scholars need to abandon the elite competitive framework of democracy or they run the risk of making their work democratically irrelevant.

To offer an alternative methodology for democratic theory, in chapter 4 I provide a democratic reading of certain methodological aspects of interpretivism and critical realism. I argue that some interpretive assumptions support democratic inclusion of lay ideas in defining and crafting the contours of political life, as well as democratic humility on the part of experts, and democratic attention to lived experience and the practical problems of non-elites. But, listening to lay voices does not mean adopting their message uncritically. I turn to critical realist philosophy of social science insofar as it provides important criticisms of interpretive social science. I suggest that democratic theorists should be attentive not only to lay self-understandings, but also to misunderstandings, mistakes, misconceptions, and to the way beliefs reproduce or relate to oppressive social structures, power, conflict, and historical domination and inequality.

Realist methodology makes lay interpretations of the social world the beginning, but not the end of inquiry, which creates room for critique and engagement. Realism holds that some interpretations of the social world are better than others, which adds impetus for engagement and dialogue in democratic theory. Moreover, realists see beliefs as a response to problematic social contexts, which compels scholars to evaluate the significance and cogency of beliefs in relation to existing social conditions, structures of power, and etc. I argue that bringing realist insights into democratic theory allows democratic scholars to explore better how lay beliefs can be illuminating and democratic and/or self-defeating and not conducive to political empowerment. Lay actors may respond to and make sense of long term inequality, exclusion, failed social movements, and disenfranchisement with self-deprecation, apathy, ambivalence, authoritarianism, and an internalized sense of powerlessness. But they may also respond to disempowerment with powerful democratic critiques, elaborate democratic visions, and ambitious aspirations. Critique of beliefs that continue to reproduce oppressive and undemocratic social structures has a place in democratic theory because it enables people to see impediments to democratization, just as learning from lay beliefs has a place in democratic theory because it helps us to see paths to and programs of democratization.

In chapter 5 I apply the methodology of critical hermeneutics to show that democratic theorists have much to learn by engaging with lay beliefs about democracy in Russia and Ukraine, particularly those that feature a strong emphasis on economic demands and critiques. These demands center on asserting economic and social rights such as a right to employment, a right to a living wage, a right to healthcare, a right to

education, a right to housing, and a right to a voice in the decision making in the workplace. Lay economic critiques focus on unequal distribution of power and rights in the economic decision making between workers and owners of major social resources. Unlike those post-communist scholars who dismiss or overlook the democratic relevance of such views by labeling them apolitical, outdated, materialistic, and undemocratic, I suggest that such lay expectations are about gaining what Marshall called social citizenship and autonomy. These economic demands are democratic because they encompass attempts to gain power and collective control over crucial social institutions and forces in the economy that affect people's lives. This lay formulation of democracy can be illuminated and reclaimed when we put such beliefs in the larger context of extreme economic dislocation that occurred since the fall of the USSR.

With a transition to a market economy and privatization of capital, power to make important economic decisions regarding wages, benefits, working hours, and product prices that affect the livelihood of millions of people has been privatized and monopolized in the hands of a few. Transition to the market has also been accompanied with austerity measures and drastic cuts in social programs across the board. Demographic reports in both countries cite rising rates of poverty, income inequality, emigration, malnutrition, alcoholism, crime, abortion, and an AIDS epidemic in the past couple of decades. Privatization of part of the economy has produced a social arrangement where a disproportionately small number of people legally own, manage, and control social wealth and productive resources for their own private benefit without a say or input from the majority of citizens. Lay Ukrainians and Russians decry such an

economic arrangement because it excludes them from sharing in power and decision making over economic resources and their economic fate. Extreme economic dislocation and impoverishment are a result of the decision making done for the benefit of a few while leaving out from consideration the economic welfare and economic interests of the majority of the population. By making economic demands, lay Russians and Ukrainians struggle to affirm their power, rights, and citizenship in the context where crucial social forces and institutions are privately controlled.

I also argue that aspects of lay conceptions of power are ambiguous and contradictory, which entails a misguided representation of social reality and limits their democratic aspirations. They may locate sources of economic power exclusively at a state level, at the level of government and financial tycoons, or at a class level. I argue that insofar as lay actors only focus on government as a usurper of power and a cause of economic dislocation, they miss addressing class inequities that also account for undemocratic distribution of power and resources. Furthermore, their apathy, cynicism, self-deprecation, internalized sense of inferiority, occasional authoritarianism, and withdrawal from the political process, while debilitating from a democratic perspective, are not accidental and do not prove the inherent intellectual inferiority of the masses. I show that lay people make sense of their social world in the context of long term political oppression, extreme socio economic dislocation, and a rollback of democratic movements in the 1990s. Pateman has long been bringing attention to the effects of social institutions that are closed to popular participation. A low sense of efficacy, ambivalence, and ambiguities in political consciousness are symptoms of larger problems with the social

institutions that foreclose channels for meaningful influence, participation, and political learning for ordinary people. If lay actors report apathy and a low sense of efficacy, it is because they often interpret their social world correctly. Their beliefs allow us to see that the social conditions they live in are deeply undemocratic. Lay Russians and Ukrainians offer a timely democratic critique of political economy in their societies in so many ways that democratic theory must take them seriously.

Chapter 1. Ambivalence about Democracy and ‘Economic’ Demands in Contemporary Lay Thinking in Ukraine and Russia

a) Introduction

As a starting point of discussion, in this chapter I identify some conspicuous themes in lay democratic thinking in Russia and Ukraine. It is not my goal here to characterize the whole spectrum of lay democratic ideas or to make strong claims about the generalizability of Russian and Ukrainian experiences to other post-communist societies. Rather, relying on a variety of surveys, extensive interviews, ethnographic studies, and studies of social movements, I draw attention to those elements of lay views that immediately stand out in the empirical literature. While I heavily draw on other scholars’ original empirical accounts about lay thinking in these societies, I approach their scholarly work creatively. I seek to synthesize many empirical studies and to highlight what features in lay thinking they commonly point to. I suggest that a conspicuous aspect of lay thinking about democracy in Ukraine and Russia can be initially characterized as ambivalence, where lay evaluations of democracy are sometimes positive and sometimes negative, and where views of democracy often intertwine with ‘economic’ demands. As this chapter is intended to be descriptive, I only indicate that scholars appear to have difficulty interpreting such beliefs, but I put off critical analysis of scholarly conceptual frameworks until later.

I use the term “ambivalence” to highlight and to organize initial presentation of some obvious facets of lay views, but it is not a critical or final assessment of the character of lay thinking. Ambivalence about democracy in lay views is a problem to be

explained and I do not treat ambivalence as an explanation. At the same time, it is something we rarely see in “established western democracies” where democracy is generally seen as desirable. I am most interested in elusive ambivalence that may potentially reflect social and political conflict, and unusual, differing meanings and associations of democracy in the wake of, or as a result of a radical transformation and failed democratic movements.

I do not suggest that many lay Russian and Ukrainian democratic ideas can be reduced to ambivalence couples with ‘economic’ demands. My goal in this chapter is to highlight that elements of this theme appear to be both prominent in various empirical literatures and quite challenging for certain scholarly conceptual frameworks with which such views are approached. Scholars tend to group lay Russian and Ukrainian conceptions of democracy under the labels ‘economic’ demands and ‘economic welfare’ concerns, implying that they are not really about democracy but something else. While in the upcoming chapters I will be arguing why such interpretations are inadequate and misleading, for the time being I continue to use these scholarly categories to describe lay perspectives. Hence, until the final analysis, I put the term ‘economic’ in quotation marks.

I focus on Ukraine and Russia because they are an example of countries where political and economic institutions have been undergoing a radically transformation. It is true that the institutional change from the Soviet communism towards parliamentary and competitive electoral politics, as well as towards market economy is mostly complete (although, the institution of electing people’s deputies was already a part of the political

life in the USSR and the concept of elections is not completely foreign in Russia and Ukraine¹). But in such societies there still continues a profound ideological change. As one author eloquently put it, “with a society in such flux, with old institutions collapsing before new ones can arise, with virtually every dimension of people’s lives subject to renegotiation”, it is difficult for people to take the new social order for granted.² Another author writes: “the problem of adaptation to a stream of radical economic and social changes at the end of the 1980s-1990s is central in the life of a post-soviet individual.”³ Reflecting on his interviews with Russians, one scholar suggests that their thought represents “a broad reflection of the turbulent society and embodies the formlessness of contemporary Russian political culture. Associations with the Soviet past can be seen as an attempt to employ familiar cultural concepts to bring order to chaos.”⁴ Thus, some

¹ For example, see Zaslavsky, Victor and Robert J. Brym, 1978, “The Functions of Elections in the USSR”, *Soviet Studies*, Vol. XXX, no. 3, pp. 362-371. For an example of a dissident advocacy of reform in Soviet electoral laws, see Medvedev, Roy A., 1975, *On Socialist Democracy*. For a discussion of the electoral reforms for enterprise and party leadership that were introduced in the perestroika era, see Medvedev, Roy and Giulietto Chiesa, 1989, *Time of Change: An Insider’s View of Russia’s Transformation*; Christensen, Paul T., 1999, *Russia’s Workers in Transition: Labor, Management, and the State under Gorbachev and Yeltsin*. For prominence of the term “people’s deputies” in Soviet political consciousness, see a brief discussion in Alexander, James, 2000, *Political Culture in Post-Communist Russia: Formlessness and Recreation in a Traumatic Transition*, pp. 116-7.

² Crowley, Stephen, 1997, *Hot Coal, Cold Steel: Russian and Ukrainian Workers from the End of the Soviet Union to the Post-Communist Transformations*, p. 199. Also see Jowitt, Ken, 1993, “The New World Disorder”, in ed. L. Diamond and M. F. Plattner, *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, p. 248, who points out that post-communist transitions are characterized by ideological confusion, uncertainty, and strife.

³ Diligenskii, G.G. 1998, *Rossiskii gorozhanin kontsa devianostykh: genesis postsovetskogo soznaniia. Sotsialno-psikhologicheskie Issledovanie*, p. 14 [Rus: Russian Citizen at the end of the Nineties: Genesis of Post-soviet Consciousness], based on open-ended interviews conducted at the end of 1997 in Moscow and Saratov.

⁴ Alexander, James, 2000, *Political Culture in Post-Communist Russia: Formlessness and Recreation in a Traumatic Transition*, p. 132, based on open-ended interviews conducted in 1996 in Syktyvkar and Kirov. But I do not necessarily agree with the use of the term “formlessness” as it may have connotations of lay views being bodiless, irrational, silly, or non-sense, which is a scholarly view that my dissertation

scholars point out that many people continue to make sense of their changing social reality using a set of ideological tools they bring in from the communist era. Other scholars suggest and study how many people may be compelled to relate to new social circumstances by internalizing novel sets of ideological resources.⁵ These diverse accounts in many ways stress that volatility and change continue to be part of the post-communist social landscape.⁶ In this chapter I draw attention to the fact that in the eyes of many lay Ukrainians and Russians the radical social change is not over and coping with new social institutions is still a prominent part of how and what people think about themselves and their new social environment.

Connected to the ongoing processes of ideological tension and change, it appears that in places such as this the meaning and scope of democracy might not be taken by many people for granted and there might be fewer settled assumptions about democracy than in the countries where so much of scholarly democratic theory is produced. For

seeks to problematize. However, I think the author here uses the term “formlessness” to highlight the changing character of lay thinking rather than its irrationality.

⁵ On explorations about how the new social order is still not taken for granted and how post-communist change is still renegotiated and made sense of by people in Russia and Ukraine by means of both old and new ideological frameworks, see: Diligenskii 1998; Alexander 2000; Crowley 1997; Phillips, Sarah D, 2008, *Women’s Social Activism in the New Ukraine*; Naumova, Nina, 1995, “Man at the Time of Transition,” Hopf, Ted, 2002, “Making the Future Inevitable: Legitimizing, Naturalizing and Stabilizing. The Transition in Estonia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan”; Humphrey, Caroline, 1999, “Traders, ‘Disorder’, and Citizenship Regimes in Provincial Russia,” and Ashwin, Sarah, 1999, “Redefining the Collective: Russian Mineworkers in Transition.”

⁶ For explorations of continuing popular adaptations to radical social change beyond Russia and Ukraine, see Simon, Janos, 1998, “Popular conceptions of democracy in postcommunist Europe,” in *The Postcommunist Citizen*, ed. by S.H. Barnes and J. Simon, pp.115-6; Bach, Jonathan, 2002, “The Taste Remains’: Consumption, (N)Ostalgia, and the Production of East Germany,” *Public Culture* 14.3; Sandler, Daniela, 2003, “Incarnate Politics: The Rhetorics of German Reunification in the Architecture of Berlin,” *Invisible Culture* 5; Burawoy, Michael and Katherine Verdery, ed., 1999, *Uncertain transition: ethnographies of change in the postsocialist world*; Pusca, Anca, 2008, *Revolution, Democratic Transition and Disillusionment: the Case of Romania*, and Vogt, Henri, 2005, *Between Utopia and disillusionment: a narrative of the political transformation in Eastern Europe*.

example, in one study, it was suggested that Russian respondents, as compared to an American sample, did not display a particularly strong sense that the new political institutions are the right ones.⁷ In another study of whether citizens in post-communist countries embrace democratic institutions, the authors report: “The meaning of trust [in political institutions] is different for a Westerner than for a Pole or Ukrainian. Even if Americans say that they distrust Congress, this does not mean that they endorse its abolition or even favor fundamental reforms. In post-communist countries, by contrast, about a quarter of all citizens favor the suspension of parliament, and even more think it could happen.”⁸ Reflecting on the peculiarity of public opinion in transforming societies, some have emphasized that “when a country is undergoing a treble transformation, novel questions are required. Whereas Western surveys deal with competition between political parties for votes, the New Russia Barometer asks about competition between regimes for popular support, since the fundamental choice is not who governs but what

⁷ For example, see Carnaghan, Ellen, 2007, *Out of Order: Russian Political Values in an Imperfect World*, p. 11. The study is based on open-ended interviews with Russians between 1998-2003 in Moscow, Krasnoyarsk, Novosibirsk, Smolensk, Ylyanovsk, and Voronezh. Also, see Carnaghan, Ellen, 2001, “Thinking about Democracy: Interviews with Russian Citizens.” *Slavic Review*, p. 337 and Hopf, “Making the Future Inevitable,” pp. 404, 418-9, 425.

⁸ Mishler, William and Richard Rose, 1997, “Trust, distrust, and skepticism: popular evaluations of civil and political institutions in post-communist societies.” *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 59, no. 2, May, p. 428. Also see on this point of Eastern European “susceptibility” to undemocratic alternatives, see Kullberg, Judith S. and William Zimmerman, 1999, “Liberal Elites, Socialist Masses, and Problems of Russian Democracy,” *World Politics*, p. 324. However, not all Anglo-American scholars maintain that it is unthinkable for ‘western publics’ to put the value of democratic governance into question. For a summary of empirical studies that point to lay Americans’ disrespect for government and politics, as well as to a ‘crisis of democracy’ in the U.S., see Schneider, Anne L. and Helen Ingram, 1997. *Policy Design for Democracy*. University Press of Kansas, pp. 3-5.

kind of political system a country is to have.”⁹ Apart from studying lay attitudes towards parliamentary and electoral institutions which many scholars say lay at the heart of democratic politics, some also maintain that for many lay Russians and Ukrainians democracy actually connotes the “ideal form of social protection.”¹⁰ This is an ‘unusual’ conception from the standpoint of leading scholarly views of democracy. I will return to detailing prominent aspects of such lay beliefs further in the chapter. For now, I wish to stress that Russia and Ukraine are an example of societies where scholarly conception of democracy is not taken for granted by many lay actors.

This chapter is organized into several sections where I show how lay Ukrainian and Russian ideas about democracy in various ways entail ambivalence, economic demands, and economic concerns. In many instances, lay Ukrainians and Russians define democracy in terms of socio-economic safety nets, protections, and guarantees. In other, less common examples, democracy is also defined as workers’ collective self-management regarding working hours, production, pension funds, wages, and benefits. Such ‘economic’ understanding of democracy is quite unusual from the standpoint of leading scholarly conceptions.

In addition, lay Russian and Ukrainian views of democracy entangle certain conceptions of human rights, freedom, equality, politics, state, and power. These are not unfamiliar themes in democratic theory. However, I insist that these lay democratic ideas

⁹ Rose, Richard, William Mishler, and Neil Munro, 2006, *Russia Transformed: Developing Popular Support for a New Regime*. Cambridge University Press, p. 72.

¹⁰ For example, see Diligenskii, “Rossiskii Gorozhanin”, pp. 69, 71, and Sharma, et al, 2007, “Public Opinion in Ukraine Prior to the 2007 Rada Elections”.

are still ‘unusual’ because economic demands and concerns are often brought to the fore. Thus, I also highlight emphases on ‘economics’ in lay conceptions of freedom and human rights and in lay conceptions of politics and state. Then, I turn to examining lay Ukrainian and Russian skepticism about democracy. These skeptical discourses usually intertwine with criticisms of new socio-economic arrangements.

b) Lay Conceptions of Democracy: Democracy as ‘Economic Welfare’

In this section I rely on an eclectic list of sources such as public opinion surveys, in-depth interviews, and ethnographies of social movements that directly or indirectly tap into the question of what lay people in Russia and Ukraine understand democracy to mean. I shall return to this question in later chapters, but studying lay understandings of democracy, Russian and Ukrainian in particular, is not a prominent research agenda in scholarship on democracy. A handful of scholars have also made an observation that democracy might mean something different in post-communist countries than in ‘western established democracies’ and this should be taken into account when studying post-communist public opinion. However, within the studies on the subject, it is maintained that ‘unusual’ lay conceptions are interesting not for their own sake but because they help to predict certain outcomes and behaviors.¹¹ Finally, some scholars maintain that post-communist citizens seem to be mistaken about the true meaning of democracy.¹² I

¹¹ For example, see Mason, “Introduction,” pp.14-5; Miller, “Conceptions of democracy”, pp. 157-163.

¹² Simon, “Popular conceptions”, pp. 81, 89, 116; Alexander “Political culture”, pp. 130-3, McIntosh et al, 1993, “The Meaning of Democracy in a Redefined Europe”; Miller and Wolchik, 1994, “Introduction - The Social Legacy and Aftermath of Communism,” p. 15.

contend, such treatments again signal that scholars struggle with accommodating ‘unusual’ lay ideas in their research.

In this chapter I am mostly concerned with highlighting conspicuous themes in lay thinking and trends in the literature that deal with Russia and Ukraine. However, I continue to place lay Russian and Ukrainian ideas in the context of post-communist countries in general, as it often helps to get a fuller picture about the peculiarity of lay ideas in transforming post-communist societies. Thus, with respect to non-Soviet countries such as Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Bulgaria, and Romania, the two somewhat widely known studies of mass conceptions of democracy are by McIntosh et al and by Simon.¹³ While there is variation across the countries in how social and economic matters in the conception of democracy are prioritized, these studies commonly show that large numbers of respondents in these societies identify democracy with matters of “economic welfare”, which is unusual from the standpoint of leading scholarly conceptions. According to McIntosh et al, from 41 to 79 percent of respondents in the region included matters such as social equality, prosperous economy, and guaranteed material necessities in their definitions of democracy.¹⁴

¹³ McIntosh et al, 1993, “The meaning of democracy”, which is based on surveys carried out by the Office of Research, US Information Agency. This closed question study is cited in Miller and Wolchik, “Introduction,” p. 15 and in Mason, “Introduction,” p. 12. A portion of findings from this conference paper has been included into McIntosh et al, 1994, “Public Meets Market Democracy in Central and East Europe 1991-1993”, p. 497. A second separate study is Simon’s “Popular conceptions”. Simon combines open ended and closed questions, answers to which are subsequently grouped and coded by the author, to determine what conceptions of democracy are prevalent in the publics of such countries as Romania, Czech and Slovak Republic, Poland, Lithuania, and Estonia in 1993.

¹⁴ McIntosh et al report that in response to a question “which of the things on this card would you say is the most important in a democracy?” [multiple choices are allowed], in 1992 41% of Poles, 2% of Czechs, 17% of Slovaks, 35% of Hungarians, 19% of Bulgarians selected ‘economic prosperity in the country’ from the list of choices. Furthermore, 11% of Poles, 17% of Czechs, 24% of Slovaks, 10% of

On the basis of closed and open questions¹⁵ about elements of democracy, Simon reports that post-communist citizens “uniformly understand political freedom, equal rights before the law and the multi-party system to be part of the concept of democracy, while moral freedom, as in the liberal-individual dimension, is mentioned least. Opportunities referring to the economic and social situation decidedly occupy the middle ground: improving economic conditions, growing social equality and greater employment.”¹⁶ At one point Simon ambiguously indicates that due to the “officially-promulgated ideology of the [communist] regime” democracy may be understood in post-communist countries as workplace participation, or simply participation, rather than political representation.¹⁷ However, this part of Simon’s analysis is least developed and it is difficult to assess the character and extent of this particular meaning among lay people in the countries examined, other than the author’s quick hint that some citizens may have been inculcated with an incorrect understanding of democracy.¹⁸

Hungarians, and 12% of Bulgarians selected ‘a government that guarantees economic equality among its citizens’. ‘A government that guarantees that basic economic needs of its people will be met’ was selected by 18% of Poles, 22% of Czechs, 26% of Slovaks, 26% of Hungarians, 16% of Bulgarians. ‘A system of justice that treats everyone equally’ was the fourth on the list of the most relevant characteristics of democracy and was selected by 12% of Poles, 24% of Czechs, 15% of Slovaks, 20% of Hungarians, and 32% of Bulgarians.

¹⁵ ‘Open’ are questions that allow respondents to name categories themselves. ‘Closed’ are questions that present respondents with a set of categories from which respondents must choose those that better represent their views.

¹⁶ Simon “Popular conceptions”, pp. 81, 100.

¹⁷ Simon, “Popular conceptions”, p. 84. Simon briefly notes that this conception might be familiar to lay people, however the only statistics reported are the percentages of people who felt they had no real influence on decision making in the workplace. These percentages are quite high.

¹⁸ Simon, “Popular conceptions”, p. 84.

Several surveys, open interviews, and ethnographic sources on Russia and Ukraine echo the findings in the studies of lay conceptions of democracy in other post-communist countries. Specifically, in different ways these sources show that the meaning of “democracy” for many lay people in Russia and Ukraine incorporates such ‘unusual’ matters as economic well being, social protections, social safety nets, a right to work, material security, protection of pensioners, freedom and equality broadly understood, and workers’ self-management. For example, in a survey conducted by the Office of Research, US Information Agency in 1992, in response to a closed question about the meaning of democracy, 74 percent of Russians selected ‘judicial system that treats everyone equally’ from the list, 68 percent selected ‘economic prosperity in the country’, and 68 percent selected ‘government that provides for basic material needs of citizens’.¹⁹ The latter two items that received so many approving selections are not usually included into the meaning of democracy in leading scholarly conceptions. In a scholarly study that examines this survey report, the authors comment that such ‘unusual’ conceptions are most likely a legacy of communism which must be overcome.²⁰

¹⁹ This survey is cited in Miller and Wolchik “Introduction”, p. 8. Survey question posed was: “People have various ideas about what makes a state a ‘democracy’. For each of the characteristics on this card please tell me whether you think it is essential, important but not essential, not very important, or not at all important for determining whether a state is a democracy.” Respondents were allowed to select multiple items. The items on the choice list included: ‘judicial system that treats everyone equally’ (selected by 75%), ‘economic prosperity in the country’ (selected by 68 %), ‘government that provides for basic material needs of citizens’ (selected by 68%), ‘protection of rights of minorities’ (selected by 52%), ‘free market economy’ (by 44%), ‘freedom to criticize the government’ (by 42%), ‘at least two strong political parties competing in elections’ (by 39%).

²⁰ Miller and Wolchik, “Introduction”, p. 16. Alexander also address the issues of “Soviet conceptions of democracy” and post-soviet redefinition of these concepts in lay thinking, Alexander, “Russian Political Culture”, p. 127-131.

It is not clear to what degree ‘equality’ in the sense that survey scholars use the term in survey questions allows lay actors to express their views. For example, ‘equality before the law’ is considered by some scholars consistent with democracy, but ‘economic equality’ is not.²¹ Scholars may be ambiguous on this issue, which I suggest is indicative of difficulties with accommodating ‘unusual’ lay beliefs. For instance, McIntosh et al stress that economic equality is inimical to democracy and freedom, but rather that democracy is about *judicial* equality. Yet, when 63 to 85 per cent of respondents in Hungary, Romania, Poland, and Romania identify democracy with a “*social* system that treats everyone equally”, McIntosh et al still conclude that lay conceptions are consistent with scholarly conceptual benchmark of democracy.²² Consider the following lay response to a question about what democracy is: “I don’t know, everything is divided equally. I think this, although it was the same for communism, everything divided equally. Yet, it seems to me that democracy is a system in which everything is divided equally.”²³ According to Alexander’s interpretation, this respondent confuses categories

²¹ For e.g., in McIver et al, “Public meets market democracy,” pp. 495-6, where preferences for freedom are interpreted as public support for democracy, and preferences for economic equality are interpreted by these scholars as the leftovers of the communist past or simply as egalitarianism, but in either case, as conservatism and an impediment to democratization in the region, pp. 495-6. As these authors derive and endorse a notion of democracy from Dahl’s *Polyarchy*, equality in the judicial sense considered an essential feature of democracy in their conceptual framework. I will return to an analysis of these issues in chapter 2 and 3.

²² McIntosh et al, 1994, “Public Meets Democracy in Central and East Europe 1991-1993,” p. 498, table 1, emphasis added.

²³ Alexander, “Political culture,” p. 131.

as she reveals her inability to separate contemporary Russian democracy from the Soviet version.²⁴

Allusions to the unusual from the standpoint of leading scholarly conceptions view of democracy are also pronounced in Diligenskii's study that maps 'post-Soviet consciousness at the end of the nineties'. This work is not primarily focused on mass conceptions of democracy in Russia. Nevertheless, whenever a question of democracy in lay Russian understanding arises, Diligenski, by referencing the interview material, highlights that for many Russians democratization is a symbol of social expectations.²⁵ Moreover, he notes that for them democracy stands for the "ideal form of social protection...state paternalism and social safety nets without party dictatorship."²⁶ While Diligenskii acknowledges that it is not uncommon for post-soviet Russians to think about democracy in terms of social welfare and social safety nets, he characterizes these tendencies as a "rejection of liberal and democratic values", as echoes of soviet consciousness, and as longing for paternalism.²⁷ Similar to these findings, in another extensive interview-based study Alexander reports several answers to a question about the meaning of democracy. He writes that although direct allusions to socialist

²⁴ Alexander, "Political culture," p. 131.

²⁵ Diligenskii, "Rossiiski gorozhanin", pp. 91, 68-69, 85. This study is based on thirty open-ended interviews with *riadovue liudi*, "rank and file" people randomly selected from Moscow and Saratov. Diligenskii's analysis is complemented with frequent references to VTSiOM (a former All Soviet Center for Public Opinion Research and currently an All Russian Center for Public Opinion Research) 1997 data on public opinion in Russia.

²⁶ Diligenskii, "Rossiskii gorozhanin", pp. 69, 71.

²⁷ Diligenskii, "Rossiskii gorozhanin", pp. 91, 69, 85, 71, 74.

democracy did not dominate discussion, “several respondents included political and economic dimensions in their definitions”.²⁸

When commenting on lay understanding of democracy in Ukraine, Carson writes:

In the West, we often assume that we share an understanding of the concept of democracy with the rest of the world. However, this understanding is often different from what citizens of the former Eastern Bloc might consider democracy. A new film recently released in Hungary portrays two villagers talking about democracy, and distinguishing what they once knew as ‘people’s democracy’ and today’s version as ‘democracy democracy’. *There is often confusion in these societies as to what the difference is between past and present usage.*²⁹

Thus, according to a series of public opinion polls that were conducted in Ukraine between 2000 and 2008 by International System for Elections Foundation, it is consistently shown that it is not uncommon for people in Ukraine to think about democracy in terms of what may be grouped in the literature as matters of “economic welfare”. When in 2007 people were asked to select the five most important elements of democracy from a list of twelve choices, “protection of human rights” topped the list, followed by “everyone has work” and “retirees looked after by the state”.³⁰ When survey

²⁸ Alexander, “Political culture”, p. 130.

²⁹ Carson, Thomas, 2000, “Attitudes Toward Change, the Current Situation, and Civic Action in Ukraine – 2000,” p. 11.

³⁰ Sharma, et al, 2007, “Public Opinion in Ukraine Prior to the 2007 Rada Elections.” This poll is based on closed questions allowing respondents to select multiple items, ‘Protection of human rights’ is selected by 66% of respondents, ‘everyone has work’ by 53%, ‘no official corruption’ by 50%, ‘fair and consistent enforcement of laws’ by 44%, ‘pensioners supported by state’ by 43%, ‘freedom of speech’ by 42%, ‘state supports all who cannot work’ by 39%, ‘freedom to vote’ by 29%; ‘checks and balances’ by 26%, ‘freedom of religion’ by 24%, ‘freedom of press’ by 15%, ‘freedom of association’ by 10%. In this same poll, 49% of Ukrainians said that Ukraine is not a democracy, and 22% did not have an opinion. These results were roughly repeated in 2006, 2005, 2004, 2003, and 2002, but 2000 survey results on this account were different. Also, the 2000 survey was based on open, not closed questions, responses to which were categorized and coded by survey researchers. Thus, in 2000, 55% named ‘human rights’, 18% named ‘rule of law, equality, justice’, 13% named ‘power of the people, access to power, transparency’, 16% named ‘material prosperity, social welfare’, Carson 2000, pp. 11-12. From 2002 and

analysts report these findings, they write that “such tenets of democracy as freedom of choice, speech, and voting were mentioned less frequently” and that “Ukrainians may not be committed to the freedoms a democracy embodies”.³¹

Furthermore, in 2010 one of Ukraine’s largest newspapers, *Zerkalo Tuzhnia*, publicized the results of a 2009 national poll conducted by a Fund for Democratic Initiatives and Kyiv Institute of Sociology NANU. According to the poll, 74 percent of respondents consider equality before the law as a central feature of democracy, 59 percent of respondents include a guarantee of employment in their understanding of democracy, and 47 percent of respondents consider that protection from usurpation of power is an important characteristic of democracy. The poll reports that only 27 per cent of respondents consider freedom of speech to be central to democracy, 11 percent consider national elections important for democracy, and 9 percent consider local elections relevant for defining democracy.³² Lay answers to questions about the meaning of democracy were grouped in this newspaper article under the section heading “The Childish Illness of ‘Leftiness’”, and commentator notes that “we must say that they [Ukrainian people] include in their understanding of democracy those features that democracy has nothing to do with”.³³

on, respondents were given closed questions – cards with a list of items from which they could select what best represented their understanding of democracy.

³¹ Sharma 2003, p. 21. Also, see Sharma 2008, pp. 37.

³² Kirichenko, Irina, 2010. “Neystoychivuy ‘Kentavr’ Nashey Demokratii,” [The unstable ‘centaur’ of our democracy], *Zerkalo Tuzhnia*, No. 13 (793) 3-9 April, available at <http://www.zn.ua/3000/3050/69027/>

³³ Kirichenko, Irina, 2010. “Neystoychivuy ‘Kentavr’ Nashey Demokratii,” [The unstable ‘centaur’ of our democracy], *Zerkalo Tuzhnia*, No. 13 (793) 3-9 April, available at <http://www.zn.ua/3000/3050/69027/>

Furthermore, paralleling “economic” aspects of lay ideas discussed above, some historical and ethnographic studies of 1989-1996 Ukrainian and Russian labor movements indicate that participants thought of democracy as respect for human dignity, including in the workplace; freedom of speech in the workplace; workers’ independence; workers ability to elect managers; workers’ participation in decision-making about production policies, wages rates, pensions, and work shifts; and workers’ freedom from the state, managers, or corporate control.³⁴

c) ‘Economic’ Demands and Concerns in Lay Conceptions of Human Rights and Freedom

Human rights and freedom are familiar categories in scholarly conceptions of democracy, and they also occupy a prominent place in lay Ukrainian and Russian reflections about democracy. But it is worthwhile exploring what lay actors in post-communist countries might mean by rights and freedom. In some assessments, due to the legacy of the communist past the meaning of rights and freedoms entails strong socio-economic connotations and is not limited to civil and political rights.³⁵ Alexander, for

³⁴ For a survey of ideas about democracy that permeated labor movement in Ukraine and Russia from the onset of post-soviet transformation and on, see Siegelbaum, L. H. and D.J. Walkowitz, ed., 1995, *Workers of the Donbass Speak: Survival and Identity in the New Ukraine, 1989-1992*; Crowley, *Hot Coal, Cold Steel*, Mandel, David, 1994, *Rabotyagi: Perestroika and After Viewed From Below. Interviews with Workers in the Former Soviet Union*; Clark, Simon, et al., 1993, *What about the workers?;* Christensen, *Russia’s Workers in Transition*; Simon, Rick, 2000, *Labour and Political Transformation in Russia and Ukraine*.

³⁵ See Miller and Wolchik, “Introduction”, pp. 16-9. For example, if we look at the constitution of Ukraine, it further shows that ‘discourse on human rights’ [but not actual practice] in this society includes various guaranteed economic, social, cultural, environmental, civil, and political rights, Constitution of Ukraine, chapter II, articles 21 to 64, available at <http://www.rada.gov.ua/const/conengl.htm>

example, reports that democracy was often described by his respondents as: “the right to public expression, general rights, economic rights, and the freedom to choose one’s own life path.”³⁶ At the same time, Alexander is unsympathetic to his respondents stressing “economic” entitlements and he characterizes them as outdated.³⁷

Lay ‘economic’ understanding of rights is also seen in responses that encompass skepticism about post-Soviet social reality. For instance, in reference to widespread economic dislocation in Russia, some of Diligenskii’s respondents conclude: “[today] citizens do not have any rights”.³⁸

According to an All Russian Center for Public Opinion Research, in 2002 when asked to rank the importance of various individual rights, 90 percent rated a right to ‘a minimal standard of living’ as of the utmost importance, while less than 30 percent gave the same rating to ‘freedom of assembly’.³⁹

‘Unusual’ views of democracy and human rights are also echoed in lay reflections about freedom, indicating that not only the meaning of human rights but also of freedom does not stop at economic and social questions. It is worthwhile to examine the concept of freedom because it is too often connected to democracy in lay Russian and Ukrainian views. In a survey study of mass conceptions of democracy in Russia and Ukraine, Miller et al find that the masses, as opposed to elites who emphasize law and order, tend to

³⁶ Alexander “Political culture”, p. 127.

³⁷ Alexander “Political culture”, pp. 124-5.

³⁸ Diligenskii, “Rossiskii gorozhanin”, p. 83.

³⁹ Teodor P. Gerber and Sara E. Mendel’son, 2002, “Grazhdane Rossii o Pravakh Cheloveka,” *Monitoring obschestvennogo mnenia: Informatsionnuy analiz*, cited in Carnaghan, *Out of Order*, p. 180.

define democracy in terms of freedom, particularly freedom of speech, movement, travel, and action.⁴⁰ Alexander also reports that freedom broadly understood occupied a significant place in his respondents' conceptions of democracy.⁴¹

Diligenskii notes that in his interviews other aspects in lay conception of democracy encompass freedom of speech, action, movement, and development of personality in many ways. He cites ideas of some of his respondents as: "in a democracy one's actions are not limited".⁴² But from his citation of the interview material it is also evident that many respondents in their understanding of freedom draw connections to socio-economic conditions, such as poverty, long hours of work, and crime in which freedom of action and free development of personality cannot exist.⁴³ In Alexander's analysis, his respondents' conceptualizations of freedom "were almost universally positive, expressing belief in the freedom of thought, speech and action", but at the same time, respondents extend their understanding of freedom to economic and financial freedom to carry on their lives as they see fit.⁴⁴

Some scholars show that freedom in Russia is often understood beyond the scope of the liberal conception (and I would stress, not necessarily in opposition to it). For

⁴⁰ Miller et al, "Conceptions of Democracy," pp. 157-190. This survey study is based on open questions, responses to which are then coded and categorized by the authors.

⁴¹ Alexander, "Political culture", pp. 126-131.

⁴² Diligenskii, "Rossiskii gorozhanin," p. 71.

⁴³ Diligenskii, "Political culture," pp. 28-31, 60-91.

⁴⁴ Alexander, "Political culture", pp. 124-5. Throughout his book, Alexander refers to the unusual lay views and expectations in Russia as "conservative", only connoting that they "cling to the values of the past" rather than highlighting the qualitative difference of such views.

example, some contend that for many Russians freedom entails material security.⁴⁵ However, the particular character of such lay beliefs is often accommodated in scholarly literature with difficulty. It may be that scholars design questions that do not allow respondents to express their views adequately. Also, scholarly interpretations may not successfully capture the character of lay ideas. For instance, in lay responses economic freedom and economic security refer to the same thing, i.e. the ability to live a life free from financial anxiety and develop freely in the widest sense of the word.⁴⁶ However, such lay beliefs about freedom are accommodated in scholarly frameworks with difficulty. Note that in this example, lay understanding does not fit well within the dichotomy of freedom vs. material security that underlies the interviewer's question to begin with. In this lay view, rather than an opposition, there is a meaningful connection between freedom, material security, independence, and flourishing. For instance, when commenting on such lay ideas Carnaghan suggests that Russians appear to understand freedom in terms of "material security *rather than* in terms of independence or choice."⁴⁷ On another occasion, Carnaghan contends that Russians simply value material security *more* than freedom.⁴⁸ But such interpretations do not adequately reflect the character of lay ideas in question.

⁴⁵ Carnaghan, *Out of order*, p. 33. Also, similar questions are explored in Romanovich, Nelli A., 2003, "Demokraticheskie tsennosti I svoboda 'po-russki,'" pp. 42-8.

⁴⁶ Alexander, "Political culture", pp. 124-5, Carnaghan, *Out of order*, p.180.

⁴⁷ Carnaghan, *Out of order*, p. 33, emphasis added.

⁴⁸ Carnaghan, *Out of Order*, p. 176-7.

A 2000 survey of Voronezh citizens, as well as analyses of this survey present further exemplify lay ‘economic’ understandings of freedom and of scholarly difficulty with accommodating such views. In response to a question “would you be willing to give up some of your democratic freedoms (freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom to travel to other countries, freedom of currency transactions, etc.) in exchange for the stabilization of the economic and political situation in the country,” 85 percent of respondents would be willing to sacrifice their freedoms. Specifically, 57 percent of respondents expressed willingness to give up their freedom for a chance to work and to receive their pay or pension on time, 37 percent would do so to lower the crime rate, and 31 percent would do so because they do not feel that they get any benefit from their freedom [as defined by scholars].⁴⁹ In Romanovich’s analysis, this data indicates that most Russians do not place a high value on democratic freedoms, but it may be because Russians have a different understanding of freedom, which cannot be recovered through the limiting scope of the survey question offered to respondents.⁵⁰ Romanovich then proceeds to employ a supposedly more plausible dichotomy: “democratic freedoms versus ‘freedoms Russian style.’”⁵¹ Throughout the remainder of her essay, Romanovich interprets Russian public opinion through a conceptual opposition of democratic values, freedoms, and individual rights *versus* security, order, and public interest. She writes:

⁴⁹ Romanovich, “Demokraticheskie Tsennosti,” p. 43.

⁵⁰ Romanovich, “Demokraticheskie tsennosti,” pp. 43, 45.

⁵¹ Carnaghan, *Out of order*, also makes a note of this unusual understanding of freedom, however, after a brief acknowledgement this specificity is largely obscured in her account. I will return to Carnaghan’s analysis again at the end of the chapter.

...*Personal freedoms* and democratic rights, although they are important, *are not decisive*; and they remain in the background relative to other considerations – namely, the interests of the public (the people). It is in this sense that we can speak of the collectivism of Russia’s people... we can say that Russians give priority to equality and brotherhood, and *only then to liberty, understood as the independence of the individual*. In that context, political rights and freedoms are relatively unimportant.⁵²

In fact, towards the end of her essay Romanovych completely obscures the “economic” dimensions of the lay Russian understanding of freedom, independence, rights, and security that many surveys she discusses point to. Instead, she states that the Russian worldview, contrary to Protestant ethics, is structured by an Orthodox assertion that freedom means individual moral self-determination, i.e. not being enslaved by one’s evil passions and desires. She sums up: “Russians place so little value on democratic freedoms because this type of freedom does not rank first in the list of [Orthodox] value priorities formulated by the national culture over many centuries.”⁵³ Carnaghan, who draws on Romanovych’s survey report and interpretation of freedom “Russian style”, cites this latter part of Romanovych’s essay about Russians’ Orthodox view of freedom. Carnaghan also adds another “plausible” interpretation that Russians simply value material security more than freedom, or they do not value “the personal freedom that underlies democracy”.⁵⁴ And this is all while both Carnaghan and Romanovych acknowledge (albeit briefly) that material security is a feature of lay Russians’ view of

⁵² Romanovych, “Demokraticheskie tsennosti,” pp. 44-5.

⁵³ Romanovych, “Demokraticheskie tsennosti,” p. 47-8.

⁵⁴ Carnaghan, *Out of Order*, p. 176-7.

freedom and independence.⁵⁵ I suggest that such unconvincing and inconsistent scholarly interpretations of lay ideas are indicative of their difficulty with grasping the significance of ‘unusual’ lay views.

d) ‘Economic’ Demands and Concerns in Lay Conceptions of State and Politics

In the previous sections I touched upon different ways in which ‘economic’ matters make their way into lay views of democracy, freedom, and rights in Russia and Ukraine. In this section I continue highlighting the salience of ‘economic’ demands and concerns in lay reflections about politics and state. I argue that this survey, interview, and ethnographic literature reflects, and at the same time has difficulty accommodating such lay conceptions of the state and politics.

In a variety of ways studies show that lay Ukrainians and Russians are “infatuated” with matters of “economic welfare” and that they have difficulty separating the realm of “economics” from the state, politics, and democracy. Scholars cannot seem to accommodate such beliefs. For example, Mishler and Rose note that “debate continues in the literature about the extent to which citizens in post-communist societies are capable of distinguishing between politics and economics...”⁵⁶ While their own study leads them to maintain that post-communist citizens do not easily differentiate between political, civic and economic institutions, Mishler and Rose express hope that eventually as citizens acquire more experience with democracy they might learn to

⁵⁵ Carnaghan, *Out of Order*, pp. 33, 177.

⁵⁶ Mishler, William and Richard Rose, 1997, “Trust, distrust, and skepticism: popular evaluations of civil and political institutions in post-communist societies.” p. 436, ft. 12.

separate politics from economics.⁵⁷ Alexander acknowledges that his respondents were overwhelmingly preoccupied with matters of “economic welfare”: “concern about economic problems, especially as they affected individuals and families, attracted sustained comment across a spectrum of issues... Discussion focused consistently on specific topics (inflation, wage arrears, the economic-environmental balance and so on)... popular concern for economic security was ever present...The concern about food was so high that it blocked marginally higher needs, such as clothing.”⁵⁸ Alexander’s respondents offered a variety of solutions to their “economic” problems such as speeding up the reforms, economic integration of the former Soviet republics, decentralization of decision making, or strong state intervention.⁵⁹ Alexander characterizes his respondents as having “low interest in politics” and insists that their interests have nothing to do with “high order activities, such as political”.⁶⁰

Salience of ‘economic’ concerns in lay views about politics and democracy reappears in the literature in a variety of ways. Also, there are often contradicting hypotheses and interpretations which again signal that scholars struggle with explaining away such views. Some scholars suggest that economic hardship leads to low support for democracy, and hence one must explore “the economic bases of political support and legitimacy in [post-communist] countries and the close ties between economic and

⁵⁷ Mishler, William and Richard Rose, 1997, “Trust, distrust, and skepticism: popular evaluations of civil and political institutions in post-communist societies.”, pp. 433, 442-6.

⁵⁸ Alexander, *Political Culture* pp. 89-90, 73-5.

⁵⁹ Alexander, *Political Culture*, pp. 72-101.

⁶⁰ Alexander, *Political Culture* pp. 89-90, 73-5.

political stability”.⁶¹ Others maintain that rather than evaluating new political institutions and practices by reference to economic performance, many post-communist citizens simply prioritize materialistic and economic concerns *over* abstract political principles.⁶² Characterizations of lay Russian and Ukrainian concerns with “economic welfare” as “materialistic” also appear in studies of democratic movements.⁶³ Some scholars contend that there is no connection between political and economic attitudes in post-communist countries, and citizens are committed to ‘democracy’ regardless of their economic

⁶¹ For a summary of these theoretical and methodological issues, see Gibson 1996, p. 957. For an example of studies that demonstrate positive relationships between economic hardship and low support for democracy or argue that economic success is a precondition of political reform success, see Haggard and Kaufman, 1997, “The Political Economy of Democratic Transitions”; Diamond, Larry, 1995, “Democracy and Economic Reform”; Kluegel and Mason, 2004, “Fairness Matters: Social Justice and Political Legitimacy in Post-Communist Europe,” pp. 813-34; Whitefield and Evans, 1994, “The Russian Election of 1993: Public Opinion and the Transition Experience,” p. 57; Kullberg and Zimmerman, 1999, “Liberal Elites, Socialist Masses, and Problems of Russian Democracy,” pp. 323-58; Mishler and Rose, “Trust, distrust, and skepticism” pp. 442-6; Finifter and Mickiewicz, 1992, “Redefining the Political System of the USSR,” pp. 857-74; Clarke et al, 1993, “The Political Economy of Attitudes toward Polity and Society in Western European Democracies,” pp. 998-1021, Rose, Richard, William Mishler, and Christian Haerpfer., 1998, *Democracy and Its Alternatives*. John Hopkins University Press, pp. 172, 174-8. Evans and Whitefield 1995, for example, argue that while economic well-being seems to be important factor in influencing public support for democracy, perception of government responsiveness is of greater weight, “The Politics and Economics of Democratic Commitment: Support for Democracy in Transition Societies,” pp. 485-514.

⁶² Gibson, “Political and Economic Markets,” p. 957; Mason, “Introduction,” p. 9; Mason, “Justice, Socialism, and Participation in the Postcommunist States,” pp.74-7; Kluegel et al, 1995., “Accounting for the Rich and the Poor”; Clarke et al, 1993, “The Political Economy of Attitudes toward Polity and Society in Western European Democracies,” pp. 998-1021; McIntosh et al, “Public Meets Democracy in Central and East Europe 1991-1993”, pp. 483-512; Evans and Whitefield, “The Politics and Economics of Democratic Commitment: Support for Democracy in Transition Societies,” pp. 485-514. Also, Diligenskii, *Rossiskii gorozhanin*; Alexander, *Political culture*; and Simon, *Labor and political transformation*.

⁶³ Depending on scholarly frameworks used, goals of social movements are characterized as either “democratic” or “economic” and “materialistic”, though there are variations in these scholarly interpretations and emphases. For e.g., see: Simon, *Labor and Political Transformation*, Christensen, *Russia’s Workers in Transition*; Crowley, *Hot Coal, Cold Steel*; Fainer, *Pomarancheva revoliutsiia*; Clark, *What about the workers?*; Stepanenko, “Civil Society in Post-Soviet Ukraine.”

circumstances.⁶⁴ Finally, some scholars suggest that post-communist citizens, in contrast to norms in ‘established western democracies’, are too political since they are used to politicizing “economics”. However, scholarly conclusions often imply that lay actors must learn to compartmentalize economics and politics.⁶⁵ In many ways survey and interview literature reveals a deep connection between “economics”, politics, state, and democracy in lay Russian and Ukrainian beliefs. However, scholars often end up suggesting that lay Russians and Ukrainians confuse terms, mix categories, or focus on wrong things and have illegitimate expectations about democracy, politics, and the state.

In what follows I focus on highlighting in more detail the character of these lay ‘economic’ concerns as well as salience of ‘economic’ demands in lay conceptions of the state. For example, survey and interview scholars report overwhelming popular concerns with economic questions. According to Ferguson’s report, in 1999, 94 percent of Ukrainians were “unsatisfied with the situation in the country”, and 80 percent listed “economic reasons for dissatisfaction”.⁶⁶ In a 2000 poll, 85 percent of Ukrainians said

⁶⁴ Duch, Raymond, 1993, “Tolerating Economic Reform: Popular Support for Transition to a Free Market in the Former Soviet Union,” pp. 590-608; Duch, Raymond M., 1995, “Economic Chaos and the Fragility of Democratic Transition in former Communist Regimes,” pp. 121; Gibson, James L, 1996, “Political and Economic Markets: Changes in the Connections Between Attitudes Toward Political Democracy and a Market Economy Within the Mass Culture of Russia and Ukraine,” pp. 954-984; Gibson, James L, 1996, “A Mile Wide but an Inch Deep(?): the Structure of Democratic Commitments in the Former USSR,” p.21-2; and Mishler and Rose, 1996, “Trajectories of Fear and Hope: Support for Democracy in Post-Communist Europe,” pp. 553-581. Colton argues that Russian citizens are committed to new political institutions, but it is just that evaluations of personal and national economy influences the way the gauge the success of these institutions, Colton, Timothy J., 2000, *Transitional Citizens: Voters and What Influences Them in the New Russia*.

⁶⁵ Reisinger et al, 1995, “Public Behavior and Political Change,” pp. 944-5 and Mishler and Rose, “Trust, distrust, and skepticism,” p. 433.

⁶⁶ Ferguson, Gary, 1999, “Public Opinion in Ukraine - 1999”, pp.4-5. Also, see Nikolayevskiy, Valeriy N., 2004, “Presidential Elections in Ukraine, 2004: Sociological Dimensions,” about various aspects of public opinion before the Orange Revolution that reflects the same statistics.

that they witnessed prominent changes that had a significant influence on the lives of the majority of people in the past ten years. Among those changes, economic changes were mentioned at the top of the list and majority pointed to negative consequences of this change on the national and personal level. 54 percent reported that living standards declined, 15 percent said they remained the same, and 76 percent reported that the situation in Ukraine has worsened.⁶⁷ These numbers were virtually replicated in the Ukrainian surveys of the following years, up to 2008.⁶⁸ In 2003, Sharma et al report that “this data contributes to the finding that economic difficulty is the leading factor for opinions on many issues in Ukraine.”⁶⁹ Burkele et al write that in 2005 Ukrainians felt that issues related to the country’s economy are the most important issues facing Ukraine and should be addressed by the new [Orange Revolution] government. The authors conclude “economic concerns dominate the Ukrainian psyche” and the “economic anxiety felt by many Ukrainians continues to be reflected in the data in that secure employment and the state’s care of retirees are often cited as defining characteristics of democracy.”⁷⁰ According to the same report, “unemployment, low wages, lack of social payments and general economic problems were mentioned most often when asked to

⁶⁷ Carson, Thomas, “Attitudes Toward Change, the Current Situation, and Civic Action in Ukraine – 2000”, pp. 4, 7-9.

⁶⁸ Source: International Fund for the Election Systems, 1999-2008.

⁶⁹ Sharma, Rakesh and Nathan Van Dusen, 2003, “Attitudes and Expectations: Public Opinion in Ukraine 2003.”

⁷⁰ Buerkle, Karen et al, 2005, “Public Opinion in Ukraine After the Orange Revolution, April 2005,” pp. 7, 33-5, 24.

name the most important issues facing Ukraine today”.⁷¹ In 1997, according to VTSIOM surveys almost 70 percent of Russians expressed a sense of sociological fear, fear of poverty, and falling standards of life: “People directly connect their fears and concerns with reforms and instability of the new society....economic risks, unemployment, bankruptcies – typical risks associated with the market economy to which westerners are used but not the people in post-soviet countries.”⁷² Rose and colleagues report similar results about Russians being unsatisfied with their household economic situation as well as the development of national economy, and about two thirds of respondents stress worsening of their situation in the past years.⁷³

The prominence of popular ‘economic’ concerns is interesting because it is not just that many people in Russia and Ukraine are concerned with economic and social matters, but this concern manifests itself in political terms and implies a particular understanding of politics and state. For example, many scholars note that Eastern-Europeans in general, or Russians and Ukrainians in particular (and often in contrast to regional elites) prefer a strong role of the government in regulating the economy and providing various social guarantees for its citizens.⁷⁴ Some also stress that “we find

⁷¹ Buerkle et al, “Public Opinion in Ukraine After the Orange Revolution, April 2005,” p. 33-5.

⁷² Quoted in Diligenskii, *Rossiskii gorozhanin*, p. 30.

⁷³ Rose, Richard, William Mishler, and Christian Haerpfer., 1998, *Democracy and Its Alternatives*. John Hopkins University Press, pp. 167-72.

⁷⁴ Kullberg and Zimmerman, 1999, “Liberal Elites, Socialist Masses, and Problems of Russian Democracy,” pp. 323-58; Kluegel and Mason, “Fairness Matters: Social Justice and Political Legitimacy in Post-Communist Europe,” p. 814; McIver et al 1994, “Public Meets Democracy,” p. 500; Bahry, 1999, “Comrades into Citizens”, p. 841; Finifter, 1996, “Attitudes toward Individual Responsibility and Political Reform in the Former Soviet Union,” p. 150, and Finifter and Mickiewicz, 1992, “Redefining the Political System of the USSR: Mass Support for Political Change,” p. 861.

dramatically more pro-interventionist views among Eastern Europeans than among even the most left-wing of the Western population. Support for the market is clearly qualified by an expectation of state intervention.”⁷⁵ Thus, in describing how his Russian respondents understand the “state”, Alexander writes: “...respondents commented on the state responsibility for their standard of living.”⁷⁶ Diligenskii notes that it was not uncommon for his respondents to approach economic status and economic welfare politically: “In this sense, *homo soveticus* is predominantly a political being.”⁷⁷ Lay Russians opt for collective, political approach to solving their economic problems. Yet, when discussing a tendency among his respondents to hold the state accountable for social and economic well-being of citizens, Diligenskii implies they should be able to overcome such outdated attitudes.⁷⁸

In fact, ‘state’ has a particular meaning for many lay actors in Russia and Ukraine, which is unusual from the standpoint of leading conceptions. For example, according to one of such views, the state is “...our lives, it is our apartment, house, forest, and land. *Everything* is our state.”⁷⁹ Alexander characterizes the ‘unusual’ aspects of lay

⁷⁵ Evans, Geoffrey, 1994. “The Social Bases of Democratization and Marketization in Eastern Europe,” Presented at the Social Bases of Liberalisation, an SSRC and the Institute of Political Studies conference, Polish Academy of Sciences, p. 6

⁷⁶ Alexander, *Political culture*, p. 119.

⁷⁷ Diligenskii, *Rossiskii gorozhanin*, p. 87.

⁷⁸ Diligenskii, *Rossiskii gorozhanin* p. 87. In chapter 3 shall return to analyzing scholarly conceptions of the state with which public opinion in post-Soviet countries is approached and dominant scholarly emphasis on the “lean state” and “individual responsibility” as integral to democracy, as opposed to “social guarantees state”. For example, see Gibson, 1992, “Democratic values,” p. 341 and McIntosh et al, 1994, “Public Meets Democracy,” p. 485, 492.

⁷⁹ Alexander, *Political culture*, p. 119, emphasis added.

conceptions of the state in the following way: “the state [for Russians] *is not* an ‘objective’ concept describing institutions and procedures: the state fulfils the role of protector while embodying the strength and unity of the Russian people.”⁸⁰ Furthermore, commenting on the role of the welfare state which constantly “appeared in every day conversation”, Alexander laments that “such comments indicated a broad popular desire for the state to watch over them.”⁸¹ Lay responses that Alexander gathers reveal that lay actors opt for a political approach to solving their economic problems, such as securing social guarantees from the state.

These ‘economic’ conceptions of the state presented in interview studies are echoed in nationwide surveys. According to a 1998 RNISiNP survey, “94 percent of Russians thought that the state’s social functions included guaranteeing that wages are matched to the quantity and quality of work; 86.1 percent that it should guarantee every family a minimum income level, and 85.6 percent that it should guarantee a job to everyone who needs one. Nonetheless, half of the respondents believed that everyone should take responsibility for the material well-being of his/her family and not count on the state.”⁸² Analyzing this survey results, Romanovich highlights that “two models coexist in citizens’ minds: the paternalistic model inherited from the past; and the individualistic model, which, although imposed on the majority by life, is nonetheless

⁸⁰ Alexander, *Political culture*, p. 120, emphasis added.

⁸¹ Alexander, *Political culture*, p. 196.

⁸² Romanovich, “Demokraticheskie tsennosti,” p. 44.

already in place, the ‘realistic’ model of solving one’s own problems.”⁸³ Also, according to an earlier 1995 VTSiOM surveys, 33.5 per cent of Russians expressed the desire to continue with the [economic] reforms and 40.9 percent said they did not know whether they were supportive of reforms. Furthermore, 67.3 per cent of Russians preferred a market economy and 16.9 per cent preferred planned economy. However, 57 percent answered that the government bears primary responsibility for the welfare of individuals in the society, while 23.4 per cent pointed to an individual as bearing this responsibility.⁸⁴

Diligenskii notes that for both his older and younger respondents alike it is not uncommon to report a sense of political powerlessness because of their inability to control their socio-economic reality. He concludes that both younger and older adopt the social position of total alienation from and rejection of the institutions of power and politics.⁸⁵ However, Diligenskii struggles to accommodate the reported sense of inefficacy and continues to describe his respondents as displaying “paternalistic attitudes” and being oblivious to the values of political and civic participation.⁸⁶ When confronted with respondents’ aspirations to assert control over economic matters, and this is usually in the form of “state guarantees”, scholars often characterize them as “conservative”, “authoritarian”, “paternalistic”, and inimical to democratic values.⁸⁷ Carnaghan points

⁸³ Romanovich, “Demokraticeskie tsennosti,” p. 44.

⁸⁴ VTSiOM, May 1995, cited in Clark, Goss, and Kosova, 2003, *Changing Attitudes Toward Economic Reform*, p. 32.

⁸⁵ Diligenskii, *Rossiskii gorozhanin*, pp. 86-92, emphasis added.

⁸⁶ Diligenskii, *Rossiskii gorozhanin*, pp. 86-92.

⁸⁷ In survey literature, see Miller et al, 1994, “Reassessing Mass Support for Political and Economic Change,” McIntosh et al, 1994, “Public Meets Democracy,” pp. 500-3. Within interview based literature,

out parallel themes: “Many of my respondents – democrats and nondemocrats, free-marketeters and market skeptics, pensioners and youth – suffered from passivity in the face of power. As a group, they were highly skeptical about the possibilities of positive change [in their lives].”⁸⁸ Similarly, Carnaghan struggles to accommodate her respondents’ sense of inefficacy over their economic fate. Even as her respondents stress that they feel new social and political institutions are not helping them to solve the real problems of their lives, Carnaghan still insists that alienation might relate to lay Russians’ inability to utilize what the new institutions have to offer.⁸⁹

Emphasis on ‘economic’ matters in lay reflections about lifestyle, freedom, state responsibilities, and adaptation to post-soviet transition is also revealed in those ethnographies of post-socialism that seek to highlight new moral codes and values which began operating with the introduction of capitalism. However, these accounts of lay ideas on the matters of “economic welfare” contrast with aforementioned scholarly allegations that post-communist citizens happen to be “materialistic” and “apolitical”, or unable to distinguish between politics and economics. On this alternative view, *homo soveticus* is an ascetic and moralized being. Some ethnographers maintain that the ascetic value framework has carried over into post-socialism and now it provides a familiar points of reference for lay actors. So, ordinary people appear to be concerned with “material” and “economic” things, but this is a result of Soviet value framework

see Diligenskii, *Rossiskii gorozhanin*, pp. 80-81, and Alexander, *Political Culture*, pp. 89, Romanovich, “Demokraticheskie tsennosti,” p. 44.

⁸⁸ Carnaghan, *Out of order*, p. 8.

⁸⁹ Carnaghan, *Out of order*, pp. 8, 169.

coming in contact with a changing social environment. Such scholarly readings of the role of “materialism” in the Soviet and post-Soviet value systems suggest that a concern with “material things” is a specific phenomena of capitalism and its culture of consumerism. In contrast, poverty in the Soviet days was considered purifying and material acquisition was equated in “official ideologies” with corruption, moral degradation, and impropriety. Allegedly, these “Soviet norms of propriety” have been widely used by post-communist people to critique “crass nouveau riche materialism”. Also, according to some ethnographers, a particular feature of post-soviet adaption has been eventual acceptance of material pursuits and consumerism; hence, an emphasis on matters of economic welfare.⁹⁰

However, these studies, similarly to the surveys and interviews described earlier, signal scholarly difficulty with accommodating the salience of ‘economic’ matters in lay reflections about their life circumstances. Of course, it might be worthwhile to highlight materialist values and norms as peculiar to capitalism. However, explaining lay “infatuation” with economic welfare by reference to the introduction of capitalism is not very convincing. Interpreting “economic welfare” concerns as just a cultural effect of capitalism further mystifies the political aspect of these concerns. Moreover, as I pointed out earlier, many scholars acknowledge (albeit lament) that economic security, free housing, guaranteed employment, free healthcare, free maternity leave, free childcare,

⁹⁰ For example, see Patino, Jennifer, 2005, “To be happy in a Mercedes: Tropes of value and ambivalent visions of marketization,” p. 480, and Ries, Nancy, 2002, “Honest Bandits and ‘Warped People’: Russian Narratives about Money, Corruption, and Moral Decay,” p. 277-80, 292, and Shevchenko, Olga, 2002, “Between the Holes’: Emerging Identities and Hybrid Patterns of Consumption in Post-Socialist Russia,” pp. 841-866.

and free education, among other things, were embedded in the Soviet understanding of political legitimacy, rights and freedoms.⁹¹ I suggest that there is little basis for believing that Soviet social norms glorified poverty and asceticism. Scholarly accounts of “Soviet psyche” and “post-Soviet psyche” tend to be inconsistent and it indicates general scholarly difficulty with grasping the significance of lay concerns with “economic welfare”.

e) Lay Skepticism About Democracy and ‘Economic’ Matters

In this section I direct attention to another conspicuous aspect of lay Ukrainian and Russian thinking – skepticism about democracy due to ‘economic’ dissatisfaction. I suggest that within this theme there is a certain lay understanding of social and historical tendencies, and a certain conception of power and powerlessness. In addition to what I discussed earlier in the chapter as ‘unusual’ lay conceptions of democracy with positive associations, I submit, ‘unusual’ conceptions of democracy may also have negative or critical connotations. For example, according to Simon, the word ‘democracy’ in Central and Eastern Europe is used: “as a portrayal of the situation, as an expectation, as a comparison, as an evaluation, as a judgment, for the expression of vague desires or concrete decisions, for the designation of social organizations, behavior modes, movements, political systems, parties, tendencies, and real, believed, or false

⁹¹ For some further readings on this, see Baller on Soviet visions of freedom connected to material and economic security and guarantees, Baller E.A., 1977, *Freedom, for What? For Whom?* pp. 14-7, 19-20.

ambitions.”⁹² In that regard, Simon reports that in 1993, four fifths of Hungarians put a negative value on the concept of democracy. According to lay Hungarians, democracy is nothing but “the rule of the elite above the heads of the people,” “the great deceivers of the people,” “unemployment,” “poverty,” “misery,” “failure,” and “empty talk.”⁹³

In this section I propose to examine how lay Ukrainian and Russian skepticism about democracy often depends on democracy defined in a particular context as capitalism, as socio-political inequality, as political institutions divorced from socio-economic guarantees, or as rule of the elites. Specifically, I suggest this ‘lay skepticism about democracy’ encompasses a certain critical understanding of social tendencies, power relations, and power distribution in post-Soviet societies. Lay conceptions of post-Soviet societies and power, in turn, bring questions of ‘economic welfare’ and ‘economic’ realm into consideration.

There are many studies that point to wide-spread disillusionment with democracy in Russia and Ukraine. For example, most recently, in 2009, the Pew Global Attitudes Project reports that in Ukraine 30 percent of people approve of the change to liberal democracy (compared to 72 percent in 1991) and in Russia – 53 percent (compared to 61 percent in 1991).⁹⁴ In 2005, a survey was conducted to evaluate citizen satisfaction with democracy and the overall political and socio-economic situation in Ukraine. According

⁹² Simon, “Popular conceptions,” p. 86.

⁹³ Simon, “Popular conceptions,” pp. 88, 90.

⁹⁴ “The End of Communism is Cheered, but Now with More Reservations: The Pulse of Europe 2009, Twenty Years after the Fall of the Berlin Wall.” According to this report, in 2009 85 percent of East Germans approve of change to democracy, i.e. ‘multiparty politics’, as well as 80 percent of Czechs, 71 percent of Slovaks, 70 percent of Poles, 56 percent of Hungarians, 55 percent of Lithuanians, and 52 percent of Bulgarians approve.

to the survey results, a little more than 80 percent of Ukrainians were dissatisfied with the economic and political situation in the country, and close to 60 percent believed they cannot influence government decision making. Also, the optimism accompanying the Orange Revolution and beliefs that Ukraine was on the right track in terms of political and economic reforms have significantly declined after Yushenko's Orange coalition took office.⁹⁵ In a different vein, some studies indicate that Ukrainian and Russian citizens only support 'democracy' if it is congruent with their own understanding of the term, which has to include 'economic welfare', 'freedom', or 'elements of order'.⁹⁶ Yet others suggest that post-communist citizens do not support democratization because they conflate democracy with capitalism, and insofar as too many experience dislocation under capitalism, support for new political institutions is low.⁹⁷

Thus, according to some accounts, lay skepticism or rejection of democracy is connected to an understanding of democracy as capitalism, as deterioration of economy, and as a system where a small group of people, usually government officials and businessmen and women monopolize (more often – grab) power and resources. Sometimes, democracy is understood as a state that exists independently of interests of the people. Such views of democracy can be characterized as critiques of the state of post-Soviet societies. For example, Alexander reports that his respondents' views of

⁹⁵ "Public Opinion in Ukraine: November 2005," pp. 9, 12-3, and for comparison, see Buerkle, Karen et al, "Public Opinion in Ukraine After the Orange Revolution, April 2005."

⁹⁶ Sharma et al, 2007, "Public Opinion in Ukraine Prior to the 2007 Rada Elections"; Miller et al, "Conceptions of Democracy," pp. 157-190; Carnaghan, *Out of Order*. Simon makes a similar argument about other post-communist countries, Simon, "Popular conceptions".

⁹⁷ Carnaghan, *Out of Order*, p. 171, Alexander, *Political Culture*, pp. 127-33.

democracy are complex and varied. Many included emphasis on freedom and socio-economic guarantees in their conceptions. But many also questioned appropriateness of democracy for Russia and expressed their disillusionment with democracy, insofar as it stands for economic impoverishment and dislocation.⁹⁸

Carnaghan notes that some of her respondents defined democracy as: “whatever was good for people in power, which meant that government officials were free to escape responsibility for their actions and enterprise managers could lavish high salaries on themselves while workers barely earned enough to feed their families.”⁹⁹ She also notes that some equated democracy with capitalism, and capitalism with closed factories.¹⁰⁰ According to Yavlinsky, “democratic reforms [in post-Soviet societies] have become associated in too many minds with robbing the people and imposing hardship on the many for the benefit of the few.”¹⁰¹ Finally, Hoffman observed that “today, many Russians equate democratic reforms not only with greater freedom of speech and religion but also with the loss of external and internal empires, domestic political stalemate, economic hardship, ethnic rivalry, rising crime rates, and a wide range of professional and personal hardships.”¹⁰² I shall return to ‘unusual’ negative associations of democracy further. Let me accentuate that these lay skeptical and ‘unusual’ views of democracy do

⁹⁸ Alexander, *Political Culture*, pp. 127-33.

⁹⁹ Carnaghan, *Out of Order*, p. 171.

¹⁰⁰ Carnaghan, *Out of Order*, p. 171.

¹⁰¹ Yavlinsky, Grigory A., 1995. “To Russian Democrats: Don’t Unite”, *The New York Times*, 14, Sept., p. A27.

¹⁰² Hoffmann, Erik, 1994, “Challenges to Viable Constitutionalism in Post-Soviet Russia”, *The Harriman Review*, 7, 10-12, p. 33.

not only indicate that support for ‘democracy’ among many lay actors may be shaky, but they also reflect a deep seated sense of disillusionment with social transformations of the past couple of decades. In this sense, I suggest that lay skepticism about ‘democracy’ in Russia and Ukraine signals a critique of post-Soviet (and Soviet) society and powers that be. But I shall return to analysis of these critiques in chapter 5.

Lay Russian and Ukrainian disillusionment with the new social order reappears in survey, interview based, and ethnographic literature. For example, Ries describes “all-delegitimizing cynicism” in lay Russian discourses about post-Soviet life and politics: “cynicism in its many guises is metaphoric shorthand – a way of encapsulating, depicting, and circulating a view of the present world.”¹⁰³ Disillusionment with post-communist transitions has been an object of interest for some scholars and there is an emerging trend, however the “disillusionment” readings of post-communist transition are still largely marginal.¹⁰⁴ ‘Disillusionment’ studies generally place themselves as critical contributors to ‘transitology’ literature and they seek to debunk the ‘legitimizing discourses of transition’, which is not the case for much of the literature on post-soviet transition. In this section I mostly rely on the mainstream studies because they simultaneously point to wide spread lay disillusionment but also struggle to grasp its significance. Moreover, since democracy is often understood by lay actors as post-soviet political *and* economic reforms, or simply as the period following the collapse of the USSR, I utilize survey and ethnographic studies that encompass these broad themes.

¹⁰³ Ries, “Honest Bandits,” p. 277. Also, see Hopf, 2002, “Making Future Inevitable,” p. 418-9.

¹⁰⁴ For some examples, see reflection on this in Burawoy, “Afterword,” pp. 301-21; Pusca, *Revolution, Democratic Transition and Disillusionment*; Vogt, *Between Utopia and disillusionment*.

Thus, it is important to consider accounts that highlight the ‘economic’ aspects of post-communist disillusionment – these themes emerge in a variety of studies with different theoretical and methodological questions at hand. In 1997, VTSiOM reported that one third of Russians subjectively feel that they have no exit strategy in current socio-economic conditions.¹⁰⁵ In a focus group-based study of lay (de)legitimization of transition in Ukraine, Estonia, and Uzbekistan, Hopf concludes that there is:

...The unanimous popular understanding that the people who have lost in the transition definitely did not deserve their fates – farmers, pensioners, people with large families, workers, the poor, and so on... *The moderators asked the respondents to write down all the improvements they could think of in the last five years or so. Almost without exception, the request was met by laughter, silence, derisive jokes and other intimations that the transition had done no good...* Eventually, the participants wrote down some improvements [such as national sovereignty and freedom of religion]... Finally, the only material improvements widely cited were better supplies of goods in the shops and open borders. But the discussions of both these items quickly revealed the paradox of market reform... in the new world, the market distributes goods, and in most cases proves to be an institution more impervious to manipulation than the communist political system... *Focus groups had a very hard time coming up with any material improvements in their lives, and did not do so at all except under hard prodding from the moderator.*¹⁰⁶

Diligenskii points out that while diversity of political views and reflections among Russians is abundant, it is possible to highlight some conspicuous themes: “These common components are localized not as much in the sphere of social ideals or positive political orders, but in rejection and negative characterization of two actually lived

¹⁰⁵ VTSiOM, 1997, *Ekonomicheskie i socialnue peremnu: monitoring obschetvennogo mnenia*, No. 6, p. 63, cited in Diligenskii, *Rossiskii gorozhanin*, p. 5.

¹⁰⁶ Hopf, “Making Future Inevitable,” p. 418-9. On post-communist disillusionment in Russia, see another interview study by Howard, 2003, *The Weakness of Civil Society in Post-Communist Europe*, pp. 136-145.

political regimes. These regimes are soviet totalitarian-authoritarian partocracy and post-soviet relations that bridge the power of money and bureaucracy with social and political disorder, criminalization, and dysfunctional branches of power.”¹⁰⁷ Howard also points to apparent “double” disillusionment: first with the communist past, and then with post-communism.¹⁰⁸ The theme of such all encompassing disillusionment is echoed in a 1994 earlier study that quoted a participant in Ukraine’s 1989-1991 workers movement:

There are certain groups of people who want it all to return to what it was. Many people believed in socialism, in communism, but those were only promises. And now people can’t quite resign themselves to the fact that they never got what had been promised to them and they think that the bosses got it all and arranged a sort of micro-communism for themselves. They had access to everything, and ordinary members of the party were just stupid taxpayers...everything depended on bureaucrats, on partocrats. People just believed and had hopes, and now nobody believes in anything.¹⁰⁹

In these lay reflections, disillusionment with the Soviet past and post-Soviet transformation is connected to concerns with people’s ‘economic’ disempowerment and social dislocation that accompanies these transitions. In what follows, I continue to trace this aspect of lay beliefs in Russia and Ukraine. I highlight not only general disillusionment with post-communist transformation, but also disillusionment with democracy insofar as it is connected to economic hardships and injustices. Within these

¹⁰⁷ Diligenskii, *Rossiski gorozhanin*, p. 93.

¹⁰⁸ See Howard, *The Weakness of Civil Society*, pp. 122-45. Although, note that in some surveys of Russian respondents, a majority of respondents agree that “life was better in the 1970s”, yet most do not wish to “go back to the past”. Rose et al report that “nostalgia about the past does not usually lead to a desire to go back to it. Less than half those giving a positive rating to the Communist regime would actually like to see it back.” See Rose, Mishler, and Haerpfer, *Democracy and Its Alternatives*, pp. 109-10.

¹⁰⁹ Siegelbaum and Walkowitz, *Workers of the Donbass Speak*, p. 206.

discourses we do not only find critical reflections about society, but also certain views of power and powerlessness.

Carnaghan states that those Russians who felt that economy had fallen apart and left few options for ordinary people to improve their material situation “were less supportive of democracy.”¹¹⁰ She quotes one of her respondents in a conversation about Russia’s post-soviet reforms: “I would like to know what is this economic change? That they took everything out of our wallets and left us without money? That some banks closed and left us without money? Is that economic change?”¹¹¹ Echoing similar themes that combine skepticism about democracy and socio-economic grievances, one respondent comments: “The Duma [Russian parliament] is unnecessary. It’s on the back of the pensioners, of the people. Given the kind of people who are there, it would be better to dissolve it.”¹¹² Some characterize the Duma as “an all-Russian comedy”, some say “they created this swamp, Duma, it is impossible...these fractions...”, and it is not uncommon to hear lay references to government as a “circus”, “theater of the absurd”, “surrealism” or a “zoo”.¹¹³ Consider the following way in which lay skepticism about democracy is articulated:

For me as a simple person, *the kind of democracy we have now is not useful*. I am happy that I was full and safe, that for my work I received an adequate and punctual salary, that I didn’t live in want, and that I was not afraid of the

¹¹⁰ Carnaghan, *Out of Order*, p. 165.

¹¹¹ Carnaghan, *Out of Order*, p. 167.

¹¹² Carnaghan, *Out of Order*, p. 170.

¹¹³ Carnaghan, *Out of Order*, p. 170; Diligesnkii, *Rossiskii gorozhanin*, p. 90; Shevchenko, Olga, 2001, “Bread and Circuses: Shifting Frames and Changing References in Ordinary Muscovites’ Political Talk,” p. 87.

streets. The essence of the matter is that [today] there is no power, no control. In places, everything is allowed to run its course, banditism, rackets.¹¹⁴

In their conception of democracy and in their skeptical thinking about ‘democracy’, lay actors also stress unequal relations of power. Furthermore, these conceptions of power relate to contempt of social inequality and privilege.¹¹⁵ In the words of one of Diligenskii’s respondents: “nothing really changes in terms of who is in power, now they just let us talk a little bit more.”¹¹⁶

In some lay allegations of lawlessness and disorder in post-Soviet societies we find critical views of power insofar as it connects to ‘economic’ matters.¹¹⁷ Based on his interview material, Diligenskii concludes that there appears to be a sense of wide spread disillusionment with post-soviet transformation and there appears to be a certain consensus in this disillusionment, namely, that contemporary Russia is based on lawlessness, disorder, and social unprotectedness.¹¹⁸ Diligenskii quotes one of his respondents representative of this trend: “the country is influenced by financial circles, criminal structures, and the old party gang. We live in a lawless and orderless society.”¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ Carnaghan, *Out of Order*, p. 170, emphasis added.

¹¹⁵ Alexander, *Political Culture*, p. 131.

¹¹⁶ Diliginskii, *Rossiskii gorozhanin*, p. 4.

¹¹⁷ For exploration of centrality of concerns with lawlessness and disorder among ordinary Russians, see Carnaghan, *Out of Order*; Carnaghan, Ellen, 2001, “Thinking about Democracy: Interviews with Russian Citizens,” pp. 336-366.

¹¹⁸ Diligenskii, *Rossiskii gorozhanin*, p. 81.

¹¹⁹ Diligenskii, *Rossiskii gorozhanin*, p.79, emphasis added. A similar theme in lay thinking about matters of order and disorder is echoed in Humphrey’s study, see Humphrey, Caroline, 1999, “Traders, ‘Disorder’, and Citizenship Regimes in Provincial Russia.”

Economic fairness and stability, as well as equality in the distribution of power and resources underlie such lay views of lawfulness and order. Conversely, inequality, social stratification, and emergence of a narrow class of “winners” who also hold power underlie lay views of disorder. Carnaghan who compared to many other scholars provides quite sympathetic interpretation of Russian apparent ‘longing for order’, still has difficulty with grasping the force of these lay views. While she acknowledges that her respondents have many “economic” and “social” concerns, she tends to understand these concerns as separate or secondary from concerns with law and order, politics and democracy.¹²⁰

Lay skeptical, cynical, or disillusioned discourses about post-Soviet transformation often encapsulate a lot of distrust and condemnation of economic and political elites. For instance, Ries in her study of lay Russian narratives about money, corruption, and bandits notes that “the image of two intimately connected but utterly unequal social groups, the ‘honest’ people (those at the bottom) who have played by the rules and only gotten poorer and the former communists, businesspeople, traders, and bandits (those at the top) who have stolen everything they possibly could, was constantly voiced by other working people and pensioners with whom I spoke.”¹²¹ One respondent characteristically combines a view of present social order, power, monopolization of economic resources, and injustice: “They [officials and business elites] pilfered and

¹²⁰ Carnaghan, *Out of Order*; Carnaghan, Ellen, 2001, “Thinking about Democracy: Interviews with Russian Citizens,” pp. 336-366.

¹²¹ Ries, “Honest bandits,” p. 295.

plundered the whole economy. The common people call privatization *prikhvatizatsia*. Whoever was nothing became everything. They completely plundered the government, the whole economy.”¹²² In the words of one of Howard’s respondents, similar conflation of state, government and economic monopolization are evident:

I am very, *very* disappointed. The distribution of property took place, in my view, very unjustly... The distribution of property was simply a fraud, they cheated the people, and everybody knows this. Consequently, how can I believe my government, when it deceives me? First, they deceived the people, and second, they robbed them.¹²³

Ries reports: “Nearly everyone I have interviewed has a tale to tell of a friend, relative, colleague, or acquaintance who amassed a considerable fortune after 1991. Such stories were often tinged with awe and aversion, since so many fortunes had their base in the semi criminal shadow economy.”¹²⁴ However, Ries interprets criticisms of lopsided income distribution as “imagined”: “trading, the predominant (and most visible) economic activity of the day, feeds into the image of moneymaking as an activity by which money is made without work... *it is imagined* that the owners of these enterprises [kiosks, private shops] make ‘piles of money’ without working. This, of course, reflects Soviet-era and even pre-Soviet Russian constructions of trade as immoral speculation.”¹²⁵

According to the surveys conducted by the Social Justice Project, Russians are more likely than people in almost all the other twelve countries sampled to think that

¹²² Carnaghan, *Out of Order*, p. 166

¹²³ Howard, *The Weakness of Civil Society*, p. 139.

¹²⁴ Ries, “Honest Bandits,” pp. 285-6.

¹²⁵ Ries, “Honest bandits,” p. 294, emphasis added.

wealth is the product of dishonesty and having the right connections, not of hard work and talents.¹²⁶ Consider a lay statement representative of these ideas: “Look at who gets rich nowadays. Not people doing honest work or anything productive. Just those people who know how to steal, are willing to steal and kill and swindle to get what they want.”¹²⁷ Public surveys in such countries as Russia, Hungary, East Germany, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Poland, Bulgaria, Estonia, and Romania record contemporary support of economic egalitarianism, wherein many people prefer less inequality in the economic realm and criticisms of the lopsided income distribution are strong.¹²⁸

Scholars have difficulty accommodating the significance of lay concerns with class inequality in relation to democracy. This difficulty may consist in scholarly insistence that ‘economic’ equality is irrelevant to matters of democracy and legitimacy. For example, some survey scholars suggest that lay aversion to sharp inequality must be overcome in the process of democratization.¹²⁹ Surveys under the rubric “support for market economy” consistently point to people’s mixed attitudes towards the market economy.¹³⁰ Here too, scholars struggle with accommodating the significance of lay

¹²⁶ Kluegel et al, “Accounting for the Rich and the Poor,” p. 190.

¹²⁷ Ries, “Honest Bandits,” p. 295.

¹²⁸ In survey literature Delhey 1997:80-7, Mason 1992, 1995, Mason and Kluegel et al 2000. This is also indicated in anthropological studies of Patino 2000 and Ries 2002.

¹²⁹ See a summary in Smolar, A., 1996, “From Opposition to Atomization”, p. 37. McIver et al, “Public meets market democracy,” for pp. 495-6, 511, where the author’s conceptual framework is grounded in a dichotomy between freedom and equality, and preferences for freedom are interpreted as public support for democracy, and preferences for equality are interpreted by these scholars as the leftovers of the communist past or simply as egalitarianism, but in either case, as conservatism and an impediment to democratization in the region.

¹³⁰ Gibson, James L., 1996, “Political and Economic Markets,” p. 966, and for a more recent summary of mixed survey results on this subject, see Carnaghan, *Out of Order*, p. 115.

concerns with inequality and scholars maintain that “market justice depends on [accepting] inequality”.¹³¹ However, none of these scholarly interpretations capture well the sort of connections that lay actors make between ‘economic’ inequality, power relations, justice, and legitimacy.

In addition, many studies in various ways show that the disdain with socio-economic inequality or economic dislocation are strongly connected to lay people’s contemptuous views of the state. I suggest, it is worthwhile to highlight the peculiarity of lay Russian and Ukrainian understanding of the state, as state [Rus. *gosydarstvo*, *vlast’* and Ukr. *derzhava*, *vlada*] is often brought up in disillusioned lay reflections.¹³² While earlier I have already touched upon lay Russian and Ukrainian tendencies to include the ‘state’ in solving problems of economic dispossession, there is also another dimension of lay understanding of the state. In contrast, this second dimension can be characterized as a wide-spread suspicion of and opposition to the state. Such assessment is not new and has been voiced by several scholars. For example, Robert Tucker conceptualized Russia as a double entity: “On the one hand, there is *vlast’* [power] or *gosudarstvo* [state]...On the other hand, there is population at large, the society, nation or people (*obshchestvo*, *narod*)...that came to be conceived as a separate and distinct Russia with a life and truth

¹³¹ Delhey, Jan, 1997, “Farewell to Marx? Opinions on Inequality in Post-communist Countries,” p. 81; Mason, “Introduction,” and Kluegel and Mateju, 1995, “Egalitarian vs. Inegalitarian Principles of Distributive Justice.”

¹³² Russian ‘*vlast’/gosydarstvo*’ and Ukrainian ‘*vlada/derzhava*’ translate into ‘state’. But these words ‘*vlast’/vlada*’, ‘*gosydarstvo/derzhava*’ may also mean nationhood, country, power, government, rulership, and officialdom.

of its own.”¹³³ Another scholar argues that the post-communist period has not significantly changed this ‘citizen/state’ relationship as the masses continue “confronting the State with all-encompassing expectations and demands... at the same time they distrust the State...”¹³⁴ Based on aspects of his respondents’ answers, Diligesnkii notes that there is a dual tendency on the one hand to expect social protections from the state, and on the other, “in tandem with Marxist-Leninist theoretical conceptions and traditional Russian mentality” to see a conflict between state and the people.¹³⁵

Echoing such scholarly generalizations about Russian political culture, Ries reports that accusations of corruption in post-Soviet society are abundant, but “most people concurred that the moral waters are murkier the higher one looks. The more money a person has... the more corrupt he or she must be. Government officials and the new business class are seen as being the most corrupt of all, as being utterly disinterested in what happens to “the people” as long as their pockets are full and their dachas protected by high walls.”¹³⁶ In the words of another respondent, the Russian government: “is nothing but a giant mafia up there. We must simply try to live on our own down here

¹³³ Tucker, Robert C., 1963, *The Soviet Political Mind*, cited in Alexander, *Political Culture*, p. 194. On similar views of the state in the dissident discourses, see Baker, “The Taming of the Idea of Civil Society”; Konrad, *Antipolitics*; Tamas, “A Disquisition on Civil Society.” Also, a tendency to oppose the state in Eastern European political consciousness is discussed in Pusca, *Revolution, Democratic Transition and Disillusionment*, pp. 138-43.

¹³⁴ Oswald, I. and Voronkov, V., 2004, “The ‘Public-Private’ Sphere in Soviet and Post-Soviet Society,” p. 98-9.

¹³⁵ Diligesnkii, *Rossiskii gorozhanin*, p. 74.

¹³⁶ Ries, “Honest Bandits,” p. 294.

and get by without politics.”¹³⁷ Ries notes that the metaphor of mafia is often applied to the “government” mafia: “to those who are seen as invisibly, conspiratorially, and effectively mastering social resources and power to the detriments of the people ‘down here.’”¹³⁸ Here an excerpt from an interview with a black market trader that is representative of deep seated skepticism and distrust of authorities:

...The politicians – that is our true mafia, each and every one of them: the real mafia. The street bandits, who you have met, they are basically honest, hardworking guys. The real corruption is at the top, and it is the politicians, from top to bottom, who are the real criminals. I think they should all be taken out and shot.¹³⁹

In another study, respondent states; “What kind of culture can we have, when those that are trying to get to the top [higher official posts] are the ones that stole and grabbed more than others?”¹⁴⁰ This theme is also echoed in Howard’s interview based study. The responses Howards cites reveal lay view of post-communist politicians, government, and the state as usurpators of power and resources, and as a privileged class. These lay voices also encapsulate a distrust of post-communist politicians and political institutions and understanding the state and politicians as being responsible for post-communist socio-economic ills.¹⁴¹ Carnaghan states that her disillusioned respondents felt either that the government was directly responsible for the distress of their daily lives or that the government was incapable of making anything better. Furthermore, many

¹³⁷ Ries, “Honest Bandits,” p. 308.

¹³⁸ Ries, “Honest Bandits,” p. 308.

¹³⁹ Ries, “Honest Bandits,” p. 308.

¹⁴⁰ Diligenskii, *Rossiskii gorozhanin*, p. 83.

¹⁴¹ Howard, *The Weakness of Civil Society*, pp. 138-41.

continued to make connections between money and power, consistently bringing government into the equation: “Here, who comes to power? Whoever has money... In Russia, now money is not all clean. Clean work doesn’t provide that kind of money.”¹⁴²

I already indicated that empirical literature generally has a problem accommodating the apparent tendency in lay Russian and Ukrainian views to expect social protections from the state. Similarly, the other side of lay views of the state – deep distrust – is also accommodated in the empirical literature problematically. Generally, scholars who study post-communist transitions expect citizens to support, or trust in, their new political institutions, which are a part of the state apparatus.¹⁴³ This support is interpreted by scholars as ‘support for democracy’ or seen as integral for success of democratization.¹⁴⁴ When scholars come across Russian and Ukrainian citizens’ distrust and suspicion of the state institutions and elite leadership, they conclude that prospects for democratization in the region remain murky. The reason is because democratization depends on people’s trust in the new institutions, on people’s willingness to participate politically, and on people’s willingness to accept the position of governed.¹⁴⁵ In one such

¹⁴² Carnaghan, *Out of Order*, pp. 168-9.

¹⁴³ For theoretical groundwork on this issue, see Putnam, *Making Democracy Work*. Also, see Rose, Richard, 1994, “Postcommunism and the Problem of Trust,” *Journal of Democracy*, 5, July, pp. 18-30.

¹⁴⁴ Carnaghan notes that many empirical scholars that study citizen support for democracy ask respondents to say if they accept democratic values rather than democratic institutions, because apparently citizens have a difficulty separating their assessment of actually existing institutions, such as Duma or Supreme Rada from abstract terms such as parliament or multiparty politics, Carnaghan, *Out of Order*, p.

¹⁴⁵ Carnaghan, “Thinking About Democracy,” p. 344; Gibson, 1996, “Political and Economic Markets,” p. 957, Mishler and Rose, 1997, “Trust, distrust, and skepticism,” pp. 418-451; Rose et al, *Russia Transformed*.

scholarly assessment that links the alleged failure of democratization with a mass distrust of the state and powers that be, one author writes:

That [Soviet] legacy *includes a ghetto political culture* that views the state with deep-seated suspicion; *a distrustful society* where people habitually hoard information, goods, and goodwill, and share them with only a few intimates; a widespread penchant for *rumormongering* that undercuts sober public discourse; and an untried, often apolitical leadership, barely familiar with and often disdainful of the politician's vocation.¹⁴⁶

Scholars in this vein of interpretation of survey results discredit lay distrust in existing political institutions, whereby leaving no room to express criticisms and discontent.

Lay actors stress that those in power illegitimately monopolize resources, that they are the ones who flourish and not people, and there is nowhere for many people to turn to solve the 'economic' problems of their lives. So, skepticism about "democracy", i.e. electoral politics, in a complex way is grounded in 'economic' concerns and critiques. Disappointment with electoral politics and elite leadership is expressed by lay actors in the following way:

Of course it's important to participate in elections because we are not indifferent to who will be president. But in principle we don't know these people. Well, we see them on television, but what people say about them is completely different: that they are corrupt, that they take bribes. That they take money from it's not clear where. It turns out that they extort money out of our very pockets... And there's nowhere for us to turn, because it's our own government that is fleecing us.¹⁴⁷

Usually, scholars tend to interpret such ideas as evidence for the fact that non-elite Russians and Ukrainians reject democracy and their views are illegitimate. However, not

¹⁴⁶ Jowitt, Kenneth, 1996, "The New World Disorder," p. 28.

¹⁴⁷ Carnaghan, *Out of Order*, p. 170.

all studies uniformly demonstrate that Russians and Ukrainians are imperfect democrats; rather, findings on this subject are mixed and inconsistent.¹⁴⁸ Some argue that many citizens in Russia and Ukraine often display authoritarian attitudes, deep distrust of authorities, and they are noncommittal to parliamentary institutions, multiparty politics, and politicians in their countries.¹⁴⁹ Other scholars claim directly or indirectly that post-communist citizens are skeptical of the new social order because they are ideologically confused and they are still learning,¹⁵⁰ because they are stressed by temporary economic hardships and social disorder accompanying transitions,¹⁵¹ because they are disillusioned by the pace of the reforms,¹⁵² because they are in the grips of the past, or because they

¹⁴⁸ See a summary of these issues in Fleron, "Post-Soviet Political Culture in Russia," pp. 323-4. Also see: Duch, "Tolerating Economic Reform," pp. 590-608; Duch, "Economic Chaos," pp. 121-158; Gibson, "Political and Economic Markets," pp. 954-984; Gibson, "A Mile Wide but an Inch Deep(?)" pp. 396-420; Mishler and Rose, "Trajectories of Fear and Hope," pp. 553-581; Colton, *Transitional Citizens*.

¹⁴⁹ Holovaha, Evgen. "Contradictory Attitudes Towards Democratic Values in Ukraine"; Rose et al, *Democracy and Its Alternatives*; Kullberg and Zimmerman, "Liberal Elites, Socialist Masses," pp. 323-58; Mishler and Rose, "Trust, distrust, and skepticism," pp. 418-451; Whitefield and Evans, 1994, "The Russian Election of 1993," p. 41.

¹⁵⁰ Alexander, *Political Culture*; Duch, "Tolerating Economic Reform," p. 593; Evans and Whitefield, "The Politics and Economics of Democratic Commitment," pp. 485-514; Hopf, "Making the Future Inevitable," p. 405; Howard, 2003, *The Weakness of Civil Society in Post-Communist Europe*; Kaase, "Political Culture and Political Consolidation in Central and Eastern Europe," Miller and Wolchik, "Introduction"; Mishler and Rose, "Trust, distrust, and skepticism," pp. 418-451; Rose, *Understanding Post-Communist Transformation*; Simon, "Popular conceptions."

¹⁵¹ Bahry, Donna, 1999, "Comrades into Citizens? Russian Political Culture and Public Support for the Transition"; Mishler and Rose, "Trust, distrust, and skepticism"; Alexander, *Political Culture*; Carnaghan, *Out of Order*; Howard, *The Weakness of Civil Society*; Duch, "Tolerating Economic Reform"; Evans and Whitefield, "The Politics and Economics of Democratic Commitment"; Kullberg and Zimmerman, "Liberal elites and socialist masses", Mason et al, *Marketing democracy*; McIntosh, et al, "Public Meets Democracy."

¹⁵² Bahry, Donna, 1999, "Comrades into Citizens? Russian Political Culture and Public Support for the Transition," Carnaghan, *Out of Order*; Alexander, *Political Culture*.

have wrong cultural preferences.¹⁵³ Such mixed and inconsistent scholarly interpretations discredit validity and relevancy of lay Russian and Ukrainians assessments of democratic transitions. These interpretations show that scholars struggle accommodating significance and character of lay skepticism about democracy insofar as it is connected to ‘economic’ matters.

¹⁵³ Fleron, 1998, “Congruence Theory Applied”; Fleron and Ahl, “Does the Public Matter for Democratization in Russia?”; Miller et al 1994, “Reassessing Mass Support for Political and Economic Change” pp. 409-10; Kullberg and Zimmerman, “Liberal Elites, Socialist Masses” p. 354-6; Miller and Wolchik, “Introduction”; Dawisha, “Communism as a Lived System of Ideas,” pp. 463-493; Delhey, “Farewell to Marx?”

Chapter 2. Reading Schumpeter's Elite Competitive Model of Democracy: An Interpretation of His Rampant Anti-Populism

a) Introduction

I maintain that learning from and critically engaging with lay¹ political thinking should be a form of democratic scholarship. In this dissertation I am interested in exploring how something of the sort can be done with respect to lay Ukrainian and Russian democratic beliefs that feature an unusually strong emphasis on matters of “economic welfare”. In view of this goal, democratic theory must, at the very least, be open to engaging with lay ideas about democracy and society, as well as be open to applying democratic analysis to “economic” institutions, practices, and experiences. However, I suggest that not only do conventional frameworks in democratic theory fail to equip scholars with necessary methodological tools, but these conventional frameworks *discourage* scholarly engagement with lay ideas about democracy and application of democratic analysis to the “economic” realm.

Specifically, in this chapter I turn to examining the attributes of Schumpeter's elite competitive model of democracy, the conceptual language and claims of which have

¹ “Lay” as a concept to designate particular group(s) of people may quickly run into many difficulties. This is an example of what Sayer referred to as a “bad abstraction” or a “chaotic conception” (Sayer, Andrew, 1984, *Method in Social Science: a Realist Approach*, pp. 126-131). “Lay” covers an enormous variety of people. Chaotic conceptions are problematic because they encompass objects that are internally heterogeneous and have important differences which become obscured. Nevertheless, I use the term to focus on the following characteristics: popular, grassroots, non-academic, ordinary, common, non-elite, non-scholarly thinking, but without associated negative connotations that such views are inherently unintelligent, irrational, or uninteresting. Also, I use it to highlight that the social contexts I am dealing with are unequal in terms of power distribution and I am specifically interested in the thinking of those people who do not occupy social positions of power, but I do not intend to exclude certain figures some might classify as elite, such as dissenting or murdered journalists, public intellectuals, or leaders of movements. Interpretive scholars use the term “lay” to refer to a type of thinking associated with a particular place and period of history, and this is also clearly a feature of my project. Thus I maintain this term. I shall return to this point in chapter 4 when I discuss interpretive social science.

been very influential in Anglo-American scholarship on democracy. I contend that skepticism about the value of lay political thinking as well as exclusion of “economics” from democratic thought and action are the backbone of Schumpeter’s anti-democratic politics. Moreover, it is precisely these ideas that preclude scholarly interest in lay conceptions of democracy and serious engagement with lay “economic” concerns. Yet, Schumpeter is more known for his contribution to a “realistic” theory of democracy rather than for his conservative social vision.² Thus, in this chapter I highlight the point that there is an organic relationship between Schumpeter’s political preferences, his assumptions about lay capacities and society (social ontology), and his well-known definition of democracy as just a method or institutional framework that allows political elites to compete for people’s votes. I maintain that Schumpeter’s influential ‘elite competitive model’ of democracy does not simply provide us with a certain conceptual vocabulary and social ontological assumptions, but that this vocabulary and these assumptions have conservative politics inscribed in them. Moreover, the elite competitive model has certain problematic consequences for democratic studies, but I detail this in the next chapter. I also highlight that Schumpeterian assumptions are very influential in scholarship on democracy, even though most of scholars seek to distance themselves from Schumpeterian politics. I suggest that conservative motivations cannot be easily divorced from the conceptual vocabulary and assumptions of the elite

² By “conservative” I refer to ideas directed at resisting social change, advocating hierarchy in political, social, and economic sense, favoring very limited inclusion of non-elites in decision making that effects the direction of society, and deep seated skepticism about mass political capacities. In this sense, I use ‘anti-democratic’ and ‘conservative’ interchangeably. On Schumpeter’s conservatism, see Medearis, John, 2009, *Joseph Schumpeter*, Continuum.

competitive model. Hence, overcoming Schumpeterian social vision requires scholars more than simply checking their values – I submit that we must give up on using Schumpeterian language and assumptions altogether.

I begin this chapter by first specifying in what sense I use the terms ‘elite competitive model’, ‘social ontology’, and ‘social vision’, as well as related terms such as ‘theory’, ‘assumptions’, ‘conceptual frameworks’, ‘conceptual vocabulary’, and ‘categorical distinctions’. As I do that, I relate the character of my investigation to the fact/value dichotomy which, even though severely criticized, is still often a starting point in assessing the merits of democratic theory. I argue that the fact/value dichotomy is not helpful for grasping the attributes of Schumpeter’s ‘elite competitive model’, as well as that this dichotomy is not helpful for recognizing the legacy of Schumpeterian assumptions for studies of democracy. I concur with those who insist that scholarship on democracy cannot be described in terms of easily distinguishable factual and value statements because they are inevitably interwoven. Moreover, I contend that the fact/value dichotomy is not only untenable, but it is also obfuscating because democratic theory always presupposes much more than just intertwined ‘is’ and ‘ought’ statements. I suggest that any discussion of democracy, including advancing a model of democracy, encompasses an interlocutor’s political preferences, assumptions about human capacities, and certain understanding of history, present society, social tendencies, and pressing social problems, to mention some. We might not always be aware of the social vision implied in our views of democracy, and yet, I maintain, this vision has definite consequences for structuring debates and studies of democracy. In this subsection I argue

that a better way to approach Schumpeter's 'elite competitive model' is by transcending the fact/value dichotomy. This allows seeing that there is an organic relationship between the conservative social vision and the conceptual vocabulary of the elite competitive model. Moreover, transcending the fact/value dichotomy allows the asking of critical questions about the consequences of the assumptions implied in scholarly conceptions of democracy. Using the vocabulary of the elite competitive model will always mean reinforcement of a conservative social vision and certain problematic research outcomes in democratic theory regardless of scholarly personal motivations.

Then, I proceed to lay out central aspects of Schumpeter's social vision and highlight how his politics underpins the elite competitive conception of democracy. I bring attention to textual, biographical, and contextual evidence that helps to conceive of Schumpeter as a staunch anti-democrat and a conservative. I argue that these political preferences shaped Schumpeter's claims about democracy, social tendencies, social problems, and lay actors in *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*.

Specifically, I suggest that in Schumpeter's conservative social vision, two notions are prominent. The first is a view that the 'socio-economic realm' should have little to do with the impetus of democratic politics. The second is a view that mass political capacities are inherently and naturally limited and the masses are unfit for responsible political thought and action. Schumpeter's deep-seated aversion to democracy and his aristocratic regard for the principles of social hierarchy fortified and reinforced his ideas regarding the worth of lay people's ideas and the desirability of lay political influence. These ideas undergird the elite competitive conception of democracy.

On this account, democracy cannot possibly mean ‘popular rule’ and the leveling of hierarchical structures and elite domination in the ‘socio-economic’ realm. Rather, Schumpeter claims that democracy is an institutional framework or method for selection of *political* leadership – he insisted that this is the only thing democracy can ever be. Furthermore, accentuating that there is only one possible realization of ‘democracy’, the meaning of ‘democracy’ in the elite competitive version is also conceived as static and unchanging. I maintain that this fixed view of democracy, coupled with Schumpeter’s deep disdain for practices of non-elite influence on the direction of society, makes the scope of democracy, i.e. popular rule, closed to reinterpretation and contestation *by lay actors themselves*.

Finally, I highlight how Schumpeter’s approach to democracy, his social ontological assumptions, and his categorical distinctions are prominent in scholarship on democracy. In light of continued criticisms of the elite competitive model, many scholars have sought to distance themselves from a Schumpeterian ‘thin’ or ‘elite’ conception of democracy. But even though many scholars have cast doubt on the merits of Schumpeter’s elite competitive model and have advanced additional benchmarks of democracy, I point out that Schumpeterian vocabulary and assumptions have not necessarily been abandoned but rather supplemented by a longer list of defining characteristics of democracy. And yet, I insist that the problematic impact of Schumpeter’s conception of democracy cannot be mitigated by adding more things to the list of defining factors of democracy, but only by abandoning Schumpeterian ontological assumptions and categorical distinctions altogether.

In chapter 1 I briefly pointed out that lay Ukrainian and Russian ideas about democracy appear to be accommodated with difficulty in survey and interview-based literature. In particular, there is a sense in which many scholars struggle with grasping the significance of the “economic” aspects of lay ideas. Also, there seems to be a profound lack of interest in lay conceptions of democracy and views of society, particularly when these lay ideas are considered ‘unusual’ from the standpoint of leading scholarly conceptions. My goal in chapters 2 and 3 is to show that these tendencies are due to scholars unreflectively bringing Schumpeterian assumptions and conceptual vocabulary into their studies. But of course, very few scholars of post-communist studies are strict Schumpeterians. For example, many draw on Dahl’s *Polyarchy* rather than Schumpeter’s *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. In view of that, in the last section of chapter 2 I highlight strong parallels between the elite competitive assumptions and conceptions on one hand, and Dahl’s early democratic theory on the other, even though at first glance there are substantial differences between Dahl and Schumpeter.

b) Approaching the Elite Competitive Model: Beyond the Fact/ Value

Dichotomy

In this subsection I mainly specify my usage of some important terms. I also argue that appreciating the attributes of Schumpeter’s elite competitive model as well as the legacy of Schumpeterian assumptions and conceptions for scholarship on democracy cannot be done within the confines of the debate set by the infamous fact/value dichotomy. Thus, I begin 1) by explaining that reference to models and gradations of

democracy in democratic theory is a contemporary development. I also suggest that the parallel tendency in scholarship on democracy is to enlist people of questionable democratic credentials in the realm of democratic theory. Moreover, to situate Schumpeter within scholarship on democracy, I point out what other labels besides ‘elite competitive model’ have been associated with Schumpeter’s conception of democracy.

Then, 2) I turn to highlighting what can be gained by overcoming the fact/value dichotomy that is still a quintessential starting point in assessing the merits of scholarship on democracy. I argue that this dichotomy is untenable and it also precludes recognizing that scholarship on democracy cannot be simplified into the dualism of statements of fact and value. Democratic theory contains certain views of historical tendencies, main social forces, important social actors, human capacities, social problems, and solutions, which I refer to as social ontology. Moreover, these claims are reflective of aspects of the social world *from a vantage point* of certain political preferences, which I refer to as social vision. I suggest that social ontological assumptions and social vision are two sides of the same coin and they buttress our conceptions of democracy. Going beyond the fact/value dichotomy allows recognizing all this and allows scrutinizing the social ontology and social vision implied in our democratic theory. Finally, I argue that transcending the fact/value dichotomy opens room for asking critical questions about the consequences of our theoretical frameworks in research on democracy and society. If we continue to cling to the fact/value dichotomy when assessing the merits of scholarship on democracy, questions about the research consequences of theoretical frameworks are most likely to escape our consideration.

1) Models and Gradations in Democratic Theory

Let me point out that branching out of democratic theory into ‘models’, ‘variants’, or ‘gradations’, where a clearer distinction between democratic and undemocratic thought is forsaken, is a relatively recent phenomenon.³ A few historians of political ideas point out that democratic thought encompassed different features in earlier centuries and such aspects of politics as representation, rule of law, and constitutionalism at some point were often associated with undemocratic impulses.⁴ Furthermore, in the 18th and 19th centuries, it would be unthinkable for democrats to associate democracy with women’s suffrage and multi-party competition. Hence, the term democracy has undergone long evolution and has been continually debated.⁵

Also, some argue that it was more common for intellectuals to fall into two broad schools, either those who sought to advance, theorize, and defend popular rule, or those

³ See such examples as Macpherson, C.B. 1977, *The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy*, Oxford University Press; Gutman, Amy and D. Thompson, 2004, *Why Deliberative Democracy?* Princeton University Press; Habermas, Jurgen, 1994, “Three Normative Models of Democracy”, in *Constellation*, 1; Mouffe, Chantal, 1992, *Dimensions of Radical democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship, Community*, London: Verso; Gabardi, Wayne, 2001, “Contemporary Models of Democracy”, *Polity*, Vol. 33, No. 4, Summer, pp. 547-566; Sorensen, Georg, 2008. *Democracy and Democratization: Process and Prospects in a Changing World*, Westview Press; Elkins, Zachary, 2000, “Gradations of Democracy? Empirical Tests of Alternative Conceptualizations,” *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 44, No. 2, April 2000, pp. 287-294; and Collier, David and Steven Levitsky, 1997, “Research Note: Democracy ‘With Adjectives’: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research,” *World Politics*, Vol. 49, Number 3, April, pp. 430-451.

⁴ Wolin, Sheldon S., 1994, “Norm and Form: The Constitutionalizing of Democracy”, in *Athenian Political Thought and the Reconstruction of American Democracy*. Ed. By J.P. Euben and J.R. Wallach, J. Ober., Cornell University Press, pp. 29-59; Wood, Ellen Meiksins, 1995, *Democracy Against Capitalism: Renewing Historical Materialism*. Cambridge University Press; Markoff, John, 1997. “Really Existing Democracy: Learning from Latin America in the late 1990s”, *New Left Review*, Vol. a, pp. 50-4.

⁵ Markoff, John, 1997. “Really Existing Democracy: Learning from Latin America in the late 1990s”, *New Left Review*, Vol. a, pp. 50-4, and also Palmer, Robert R., “Notes on the Use of the Word ‘Democracy’, 1789-1799, *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 68, 1953, pp. 203-26.

who felt that certain ‘virtues’ such as preservation of hierarchical features of society were threatened by democracy and theorized it as a social ill to be contained. The latter strain of thought has been quite powerful in Western intellectual history and specifically academic embrace of democracy is rather associated with the latter half of the twentieth century.⁶ In addition, some scholars contend that not only has the definition of democracy been “a moving target”, but defining has largely been a popular, a street matter rather than academic:

...In the 1780s, which appears to be the moment when the word ‘democracy’ stopped being primarily a term known to political philosophers as one of Aristotle’s three types of political rule and entered the language of the streets and fields...From the moment the term escaped the philosopher’s study, ‘democracy’ has been part of the legitimating or delegitimizing vocabulary of political praise or blame. *It has been primarily an actor’s term, not an analyst’s...* What modern ‘democracy’ was or should be or might be was disputed...The frequency of claims of democracy by regimes...has led social scientists to invest enormous energy in trying to arrive at a parsimonious definition of democracy that can be used for measurement purposes...Robert Dahl counts some twenty-two ‘polyarchies’, as he calls institutionalized approximations of the democratic ideal...*They have missed the profound theoretical significance of such persistent discrepancies. Democracy is not theirs to define, but is defined and redefined in the streets and in the palaces.*⁷

⁶ Skinner, Quentin, 1973, “The Empirical Theorists of Democracy and Their Critics: A Plague on Both Their Houses.” *Political Theory*, Vol. 1, No. 3, Aug., pp. 287-306; Palmer, Robert R., “Notes on the Use of the Word ‘Democracy’, 1789-1799, *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 68, 1953, pp. 203-26; Wolin, Sheldon S., 1994, “Norm and Form: The Constitutionalizing of Democracy”. in *Athenian Political Thought and the Reconstruction of American Democracy*. Ed. By J.P. Euben and J.R. Wallach, J. Ober., Cornell University Press, pp. 29-59; Wood, Ellen Meiksins, 1995, *Democracy Against Capitalism: Renewing Historical Materialism*. Cambridge University Press; Held, David, 1987. *Models of Democracy*, pp. 1, 16, 19-20, 29, 33, Markoff, John, 1997. “Really Existing Democracy: Learning from Latin America in the late 1990s”, *New Left Review*, Vol. a.

⁷ Markoff, John, 1997. “Really Existing Democracy: Learning from Latin America in the late 1990s”, *New Left Review*, Vol. a, pp. 50-4, also Palmer, Robert R., “Notes on the Use of the Word ‘Democracy’, 1789-1799, *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 68, 1953, pp. 203-26, and Medearis, John, 2004, “Lost or Obscured? How V.I. Lenin, J. Schumpeter and H. Arendt misunderstood Worker Council Movement.” *Polity*, Vol. XXXVI, N. 3, April.

Moreover, recent trends to differentiate democracy into subtypes coincide with a perplexing tendency to include theories of questionable democratic credentials into the realm of democratic thought.⁸ Schumpeter, who famously identified democracy as “a rule of a politician” and “a method or institutional framework whereby politicians compete for people’s votes” *rather than* popular rule, disdained the ‘common man’ and was contemptuous of the democratization of society that he witnessed in his time.⁹ And yet, as David Held notes and concurs, Schumpeter is considered by many an important figure and contributor to scholarship on *democracy*.¹⁰

Some have suggested that lack of careful attention to socio-contextual factors and authorial intentions in our assessment of intellectual legacies and contributions may have led to harboring scholars with anti-democratic aspirations in the realm of democratic theory. Hence, we assume that anyone must have contributed to or must have had theory of democracy regardless of their real interests, intentions, and position on the question of democracy.¹¹ For example, the social theory of someone like Fridrich Hayek, who made

⁸ For some critical discussions of how contemporary democratic theory harbors undemocratic assumptions and views, see Pateman, Carole, 1976, *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge University Press, p. 104; Wood, Ellen Meiksins, 1995, *Democracy Against Capitalism: Renewing Historical Materialism*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 204-38, and Baker, Gideon, 2007, “The Taming of the Idea of Civil Society”, *Democratization*, Vol. 14, No. 4, Aug. Held also notes powerful anti-democratic influences in Western intellectual history, albeit very briefly, and he does not extend his criticisms to contemporary figures such as Weber, Schumpeter, Hayek, and Nozick, to mention some. See Held, David, 1987. *Models of Democracy*, p. 1, 16, 19-20, 29, 33.

⁹ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, pp. 269, 270, 282-5.

¹⁰ Held, David, 1987. *Models of Democracy*, p. 164.

¹¹ On consequences of omitting social context, historical specificity, and authorial intentions from understanding and studying intellectual legacies of earlier times, see Skinner, Quentin, 1969. “Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas,” *History and Theory*, 8, 1, and Ashcraft, Richard, 1980,

even fewer attempts than Schumpeter to hide his aversion to popular rule, is still characterized by Held as supplying us with a model of ‘democracy’.¹² Hayek suggested that if majorities must participate in governance, it should only be limited to electing leaders. And even then, Hayek had an elaborate scheme that on various levels limited voting rights for the masses. Hayek conceived that proper government must be bicameral, with an upper and lower assembly. He maintained that people over age 45 should be allowed to vote only *once* to elect legislators into the upper legislative assembly, where representatives would serve for 15 years. Furthermore, Hayek only supported universal suffrage if it was limited to electing officials into the lower legislative assembly and only if the legislative power of the lower assembly was bound by the legislative power of the upper assembly.¹³

The label ‘elite competitive model of democracy’ in reference to Schumpeter’s (as well as to Weber’s) influence in democratic studies has been popularized by David Held.¹⁴ Some scholars may be more familiar with references to Schumpeter’s legacy in originating the ‘minimal’, ‘thin’, ‘electoral’, ‘empirical’, ‘realist’, ‘elite’, ‘restrictive’, ‘process’, or ‘procedural’ theory or conception of democracy.¹⁵ Others may be more

“Revolutionary Politics And Locke’s Two Treatises of Government,” *Political Theory*, Vol. 8, No. 4, November, pp. 429-485.

¹² Held, David, 1987. *Models of Democracy*, pp. 243-55.

¹³ See Hayek, Friedrich, 1960, *Constitution of Liberty*, Chicago University Press, pp. 104, 107, 109-10, and *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: A New Statement of the Liberal Principles of Justice and Political Economy*, vol. III, University of Chicago Press, pp. 11-17.

¹⁴ Held, David, 1987. *Models of Democracy*, p. 143, 159, 164, 171.

¹⁵ Held, David, 1987. *Models of Democracy*, p. 143, 159, 164, 171; Ricci, David M, 1970. “Democracy Attenuated: Schumpeter, the Process Theory, and American Democratic Thought,” *Journal of Politics*,

familiar with Schumpeter being situated within a ‘liberal democratic tradition’ insofar as the tradition refers to attempts, in Held’s formulation, to “defend *and* limit the political rights of citizens” or, in Pateman’s formulation, to attempts to “give a well-defined *but* minimal role to the citizen”.¹⁶ In this chapter I use Held’s terminology and employ the label ‘elite competitive model’ in reference to certain Schumpeterian social ontological assumptions and conceptual vocabulary that I argue are influential in the scholarship of democracy.

2) Advantages of Transcending the Fact/Value Dichotomy

A view that scholarship on democracy branches out into ‘normative democratic theory’ and ‘empirical studies of democracy’ has been a received wisdom in American political science since the rise of behaviorism and the estrangement of political theory

Vol. 32, No. 2. (May), pp. 239-267; Pateman, Carole, 1976, *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 13-4; Pateman, Carole, 1989, *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism, and Political Theory*. Polity Press, pp. 142-3, 145, 172; Cammack, Paul, 1997, *Capitalism and Democracy in the Third World: The Doctrine for the Political Development*, Leicester University Press, pp. 218-31; Diamond, Larry and Marc F. Plattner, ed., 1993, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy Revisited*. John Hopkins University Press, p. ix; Diamond, Larry, 2003, “Defining and Developing Democracy,” in ed. R.A. Dahl, I. Shapiro, and J.A. Cheibub, *The Democracy Sourcebook*. p. 31; Kaufman-Osborn, Timothy V., 2009, “Political Theory as a Profession?” Presented at a UCLA Political Theory Workshop, January 9, 2009, pp. 13-9; Schmitter, Philippe C., and Terry Lynn Karl, 1996, “What Democracy Is... and Is Not.” In L. Diamond and M.F. Plattner, eds. *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, Second Edition, Johns Hopkins University Press, p. 60, 61, n. 3; Skinner, Quentin, 1973, “The Empirical Theorists of Democracy and Their Critics: A Plague on Both Their Houses.” *Political Theory*, Vol. 1, No. 3, Aug., p. 287; Przeworski, Adam, 2003, “Minimalist Conception of Democracy: A Defense,” in ed. R.A. Dahl, I. Shapiro, and J.A. Cheibub, *The Democracy Sourcebook*, p. 12.

¹⁶ Held only briefly alludes to the elite competitive model being imbedded in the ‘tradition of liberal democracy’, while Pateman explicitly states that empirical democratic theory “is a direct heir” to the tradition of liberal democracy, see Held, David, 1987. *Models of Democracy*, p. 159, emphasis in original, and Pateman, Carole, 1989, *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism, and Political Theory*. Polity Press, p. 145, 143.

from the rest of the discipline in the mid twentieth century.¹⁷ According to this view, normative democratic theorists explore questions about what democracy ought to be and empirical scholars study how democracies work, get consolidated, or get destabilized. Such a division of labor in scholarship of democracy builds upon a fact/value distinction that can be traced to influential positivist philosophy of social science.¹⁸ Positivist philosophy is associated, among other things, with views that knowledge and claims can be divided into value judgments and statements of facts and that value-free knowledge is possible. For example, Kaufman-Osborn defines positivist philosophy as one that:

... (1) advances a nomological conception of knowledge, one that identifies the end of inquiry with the construction of causal explanations relating the occurrence of specific events through reference to universal laws that predict an invariant relationship between certain antecedent conditions and their necessary consequences; (2) claims that a presupposition of such knowledge is the generation of a *neutral language whose content stands in some isomorphic relationship to the antecedently existent objects it describes*; and (3) *affirms the ideal of value-free knowledge*.¹⁹

¹⁷ Gunell, John. 1993, *The Descent of Political Theory*, Chicago University Press, pp. 253-61; Kaufman-Osborn, Timothy V., 2009, "Political Theory as a Profession?" Presented at a UCLA Political Theory Workshop, January 9, 2009, pp. 13-9; Meilleur, Maurice, J. 2005, "After Methodology: Toward a Profession of Political Science," in *Perestroika: The Raucous Rebellion in Political Science*, ed. by Kristen R. Monroe, Yale University Press, pp. 494; Pateman, Carole, 1976, *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 13-6. Dahl, Robert A., 1961, "The Behavioral Approach in Political Science: Epitaph for a Monument to a Successful Protest," *APSR*, Vol. 55, 4, p. 763; Dahl, Robert, 1956, *A Preface to Democratic Theory*. The University of Chicago Press.

¹⁸ For example, see discussion in Meilleur, Maurice, J. 2005, "After Methodology: Toward a Profession of Political Science," in *Perestroika: The Raucous Rebellion in Political Science*, ed. by Kristen R. Monroe, Yale University Press, pp. 491, 492-3.

¹⁹ Kaufman-Osborn, Timothy, 1991. *Politics/Sense/Experience: A Pragmatic Inquiry into the Promise of Democracy*. Cornell University Press, p. 229, emphasis added. Also, for classical statements in positivist philosophy of social science, see Hempel, Carl G., 1942, "The Function of General Laws in History", *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 39, No. 2, Jan 15, pp. 3, 5-48; Popper, Karl, "Science: Conjectures and Refutations."

The fact/value dichotomy has been fiercely criticized in the philosophy of social science as untenable. According to critics of the positivist philosophy of Hempel and Popper, empirical observations are not self-evident and there is no ‘brute data’ or ‘mere facts’ out there that can serve as a neutral arbiter between competing theories. According to critics, observations and data must always be articulated or interpreted through systems of contextually and historically specific meaning, vocabularies, theories, concepts and categories. Critics of positivism insist that we do not have access to observations and data in some fixed, raw and unprocessed state before we impose our theoretical frameworks, judgments, and language upon them. Data and observations are always impregnated with our understanding of them, and this is the kind of data and observations we have access to.²⁰

Moreover, fitting scholarship on democracy into the dualism of fact and value judgment has been challenged as well. For example, in commenting on what is often perceived as the ‘non-normative’, ‘non-ideal’ theory of democracy of Dahl, Eckstein, Sartori, Almond, Lipset, and Verba, Carole Pateman notes: “The contemporary theory of democracy does not merely describe the operation of certain [‘democratic’] political systems, but... includes a set of standards or criteria by which a political system may be

²⁰ For example, see Quine, W. V., 1951, “Main Trends in Recent Philosophy: Two Dogmas of Empiricism,” *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 60, No. 1, Jan., pp. 20-43; Sayer, Andrew R., 1992, *Method in Social Science: A Realist Approach*. Routledge, p. 45, 49-51, 52-5, 64, 72-3; Taylor, Charles, 1987. “Interpretation and the Sciences of Man,” in ed. Rubinow and Sullivan, *Interpretive Social Science: A Second Look*, University of California Press, p. 33, 38, 53, 59; Hawkesworth, Mary, 2006, “Contending Conceptions of Science and Politics: Methodology and the Constitution of the Political,” in ed. D. Yanow and P.Shwartz-Shea, *Interpretation and Method*. M.E. Sharpe, p. 35-6.

judged ‘democratic’...”²¹ In a similar attempt to highlight the normative content of ‘non-normative’ scholarship on democracy, Meilleur claims that for self-identified scientific democratic theorists who sought to eschew and deny value judgments in their work, “American democracy became their premise instead of their goal...in their hands democratic theory became a body of apologism for a government *presumed already to be democratic*.”²² Insofar as any study of democracy always implies a set of criteria by which to judge a system as ‘democratic’, every study of democracy is evaluative – it implicitly tells us *how we ought* to be thinking about what democracy is.

And yet, the view that knowledge can be divided into statements of facts and value judgments is not simply pervasive in social sciences but this view has attained a status of cultural hegemony. For example, Hillary Putnam concludes that the acceptance of an unquestionable dichotomy between fact and value has become a “cultural institution”:

By calling the dichotomy a cultural institution, I mean to suggest that it is an unfortunate fact that the received answer will go on being the received answer for quite some time regardless of what philosophers may say about it, and regardless of whether or not the received answer is right. Even if I could convince you that the fact/value dichotomy is without rational basis...still...the next time you had a discussion at some deliberative body of which you happen to be a member, you would find someone saying to you, “*Is that supposed to be a statement of fact or a value judgment?*” *This way of thinking has become institutionalized.*²³

²¹ Pateman, Carole. 1970. *Participation and Democratic Theory*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 15-6, emphasis added.

²² Meilleur, Maurice, J. 2005, “After Methodology: Toward a Profession of Political Science,” in in *Perestroika: The Raucous Rebellion in Political Science*, ed. by Kristen R. Monroe, Yale University Press, pp. 492-3, emphasis added.

²³ Putnam, Hillary, 1981. *Reason, Truth, and History*, Cambridge University Press, ch.6, emphasis added.

Moreover, in scholarship on democracy it is still expected that one must refer to the fact/value distinction when clarifying the scope of one's inquiry about democracy, and the distinction between "normative democratic theory" and "empirical studies of democracy" is well entrenched. For instance, it is common for 'empirical' scholars of democracy to distinguish their activity from 'prescriptive political theory' where "writers seek to define the ideal democracy in terms of how it *ought* to work."²⁴ In contrast, 'empirical' scholars of democracy "concentrate on explaining the maintenance of established democracies such as the United States or England; others focus on how countries...establish a democracy; a third group studies the governance of undemocratic regimes such as China; and some examine the breakdown of democracy, such as in Weimar Germany."²⁵

Democratic theorists share such conceptions of different activities within scholarship on democracy. For instance, Gutmann and Thompson view democratic theory as a moral theory that supports a certain conception of democracy.²⁶ In other words, they perceive democratic theory is a type of scholarship that specifies a set of democratic principles and standards (be that in the form of social norms or institutions), that gives a certain meaning to democracy, and tells us what democracy *ought* to be.

²⁴ Rose, Richard, William Mishler, and Christian Haerpfer., 1998, *Democracy and Its Alternatives*. John Hopkins University Press, pp. 27-8, emphasis in original.

²⁵ Rose, Richard, William Mishler, and Christian Haerpfer, 1998, *Democracy and Its Alternatives*. John Hopkins University Press, p. 27.

²⁶ Gutmann, Amy and D. Thompson, 2004, *Why Deliberative Democracy?* Princeton University Press, p. 13.

Similarly, Held insists on describing the terrain of democratic theory through a dichotomy of easily distinguished factual and evaluative statements: “Moreover, models of democracy involve necessarily... a shifting balance between descriptive-explanatory and normative statements; that is, between statements about how things are and why they are so, and statements about how things ought to or should be.”²⁷

I suggest Held’s allusion to the untenable dualism of description vs. prescription to portray the scope of democratic theory is one of the reasons why he is unable to provide an adequate account of Schumpeter’s elite competitive vision of democracy, its relation to Schumpeter’s conservative politics, and the character of its impact on Anglo-American scholarship. While I recognize Schumpeter’s enduring influence, I do not take for granted a view that he sought to introduce a ‘realistic’, ‘non-normative’, ‘scientific’ theory of democracy that would help us to “account for how actual democracies work”²⁸. Held’s allusion to the term “actual democracies” is suggestive of Held’s oblivion to how labeling a society as democratic is already a value judgment. Moreover, Held’s allusion to the task of “accounting for how actual democracies work” indicates that in Held’s view mechanisms of society can be described in a neutral, non-normative and non-ideological language of facts. Held echoes one of the more common (albeit incorrect) interpretations of Schumpeter’s “democratic” theory, namely that Schumpeter eschewed value judgments and prescriptions in his democratic theory and claims about society. Many admirers and critics of Schumpeter alike concur in their belief that Schumpeter’s view of

²⁷ Held, David, 1987. *Models of Democracy*, p. 7.

²⁸ Held, David, 1987. *Models of Democracy*, p. 164, also see pp. 7-9.

democracy does not have value judgments in it, that it is simply descriptive, realistic and sobering.

In contrast to Held's position, I contend that overcoming the fact/value dichotomy allows recognizing that Schumpeter's elite conception of democracy is grounded in Schumpeter's conservative social vision and political preferences. I argue that these political convictions and preferences cannot be separated from the vocabulary of the elite competitive model – they are inscribed into it. Moreover, going beyond the confines of the fact/value dichotomy allows us to conceive that democratic theory cannot be described as a compilation of intertwined facts and values – such a view of democratic theory is simplistic and obscuring. I suggest that Schumpeter's elite conception of democracy, as any other conception, implies a certain understanding of history, social tendencies, pressing social problems, and lay actors' capacities – all of which I refer to as social ontology.

In chapter 4 I shall return to different ontological presuppositions in the philosophy of social science, particularly in interpretivism and in critical realism. For the purposes of this chapter, by social ontological assumptions I refer to theories and convictions that democratic scholars hold, implicitly or explicitly, about features of society, main social actors, main social tendencies and problems, the scope of politics, human capacities, and social structures. As White suggests, 'ontology' often refers to various social entities presupposed by our scientific theories: "in affirming a theory, one

also takes on a commitment to the existence of certain entities.”²⁹ Also, what I refer to as social ontology encompasses certain value judgments and political preferences, i.e. one’s social vision. I submit that it is hard to establish a clear distinction between social ontology and an author’s social vision and political motivations. For instance, assumptions and beliefs about what belongs to the scope of politics and the ‘public’ realm can be a part of both one’s social ontology and one’s social vision, and I use these two terms interchangeably.

While any discussion of democracy is grounded in a certain social ontology and social vision, such assumptions need not be explicitly stated and it might take some work and analysis to excavate the social ontology that any particular democratic theory implies. In this chapter I specifically highlight some social ontological assumptions inherent in Schumpeter’s elite competitive model of democracy. In the next chapter I show that these assumptions are problematic because, among other things, they do not help to generate interest in lay democratic thinking, they do not allow understanding the significance of lay ‘economic’ concerns, they discourage learning from lay views, and they arrest scholarly ability to detect instances of serious violations of democratic politics.

I do not allege that there is a logically consequential relationship between adopting social ontological assumptions on one hand and outlining a conception of democracy on the other. Rather, I begin from the view that it is hardly possible to neatly

²⁹ White, Stephen K., 2000, *Sustaining Affirmation: The Strengths of Weak Ontology in Political Theory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 3.

separate social ontology and a view of democracy as they interknit and reinforce each other. Nevertheless, I insist on the distinction in order to accentuate, when needed, problematic consequences of certain ontological assumptions that underpin Schumpeter's elite view of democracy. Consider how Schumpeter's contention that democracy cannot possibly mean 'rule of the people' but only elite politics rests on the ontological presupposition that human political capacities are limited and the masses are generally incapable of formulating their interests and making sound and responsible political judgments. In turn, such a skeptical view of mass political capacities, as compared to social elites, designates society as hierarchical simultaneously in a descriptive and normative sense – social hierarchy and leadership of the masses by social elites in Schumpeter's social vision is not only 'natural' but also desirable and commonsensical. Moreover, in Schumpeter's elite model, emphasis on social hierarchies as a feature of society to reckon with and to preserve provides impetus for arguing that popular rule is impossible and 'democracy' can only be about elite politics. Schumpeter's conclusion that 'democracy' is compatible with social hierarchies rests not only on his understanding of society and social tendencies, but also on his valuing of social inequality.

Although I do not replicate Held's approach to democratic theory and I am critical of several of his claims, my view that democratic theory implies social ontology is influenced by Held's heuristic 'models of democracy':

As I use the term [model of democracy] here it refers to a theoretical construction designed to reveal and explain the chief elements of a democratic form and its underlying structure of relations... Models, are, accordingly, complex 'networks' of concepts and generalizations about aspects of the political realms and its key conditions of entrenchment, including economic and social conditions... [Models have] key features,

recommendations, assumptions about the nature of the society in which democracy is or might be embedded, fundamental conceptions of the political capabilities of human beings, and how they justify their views and preferences.³⁰

At the same time, parallels between my approach to the elite competitive model and Held's view of 'models of democracy' are contingent. For example, I do not intend to reconstruct and analyze 'models of democracy' as if autonomous from each other, but rather I wish to highlight and analyze a set of problematic elite competitive ontological assumptions and conceptual vocabulary that permeate seemingly different discussions of democracy. Held is prompt to divide the realm of academic democratic theory into different and competing definitions, i.e. "variants" of democracy, such as classical, protective, developmental, direct, competitive elitist, and plural, to mention a few.³¹ With this layout, one is bound to focus on different conceptions of democracy at the expense of examining how similar ontological assumptions may buttress such models. Held does provide two "broad classificatory labels" for all the models he enlists, which are "direct or participatory democracy" and "liberal or representative democracy".³² This suggests that uncovering commonalities within the range of academic democratic theories may be significant in Held's analysis. However, he quickly specifies that "they [broad labels] will be deployed only on a highly restricted basis; for one of the central purposes of this volume is to explicate and assess a far wider range of arguments about democracy

³⁰ Held, David, 1987. *Models of Democracy*, pp. 6-7.

³¹ Held, David, 1987. *Models of Democracy*, p. 3.

³² Held, David, 1987. *Models of Democracy*, p. 4.

than are suggested by these too general notions alone.”³³ Thus, the language of ‘models’ in the sense that Held uses is not very helpful for my project of pointing out how apparently different ‘models’ may be grounded in the same ontology and share core theoretical aspects. In contrast to Held, in my use of the term ‘elite competitive model’ is used to signal not so much a particular model of democracy in contrast to other variants, but to flag a set of views and assumptions about democracy, society, and lay actors that may be embedded in other ‘models’ of democracy as well.

Furthermore, in contrast to conventional understanding of scholarship on democracy, I contend that reducing analysis of democratic theory to ‘is vs. ought’ issues precludes scholars from analyzing the research consequences of their theoretical frameworks and conceptual vocabularies. I contend that in order to gain a broader grasp of the attributes of contemporary scholarship on democracy, and of the elite competitive model in particular, we should examine what consequences theoretical frameworks have for social inquiry. For example, we can scrutinize the merits of our democratic theory in terms of what research questions become relevant and which do not, how and which ‘facts’ and ‘observations’ become relevant and which not, as well as how and what ‘empirical findings’ are conceptualized and interpreted with respect to democracy.³⁴

³³ Held, David, 1987. *Models of Democracy*, p. 5.

³⁴ This aspect of my exploration is inspired by Walker’s pragmatic approach, see Walker, Jack L., 1966, “A Critique of the Elitist Theory of Democracy,” *American Political Science Review*, 60, 2 (June), who argues that the ‘elite’ theory of democracy is problematic because its language and assumptions preclude exploration of social movements and relations between coercion, apathy, consent, and domination in a society. I also draw on Topper, Keith, 2005. *The Disorder of Political Inquiry*. Harvard University Press, and resemble his pragmatic approach to critiquing methodological and conceptual choices, i.e. I am asking questions about consequences of such choices. Of course, this does not mean that normative questions are excluded from pragmatic reflections. In fact, as Topper points out throughout his book, social visions always fortify pragmatic investigation and critique, meaning that problems of particular

For instance, transcending the fact/value debate and focusing on research consequences of the elite competitive model allows me to demonstrate in the next chapter how the Schumpeterian conceptual framework and ontological assumptions implied in it structure the process of knowledge production. I argue that this framework is an inadequate guide to research on democracy and lay democratic beliefs. The Schumpeterian framework has a series of problematic consequences for what questions are asked about democracy, society, and Ukrainian and Russian lay beliefs and what questions are not, for sorts of things that are observed about democracy, society, and lay beliefs and what are not, and for how research findings are framed. Of course, any other conceptual framework and assumptions structure the process of knowledge production – our conceptual vocabularies and social visions are necessary for carrying out research. My point is not to advocate the exclusion of conceptual frameworks and social visions from scholarship on democracy. Rather, I seek to demonstrate the inadequacies and weaknesses of the Schumpeterian framework.

c) Schumpeter – His Social Ontology, Conservative Politics, and The Elite

Conception of Democracy

I make the social ontological assumptions of the elite competitive model explicit by drawing on the work of Joseph Schumpeter, on secondary work on Schumpeter's

methodological and conceptual choices become visible only from the point of view of different theoretical framework, pp. 159-63. I shall return to the question of alternative methodological and theoretical view of democratic notions in chapters 4 and 5. Also, the idea that certain conceptual choices in democratic theory have consequences for studying democracy has been briefly touched upon in Held, David, 1987. *Models of Democracy*, Stanford, pp. 6-7, and Pateman, Carole, 1976. *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 13-6.

intellectual legacies, and on critical treatments of the elite competitive conception of democracy. In particular, I draw on Medearis's study of Schumpeter's democratic thought to excavate the kind of ontological assumptions that make up the elite competitive model of democracy.

While the elite competitive model of democracy occupies a prominent place within contemporary democratic scholarship, Medearis argues that this was not Schumpeter's only statement on the subject and aside from Schumpeter's allusions to 'classical democracy' and his restatement of democracy as a method of leadership selection, Schumpeter also had a transformative theory of democracy. In fact, Schumpeter mainly conceived of democracy as a transformative force, "as a real historical tendency implicated in social transformation...a transformative conception of democracy acknowledges that, empirically and historically, democracy has always been an ideology, a system of beliefs, practices, and values capable of motivating political action, and not just a method or an institutional framework."³⁵ Through the transformative conception of democracy Schumpeter recognized "the social and economic implications of spreading democratic movements and practices, whereas the elite conception held that democracy was simply an arrangement of *political* institutions."³⁶ My goal in this section is to scrutinize the practical significance of Schumpeter's elite conception of democracy because it is this and not the transformative

³⁵ Medearis, John. 2001, *Joseph Schumpeter's Two Theories of Democracy*, Harvard University Press, p. 4, 8.

³⁶ Medearis, John. 2001, *Joseph Schumpeter's Two Theories of Democracy*, Harvard University Press, p. 4, emphasis in original.

conception that has had such an enduring influence on American political science.

However, as Medearis points out:

it is the recognition of this transformative conception of democracy in Schumpeter's work that underpins virtually everything else...for even his elite conception of democracy is best understood not in isolation as a complete and freestanding theory of democracy but rather in relation to his theory of liberal capitalist development. It was not merely a descriptive conception...It took on practical, prescriptive significance as part of a sketch of a "democratic" socialist society in which the most dangerous democratic tendencies, from Schumpeter's deeply conservative standpoint, would be curbed. It was, in short, a reactionary response to the democratic social, economic, and political tendencies that he most deplored.³⁷

My treatment of Schumpeter's democratic thought builds on this recognition of his transformative conception of democracy. For example, Medearis maintains that grasping Schumpeter's transformative conception of democracy deepens our understanding of Schumpeter's democratic thought and social theory as a whole and helps to recognize that Schumpeter's elite conception is a conservative response to democratizing tendencies in labor politics that he witnessed in his time. Moreover, recognizing the transformative conception permits us to compare Schumpeter's two theories of democracy and reveal severe limitations of the elite conception in terms of how it constricts our understanding of the social world and the role of democratic beliefs and movements in democracy.³⁸ While I want to highlight that the elite conception of democracy is grounded in an aristocratic-conservative social ontology, it is not to say that

³⁷ Medearis, John. 2001, *Joseph Schumpeter's Two Theories of Democracy*, Harvard University Press, p. 8, 4.

³⁸ Medearis, John. 2001, *Joseph Schumpeter's Two Theories of Democracy*, Harvard University Press, p. 14. Also, see Medearis, John, 2001b, "Ideology, Democracy, and the Limits of Equilibrium: A Schumpeterian Critique," *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 31, No. 2, 355-388.

I am ‘catching’ scholars smuggling values into their work or that all those who employ the elite conception necessarily share Schumpeter’s social vision and motivations. Rather, what I wish to show is that adopting the elite competitive conception of democracy cannot be easily divorced from the social vision, i.e. Schumpeter’s conservative politics, in which the elite view is grounded. I also stress that the elite competitive model establishes a series of limitations on the questions scholars pose, on the collection of facts, and, consequently, on the understanding of society, democracy, and lay actors’ beliefs. As Medearis suggests, “there are limitations to an elite conception of democracy, regardless of a person’s values or adherence to scientific procedures. These are limitations as to the social structures and social tendencies that can be seen and understood from the standpoint of such a conception.”³⁹

In Schumpeter’s social vision, I argue, two ontological notions are especially prominent. First, it is a view that the ‘socio-economic realm’ has little to do with the impetus of democratic politics (in contrast to Schumpeter’s transformative conception of democracy which recognized historical tendency of democratic ideologies to democratize the sphere of labor and economics). Second, it is the view that mass political capacities are inherently and naturally limited and the masses are unfit for responsible political thought and action. These ontological postulations, fortified by Schumpeter’s conservative politics, undergird Schumpeter’s elite competitive conception of democracy. On this account, democracy cannot possibly mean ‘popular rule’ and leveling of

³⁹ Medearis, John. 2001, *Joseph Schumpeter’s Two Theories of Democracy*, Harvard University Press, p. 14.

hierarchical structures and elite domination in the ‘socio-economic’ realm.⁴⁰ Also, democracy on this account is defined *as just and only* an institutional framework or method for selection of *political* leadership.⁴¹ Due to accentuating that the elite leadership is the only thing that democracy can possibly be, the meaning of ‘democracy’ in the elite competitive version is also conceived as static and unchanging (in contrast to Schumpeter’s transformative conception that recognized that social change is inspired by changes in social beliefs and values).⁴² This fixed view of democracy, I maintain, coupled with Schumpeter’s deep disdain for practices of non-elite influence on the

⁴⁰ For example, see Ricci, David M, 1970. “Democracy Attenuated: Schumpeter, the Process Theory, and American Democratic Thought,” *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 32, No. 2. (May), pp. 239-267; Walker, Jack L., 1966, “A Critique of the Elitist Theory of Democracy,” *American Political Science Review*, 60, 2 (June), p. 286, 288; Cammack, Paul, 1997, *Capitalism and Democracy in the Third World: The Doctrine for the Political Development*, Leicester University Press, p. 218-31; Baker, Gideon, 2007, “The Taming of the Idea of Civil Society”, *Democratization*, Vol. 14, No. 4, Aug; and Held, David, 2006, *Models of Democracy*. Stanford University Press, 2nd ed., pp. 225-31. Also see Wood and Wolin, although they do not refer to Schumpeter specifically, the conception of democracy they criticize has Schumpeterian overtones, Wood, Ellen Meiksins, 1995, *Democracy Against Capitalism: Renewing Historical Materialism*. Cambridge University Press; Wolin, Sheldon S., 1994, “Norm and Form: The Constitutionalizing of Democracy”, in *Athenian Political Thought and the Reconstruction of American Democracy*. Ed. By J.P. Euben and J.R. Wallach, J. Ober., Cornell University Press, pp. 29-59.

⁴¹ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, pp. 269, 270, 282-5, also see critiques of excluding meaningful popular participation from the scope of democracy in O’Toole, Laurence J. Jr., 1977, “Schumpeter’s ‘Democracy’: A Critical View,” *Polity*, Vol. 9, No. 4. (Summer), pp. 446-462; Pateman, Carole, 1976, *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge University Press, p. 104; Pateman, Carole, 1989, *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism, and Political Theory*. Polity Press, pp. 142-5; and Baker, Gideon, 2007, “The Taming of the Idea of Civil Society”, *Democratization*, Vol. 14, No. 4, Aug.

⁴² For critiques of static definition of democracy, see Medearis, John, 2001b. “Ideology, Democracy, and the Limits of Equilibrium: A Schumpeterian Critique,” *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 31, No. 2, 355-388; Markoff, John, 1997. “Really Existing Democracy: Learning from Latin America in the late 1990s”, *New Left Review*, Vol. a; and Wolin, although Wolin does not critique Schumpeter directly, Wolin, Sheldon S., 1994, “Norm and Form: The Constitutionalizing of Democracy” in *Athenian Political Thought and the Reconstruction of American Democracy*. Ed. By J.P. Euben and J.R. Wallach, J. Ober., Cornell University Press, pp. 29-59.

direction of society makes the scope of democracy, i.e. popular rule, closed to reinterpretation and contestation *by lay actors themselves*.⁴³

In order to grasp prominent elements of Schumpeter's social ontological commitments we need to begin with recognizing an overarching theme that motivated and framed his intellectual work. This theme is a perceived crisis of the 'old' social order that encompassed hierarchical structures, practices, and social relations. While Schumpeter was critical of the 'new' bourgeois society and expressed regrets about the decline of the old aristocratic and monarchist values and institutions in Europe, he recognized that a wide range of social practices in bourgeois societies still were deeply inegalitarian.⁴⁴ Yet, the rise of social democratic parties at the turn of the twentieth century and democratic movements indicated that European societies were changing further and the ethos of leveling and democratization of the time presented a real threat to the relationships of master and worker in the workplace, local, and national government. Perception of this crisis was not only built on a set of particular historical, political, and sociological assumptions that Schumpeter held, but was also a phenomenon to which Schumpeter directed his theory of democracy and political economy. I particularly direct attention to Schumpeter's understanding of the crisis of 20th century capitalist society as historically inevitable delegitimation of the hierarchical features of capitalism and spread

⁴³ Echoes of such critique of the static and conservative approach to the meaning of democracy can be seen in Markoff, John, 1997. "Really Existing Democracy: Learning from Latin America in the late 1990s", *New Left Review*, Vol. a, and Medearis, John, 2004, "Lost or Obscured? How V.I. Lenin, J. Schumpeter and H. Arendt misunderstood Worker Council Movement." *Polity*, Vol. XXXVI, N. 3, April.

⁴⁴ Swedberg, Richard, 1992. *Schumpeter: A Biography*. Princeton University Press, pp. 8-9, 52-3, 63, 146; Medearis, John, 2009, *Major Conservative and Libertarian Thinkers: Joseph Schumpeter*, Continuum.

of democratic movements, tendencies, and expectations in connection with socio-economic structures, the workplace, and labor politics. For example, his later work in *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (from here on *CSD*) is one of Schumpeter's later attempts to understand and explicate historical tendencies and the future of capitalist system in light of the rise of social democratic parties and council movements in Europe, and New Deal in America.⁴⁵ It is no surprise then that *CSD* is heavily focused on examining the relationship between capitalism, socialism, and democracy.

Schumpeter understood capitalism in terms of a coexistence of the capitalist order and capitalist system. The 'order' encompasses institutions, culture and beliefs which legitimize capitalism. The system consists of the narrow functioning and mechanics of the economy.⁴⁶ For Schumpeter, survival of capitalism from a purely economic perspective was possible - there is nothing in the system, he argued, that poses a threat to the system's survival.⁴⁷ However, it is the changing cultural beliefs that would present a challenge to capitalism.⁴⁸ Schumpeter maintained that beliefs that challenge the legitimacy of capitalism arise out of advanced development of the capitalist system itself because such a system nurtures practices and values of rationalization. Rationalization of society in turn, Schumpeter believed, lead social groups to question the legitimacy of

⁴⁵ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, p. 108-10 (given changes in mass values, Schumpeter asked 'what is the future of capitalism?').

⁴⁶ Swedberg, Richard, 1992. *Schumpeter: A Biography*. Princeton University Press, pp. 158-9, Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, pp. 42, 73-80.

⁴⁷ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, pp. 42, 73-80, 120.

⁴⁸ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, p. 162.

private property and hierarchical relations between workers and property owners, bosses, and managers in the economy. Schumpeter believed that “routinization of the entrepreneurial function”, decomposition of the bourgeoisie, changing institutions of property and contract, hostility of intellectuals to capitalism, and spreading democratization in capitalist society all point to “capitalism exhausting itself”.⁴⁹ Schumpeter saw socialism inevitable: “Socialism of a very sober type would almost automatically come into being.”⁵⁰

However, given Schumpeter’s aristocratic preferences and conservative background, he was concerned with the implications that democratization of society would bring for the old order that combined hierarchical elements of capitalism and aristocratic influence in Austria.⁵¹ The implications already were manifest in light of worker council movement which was introducing new expectations for organizing socio-economic affairs and structures in several European societies. The worker council movement was making it possible to speak about the sovereignty of workers and their role in influencing the institutions and practices of work as democracy.⁵² Schumpeter was deeply troubled by the force of these democratic ideologies, movements, and

⁴⁹ Swedberg, Richard, 1992. *Schumpeter: A Biography*. Princeton University Press, pp. 158-9; Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, pp. 131-70.

⁵⁰ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, pp. 131, 143-219.

⁵¹ For references to Schumpeter’s conservative and royalist preferences, see Swedberg, Richard, 1992. *Schumpeter: A Biography*. Princeton University Press, pp. 8-9, 52-3, 63, 146. Medearis provides a much more consistent and in depth look at Schumpeter’s conservatism and its relation to his work, see Medearis, John. 2001, *Joseph Schumpeter’s Two Theories of Democracy*, Harvard University Press, and Medearis, John, 2009, *Major Conservative and Libertarian Thinkers: Joseph Schumpeter*, Continuum.

⁵² Medearis, John. 2001, *Joseph Schumpeter’s Two Theories of Democracy*, Harvard University Press, p. 46-9, 59-64.

changes. He regretted that social hierarchies were thus threatened and that the gate to political-economic rule, influence, and decision making would be open for vast majorities of people whose social standing he thought should not permit them to do so.⁵³

Schumpeter's elite conception of democracy is an attempt to understand and to respond to such changes. For example, Schumpeter's letters and memos from post WWI years that encourage the creation of a conservative movement or party, led by members of Austrian aristocratic circles, do not simply provide an insight into Schumpeter's practical politics but reveal his understanding and theorization of changes that the society of his time was undergoing.⁵⁴ Schumpeter was an admirer of Tory democracy, which he described as "that technique of public life which has been perfected in England and which even in periods of sharpest democratic tendencies has preserved the influence of the aristocracy and generally of conservative interests: the technique of Tory democracy".⁵⁵ It is beyond the scope of this chapter to recreate all of Schumpeter's written work that pertains to questions of his conservative reactions to democratization, and an extensive study of Schumpeter's thought on democracy already exists. But a short excerpt from one such letter to Count Otto Harrach gives a sense of Schumpeter's aristocratic and conservative outlook and aims:

⁵³ For example, see excerpts from Schumpeter's published work, letters and memos on monarchy and regretting the spread of the democratic debate, universal franchise, and worker council movements, Medearis, John. 2001, *Joseph Schumpeter's Two Theories of Democracy*, Harvard University Press, pp. 21-49, 59-64.

⁵⁴ Medearis, John. 2001, *Joseph Schumpeter's Two Theories of Democracy*, Harvard University Press, p. 37, also see Swedberg, Richard, 1992. *Schumpeter: A Biography*. Princeton University Press, pp. 52-3.

⁵⁵ Quoted in Medearis, John. 2001, *Joseph Schumpeter's Two Theories of Democracy*, Harvard University Press, p. 38.

Your Erlaucht is absolutely right: we do not suffer a lack of democracy, one could rather say that the social structure of Austria cannot stand so much democracy – an in particular so much giving in to every slogan of the day – that it does not correspond to its [the social structure's] nature, and that it was imposed artificially: to guide and dominate such a far-reaching democracy with us is a very difficult task for which our government unfortunately is totally incapable. And because we have created such democratic institutions which, however we – unlike English society – are unable to handle, these organs, in particular Parliament and the Press, get so easily out of hand... I arrive at a point... one cannot emphasize enough: were there leadership on the part of the government, an actual political effort on its part, matters could never have come to the events in parliament. But without a guiding hand, as it were, letting them to themselves, the parties immediately fell into the old habit of reciting their radical phrases.⁵⁶

Since Schumpeter was antipathetic to non-elite self-governance in a variety of social institutions, his elite conception of democracy reflects these concerns by granting a 'democratic' air to a very narrow set of social institutions which, to top it off, must be led by social elites, all while arguing that more participatory institutions are not feasible.⁵⁷ Yet, it is not that such institutions and practices are unrealistic, but that they are undesirable for Schumpeter, given his own political preferences. Readers of *CSD* may be familiar with Schumpeter's discussion of how masses are generally unfit for political participation due to their susceptibility to manipulation, infantilism, and irrational impulses (although in contrast to this, in other chapters of *CSD* Schumpeter maintained that human nature is malleable: "how far malleability goes is a question, but that it is not static is a fact"⁵⁸). Schumpeter argues that there is supposedly plenty of evidence where

⁵⁶ Quoted in Medearis, John. 2001, *Joseph Schumpeter's Two Theories of Democracy*, Harvard University Press, p. 38.

⁵⁷ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, pp. 262, 269, 284, 285.

⁵⁸ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, pp. 203, 204-5.

common people display anything but rationality, responsibility, awareness, and logical consistency in matters of politics.⁵⁹ Schumpeter also argues that common folks basically have no clue about most political problems and their understanding of their interests has little to do with reality because they do not spend time studying the problem; they are affected by impulses and propaganda.⁶⁰ In addressing the notion of popular rule Schumpeter maintains that the whole idea could not be further removed from the reality of politics, and the belief in ‘popular rule’ is a house of sand:

Of many sources of the evidence that accumulated against the hypothesis of rationality, I shall mention only two. The one...the psychology of the crowds...the realities of human behavior when under the influence of agglomeration – in particular the sudden disappearance, in a state of excitement, of moral restraints and civilized modes of thinking and feeling, the sudden eruption of primitive impulses, infantilisms and criminal propensities... Newspaper readers, radio audiences, members of a party even if not physically gathered together are terribly easy to work up into a psychological crowd and into a state of frenzy in which attempt at rational argument only spurs the animal spirits... Thus the typical citizen drops down to a lower level of mental performance as soon as he enters the political field. He becomes a primitive again. His thinking becomes associative and affective.”⁶¹

This discussion of political capacities of ‘ordinary citizens’ leads up to Schumpeter’s famous definition of democracy as “a rule of a politician” and “a method or institutional framework whereby politicians compete for people’s votes”, rather than popular rule.⁶²

⁵⁹ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, p. 256.

⁶⁰ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, p. 260-1.

⁶¹ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, p. 260-2.

⁶² Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, pp. 269, 270, 282-5.

Schumpeter's disdain of non-elite meddling in the affairs of government is further highlighted through his insistence on strict boundaries between politicians and voters:

The voters outside of parliament must respect the division of labor between themselves and the politicians they elect. They must not withdraw confidence too easily between elections and they must understand that, once they have elected an individual, political action is his business and not theirs. This means that they must refrain from instructing him about what he is to do...the practice of bombarding them with letters and telegrams for instance – ought to come under the same ban.⁶³

Some have taken issue with Schumpeter's supposedly 'realistic' and 'innocent' theory of human nature and human capacities – he has been challenged on empirical grounds.⁶⁴ While important, the debate over the merits of Schumpeter's realism obscures other important features of his social ontology, in particular, his view of social actors and their capacities for politics and self-governance. I propose to examine Schumpeter's aversion to the notion of popular rule in light of Schumpeter's position on democratic participation in the workplace. *I wish to highlight that Schumpeter did not just think that human beings in general are politically inept, but it is a particular social class of people that he felt must not be allowed to exert influence in society, while members of aristocratic and property owning circles should.*

CSD was written after Schumpeter emigrated from Austria to the United States. The American social scene presented Schumpeter with problems similar to those he was responding to while in Austria - the New Deal and dramatic changes in American labor politics that were geared towards granting workers some political rights and freedoms in

⁶³ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, p. 295.

⁶⁴ Pateman, Carole, 1976. *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge University Press.

the workplace: "...Step by step we can trace the way that led from backing the master to neutrality, through the various nuances of neutrality to backing the workman's right to being considered *an equal partner* in a bargain..."⁶⁵ Of course, Schumpeter does not celebrate such attempts to subvert the essence of capitalist enterprise and he does not welcome the thought of a worker standing on an equal footing with a boss, a manager, and property owner, being able to exert influence on the decision making concerning matters of work and economics, i.e. the worker's very livelihood. Moreover, he expresses concerns over the loss of respect for leadership and loss of discipline among the workers.⁶⁶ In response, Schumpeter searches for possible and effective ways to curb this leveling and equalization of power and class difference through gaining democratic freedoms and rights in the workplace.

Schumpeter understood worker council movements and democratic socialism as a society in which "each would count for one and no one more than one" and differentiated it from Bolshevism that relied on practices of central control of economic production.⁶⁷ However, it is precisely this feature of Bolshevism that Schumpeter came to admire. Thus he concludes: "Considering this state of things [American New Deal and leveling in the workplace], we need not project the tendencies inherent in it very far ahead in order

⁶⁵ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, p. 214, emphasis added.

⁶⁶ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, p. 214-8, also see Swedberg, Richard, 1992. *Schumpeter: A Biography*. Princeton University Press, p. 148.

⁶⁷ Quoted in Medearis, John. 2001, *Joseph Schumpeter's Two Theories of Democracy*, Harvard University Press, pp. 63-4.

to visualize a situation in which *socialism might be the only means of restoring social discipline*.⁶⁸ While having recognized that capitalism was being delegitimized by spreading democratic-socialist tendencies in his earlier and other writings, in *CSD* Schumpeter maintains silence about a fundamental connection between socialism and democracy.⁶⁹ Instead he uses the term ‘socialism’ to designate practices of state control and factory discipline, as well as expresses his enthusiasm for ‘socialism’ of such form – Bolshevism: “We can see in Russia even how the socialist regime fostered authoritarian discipline in the economic realm among other things”.⁷⁰ Consequently, Schumpeter’s disdain for economic and political self-rule leads him to obscure the meaning of both socialism and democracy in *CSD*. He writes: “After all, *effective* management of the socialist economy means dictatorship not *of* but *over* the proletariat in the factory.”⁷¹ It is not the question of participation in the decision making of all people that underpinned Schumpeter’s elite conception of democracy and his ‘sober’ assessment of human political capacities. Rather, I argue that it is his antipathy to participation of working, non-elite, or ‘lower’ social classes that structures his elite competitive model of democracy.

⁶⁸ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, pp. 214-5.

⁶⁹ See excerpts from Schumpeter’s other writings in Medearis, John. 2001, *Joseph Schumpeter’s Two Theories of Democracy*, Harvard University Press, pp. 63-4, and Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, pp. 235-7. Also, see Swedberg, Richard, 1992. *Schumpeter: A Biography*. Princeton University Press, p. 164.

⁷⁰ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, p. 217.

⁷¹ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, p. 302.

d) Echoes of the Elite Competitive Model in Dahl's *Polyarchy*

Many have pointed out that Schumpeter's elite competitive model of democracy has greatly shaped Anglo-American scholarship on democracy.⁷² Such prominent authors as Downs, Lipset, Dahl, Almond, Huntington, Diamond, Stepan, Linz, Przeworski, O'Donnell, and Schmitter, who are considered seminal contributors to American scholarship on democracy, explicitly acknowledge Schumpeter's influence on their work.⁷³ Some seminal authors in survey literature on post-communist transformation also acknowledge Schumpeter's influence on their conception of democracy and it is not uncommon to find reference to "Schumpeter's classic

⁷² For example, see references to Schumpeter's enduring influence on democratic scholarship in American political science in Macpherson, C.B. 1977, *The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy*, Oxford University Press, p. 77; Ricci, David M, 1970. "Democracy Attenuated: Schumpeter, the Process Theory, and American Democratic Thought," *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 32, No. 2. (May), pp. 239-267, Held, David, 1987. *Models of Democracy*, p. 164, Pateman, Carole, 1976, *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge University Press, p. 13-4; Pateman, Carole, 1989, *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism, and Political Theory*. Polity Press, pp. 142-3, 145, 172; Cammack, Paul, 1997, *Capitalism and Democracy in the Third World: The Doctrine for the Political Development*, Leicester University Press, pp. 218-31, Medearis, John, 2001. *Joseph Schumpeter's Two Theories of Democracy*, Harvard University Press, pp. 1-2, Diamond, Larry and Marc F. Plattner, ed., 1993, "Introduction," in *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy Revisited*. John Hopkins University Press, p. ix; Schmitter, Philippe C., and Terry Lynn Karl, 1996, "What Democracy Is...and Is Not." In L. Diamond and M.F. Plattner, eds. *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, Second Edition, Johns Hopkins University Press, p. 60, 61, n. 3.

⁷³ Examples of those seminal American scholars who credit Schumpeter directly are: Downs, Anthony, 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, New York, HarperCollins, p. 29, n. 11; Lipset, Seymour Martin, 1959. "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," *American Political Science Review*, 53 (1), p. 71; Dahl, Robert, 1956, *A Preface to Democratic Theory*. The University of Chicago Press, p. 131, n. 12; Huntington, Samuel, 1993, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. University of Oklahoma Press, p. 6; Diamond, Larry, 2003, "Defining and Developing Democracy," in ed. R.A. Dahl, I. Shapiro, and J.A. Cheibub, *The Democracy Sourcebook*. p. 31; Przeworski, Adam, 2003, "Minimalist Conception of Democracy: A Defense," in ed. R.A. Dahl, I. Shapiro, and J.A. Cheibub, *The Democracy Sourcebook*, p. 12; Diamond, Larry, J. Linz and S. Lipset, ed., 1988, *Democracy in Developing Countries*. Vol. 2, Africa. London: Adamantine Press, p. xvi; Linz, Juan, 1978, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown, and Reequilibration*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press p. 48, 94; Almond, Gabriel, A., 1980, "The Intellectual History of the Civic Culture Concept," In *The Civic Culture Revisited*, ed. G.A. Almond and S. Verba, Little, Brown, p. 21.

definition”.⁷⁴ However, contemporary followers of these prominent scholars rarely cite Schumpeter directly. In this section, through examining the early work of Dahl I demonstrate that Schumpeterian assumptions and conceptions, even if not explicitly acknowledged, are still prominent in scholarship on democracy.

Moreover, I do not suggest that Schumpeterian vocabulary and assumptions are the only ones that many democratic scholars operationalize and ground their research in, since rarely are contemporary scholars strict Schumpeterians. The fact that many today seek to distance themselves from Schumpeterian ‘elite’ and ‘minimalist’ vision of democracy must be recognized. For example, quite a few suggest that the elite competitive conception of democracy is too narrow and emphasis just on elections must be supplemented with additional elements such as rule of law, tolerance, freedom of the press, government responsiveness, and more equitable representation, to mention some, as essential elements of democracy.⁷⁵ Schumpeter, on the other hand, was opposed to parliamentary politics, universal suffrage, government responsiveness to the electorate,

⁷⁴ For example, see Rose, Richard, William Mishler, and Neil Munro, 2006, *Russia Transformed: Developing Popular Support for a New Regime*. Cambridge University Press, p. 35-6; Rose, Richard, William Mishler, and Christian Haerpfer., 1998, *Democracy and Its Alternatives*. John Hopkins University Press, p. 33.

⁷⁵ For such examples, see Rose, Richard, William Mishler, and Neil Munro, 2006, *Russia Transformed: Developing Popular Support for a New Regime*. Cambridge University Press, p. 34, Rose, Richard, William Mishler, and Christian Haerpfer., 1998, *Democracy and Its Alternatives*. John Hopkins University Press, p. 20; McIntosh, Mary, Martha Abele MacIver, Daniel Abele and Dina Smeltz, 1994, “Public Meets Democracy in Central and East Europe 1991-1993”, *Slavic Review*, 53, Fall, p. 495-6; Montero, Alfred P., 1998, “Review: Assessing the Third Wave Democracies.” *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, Vol. 40, No. 2, Summer, pp. 117-134; Gibson, James L., 1996, “Political and Economic Markets: Changes in the Connections Between Attitudes Toward Political Democracy and a Market Economy Within the Mass Culture of Russia and Ukraine.” *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 58, No. 4, Nov, p. 964; Gibson, James L., 1998 “Putting Up with Fellow Russians: An Analysis of Political Tolerance in the Fledgling Russian Democracy,” *Political Research Quarterly*, 51, March, pp. 37-68; Gibson, James L., Raymon M. Duch, and Kent L. Tedin. 1992, “Democratic values and the Transformation of the Soviet Union,” *Journal of Politics*, 54, p. 337.

and the free press, unless their ‘radical’ fallouts were subordinated to the leadership of national elites (i.e. Schumpeter’s plan for Tory democracy).⁷⁶ So, putting emphases on freedom of the press and government responsiveness is important and clearly is an advance beyond the Schumpeterian social vision. Critics of the elite competitive model and those who wish to distance themselves from it believe that expanding the Schumpeterian view of democracy is sufficient. For example, Gibson et al. write:

More simply put, a democratic citizen is one who believes in individual liberty and who is politically tolerant, who holds a certain amount of distrust of political authority but at the same time is trustful of fellow citizens, who is obedient but nonetheless willing to assert rights against the state, who views the state as constrained by legality, and who supports basic democratic institutions and processes [electoral competition]. *Though there are undoubtedly those who would quibble with the list, it would be largely on the need to supplement the roster rather than delete items from it.*⁷⁷

However, as I shall argue in chapter 3, more serious limitations and problematic consequences of the elite competitive model do not stem from it being too narrow or too thin as some may think. Rather, I contend that the assumptions and conceptions embedded in the elite competitive model are flawed in their own right and their anti-democratic implications cannot be ameliorated by adding more things to the ‘list’ of definition of democracy. Overcoming conservative consequences of the elite competitive model requires abandoning this framework altogether.

⁷⁶ Medearis, John. 2001, *Joseph Schumpeter’s Two Theories of Democracy*, Harvard University Press, p. 32, 35-6, and Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, p. 295.

⁷⁷ Gibson, James L., Raymon M. Duch, and Kent L. Tedin. 1992, “Democratic values and the Transformation of the Soviet Union,” *Journal of Politics*, 54, p. 332, emphasis added. Gibson et al. highlight that Schumpeter’s view of democracy is too narrow and minimalist, and hence, unsatisfactory.

Remember that in the elite competitive model of democracy, two ontological notions are especially prominent. The first is a view that the ‘economic realm’ has little to do with the impetus of democratic politics. The second is a view that the masses, i.e. lower class people’s political capacities, are inherently and naturally limited and they are unfit for responsible and valuable political thought and action. These ontological postulations, fortified by Schumpeter’s conservative politics, undergird Schumpeter’s elite competitive conception of democracy. On this account, democracy is defined *as just and only* an institutional framework or method for selection of *political* leadership. Also, democracy cannot possibly mean ‘popular rule’ and leveling of hierarchical structures and domination and power of one small class of people in the ‘economic’ realm. Due to accentuating that the elite leadership is the only thing that democracy can ever be, the meaning of ‘democracy’ in the elite competitive version is also conceived as static and unchanging. This fixed view of democracy, coupled with Schumpeter’s deep disdain for practices of non-elite influence on the direction of society makes the scope of democracy, i.e. popular rule, closed to reinterpretation and contestation *by lay actors themselves*.

In what follows I focus on highlighting strong parallels between the elite competitive assumptions and conceptions on one hand, and Dahl’s democratic theory in *Polyarchy* on the other. Survey and interview scholars on post-communist democratic beliefs often cite Dahl, rather than Schumpeter, and often it is Dahl’s conception of democracy and his understanding of the role of lay democratic beliefs in democratic

theory and practice that are explicitly recognized.⁷⁸ While Dahl acknowledges Schumpeter's influence on his work, it is still worthwhile to establish these parallels because upon a surface glance it may appear that there is little in common between authors like Schumpeter and Dahl.⁷⁹ For example, in Dahl's *Polyarchy* responsiveness of government to the electorate is considered a defining feature of democracy and as I pointed out earlier, in *CSD* Schumpeter campaigned against putting emphasis on government responsiveness and interaction between politicians and voters. Also, in Dahl's framework citizen preferences and beliefs appear to be important for democratic theory and practice, which clearly is not a notion that Schumpeter ever advanced or defended. Even some survey scholars on post-communist transformations want to insist that there is a clear distinction between the elite theory of Schumpeter and non-elite

⁷⁸ For example, see Almond, Gabriel and Sidney Verba, 1965, *The Civic Culture*. Little Brown, p.118-9, Bahry, Donna, 1999, "Comrades into Citizens? Russian Political Culture and Public Support for the Transition," *Slavic Review*, Vol. 58, No. 4, Special Issue: Ten years after 1989: What Have We Learned? Winter, p. 848; Carnaghan, Ellen, 2001, "Thinking about Democracy: Interviews with Russian Citizens." *Slavic Review*, Vol. 60, No. 2, Summer, p. 350, n. 51; Carnaghan, Ellen, 2007, *Out of Order: Russian Political Values in an Imperfect World*. The Pennsylvania State University Press, pp. 15-6, n. 7; Gibson, James L., Raymon M. Duch, and Kent L. Tedin. 1992, "Democratic values and the Transformation of the Soviet Union," *Journal of Politics*, 54, p. 331; Hopf, Ted, 2002. "Making the Future Inevitable: Legitimizing, Naturalizing and Stabilizing. The Transition in Estonia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan," *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 8, No. 3, p. 405; McIntosh, Mary, Martha Abele MacIver, Daniel Abele and Dina Smeltz, 1994, "Public Meets Democracy in Central and East Europe 1991-1993", *Slavic Review*, 53, Fall, pp. 495-6; Przeworski et al., 2000, *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990*. Cambridge University Press, p. 15; Reisinger, W.M., A.H. Miller, V.L. Hesli, K.H. Maher, 1994. "Political Values in Russia, Ukraine and Lithuania: Sources and Implications for Democracy." *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 24, No. 2, April, p. 205; Gibson, James L., Raymon M. Duch, and Kent L. Tedin. 1992, "Democratic values and the Transformation of the Soviet Union," *Journal of Politics*, 54, pp. 330 n. 3, 331; Miller, Arthur H., V.L. Hesli, W.M. Reisinger, 1997, "Conceptions of Democracy among Mass and Elite in Post-Soviet Societies," *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 27, No. 2, Apr., p. 158 n. 2; Reisinger, William M., 1995. "The Renaissance of a Rubric: political Culture as Concept and Theory," *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 7, no. 4, p. 344; Rose, Richard, William Mishler, and Christian Haerpfer., 1998, *Democracy and Its Alternatives*. John Hopkins University Press, p. 28-30.

⁷⁹ Dahl, Robert, 1956, *A Preface to Democratic Theory*. The University of Chicago Press, p. 131, n. 12.

theory of Dahl.⁸⁰ Moreover, Przeworski et al. comment that Dahl's conception of democracy is too demanding insofar as Dahl includes participation as one of the essential features of democracy.⁸¹ Instead, Przeworski et al. insist on excluding 'participation' from the definition of democracy and defend a 'minimalist', Schumpeterian conception of democracy, where democracy is "a regime in which those who govern are selected through contested elections."⁸² Hence, I want to acknowledge the ways in which Dahl's democratic theory in *Polyarchy* stands in contrast to Schumpeter's elite conception. And yet, I contend that in spite of some obvious disjunctions between Schumpeter and Dahl there are certain strong parallels in their ontological assumptions and views of democracy.

Polyarchy is about how to become a democracy, about democratization. So, the overarching question to which Dahl's *Polyarchy* speaks is: what are the conditions under which a regime can be transformed into one where "the opponents of the government [can] openly and legally organize into political parties in order to oppose the government in free and fair elections?"⁸³ In his view of democracy, that end goal of transformation,

⁸⁰ Resinger, William M., 1995. "The Renaissance of a Rubric: Political Culture as Concept and Theory," *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 7, no. 4, p. 344.

⁸¹ Przeworski, Adam, Michael E. Alvarez, Jose Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Limongi. 2000. *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990*, Cambridge University Press, p. 34. Przeworski et al. note that if participation was included into the definition of democracy, it would lead to disqualifying the United States from the list of democratic countries until the 1950s. Hence, Dahl's emphasis on participation is supposedly raising the bar of democracy too high. Przeworski et al. never explain, however, why excluding the United States from the ranks of democratic countries is a problem.

⁸² Przeworski, Adam, Michael E. Alvarez, Jose Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Limongi. 2000. *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990*, Cambridge University Press, p. 15.

⁸³ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 1.

Dahl stresses competition between parties and elections and such a conception is clearly Schumpeterian. But further Dahl also identifies responsiveness of government to citizen preferences as a characteristic feature of democracy:

I assume that a key characteristic of a democracy is the continuing responsiveness of the government to the preferences of its citizens, considered as political equals... *In this book I should like to reserve the term "democracy" for a political system one of the characteristics of which is the quality of being completely or almost completely responsive to all its citizens...* I assume further that in order for a government to continue over a period of time to be responsive to the preferences of its citizens, considered as political equals, all full citizens must have unimpaired opportunities 1. To formulate their preferences 2. To signify their preferences to their fellow citizens and the government by individual and collective action 3. To have their preferences weighed equally in the conduct of the government, that is, weighted with no discrimination because of the content or source of the preference. These, then, appear to me to be three necessary conditions for a democracy, though they are probably not sufficient⁸⁴

Thus, we can also see that for Dahl, unlike Schumpeter's elite competitive conception, it is not enough that presence of elections, i.e. competition for votes, qualifies society as democratic. In addition to "[everyone's] right to vote", "the right of political leaders to compete for support", and "free and fair elections", Dahl emphasizes responsiveness of government to the electorate, freedom of speech, freedom of association, "eligibility for public office", "alternative sources of information", and "institutions for making government policies depend on votes and other expression of preference."⁸⁵ However, in spite of the expanded list and apparently different emphases, I contend Dahl's democratic vision in important respects is still very Schumpeterian. Perhaps, the most eloquent

⁸⁴ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 1-2, emphasis added.

⁸⁵ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 2-3.

statement in *Polyarchy* that demonstrates Dahl's alignment with the Schumpeterian elite and conservative social vision that I would like to open my criticisms with is this:

*Most people, it appears, have quite rudimentary political beliefs. Rich and complex systems of political belief are held only by small minorities. On the present evidence, it is reasonable to think that while this is true in all countries, the lower the average level of formal education, the smaller the minority is that has complex beliefs about politics... With all that is known about political beliefs, it would be wildly unrealistic to expect, even in a country like the United States where a democratic ideology has been the dominant belief system for generations, that many people would possess an elaborately worked-out democratic theory.*⁸⁶

I submit Dahl's theory exhibits features I pointed out in reference to Schumpeter's elite model, such as static and unchanging view of democracy, separation of economics from the scope of politics and democracy, bracketing the question of self-rule, and related to the latter, disinterest in lay actors' democratic thought. For example, Dahl is unambiguous in his view that the meaning of democracy has not been or may not be susceptible to contestation, not to mention contestation by lay actors. He responds to apparent debates about what democracy entails by saying that "the institutional arrangements" that he discusses "have [already] come to be regarded as a kind of imperfect approximation of an ideal [democracy]".⁸⁷ Such a formulation of the problem in one sweep erases from the grasp of democratic theory definitional and conceptual issues in regards to democracy – other than Dahl himself and certain intellectuals he

⁸⁶ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 127, 131-2, emphasis added.

⁸⁷ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 9, n. 4.

singles out, from Dahl's discussion it is unclear who else regards "institutional arrangements" that he highlights as an approximation of democracy, i.e. popular rule.⁸⁸

It is even less clear why only Dahl and several intellectuals are to be consulted on the issue of what popular rule entails. Consider that Dahl explicitly brackets what he calls the "third" episode of democratization "interrupted by the WWII, the process seems to have renewed itself in the late 1960s in the form of rapidly rising demands, notably among young people, for the democratization of a variety of social institutions. This book is concerned with the first and second of these [democratic] transformations but not the third."⁸⁹ Presumably, many "young people" in America of 1960 would not agree with Dahl's definition of democracy (he also admits that some radical intellectuals might be "disappointed by the transparent failures of polyarchies"⁹⁰). However, Dahl's theoretical framework inadvertently forecloses or excludes those conceptions of democracy and democratic debate that do not fit the categories set out by him in the beginning. He justifies the exclusion by stating that his study is about more modest democratic goals, implying that the "third" episode of democratic debate and transformation is yet too utopian to take seriously into account – talking about it would be idealistic rather than realistic, especially in regards to "third world countries".⁹¹ However, apparent skepticism about "utopian" social transformations in America does not prevent Dahl's book length

⁸⁸ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 17.

⁸⁹ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 9.

⁹⁰ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 17.

⁹¹ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, pp. 9-11, 14.

interest in another utopian project of social transformation of third world countries into polyarchies.⁹² Thus, we can see that Dahl's conception of democracy and ontological presuppositions exhibit Schumpeterian strains, particularly a view that the meaning of democracy is fixed and that scholars cannot rely on the masses for rich and interesting reflection about the scope of democracy and society. I shall return to this point further: such ontological presuppositions cannot motivate survey and interview scholars to inquire into 'unusual' lay Russian and Ukrainian visions of democracy, not to mention learning from and engaging with these insights.

We must note that Dahl's overall democratic theory provides inconsistent messages with respect to the 'socio-economic' realm and inequalities in democracy. In *Polyarchy* he is explicit that his vision of democratic politics does not encompass democratization of the 'socio-economic' realm, i.e. "subnational organizations, particularly private associations, [which] are hegemonic or oligarchic".⁹³ Furthermore, Dahl examines the "socio-economic" realm, i.e. level of economic development, distribution of resources, and inequalities as potential preconditions for democracy or as not affecting chances for stability of democracy, but not as a matter of democracy and a sphere to be governed by democratic principles.⁹⁴ Dahl's democratic theory per *Polyarchy* is Schumpeterian insofar as the 'economic realm' and transformation of socio-economic hierarchies and domination are divorced from the scope of politics and

⁹² Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 11.

⁹³ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 14.

⁹⁴ Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 14, pp. 60-81.

democracy. But in his later work Dahl addresses issues of democratizing that subnational, private space – e.g. the workplace, education, - governed by undemocratic principles.⁹⁵ But it is not this “socio-economic” side of Dahl’s democratic theory that has been influential in survey and interview-based literature, but rather the Schumpeterian in spirit *Polyarchy*.

Echoes of Schumpeterian ontology can also be seen in Dahl’s discussion of what role in a society, aside from selecting leadership, he envisions for the vast majority of people. I submit, while Dahl appears to accentuate the role of citizens in his democratic theory, this role does not extend to lay actors reflecting on, judging, and influencing the organizing structures of the society in which they live. For Dahl, the role of lay actors is to signify preferences to the government but it is not about lay actors contesting the scope of their influence in their own society, which is really a form of self-rule. The very term that Dahl chooses – preferences - has a particular connotation in reference to ideas. Preferences are usually electoral and policy, but are not views and expectations about the scope of democracy, structures and organization of society.⁹⁶

Let me draw attention to two examples that reveal Dahl’s carelessness about the role, weight, and contribution of lay actors’ democratic ideas to democratic theory and direction of society. The first is his defense of polyarchy from potential critics of polyarchy. Dahl defends his concept of polyarchy on behalf of “intellectuals who have actually experienced life under severely repressive hegemonic regimes” from the

⁹⁵ See Dahl, Robert, 1970, *After the Revolution: Authority in a Good Society*, Yale University Press, and Dahl, Robert, 1985. *A Preface to Economic Democracy*, Prentice-Hall.

⁹⁶ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 26, 29.

“intellectuals who are, at heart, liberal or radical democrats disappointed by the transparent failures of polyarchies”.⁹⁷ In this case, reflections of intellectuals about democracy are quite important for Dahl to an extent that they affect whether the outlook on polyarchy should be negative or positive. But intellectuals are not the only ones that have lived in severely repressive hegemonic regimes and it is not clear whether their experiences are even representative of the experiences of millions of lay actors – but interest in lay reflections and insights about democracy, domination, and repression never even arises in Dahl’s framework. I contend that when such outright disinterest in lay actors’ theoretical contributions is combined with barring “economics” from the scope of democracy, it is difficult to imagine how democratic scholarship can even take lay actors’ democratic thinking with strong emphasis on economic welfare and economic injustices seriously. The type of democratic scholarship that Dahl’s view of democracy fortifies is not one where democratic scholars would be interested in how lay Russian and Ukrainian actors think about democracy and their societies and its socio-economic institutions and practices, not to mention adequately grasping, learning from and engaging with these lay democratic ideas.

The second example that demonstrates echoes of Schumpeter’s elite social ontology in *Polyarchy* concerns Dahl’s discussion about the place of lay democratic beliefs in democratic theory and practice. On Dahl’s account, not all lay views are of interest for democratic scholarship and democratic transformation, but only beliefs of political activists: “In this chapter I am going to be mainly concerned with the beliefs of

⁹⁷ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 17.

the people most involved in political action, such as activists, militants, and in particular those with the greatest manifest or implicit power, actual or potential, the leaders or potential leaders”.⁹⁸ And even as far as political activists are concerned, their beliefs are important from Dahl’s standpoint insofar as they help to “affect chances for a particular kind of regime, defined here according to the extent of hegemony, public contestation, and polyarchy,” but not as a reservoir of knowledge and insights for democratic scholars.⁹⁹ Admittedly, Dahl conceives beliefs interchangeably with knowledge – in this sense, beliefs have conceptual and cognitive elements for him and encompass “assumptions about reality, about the character of the past and present”.¹⁰⁰ However, Dahl’s initial understanding of the scope of popular rule and related to that ontological position about the role and weight of lay beliefs in democratic practice and theory are ultimately Schumpeterian because Dahl is not interested in lay actors’ political thought describing and influencing structure, organization, or transformation of society at large. The question for Dahl is not about what political activists can tell scholars about society, democracy, and transformation, but in what way political activists are an asset or an impediment to the movement toward polyarchy.¹⁰¹ Beliefs of the “inactive or excluded strata” may become important insofar as they may be mobilized by various political

⁹⁸ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 126-7.

⁹⁹ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, pp. 125, 126, 132.

¹⁰⁰ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 125.

¹⁰¹ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 126, 132.

leaders with democratic (in Dahl's sense) or undemocratic intentions.¹⁰² I submit that the type of democratic studies that Dahl's democratic theory inspires is ultimately Schumpeterian – it is not one where democratic scholars are encouraged to investigate into how lay Russian and Ukrainian actors think about democracy and their societies, not to mention adequately grasping, learning from and engaging with these lay democratic ideas.

In conclusion, I highlighted that Schumpeter abhorred the idea of lay people's influence on social institutions affecting their lives. Schumpeter believed that lay political thinking is inherently uninteresting, irrational, and worthless. Thus, in his aristocratic view, lay thought and action should occupy an insignificant role in matters of governance and society, including the designation of the scope of democracy, i.e. popular rule. Schumpeter understood and valued social hierarchy in both cognitive and practical sense and I argued that these conservative convictions are inscribed into the vocabulary and assumptions of the elite competitive model of democracy. I have also argued that Schumpeter's assumptions are echoed in the work of Robert Dahl, even though Dahl differs from Schumpeter in a number of important respects. Without denying those differences, I have insisted that in Schumpeterian spirit Dahl cautions against academic engagement with concrete lay ideas about society and democracy. In addition, in Schumpeterian spirit, his work remains inhospitable to democratic critique and analysis of the 'economic' realm.

¹⁰² Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 131.

Chapter 3. Minus the People and Minus Social Justice: Two Implications of the Schumpeterian Framework for Scholarship on Democracy

a) Introduction

Democratic theorists should take the rational and deliberative capacity of lay actors seriously because democracy should be about non-coercion, inclusion, the free exchange of ideas, and equality among listeners and speakers. In a democracy, rights and laws should not be an imposition but rather authorized by the people themselves. As a form of government where people are in power, democracy broadly encompasses a principle of popular participation in the direction of political life. One way to understand participation, I argue, is by thinking about it as an opportunity for individual and collective self-expression, where lay actors can contribute to interpreting features of their social world, including the meaning of democracy. Moreover, historically democracy has been contested and redefined not only by experts and elites, but often by lay actors themselves through social movements.

However, my analysis of prominent scholarly frames and assumptions suggests that there is hardly any room for taking lay ideas about democracy seriously. Based on the example of post-communist survey and interview literature, I examine the implications of grounding research on democracy and lay democratic beliefs in Schumpeter's influential elite competitive model of democracy. I submit that the abundance of survey and interview literature makes it appear as though scholarship on democracy has methodological and conceptual resources to generate a plethora of interest in lay, and in this case Ukrainian and Russian, views. But paradoxically, as I show, survey and

interview scholars labor under the assumptions that lay political thought is immaterial for understanding important problems of democracy and society, which is an undemocratic conviction. I argue that these tendencies are not due to scholars “smuggling” their values into their research when it is supposed to be value free, but rather due to their unreflective adoption of Schumpeterian framework of the elite competitive democracy.

Schumpeter famously defines democracy as “a rule of politician... a method or institutional framework whereby politicians compete for people’s votes”, rather than popular rule or socialism.¹ But many contemporary scholars who adopt this framework are unaware of what social vision fortifies this vocabulary.² Schumpeter abhorred the idea of lay people’s influence on social institutions affecting their lives, particularly

¹ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, pp. 269, 270, 282-5.

² Examples of those seminal American scholars who credit Schumpeter directly are: Downs, Anthony, 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, New York, HarperCollins, p. 29, n. 11; Lipset, Seymour Martin, 1959. “Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy,” *American Political Science Review*, 53 (1), p. 71; Dahl, Robert, 1956, *A Preface to Democratic Theory*. The University of Chicago Press, p. 131, n. 12; Huntington, Samuel, 1993, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. University of Oklahoma Press, p. 6; Diamond, Larry, 2003, “Defining and Developing Democracy,” in ed. R.A. Dahl, I. Shapiro, and J.A. Cheibub, *The Democracy Sourcebook*. p. 31; Przeworski, Adam, 2003, “Minimalist Conception of Democracy: A Defense,” in ed. R.A. Dahl, I. Shapiro, and J.A. Cheibub, *The Democracy Sourcebook*, p. 12; Diamond, Larry, J. Linz and S. Lipset, ed., 1988, *Democracy in Developing Countries*. Vol. 2, Africa. London: Adamantine Press, p. xvi; Linz, Juan, 1978, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown, and Reequilibration*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press p. 48, 94; Almond, Gabriel, A., 1980, “The Intellectual History of the Civic Culture Concept,” In *The Civic Culture Revisited*, ed. G.A. Almond and S. Verba, Little, Brown, p. 21. Also see overviews of Schumpeter’s legacies on the contemporary field of democratization studies Cammack, Paul, 1997, *Capitalism and Democracy in the Third World: The Doctrine for the Political Development*, Leicester University Press, pp. 218-31; Medearis, John, 2001. *Joseph Schumpeter’s Two Theories of Democracy*, Harvard University Press, pp. 1-2, Diamond, Larry and Marc F. Plattner, ed., 1993, “Introduction,” in *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy Revisited*. John Hopkins University Press, p. ix; Schmitter, Philippe C., and Terry Lynn Karl, 1996, “What Democracy Is...and Is Not.” In L. Diamond and M.F. Plattner, eds. *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, Second Edition, Johns Hopkins University Press, p. 60, 61, n. 3.

economic institutions such as industries and the workplace.³ As a conservative and a self-proclaimed aristocrat, Schumpeter believed that lay political thinking is inherently uninteresting, irrational, and worthless, and that mass influence in the matters of society is undesirable.⁴ I wish to highlight that Schumpeter did not just think that human beings in general are politically inept, but it is a particular social class of people – laborers - that he felt must not be allowed to exert influence in the society, while members of aristocratic and property owning circles should.⁵ Schumpeter understood and valued such social hierarchy on both cognitive and practical levels. By this I mean that within his social vision not only should there be limits on mass participation, but also lay thinking should not be taken seriously.

I argue that these conservative convictions are *inscribed* into the vocabulary of the elite competitive model of democracy and overcoming their anti-democratic bias requires scholars to do more than just check their own political motivations. I insist that one must give up on using the influential framework of the elite competitive model altogether. On Schumpeter's account, democracy cannot possibly mean 'popular rule' and leveling of

³ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, p. 108-10; For references to Schumpeter's conservative and royalist preferences, see Swedberg, Richard, 1992. *Schumpeter: A Biography*. Princeton University Press, pp. 8-9, 52-3, 63, 146. Medearis provides a much more consistent and in depth look at Schumpeter's conservatism and its relation to his work, see Medearis, John. 2001, *Joseph Schumpeter's Two Theories of Democracy*, Harvard University Press, and Medearis, John, 2009, *Major Conservative and Libertarian Thinkers: Joseph Schumpeter*, Continuum. Also, see excerpts from Schumpeter's published work, letters and memos on monarchy and regretting the spread of the democratic debate, universal franchise, and worker council movements, Medearis, John. 2001, *Joseph Schumpeter's Two Theories of Democracy*, Harvard University Press, pp. 21-49, 59-64.

⁴ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, pp. 203, 204-5, 256, 260-1.

⁵ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, p. 214-8, also see Swedberg, Richard, 1992. *Schumpeter: A Biography*. Princeton University Press, p. 148; Medearis, John. 2001, *Joseph Schumpeter's Two Theories of Democracy*, Harvard University Press, pp. 63-4.

hierarchical structures and elite domination in the “economic” realm.⁶ Also, democracy on his account is defined *as just and only* an institutional framework or method for selection of *political* leadership.⁷ Due to accentuating that the elite leadership is the only thing that democracy can possibly be, the meaning of ‘democracy’ in the elite competitive version is also conceived as static and unchanging, i.e. transhistorical.⁸ This fixed view of democracy, I maintain, coupled with Schumpeter’s deep disdain for practices of non-elite influence on the direction of society makes the scope of democracy, i.e. popular rule, closed to reinterpretation and contestation *by lay actors themselves*.⁹

⁶ For example, see Ricci, David M, 1970. “Democracy Attenuated: Schumpeter, the Process Theory, and American Democratic Thought,” *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 32, No. 2. (May), pp. 239-267; Walker, Jack L., 1966, “A Critique of the Elitist Theory of Democracy,” *American Political Science Review*, 60, 2 (June), p. 286, 288; Cammack, Paul, 1997, *Capitalism and Democracy in the Third World: The Doctrine for the Political Development*, Leicester University Press, p. 218-31; Baker, Gideon, 2007, “The Taming of the Idea of Civil Society”, *Democratization*, Vol. 14, No. 4, Aug; and Held, David, 2006, *Models of Democracy*. Stanford University Press, 2nd ed., pp. 225-31. Also see Wood and Wolin, although they do not refer to Schumpeter specifically, the conception of democracy they criticize has Schumpeterian overtones, Wood, Ellen Meiksins, 1995, *Democracy Against Capitalism: Renewing Historical Materialism*. Cambridge University Press; Wolin, Sheldon S., 1994, “Norm and Form: The Constitutionalizing of Democracy”, in *Athenian Political Thought and the Reconstruction of American Democracy*. Ed. By J.P. Euben and J.R. Wallach, J. Ober., Cornell University Press, pp. 29-59.

⁷ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, pp. 269, 270, 282-5, also see critiques of excluding meaningful popular participation from the scope of democracy in O’Toole, Laurence J. Jr., 1977, “Schumpeter’s ‘Democracy’: A Critical View,” *Polity*, Vol. 9, No. 4. (Summer), pp. 446-462; Pateman, Carole, 1976, *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge University Press, p. 104; Pateman, Carole, 1989, *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism, and Political Theory*. Polity Press, pp. 142-5; and Baker, Gideon, 2007, “The Taming of the Idea of Civil Society”, *Democratization*, Vol. 14, No. 4, Aug.

⁸ For critiques of static definition of democracy, see Medearis, John, 2001b. “Ideology, Democracy, and the Limits of Equilibrium: A Schumpeterian Critique,” *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 31, No. 2, 355-388; Markoff, John, 1997. “Really Existing Democracy: Learning from Latin America in the late 1990s”, *New Left Review*, Vol. a; and Wolin, although Wolin does not critique Schumpeter directly, Wolin, Sheldon S., 1994, “Norm and Form: The Constitutionalizing of Democracy” in *Athenian Political Thought and the Reconstruction of American Democracy*. Ed. By J.P. Euben and J.R. Wallach, J. Ober., Cornell University Press, pp. 29-59.

⁹ Echoes of such critique of the static and conservative approach to the meaning of democracy can be seen in Markoff, John, 1997. “Really Existing Democracy: Learning from Latin America in the late 1990s”,

In this essay I specifically explore implications of adopting Schumpeter's conception of democracy that is fixed, that brackets the "socio-economic" realm, and that does not recognize lay actors as legitimate political agents with valuable reflections upon the scope of their rule, their problems, and their society. I contend that insofar as democratic scholars adopt this prominent framework and conceptual vocabulary, they end up (I) uninterested in exploring lay conceptions of democracy, reluctant to learn from lay ideas, and (II) incapable of adequately understanding 'unusual' lay democratic thinking focused on "economic" institutions, practices, and experiences. Scholars who adopt the vocabulary of the elite competitive model remain unable to comprehend instances of political powerlessness, inequality, and unfreedom in the "economic" realm that many lay actors point to, not to mention explaining these phenomena and relating them meaningfully to the impetus of democratization in Ukraine and Russia.

b) Devaluing Lay Contribution for Theory of Democracy

Lay thinking in general is devalued in the elite competitive framework, the meaning and form of democracy are conceived as static and unchanging, and the "socio-economic" realm is protected from democratic oversight. As a result, it is difficult for followers of the elite competitive model to generate interest in lay conceptions of democracy and to accommodate the 'unusual' focus on "economic" matters. This implication can be seen in two broad and related tendencies in survey and interview

New Left Review, Vol. a, and Medearis, John, 2004, "Lost or Obscured? How V.I. Lenin, J. Schumpeter and H. Arendt misunderstood Worker Council Movement." *Polity*, Vol. XXXVI, N. 3, April.

based research on Russian and Ukrainian democratic beliefs. (1) The first tendency that I highlight here is a very narrow approach to lay democratic thinking. On this account, lay democratic beliefs are not seen as a system of meaning that entails a certain vocabulary and a particular understanding of democracy and society, but as just a set of attitudes towards objects that scholars themselves label as representing aspects of democracy. I call this approach to lay beliefs *methodological reductionism*. Furthermore, lay attitudes are interesting to scholars insofar as they help to predict behavior or help to maintain a particular form of government that scholars identify with democracy in the beginning of their investigation. I call this approach to lay ideas *methodological instrumentalism*. (2) Second, even though in general in post-communist literature there is very little sustained interest in lay conceptions of democracy, within the scarce research that exists, ‘unusual’ lay conceptions of democracy are either instrumentalized or in extreme cases explicitly dismissed.

1) Lack of Interest in Lay Conceptions of Democracy, Instrumentalism, and Reductionism

Studying lay understanding of democracy is not a prominent research agenda in survey and interview-based literature. Rather, the focus is on discovering whether mass beliefs support the vision of democracy as defined by scholars:

Virtually all of the empirical investigation of popular support for democracy follows the same research methodology. This methodology involves devising a set of survey questions that reflect certain democratic principles – such as competitive elections, a competitive party system or freedom to criticize government – and then asking the survey respondents to indicate a positive to negative evaluation of each principle. The extent of support for

these various principles thus reveals the overall level of support for democracy.¹⁰

For instance, Gibson et al. design a study to determine “the degree to which the cultural requisites to democracy are present in the contemporary political culture of the USSR.”¹¹ This inquiry (both developing survey questions and interpreting responses) is wholly grounded in the conceptual framework of democracy developed by Dahl in his *Polyarchy*.¹² But Dahl’s democratic theory in *Polyarchy*, while introducing new terms into democratic vocabulary, still, in Schumpeterian spirit, cautions scholars against taking lay actors’ visions of democracy seriously and separates democracy from matters of political economy.¹³ Gibson et al. investigate whether Russian public opinion is hospitable to “core democratic rights, liberties, and institutions” such as “political diversity, openness, and competition”.¹⁴ Such a formulation suggests that the goal for scholars is not to explore what lay Russians might understand by democracy, but rather to investigate whether lay Russian beliefs conform to scholarly standards and precepts regarding democracy.

¹⁰ Miller, Arthur H., V.L. Hesli, W.M. Reisinger, 1997, “Conceptions of Democracy among Mass and Elite in Post-Soviet Societies,” *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 27, No. 2, Apr, p. 159.

¹¹ Gibson, James L., Raymon M. Duch, and Kent L. Tedin. 1992, “Democratic values and the Transformation of the Soviet Union,” *Journal of Politics*, 54, p. 329.

¹² Gibson, James L., Raymon M. Duch, and Kent L. Tedin. 1992, “Democratic values and the Transformation of the Soviet Union,” *Journal of Politics*, 54, pp. 330-1.

¹³ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 9-11, 14, 17, 127, 131-2.

¹⁴ Gibson, James L., Raymon M. Duch, and Kent L. Tedin. 1992, “Democratic values and the Transformation of the Soviet Union,” *Journal of Politics*, 54, pp. 329, 333.

I suggest that the tendency to remain uninterested in lay conceptions of democracy and instead to tailor research to scholars own views of democracy is based on their implicit and unreflective acceptance of the assumptions and vocabulary of the elite competitive model. Gibson et al.'s survey study is embedded in Schumpeterian assumptions that democracy's form is known in advance, it has nothing to do with political economy, it is fixed, it is unquestionable, and that democracy's meaning is not something to be debated by lay actors. Schumpeterian vocabulary does not motivate scholars to inquire into lay conceptions of democracy because the meaning of democracy in the elite competitive model is set beforehand and lay thought in general is devalued.

Even when scholars acknowledge that democracy is a contested concept, this acknowledgement does not bear on the course of their investigation and is normally resolved by references to work of a seminal author. As one of such examples, Rose et al. justify the meaning of democracy they use by references to prevailing cultural wisdom or colloquial use. More specifically, they state that their research is about "regimes *colloquially* described as democratic".¹⁵ Such an approach can potentially signify scholarly interest in *local* knowledge and lay conceptions of democracy. However, the assumptions of the elite competitive model that frame their discussion do not allow Rose et al. to consider such a possibility even after they appear to have acknowledged that there is such a thing as a colloquial use of democracy. Thus, as they interject that "the idea of democracy is a contested concept", they clarify that "the presence or absence of

¹⁵ Rose, Richard, William Mishler, and Christian Haerpfer, 1998, *Democracy and Its Alternatives*. John Hopkins University Press, p. 27-8, emphasis added.

competitive elections is the simplest definition of democracy.”¹⁶ Rose et al., even though themselves Anglo-American scholars studying a post-communist society, fail to follow up on their recognition that colloquial uses of democracy might differ across societies. Rather, they immediately resort to Dahl’s authority on the subject of democracy’s meaning, while also reiterating Schumpeter’s legacy in supplying the “classical definition”.¹⁷

I argue that such a conceptually motivated lack of interest in lay definitions of democracy results in the reductionist approach to lay democratic thinking. By *reductionism* I mean that scholars reduce lay democratic thought to just a set of attitudes about social objects and principles that scholars themselves label as democracy, rather than see lay beliefs as a system of meaning that entails an understanding of democracy and society. Assumptions that constitute the elite competitive model condition fixed questions and interpretations of responses, such as for example asking lay actors “If the parliament were suspended and parties abolished would you approve or disapprove?” Lay positive response to such question is interpreted in scholarly frameworks as evidence of nonsupport for democracy and as evidence of the lack of democratic beliefs in popular culture.¹⁸ However, questions of the sort cannot help scholars to get at what democracy actually means to lay actors and such research findings obscure and devalue the force of

¹⁶ Rose, Richard, William Mishler, and Christian Haerpfer, 1998, *Democracy and Its Alternatives*. John Hopkins University, p. 26.

¹⁷ Rose, Richard, William Mishler, and Christian Haerpfer., 1998, *Democracy and Its Alternatives*. John Hopkins University Press, pp. 28, 33.

¹⁸ Rose, Richard, William Mishler, and Christian Haerpfer., 1998, *Democracy and Its Alternatives*. John Hopkins University Press, p. 236, Appendix A.

lay democratic thinking. In the end, reductionist research leaves survey and interview scholars in the dark with respect to the very object of their study – lay democratic beliefs. So, even though it appears there is plenty of scholarly attention to public opinion in post-communist countries, this interest is very limited and contingent. The reductionist approach to lay democratic thinking cannot assist scholars in recovering the force and character of lay democratic ideas, not to mention stimulate scholars to learn from lay conceptions and relate these lessons to the impetus of democratization in the societies that they study.

Furthermore, the lack of interest in lay conceptions of democracy manifests itself in yet another common approach to lay thinking – *instrumentalism*. On this account, lay attitudes are interesting to scholar as an instrument, as a way to predict lay actors' behavior or explain the (non)viability of a given set of institutions: "One of the most interesting questions nowadays is whether or not there exists in the territories of the former Soviet Union a political culture (or at least a sub-culture or incipient culture) that is receptive to democracy to an extent *that would sustain* democratic institutions and processes."¹⁹ This instrumental approach to public opinion is exemplified by arguments that democracy (as conceived by scholars) requires on the part of citizens a commitment to certain values, norms, institutions, and practices.²⁰ For example, for Almond and

¹⁹ Fleron, Frederic J., 1996, "Post-Soviet Political Culture in Russia: An Assessment of Recent Empirical Investigations," p. 231, emphasis added.

²⁰ Almond, Gabriel and Sidney Verba, 1965, *The Civil Culture*; Dahl, Robert 1971, *Polyarchy*, p. 30, and chapter 8; Dahl, Robert, 1991, *Democracy and Its Critics*, pp. 262-4; Diamond, Larry, 1999, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation*; Fleron, Frederic J., 1996, "Post-Soviet Political Culture in Russia: An Assessment of Recent Empirical Investigations," pp. 225-60; Fleron J. Frederic, and Richard Ahl,

Verba, the seminal authors of the ‘political culture’ paradigm, the ultimate interest is in what political culture can do for the stability of certain institutions as opposed to political culture as a system of meaning that enables people to define certain institutions, values, and practices as democratic and not others.²¹ Such instrumentalism is also evident in Dahl’s understanding of the role of lay beliefs in politics. For Dahl, ideas of lay activists are important mainly because they might play a role in contributing to or subverting democratization per Dahl’s definition of democracy.²² It is this theoretical legacy of Dahl, which is very Schumpeterian in spirit that is often followed by many survey and interview scholars.²³

1998, “Does the Public Matter for Democratization in Russia? What We Have Learned from ‘Third Wave’ Transitions and Public Opinion Surveys,” pp. 287-330.

²¹ *Civic Culture* was written to explore conditions for the stability of ‘democratic’ institutions and in the context of the rise of “democratic equilibrium theory”, see Almond, Gabriel A. “The Civic Culture: Prehistory, Retrospect, and Prospect.” This paper is a written version of a series of research colloquia presented at the Center for the Study of Democracy and the Department of Politics and Society, University of California, Irvine, Nov. 17, 1995. Also, for an overview of motivations for and arguments within the “democratic stability” literature, see Meilleur, Maurice, J. 2005, “After Methodology: Toward a Profession of Political Science,” in *Perestroika: The Raucous Rebellion in Political Science*, ed. by Kristen R. Monroe, Yale University Press, pp. 492-3, and Pateman, Carole, 1976, *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 12-6, 104, Cammack, Paul, 1997, *Capitalism and Democracy in the Third World: The Doctrine for Political Development*, Leicester University Press, p. 232.

²² Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, pp. 126-127, 131-2.

²³ For example of those who draw on Dahl rather than Schumpeter, see Almond, Gabriel and Sidney Verba, 1965, *The Civic Culture*. Little Brown, p.118-9, Bahry, Donna, 1999, “Comrades into Citizens? Russian Political Culture and Public Support for the Transition,” *Slavic Review*, Vol. 58, No. 4, Special Issue: Ten years after 1989: What Have We Learned? Winter, p. 848; Carnaghan, Ellen, 2001, “Thinking about Democracy: Interviews with Russian Citizens.” *Slavic Review*, Vol. 60, No. 2, Summer, p. 350, n. 51; Carnaghan, Ellen, 2007, *Out of Order: Russian Political Values in an Imperfect World*. The Pennsylvania State University Press, pp. 15-6, n. 7; Gibson, James L., Raymon M. Duch, and Kent L. Tedin. 1992, “Democratic values and the Transformation of the Soviet Union,” *Journal of Politics*, 54, p. 331; Hopf, Ted, 2002. “Making the Future Inevitable: Legitimizing, Naturalizing and Stabilizing. The Transition in Estonia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan,” *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 8, No. 3, p. 405; McIntosh, Mary, Martha Abele MacIver, Daniel Abele and Dina Smeltz, 1994, “Public Meets Democracy in Central and East Europe 1991-1993”, *Slavic Review*, 53, Fall, pp. 495-6; Przeworski et al., 2000, *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the*

It is true that there is no scholarly agreement about how much political culture or public opinion matters²⁴, what particular values are constitutive of democratic political culture²⁵, or where democratic attitudes come from.²⁶ But, I contend, these scholarly debates do not change the character of survey and interview-based intervention in scholarship on democracy that I want to highlight here. For scholars who ground their research in unreflective acceptance of Schumpeterian assumptions and conceptual categories, lay Russian and Ukrainian beliefs are interesting because they may contribute to fostering or impeding sustainability of institutions defined by scholars as democracy

World, 1950-1990. Cambridge University Press, p. 15; Reisinger, W.M., A.H. Miller, V.L. Hesli, K.H. Maher, 1994. "Political Values in Russia, Ukraine and Lithuania: Sources and Implications for Democracy." *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 24, No. 2, April, p. 205; Gibson, James L., Raymon M. Duch, and Kent L. Tedin. 1992, "Democratic values and the Transformation of the Soviet Union," *Journal of Politics*, 54, pp. 330 n. 3, 331; Miller, Arthur H., V.L. Hesli, W.M. Reisinger, 1997, "Conceptions of Democracy among Mass and Elite in Post-Soviet Societies," *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 27, No. 2, Apr., p. 158 n. 2; Resinger, William M., 1995. "The Renaissance of a Rubric: political Culture as Concept and Theory," *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 7, no. 4, p. 344; Rose, Richard, William Mishler, and Christian Haerpfer., 1998, *Democracy and Its Alternatives*. John Hopkins University Press, p. 28-30.

²⁴ Resinger, William M., 1995, "The Renaissance of a Rubric: political Culture as Concept and Theory," pp. 328-52; Laitin, David D., 1995, "The Civic Culture at 30," pp. 168-73.

²⁵ Various authors emphasize some 'constituents of democratic political culture' more than others, for example, see Almond and Verba 1965; Dahl, Robert., 1989, *Democracy and Its Critics*; Putnam, Robert, 1993, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, Gibson et al., 1992, "Democratic values and the Transformation of the Soviet Union," p. 331; Gibson, James L, 1998 "A Sober Second thought: An Experiment in Persuading Russians to Tolerate," pp. 819-50.

²⁶ For an example of arguments about cultural and religious sources of democratic values, see Huntington, Samuel, 1996, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. For an example of arguments about economic growth as a source of democratic values, i.e. desire to support electoral and parliamentary institutions, to participate in politics, lobby, and protest, see Inglehart, Ronald, and Hans D. Klingemann, 1979, "Ideological Conceptualization and Value Priorities." In *Political Action: Mass Participation in Five Western Democracies*, ed. by S. Barnes, M. Kaase, et al.. Beverly Hills: Sage, pp. 209-11; Inglehart, Ronald, 1990, *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society*, and Lipset, Seymour Martin, [1959]1981, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*. For an example of how these seminal works on sources of political culture are currently employed in survey literature on post-communist countries, see Reisinger, W.M., A.H. Miller, V.L. Hesli, K.H. Maher, 1994. "Political Values in Russia, Ukraine and Lithuania: Sources and Implications for Democracy." *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 24, No. 2, April.

beforehand. However, scholars never approach these lay beliefs as source of valuable insights about democracy and society from which scholars might learn and with which they might engage critically.

Reisinger's, Fleron's, and Laitin's seminal reviews of the strengths and weaknesses of the political culture approach in "post-Sovietology" provide a good insight into how survey and interview scholarship is embedded in Schumpeterian assumptions. All three, in so far as they understand the scope of democracy and the role of lay actors in a Schumpeterian sense, ground their discussion of lay beliefs in what I call methodological instrumentalism and reductionism. And although these scholarly assessments of survey and interview-based literature differ, their shared acceptance of Schumpeterian assumptions compels them to see lay political thinking as nothing more than just a set of attitudes instrumental to goals external to lay actors' wishes and aspirations.

Fleron is critical, among other things, of a vague concept of 'political culture' which many scholars operationalize, because this vague concept makes it difficult to test hypotheses. Fleron seeks to discredit the "psychological" view of political culture and instead suggests that studying lay attitudes towards electoral and representative institutions should be supplemented or substituted with studies of lay actors' behavior because actions speak louder and even differently than words. Then, only on the basis of examining lay behavior towards such institutions scholars should judge how much

support and basis for democracy there is in a society.²⁷ Fleron also addresses another methodological challenge, namely that the causal efficacy of political culture is largely undetermined and it remains unclear whether scholars should even study political culture. Fleron's methodological recommendation amplifies instrumentalism and reductionism, and hence the Schumpeterian vocabulary, to the point where he ends up advocating that scholars should not focus at all on lay attitudes towards [scholarly defined] democracy:

We are still left with questions concerning the causal efficacy of political culture. But if the development of a democratic political culture is an effect rather than a cause of democracy, then a continuing quest to find a democratic political culture (or sub-cultures) may be quixotic. *We might instead focus our attention on the development of a democratic political order (or sub-orders) in Russia.* Only after democratic institutions and practices have taken firm hold on the national and sub-national levels would we then expect to find the steady growth and consolidation of a democratic and civic political culture.²⁸

Fleron's stance is Schumpeterian since the meaning of democracy is seen as fixed, elite rather than popular leadership is emphasized, and the role of lay political thought in giving meaning to self and the social world is dismissed. Fleron's framework leaves no room for lay Russians to be active agents in defining and shaping social institutions and practices that affect their lives. Fleron's "democracy" is people-less – it is a type of society where elites and academic experts rather than lay actors actively participate in defining and shaping the scope of democracy - popular rule. Fleron's methodological recommendations, which are predicated on the assumptions and

²⁷ Fleron, Frederic J., 1996, "Post-Soviet Political Culture in Russia: An Assessment of Recent Empirical Investigations," *Europe-Asia Studies* 48, no. 2, March, p. 240-1.

²⁸ Fleron, Frederic J., 1996, "Post-Soviet Political Culture in Russia: An Assessment of Recent Empirical Investigations," *Europe-Asia Studies* 48, no. 2, March, p. 252-3, emphasis added.

vocabulary of the elite competitive model, create an inhospitable environment for the type of research where lay conceptions of democracy and reflections about society are sought out, considered equal, understood well, and learned from.

Laitin's critical assessment of the "political culture paradigm" resembles Fleron's argument. Laitin is unconvinced that this paradigm is a fruitful research avenue because, among other things, it failed to produce predictions about the stability or reversibility of new democracies.²⁹ Laitin points out how "with work on democratization returning to the spotlight in political science, it is significant how little of it relies on "political culture" as a key independent variable."³⁰ Laitin's approach to lay democratic beliefs, while still exemplifying what I refer to as instrumentalism, is also the case of taking this instrumentalism to a new level. In contrast to scholars who are only interested in lay attitudes towards objects and principles that scholars themselves associate with democracy, Laitin emphatically advocates dropping even this limited and contingent interest in lay democratic beliefs. His reasoning is that the "political culture paradigm" fails "to explain democratic stability when using citizens' attitudes and beliefs as an independent variable."³¹ Laitin's Schumpeterian treatment of lay democratic beliefs is further evident in his reproach to those scholars of democracy who focus on public opinion: "they assume that citizen support is a key element for incumbency and regime

²⁹ Laitin, David D., 1995, "The Civic Culture at 30," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 89, no. 1, p. 168.

³⁰ Laitin, David D., 1995, "The Civic Culture at 30," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 89, no. 1, p. 169.

³¹ Laitin, David D., 1995, "The Civic Culture at 30," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 89, no. 1, p. 170.

health.”³² Laitin does not even entertain the possibility that citizen views, beliefs, and theories of democracy *belong* in studies of democracy, i.e. *popular rule*. In Schumpeterian spirit, Laitin implies that lay actors should not be treated as primary political agents, as masters of their society and their livelihoods. In the Laitin-Schumpeterian framework, lay actors are not the ones who get to define democracy and reflect on working mechanisms of their society – such conditions, according to Laitin cannot be associated with “regime health”. Laitin is uncompromising that the only reason why lay beliefs should be of interest to scholars of democracy is if these beliefs actually happen to contribute to stability of democracy as defined by scholars. Otherwise, lay views have no utility in scholarship on democracy. Laitin’s instrumentalism is the reason why he also praises followers of “Putnam’s path breaking study” because supposedly it supplies a research program that seeks “to find the connections among culture, social structure, and political institutions”.³³ Putnam’s research program is valuable precisely because it shows in what way lay beliefs can be instrumental – for Laitin instrumentalism is a hallmark of good research on lay beliefs and democracy.

Even though Laitin briefly makes several observations that are uncommon for empirical democratic studies, his Schumpeterian understanding of democracy firmly puts him on the path of perpetuating that which he criticizes. For example, Laitin

³² Laitin, David D., 1995, “The Civic Culture at 30,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 89, no. 1, p. 161.

³³ Laitin, David D., 1995, “The Civic Culture at 30,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 89, no. 1, pp. 174.

acknowledges that Geertz's theory provides a far richer understanding of culture as compared to Almond's focus on just attitudes. Laitin is also critical that "Geertz's pointers" were never cited in the "civic culture literature".³⁴ Uncharacteristically for empirical literature on democratization, Laitin is also critical of empirical political scientists for unreflective use of democratic theory:

...But the purpose of science is to help us see through world complexity, so that we may see our world in a more patterned way. Here the authors [of political culture paradigm] fail us. One reason for this failure is a rather arcane notion of theory. The authors repeatedly invoke 'democratic theory' as if it were an object that is 'out there.' Democratic theory 'prescribes' and has 'precepts'. *With that view of theory, the authors themselves are not obliged to theorize...*³⁵

However, Laitin envisions democracy, in a Schumpeterian undemocratic vein, i.e. as fixed in meaning and decoupled from the principle of popular rule. Thus, Laitin's criticism of empirical scholars is one-sided and circumscribed, where he reproaches them for not being able to find sufficient empirical evidence for a theory of democracy that already exists: "...with that view of theory, the authors themselves are not obliged to theorize, that is, to move back and forth between deduction and induction in order to give *scientific credence to propositions about the role of [public] support in democratic society.*"³⁶ Since the meaning of democracy in Laitin's framework is fixed and impervious to contestation by lay actors themselves, his criticism of scholarship on

³⁴ Laitin, David D., 1995, "The Civic Culture at 30," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 89, no. 1, pp. 168-9.

³⁵ Laitin, David D., 1995, "The Civic Culture at 30," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 89, p. 170, emphasis added.

³⁶ Laitin, David D., 1995, "The Civic Culture at 30," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 89, p. 170.

democracy does not in any significant way challenge Schumpeterian assumptions and vocabulary, but in fact augments them. Laitin's uncommon acknowledgements do not prevent Laitin from doing what he himself (albeit briefly) criticizes – he envisions democracy as a variable whose meaning is set in advance by scholars. Laitin recommends that “culturalists will, if they take Putnam seriously need to show the “value added” by specific information on the content of symbolic practices.”³⁷ However, the value of lay beliefs on this account is already envisioned as only instrumental, not meaningful. In order to present evidence for the “value added”, in Laitin's view scholars must demonstrate what lay beliefs (in their reduced form) can or cannot do for democracy *as defined by scholars*. Thus, with respect to Geertzians he concludes: ““But Geertzians will have to specify more precisely than they have in the past what particular forms of culture have what *impacts on outcomes* (e.g., *democracy*, levels of corruption, economic growth). This is an important and inviting challenge.”³⁸

Resinger directs his critique of the political culture approach to what he claims is a recent feud between political culture and rational choice theory. Similarly to Fleron and Laitin, he is critical of the political culture paradigm for failing to show that there is an actual connection between political culture and political processes.³⁹ Resinger's view of lay thinking is instrumental and reductionist. Instrumentalism permeates Resinger's

³⁷ Laitin, David D., 1995, “The Civic Culture at 30,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 89, p. 174.

³⁸ Laitin, David D., 1995, “The Civic Culture at 30,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 89, p. 174, emphasis added.

³⁹ Resinger, William M., 1995, “The Renaissance of a Rubric: political Culture as Concept and Theory,” p. 329.

methodological recommendations to survey scholars: "...if the author intends to use the concept [of political culture] to explain some aspect of political outcomes – such as whether democracy takes root – he or she would explicate his or her assumptions about how a society's political culture relates to other politically relevant features of the society, including the development and functioning of political institutions."⁴⁰ On Resinger's account, lay thinking and definition of democracy are posed as two unrelated poles and lay thinking cannot possibly be perceived as a source of democracy's meaning. Rather, democracy is defined beforehand by experts, and lay political thought, reduced to a set of attitudes towards social objects, may be of interest to scholars if it is instrumental in producing a desired outcome.

At the same time, Resinger attempts to overcome the methodological limits set by instrumental and reductionist approaches to lay beliefs. For example, in the end he briefly suggests that "while one cannot study political culture without attending to its place in the political system, investigations of mass orientations *are of interest for their own sake*."⁴¹ Yet, since he never fully relaxes the assumptions and vocabulary of the elite competitive model of democracy, he only proposes to transcend instrumentalism while still clinging to a reductionist view of lay thinking. Hence, he refers to lay beliefs as orientations, not theories, explanations, views, and vocabularies. Resinger is also critical of elitist assumptions that often permeate the bulk of literature on

⁴⁰ Resinger, William M., 1995, "The Renaissance of a Rubric: political Culture as Concept and Theory," p. 334.

⁴¹ Resinger, William M., 1995, "The Renaissance of a Rubric: political Culture as Concept and Theory," p. 348.

democratization. He identifies the “elitist school of democracy” to which followers of Schumpeter, Schattschneider, Lijphart, Rustow, O’Donnell, Schmitter, Przeworski, and di Palma belong: “They propose that democracy depends to a much greater degree upon the attitudes and behaviors of elites than upon those of mass publics. Of course, extreme elitist perspectives are rarely tenable...”⁴² However, since Resinger never fully transcends the elite competitive framework, in his assessment he implicitly relies on a static and known model of democracy toward which both elites and masses in post-communist countries must strive.⁴³

I suggest that it is not uncommon in survey and interview literature to use terms such as ‘mass *attitudes* towards democracy’, ‘mass *perceptions* about democracy’, or ‘mass democratic *values*’, rather than the more emphatic ‘lay democratic *thought*’ or ‘lay democratic *theory*’. Such framing of research projects is a broader manifestation of instrumentalism and reductionism, and hence, of Schumpeterian vocabulary and assumptions in scholarly treatment of lay political thought. According to the elite conservative social vision such as Schumpeter’s, lay people cannot possibly have a vibrant and valuable understanding of democracy and society in which they live and often suffer, nor can they have a sound understanding of their interests and problems. This assumption is also the reason why on the elite conservative account popular self-rule is a misnomer and elite leadership of the masses is necessary. This ideological stance is perpetuated by scholars who may have very different political motivations but

⁴² Resinger, William M., 1995, “The Renaissance of a Rubric: Political Culture as Concept and Theory, p. 344.

⁴³ Resinger, William M., 1995, “The Renaissance of a Rubric: Political Culture as Concept and Theory, p. 344, emphasis.

nonetheless continue to unreflectively use Schumpeter's vocabulary. I submit that lay democratic ideas cannot be reduced to a set of attitudes and values - they encompass certain definitions, meanings, explanations, self-perceptions, practical experiences and theories of the social world. And yet, all of this must be overlooked and untapped in research that is grounded in the vocabulary of the elite competitive model.

2) Dismissing Lay "Economic" Conceptions of Democracy

I highlighted above that grounding research in Schumpeterian assumptions and vocabulary does not help to generate a sustained interest in lay conceptions of democracy. In this subsection I suggest that in rare cases when this attention does arise, the scholarly tendency is either to instrumentalize or, in extreme instances, to dismiss lay understandings of democracy. Particularly, it is the 'unusual', i.e. economic, conceptions of democracy, which do not fit Schumpeterian scholarly categories that become the target of scholarly dismissal. Schumpeterian assumptions and conceptual categories override any non-conventional scholarly impulses and formulation of innovative research questions.

For example, a small number of scholars note that lay conceptions of democracy should be taken into account because democracy might mean something different in post-communist countries than in the "established western democracies" or even in the region's elite perspectives. However, such interest in lay definitions of democracy is justified by instrumental reasons, meaning that lay conceptions may turn out useful in

explaining the fate of new social institutions.⁴⁴ Thus, even those who observe that there is a lack of scholarly attention to lay visions of democracy do not come to treat these lay ideas as a reservoir of insights worthy of scholarly engagement. Instead, scholars approach the lay views that they uncover instrumentally.

Miller et al.'s inquiry into the conceptions of democracy among the masses and elites in post-Soviet Russia and Ukraine is an example of a research undertaking motivated by a desire to transcend the limits of the elite competitive model. And yet, this study falls short of doing so because the assumptions of the elite competitive model are never fully relaxed and scholarly interest in lay conceptions remains contingent. Miller et al. criticize mainstream survey research for holding a "widespread agreement on the principles or characteristics that define a democracy" and for presuming that "those characteristic or values [are] the ones that citizens in the emerging democracies also see as relevant and important".⁴⁵ Miller et al. devise an inquiry into the mass conceptions of democracy because they believe this is the most accurate way to access public support for

⁴⁴ For discussion of these issues and an example of such instrumental studies of democratic conceptions, see Miller, Arthur H., V.L. Hesli, W.M. Reisinger, 1997, "Conceptions of Democracy among Mass and Elite in Post-Soviet Societies," pp. 157-163; Simon, Janos, 1998, "Popular conceptions of democracy in postcommunist Europe," in *The Postcommunist Citizen*; and Mason, David S., 2000, "Introduction," in Mason D.S., J.R. Kluegel, L. Khakhulina, ed., *Marketing democracy : changing opinion about inequality and politics in East Central Europe*, pp.14-5. Note that assigning an instrumental role to popular conceptions of democracy is slightly different from suggesting that lay views of democracy are important because they may reveal that it is not that post-communist publics dislike democracy but rather they reject the institutions that presently exist. In this sense, a 'finding' emerges that Russians still "give democracy a chance". For example of this approach, see Carnaghan, *Out of Order*, and Carnaghan, Ellen, 2001, "Thinking about Democracy: Interviews with Russian Citizens," pp. 336-366. In such scholarly treatments of popular democratic beliefs the qualitatively different aspects of democracy in lay views become obscured because of this 'real vs. ideal democracy' framework through which lay views of democracy are filtered. Carnaghan's conception of democracy does not allow lay Russians to influence or change her understanding of democracy, and in the end lay Russian democratic ideas are obscured.

⁴⁵ Miller, Arthur H., V.L. Hesli, W.M. Reisinger, 1997, "Conceptions of Democracy among Mass and Elite in Post-Soviet Societies," p. 161.

democracy, where the mainstream approaches do not allow respondents to define democracy and obscure the character of lay democratic beliefs:

An example of how an invalid and unreliable measure of support for democracy could arise is as follows. *Suppose that the citizens think about democracy as a form of government that will promote individual prosperity while controlling corruption and crime, but the researchers asks survey questions about support for competitive political parties, free elections and protecting minority rights...* However, if the researcher had measured support for democracy in terms of promoting economic opportunity or rule of law and protection of individual rights, they would have had a more valid and reliable measure because that is how the public understands democracy, and those terms would have been more relevant to (capable of predicting) their political behavior. Because democracy is a complex, potentially multi-dimensional concept it is important that the researcher measure the most salient and relevant aspects of this concept.⁴⁶

Miller et al. approach lay democratic beliefs in a fashion that is radically different from many other scholars. Miller et al. do not only recognize that the meaning of democracy may be contested, but they extend the privilege of this contestation to lay actors themselves. And yet, this study never quite overcomes the logic of the elite competitive model. For example, Miller et al. further justify their study of mass conceptions of democracy by both relaxing Schumpeterian vocabulary and returning back to it:

If democracy is to be ‘rule by the people’, then we would want to know if the political leaders – those who are actually formulating the institutions and procedures for these newly emerging democracies – have a conception of democracy that is similar to that expressed by the ordinary citizens. If there are major discrepancies between the meaning of democracy expressed by the mass and elite...we need to be concerned about the extent to which representation is actually occurring...⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Miller, Arthur H., V.L. Hesli, W.M. Reisinger, 1997, “Conceptions of Democracy among Mass and Elite in Post-Soviet Societies,” p. 161, n. 7, emphasis added.

⁴⁷ Miller, Arthur H., V.L. Hesli, W.M. Reisinger, 1997, “Conceptions of Democracy among Mass and Elite in Post-Soviet Societies,” p. 164.

Here, while contra Schumpeter, the notion of popular rule is a starting point, political leaders are *still* introduced as crucial social actors. Also, emphasis on *political* leaders signifies that the ‘socio-economic’ realm is not included in the scope of democratic analysis. I submit that in spite of their novel research undertaking, Miller et al. continue to hold on to the elite competitive framework. In their conclusion, they end up instrumentalizing lay conceptions of democracy, privileging the role of elites in shaping the direction of society, and downplaying the “economic” aspects of lay Russian and Ukrainian democratic thinking.

Miller et al. suggest that the elites in their definition of democracy gave greater weight to the rule of law, whereas the masses emphasized freedom, especially freedom of speech, freedom of beliefs, and individual choice.⁴⁸ They conclude that knowledge of these lay conceptions “may prove far more powerful in explaining the process of democratization” and “capable of predicting their political behavior”⁴⁹ - this is an instrumental approach to lay democratic views. Furthermore, Miller et al. continue to dwell on the Schumpeterian view of democracy that privileges elite leadership and brackets the “socio-economic” realm. Thus, Miller et al. ultimately return to focusing on how lay beliefs may help to explain progress toward a known, fixed model of democracy. But in this Schumpeterian fixed model, the “economic” realm is bracketed from

⁴⁸ Miller, Arthur H., V.L. Hesli, W.M. Reisinger, 1997, “Conceptions of Democracy among Mass and Elite in Post-Soviet Societies,” p. 169.

⁴⁹ Miller, Arthur H., V.L. Hesli, W.M. Reisinger, 1997, “Conceptions of Democracy among Mass and Elite in Post-Soviet Societies,” p. 187 and 161, n. 7.

democratic analysis. For example, Miller et al. comment on citizen non-support and elite support for market reforms using the lenses of the elite competitive conceptual categories. They downplay the value of lay “economic” interests and problems in favor of uncompromising elite leadership to establish a form of society that masses themselves might not support: “Given the *more than half of the citizens in these post-Soviet countries are currently opposed to a market economy* this mobilization [by elites of the masses in support of economic reform] effort is *certainly necessary*.”⁵⁰

In their conclusion, Miller et al. again insert an instrumental view of lay Russian and Ukrainians conceptions of democracy: “In order to mobilize the citizenry by using democratic symbols the leadership must be able to communicate in a way that the citizens will find meaningful. The effectiveness of this communication, however, will be limited by the fact that the citizens and leaders have somewhat different conceptions of democracy.”⁵¹ Thus, although Miller et al. produce a study about lay conceptions of democracy, they specify that the value of these lay conceptions hinges on how well they can be exploited and manipulated in an attempt to establish a fixed, known, Schumpeterian form of “democracy”.

In some cases scholarly treatment of lay conceptions of democracy encompasses instrumentalizing as well as dismissing ‘unusual’, i.e. economic aspects of lay democratic views, which is an implication of using Schumpeterian vocabulary. According to the

⁵⁰ Miller, Arthur H., V.L. Hesli, W.M. Reisinger, 1997, “Conceptions of Democracy among Mass and Elite in Post-Soviet Societies,” p. 188, emphasis added.

⁵¹ Miller, Arthur H., V.L. Hesli, W.M. Reisinger, 1997, “Conceptions of Democracy among Mass and Elite in Post-Soviet Societies,” p. 188.

framework of the elite competitive model the meaning of democracy is fixed and “matters of economics” are not within the scope of democratic thought and action. Thus, scholars who implicitly and unreflectively accept Schumpeterian assumptions will be compelled to conclude that lay Russian and Ukrainian democratic ideas are incorrect because, supposedly, lay subjects confuse terms, combine categories, and generally have wrong or illegitimate expectations about democracy. For example, Miller et al. write:

A major legacy of communism is the belief that the government is responsible not only for assuring general prosperity for the country, but also for guaranteeing employment and the basic material needs of individual citizens. These responsibilities have become enmeshed in the very definition of democracy for many Russians and Central and Eastern Europeans.⁵²

On this view, mass conceptions of democracy are interesting to study because they might reveal that post-communist masses are confused about the true meaning of democracy and this may become an impediment to democratization (as defined by scholars) in the region.⁵³ However, in these scholarly frameworks lay Russian and Ukrainian thinking cannot possibly influence the debate about realization of democracy.

Furthermore, such scholarly assessments are supplemented with recommendations that post-communist citizens need to learn the real meaning of democracy, as opposed to

⁵² Miller, James R. and Sharon L. Wolchik, ed., 1994, “Introduction - The Social Legacy and Aftermath of Communism,” in *The Social Legacy of Communism*, p. 16. Alexander also addresses the issues of “Soviet conceptions” or ‘unusual’ conceptions of democracy and its reemergence in post-soviet lay thinking, Alexander, *Russian Political Culture*, pp. 127-131.

⁵³ Alexander, James, 2000, *Political Culture in Post-Communist Russia: Formlessness and Recreation in a Traumatic Transition*, pp. 130-3, and Miller, James R. and Sharon L. Wolchik, ed., 1994, “Introduction - The Social Legacy and Aftermath of Communism,” in *The Social Legacy of Communism*, p. 15-6. In reference to ‘incorrectness’ of post-communist lay democratic views beyond Ukraine and Russia, see Simon, Janos, 1998, “Popular conceptions of democracy in postcommunist Europe,” In *The Postcommunist Citizen*, pp. 81, 89, 116; McIntosh, Mary, Martha Abele MacIver, Daniel Abele and Dina Smeltz, 1994, “Public Meets Democracy in Central and East Europe 1991-1993”, *Slavic Review*, 53, Fall, pp. 483-512.

the meaning they inherited from the past. For instance, Simon indicates that due to the “officially-promulgated ideology of the [communist] regime”, democracy may be understood in post-communist countries as workplace participation, or simply participation, rather than political representation.⁵⁴ However, even after having reported statistics that many respondents did not feel they had real influence on decision making in the workplace, instead of providing a discussion about unrealized democracy, he suggests that aspirations for economic democracy should be dropped altogether:

The example well illustrates, however, the situation when the principles and rationalities of democracy and the market economy cross one another, the result is that the principles of the traditional state socialist conception of democracy are damaged. One great lesson is that Postcommunist citizens must find the answer to the degree to which capitalist democracy is different from state socialist democracy and *must reevaluate and study the principles and practice of modern democracy*.⁵⁵

In another example, while Diligenskii acknowledges that it is not uncommon for post-soviet Russians to think about democracy in terms of social protections, social welfare, and social safety nets, he still characterizes these tendencies as a “rejection of liberal and democratic values” and as echoes of soviet consciousness.⁵⁶ Such a conclusion does not help to get at the character of lay Russian democratic beliefs. The

⁵⁴ Simon, Janos, 1998, “Popular conceptions of democracy in postcommunist Europe,” In *The Postcommunist Citizen*, p. 84.

⁵⁵ Simon, Janos, 1998, “Popular conceptions of democracy in postcommunist Europe,” In *The Postcommunist Citizen*, p. 84, emphasis added.

⁵⁶ Diligenskii, G.G. 1998. *Rossiskii gorozhanin kontsa devianostykh: genesis postsovetskogo soznaniia. Sotsialno-psikhologicheskie Issledovanie*, pp. 91, 69, 85, 71, 74. Note the this author does not define clearly what democracy means to him, however he frequently uses the term ‘liberal democracy’ and asks questions how ‘liberal-democratic’ his respondents are. At one point, Diligenskii states that ‘democracy dictates market relations’, p. 68, in another instance he makes connections between democracy and responsible citizen action and participation, p. 69.

only thing that Diligenskii accomplishes is dismissing lay ideas by referring to them as undemocratic because they do not fit his own, Schumpeterian conceptual categories and expectations regarding democracy. When survey analysts report findings that it is not uncommon for Ukrainians to think about democracy in terms of what is grouped in the literature as matters of “social welfare” such as guaranteed employment, pensions, equality, and provision of basic material necessities, they comment that “such *tenets* of democracy as freedom of choice, speech, and voting were mentioned less frequently [as aspects of democracy]”, and thus, “Ukrainians may not be committed to the freedoms a democracy embodies.”⁵⁷ However, such a characterization obscures democratic ideas that lay Ukrainians hold and it is a way to dismiss an alternative and more radical vision of a democratic society.

While it is not necessarily a common theme in post-communist literature on lay beliefs, some scholars do note that “liberal western” frames of reference may not be useful for understanding lay Russian “volatile” attitudes towards market and democracy.⁵⁸ I propose to examine this (albeit rare) type of arguments closely. I suggest that such scholarly criticisms, while an important beginning, cannot exemplify a successful refutation of the terms of the elite competitive model. The reason, I argue, is

⁵⁷ Sharma, Rakesh and Nathan Van Dusen, 2003, “Attitudes and Expectations: Public Opinion in Ukraine 2003,” Source: International Foundation for Election Systems, p. 21; and Sharma, Rakesh, Rola Abdul-Latif, and Lauren Serpe, 2008, “Dissatisfaction and Disillusionment in Ukraine: Findings from an IFES 2008 Survey,” Source: International Foundation for Election Systems, p. 37, emphasis added.

⁵⁸ Bahry, Donna, 1999, “Comrades into Citizens? Russian Political Culture and Public Support for the Transition,” *Slavic Review*, Vol. 58, No. 4, Special Issue: Ten years after 1989: What Have We Learned? Winter, p. 841.

because even such critical scholars continue to ground their critique in the vocabulary of the elite competitive model.

For example, rather than categorizing lay Russian beliefs as incoherent or illegitimate, Bahry proposes to appreciate that these lay views “in fact simply conform to another logic and another context” and that “there is a logic to Russian attitudes on many issues”.⁵⁹ Bahry’s is an example of a study that wishes to diverge from the mainstream approach in survey literature that I critique. However, I suggest that the familiar Schumpeterian assumptions and conceptions that Bahry continues to hold on to do not allow her to confront the inadequacy of the mainstream as she claims she does.

For instance, Bahry wishes to highlight that Russians support state interventions in the economy not because they are, as many have suggested, subversive and “mired in traditional values”, but because there is a rational explanation for such a support:

... State intervention in distributive and redistributive questions can be viewed [by Russians] as a way to offset a weak or distorted market. Since the private sector is underdeveloped and opaque, government solutions may be preferred simply because there are few realistic alternatives. Support for state control of prices, for instance, can be a logical response where real incomes are static or declining and people believe that price levels are driven up artificially by producers or distributors. Support for government job guarantees makes sense when the private sector is perceived as too small and unstable to keep people regularly employed.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Bahry, Donna, 1999, “Comrades into Citizens? Russian Political Culture and Public Support for the Transition,” *Slavic Review*, Vol. 58, No. 4, Special Issue: Ten years after 1989: What Have We Learned? Winter, pp. 841-2.

⁶⁰ Bahry, Donna, 1999, “Comrades into Citizens? Russian Political Culture and Public Support for the Transition,” *Slavic Review*, Vol. 58, No. 4, Special Issue: Ten years after 1989: What Have We Learned? Winter, p. 841, 848.

Bahry clearly makes an attempt to reflect critically on the inadequacy of scholarly frameworks with which scholars approach collection and interpretation of lay responses. Bahry argues that many Russians' ideas do not easily conform to the categories of either the "liberal" or "socialist" model of society, and unreflective use of scholarly frameworks leads to misinterpreting survey findings and the character of Russian political beliefs.⁶¹ Bahry differs from common approaches in studies of post-communist beliefs in that she is attentive to how scholarly conceptual frameworks can lead to mischaracterizing and even delegitimizing lay views. While some tend to dismiss lay Russian and Ukrainian 'unusual' emphases on state and collective intervention in economic matters, Bahry wants to understand the logic behind such lay ideas. At the same time, I submit, since Bahry continues to ground her own discussion in the categorical distinctions and conceptions of the elite competitive model of democracy, her analysis of apparent 'unusual' lay Russian ideas continues to echo the mainstream trends that she herself sets out to critique.

Thus, she prefaces her comments on Russian "contradictory attitudes towards democracy" by saying, with references to Dahl and Przeworski, that "democracy hinges on stable rules of the political game and intertemporal trust – the ideas that people who lose one round of political competition can still play and potentially win in the next."⁶²

⁶¹ Bahry, Donna, 1999, "Comrades into Citizens? Russian Political Culture and Public Support for the Transition," *Slavic Review*, Vol. 58, No. 4, Special Issue: Ten years after 1989: What Have We Learned? Winter, p. 842.

⁶² Bahry, Donna, 1999, "Comrades into Citizens? Russian Political Culture and Public Support for the Transition," *Slavic Review*, Vol. 58, No. 4, Special Issue: Ten years after 1989: What Have We Learned? Winter, p. 848.

Bahry highlights that many scholars confronted with some Russians skeptical of party politics and supporting extremist organizations (such as Russia's Communist Party), a strong state, order, and government control of the media are quick to declare Russians undemocratic. However, Bahry wants to insist, even such seemingly undemocratic convictions on the part of Russians are logical in regards to their social context and are still quite consistent with a view of democracy:

... Given low levels of information and a weak state, it can be difficult to judge the real threat that extremist organizations might pose... People inclined toward democratic values might also be ambivalent about political parties... the strongest party in Russia is arguably the Communist Party of the Russian Federation – and someone who believes in democracy could easily have doubts about the KPRF's democratic credentials... Would-be democrats could have mixed feelings about controls on the media as well... but where sources are often unclear and accuracy is doubtful, the ideas of public regulation can be appealing... Ambivalence can also extend to elections... they [voters] are likely to be more skeptical about its [competitive voting] application, especially at the regional and local level... [and] Order and democracy, for example, can be perceived as complementary rather than contradictory. If democratic government is about stable rules of the political game and stable expectations, then "order" can be a critical element in making it work.⁶³

However, I submit that since Bahry still bases her analysis of lay Russian ideas in the elite competitive framework of democracy, her conclusions have similar limitations. In Bahry's discussion, democracy per elite competitive model is defined in the beginning of investigation, the meaning of democracy is fixed, the meaning of democracy is insulated from lay interpretations and contestation, and the meaning of democracy is divorced from matters of the "economic" realm. Bahry writes: "*democracy hinges on*

⁶³ Bahry, Donna, 1999, "Comrades into Citizens? Russian Political Culture and Public Support for the Transition," *Slavic Review*, Vol. 58, No. 4, Special Issue: Ten years after 1989: What Have We Learned? Winter, pp. 849-51.

stable rules of the political game and intertemporal trust – the ideas *that people who lose one round of political competition can still play and potentially win in the next.*”⁶⁴ Even though upon surface glance Russian beliefs might seem unusual or irrational from the standpoint of leading scholarly conceptions, for Bahry they are rational *insofar as she sees them as still conforming to and not challenging* the scholarly conception of democracy and view of society per elite competitive model. In spite of her initial recognition of the importance of local culture and local frames of reference for thinking about politics, social institutions, and practices, the question of how lay Russians might theorize democracy and aspects of their societies and how scholars might learn from these ‘unusual’ ideas wholly escapes Bahry’s analysis.⁶⁵ It is never explored whether lay Russian demands might have something to do with such lay understanding of democracy and aspects of their society that radically challenge scholarly conceptual frameworks and may become a source of valuable lessons for scholarly understanding of democracy and a starting point of critical engagement.

In her essay Bahry advances the thesis that Russians do not necessarily reject [Dahl’s and Przeworski’s understanding of] democracy, even though upon initial glance it may seem they do. She also provides a concluding assessment that contradicts her previous statements when she indicates that many Russians “are simply selective in their

⁶⁴ Bahry, Donna, 1999, “Comrades into Citizens? Russian Political Culture and Public Support for the Transition,” *Slavic Review*, Vol. 58, No. 4, Special Issue: Ten years after 1989: What Have We Learned? Winter, p. 851, emphasis added, also p. 848.

⁶⁵ Bahry, Donna, 1999, “Comrades into Citizens? Russian Political Culture and Public Support for the Transition,” *Slavic Review*, Vol. 58, No. 4, Special Issue: Ten years after 1989: What Have We Learned? Winter, p. 842.

assessments of both democracy and markets. Some elements are more appealing than others; some are fraught with more risk.”⁶⁶ Such characterization is very similar to the popular diagnosis that Russians seem to reject democracy. Bahry only adds to this diagnosis by arguing that there is a logic behind this rejection. Thus, due to the constraints imposed by the elite competitive model, there is little room in such analysis for even posing questions about what lay agents define democracy and for relating voices critical of post-soviet “democracy” and society to the impetus of democratization. I submit that even though Bahry is very enthusiastic to take Russian beliefs seriously and understand them on their own terms, the vocabulary and assumptions of the elite competitive model do not allow her to succeed in this task.

Survey and interview-based research is a valuable methodological tool and a source of information. While it projects a sense that lay Russian and Ukrainian public opinion matters for and is taken seriously by democratic scholars, upon closer examination, grounding research in the assumptions of the elite competitive model undermines one potential promise of both survey research and democratic scholarship. The conceptual vocabulary of Schumpeter’s elite competitive model of democracy prevents researchers from seeking, adequately grasping, and learning from lay ideas about democracy. The elite conservative social vision that underlies the elite competitive model perpetuates a demeaning attitude towards the place and role of lay actors in influencing the direction of affairs of their society and their own lives. There is very little

⁶⁶ Bahry, Donna, 1999, “Comrades into Citizens? Russian Political Culture and Public Support for the Transition,” *Slavic Review*, Vol. 58, No. 4, Special Issue: Ten years after 1989: What Have We Learned? Winter, p. 852.

democratic about a priori devaluing and neglecting lay contributions to the theory and practice of democracy.

Followers of the elite competitive model remain uninterested in and unaware of lay conceptions of democracy or they are compelled to dismiss the ‘unusual’, i.e. “economic” aspects of lay Russian and Ukrainian democratic beliefs because they do not fit scholarly preconceptions. Such an approach obscures more than it really reveals about the object of scholarly study – lay democratic beliefs *and* democracy. Scholarly tendencies that I highlight here foreclose the possibility of scholarly reexamination of the meaning of democracy. These tendencies also preclude exploration of how “economic” matters can be related to the impetus of democratization in post-communist Russia and Ukraine. Rather, ‘undesirable’ elements in lay thinking that have to do with socio-economic matters are downplayed or flagged by scholars as not belonging to the scope of democracy or even as undemocratic. Not only does this lead to missing the force of lay Russian and Ukrainian political thinking, but it also prevents democratic scholars from grasping the challenges that post-communist transformation poses for the vast majority of people, for their political empowerment, their flourishing, life choices, and happiness.

c) Misunderstanding or Displacing the Democratic Significance of ‘Economic’ Aspects in Lay Ukrainian and Russian Democratic Ideas

In this subsection I continue analysis of difficulties that grounding research in the assumptions of the elite competitive model of democracy brings about. Matters of the “economic realm” are not bracketed in lay Ukrainian and Russians reflections about

democracy, freedom, state, and efficacy, as they are in scholarly frameworks. In this subsection I argue that scholarly exclusion of economics from democratic analysis leads them to misunderstand or misplace the democratic significance of lay Russian and Ukrainian ideas. I organize my discussion into two parts. (a) In the first, I begin by outlining the scholarly understanding of the realm of “politics” and I point out how scholarly conceptual frameworks do not allow accommodating lay Russian and Ukrainian political beliefs. (b) In the second subsection, I continue on this topic by laying out scholarly views of the state, freedom, and efficacy that bracket consideration of “economics”. I then call attention to how these scholarly conceptions that are grounded in Schumpeterian distinctions lead to scholars obscuring the democratic significance of lay Russian and Ukrainian ideas.

1) The Scholarly Conception of the “Political” and Its Implications

Mishler and Rose note that “debate continues in the literature about the extent to which citizens in post-communist societies are capable of distinguishing between politics and economics...However, the question is empirical, not conceptual, and can be addressed with the data at hand.”⁶⁷ The question of whether lay Russians and Ukrainians

⁶⁷ Mishler, William and Richard Rose, 1997, “Trust, Distrust, and Skepticism: Popular Evaluations of Civil and Political Institutions in Post-communist Societies.” p. 436, ft. 12. Other studies that address the question of post-communist public inability to separate economics from politics are Finifter, Ada W., and Ellen Mickiewicz, 1992, “Redefining the Political System of the USSR: Mass Support for Political Change.” *American Political Science Review*, 86:857-74; Finifter, Ada W., 1996, “Attitudes toward Individual Responsibility and Political Reform in the Former Soviet Union,” *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 90, No. 1, March, pp. 138-52; Miller, A.H., Hesli, V.L. and W.M. Reisinger, 1994. “Reassessing Mass Support for Political and Economic Change in the Former USSR.” *American Political Science Review*, 88:399-411

separate economics from politics has sparked some attention in survey and interview literature because of scholarly insistence that separation of economics and politics is an indicator of consolidation of democratic political culture.⁶⁸ Of course, excluding much of social experience from democratic analysis is a Schumpeterian endeavor. Conceptual separation of democracy and “economics” is built into the language of the elite competitive model of democracy. Hence, it is difficult for scholars who ground their research on democracy in such Schumpeterian assumptions to grasp the democratic significance of “economic” concerns that lay people have. Moreover, Schumpeterian vocabulary compels scholars to sanction lay non-conformism on this point in a variety of ways. Thus, separation of “economics” from matters of democracy and politics leads scholars to characterize economic aspects of lay Russian and Ukrainian ideas as causes of political attitudes, or as materialistic, authoritarian, outdated, and apolitical, but *never* as democratic attitudes.

The prominence of an “economic beliefs as causes of political beliefs” framework is one example of Schumpeterian scholars’ inability to grasp the character and significance of ‘unusual’ lay views. Such a framework is a by-product of a scholarly non-economic conception of politics. Schumpeterian vocabulary leads to scholars filtering economic aspects out of people’s political ideas. As a result, economic features of lay Russian and Ukrainian ideas may enter scholarly inquiry as “causes”. Thus, some

⁶⁸ Mishler and Rose, 1996, “Trust, distrust, and skepticism,” p. 432. Of course, such claims are often contradicted by scholars recognizing that “in established democracies, economic performance, as measured both by individual material well-being and macroeconomic conditions, is important for evaluating both institutions and incumbents,” which seems to be legitimate and conducive to democracy, see Mishler and Rose, 1996, “Trust, distrust, and skepticism,” p. 441.

Schumpeterian scholars claim that economic hardship leads to low support for democracy, and hence one must consider “the economic bases of political support and legitimacy in [post-communist] countries and the close ties between economic and political stability”.⁶⁹ Other Schumpeterian scholars show that there is no connection between political and economic attitudes in post-communist countries, and citizens are committed to “democracy” regardless of their economic circumstances.⁷⁰ Since matters of “economic welfare” are excluded from the elite competitive conception of democracy, scholars who explore popular support of new political institutions are led to frame their research in terms of a “causal structure between economic and political attitudes”. Such

⁶⁹ For a summary of these theoretical and methodological issues, see Gibson, James L., 1996, “Political and Economic Markets: Changes in the Connections Between Attitudes Toward Political Democracy and a Market Economy Within the Mass Culture of Russia and Ukraine.” *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 58, No. 4, Nov, p. 957. For an example of studies that argue there is a positive relationship between economic hardship and low support for democracy or argue that economic success is a precondition of political reform success, see Haggard and Kaufman, 1997, “The Political Economy of Democratic Transitions”; Diamond, Larry, 1995, “Democracy and Economic Reform”; Kluegel and Mason, 2004, “Fairness Matters: Social Justice and Political Legitimacy in Post-Communist Europe,” pp. 813-34; Whitefield and Evans, 1994, “The Russian Election of 1993: Public Opinion and the Transition Experience,” p. 57; Evans and Whitefield, 1995, “The Politics and Economics of Democratic Commitment: Support for Democracy in Transition Societies,” pp. 485-514; Kullberg and Zimmerman, 1999, “Liberal Elites, Socialist Masses, and Problems of Russian Democracy,” pp. 323-58; Mishler and Rose, “Trust, distrust, and skepticism”; Finifter and Mickiewicz, 1992, “Redefining the Political System of the USSR,” pp. 857-74; Clarke et al., 1993, “The Political Economy of Attitudes toward Polity and Society in Western European Democracies,” pp. 998-1021, Rose, Richard, William Mishler, and Christian Haerpfer., 1998, *Democracy and Its Alternatives*. John Hopkins University Press, p. 172, 174-8.

⁷⁰ Duch, Raymond, 1993, “Tolerating Economic Reform: Popular Support for Transition to a Free Market in the Former Soviet Union,” pp. 590-608; Duch, Raymond M., 1995, “Economic Chaos and the Fragility of Democratic Transition in former Communist Regimes,” pp. 121; Gibson, James L, 1996, “Political and Economic Markets: Changes in the Connections Between Attitudes Toward Political Democracy and a Market Economy Within the Mass Culture of Russia and Ukraine,” pp. 954-984; Gibson, James L, 1996, “A Mile Wide but an Inch Deep(?): the Structure of Democratic Commitments in the Former USSR,” p.21-2; and Mishler and Rose, 1996, “Trajectories of Fear and Hope: Support for Democracy in Post-Communist Europe,” pp. 553-581. Colton argues that Russian citizens are committed to new political institutions, but it is just that evaluations of personal and national economy influences the way they gauge the success of these institutions, Colton, Timothy J., 2000, *Transitional Citizens: Voters and What Influences Them in the New Russia*.

scholars continue to oscillate between hypotheses that economic attitudes cause political ones, political attitudes cause economic ones, or both political and economic attitudes are independent and are caused by separate factors.⁷¹ But of course, neither of these claims challenges Schumpeterian assumptions and view of democracy. In either case, conceptual distinctions built into the elite competitive model prevent scholars from grasping the nature and significance of lay thinking in Russia and Ukraine.

It is common among some scholars to characterize lay Russian and Ukrainian beliefs as *apolitical* and it is another example of how Schumpeterian vocabulary precludes scholars from grasping the character and significance of lay Russian and Ukrainian views. I suggest it is a Schumpeterian conception of democracy where “economics” is depoliticized that leads scholars to reinterpret wide-spread economic concerns as *apolitical* and by extension as having nothing to do with matters of democracy, decision making, and relations of power. Lay Ukrainian and Russian “economic” concerns are never presented as democratic aspirations, because “economics” is divorced from matters of democracy in the elite competitive model. For example, in contrast to those who claim that post-communist masses evaluate new political institutions and practices by reference to economic conditions, some scholars suggest that many lay actors simply prioritize materialistic and economic concerns *over*

⁷¹ See a summary of these research trends in Gibson, James L., 1996, “Political and Economic Markets: Changes in the Connections Between Attitudes Toward Political Democracy and a Market Economy Within the Mass Culture of Russia and Ukraine.” *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 58, No. 4, Nov, pp. 957-61.

abstract political principles.⁷² Thus, in some studies the strong emphases on “economics” in popular thinking is described as apolitical: “at this point most of the citizens of Eastern Europe seem *less interested in either ideology or politics and more interested in their own economic fate and that of their country.*”⁷³ “Materialist”, “apolitical”, or simply “economic” are some of the labels that Schumpeterian scholars use to describe lay thinking in post-communist countries.⁷⁴ “Materialist” concerns are contrasted with “postmaterialist”, i.e. political concerns such as “having more say in the decisions of government or freedom of speech”.⁷⁵ In a similar vein, scholars who are confronted with overwhelming lay concerns with “economic matters” in post-communist countries may

⁷² Mason, D.S., 1995, “Justice, Socialism, and Participation in the Postcommunist States,” p. 74, emphasis added. Also, Diligenskii, *Rossiskii gorozhanin*; Alexander, *Political culture*; and Simon, *Labor and political transformation*.

⁷³ Mason, D.S., 1995, “Justice, Socialism, and Participation in the Postcommunist States,” p. 74, emphasis added. Also, Diligenskii, *Rossiskii gorozhanin*; Alexander, *Political culture*; and Simon, *Labor and political transformation*.

⁷⁴ For e.g., see Mason, “Introduction,” p. 9; Mason, “Justice, Socialism, and Participation in the Postcommunist States,” pp.74-7; Diligenskii, *Rossiskii gorozhanin*; and Alexander, *Political Culture*; and my citing of scholarly interpretations in chapter 1. Such labels also make way into studies of social movements: depending on the conception of democracy that scholars use, goals of social movements are characterized as either “democratic” or “economic” and “materialistic”, though there are variations in these scholarly interpretations and emphases, see: Simon, *Labor and Political Transformation*, Christensen, *Russia’s Workers in Transition*; Crowley, *Hot Coal, Cold Steel*; Fainer, *Pomarancheva revoliutsiia*; Clark, *What about the workers?*; Stepanenko, “Civil Society in Post-Soviet Ukraine.” The terminology of “materialist vs. postmaterialist” values and attitudes owes to a seminal work of Inglehart, Ronald, and Hans D. Klingemann, 1979, “Ideological Conceptualization and Value Priorities,” in *Political Action: Mass Participation in Five Western Democracies*, ed. by S. Barnes, M. Kaase, et al., Sage, pp. 203-213, and Inglehart, Ronald. 1990, *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society*, p. 442. However, one must be careful to differentiate Inglehart’s framework from the way in which his conceptual dichotomy of “materialist” versus “postmaterialist/political” has been appropriated by other scholars. For example, Inglehart is ambiguous on the subject. At times, “materialist” in his terminology signifies “non-political” concerns such as food and shelter. But at other times, he specifies that *both* “materialist” and “postmaterialist” concerns are of political nature, it is just that “materialists” focus on issues of class and economics, wherein “postmaterialist” values encompass issues of environmentalism, identity, race, ethnicity, and so forth, see Inglehart and Klingemann, 1979, pp. 209-11.

⁷⁵ Mason, “Introduction,” p. 9.

also conclude that people's commitment to democracy – new political institutions – has been “instrumental” or “ephemeral”. By this scholars mean that lay people in post-communist countries care less about democracy and politics, and more about their economic well-being, and democracy is just a means to economic welfare.⁷⁶

Of course, I do not want to suggest that scholars are insensitive to lay people's economic fears. Those who study post-communist societies are well aware of and often sympathetic to the challenges that extreme socio-economic dislocation accompanying the rise of a market economy has brought to millions of households in the region. And yet, in spite of many scholars' sympathies, unreflective employment of Schumpeterian vocabulary conditions scholars to produce such classifications and interpretations that inadvertently demean lay “economic” grievances and aspirations. Schumpeterian vocabulary and assumptions lead scholars to empty lay Russian and Ukrainian “economic” interests of political and democratic significance. Moreover, instead of grasping the magnitude of ‘unusual’ lay views, categorical separations embedded in the elite competitive model of democracy perpetuate mystification and misrecognition of lay ideas.

⁷⁶ Gibson, “Political and Economic Markets,” p. 957; Mason “Introduction”; Kluegel et al., 1995., “Accounting for the Rich and the Poor”; Clarke et al., 1993, “The Political Economy of Attitudes toward Polity and Society in Western European Democracies,” pp. 998-1021; McIntosh et al., “Public Meets Democracy in Central and East Europe 1991-1993”, pp. 483-512; Evans and Whitefield, “The Politics and Economics of Democratic Commitment: Support for Democracy in Transition Societies,” pp. 485-514.

As one of many such examples in interview and survey literature, when commenting on overwhelming preoccupation with economic issues among his respondents, Alexander writes:

...In general, interest in politics was low, concern about economic problems, especially as they affected individuals and families, attracted sustained comment across a spectrum of issues...Discussion focused consistently on specific topics (inflation, wage arrears, the economic-environmental balance and so on)...The majority of responses reflected conservative positions that clearly harkened back to the past, while others masked conservative attitudes with apparent support for reform policies...Whatever the source of perceived salvation, popular concern for economic security was ever present...The concern about food was so high that it blocked marginally higher needs, such as clothing. This focus on survival issues is important in two respects. First, it is a major factor explaining why Russians rarely participated in higher order activities, such as political or community events; and, second, conservative responses implying the need for state intervention were common among Russians coping with continual whirlwinds of change.”⁷⁷

Even though Alexander’s interviewees displayed a high interest in and a plethora of commentaries on their personal and country’s economic fate, as well as a variety of solutions from speeding up the market reforms to economic integration of the former Soviet republics, decentralization of decision making, and strong state intervention, Alexander *still* categorizes these lay ideas as “socio-economic”, his respondents as having “low interest in politics”, or their interests and concerns simply having nothing to do with “high order activities, such as political”.⁷⁸ Only his respondents’ references to candidates for the Duma and presidency are characterized by Alexander as belonging to

⁷⁷ Alexander, *Political Culture* pp. 89-90, 73-5, emphasis added.

⁷⁸ Alexander, *Political Culture*, pp. 72-101.

the “political” realm. Lay reflections on the matters of electoral candidates are grouped in the book under the headings “political environment”, “political leadership”, and etc.

In another example of scholarly difficulty with accommodating the unusual connection between what scholars dichotomize as politics and economics, Mishler and Rose resort to a wishful thinking. They suggest that though it seems that the post-communist citizens evaluate all institutions holistically, without differentiating between political, civic, and economic, they state that “over time as citizens acquire more experience with the institutions of state and society, the weak and inchoate distinctions they currently draw between civil and political institutions may crystallize and emerge with greater clarity and strength.”⁷⁹ In either case, Schumpeterian separation of economics from matters of politics and democracy prevents scholars from understanding lay beliefs that they study adequately, as well as it prevents them from comprehending democratic relevance of such beliefs. Schumpeterian assumptions give rise to scholars mischaracterizing and obscuring lay Russian and Ukrainian democratic thinking.

2) The Scholarly Conceptions of the State and Freedom, and Implications

I suggest that bracketing the “economic” realm as categorically distinct from questions of democracy and politics also underlies a non-economic view of the state and freedom. Lay actors stress the oppressive elements of their “economic” experiences by emphasizing lack of individual freedom, choice, fairness, and empowerment in the

⁷⁹ Mishler and Rose, 1996, “Trust, distrust, and skepticism,” p. 433. According to the findings of these authors, negative evaluation of macroeconomic performance and personal economic conditions correlate with low levels of trust in new political, civic, and economic institutions, pp. 442-6.

“economic” realm. Lay Ukrainians and Russians are often skeptical about the value of parliamentary institutions in helping them to solve many problems of their lives. In attempts to assert control in circumstances where powerlessness is rampant, many lay actors often propose ‘unusual’ solutions such as state intervention in the economy, the guarantee of social and economic rights, or dissolution of parliament altogether. Yet, scholarly frameworks comprised of the static meaning of democracy and ‘non-economic’ conceptions of the state and freedom do not allow representing and understanding such lay thinking adequately. Moreover, the elite competitive framework may even lead scholars to reproach lay critics who report an immense sense of inefficacy and powerlessness over the direction of their lives.

In the context of scholars employing the Schumpeterian conception of democracy wherein democracy is seen as having nothing to do with popular rule in the “socio-economic” realm, it is not uncommon to find scholars of post-communism also stressing the notion of a ‘lean state’ as a necessary element of democratic politics.⁸⁰ Such scholars

⁸⁰ For examples of survey and interview scholars who stress that democracy is necessarily about ‘less state intervention’ in the socio-economic realm, see Fléron, Frederic J., 1996, “Post-Soviet Political Culture in Russia: An Assessment of Recent Empirical Investigations,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 48, no. 2, March, p. 241; Rose, Richard, William Mishler, and Neil Munro, 2006, *Russia Transformed: Developing Popular Support for a New Regime*, Cambridge University Press, p. 105; Rose, Richard, William Mishler, and Christian Haerpfer, 1998, *Democracy and Its Alternatives*. John Hopkins University Press, pp. 24, 34-6; McIntosh, Mary, Martha Abele MacIver, Daniel Abele and Dina Smeltz, 1994, “Public Meets Democracy in Central and East Europe 1991-1993”, *Slavic Review*, 53, Fall, pp. p. 485, 492; Berger, Peter, 1993, “The Uncertain Triumph of Democratic Capitalism,” *Journal of Democracy*, 3, pp. 7-16; Gibson, James L., Raymon M. Duch, and Kent L. Tedin. 1992, “Democratic values and the Transformation of the Soviet Union,” *Journal of Politics*, 54, p. 431; Reisinger, William M., Arthur H. Miller, Vicki L. Hesli, 1995. “Public Behavior and Political Change in Post-Soviet States.” *The Journal of Politics*. Vol. 57, No. 4, Nov., pp. pp. 944-5; Mishler, William and Richard Rose, 1997, “Trust, distrust, and skepticism: popular evaluations of civil and political institutions in post-communist societies.” *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 59, no. 2, May, p. 418; Finifter, Ada W., and Ellen Mickiewicz, 1992, “Redefining the Political System of the USSR: Mass Support for Political Change,” *American Political Science Review*, 86, pp. 857-74; Miller, A.H., Hesli, V.L. and W.M. Reisinger, 1994,

write: “In established democracies, the regime leaves many areas of social life to *individual choice* and to the activities of civil society institutions independent of government”.⁸¹ In other words, scholarly emphasis on a ‘lean state’ is based on a belief that circumscribing the realm of the state leaves opportunities for freedom, individual choice, independence and self-government. A related scholarly tendency is to employ a ‘procedural’ view of the state wherein the state in scholarly conceptual frameworks is understood as just a set of institutions and procedures and the proper realm of the state action must not encompass guaranteeing social welfare to its citizens.⁸²

I argue that employing such conceptions as ‘procedural state’, ‘lean state’, or ‘less state control’ is just another way of reinforcing the exclusion of the “socio-economic” matters and realm from the scope of democratic analysis. Such an ambition was at the heart of Schumpeter’s elite conservative and anti-democratic politics. Schumpeterian framework is problematic because its language is permeated by anti-democratic assumptions as a result of which scholars are unable to accommodate *democratic* critique of political economy and lay attempts to put economic under popular control. As a

“Reassessing Mass Support for Political and Economic Change in the Former USSR.” *American Political Science Review*, 88:399-411.

⁸¹ Rose, Richard, William Mishler, and Neil Munro, 2006, *Russia Transformed: Developing Popular Support for a New Regime*. Cambridge University Press, p. 105, emphasis added.

⁸² For example of studies that are more explicitly grounded in ‘procedural’ view of the state and rejection of the notion of ‘welfare state’, see Alexander, James, 2000, *Political Culture in Post-Communist Russia: Formlessness and Recreation in a Traumatic Transition*, Northeastern State University, 2000, pp. 120, 196; Diligenskii, G.G. 1998. *Rossiskii gorozhanin kontsa devianostykh: genesis postsovetskogo soznaniia. Sotsialno-psikhologicheskie Issledovanie*. Moskva, pp. 91, 68-9, 85, 71, 74; Reisinger, William M., Arthur H. Miller, Vicki L. Hesli, 1995. “Public Behavior and Political Change in Post-Soviet States.” *The Journal of Politics*. Vol. 57, No. 4, Nov., pp. pp. 944-5; Rose, Richard and Ellen Carnaghan, 1995, “Generational Effects on Attitudes to Communist Regimes: A comparative Analysis”, pp. 28-32; Finifter, Ada W., and Ellen Mickiewicz, 1992, “Redefining the Political System of the USSR: Mass Support for Political Change.” *American Political Science Review*, 86, pp. 859-62.

manifestation of difficulty in accommodating ‘unusual’ lay beliefs, scholars often resort to distorting labels of such lay views as “authoritarian”, “outdated”, “undemocratic”, or “longing for paternalism”. For instance, Kullerberg and Zimmerman conclude that lay Russian call for state intervention in economics in the form of social guarantees, price caps, and so forth, is outdated and *inimical* to democratization.⁸³ Also, consider Alexander’s characterization of his respondents’ views of collective bodies as outdated and paternalistic:

The state [for Russians] is not an ‘objective’ concept describing institutions and procedures: the state fulfils the role of protector while embodying the strength and unity of the Russian people...Conservative views of the state explain the disorientation felt by many Russians. As if losing a parent [referring to disintegration of the Soviet welfare state], conservatives were searching for something to fill the void...Such comments indicated a broad popular desire for the state to watch over them.⁸⁴

While Diligenskii acknowledges that it is not uncommon for post-soviet Russians to think about democracy in terms of social protections, social welfare, and social safety nets, he still characterizes these tendencies as a “rejection of liberal and democratic values” and as echoes of soviet consciousness characterized by “paternalism” whereby people want the state to be a guarantor of their wellbeing.⁸⁵ In addition, in contrast to those who may characterize post-communist publics as too “materialistic” and “apolitical” (see my discussion earlier), some scholars depict post-communist masses as too politicized insofar as they long for state intervention in economics. On this account,

⁸³ Kullerberg and Zimmerman, “Liberal elites, socialist masses”, p. 324.

⁸⁴ Alexander, *Political culture*, pp. 120, 196.

⁸⁵ Diligenskii, “Rossiskii gorozhanin”, pp. 91, 69, 85, 71, 74.

the Soviet experience is known for totalitarianism where all matters, even those of civil society, were subsumed under state control and planning. The challenge as it stands for post-communist publics is to learn to separate certain realms of life, such as economics, as independent of state intervention and belonging to ‘civil society’. When lay actors hold other views, Schumpeterian scholars interpret them as counter-reformist, conservative, and antidemocratic, which is just another way to state that lay ideas do not fit scholarly categories and social visions.⁸⁶

But it is not just the scholarly dismissal *tout court* which is problematic. Schumpeterian assumptions are so constricting that even if scholars do not discard ‘unusual’ lay views of the state, the Schumpeterian framework provides no language for fruitful engagement with such lay ideas. I suggest that separation of “economics” from democratic critique perpetuates contradictions, taboo topics, and myths in scholarly analyses. For example, scholars advocate ‘lean’ and ‘procedural’ state because supposedly this guarantees that the “socio-economic” realm becomes one where human freedom, individual choice, independence, and self-government reign. Paradoxically, human freedom, choice, independence and self-government are principles associated with *democratic* practices and scholars inadvertently talk about the realm of “economics” by appealing to these democratic principles (of course, this was not the case in Schumpeter’s understanding of democracy). But, rather than investigating, scholars simply *assume* and cling to an unsubstantiated claim that a ‘lean state’ is a guarantee and basis of freedom, choice, empowerment and independence in the “economic” realm. When scholars are

⁸⁶ Reisinger et al., 1995, “Public Behavior and Political Change,” pp. 944-5.

confronted with lay views that give practical insights about what is going on inside the bracketed “economic” realm in a ‘lean’ state society, the Schumpeterian framework compels scholars to dismiss these lay experiences without any serious consideration.

In one illustrative study, let me further highlight how scholarly understanding of the ‘state’ epitomizes a Schumpeterian categorical exclusion of economics from the matters of democracy. Mishler et al. ground their survey research project in a view that there are certain state institutions such as courts, parliament, presidency, and police, and then there are civil and economic institutions, such as the church, market, and neighborhood clubs. Such a distinction relies on a categorical separation of economics and politics. Democratic action and critique in these scholarly frameworks only extends to the so-called “political”, “state” institutions, such as parliaments, and presidency (but not to the courts and police). The civil and “economic” institutions, on the other hand, must develop and function independently of “state control”.⁸⁷ I submit that the language of the ‘small state’ (i.e. boundaries of the state stop at economic institutions) that permeates this study also implies limited democracy. On this view, only a handful of social institutions can be “legitimately” democratized, e.g. presidency and parliament (for the purpose of this discussion I am bracketing not so trivial questions whether voting can even be called an adequate means of public control and oversight of political institutions).

⁸⁷ Mishler, William and Richard Rose, 1997, “Trust, distrust, and skepticism: popular evaluations of civil and political institutions in post-communist societies.” *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 59, no. 2, May, p. 430.

The realm of democracy thus envisioned is very limited and there remains a whole array of economic structures, institutions and practices unchecked by democratic principles.⁸⁸

Notably, while post-communist scholars employ the language of accountability, responsiveness, and public control in relation to state institutions such as presidency and parliament, once their discussion of public oversight turns to “institutions of civil society”, their terminology arbitrarily changes to such negatively charged terms as “state control” (in other cases scholars may use such terms as “politicization of”, “state intervention into”, or simply “regulation” when referring to public oversight of economic institutions and resources).⁸⁹ So, in these scholarly frameworks, the possibility of public oversight of the institutions of presidency and parliament is equated with democratic oversight, while the possibility of public oversight of “economic” institutions and practices is *not* conceived as the possibility of democratic oversight. I suggest that following a Schumpeterian categorical separation of democracy and economics allows scholars to simultaneously advocate democratization as well as sharp limits to the democratization of post-communist societies.

⁸⁸ For similar discussion and critique of dominant tendencies in democratic studies to limit the realm of public, collective, and democratic action and to “liberate” institutions of civil society from democratic oversight, see Baker, Gideon, 2007, “The Taming of the Idea of Civil Society”, *Democratization*, Vol. 14, No. 4, Aug, and Held, David, 2006, *Models of Democracy*. Stanford University Press, 2nd ed., pp. 225-31, and Wood, Ellen Meiksins, 1995, *Democracy Against Capitalism: Renewing Historical Materialism*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 234-63.

⁸⁹ Mishler, William and Richard Rose, 1997, “Trust, distrust, and skepticism: popular evaluations of civil and political institutions in post-communist societies.” *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 59, no. 2, May, pp. 420, 430. For examples of scholars using the term ‘politicization’ of economic institutions and practices with negative connotations, see Rose, Richard, William Mishler, and Neil Munro, 2006, *Russia Transformed: Developing Popular Support for a New Regime*. Cambridge University Press, p. 105. Also, see Schmitter, P.C., and Karl, Terry Lynn, 1993. “What Democracy Is...and Is Not”, *Global Resurgence of Democracy*, ed. by L. Diamond and M.F. Plattner, Johns Hopkins University Press, p. 41.

Another way in which post-communist survey and interview scholars emblemize and reinforce Schumpeterian separation of economics and democracy, as well as misplace the significance of lay Russian and Ukrainian beliefs, is through their conception of freedom. Scholars see protecting and enhancing individual liberty as central to democratic politics. But I suggest that in Schumpeterian spirit (although Schumpeter never stressed the principle of individual liberty in relation to democracy) scholars exclude “economic” matters from their view of freedom as well as from their understanding of constraints on freedom. For example, when survey and interview-based scholars evoke the notion of ‘individual freedom’, they refer to “freedom to join organizations, travel, speak, avoid unlawful arrest, participate in politics, and practice religion.”⁹⁰ In another formulation:

Central to virtually all definitions of democracy is individual liberty. Not only must the power of democratic states be constrained, but democracies require guaranteed opportunities for citizens – individually or in groups – to compete for political power. *Individual liberty is the ability to vie for power and is an important lubricant for the machinery of democracy...* It is of course not very useful to ask simply whether liberty is of any value to the respondent. Instead, we posed questions that postulated a conflict between liberty and order. We hypothesize that democracies require citizenries committed to liberty even when there is a prospect for disorder.⁹¹

I suggest that in these scholarly views, liberty is understood as having little relation to distribution of resources and the realm of “economic life”. Furthermore, scholarly understanding of constraints on individual freedom also excludes “economic”

⁹⁰ Mishler, William and Richard Rose, 1997, “Trust, Distrust, and Skepticism: Popular Evaluations of Civil and Political Institutions in Post-communist Societies.” *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 59, no. 2, May, p. 448.

⁹¹ Gibson, James L., Raymon M. Duch, and Kent L. Tedin. 1992, “Democratic values and the Transformation of the Soviet Union,” *Journal of Politics*, 54, p. 341; emphasis added.

considerations. For example, scholars believe that the state power is the main impediment to human freedom or to freedom of speech, association, and religion specifically, and it is state power that must be curtailed and checked.⁹² It is commonplace for scholars to claim that it is possible to create conditions for free human development just by checking and curtailing state power. At the same time, in such scholarly conceptions of freedom “economic” constraints such as unemployment, inability to afford housing, and low wages are generally not even considered as constraints at all.

In an attempt to emphasize the opposition between individual liberty and matters of “economics”, scholars often resort to dichotomizing freedom and matters of “economic welfare”. This is evident in how scholars frame survey questions regarding freedom, such as asking respondents whether they would give up material security for freedom, or whether freedom is more important than a guaranteed minimum standard of living.⁹³ In a similar attempt to exclude “economic” matters from the conception of freedom, McIver et al. frame a survey question into a dichotomy of free society versus equal society where nobody is needy:

Which of these two statements comes closest to your own opinion: a) I find that both freedom and equality are important. But if I were to choose one or the other, I would consider personal freedom more important, that is, that everyone can *live in freedom and develop without hindrance*; b) Certainly freedom and equality are important. But if I were to choose one or the other,

⁹² For example, see Carnaghan, Ellen, 2001, “Thinking about Democracy: Interviews with Russian Citizens.” *Slavic Review*, Vol. 60, No. 2, Summer, p. 350.

⁹³ See a summary of scholarly conceptions of freedom in regards to material security in Carnaghan, *Out of order*, pp. 33, 176-8, 180, and Romanovich, Nelli A., 2003, “Demokraticheskie Tsennosti I Svoboda ‘Po-Russki,’” pp. 42-8.

I would consider equality more important, that is, that *nobody is needy* and that social class differences are not so strong.⁹⁴

In this scholarly example, being needy, or, in other words, struggling financially is not even considered a hindrance to freedom, human development, and flourishing. So, insofar as scholars claim that individual liberty is central to democracy, which is something that Schumpeter did not at all espouse, they still end up reinforcing Schumpeterian assumptions by bracketing “economics” from democratic consideration. In a Schumpeterian ethos, scholars insist that freedom, and hence democracy, has little to do with material security and certain economic guarantees and rights.

The scholarly conception of freedom is problematic because it does not allow interpreting lay Ukrainian and Russian views of freedom adequately. For many lay Ukrainians and Russians, rather than an opposition, there is a meaningful connection between freedom, material security, guaranteed employment, decent wages, individual choice, independence, and self-realization. But instead of reflecting these lay views, scholars construct obscuring and mystifying interpretations that Russians and Ukrainians supposedly prefer material security over freedom, independence, and choice. And since freedom underlies democracy, scholars conclude that lay people may not be as committed to democracy as one might wish.⁹⁵ I suggest that these inadequacies are a product of dualisms embedded in the Schumpeterian separation of economics from the scope of politics and democracy used by scholars unreflectively.

⁹⁴ McIver et al., “Public Meets Market Democracy,” p. 511.

⁹⁵ Carnaghan, *Out of order*, p. 33, 176-7, 180-1.

In addition to misrepresenting lay views, scholarly ‘non-economic’ conceptions of freedom may also lead to scholars dismissing “economic” concerns in lay ideas.

Consider how Alexander notes that his respondents’ conceptualizations of freedom “were almost universally positive, expressing belief in the freedom of thought, speech and action”, but at the same time he judges:

Rather than move on to a new era, the understanding and expression of freedom in post-Soviet Russia exhibited strains of thought reminiscent of the Soviet past. Some conservative comments alluded to the tradeoff of types of freedom as the negative freedom of liberal democracies (speech, thought, and so on) replaced the positive freedoms of socialist society (guaranteed work, state provided medical care, and so on).⁹⁶

Alexander’s interpretation of responses is yet another example of difficulties that followers of Schumpeterian vocabulary run into when confronted with ‘unusual’ lay beliefs. Rather than recovering the significance of lay views of freedom, Alexander characterizes those elements that do not fit his framework as outdated and useless. But such a dichotomy cannot help to capture the view of freedom that respondents may hold. Moreover, Alexander advances a debatable view that one must make a choice between something like freedom of speech and guaranteed employment. Alexander himself acknowledges that his respondents (positively) understood freedom as freedom of speech, freedom to stand up for one’s point of view, *as well as* freedom from economic

⁹⁶ Alexander, “Political culture”, pp. 124-5. Throughout his book, Alexander dismisses the unusual lay views and expectations in Russia as “conservative” only connoting that they “cling to the values of the past” rather than investigating how such beliefs challenge scholarly expectations and social vision.

insecurity.⁹⁷ And yet, Alexander continues to force these lay views into a dichotomy where one must *rationaly* choose ‘negative’ in favor of ‘positive’ freedom.

Remarkably, the conception of freedom that many survey and interview scholars employ is consistent with Isaiah Berlin’s view of freedom which distinguishes between two states of freedom: ‘negative’, freedom from external constraints, and ‘positive’, freedom to do and become something. Berlin designates ‘negative’ freedom as a type of political freedom and also as morally superior. In contrast, he distinguishes ‘positive’ freedom from quintessentially political freedom and associates ‘positive’ freedom with economic guarantees and rights.⁹⁸ Berlin’s famous dichotomization of freedom into negative and positive states reflects cold war views, wherein many shied away from socio-economic conceptions of freedom (‘positive freedom’) and rights because of their association with communism.⁹⁹ However, Berlin’s view has also come under severe attack, notably from people who do not sympathize with communism.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, some suggest that the conceptual distinction between “freedom from” and “freedom to” is simply misleading and untenable:

[The distinction] can serve only to emphasize one or the other of two features of *every* case of the freedom of agents. Consequently, anyone who argues that freedom *from* is the “only” freedom, or that freedom *to* is the “truest” freedom, or that one is “more important than” the other, cannot be

⁹⁷ Alexander, “Political culture”, pp. 124-5, 128, also see the discussion of freedom in lay Russian and Ukrainian views in Chapter 1.

⁹⁸ Berlin, Isaiah, 1958, *Two Concepts of Liberty*, Oxford at the Clarendon Press.

⁹⁹ See review in Christman, John, 2005, “Saving Positive Freedom,” *Political Theory*, Vol. 33, No. 1, Feb.

¹⁰⁰ Sen, Amartya, 1999. *Development as Freedom*, New York: Alfred Knopf; Amartya Sen, 1992, “Minimal Liberty,” *Economics*, 57; Sen, Amartya, 1999. “Democracy and Social Justice,” *World Bank Development Outlook*, Summer; Sen, Amartya, “Food and Freedom,” *World Development*, 17.

taken as having said anything both straightforward and sensible about two distinct kinds of freedom. He can, at most, be said to be attending to, or emphasizing the importance of only one part of what is always present in any case of freedom...*Freedom is always both freedom from something and freedom to do or become something...*¹⁰¹

Yet, in survey and interview literature that relies on the conception of freedom that brackets socio-economic considerations there is virtually no acknowledgement that Berlin's approach to freedom has been discredited.

Schumpeterian vocabulary leads to missing a lot of insights about Ukrainian and Russian post-communist societies. Lay democratic ideas do not just reveal to us how people think, but they *also* reveal something about the social situations, practices, and institutions that constitute their lives, and this is also a reason why lay insights are valuable. Scholarly 'non-economic' conceptions of freedom remove incentives to conceive of and examine constraints on human action and flourishing that have to do with relations, practices, and institutions in the "socio-economic" realm. Consequently, Schumpeterian scholars provide little purchase on explaining social situations where conditions for free human development and empowerment are not met.

Many lay Ukrainians and Russians are critical of parliamentary institutions and post-communist social arrangements because they are seen as disempowering, oppressive, humiliating, and unfair. Yet, Schumpeterian assumptions prevent scholars from grasping the democratic significance of such criticisms. On the contrary, scholars end up claiming that lay Ukrainians and Russians have undemocratic sentiments or that

¹⁰¹ McCallum, Gerald C., 1967, "Negative and Positive Freedom," *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 76, No. 3, Jul, p. 318-9, emphasis in original.

they are not ready to accept responsibility for their own economic failures. When taking into account how much has been acknowledged about the horrific affects of post-communist transformation on the socio-economic conditions in the region, such interpretations seem insensitive. However, I insist that this is not due to scholarly own motivations and preferences, but rather due to unreflective use of Schumpeterian vocabulary.

Many scholars acknowledge their respondents' sense of "economic" powerlessness. But since scholars divorce the "economic" realm from democratic analysis, they remain unable to relate the democratic significance of these lay views adequately. As a result, scholarly interpretations of lay criticisms are often ambiguous and inconsistent. For example, scholars may recognize and empathize with lay disappointment with the new social order, but at the same time Schumpeterian assumptions that structure scholarly research compel them to downplay or discredit these critical lay voices. Moreover, even if scholars have radical and progressive intentions, the Schumpeterian vocabulary that is so influential in shaping the scholarship on democracy will tamper these radical impulses.

For example, while scholars may acknowledge briefly that there is some legitimacy to lay "economic" grievances, they remain unable to relate lay insights to the theory and practice of democracy. Instead, scholars resort to speculating about the future benefits of economic transformation:

Economic considerations are likely to be especially relevant in post-Communist societies because economic problems are profound. Moreover, one legacy of a state-run economy is that citizens are accustomed to holding government responsible for both macroeconomic conditions and individual

welfare...Although market reforms may eventually prove their worth, their immediate effect has been the contradiction of the official economy and large scale dislocations in the lives of many citizens.¹⁰²

In a more chilling interpretation, when commenting on some of his respondents' sense of economic disempowerment, Alexander claims that "losers" in the transition might have to learn to take responsibility for their economic misfortunes:

...conservative views of the state explain the disorientation felt by many Russians. As if loosing a parent, conservatives were searching for something to fill the void. Simultaneously, *self-reliant reformers were beginning to flourish in the unconstrained environment*. While retaining access to certain weakening state services, these individuals were also *taking advantage of the opportunities* now afforded by the absence of state controls, *investigating business opportunities and enrolling their children in private schools*.¹⁰³

Schumpeterian assumptions preclude scholars from even considering and exploring how the powerlessness that their respondents report over the "economic" direction of their lives might have something to do with undemocratic post-communist "economic" institutions, structures, and practices.

Carnaghan, who seeks to understand the alleged Russians' longing for order and their "imperfect support for democracy," continuously presents concerns with questions of "economic welfare" as irrelevant or inimical to democracy, freedom, citizen

¹⁰² Mishler, William and Richard Rose, 1997, "Trust, distrust, and skepticism: popular evaluations of civil and political institutions in post-communist societies." *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 59, no. 2, May, p. 441. Also see Rose, Richard, William Mishler, and Christian Haerpfer., 1998, *Democracy and Its Alternatives*. John Hopkins University Press, p. 172.

¹⁰³ Alexander, *Political culture*, p. 121. Also, for other examples where an undesirable focus on "economic welfare" in lay democratic views is characterized as conservative, see Kullberg and Zimmerman, "Liberal elites, socialist masses", p. 324.

empowerment, and efficacy.¹⁰⁴ But she also acknowledges that: “many of my respondents – democrats and nondemocrats, free-marketeters and market skeptics, pensioners and youth – suffered from passivity in the face of power. As a group, they were highly skeptical about the possibilities of positive change. They have not yet embraced their new roles as citizens because they are not sure that their political context has fundamentally changed.”¹⁰⁵ And yet, Carnaghan notes (disapprovingly) that her disillusioned and impoverished respondents did not support democratic values because “*supposedly* democratic institutions were not working very well to solve the real problems of their lives.”¹⁰⁶ She also frames her interpretation of Soviet and post-Soviet political culture “as a response to current social disorder... the people most troubled by this social disorder were *less likely to support democracy* and less likely to have confidence in public officials.”¹⁰⁷ Even though Carnaghan might be sympathetic to her impoverished interviewees, the Schumpeterian vocabulary does not allow her to see the democratic significance of these lay views. Paradoxically, Carnaghan’s interpretation suggests that there is something *undemocratic* about people’s views that are critical of present society, unequal distribution of power and resources, economic disempowerment, and disenfranchisement. The only conclusion that Schumpeterian vocabulary allows her to provide is that her respondents *do not support democracy*.

¹⁰⁴ Carnaghan, *Out of Order*, pp. 164-175.

¹⁰⁵ Carnaghan, *Out of Order*, p. 7.

¹⁰⁶ Carnaghan, *Out of Order*, p. 169, emphasis added.

¹⁰⁷ Carnaghan, *Out of Order*, pp. 8, 7.

In the Schumpeterian framework there is no room for asking critical questions about how undemocratic existing socio-economic institutions and practices are. Hence, lay voices that are critical of the scholarly model of democracy can only be interpreted as rejecting democracy. It is not uncommon to find scholarly emphasis on the “lean state” entangled with emphasis on “individual responsibility” as integral to democracy, as opposed to a “social guarantees state”.¹⁰⁸ When scholars face respondents’ critical remarks about unfair economic arrangements and respondents’ aspirations to assert control over economic matters through demanding “state social guarantees”, scholars characterize such views as “conservative”, “authoritarian”, or “paternalistic”.¹⁰⁹

In some more radical and progressive accounts of post-communism within the mainstream literature we come across claims that citizens in post-communist countries must have “rights consciousness”, which means that they must be willing to “claim individual rights for themselves against the state *and other* powerful institutions”.¹¹⁰

Consider Gibson et al. stating that:

¹⁰⁸ For example, see Gibson, 1992, “Democratic values,” p. 341; Reisinger et al., 1995, “Public Behavior and Political Change,” pp. 944-5; and McIntosh et al., 1994, “Public Meets Democracy,” p. 485, 492; Finifter, Ada W., and Ellen Mickiewicz, 1992, “Redefining the Political System of the USSR: Mass Support for Political Change.” *American Political Science Review*, 86:857-74; Finifter, Ada W., 1996, “Attitudes toward Individual Responsibility and Political Reform in the Former Soviet Union,” *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 90, No. 1, March, pp. 138-52; Rose, Richard, William Mishler, and Christian Haerpfer., 1998, *Democracy and Its Alternatives*. John Hopkins University Press, p. 172.

¹⁰⁹ In survey literature, see Miller et al., 1994, “Reassessing Mass Support for Political and Economic Change,” McIntosh et al., 1994, “Public Meets Democracy,” pp. 500-3. Within interview based literature, see Diligenskii, *Rossiskii gorozhanin*, pp. 80-81, and Alexander, *Political Culture*, pp. 89, Romanovich, “Demokraticheskie tsennosti,” p. 44, Kullberg, Judith S. and William Zimmerman, 1999, “Liberal Elites, Socialist Masses, and Problems of Russian Democracy,” *World Politics*, Vol. 51, No. 3, Apr. 1999, pp. 323-58.

¹¹⁰ Gibson, James L., Raymond M. Duch, and Kent L. Tedin. 1992, “Democratic values and the Transformation of the Soviet Union,” *Journal of Politics*, 54, pp. 329, 332, 344-5; Gibson, James L.,

*Our view is that rights consciousness contributes to democracy because it results in greater demands by the citizenry for the advancement and protection of individual and collective political, social, and economic rights. Democracies are not well served by passive citizens who are unwilling to assert their rights against intrusions by governmental or nongovernmental institutions. To the extent that the authority of the government is too readily accepted, democracy is threatened. One of the most important aspects of the authority relationships between governments and the governed concerns the rights that citizens claim for themselves. High levels of rights consciousness constrain institutions within democracies; they define citizens as active participants in governance, not as passive recipients of governance.*¹¹¹

In this example, scholarly allusion to economic and social rights, as well as to potential tyranny of non-governmental institutions, is an example of transcending the Schumpeterian bracketing of the socio-economic realm in thinking about democracy. However, the potential radical effects of Gibson et al. claims are eclipsed by their nonetheless loyal application of Schumpeterian assumptions in the rest of the study. When discussing attributes of democracy and democratic culture, in Schumpeterian spirit, they bracket the “socio-economic” realm. Thus, their view of individual liberty, democratic institutions, democratic practices, and equality is non-economic.¹¹² For example, Gibson et al. envision democratic equality as equal treatment of people

1998, “A Sober Second thought: An Experiment in Persuading Russians to Tolerate,” *American Journal of Political Science* 42, no. 3, p. 820; emphasis added.

¹¹¹ Gibson, James L., Raymond M. Duch, and Kent L. Tedin. 1992, “Democratic values and the Transformation of the Soviet Union,” *Journal of Politics*, 54, pp. 344-5, emphasis added.

¹¹² Gibson, James L., Raymond M. Duch, and Kent L. Tedin. 1992, “Democratic values and the Transformation of the Soviet Union,” *Journal of Politics*, 54, p. 332-7.

irrespective of their political views, and liberty and ability to vie for political power or express themselves freely.¹¹³

In the end, directly or indirectly many studies impart a message that post-communist citizens are skeptical of the new social order because they are confused and they are still learning,¹¹⁴ because they are stressed by temporary economic hardships and social disorder accompanying transitions,¹¹⁵ because they are disillusioned by the pace of the reforms,¹¹⁶ because they are in the grips of the past, or they have wrong cultural preferences.¹¹⁷ Some scholars show an inability to accommodate the critical force of lay views they study by suggesting that widespread distrust towards new civil and political institutions to some extent is a result of past legacies: “The consequence [of compulsory participation in Soviet times] was massive alienation and distrust of the Communist

¹¹³ Gibson, James L., Raymond M. Duch, and Kent L. Tedin. 1992, “Democratic values and the Transformation of the Soviet Union,” *Journal of Politics*, 54, pp. 341, 343.

¹¹⁴ Alexander, *Political Culture*; Duch, “Tolerating Economic Reform,” p. 593; Evans and Whitefield, “The Politics and Economics of Democratic Commitment,” pp. 485-514; Hopf, “Making the Future Inevitable,” p. 405; Howard, 2003, *The Weakness of Civil Society in Post-Communist Europe*; Kaase, “Political Culture and Political Consolidation in Central and Eastern Europe,” Miller and Wolchik, “Introduction”; Mishler and Rose, “Trust, distrust, and skepticism,” pp. 418-451; Rose, *Understanding Post-Communist Transformation*; Simon, “Popular conceptions.”

¹¹⁵ Bahry, Donna, 1999, “Comrades into Citizens? Russian Political Culture and Public Support for the Transition”; Mishler and Rose, “Trust, distrust, and skepticism”; Alexander, *Political Culture*; Carnaghan, *Out of Order*; Howard, *The Weakness of Civil Society*; Duch, “Tolerating Economic Reform”; Evans and Whitefield, “The Politics and Economics of Democratic Commitment”; Kullberg and Zimmerman, “Liberal elites and socialist masses”, Mason et al., *Marketing democracy*; McIntosh, et al., “Public Meets Democracy.”

¹¹⁶ Bahry, Donna, 1999, “Comrades into Citizens? Russian Political Culture and Public Support for the Transition,” Carnaghan, *Out of Order*; Alexander, *Political Culture*.

¹¹⁷ Fleron, 1998, “Congruence Theory Applied”; Fleron and Ahl, “Does the Public Matter for Democratization in Russia?”; Miller et al. 1994, “Reassessing Mass Support for Political and Economic Change” pp. 409-10; Kullberg and Zimmerman, “Liberal Elites, Socialist Masses” p. 354-6; Miller and Wolchik, “Introduction”; Dawisha, “Communism as a Lived System of Ideas,” pp. 463-493; Delhey, “Farewell to Marx?”

regime and a lingering cynicism toward both political and civil institutions... The immediate problem [of post-communist society] *is overcoming the abiding cynicism and distrust which are a predictable legacy of Communist rule.*¹¹⁸

Whatever the interpretation, lay Russian and Ukrainian reflections never perceived as *democratic* grievances and aspirations, again, for the reason that scholars unreflectively employ the Schumpeterian vocabulary. The Schumpeterian framework forecloses incentives and avenues for scholars to explore how distrust of new institutions and practices can be a *legitimately* critical view and *consistent* with democratic principles. The Schumpeterian framework leaves no room for the view that it is possible to be critical of new post-communist society and economy *on democratic grounds*. Scholars who ground their research in Schumpeterian presuppositions and vocabulary are compelled to characterize lay critical voices that they encounter as misguided or in extreme cases as undemocratic. Scholars construct a misleading choice between “democracy” as scholars (via Schumpeter) conceive it, or anarchy and authoritarianism, but not between “democracy” as scholars conceive and truer, stronger democracy. In the spirit of elite conservative social vision, unreflective followers of Schumpeter insist that change and democratization of present society is both inconceivable and undesirable:

In a democracy popular attitudes matter. At minimum, people vote. For governments to work well, people also have to obey the law, respect state authority, and accept the appropriateness of the [parliamentary and market] institutions that exist. *If they do not, even the best-designed institutions will have trouble functioning well, and the result is likely to be*

¹¹⁸ Mishler, William and Richard Rose, 1997, “Trust, distrust, and skepticism: popular evaluations of civil and political institutions in post-communist societies.” *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 59, no. 2, May p. 420, emphasis added.

*either a collapse into anarchy or a shift toward more autocratic forms of rule.*¹¹⁹

The Schumpeterian framework manifests its conservative force in delegitimizing lay democratic beliefs that do not fit scholarly categories as well as in removing from scholarly view the exploration of an array of social practices, problems, and structures that are based on unfreedom, lack of choice, inequality, domination, and privileging interests of a small groups of people in the society. By following the assumptions and logic of the elite competitive model we continue to dwell on a type of “democratic” theory that dismisses lay views and interests born out of experiences of acting within Russian and Ukrainian societies which in so many ways are still undemocratic. Thus, not only are Schumpeter’s unreflective followers unable to take an interest in and grasp the full force, complexity, and critical edge of lay ideas that they study, but they end up unable to discern the most obvious violations of democratic politics that lay Ukrainians and Russians direct them to.

¹¹⁹ Carnaghan, Ellen, 2001, “Thinking about Democracy: Interviews with Russian Citizens.” *Slavic Review*, Vol. 60, No. 2, Summer, p. 344, emphasis added.

Chapter 4. Interpretivism and Beyond: Toward Critical Hermeneutics in Democratic Theory

a) Introduction

The idea of democracy is premised upon citizens playing an active role in the affairs that directly affect their lives. Among other things, participatory and deliberative theorists stress democratic principles such as participation, self-governance, empowerment, solidarity, equality among listeners and speakers, inclusion, the free exchange of ideas, and collective decision-making in public matters. But the need to integrate lay people's own ideas about democracy and politics into democratic theory has been largely neglected. I propose that democratic theory reexamine its underlying commitments and become more forward and explicit about the importance of bringing lay voices into theoretical discourses. I argue that certain methodological resources of the interpretive approach to social inquiry are instrumental in fulfilling this task. By interpretivism I broadly refer to the presupposition that society is constituted by the values, norms, and concepts of its participants and that it is the goal of the social sciences to explain reality in terms of those historically and locally situated meanings. In particular, I suggest that it is the epistemological emphasis that some interpretivists place on non-expert knowledge and frames of reference that has democratic implications.

Among other things, democratic theory is concerned with outlining the scope and substance of democracy. That is to say, democratic theory speaks to the public matter of widest reach and significance: envisaging the contours of the society in which people live. Then, from a democratic standpoint, it is not only acceptable but necessary that

ordinary people's perspectives count in conceptualizing democracy. Moreover, historically democracy has been contested and redefined not only by experts and elites, but often by lay actors themselves through social movements, and those non-elite ideas have had a direct impact on how we think about democracy today.¹

Since interpretivism as an approach to social inquiry involves several variants, in this chapter I explain which interpretive assumptions specifically can be utilized to revitalize democratic theory. Interpretivists share a belief that social reality is constructed through the ongoing meaning making within communities and groups. This compels scholars to focus on interpreting the significance of social behavior, institutions, relations, and practices not from an illusory Archimedean standpoint, but from the standpoint of social actors themselves, and I suggest that this has democratic implications. It is this feature of interpretive methodology that can help to reinforce for democratic theorists the idea that lay people's beliefs are integral to defining the terrain of social and political life.

¹ Several contemporary scholars of democratic history throughout the world point out that social movements and democratic experiments at the grassroots level have had or may play an important role in redefining democratic institutions and practices, and they greatly affect contemporary conceptions of democracy. For example, see Wolin, Sheldon S., 1994, "Norm and Form: The Constitutionalizing of Democracy", in *Athenian Political Thought and the Reconstruction of American Democracy*. Ed. By J.P. Euben and J.R. Wallach, J. Ober., Cornell University Press, pp. 29-59; Wood, Ellen Meiksins, 1995, *Democracy Against Capitalism: Renewing Historical Materialism*. Cambridge University Press; Markoff, John, 1997. "Really Existing Democracy: Learning from Latin America in the late 1990s", *New Left Review*, Vol. a, pp. 50-4; Palmer, Robert R., "Notes on the Use of the Word 'Democracy', 1789-1799, *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 68, 1953, pp. 203-26; Medearis, John, 2004, "Lost or Obscured? How V.I. Lenin, J. Schumpeter and H. Arendt misunderstood Worker Council Movements." *Polity*, Vol. XXXVI, N. 3, April, Stears, Marc. 2010. *Demanding Democracy: American Radicals in Search of a New Politics*. Princeton University Press; Nysten, William R. 2003. *Participatory Democracy Versus Elitist Democracy: Lessons from Brazil*. Palgrave Macmillan Press; and Avritzer, Leonardo. 2002. *Democracy and the Public Space in Latin America*. Princeton University Press, pp. 50-65.

Injecting this methodological assumption into the vocabulary of democratic theory would direct democratic theorists toward listening to and learning from lay democratic visions. Interpretively flavored democratic theory would transcend a hierarchical world view and elevate lay political thought out of its subordinate place to the status of an equal vis-à-vis the social elites and academic experts. Moreover, including grassroots perspectives, conceptualizations, and concerns in theorists' understanding of political life would help to level the very enterprise of knowledge production not only in its method but also in its substance. In this chapter I specify how interpretivism supports democratic inclusion of lay ideas in defining and crafting the contours of political life, as well as democratic humility on the part of experts, and democratic attention to lived experience and the practical problems of non-elites.

I have identified three groups of scholars who stress that interpretive social science requires a prior ethical commitment to democratic principles and that interpretivism is a more democratic mode of knowledge and inquiry. However, such claims do not constitute the main thrust of their reading of interpretivism. Moreover, such features of interpretivism are not evaluated by these scholars in the light of democratic theory.² For

² Of course, there have been appeals to democratize political science via interpretive methods, and such arguments have been voiced by some *Perestroikans*, for example, see: Luke, Timothy W., 2005. "Between Confused Critics and Careerist Co-conspirators," in *Perestroika: The Raucous Rebellion in Political Science*, ed. by Kristen R. Monroe, Yale University Press, pp. 468, 473; Meilleur, Maurice, J. 2005, "After Methodology: Toward a Profession of Political Science," in *Perestroika: The Raucous Rebellion in Political Science*, ed. by Kristen R. Monroe, Yale University Press, pp. 498-9; and Schram, Sanford F. 2005. "A Return to Politics: Perestroika, Phronesis, and Postparadigmatic Political Science," in *Perestroika: The Raucous Rebellion in Political Science*, ed. by Kristen R. Monroe, Yale University Press, pp. 104-5. For a most recent statement on the subject that echoes these concerns, see Hilmer, Jeffrey D. 2011. "Social Science, Political Science and Democracy Today." *New Political Science*, (review chapter), 33:2, pp. 239-248. Here I develop this theme in regard to democratic theory specifically.

example, within the literature on interpretive policy studies and interpretivism in general, a few scholars bring out democratic implications of interpretive social inquiry, but stop short of arguing for interpretive reform in democratic theory itself.³

Similarly, some interpretive comparativists maintain that interpretive studies have certain advantages over the large-n and statistical varieties of scholarship and can reveal things about democracy and democratization that other forms of social inquiry cannot. However, such benefits are not interpreted through the lenses of democratic theory.⁴

And, while some proponents of Q-methodology insist that democratic theory true to its

³ Yanow, Dvora and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, 2006. "Doing social science in a humanistic manner," in ed. *Interpretation and Method*. M.E. Sharpe, 2006, pp.380-95; Yanow, Dvora, 2005. "In the House of 'Science,' There Are Many Rooms." In *Perestroika: The Raucous Rebellion in Political Science*, ed. by Kristen R. Monroe, Yale University Press, p. 211-12; Yanow, Dvora. 1993. "The Communication of Policy Meanings: Implementation as Interpretation and Text. *Policy Sciences* 26(1), pp. 41-61; Jennings, Bruce, 1983. "Interpretive Social Science and Policy Analysis." In *Ethics, the Social Sciences, and Policy Analysis*. Ed. D. Callahan and B. Jennings, New York: Plenum Press, pp. 3-36; Schneider, Anne L. and Helen Ingram, 1997. *Policy Design for Democracy*. University Press of Kansas, pp. 37-8; Dunn, William N. and Rita Mae Kelly, eds. 1992. *Advances in Policy Studies Since 1950*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers; Fischer, Frank. 1990. *Technocracy and the Politics of Expertise*. Newbury Park, California: Sage; Hawkesworth, M.E. 1988. *Theoretical Issues in Policy Analysis*. Albany: State University Of New York, pp. 30-2. Also see Bellah, Robert N, 1983. "Social Science as Practical Reason," in *Ethics, the Social Sciences, and Policy Analysis*. Ed. D. Callahan and B. Jennings, pp. 37-68. Bellah's view of social science is informed by interpretive assumptions but at the same time he is critical of some implications of interpretive social science for innovation and social change. Similarly, see Meilleur, Maurice, J. 2005, "After Methodology: Toward a Profession of Political Science," in *Perestroika: The Raucous Rebellion in Political Science*, ed. by Kristen R. Monroe, Yale University Press, and Schram, Sanford F. 2005. "A Return to Politics: Perestroika, Phronesis, and Postparadigmatic Political Science," in *Perestroika: The Raucous Rebellion in Political Science*, ed. by Kristen R. Monroe, Yale University Press. While Meilleur and Schram argue that interpretivism promises democratic political science, their views are also informed by Dewey's pragmatism and critical realism, which although they intersect with the interpretive focus on subjective experience are not quite the same approaches to social inquiry.

⁴ Wedeen, Lisa, 2004. "Concepts and commitments in the study of democracy." pp. 274-307, in Shapiro, Ian, Rogers M. Smith, and Tarek E. Masoud, ed. *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*. Cambridge University Press; Schaffer, Frederic Charles, 2000. *Democracy in Translation: Understanding Politics in an Unfamiliar Culture*. Cornell University Press; Hopf, Ted, 2002. "Making the Future Inevitable: Legitimizing, Naturalizing and Stabilizing. The Transition in Estonia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan," *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 8, No. 3, 403-436; Howard, Marc Morje, 2003. *The Weakness of Civil Society in Post-Communist Europe*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 121-146.

spirit must incorporate lay political discourses, they are not forceful in acknowledging that it is precisely the interpretive epistemology that centers on and even valorizes lay self-interpretations that is democratic.⁵

In what follows I synthesize and develop these diverse arguments to highlight the democratic promise of certain interpretive assumptions. First, I identify what methodological starting points democratic theory could borrow from interpretive social science, since I do not make an argument about all of interpretivism but only about certain of its assumptions. Then, I summon several core concepts of deliberative and participatory theories of democracy in order to establish a connection between certain aspects of interpretive epistemology and the impetus of democratic theory. In particular, I explore how the interpretive focus on lay self-understandings, everyday experiences, and the contingency of political ideas speak to democratic principles of empowerment, self-government, collective decision making, political inclusion, and democratic change. Since the amalgamation of interpretivism and democratic theory is not yet a fully formed alternative, with a few exceptions I shall mainly speak about a potential rather than actual literature. Moreover, I discuss in what way the interpretive alternative raises challenges for and in what way it resonates with a recent methodological shift in the practices of political theory.

⁵ Dryzek, John S. and Jeffrey Berejikian, 1993. "Reconstructive Democratic Theory," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 87, No. 1, Mar, pp. 48-60, Dryzek, John S. and Leslie Holmes, *Post-communist Democratization: Political Discourses Across Thirteen Countries*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 3-20.

b) What Sort of “Interpretivism” Are We Talking About? Extracting Three Relevant Assumptions

Referring to a single “interpretivism” would run into several problems because scholarly work identified with the interpretive paradigm is quite diverse in orientations and applications.⁶ In fact, Wedeen suggests that “the label may be so elastic as to refer to everything and nothing at the same time”.⁷ For example, there is a big gap between the research techniques and goals involved in participatory action research on one hand, and discourse analysis on the other, although both methods may be referred to by a shorthand “interpretive”. Methodological diversity notwithstanding, it is still common for interpretive scholars to suggest that there are certain characteristics, such as their focus on understanding the inner world of the community and recovering the meaning of social practices from the standpoint of participants in those practices that distinguish interpretivists from other practitioners of social science. But even within these scholarly treatments, there is no clear agreement about the overall common features of

⁶ Here are some examples of interpretive research methods to highlight diversity within the interpretive political inquiry: participatory action research, case study analysis, category analysis, constructivist analysis, content analysis, critical legal studies, critical race theory, deconstruction, discourse analysis, dramaturgical analysis, ethnographic semantics, ethnography, ethnomethodology, feminist analysis, frame analysis, genealogy, hermeneutics, life history, metaphor analysis, oral history, participant-observation, space analysis, storytelling analysis, textual analyses, and value-critical analysis. See Yanow, Dvora and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, 2006. “Introduction,” in ed. *Interpretation and Method*, Sharpe, p. xx. Also, for additional overviews of various methodological orientations within “interpretivism”, see Yanow, Dvora, 2005. “In the House of ‘Science,’ There Are Many Rooms.” In *Perestroika: The Raucous Rebellion in Political Science*, ed. by Kristen R. Monroe, Yale University Press pp. 205-6, and Prasad, Pushkala. *Crafting Qualitative Research: Working in the Postpositivist Traditions*. Armonk: New York, 2005.

⁷ Wedeen, Lisa, 2004. “Concepts and Commitments in the Study of Democracy,” in I. Shapiro et al, *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*. Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 284.

interpretivism.⁸ It is worthwhile to note then that it is not my intention here to minimize diversity within the interpretive paradigm, to make blanket statements about what “interpretivism” is, or to address some apparent tensions within the methodological literature on interpretivism (unless these tensions are central to my argument). Rather, my aim here is to extract analytical tools that are recognizably interpretive and to show how they promise a renewal of democratic theory.

More specifically, I suggest that we can extract from the interpretive approach to political inquiry *three interrelated methodological starting points* that can help to reinforce several democratic commitments. *First* is the interpretive focus on lay people’s understanding of themselves and their society, or to use Geertz’s terminology, the ability

⁸ For instance, Dallmayr and McCarthy do not provide an agreed-upon definition of the interpretive exegesis and instead argue that “the scope of hermeneutical understanding is bound to be broad and devoid of clear-cut boundary lines”, where some emphasize subjective purpose and intentionality, while others stress a much less personal origin of meaning and subjectivity. Wedeen maintains that Foucauldian assumptions about knowledge and power are a common feature of interpretive social science, and Yanow suggests that critical theory can be categorized as a form of and has influenced interpretivism. However, Sil designates critical theory as a distinctive form of the interpretivism research program and Topper maintains that abstaining from criticizing subjective understanding is one of the main features of interpretive social science modeled after Peter Winch (but this is not the case with Taylor’s interpretive social science). Moreover, Topper, Shapiro, and Wendt suggest that interpretivism is comparable to rational choice theory insofar as it assumes “agents without structures” and lacks an adequate treatment of power and social constraints on primary experience. In contrast, Wedeen insists that unlike behavioralists, interpretivists tend to eschew individualist orientation and acknowledge that purposeful individuals are never divorced from the actual historical processes. See Dallmayr, Fred R. and T. A. McCarthy, 1977. “Introduction,” in ed. *Understanding and Social Inquiry*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, p. 11, Wedeen, Lisa, 2004. “Concepts and Commitments in the Study of Democracy,” in I. Shapiro et al, *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*. Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 284, Yanow, Dvora and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, 2006, “Introduction,” and “Thinking Interpretively: Philosophical Presuppositions and the Human Sciences,” in *Interpretation and Method*, Sharpe, pp. xx, 7, Topper, Keith, 2005. *The Disorder of Political Inquiry*. Harvard University Press, p. 150-2, 160-1, and Sil, Rudra, 2004. “Problems Chasing Methods or Methods Chasing Problems? Research Communities, Constrained Pluralism, and the Role of Eclecticism,” in Shapiro, Ian, Rogers M. Smith, and Tarek E. Masoud, ed. *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*. Cambridge University Press, p. 317, and Shapiro, Ian and Alexander Wendt, 2005. “The Difference That Realism Makes: Social Science and the Politics of Consent”, in *The Flight from Reality in the Human Sciences*, Princeton University Press, 2005.

of interpretive social science to “aid us in gaining access to the conceptual world in which our subjects live...to the structures of meaning through which men give shape to their experience”.⁹ Interpretive scholars share an assumption that the object of the social sciences - the social world - is fundamentally different from the natural and physical worlds. Society is a human realm and among other things, it is distinguished by human cognition, interpretation, agency, intentionality, and purpose. Thus, similarly to a scientific community, society also has within it knowledge, ideas, conceptions, and theories of the world around us, and these systems of signification should not be overlooked by social science studies. Social agents’ self-understandings partly constitute their life experiences and social reality – people give meaning to their world, institutions, practices, and behaviors.¹⁰ On the interpretive account, if social sciences wish to grasp the constitutive dimensions of social reality, they must begin by grasping the meaning of

⁹ Geertz, Clifford, 1973. “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture,” in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York Basic Books, 1973, pp. 24, 10, 12, 14, 27; Geertz, Clifford, 1973. “The Politics of Meaning,” in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York Basic Books, 1973, p. 312.; Winch, Peter, 1977. “The Idea of a Social Science,” in ed. Dallmayr, Fred R. and T. A. McCarthy, *Understanding and Social Inquiry*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, p. 142, 147; Geertz, Clifford, 1973. “Ideology As a Cultural System,” in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York Basic Books, 1973, pp. 214, 216, 220; Taylor, Charles, 1987. “Interpretation and the Sciences of Man,” in ed. Rabinow and Sullivan, *Interpretive Social Science: A Second Look*, University of California Press; and Rabinow, Paul and William Sullivan, 1986. “Introduction,” in ed. *Interpretive Social Science*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2nd ed.

¹⁰ Yanow, Dvora, 2006, “Thinking Interpretively: Philosophical Presuppositions and the Human Sciences,” in *Interpretation and Method*, Sharpe, p. 9; Jackson, Patrick Thaddeus. “Making Sense of Making Sense: Configurational Analysis and the Double Hermeneutic.” ed. D. Yanow and P. Shwartz-Shea, 2006, *Interpretation and Method*. M.E. Sharpe, p. 269; Giddens, Anthony, 1976. *New Rules of the Sociological Method*, London: Hutchinson, pp. 9, 13, 86, 160; Taylor, Charles, 1987. “Interpretation and the Sciences of Man,” in ed. Rabinow and Sullivan, *Interpretive Social Science: A Second Look*, University of California Press, pp. 35, 46, 60, and Winch, Peter, 1958, *The Idea of a Social Science and Its Relation to Philosophy*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; Sayer, Andrew R., 1992, *Method in Social Science: A Realist Approach*. Routledge, pp. 35-39, 60, 65; Topper, Keith, 2000. “In Defense of Disunity: Pragmatism, Hermeneutics, and the Social Sciences”, *Political Theory*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Aug), p. 522.

social practices internally, from the standpoint of lay actors themselves.¹¹ Thus, *epistemologically* interpretivism entails a goal of understanding lay people's interpretations of their own and others' experiences and a goal of uncovering context-specific meanings. Hence, the interpretive focus on lay people's beliefs, ideas, perspectives, and interpretations of themselves and the society in which they live.¹²

Second, I argue that it would be useful for democratic theory to adopt a related interpretive belief in the cultural and historical contingency of meaning of social institutions, relations, and practices. Interpretivists posit social reality as socially constructed, i.e. ontologically consisting of facts, objects, events, acts, and artifacts that are not self-evident and objective but become intelligible only through local and historical frames of reference, as well as human intentions that underlie them.¹³ Or, to use Geertz's terminology once again, what the interpretive social science is concerned

¹¹ Topper, Keith, 2000. "In Defense of Disunity: Pragmatism, Hermeneutics, and the Social Sciences", *Political Theory*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Aug), pp. 522-6; Taylor, Charles, 1987. "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man," in ed. Rubinow and Sullivan, *Interpretive Social Science: A Second Look*, University of California Press, pp. 40, 61, and Geertz, Clifford, 1973. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York Basic Books, pp. 14-5, 24.

¹² Although note that not all interpretivists agree on where the locus of the expression of human meaning lies. Some prefer to focus on the "life world" of lay actors through in-depth interviews, ethnographic research and participant observation. Other interpretivists who wish to study the lay "inner world" look for its "materialized" expressions in the form of art, film, dance, language, proclamations, sculpture, and architecture, to mention some, which must be understood in terms of what they represent for participants. For this reading of some of the most pronounced different orientations within interpretivism such as that between phenomenology and hermeneutics, see Yanow, Dvora, 2006, "Thinking Interpretively: Philosophical Presuppositions and the Human Sciences," in *Interpretation and Method*, Sharpe, pp. 13-6.

¹³ Taylor, Charles, 1987. "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man," in ed. Rabinow and Sullivan, *Interpretive Social Science: A Second Look*, University of California Press, pp. 61, 69, 75; Rabinow, Paul and William Sullivan, 1986. "Introduction," in ed. *Interpretive Social Science*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2nd ed; Yanow, Dvora, 2006, "Thinking Interpretively: Philosophical Presuppositions and the Human Sciences," in *Interpretation and Method*, Sharpe, pp. 13-6; Sil, Rudra. 2004. "Problems Chasing Methods or Methods Chasing Problems? Research Communities, Constrained Pluralism, and the Role of Eclecticism," in Shapiro, Ian, Rogers M. Smith, and Tarek E. Masoud, ed. *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 316-7.

with is the “webs of significance he [the human being] *himself has spun*.”¹⁴ These webs of significance help to give shape and meaning to the social world and human experience, and they also vary across time and space, and may be contested. For this reason, interpretive scholars problematize objective claims to knowledge and they tend to focus on subjectivity and multiple and contingent views of social reality, thereby normalizing an interest in both lay and alternative political views and explanations.¹⁵ This accounts for an interpretive skepticism about claims to universal, natural, and transhistorical truths, ways of life, and models of ‘good society’.¹⁶ Attention to the contingency of the meanings inscribed in political life also leads interpretive scholars to emphasize humility on the part of experts.

And *third*, I suggest that the interpretive attention to lay actors’ everyday experiences and local contexts can help to bring abstract democratic theory closer to

¹⁴ Geertz, Clifford, 1973. “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture,” in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York Basic Books, p. 5, emphasis added.

¹⁵ Yanow, Dvora, 2006, “Thinking Interpretively: Philosophical Presuppositions and the Human Sciences,” in *Interpretation and Method*, Sharpe, p. 13. Also see Taylor, Charles, 1987. “Interpretation and the Sciences of Man,” in ed. Rubinow and Sullivan, *Interpretive Social Science: A Second Look*, University of California Press, p. 61; Geertz, Clifford, 1973. “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture,” in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York Basic Books, pp. 3-32; Geertz, Clifford, 1973. “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight,” in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York Basic Books, pp. 412-55; Taylor, Charles, 1987. “Interpretation and the Sciences of Man,” in ed. Rubinow and Sullivan, *Interpretive Social Science: A Second Look*, University of California Press; and Wedeen, Lisa, 2004. “Concepts and commitments in the study of democracy,” in Shapiro, Ian, Rogers M. Smith, and Tarek E. Masoud, ed. *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 285-99.

¹⁶ According to Dallmayr and McCarthy, Winch has held the most radical position on the issue. Namely, Winch proposed a “uniqueness thesis” where similarity in life forms is ruled out. Rather, Winch insisted that it was in the nature of human society to “consist in different and competing ways of life, each offering a different account of the intelligibility of things”. However, Dallmayr and McCarthy suggest that in his later writings Winch modified his “relativist” assumptions considerably. See Dallmayr, Fred R. and T. A. McCarthy, 1977. “Introduction,” in ed. F.R. Dallmayr and T.A. McCarthy, *Understanding and Social Inquiry*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, pp. 8-9.

people's lives. Interpretive social science has the quality of questioning the "neutrality" and "universalism" of knowledge produced in the "expert" circles such as universities, and it encourages and legitimizes an interest in "subjectivity" and many forms of local and everyday knowledge.¹⁷ Interpretive social scientists are often interested in illuminating substantive questions, concerns, aspirations, and systems of meaning that guide, motivate, and preoccupy lay actors. In turn, this can help to turn what might initially be considered "mundane", everyday, and apolitical into a normal subject of democratic discussion.

Altogether, I argue that injecting these interpretive starting points into democratic theory can help to reinforce several crucial commitments on which democratic theory stands, such as inclusion, equality, free exchange of ideas, expansion of public forums, and grassroots empowerment. Interpretive democratic theory has a bigger potential to remain conscious of the historical and cultural contingency of the meaning and scope of democracy, and make theory more open to different and potentially valuable ideas that emanate not only from academics and elites, but also from the grassroots. Interpretivism can help to orient democratic theory toward seeking out lay perspectives on democracy and thinking through questions of democracy and society together with lay actors. Not only would such method help to make democratic theory's commitment to public debate stronger, but openness to revision of democratic ideas would also bolster its commitment to democratization and democratic change.

¹⁷ Yanow, Dvora and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, 2006. "Doing social science in a humanistic manner," in ed. *Interpretation and Method*. M.E. Sharpe, pp. 387-9, and Yanow, Dvora, 2006, "Thinking Interpretively: Philosophical Presuppositions and the Human Sciences," in *Interpretation and Method*, Sharpe, p. 22-3.

In addition, since interpretive social science is concerned with studying and understanding local knowledge in concrete social settings, modeling democratic theory on such a premise can help to make it more democratic in its substance by making it attuned to what lay people perceive as their problems, concerns, and predicaments. Not only can the interpretive approach help democratic theory to detect realities that matter for lay actors, but it also encourages taking them seriously, even though they might not confirm scholarly expectations and appear trivial or misguided. In what follows I continue to develop this argument by synthesizing similar points made by scholars who are otherwise dissimilar in their disciplinary focus. Since there has not been a systematic attempt to highlight the democratic promise of interpretive social science, I suggest that by juxtaposing these readings of interpretivism we can begin to see more clearly what promise it holds for democratic theory.

1) Interpretivism and Democratic Inclusion of Lay Ideas in Theoretical Discourses

Several scholars of policy studies stress that including lay insights in social science is democratic because it extends the privilege of knowledge production to lay actors who often do not occupy social positions of power and are excluded from affecting political agenda setting in meaningful ways as compared to social elites and academic experts. They see interpretive social science as a public forum, an additional channel through which ordinary people's opinions and concerns can be

heard and disseminated, and also shape research agendas.¹⁸ The interpretive approach to social science entails collective inquiry and popular-based knowing, which contains within it a promise of “renewed democratic participation in political life and in the process of governance in our society.”¹⁹ According to such a view, interpretivism has a democratic ethos because it helps to decenter elite and expert monopolization of the intellectual field by according space for lay reflections and ideas. Giving lay actors a voice through incorporating their perspectives and social constructions into social science can contribute to their democratic empowerment:

Among the most detrimental effects of scientific analysis in policy making is the fact that it creates another group of experts who further denigrate the role of ordinary citizens. Instead of counterbalancing interest group claims or curbing the excesses of self-interest policies, it has created a new privileged class that damages citizenship and democracy... *When science replaces the voice of ordinary people it disempowers them just as much as any other form of elitism.*²⁰

Of course, the aforementioned scholarly treatments, while pointing out various democratic implications of the interpretive approach, do not necessarily draw parallels between interpretivism and democratic theory per se. Dryzek is perhaps the only democratic theorist who has engaged interpretive assumptions and argues that listening to

¹⁸ Banner, James M. Jr., 1983. “Comment on Robert N. Bellah, ‘Social Science as a Practical Reason,’ in *Ethics, the Social Sciences, and Policy Analysis*. Ed. D. Callahan and B. Jennings, New York: Plenum Press, pp. 66-7. Also, see Bellah, Robert N, 1983. “Social Science as Practical Reason,” in *Ethics, the Social Sciences, and Policy Analysis*. Ed. D. Callahan and B. Jennings, pp. 3-37.

¹⁹ Jennings, Bruce, 1983. “Interpretive Social Science and Policy Analysis.” In *Ethics, the Social Sciences, and Policy Analysis*. Ed. D. Callahan and B. Jennings, p. 12, also see p. 35.

²⁰ Schneider, Anne L. and Helen Ingram, 1997. *Policy Design for Democracy*. University Press of Kansas, p. 38, emphasis added. Also, see Hawkesworth, M.E. 1988. *Theoretical Issues in Policy Analysis*. Albany: State University Of New York Press, pp. 30-1.

lay political discourses is in the very nature of democratic theory.²¹ In critiquing the “ideal”, “non-empirical” democratic theory Dryzek states that its alienation from the voices and language of ordinary people undermines the purpose of democratic theory in the first place: “The alienation of political theory may be bad enough; *but the alienation of democratic theory is worse because, ironically, any theorist of democracy is presumably postulating some measure of equality across speakers and listeners.*”²² In other words, inclusion of lay perspectives into democratic theory and collectivizing inquiry is appropriate because it reinforces and keeps true to egalitarian, i.e. democratic attitudes. Thus, democratic theory cannot sustain epistemological elitism. A theory can be called democratic if it is democratic not only in its substance but also in its method.²³

²¹ But note that Dryzek and Berejikian do not call their approach to democratic theory interpretive. While they briefly acknowledge that “the idea that the analyst should attend closely to subjects’ own constructions of politics has in the past been advanced most forcibly in ethnographic studies involving intensive interviewing...”, they also insist that such endeavors are not very helpful in reconstructing subjective understandings because ethnographers end up imposing their frames in interpreting their subjects’ thinking, Dryzek, John S. and Jeffrey Berejikian, 1993. “Reconstructive Democratic Theory,” *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 87, No. 1, Mar, p. 50. Instead, Dryzek and Berejikian resort to a Q methodology and argue that it helps to eliminate bias, creativity, and prejudgment on the part of the researcher. Nevertheless, I continue to categorize Dryzek and Berejikian as employing interpretive assumptions because of their interest in lay actors’ constructions of social reality (pp. 48, 50), which is an endeavor central to interpretive social science. Moreover, I suggest that Dryzek’s and Berejikian’s differentiation between interpretive inquiry and their own inquiry is mistaken in two respects. First, an adequate and accurate representation of the subjects’ inner world is one of the points of contention and interpretive scholars disagree how much interpretive latitude a scholar is allowed in understanding someone else’s beliefs (I shall return to this point again in the second part of the chapter). Second, Dryzek and Berejikian are mistaken to assume that lay beliefs and ideas generally speak for themselves and need not be interpreted and explicated. In fact, in their own study they engage in extensive filtering, classifying and categorizing their subjects’ responses in order to make them comprehensible, as well as interpreting their significance for democratic theory.

²² Dryzek, John S. and Jeffrey Berejikian, 1993. “Reconstructive Democratic Theory,” *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 87, No. 1, Mar, p. 49, and also see pp. 57, 59.

²³ Dryzek, John S. and Jeffrey Berejikian, 1993. “Reconstructive Democratic Theory,” *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 87, No. 1, Mar, p. 59.

To develop this point further, let me point out that the rise of deliberative democratic theory shows that contemporary theorists are interested in what lay actors have to say about politics and believe that production of political knowledge should be a collective enterprise grounded in a public dialogue. For deliberative theorists, public discussion is central to legitimating laws and policies, hence their emphasis on the proliferation of public forums and ordinary people's involvement in political life.²⁴ While deliberative and participatory models are treated as two separate approaches to democracy, there are strong parallels between them and some deliberative democrats emphasize the principle of popular participation.²⁵ I suggest that from the standpoint of both participatory and deliberative models, inclusion of lay perspectives in democratic theory should be seen as an attempt to extend participation in political life to non-elites, as well as an attempt to democratize the intellectual realm and to multiply public forums.

I want to be clear that neither deliberative nor participatory theorists explicitly call for democratizing democratic theory, but I suggest that their vocabularies invite an

²⁴ Of course, not all deliberative theorists advance an identical model and there are disagreements that yield different versions of deliberative democracy. For example, deliberative theorists differ in the degree to which they emphasize participatory over representative democracy. Also, there are differences with respect to what realms of civil society deliberation should reach. For an overview, see Gutmann, Amy and D. Thompson, 2004, *Why Deliberative Democracy?* Princeton University Press, pp. 21-39. Also, see Bohman, James and William Rehg, eds. 1997. *Deliberative Democracy*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press; and Macedo, Stephen, ed. 1999. *Deliberative Politics*, Oxford University Press. Nonetheless, emphasis on public dialogue, inclusion, lay political ideas, and lay influence in the matters of society beyond just voting captures the distinctive feature of deliberative model of democracy, see Gutmann and Thompson, pp. 1-39. Also, see Rawls, John. 1996. *Political Liberalism*, Columbia University Press; Habermas, Jurgen, 1994, "Three Normative Models of Democracy", in *Constellation*, 1; Habermas, Jurgen, 1996, *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, trans. W. Rehg, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press; Habermas, Jurgen. *The Theory of Communicative Action*, transl. by Thomas McCarthy, Boston: Beacon Press; Bohman, James, 1996. *Public Deliberation: Pluralism, Complexity, and Democracy*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press; and Dryzek, John S, 1990. *Discursive Democracy*. Cambridge University Press.

²⁵ Dryzek, John. 2000. *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond*. Oxford University Press, pp. 81-114.

engagement with grassroots perspectives. Several theorists have pointed this out, albeit the point has not been developed systematically. For example, in their now classic work on deliberative democracy, Gutmann and Thompson state:

Deliberative democrats should try to ensure that not only the practice *but also the theory of democracy they favor is systematically open to challenge*...If deliberative democrats are prepared to take a dynamic view of their own theory, as we have suggested they should, they can regard their principles, not as fixed at any point in time, but as subject to change over time...Deliberative democrats should be committed to regarding their principles as subject to revision *not only through moral argument among themselves, but also through moral argument by citizens* and their representatives deliberating together in political forums, including school boards, legislatures, and courts.²⁶

For deliberative theorists, democracy should be about the political influence of lay actors as it pertains to crafting the laws, policies, and institutions under which they live. For example, Habermas, as one of the theorists who is credited with laying the groundwork for deliberative politics, reminds us that in a democracy, rights and laws should not be alien and an imposition but rather authorized by the people themselves.²⁷ Habermas stresses a cooperative search for truth, where not the coercion but rather the force of the better argument would be decisive. Only those laws and policies can be

²⁶ Gutmann, Amy and D. Thompson, 2004, *Why Deliberative Democracy?* Princeton University Press, pp. 57-8.

²⁷ Habermas, Jurgen. 1998. "On the Internal Relation between the Rule of Law and Democracy." in *The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory*. The MIT Press, Cambridge, pp. 253-264. Similarly, although not influenced by Habermas but by Rawlsian political philosophy, Gutmann and Thompson contend that "persons should be treated not merely as objects of legislation, as passive subjects to be ruled, but as autonomous agents who take part in the governance of their own society, *directly* or through their representatives." Gutmann, Amy and D. Thompson, 2004, *Why Deliberative Democracy?* Princeton University Press, p. 3, emphasis added. Also see pp. 53-5.

democratically legitimate that could be an object of agreement among those concerned.²⁸ Deliberative democrats are committed to the principle of “deliberative inclusion” which, I suggest, can be interpreted not only as a call for bringing lay perspectives into crafting public policy in town halls and coffee shops, but for democratizing democratic theory as well.²⁹ I echo Gutmann and Thompson when they write that:

...Deliberative democrats must recognize the provisional nature not only of democratic deliberation but also of their own theory of democratic deliberation. Both their theory and their practices need to be essentially responsive to change. Practically, deliberative democrats must work not only to make the familiar institutions of democracy more friendly to deliberation but also to extend the scope of deliberation to institutions where it has not previously dared to go.³⁰

I suggest that democratic theorists should recognize that scholarship is an important forum through which opinions about democratic laws, rights, institutions, and practices are presented. By their own standards, deliberative theorists should want to bring grassroots perspectives on democracy and politics into democratic theory.

Emphasis on participation marks the contribution of the theorists of participatory democracy to democratic theory. For example, for Rousseau this participation meant

²⁸ See Habermas, Jurgen. 1996. *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*. Cambridge MIT Press; Habermas, Jurgen, 1993. “Discourse Ethics,” in *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, trans. Christian Lenhardt and Sherry Weber Nicholsen, Cambridge: MIT Press, p. 94; and Habermas, Jurgen. *The Theory of Communicative Action*, transl. by Thomas McCarthy, Boston: Beacon Press.

²⁹ Cohen, Joshua, 1997. “Procedure and Substance in Deliberative Democracy”, in ed. J. Bohman and W. Rehg, *Deliberative Democracy: Chapters on Reason and Politics*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, p. 407-10, and Gutmann, Amy and D. Thompson, 2004, *Why Deliberative Democracy?* Princeton University Press, pp. 9-10.

³⁰ Gutmann, Amy and D. Thompson, 2004, *Why Deliberative Democracy?* Princeton University Press, p. 56.

participation in the making of important societal decisions and his theory provides the starting point for theorizing participatory democracy.³¹ Participatory democrats hold a multi-dimensional view of democracy and apply the principle of participation to various realms of social life, such as work, education, healthcare, and family, to mention some.³² G.D.H. Cole, whose participatory democratic theory was greatly influenced by Rousseau, elaborates that democracy is essentially bound-up with self-government in the widest sense possible:

Society will be in health only if it is in the full sense democratic and self-governing, which implies not only that all the citizens should have a “right” to influence its policy if they so desire, *but that the greatest possible opportunity should be afforded for every citizen actually to exercise this right...* Society ought to be so organized as to afford the greatest possible opportunity for individual and collective self-expression to all its members, and this involves and implies the extension of positive self-government through all its part.³³

I suggest that the vocabulary of participatory democratic theory should be understood as to call for the inclusion of lay voices and interests in democratic theory. Scholarship is a public realm where political knowledge is produced, examined, and criticized, and from the democratic perspective lay actors should not be denied an

³¹ Pateman, Carole, 1970, *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 22-4, 36.

³² Pateman, Carole, 1970, *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 36-7. For examples applying democratic principles to workplace and economy, see Cole, G.D. H. 1920. *Guild Socialism Restated*, London: Leonard Parsons; Dahl, Robert, 1970, *After the Revolution: Authority in a Good Society*, Yale University Press, and Dahl, Robert, 1985. *A Preface to Economic Democracy*, Prentice-Hall.

³³ Cole, G.D. H. 1920. *Guild Socialism Restated*, London: Leonard Parsons, p. 12-3d. Also, see Cole, G.D. H., 1920. *Social Theory*. Methuen, London, p. 208.

opportunity to participate in influencing society and politics through this channel. Among other things, participatory democrats are characterized by their concerns with declining civic disengagement and citizen distrust in politicians and political processes. Generally, participatory democrats try to discredit myths that lay actors are inherently disinterested in politics, apathetic, and ignorant. Rather, they explain these tendencies by institutions and practices that prevent or discourage active participation and hence create a citizen body that is disinterested and uninformed in public matters. For example, participatory theorists attribute the relative lack of public participation to the limited opportunities for playing a meaningful role in the governance process beyond voting in elections.³⁴ Inclusion of lay conceptions of democracy into democratic theory is one way to reverse the taming of political participation that is regretted by participatory democrats.

I argue that we should read participatory democracy in such a way as to call for an interpretive approach to democratic theory and for a conscious and systematic inclusion of lay ideas about democracy into democratic theory. Public scholarship needs to be recognized as a public forum and an additional channel for disseminating opinions and interests of the non-elites. Democratic theory is a discourse about different forms that democracy can take; directly or indirectly it involves ideas about how to structure various governmental, economic, and social practices. But such discourses cannot be democratic

³⁴ Pateman, Carole, 1970, *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 22-45, Barber, Benjamin. 1984. *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age*. Berkeley: University of California Press, Cruikshank, Barbara. 1999. *The Will to Empower: Democratic Citizens and Other Subjects*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press; Nysten, William R. 2003. *Participatory Democracy versus Elitist Democracy: Lessons from Brazil*. Palgrave Macmillan Press, pp. 27-29.

if they fail to capture voices of the grassroots. For example, for Cole cooperation in the making of laws and policies ensures democratic principles of equality and freedom, because cooperation presupposes equality rather than hierarchy and it presupposes freedom as opposed to obedience without deliberation.³⁵ When it comes to deciding public matters, and conceptualizing democracy is surely one such public matter, participatory democrats are interested in including everybody as equal decision makers.³⁶ Interpretive democratic theory with its attention to non-expert and non-elite social worlds can help to advance these democratic commitments and to revitalize democratic theory.

2) Interpretivism, Contingency, and Democratic Humility on the Part of Experts

As I mentioned earlier, interpretive scholars tend to deny objective claims to knowledge and instead study subjectivities, ordinary people's self-interpretations, and multiple and contingent views of social reality. Some suggest that because such an analysis can reveal alternative views and multiple dimensions of political problems, the interpretive approach to inquiry has emancipatory and democratic implications. More specifically, interpretivism can contribute to "facilitating democracy" by preventing an imbalanced view of social life where the interests and views of a few dominate collective decision making.³⁷ Pateman states that "in the participatory theory, 'participation' refers

³⁵ Pateman, Carole, 1970, *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge University Press, p. 39.

³⁶ On a related point, see Hawkesworth, M.E. 1988. *Theoretical Issues in Policy Analysis*. Albany: State University of New York Press, p. 31.

³⁷ Hawkesworth, M.E. 1988. *Theoretical Issues in Policy Analysis*. Albany: State University of New York Press, p. 31.

to equal participation in the making of decisions, and ‘political equality’ refers to equality of power in determining the outcome of decisions.”³⁸ I suggest that if democratic theorists commit to interpretive methodology and begin to include non-elite and alternative perceptions of social reality and democracy, they will be better equipped to uphold democratic commitments to equality of power in collective decision-making.

According to comparative interpretive scholars, interpretive analysis with its attention to the internal, “subjective” understanding, ordinary language use, and multiplicity of frames of reference can reveal how lay actors think about the scope and meaning of democracy. For example, interpretive scholars grounded in Wittgensteinian language philosophy employ ordinary language analysis to examine how the concept of democracy or equivalent concepts are used in other languages and social contexts. Ordinary language analysis is “one kind of interpretative endeavor that tries to get at how people think by analyzing the ways in which they use concepts in context”, so it is a form of inquiry into semantics.³⁹ Ordinary language analysis allows investigating alternative precepts about democracy – “language games” - that may be found in local and non-elite settings.⁴⁰ This sort of inquiry can also help to make explicit the assumptions about

³⁸ Pateman, Carole, 1970, *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge University Press, p. 43.

³⁹ Wedeen, Lisa, 2004. “Concepts and commitments in the study of democracy,” in Shapiro, Ian, Rogers M. Smith, and Tarek E. Masoud, ed. *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*. Cambridge University Press, p. 284.

⁴⁰ Wedeen, Lisa, 2004. “Concepts and commitments in the study of democracy.” pp. 274-307, in Shapiro, Ian, Rogers M. Smith, and Tarek E. Masoud, ed. *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*. Cambridge University Press, p. 283. On Wittgenstein’s “language games” and application of his ideas to democratic theory and studies of concepts in terms of “democracy games”, see Pitkin, Hannah Fenichel. 1972. *Wittgenstein and Justice*, University of California Press, pp. 39-49, 147; Schaffer, Frederic Charles, 2000. *Democracy in Translation: Understanding Politics in an Unfamiliar Culture*. Cornell University Press, p. 145; and Mouffe, Chantal, 2000. *Democratic Paradox*, Verso, pp. 60-80.

democracy that we as scholars may take for granted as obvious and universal, when in fact they are just a part of a “language game” in our social and professional context.⁴¹ In such an analysis, “the point then *is not to arrive at an authoritative definition of democracy, but rather to explore how our different uses imply various understandings of what a democratic politics entails.*”⁴²

Thus, interpretive analytical tools provide scholars with means to study how lay actors think about, understand, and conceptualize democracy, politics, and society, all while unsettling the presumed “objectivity”, “universalism”, or “correctness” of our academic beliefs. This impulse is democratic because it commands humility on the part of “experts” and recognition of alternative and non-elite perspectives. I suggest that injecting interpretive assumptions into democratic theory can help to expunge conceptual rigidity and elitism out of it. This in turn can pave the way for democratic theory to be more open to conceptual innovation and revision on the basis of grassroots perspectives. Vocabularies of both participatory and deliberative democracy encourage democratic

⁴¹ Schaffer, Frederic Charles, 2000. *Democracy in Translation: Understanding Politics in an Unfamiliar Culture*. Cornell University Press, pp. 144-6, Wedeen, Lisa, 2004. “Concepts and commitments in the study of democracy.” pp. 274-307, in Shapiro, Ian, Rogers M. Smith, and Tarek E. Masoud, ed. *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*. Cambridge University Press, p. 283; Mouffe, Chantal, 2000. *Democratic Paradox*, Verso, pp. 60-80. Also, see Hann, Chris, 1996. “Introduction: Political Society and Civil Anthropology”, in Chris Hann and Elizabeth Dunn, eds., *Civil Society: Challenging Western Models*, London and New York: Routledge, p. 14.

⁴² Wedeen, Lisa, 2004. “Concepts and commitments in the study of democracy,” in Shapiro, Ian, Rogers M. Smith, and Tarek E. Masoud, ed. *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*. Cambridge University Press, p. 281. Also, see Schaffer, Frederic Charles, 2000. *Democracy in Translation: Understanding Politics in an Unfamiliar Culture*. Cornell University Press, pp. x-xi, 8-11. Note that Schaffer refers to his work as “a language-centered approach, what we might call conceptual analysis”, p. 9.

transformation and change through redefinition of democratic institutions and practices, and I suggest that interpretive assumptions allow fulfilling these commitments.⁴³

At the same time, it may be objected that although interpretive social science supports interest in alternative perspectives and grassroots conceptualizations, interpretive methods do not always guarantee that “unusual” beliefs will be understood properly.⁴⁴ Within the interpretive paradigm, there are conflicting messages and no definitive answers regarding the proper role and consequences of researchers’ “preunderstandings” or frames of reference in representing the meaning of alternative ideas.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, I still maintain that methodological resources of the interpretive framework can help to encourage humility on the part of experts and revision of democratic ideas on the basis of non-elite contributions even if they contradict our scholarly visions.

⁴³ For example, see Gutmann, Amy and D. Thompson, 2004, *Why Deliberative Democracy?* Princeton University Press, pp. 53-8; Pateman, Carole, 1970, *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 36-7.

⁴⁴ But of course, the most profound difference between interpretive and non-interpretive modes of inquiry is that the former makes understanding the goal and the problem of social science to grapple with. See Dallmayr, Fred R. and T. A. McCarthy, 1977. “Introduction,” in ed. *Understanding and Social Inquiry*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

⁴⁵ For a comprehensive and up-to-date overview of these methodological problems, also see Godrej, Farah, 2009. “Towards a Cosmopolitan Political Thought: The Hermeneutics of Interpreting the Other.” *Polity*, 41, pp. 135-165. Also, for a practical demonstration of these problems, see Wedeen’s critique of Shafer’s misinterpretation of democratic ideas among the non-elite Senegalese: Schaffer, Frederic Charles, 2000. *Democracy in Translation: Understanding Politics in an Unfamiliar Culture*. Cornell University Press, and Wedeen, Lisa, 2004. “Concepts and commitments in the study of democracy.” pp. 274-307, in Shapiro, Ian, Rogers M. Smith, and Tarek E. Masoud, ed. *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*. Cambridge University Press, p. 282.

For example, Yanow argues that self-reflection and self-scrutiny distinguish interpretivism from “objectivist” approaches to inquiry and dogmatism.⁴⁶ Of course, this does not mean that scrutiny and reflection about our scholarly conceptual frames are necessarily easy and straightforward. Rather, obstacles to an understanding of alternative ideas and worldviews are not immediately evident and they often require continuous exposure, inspection, and renegotiation. This is also the reason why some interpretivists stress that understanding should be seen as an open-ended exercise, as an evolving process where an outside observer continues to advance closer and closer to grasping the meaning of ideas in question.⁴⁷

3) Interpretivism and Democratic Attention to Lived Experience and the Practical Problems of Non-elites

Participatory democrats are interested in rejuvenating contemporary democratic politics by advocating citizens’ involvement in important decision-making processes, particularly at the local and grass-roots level, by bringing politics closer to people’s day-to-day lives.⁴⁸ I argue that this aspect of interpretive methodology that calls for a focus

⁴⁶ See Yanow Dvora, 2007. “Passionate Humility: Linking Reflection with Double-Loop Learning,” Presented to the 3d Organization Studies Summer Workshop, Jun 7-9, p. 6, 8-9, 12 and Yanow, Dvora, 2006, “Thinking Interpretively: Philosophical Presuppositions and the Human Sciences,” p. 8, and “Neither Rigorous Nor Objective?” in *Interpretation and Method*, Sharpe, p. 73.

⁴⁷ Yanow, Dvora, 2006, “Thinking Interpretively: Philosophical Presuppositions and the Human Sciences,” p. 8, and “Neither Rigorous Nor Objective?” in *Interpretation and Method*, Sharpe, p. 73.

⁴⁸ Pateman, Carole, 1970, *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 22-45, Barber, Benjamin. 1984. *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age*. Berkeley: University of California Press; Cruikshank, Barbara. 1999. *The Will to Empower: Democratic Citizens and Other*

on local and everyday knowledge can help to bring democratic theory closer to people's lives. Some interpretive scholars suggest that it is this attention to and interest in local knowledge that has a democratic impulse because such knowledge is the domain of many, born out of and tied to everyday practices. As Yanow stresses, the interpretive concern with local and "everyday" ideas helps to put a spotlight on the circumstances, knowledge, problems, and expertise of working and low class people.⁴⁹ Paying attention to such beliefs can reveal what is important and meaningful to lay actors in concrete social settings, as well as it can show something about specific social contexts and practices that scholars do not have a first-hand access to.

To prove this point, some comparative interpretive scholars maintain that interpretive analysis can help to discover things about democracy and democratization that other forms of inquiry which are inattentive to participants' self-descriptions and perspectives cannot. For example, an interpretive narrative account relying on in-depth interviews and focus group material can make a valuable contribution to studies of post-communist transition because it can uncover how lay actors themselves perceive the new social order in relation to their everyday life experiences. According to Hopf, such an internal, subject-based understanding is impossible to come by in conventional

Subjects. Ithaca: Cornell University Press; Nylen, William R. 2003. *Participatory Democracy versus Elitist Democracy: Lessons from Brazil.* Palgrave Macmillan Press, pp. 27-29.

⁴⁹ Yanow, Dvora, 2005. "In the House of 'Science,' There Are Many Rooms." In *Perestroika: The Raucous Rebellion in Political Science*, ed. by Kristen R. Monroe, Yale University Press, p. 211, emphasis added. Also, on these points see Dewey, John. 1957. *Reconstruction in Philosophy.* Boston: Beacon Press, pp. xv, xxxi, xxxviii, 63, where he suggests that the (undemocratic) hierarchy of classes coincides with the hierarchy of knowledge: practical and mundane knowledge, and material interests are excluded from philosophy or considered lesser. However, in a democratic society such an approach to knowledge can no longer be sustained.

approaches to post-communist transition that posit “objective” measures of economic growth and the democratic legitimacy of new regimes. What an interpretive look at lay actors’ thinking in post-communist countries can reveal is that the objective (and presumably self-evident) legitimacy of the post-communist social order is deeply problematized in those local settings. Economic indices are considered by many scholars an “objective” measure of transitional success and they have shown some economic growth, even though there are variations among the post-communist countries. Yet, Hopf suggests that regardless of the indices that scholars see “objectively”, focus groups and in-depth interview studies can show that “*people actually experiencing the transition believe they are suffering*, regardless of their level of misery relative to others in the post-communist world...”⁵⁰

Similarly, according to Howard, the interpretive analysis of civic organizations can help to unearth subjective aspects of rampant non-participation in post-communist countries. In other words, it can provide a “vivid representation of people’s experiences in their own thoughts and words”.⁵¹ For example, in-depth interviews reveal that many lay actors in post-communist Russia simply do not find membership in civic organizations relevant to their daily routines of economic struggle and survival; they

⁵⁰ Hopf, Ted, 2002. “Making the Future Inevitable: Legitimizing, Naturalizing and Stabilizing. The Transition in Estonia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan,” *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 8, No. 3, p. 428, emphasis added.

⁵¹ Howard, Marc. 2003, *The Weakness of Civil Society in Post-Communist Europe*, p. 145. Note that Howard does not rely on in-depth interviews only, but largely on surveys. Yet, he makes a case that the interpretive assessment of non-participation can be used to check validity and provide depth for survey research. Moreover, I cite Howard’s work as an example of comparative interpretivism with caution, because in certain parts of his book he finds little value in staying attuned to local knowledge and diversifying ethnocentric components of scholarly conceptions. See his views with respect to the concept of ‘civil society’, pp. 39-47.

distrust public organizations and are disillusioned with post-communist developments in general.⁵² Such insights are hard to obtain in studies that omit the “subjective” dimensions of social reality, but interpretive studies of post-communist transition and democratization can reveal important things about the processes of contemporary “democratic” transitions.

There are other ways in which some aspects of interpretive social science can help to bring scholarly inquiry closer to the experiences that are common and/or important for lay actors. A semiotic-practical approach, which is yet another way to practice interpretive social science, investigates how language and systems of meaning structure everyday practices. It is a study of lay actors’ behavior and of their subjective worlds. Specifically in relation to studying democracy, an inquiry that is attentive to lived experience, local practices, and the subjective realm can help to uncover the sites of what might be construed as a democratic practice within the traditionally invisible in the scholarship “everyday” life.⁵³

The interpretive approach would compel democratic theorists to make the non-elite lived experiences relevant rather than peripheral to understanding questions of democracy. Some stress that political science that is divorced from the lived experiences

⁵² Howard, Marc. 2003, *The Weakness of Civil Society in Post-Communist Europe*, pp. 139-145.

⁵³ Wedeen, Lisa, 2004. “Concepts and commitments in the study of democracy,” in Shapiro, Ian, Rogers M. Smith, and Tarek E. Masoud, ed. *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 285-6, 299. Wedeen explores the production of “loyal” opposition through everyday qat chew practices in Yemen. Wedeen argues that interpretive account can reveal how qat chews practices in Yemen are sites where political discussion and deliberation take place “independent of more or less closed party councils...[and] would seem to be part of what democracy means”, p. 299.

of lay people fails on democratic grounds.⁵⁴ But this problem should be even more acute for *democratic theory*. Certainly, democratic theory cannot remain indifferent to a prospect of unmasking suffering and a sense of powerlessness among lay actors through their own stories. Nor can it remain uninterested about discovering the “unconventional” sites of democratic thought and action as understood by lay people themselves.

I suggest that conducting democratic theory from the standpoint of concrete lived experiences and the reality of everyday life has the potential to democratize the substance of democratic theory. Moreover, it is not only that lay political reflections can be defended on democratic grounds, but it can also be defended on pragmatic grounds because lay actors often possess detailed knowledge of local conditions, their needs, and problems. People are more likely to find public laws and programs legitimate if they contributed to crafting them or if these laws and programs meaningfully reflect their needs, priorities, and concerns. Both deliberative and participatory theorists of democracy make a pragmatic argument for democracy. For them, democratic politics has value because it is more efficient.⁵⁵ Interpretive methodology helps to speak to idealistic as well as to pragmatic considerations that democratic theorists evoke in their work on democracy.

⁵⁴ Meilleur, Maurice, J. 2005, “After Methodology: Toward a Profession of Political Science,” in *Perestroika: The Raucous Rebellion in Political Science*, ed. by Kristen R. Monroe, Yale University Press, p. 499.

⁵⁵ Pateman, Carole, 1970, *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge University Press, p. 33, and see J.S. Mill, 1963. *Chapters on Politics and Culture*, Himmelfarb G. (ed.), New York, p. 230, and Habermas, Jurgen. 1998. “On the Internal Relation between the Rule of Law and Democracy.” in *The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory*. The MIT Press, Cambridge, pp. 253-264.

c) Comparing the New Alternative to Some Broader Developments Within Academic Democratic Theory

So far I have argued that interpretive epistemology would animate democratic theory's interest in lay conceptualizations of democracy: the assumptions, concerns, meanings, aspirations, and disappointments ordinary people might invest in their understanding of democracy, and the situations their democratic perspectives help them to confront. Even if lay views of democracy do not conform to our scholarly conceptions, interpretive democratic theory would not discard or ignore these lay perspectives. On the contrary, it would make them an object of scholarly inquiry, understanding, and explication.

My goal in this section is to relate the interpretive project for democratic theory to several broader tendencies in contemporary political and democratic theory: to highlight some affinities but also to pinpoint in what way this framework differs from similar scholarly undertakings. Interpretivism and attention to lay views of democracy bring into democratic theory a focus on what some normative democratic scholars refer to as "empirical" aspects of political life.⁵⁶ Interpretivism presupposes a kind of democratic

⁵⁶ Note that mainstream political scientists do not consider interpretive social science empirical. Some insist that only those forms of inquiry grounded in the Hempelian-Popperian model of science and centered on theory testing and causal inference can be rightly referred to as empirical. For example, see King, Gary, Keohane Robert and Sidney Verba, 1994, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton University Press and Brady, H.E. and D. Collier, ed., 2004, *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standard*. Such views imply that insofar as interpretivism concerns itself with understanding rather than explanation, it is not empirical. However, Yanow and Schwartz-Shea point out that distinguishing interpretivism from empiricism is misleading if by empiricism we mean working with concrete social and historical contexts and beliefs, i.e. the real world out there. In this sense, different forms of interpretivism are no less empirical than standard empirical political science, Yanow, Dvora and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, 2006, "Introduction," in *Interpretation and Method*, p. xii.

theory that is grounded in concrete societies, lay actors, their social practices, their political and democratic perspectives, and their daily dilemmas. Also, the interpretive alternative opens democratic theory toward seeing the relevancy of not only normative, but also of practical, explanatory, and descriptive aspects of democratic thinking. However, such a proposed shift would challenge a classical approach to political theory that stresses how it should concern itself with normative aspects of political life, and these investigations can and should be done independent of the socio-historical context.⁵⁷ More importantly, the ideals-based approach to theorizing is still often evoked in democratic theory.⁵⁸ For this reason, it may appear that there is something illicit about proposing that democratic theorists engage with lay views of democracy as well as with practical and explanatory features of democratic thinking.

Of course, this classical position about the proper domain of political theory has been challenged on numerous accounts as either unsubstantiated or undesirable.⁵⁹ In

⁵⁷ For example, see classical statements on the subject by Strauss, Leo, 1957, "What is Political Philosophy?" *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 19, No. 3, August, pp. 343-368; Wolin, Sheldon, 1972. "Political Theory as a Vocation," in ed. by M. Fleisher, *Machiavelli and the Nature of Political Thought*, New York: Atheneum; Rawls, John, 1971. *A Theory of Justice*, Harvard University Press; Dworkin, Ronald, 1983. *New York Review of Books*, April 17; and Hampton, Gene, 1989, "Should Political Philosophy be Done Without Metaphysics?" *Ethics*, Vol. 99, No. 4, Jul., pp. 791-814. Also see summary overviews of this common approach to political theory by Gunnell, John G, 1993, *The Descent of Political Theory: The Genealogy of an American Vocation*, The University of Chicago Press; Mouffe, Chantal, 2000. *Democratic Paradox*, Verso, pp. 60-80; Ashcraft, Richard, 1975. "On the Problem of Methodology and the Nature of Political Theory," *Political Theory*, Vol. 3, No. 1, (Feb) and a series of responses to Ashcraft.

⁵⁸ See my discussion in ch. 2, part I.

⁵⁹ For example, some criticize the practical poverty of abstract, historically detached, and esoteric political theory, see Gunnell, John G, 1993, *The Descent of Political Theory: The Genealogy of an American Vocation*, The University of Chicago Press; Isaac, Jeffrey, 1995. "Strange Silence of Political Theory," *Political Theory*, vol. 23, no. 4, pp. 636-652. Some challenge the desirability of "objective" and decontextualized political theory as well as focusing on just political ideals. For example, see Bernstein, Richard J, 1983, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics, and Praxis*, University of

general, political theorists have been moving away from seeing themselves as disengaged from and unmediated by their social, historical, and political surroundings. For example, Bernstein advances the thesis that the concept or model of rationality, knowledge, and truth has been undergoing some important changes in political theory for quite some time, as exemplified in the works of Rorty, Habermas, Arendt, Heidegger, Gadamer, Wittgenstein, and Dewey, to mention a few. According to Bernstein, rationality is being understood as hermeneutical, historically situated, and oriented towards practices of human life, even though this model has not been fully developed yet.⁶⁰ Then, building upon the available resources, Bernstein motions towards a type of political theory that would be hospitable to and concerned with lay beliefs, social dialogues, and social

Pennsylvania Press, Toulmin, Stephen, 2001. *Return to Reason*, Harvard University Press, and Geuss, Raymond, 2008, *Philosophy and Real Politics*, Princeton University Press. Yet, other scholars question the validity of a common view that there are “perennial” problems and timeless questions in political theory. Rather, political theorists should recognize that political texts are always context-specific and purposeful, i.e. are meant by authors to convey particular messages, see Skinner, Quentin, 1969. “Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas,” *History and Theory*, Vol. 8, No. 1; Austin J.L., 1962. *How To Do Things With Words: The William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955*. Ed. by J.O. Urmson, Oxford: Clarendon; and Ashcraft, Richard, 1986. *Revolutionary Politics and Locke’s Two Treatises of Government*, Princeton University Press, pp. 3-10. Relatedly, some claim that it is impossible to transcend one’s historical and cultural context, and the “timeless” truths and themes of political theory are always imbued with the aspects of the world out of which they arise. Political texts are never insulated from the historical events surrounding them – these events, given theorists’ relation to them, shape theorists’ thinking and writing. See Ashcraft, Richard, 1986. *Revolutionary Politics and Locke’s Two Treatises of Government*, Princeton University Press, pp. 3-10. And some insist that what is known as “universal” and “ideal” political theory and beliefs often mask the ideas and interests of the dominant culture, class, gender, or race. For example, see Gramsci, Antonio, 1971. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. by Quinton Hare and G. Nowell-Smith, Lawrence and Wishart, London, pp. 206-78; Gramsci, Antonio, 1957. *The Modern Prince and Other Writings*, transl. by Lewis Marks, International Publishers: New York; Mouffe, Chantal, 2000. *Democratic Paradox*, Verso, pp. 60-80; Charles W. Mills, 1997. *The Racial Contract*, Ithaca: Cornell; Pateman, Carole, 1989. *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism, and Political Theory*, Stanford University Press; Harding, Sandra, 2004. *Feminist Standpoint Theory: Intellectual and Political Controversies*. Routledge; Said, Edward, 1979. *Orientalism*, Vintage Books.

⁶⁰ Bernstein, Richard J, 1983, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics, and Praxis*, University of Pennsylvania Press, pp. x-xi, 7, 24.

conditions that enable or constrain communication.⁶¹ While the main thrust of Bernstein's argument comes only at the end of his book, it is an example of an emerging view of political theory that would welcome my interest in lay beliefs about democracy.

More importantly, many contemporary democratic theorists amply draw on and address their work to specific events and political dilemmas (as they perceive them) of our times.⁶² In addition, several democratic theorists explicitly propose methodological reforms. For instance, in contrast to the "ideal" approach to democratic theory, Mouffe draws on Wittgenstein's language philosophy and advocates a model of historically and contextually-grounded democratic theory. According to Mouffe, democratic theory

⁶¹ Bernstein, Richard J, 1983, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics, and Praxis*, University of Pennsylvania Press, pp. 223-6.

⁶² Consider how actual historical situations and societal dilemmas in the U.S., U.K., and/or around the world form a background and a source of inspiration for much of the work in contemporary democratic theory. For example, Young responds to and reconceptualizes democratic politics in light of the 1990s L.A. riots, racism and ethnic discrimination in the contemporary U.S; Connolly thinks through reconceptualization of democratic politics through such developments as the rise of Fundamentalism in the U.S., discrimination against homosexuals, globalization, economic inequality, and cross-border movements; Bohman uses examples of political underrepresentation and indirect exclusion from public deliberation of minority groups in the U.S. and Canada such as Native-Americans and Quebecois to reconceptualize democratic politics; Gutmann and Thompson apply their deliberative democracy model to contemporary policy issues in the U.S. and the U.K. such as the Iraq war, healthcare, abortion, and gay marriage, and transitional justice in South Africa; arguments about some needed improvements in American politics form a background to Held's discussion about what democracy should mean today; Wolin advocates revitalization of American democracy through cooperatives, movements for affordable housing for low income families, and environmental sustainability, and Mouffe and Honig address challenges that multiculturalism presents for America's liberal democracy model and liberal cultural imperialism. See Young, Iris, 2000, *Inclusion and democracy*. Oxford University Press, pp. 12-9; Bohman, James, 2000, *Public Deliberation: Pluralism, Complexity, and Democracy*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, pp. 96-8, 188-9; William, Connolly, 1995. *The Ethos of Pluralization*, University of Minnesota Press, pp. 83, 105-125, 131-33, 154-60; Held, David, 1987, *Models of Democracy*; Gutmann, Amy and D. Thompson, 2004, *Why Deliberative Democracy?* Princeton University Press, pp. 1-8, 28-9, 40-2, 62-3, 70-8, 142-7; Wolin, Sheldon S., 1994, "Norm and Form: The Constitutionalizing of Democracy", in *Athenian Political Thought and the Reconstruction of American Democracy*. Ed. By J.P. Euben and J.R. Wallach, J. Ober., Cornell University Press, pp. 56-59; Honig, Bonnie, 1993, *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics*, Cornell; and Mouffe, Chantal, 2000. *Democratic Paradox*, Verso, pp. 60-80.

should not be understood as articulating universal ideals but instead as reflecting what democracy means in particular societies and historical contexts.⁶³

Yet, I suggest that while these recent developments gesture toward, they do not quite amount to, the interpretive alternative for democratic theory that I envision here. I will specify in what way the interpretive framework that I outline compares to, but also differs from, those attempts to open democratic theory toward practical questions and lay self-interpretations.

For example, while so many democratic theorists often tackle pressing social issues and particular problems, this scholarly practice still takes place in the confines of a largely ideal view of democratic theory. As a result, a strongly pronounced, rather than peripheral and implied, interest in the relationship between democratic theory, lay beliefs, and action in the real world can be professionally discounted. Thus, an attempt to cast democratic theory in terms of frameworks and concepts that are recognizable to lay people and are reflective of their experiences may be met with some skepticism. It may be objected that valorizing lay beliefs about democracy risks confusing what is (what people actually believe about democracy) with what ought to be. For instance, according to Hampton, political theory should be grounded in normative ethics and concern itself with truthfulness of ideas. But if political theorists begin to reflect ordinary people's perspectives, they would be reduced to mere politicians pandering to the masses:

⁶³ For example, see Mouffe, Chantal, 2000. *Democratic Paradox*, Verso, pp. 60-80.

“Politicians, after all, only want acceptance of ideas they (for whatever reason) are pushing; philosophers are supposed to want truth”.⁶⁴

I maintain that the resistance of democratic theory to lay influence may be based on misunderstanding the value of what lay ideas actually add. For example, the assumption that normative knowledge should be properly formed independently of social context and practice may be one of the reasons to remain detached from lay people’s life experiences and perspectives. However, such a view is mistaken, because there is no necessary opposition between practice, context, and lay beliefs on the one hand and normative questions of politics on the other. In fact, since democratic theorists do not have first-hand access to a variety of social sites and may not be aware of all possible social situations where democratic principles are violated, opening democratic theory to lay interpretations may help to uncover suffering and a sense of powerlessness. As I highlighted earlier in this chapter, the interpretive approach can aid in detecting “unconventional” perspectives on politics and those aspects of social realities that are normally “unseen” by academic experts. Thus, I suggest that attention to context-specific phenomena can help democratic theorists make their normative claims stronger and richer.

⁶⁴ Hampton, Gene, 1989, “Should Political Philosophy be Done Without Metaphysics?” *Ethics*, Vol. 99, No. 4, Jul., pp. 807, 792. In this chapter Hampton critiques Rawls’s recent project in his *Political Liberalism* of a “more community-minded, deliberately nonuniversal, and nonmetaphysical justificatory method” for political theory. But note that Hampton’s review of Rawls’s current approach to political philosophy encompasses several other criticisms that I do not touch upon here. For example, Hampton contends that Rawls’s attempt at finding principles of justice that can be agreeable to all members of society is a veiled metaphysical advocacy of liberalism, and liberal principles are not agreed upon by all members of pluralist societies, see pp. 799-802

Interpretive democratic theory would not rule out questions of normative ethics. Lay beliefs form in the context of and in response to their daily social practices, but no convincing argument can be made that because they are practice-based, they lack normative dimensions. For example, lay Russian and Ukrainian perspectives on democracy are deeply imbued with normative positions and critiques of many aspects of the post-communist social order. Whether it is their condemnation of deep economic inequality, of dismantling of social safety nets, of inability to afford housing and other basic necessities, or of a sense of political tokenism, lay Russians and Ukrainians voice normative concerns.⁶⁵ Insofar as lay interpretations can reveal how certain social realities degrade their human dignity, imprison their spirit, strip them of an ability to control their livelihood, and constrain their sense of free personhood, they can normatively enrich democratic theory by contributing insights about social injustices. Thus, studying lay self-interpretations can show democratic theorists new and more appropriate ways of thinking about democracy, and this would surely reinforce a search for normative ethics and an examination of the truth of our ideas pertaining to democracy.

In addition, including lay normative perspectives and practical situations will not only contribute to making democratic theory morally rich, but also, in a democratic spirit, to making it morally *relevant* to lay people's lives. As Schram points out, it is the social inquiry that provides delimited, contextualized, and local knowledge that "might serve

⁶⁵ See my discussion in chapter 1.

people within specific contexts” that has implications for popular empowerment.⁶⁶ I suggest that when democratic theory, a theory of popular rule, loses its connection to and relevance to people who believe they confront powerlessness and unfreedom on a daily basis, it simply fails from the democratic standpoint.

But aside from a possible skepticism about the project of interpretive democratic theory, let me explain how the interpretive framework for democratic theory compares to and also differs from some similar developments in academic democratic theory. For example, Mouffe’s contextual model of democratic theory, although echoing my concerns, has not been defended in light of the democratic impulse. Rather, it is based on a view that since an Archimedean standpoint in political theory does not exist, democratic theory should lose its pretension to universality and timelessness, and become sensitive to its contextual and cultural contingencies.⁶⁷ And even though Mouffe, similar to the aforementioned Wedeen and Schaffer, draws on Wittgenstein’s ordinary language philosophy, she does not distinguish between lay, elite, and expert political thinking. Mouffe subsumes *all* Western discourses about democracy under the homogenizing label “our views”.⁶⁸ Similarly to some interpretivists that I mentioned earlier, Mouffe problematizes rationalism, objectivity, and universalism as convenient excuses to justify

⁶⁶ Schram, Sanford F. 2005. “A Return to Politics: Perestroika, Phronesis, and Postparadigmatic Political Science,” in *Perestroika: The Raucous Rebellion in Political Science*, ed. by Kristen R. Monroe, Yale University Press, p. 104.

⁶⁷ Mouffe, Chantal, 2000. *Democratic Paradox*, Verso, pp. 60-80.

⁶⁸ Mouffe, Chantal, 2000. *Democratic Paradox*, Verso, p. 66-7.

exclusion of nonstandard and multiple views of social reality.⁶⁹ However, under “alterity” Mouffe seems to only understand non-Western and non-liberal, rather than grassroots and lay political perspectives.

As a result, Mouffe’s contextual democratic theory is not necessarily a democratic theory from below, but rather a study of cultures without making class and social status differentiations underlying various understandings of democracy.⁷⁰ While Mouffe advances a model of “radical and pluralist” democratic theory, her pluralism seems to only accommodate broader Western and non-Western categories, which, although important, does not help to attend to problems of inequality and exclusion of *lay* perspectives from social inquiry.⁷¹ Mouffe’s issue seems to be not with elitism in democratic theory per se, but with Western cultural domination. Of course, elitism itself is a form of cultural domination, but we can distinguish between domination of cultures and domination of certain social groups *within* a culture. The interpretive assumptions that I single out in this chapter are more conducive to democratic theory because they force democratic theorists to think about pluralism and difference in views not only across societies but also within societies (hence, the interpretive emphasis not only on the local but also the *lay* cultural world).

⁶⁹ Mouffe, Chantal, 2000. *Democratic Paradox*, Verso, p. 76.

⁷⁰ This homogenization effect of Mouffe’s democratic theory actually contradicts her own preoccupation with homogenizing discourses of universalism and rationalism that contribute to the “reabsorption of alterity”, see Mouffe, Chantal, 2000. *Democratic Paradox*, Verso, p. 76.

⁷¹ Mouffe, Chantal, 2000. *Democratic Paradox*, Verso, pp. 66-7.

Moreover, Dryzek and Berejikian, while advocating theorists' attention to lay discourses on democracy, remain ambiguous with regards to how collectively-based democratic theory should be. For instance, they do not explicitly take a position that democratic theorists should revise their definitions of democracy based on lay beliefs. Rather, in Dryzek's and Berejikian's view lay discourses are valuable because they offer diverse audiences whom various democratic theorists can address *as their followers*. In addition, according to Dryzek and Berejikian, lay self-understandings can help theorists to test *theorists'* assumptions about human capabilities and dispositions.⁷² So, even though they signal some sort of leveling democratic theory, their view in some ways implies that lay actors do not quite have the epistemological legitimacy of scholars of democracy.

In contrast, what I have maintained so far is that democratic theory, given its subject matter, simply cannot afford to remain distanced from lay actors' concrete experiences and their own interpretations of them. Collective and bottom-up inquiry into the questions of politics and social orders is in the spirit of democracy and democratic theorists should not be uncomfortable about approaching lay actors as equals.

Furthermore, although earlier I have highlighted those features of deliberative democratic theory that invite scholarly engagement with lay political ideas, there is a certain ambivalence on the issue. Some influential scholars have been explicit in some aspects of their work that deliberative democracy does not mean that lay actors get to

⁷² Dryzek, John S. and Jeffrey Berejikian, 1993. "Reconstructive Democratic Theory," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 87, No. 1, Mar, pp. 48-50, 57-9.

shape the structures of society and the meaning of democracy. For example, according to Habermas and Young, lay people get to exert political influence within the structures, institutions, rules and procedures already established and maintained separate from their direct influence.⁷³ But in contrast to such a treatment, Gutmann and Thompson suggest that even constitutions cannot be completely insulated from deliberation. Insulation of the 19th century U.S. constitutional protection of male suffrage from discussion is not justifiable.⁷⁴ Also, while deliberative democrats celebrate public opinion, in certain articulations this framework projects a somewhat constricted view of and a contingent interest in lay political thinking. For example, while Rawls is aware that lay beliefs encompass much more than a stance on current public policies, he insists on bracketing cultural, religious, and social theory components of lay views from what can legitimately enter public dialogue and democratic discussion.⁷⁵ I suggest that such a constricted approach to the role of lay opinion in a democracy and in democratic theory, when coupled with a view that broader contours of the social order are beyond the limits of lay influence, would foreclose democratic theory's interest in lay self-interpretations and conceptions of democracy. It would also foreclose the possibilities for democratic reform on the basis of non-elite perspectives. The interpretive framework, on the other hand,

⁷³ Habermas, Jürgen, 1994. "Three Normative Models of Democracy", in *Constellations*, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 9, and Young, Iris, 2000, *Inclusion and Democracy*. Oxford University Press, pp. 8, 11, 19.

⁷⁴ Gutmann, Amy and D. Thompson, 2004, *Why Deliberative Democracy?* Princeton University Press, pp. 53-5.

⁷⁵ Rawls, John. 1999. "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited," in *The Law of Peoples, with 'The idea of Public Reason Revisited'*, Harvard University Press, pp. 130-2, 149-2.

opens democratic theory to broader self-interpretations and the whole worldviews of lay actors, not just the fragments that materialize in certain policy positions.

Finally, in some versions of deliberative democratic theory, it is only certain characteristics of lay thinking that are seen to be of interest and relevance to democratic discussion. For example, Gutmann and Thompson are adamant that in voicing their political positions and preferences lay actors must be able to provide reasons that are accessible to all participating in deliberation and are consistent with scientific, i.e. secular methods of inquiry.⁷⁶ I suggest this may also signal that democratic theory can only be open to a limited range of lay perspectives. Of course, placing restrictions on public discussion and dialogue has been criticized by democratic theorists on democratic grounds. Some scholars of democracy insist that limiting democratic discourse to ‘common sense’, familiar, and mutually agreeable reasons and political principles would contribute to the exclusion of segments of population that may be vulnerable, powerless, less educated, and are already disadvantaged by the dominant frames of reference.⁷⁷

But let me also highlight that these restrictions sharply contrast with the interpretive framework that I have tried to advance thus far. From the interpretive standpoint, democratic theory would not be deterred by “incomprehensible” and “atypical” political and democratic perspectives. On the contrary, interpretive democratic theorists would seek to understand them, all while coming to terms with historically and

⁷⁶ Gutmann, Amy and D. Thompson, 2004, *Why Deliberative Democracy?* Princeton University Press, p. 4, 72-4, 100-104.

⁷⁷ For example, see Young, Iris Marion, 1996. “Communication and the Other: Beyond Deliberative Democracy”, in Seyla Benhabib, ed., *Democracy and Difference*, Princeton University Press, pp. 120-35; and Bohman, James. 1998. “The Coming of Age of Deliberative Democracy”, *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 6, pp. 402-3, 409-10.

socially contingent assumptions and concepts that scholars of democracy themselves hold.

d) Interpretivism and Beyond: Building on Realist Critiques of Interpretivism

Thus far I have argued that interpretive assumptions create a space for a much needed grounding of democratic theory in knowledge and concepts relevant to the daily experiences and struggles of lay actors. This interaction can be very empowering and has a democratic ethos. However, I do not propose that democratic theory stops at just listening to and echoing lay voices. Empowerment also entails contributing new conceptions and explanations of the social world to already existing everyday concepts. Democratic theorists should not only pay attention to lay self-understandings and meanings, but also try to uncover potential misunderstandings and misconceptions that are self-defeating and reproduce undemocratic social relations. But it is in this regard that interpretive social science falls short.

In order to understand these limits of interpretivism and move democratic theory beyond them, I turn to some postulations in critical realist philosophy of social science.⁷⁸ I am interested in critical realism insofar as it offers a number of democratically relevant

⁷⁸ In this chapter I am primarily interested in critical realism as a critique of certain interpretive assumptions (not rejecting interpretivism but critiquing its shortcomings and limitations). Also, note that it is controversial what “realism” entails, as there is a wide variety of meanings, especially as practitioners attach modifiers such as “internal,” “external,” “scientific,” “metaphysical,” “moral,” “transcendental,” “commonsense,” “pragmatic,” “empirical,” and “dialectical.” These common variants refer to some quite prominent differences, but others are simply redundant: see Topper, Keith, 2005. *The Disorder of Political Inquiry*. Harvard University Press, p. 112. Here I am primarily concerned with discussing scientific or critical realism and Roy Bhaskar as a recognized exemplary articulation of this variant of realism.

criticisms of interpretivism. I suggest that democratic theory needs the interpretive commitment but must also move beyond it and utilize certain aspects of critical realism that create room for critical engagement with lay political views.

1) Beyond Understanding: Making Room for Engaging and Critiquing Lay Perspectives

Like interpretivism, critical realist philosophy postulates that social life is constituted by the concepts and values of its participants. But, unlike interpretivism, realists hold that social life is *also* constituted by enduring social relationships which enable and constrain human conduct.⁷⁹ These relationships, although real, are not necessarily an object of conscious reflection or exhaustive understanding among lay actors or scholars themselves. Realists criticize interpretive social scientists taking all of lay ideas for granted. From within an interpretive framework it is difficult to formulate questions about which lay views of the social world are wrong and which are not, or when and how some beliefs should be changed or rejected.⁸⁰ In contrast, realists emphasize critical engagement with existing lay knowledge and the possibility of empowerment and social transformation through new or different ideas. Realist methodological premises make inquiry into lay beliefs one of the starting points of

⁷⁹ See Isaac, Jeffrey C. 1987. *Power and Marxist Theory: A Realist View*. Cornell University Press, pp. 6-7, 46, 57, 59, 85-6; Lukes, Steven. 1974. *Power: a Radical View*. Macmillan Press; Topper, Keith, 2005. *The Disorder of Political Inquiry*. Harvard University Press, pp. 152, 182, and Shapiro, Ian and Alexander Wendt, 2005. "The Difference That Realism Makes: Social Science and the Politics of Consent", in *The Flight from Reality in the Human Sciences*, Princeton University Press, 2005.

⁸⁰ Shapiro, Ian and Alexander Wendt, 2005. "The Difference That Realism Makes: Social Science and the Politics of Consent", in *The Flight from Reality in the Human Sciences*, Princeton University Press, 2005.

investigation, but they also promote evaluation of explanatory power, correctness, and practical and democratic relevancy of various lay ideas. Realists see beliefs as practical: they are reasons for action because they reveal the world in a certain way and afford some courses of action and not others.⁸¹ Posing this relationship between the social context and the webs of meaning directs attention to studying both social context and beliefs, and it offers a ground for critique since some explanations of the world and courses of action may be better than others.⁸²

Earlier I highlighted that interpretive attention to lay people's self-understandings is based on the notion that people give meaning to their experiences, interests, and the social contexts within which they live, and these systems of signification become the constitutive dimensions of the social realm. However, when realists think interpretively about social sciences they add that scholars too, implicitly or explicitly, interpret, i.e. articulate, represent, describe, explain, or give meaning to various features of society and lay actors' experiences. As Sayer puts it, "everyday knowledge is both part of their [social science] object *and a rival source of explanation*", and Giddens calls this the "double hermeneutic" of social science.⁸³ The double hermeneutic of social sciences

⁸¹ Brown, Andrew, Steve Fleetwood and John M. Roberts. 2002. "The Marriage of Critical Realism and Marxism: Happy, Unhappy, or on the Rocks," in *Critical Realism and Marxism*, ed. by A. Brown et al., Routledge, p. 18.

⁸² Bhaskar, Roy. 1979/1998. *The Possibility of Naturalism*. 3d ed, London: Routledge, p. 114, Topper, Keith, 2005. *The Disorder of Political Inquiry*. Harvard University Press, pp. 152, 182. Also, see an invitation toward such inquiry from Jackson, who situates himself in the interpretive paradigm, Jackson, Patrick Thaddeus. "Making Sense of Making Sense: Configurational Analysis and the Double Hermeneutic." ed. D. Yanow and P. Shwartz-Shea, 2006, *Interpretation and Method*. M.E. Sharpe, pp. 268-9.

⁸³ Sayer, Andrew R., 1992, *Method in Social Science: A Realist Approach*, Routledge, p.8, emphasis added; and Giddens, Anthony, 1976. *New Rules of the Sociological Method*, London: Hutchinson, pp. 9,

implies that just as a researcher interprets the situation incorporating lay people's interpretations, people under investigation can incorporate the researcher's interpretations into their own.⁸⁴

I suggest that the double hermeneutic posits inquiry and knowledge production as a dialogic and interactive enterprise, and this is what democratic theory must be grounded in. The double hermeneutic presupposes scholarly engagement with lay perspectives as a starting point and as an end of inquiry, "creating an ever-changing subject matter and requiring a dialogic relationship between the people doing the studying and the people being studied".⁸⁵ In fact, it allows us to see the existential logic of scholarship – its goal to contribute something back to the society in which it is situated. This contribution cannot be cast just in terms of echoing the existing knowledge and communities' self-interpretations (although, uncovering the lay cultural world is a crucial start and valuable in itself, particularly in studies of unfamiliar social contexts and historical epochs). For instance, while recognizing the importance of including lay perspectives in social

13, 86, 160. Also see Taylor, Charles, 1987. "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man," in ed. Rubinow and Sullivan, *Interpretive Social Science: A Second Look*, University of California Press, pp. 35, 46; Winch, Peter, 1958, *The Idea of a Social Science and Its Relation to Philosophy*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; and Schütz, Alfred, 1967. *The Phenomenology of the Social World*. Chicago: Northwestern University Press.

⁸⁴ Jackson, Patrick Thaddeus. "Making Sense of Making Sense: Configurational Analysis and the Double Hermeneutic." ed. D. Yanow and P. Shwartz-Shea, 2006, *Interpretation and Method*. M.E. Sharpe, p. 269, Giddens, Anthony, 1976. *New Rules of the Sociological Method*, London: Hutchinson, pp. 9, 13, 86, 160.

⁸⁵ Schram, Sanford F. 2005. "A Return to Politics: Perestroika, Phronesis, and Postparadigmatic Political Science," in *Perestroika: The Raucous Rebellion in Political Science*, ed. by Kristen R. Monroe, Yale University Press, p. 110. Schram refers to this model as a phronetic social science. Also, see Flyvbjerg, Bent. 2001. *Making Social Science Matter: Why Social Inquiry Fails and How it Can Succeed Again*. Transl. by Steven Sampson, Cambridge University Press.

science, Bellah also expresses the need to move beyond them toward revitalizing public debate and thus validating the very existence of a scholarly community:

But the practical social scientist is not, as this description so far might imply, simply a mirror for whatever he or she finds – a kind of populist reflector of existing social reality...*Their work is not a mere passive reflection of what they study...* The chief audience of practical social science is not “decision makers” but the public, and its chief impact on social policy is through influencing the climate of opinion rather than supplying discrete information for those in power...*A revival of public life becomes a task for practical social science. Such a revival is a condition for its continued existence and indeed an imperative for the survival of democratic society.*⁸⁶

Critical engagement framework takes democratic theory beyond passive interpretation toward public debate and dialogue, while not denying the relevance of interpretive epistemology.

For example, to take lay Russian and Ukrainian perspectives on democracy that I outlined in ch. 1, it is hard to overlook how they project a sense of urgency and are often imbued with deep anguish, exhaustion, and disappointment about post-communist transformations. These lay democratic discourses are tied to actual human lives, and they impart insights about experiences of oppression, unfreedom, and powerlessness. Lay Russian and Ukrainian reflections about democracy also offer glimpses into their hopes and strivings, as well as into their positions on how their struggles for survival and for preserving their human decency can be won. I suggest that interpretively minded democratic theorists who uncover such social actualities should see not just an invitation but an imperative to engage, respond, contribute, and criticize. If scholars of democracy

⁸⁶ Bellah, Robert N, 1983. “Social Science as Practical Reason,” in *Ethics, the Social Sciences, and Policy Analysis*. Ed. D. Callahan and B. Jennings, pp. 59-62.

who come by such discourses walk away with nothing to learn and nothing to contribute, it would be tantamount to indirectly brushing off all the force and earnestness of what lay people might be telling us.

Consider the problems that Hopf runs into in his interpretive study about whether the post-communist transition succeeds or fails. On the basis of several focus group discussions, he shows that there is a pervasive sense of disillusionment and bitterness among lay Ukrainians, Estonians, and Uzbeks – these themes appear to be common in how lay people experience and conceptualize the transition (see a summary of this study in ch. 1). Yet, Hopf also stresses his respondents’ hopelessness and inability to imagine an alternative to the transition. The direction and dynamics of the transition seem inevitable to his lay respondents and “protesting against the inevitable simply makes no sense...to the extent that change is expected by electing a new government, it is only tactical emendation of the transitional program. The continuation of the real misery is expected regardless of who wins.”⁸⁷ But democratic theory that reveals such poignant lay reflections and leaves it at that would inadvertently fail the very people who shared the insights. What Hopf seems to have learned from his study is that “in sum, the stories of the 250 participants in these focus groups in Estonia, Uzbekistan and Ukraine suggest that the transition can be stabilized two different ways, through legitimization [democratic deliberation about alternatives] or naturalization [there is no thinkable

⁸⁷ Hopf, Ted, 2002. “Making the Future Inevitable: Legitimizing, Naturalizing and Stabilizing. The Transition in Estonia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan,” *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 8, No. 3, p. 429.

alternative].”⁸⁸ But democratic theory cannot concur that there is no imaginable alternative to alleviate all that misery and suffering, and that the post-communist transition should run its course as is. This knowledge, although coming from lay actors, hardly benefits them - it is debilitating, not empowering. Democratic theorists must continually ask in what sense this knowledge they (re)produce can help lay actors to overcome (rather than remain enmeshed in) the wretchedness of the present situation.

If scholars only mirror lay persons’ political reflections, it could amount to preserving the existing realities of domination and unfreedom that may be maintained via the beliefs of lay actors themselves. Some even characterize interpretivism as conservative because of its privileging of the familiar ways of thinking and its dodging of questions about the possibilities of social transformation.⁸⁹ For example, Banner states that interpretive social science does not have to be connected to conservative ideologies, and right now it may be even used to counteract manipulative public policies. However, Banner reminds us that positivistic inquiry “originated in a scientific attack on received opinion” and cautions that while interpretive social science might not be aligned with

⁸⁸ Hopf, Ted, 2002. “Making the Future Inevitable: Legitimizing, Naturalizing and Stabilizing. The Transition in Estonia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan,” *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 429-30. Hopf argues that for the most part transition is stabilized in these countries through naturalization, particularly in Ukraine.

⁸⁹ Topper, Keith, 2005. *The Disorder of Political Inquiry*. Harvard University Press, p. 185, and Shapiro, Ian and Alexander Wendt, 2005. “The Difference That Realism Makes: Social Science and the Politics of Consent”, in *The Flight from Reality in the Human Sciences*, Princeton University Press, 2005.

conservative social ideologies today, “we would be foolish to ignore its earlier function or its potential.”⁹⁰

Yet, I argue that focusing on lay political thinking in itself does not have to be conservative or preclude critical engagement. Rather, it is a matter of what political intentions scholars who study lay beliefs have and what they choose to say about lay political thought that they unearth. Some scholars maintain that an ability to understand the inner world of a community should not forestall disagreeing with that self-understanding: “An interpretive analysis of institutionalized slavery may show that the slaves are able to make a meaningful life for themselves even within this context; what follows from this, however, is not that slavery is justified and should not be eliminated but only that slaves are human beings doing what human beings always do for better or worse.”⁹¹

Democratic theory should not rest on accepting all lay ideas about democracy as equally cogent and relevant. In chapter 1 I highlighted patterns of ambivalence in lay Ukrainian and Russian thinking about democracy, as well as more innovative and elaborate views of democratic politics that were present among the participants of social movements. I argue that in order to be practically relevant and be a tool of social transformation, democratic theory must be embroiled in concrete social struggles, take sides in social contexts of power monopolization and inequality, and evaluate political

⁹⁰ Banner, James M. Jr., 1983. “Comment on Robert N. Bellah, ‘Social Science as a Practical Reason,’ in *Ethics, the Social Sciences, and Policy Analysis*. Ed. D. Callahan and B. Jennings, New York: Plenum Press, pp. 67-8.

⁹¹ Jennings, Bruce, 1983. “Interpretive Social Science and Policy Analysis.” In *Ethics, the Social Sciences, and Policy Analysis*. Ed. D. Callahan and B. Jennings, New York: Plenum Press, pp. 32-3.

programs for emancipation or postures of apathy, inaction, and acceptance. This implies engagement not just with particular social realities, but also with the diverse lay ideas that compete to constitute and guide action within these social situations. The subject matter of democratic theory does not allow it to be disengaged and impartial to the actual social conflicts and struggles – a commitment to democratic change requires one to condone certain courses of action and certain social arrangements in favor of others.

At the same time, critical engagement in democratic theory should not be construed as a form of academic self-redemption and should not necessarily imply that scholars furnish a democratic discourse from the position of intellectual superiority. Note how Sayer's view of social scientists implies that their knowledge, as if on a pedestal, is above lay knowledge:

Since social science includes common sense among its objects, it cannot avoid a critical relationship with it, for in seeking to understand popular consciousness, *as it is*, in examining what is normally unexamined, we cannot help but become aware of its *illusion*...in order to understand and explain social phenomena, we cannot avoid evaluating and criticizing societies' own self-understanding.⁹²

But there is no reason to assume a priori that lay knowledge is an illusion; academic knowledge can very well be enmeshed in all sorts of ideological illusions and blindness (just as I attempted to show in chapters 2 and 3 with respect to Schumpeter's elite competitive model of democracy). A critical engagement framework should entail learning from lay ideas and a two-way dialogue rather than a one-sided critique.

⁹² Sayer, Andrew R., 1992, *Method in Social Science: A Realist Approach*. Routledge, p. 39.

For instance, while proposing a critical engagement model for social science, Hawkesworth foresees a possible objection: “The cynic might note ironically that the rhetoric of egalitarian democracy appears to coexist comfortably with the anticipation of significant contributions to decision-making from an intellectual elite.”⁹³ Hawkesworth provides a response which is not entirely satisfactory, for it assumes that the only two choices are those between a significant intellectual leadership or preserving the status quo:

...The cynical response sustains a conservative political prescription: it endorses resignation to the status quo. The argument that the prevailing political system constitutes the only viable form of democracy is advanced as the only belief consonant with a scientific understanding of political life...[but they] mistaking what currently exists for all that might exist...the cynical response instantiates depoliticization, for it denies that people might choose to alter their political life.⁹⁴

In contrast to Hawkesworth’s response, I suggest that engagement presupposes *learning from* lay conceptions of democracy, as well as possibly expanding, amending, or critiquing them. Scholarly contributions to a democratic conversation must be in response to what lay actors consider to be the political problem of the day – scholarly contributions must rest on and be constrained by lay people’s conceptualizations. Also, scholars must qualify their contributions by specifying how they lead to the empowerment of the deprived groups. To use Schram’s formulation, scholarship that seeks to empower lay actors must “demonstrate its contributions to enriching political

⁹³ Hawkesworth, M.E. 1988. *Theoretical Issues in Policy Analysis*. Albany: State University of New York Press, p. 32.

⁹⁴ Hawkesworth, M.E. 1988. *Theoretical Issues in Policy Analysis*. Albany: State University of New York Press, pp. 32-3.

discourse in contextualized settings.”⁹⁵ This may include augmenting lay people’s formulation of their political interests and asking critical questions about the cogency of lay people’s self-understanding in relation to their problems and their contexts.

2) Beyond the World of Agents Without Structures: Attention to Social Inequalities and Power

Democratic theory must consider potential effects of power and social inequality on the formation of lay people’s political interests and self-understanding. Democratic theory that fails to reconstruct lay political perspectives fails from the democratic standpoint, but so does a democratic theory that does not help to illuminate social impediments to genuine lay self-expression. The development of political capacities and a sense of efficacy are some of the central themes in classic democratic theory. Rousseau, Mill, Dewey, and Cole paid close attention to how hierarchical and authoritarian social institutions and practices prevent cultivation of political awareness. In contrast, democratic, i.e. participatory, institutions and practices contribute to cultivation of capacities to act and think politically among members of the community, and that is one of the reasons why democracy is valuable.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Schram, Sanford F. 2005. “A Return to Politics: Perestroika, Phronesis, and Postparadigmatic Political Science,” in *Perestroika: The Raucous Rebellion in Political Science*, ed. by Kristen R. Monroe, Yale University Press, p. 105.

⁹⁶ Dewey, John. 1957. *Reconstruction in Philosophy*. Boston: Beacon Press; Rousseau “On the Social Contract” 1987, J.S. Mill. 1991. *Considerations on Representative Government*; 1991, Cole G.D.H. 1920. *Guild Socialism: A Plan for Economic Democracy*. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co.; Pateman, Carole, 1970, *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge University Press.

In the interpretive approach, the discourses of the community, *rather than* the social conditions in which the discourses arise, are an object of inquiry. Such a methodological focus stems from the interpretive scholars primarily understanding the social realm as discursively constituted. Yanow nicely summarizes this feature of interpretive inquiry when she suggests that interpretive social science “concerns human subjectivity and intersubjectivity *as both subjects of and explanations for human action*”.⁹⁷ And in their seminal introduction to interpretive social science, Rabinow and Sullivan stress that for interpretive scholars “the web of meaning constitutes human existence to such an extent that it cannot ever be meaningfully reduced to...any predefined elements.”⁹⁸ I argue that democratic theory must transcend this interpretive limitation and make room for investigating the relationships between social power inequality and popular beliefs.

The strong social constructivist position has received serious criticisms from realist scholars who are interested in studying politically closed and unequal communities. Some critics maintain that interpretive inquiry is problematic because it privileges primary experiences and encourage inattention to the social conditions such as structural inequality and political oppression that often determine discourses and cultural understandings in question.⁹⁹ For example, it has long been suggested that historically, in

⁹⁷ Yanow, Dvora, 2006, “Thinking Interpretively: Philosophical Presuppositions and the Human Sciences,” in *Interpretation and Method*, Sharpe, p 10, emphasis added; also, see Topper, Keith, 2000. “In Defense of Disunity: Pragmatism, Hermeneutics, and the Social Sciences”, *Political Theory*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Aug), p. 511.

⁹⁸ Rabinow, Paul and William Sullivan, 1986. “Introduction,” in ed. *Interpretive Social Science*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2nd ed, p. 6.

⁹⁹ Shapiro, Ian and Alexander Wendt, 2005. “The Difference That Realism Makes: Social Science and the Politics of Consent”, in *The Flight from Reality in the Human Sciences*, Princeton University Press,

highly unequal social environments political thinking of the disenfranchised groups may be a reflection of the dominant groups' interests, preferences, and ideals.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, research on groups in unequal contexts indicates that when an oppressive power is removed, the non-elite's initial demands and interests may be vague, partial, ambiguous, volatile, easily retractable, poorly articulated or susceptible to manipulation by the dominant groups.¹⁰¹

Critical realism helps to provide a fuller account of human agency by integrating the study of social structures and the social relationships inherent in them that enable, place limits on, or disable human agency. It helps to bring into consideration not only values and conceptions of individuals and groups as determinants of what happens in social life, but also the enduring relationships that characterize society in question, as

2005; Topper, Keith, 2005. *The Disorder of Political Inquiry*. Harvard University Press, pp. 150-2, 160-1; Fay, Brian, 1975. *Social Theory and Political Practice*. Boston: George Allen and Unwin; Bourdieu, Pierre, 1990. "Fieldwork in Philosophy," in P. Bourdieu, *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press; Collier, Andrew. 1998. "The Power of Negative Thinking," in *Critical Realism: Essential Readings*, ed. By M. Archer et al., Routledge, p. 693; and Benton, Ted. 1998. "Realism and Social Science: Some Comments on Roy Bhaskar's 'The Possibility of Naturalism'", in *Critical Realism: Essential Readings*, ed. By M. Archer et al., Routledge, p. 304.

¹⁰⁰ For seminal statements on the subject, see Gramsci, Antonio, 1971. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. by Quinton Hare and G. Nowell-Smith, Lawrence and Wishart, London, pp. 206-78; Said, Edward, 1979. *Orientalism*, Vintage Books; and De Beauvoir, Simone. 1989. *The Second Sex*. Transl. and ed. by H.M. Parshley, New York: Vintage Books. Also, see Fiere, Paulo, 1973. *Education for Critical Consciousness*. Seabury Press, New York, pp. 21-31; Bourdieu, Pierre, 1990. "Fieldwork in Philosophy," in P. Bourdieu, *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press; Garson, David, 1973. "Automobile Workers and the American Dream', *Politics and Society*, 3, pp. 163-79; Gaventa, John. 1980. *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley*. Clarendon Press, Oxford; Lukes, Steven. 1974. *Power: a Radical View*. Macmillan Press.

¹⁰¹ For some examples of applied studies on this subject, see McAdam, Doug. *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*. University of Chicago Press, 1982; Estrich, Susan, 2001. "Real Rape" in *Understanding inequality: the intersection of race/ethnicity, class, and gender*. ed. by Barbara A. Arrighi, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers; Garson, David, 1973. "Automobile Workers and the American Dream', *Politics and Society*, 3, pp. 163-79; Gaventa, John. 1980. *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley*. Clarendon Press, Oxford.

well as the way in which these relationships are sustained, reproduced, and transformed by lay actors.¹⁰² I argue that democratic theory ought to move beyond strong social constructivist methodology. Democratic theorists will benefit from viewing the social realm as constituted not only by the discursive resources but also by power relations and practices that can have real affects on the consciousness and outlooks of the politically deprived groups.

For example, consider how in some biographical and ethnographic studies the often volatile and ambiguous democratic demands of rebelling workers and peasants in early 20th century Eastern Europe and in the post-communist societies are characterized by author as “class [or democratic] consciousness *coming and going*”.¹⁰³ These authors imply that lay people’s thinking forms in a social vacuum and is simply whimsical. Interpretivism without realist methodology would compel democratic scholars to bracket questions about the social conditions of and constraints on thinking and interest formation of rebelling or disenfranchised groups. Similarly, in Dryzek’s and Berejikian’s reconstructive democratic theory, their strong social constructivist presuppositions lead them to reduce democratic theory to just an examination of lay discourses:

“Reconstructive science concerns itself with the social competences of individuals and corresponding grammars of human interaction. Its categories are sought in its subjects,

¹⁰² Sayer, Andrew R., 1992, *Method in Social Science: A Realist Approach*, Routledge.

¹⁰³ See Lewin, Moshe, 1994. “Concluding Remarks.” Siegelbaum, L. H. and R.G. Suny, ed. *Making Workers Soviet: Power, Class, and Identity*. Cornell University Press, pp. 376-89; Kuromiya, Hiroaki. “Donbas Miners in War, Revolution, and Civil War,” Siegelbaum, L. H. and R.G. Suny, ed. *Making Workers Soviet: Power, Class, and Identity*. Cornell University Press, p. 140 and Crowley, Stephen, 1997. *Hot Coal, Cold Steel: Russian and Ukrainian Workers from the End of the Soviet Union to the Post-Communist Transformations*. The University of Michigan Press, p. 204.

rather than specified by the analyst”.¹⁰⁴ In fairness, they preface their focus on lay thinking so much because the conventional empirical studies of democracy devalue lay political capacities and mainstream normative theorists of democracy dismiss social realities altogether.¹⁰⁵ And yet, interest in lay beliefs about democracy should not lead scholars to dismiss questions about the social conditions in which popular consciousness forms.

Moreover, a few interpretivists already show an interest in questions about how unequal and closed social contexts with histories of political oppression may lead to curbing lay people’s democratic imagination and expectations. Some argue that interpretive inquiry, by virtue of being open to studying the cultural world of working people and ghetto groups can help to illuminate the effects of power and deep social inequality on lay people’s beliefs and self-understandings. Specifically, interpretivism can contribute to debates about “whether the formative cultural experiences of low-income persons have deprived them of the capacity to recognize and act rationally upon their needs and interests”.¹⁰⁶ This suggests that interpretive scholars are not indifferent to the relationship between social structures, power, and lay people’s thinking. But realism helps to make the issues of power and social inequality more acute and more pronounced in scholarly investigations.

¹⁰⁴ Dryzek, John S. and Jeffrey Berejikian, 1993. “Reconstructive Democratic Theory,” *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 87, No. 1, Mar, p. 49.

¹⁰⁵ Dryzek, John S. and Jeffrey Berejikian, 1993. “Reconstructive Democratic Theory,” *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 87, No. 1, Mar, p. 49.

¹⁰⁶ Jennings, Bruce, 1983. “Interpretive Social Science and Policy Analysis.” In *Ethics, the Social Sciences, and Policy Analysis*. Ed. D. Callahan and B. Jennings, New York: Plenum Press, p. 30.

In her studies of democratic politics in Yemen, Wedeen shows how lay actors (primarily men) exercise a measure of political control and participation through qat chew practices. But she also acknowledges that due to the history of political oppression and the controlled political environment in Yemen, their aspirations have been tamed:

...the death of these men [political activists] – by assassination, illness, and war – *may make the imaginings of political action and the concerted deliberations about self-rule all the more elusive.* The recent interventions of the U.S. in domestic Yemeni affairs, dramatized by the coordinated Yemeni-US incineration of an alleged al-Qa’ida leader, “Abu ‘Ali” al-Harithi, *may also undermine the vibrancy of these gatherings* – if not directly through the shoring up of state capacities to control populations, then indirectly through the short term violence such interventions unleash....If political assassinations – of “loyal” opposition members (such as Jar Allah ‘Umar), of insurrectionary figures (such as al-Harithi), and of regime officials (such as perhaps is the case in the 2003 car accident of the ruling party’s Yahya al-Mutawakkil) – become a preferred mode of political expression, then the instances of public sphere activity are likely to atrophy, as the openness and accessibility of *deliberative political life retreat in the shadows of death and uncertainty.*¹⁰⁷

However, Wedeen’s conclusions about the effects of power and inequality on the formation of lay actors’ political ideas do not constitute the thrust of her argument about democratic politics and lay thinking in Yemen. They are presented at the end of her investigation and are left without much analysis or engagement. This is indicative of the problems inherent in interpretive studies where focus on context-specific practices and meaning are studied at the expense of attending to social conditions in which beliefs arise. Exposing social power inequalities and exploring how they can be overcome is at

¹⁰⁷ Wedeen, Lisa, 2004. “Concepts and Commitments in the Study of Democracy,” in I. Shapiro et al, *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*. Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 301-2, emphasis added.

the heart of democratic theory. Democratic theorists cannot afford to dodge questions about power relationships and social inequalities in any given society.

3) Beyond Discourse Theory: Toward a Study of Society and Social Explanation

Realists emphasize that beliefs are not just a form of expression or materialization of consciousness. Beliefs also occur in problematic social contexts; beliefs are directed at explaining to people their existence and their society, and at solving problems; beliefs relate to social structures and may be structured by power inequalities; and beliefs are reasons for action because they reveal the world in a certain way and afford some courses of action and not others.¹⁰⁸ This methodological insight tells us that lay beliefs should not just be studied for their discursive power per interpretivism, but that lay views should be examined in the context of social practices, relations, institutions, and structures. Therefore, the force and significance of lay thinking can be better grasped when related to the surrounding social context with its enduring relations of power, inequality, and so forth.¹⁰⁹ I argue that democratic theorists must approach lay views about democracy as both a product of and a response to social context. This requires recognizing and transcending some limitations of interpretivism.

¹⁰⁸ Brown, Andrew, Steve Fleetwood and John M. Roberts. 2002. "The Marriage of Critical Realism and Marxism: Happy, Unhappy, or on the Rocks," in *Critical Realism and Marxism*, ed. by A. Brown et al., Routledge, p. 18, and Bhaskar, Roy. 1979/1998. *The Possibility of Naturalism*. 3d ed, London: Routledge, p. 114.

¹⁰⁹ See Brown, Andrew, Steve Fleetwood and John M. Roberts. 2002. "The Marriage of Critical Realism and Marxism: Happy, Unhappy, or on the Rocks," in *Critical Realism and Marxism*, ed. by A. Brown et al., Routledge, p. 18, and Bhaskar, Roy. 1979/1998. *The Possibility of Naturalism*. 3d ed, London: Routledge, p. 114.

When exploring social actors' subjectivity and the location of meaning, interpretivists often take language – its structures, interrelations, ambiguities, and inscribed values – as the chief object of inquiry. Linguistic studies are supposed to provide an insight into the shared understandings about the social world in any given context.¹¹⁰ For example, for scholars grounded in Wittgenstein's language philosophy, interpretation is a form of semantic inquiry, where ontological questions are bracketed. Instead, there is a focus on semantic questions in order to illuminate the meaning of words.¹¹¹ Here, I want to argue that reducing democratic theory to linguistic questions subverts the democratic promise of interpretive social science and thus it must be avoided. I argue that reading interpretivism through democratic lenses pushes this form of inquiry beyond questions of semantics. Also, democratic theory's commitment to critical realist assumptions about the relationship between social context and beliefs can help to gear democratic scholars toward learning from and engaging critically with lay views.

For example, consider how Schaffer, drawing on Wittgenstein's ordinary language analysis, states that: "To study how people understand "democracy" requires investigating how they use this word in *all* its ordinary contexts, both political and nonpolitical. *The meaning of the word "democracy" and the concept of democracy*

¹¹⁰ Yanow, Dvora, 2006, "Thinking Interpretively: Philosophical Presuppositions and the Human Sciences," in *Interpretation and Method*, Sharpe, p. 16; Taylor, Charles.1985. *Human Agency and Language*, Cambridge University press, pp. 119-120.

¹¹¹ Pitkin, Hannah Fenichel. 1972. *Wittgenstein and Justice*, University of California Press.

amount to no more than, and no less than, these usages.”¹¹² Schaffer also underscores that “a project that has at its core the study of language use must necessarily take language groups as a basic unit of analysis”.¹¹³ In the Schaffer-Wittgenstein version of interpretive democratic inquiry, the study of language becomes the end of inquiry, and questions of democracy’s meaning become semantic, not social or political. Following in these footsteps, democratic scholars would be compelled to ask questions mainly about the structures of language at the expense of asking questions about the structures of society, social institutions, and practices, and evaluating them together with lay actors in light of the democratic ethos. I suggest that while semantic inquiry can aid in uncovering the meaning of contested concepts such as democracy in unfamiliar contexts, democratic theory cannot afford to be a purely semantic inquiry.

For example, consider some of the problems that arise in the course of Zelnik’s ethnographic-linguistic study of inequality, political oppression, and the revolutionization of workers in pre-Soviet Russia and Ukraine. Zelnik approaches history from the perspective of the workers’ own understanding of the historical developments of their time and he heavily relies on recorded memoirs and autobiographies. In this case, language was the medium in which the consciousness of the rebels was expressed. Zelnik identifies word combinations which helped workers to rationalize their personal experience: e.g. “us workers versus them bosses”; “we are being treated like serfs”; “we

¹¹² Schaffer, Frederic Charles, 2000. *Democracy in Translation: Understanding Politics in an Unfamiliar Culture*. Cornell University Press, p. 10, emphasis added.

¹¹³ Schaffer, Frederic Charles, 2000. *Democracy in Translation: Understanding Politics in an Unfamiliar Culture*. Cornell University Press, p. 16.

are being treated like animals”. In Zelnik’s view, workers were actively interpreting social reality and they used word combinations to create a sense of social distance between them and factory owners, as well as a sense of exploitation.¹¹⁴ But, such a strong social constructivist approach is problematic for democratic theory because even when claiming to privilege the individual self-understanding, it negates its substance and reality, and might lead to trivializing personal experiences of humiliation as imagined. After having quoted blood-curdling excerpts from Alekseev’s defense speech (he was accused of inciting a worker’s rebellion), Zelnik proceeds to say: “*Here, however, I am more concerned with the themes and images of the speech itself*, for together with what we know of other *fabrichnye* [factory workers], they can help us develop a composite picture of the values and identities of politicized workers.”¹¹⁵ In contrast, democratic theorists should be asking how accurate was Alekseev’s perception of social reality? Were workers indeed disempowered in some real sense as in deprived of political voice, rights, and etc.? Democratic theorists should also ask in what way were workers responding to *undemocratic* social conditions, and what can be learned from that?

Democratic theory cannot stop at linguistic or semantic analysis. As lay people’s beliefs can be directed at describing and explaining social contexts and power relations, so democratic theory can describe and explain the same context and power relations, and

¹¹⁴ Zelnik, Reginald E. 1994. “On the Eve: Life Histories and Identities of Some Revolutionary Workers, 1870-1905.” In Siegelbaum, L. H. and R.G. Suny, ed. *Making Workers Soviet: Power, Class, and Identity*. Cornell University Press, pp. 48-9, 65.

¹¹⁵ Zelnik, Reginald E. 1994. “On the Eve: Life Histories and Identities of Some Revolutionary Workers, 1870-1905.” In Siegelbaum, L. H. and R.G. Suny, ed. *Making Workers Soviet: Power, Class, and Identity*. Cornell University Press, p. 65.

this common point of reference can become a basis for critical engagement, learning, and democratic transformation. For example, lay Russian and Ukrainian reflections on democracy entail explanations of post-communist political and economic transitions, in what way and why they do not have a sense of control over important aspects of their lives and their society, how the new governments work, why there has been such a profound social dislocation, and what are some possible solutions to the problem of how rich people become rich and how poor become poorer. Answering those questions, getting into those social contexts, thinking together with those lay Ukrainians and Russians about the politico-economic transformations and social inequalities accompanying them, understanding and evaluating lay people's practical responses to those changes are all part of what I suggest democratic theory should be able to do. Critical realism does not specify a priori which beliefs are better or worse, but it creates a methodological impetus for a dialogue, discussion, discovery, questioning, critique, and experimentation with thinking and action. Critical realism encourages a pro-active rather than a passive stance toward both lay political perspectives and the social world. That is why democratic theory can benefit from realist philosophy of social science.

Chapter 5/Conclusion. Economic Demands, Economic Critiques, and Democracy in Russia and Ukraine – Lessons for Democratic Theory

a) Introduction

All throughout this project, the rubric of ‘economic’ demands and critiques has been used to characterize some conspicuous aspects of democratic thinking in Ukraine and Russia. However, the label has served to delay and bracket, albeit for the time being, the very exploration of how exactly it can be related to the concept of democracy. Having addressed significant methodological and theoretical difficulties that would prevent critical engagement with such lay views of democracy, I can finally get to exploring lay ideas.

I use the methodology of critical hermeneutics that I laid out in chapter 4 to show that lay people provide us with the lesson that economic life must be structured democratically and that democracy cannot only be about collective control of the institution of government by electing political representatives. As I discussed in chapters 2 and 3, leaving economic life out of the scope of democratic analysis and politics is a pervasive feature of contemporary scholarship on democracy. However, the economic realm comprises social relations, institutions, forces, and actors that directly affect people’s lives. It is the realm where the majority of people spend their time through work.¹ The type, availability, compensation, and duration of work directly affect people’s financial livelihoods and their daily routines in and outside of work. It is also the realm where all economic wealth is produced. By directing our attention to post-communist

¹ Pateman, Carole, 1976, *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge University Press.

political economy, lay Russians and Ukrainians teach us how to recognize its undemocratic features and what has to be done in order to achieve democracy in their societies. They point to their lack of voice, autonomy, power, and rights in controlling economic institutions and forces. From their democratic ideas and critiques we learn that any meaningful democratic project must necessarily include democratization of economic life.

Lay Russians and Ukrainians understand democracy as popular control of social institutions, forces, services, and resources. As I demonstrated in chapter 1, lay views of democracy include what we may call ‘political’ components, such as freedom of speech, elections, and legislative representation. But lay Russians and Ukrainians also view democracy in terms of what scholars have termed ‘economic’ components, such as collective control over economic institutions, equitable distribution of resources, social protections and safety nets, social equality, economic well-being, and guaranteed material necessities. I showed how lay actors conceptualize democracy in terms of gaining economic and social rights, such as the right to employment, the right to a living wage, the right to healthcare, the right to education, the right to housing, and the right to a voice in the decision making in the workplace. Such views are unusual from the standpoint of standard scholarly conceptions where matters of economic life are excluded from democratic vocabulary and analysis.

While the ‘economic’ aspects of lay democratic discourses in Russia and Ukraine have been presented in chapter 1, these discourses still need to be reclaimed and explicated precisely because they are not easily understood vis-à-vis the standard

frameworks in the scholarly literature. Through asserting economic and social rights lay actors seek to reclaim power over their economic fate. Rather than being a subject to external social forces, actors, and institutions that escape their control, lay Russians and Ukrainians attempt to assert their power, interests, and voice in the economic realm through the discourse of social and economic rights. By making what appear to be just ‘economic’ demands, lay actors lay claim to collective control over the economic institutions and resources controlled privately and undemocratically in their societies.

Democratic governance rests on distributing equal citizenship rights to all members of the community, which in the classical meaning of the term are the rights to control, participate, and share in the society’s institutions, resources, and protections. Many contemporary discussions of citizenship take as their source T.H. Marshall’s classic *Class, Citizenship, and Social Development*. Citizenship in this view encompasses civil, political, and socio-economic rights. Civil and political rights include equal protection under the law, equal access to the judicial system, due process, suffrage, freedom of expression, and freedom to organize politically. Citizenship based on civil and political rights only is incomplete and full citizenship must encompass rights to economic welfare and security.² For Marshall, extension of citizenship into the economic sphere is not just about extending civil and political rights into the economic realm, but it is also about modifying “the whole pattern of social inequality” in the market society.³

² Marshall, T.H., 1964. *Class, Citizenship, and Social Development*. Westport, Connecticut, Greenwood Press, pp. 65-122.

³ Marshall, T.H., 1964. *Class, Citizenship, and Social Development*. Westport, Connecticut, Greenwood Press, p. 96.

Lay Russian and Ukrainian economic demands are democratic as they encompass attempt to gain full citizenship in their societies, and with it power, rights, autonomy, influence, and voice in the economic realm. Lay discourses arise in response to the exclusive economic citizenship that exists in their societies.

In chapter 1 I also showed how aspects of lay democratic thinking are woven into some very vocal economic critiques. These critiques focus on extreme socio-economic dislocation and the powerlessness of ordinary people to affect the direction of their economic fate; on the channeling of social wealth to benefit and enrich financial and industrial tycoons and government officials; and on the unequal distribution of power and rights in economic decision making between workers and owners of major social resources. Lay Russians and Ukrainians take what many scholars insist on calling democracy, such as the emergence of a multi-party system, parliamentary politics, voting, free media, and a right to free expression, with a dose of cynicism. Lay actors criticize these institutions for not helping them to solve the very real problems in their lives that have to do with economic unfreedom, social dislocation, and impoverishment. They point to the fact that post-communist empowerment is a façade empowerment because economic life in their societies is governed by a set of principles that have little, if anything, to do with democracy, their rights, their voice, their autonomy, their will, their control, their participation, and their freedom. Their economic critiques are a response to undemocratic power relations. Their critiques remind us about the dangers and ills of structuring society undemocratically, based on private and elite interests while excluding the influence and interests of the non-elites.

In chapter 2 I demonstrated that many political scientists who study democracy are grounded in the Schumpeterian framework whose conceptual vocabulary encompasses strong hostility towards the political capacities and interests of the working class. In Schumpeter's universe, non-elites have no voice in defining democracy, nor is there any room for spreading democratic principles to the economic realm. The thrust of their political participation and sharing in the decision making is reduced to choosing political leadership. In chapter 3 I showed the implications of Schumpeter's methodology, whereby many political scientists who study post-communist societies are compelled to dismiss or overlook the democratic relevance of lay Russian and Ukrainian views by labeling them just economic, apolitical, undemocratic, outdated, materialistic, not concerned with choice and independence, and inviting state authoritarianism and paternalism. Since I am not bound by Schumpeter's elite competitive framework, in contrast to wide-spread characterizations in the scholarly literature I show that lay expectations are about gaining collective control over economic life and are about gaining social citizenship, which relates to rights to economic welfare and security. Lay Russians and Ukrainians are not confused about democracy, nor do they misunderstand it. Their economic demands and critiques are democratic because they encompass attempts to assert power and collective control over crucial social institutions and forces in the economy that affect their lives. In a critical realist vein, using methodological points I established in chapter 4, I take this exploration beyond a purely discursive analysis to show not only what lay actors think about democracy, but that what they think is valid. Lay formulations of democracy can be illuminated and reclaimed when we put

them in the larger context of the post-communist transition to a so-called market economy.

With a transition to the market economy and privatization of capital, the power to make important economic decisions regarding profits, wages, benefits, working hours, and product prices that affect the livelihood of millions of people has been privatized and monopolized in the hands of political and economic elites (government officials are often owners of important economic resources). Transition to the market has also been accompanied with austerity measures and drastic cuts in social programs across the board, designed to free enterprises from tax constraints and any meaningful profit sharing with the rest of the society. Demographic reports in both countries cite high rates of poverty, income inequality, emigration, malnutrition, declining birth rates, alcoholism, crime, abortion, and an AIDS epidemic in the past couple of decades. Privatization of part of the economy has produced a social arrangement where a disproportionately small number of people legally own, manage, and control social wealth, productive resources, and the labor force for their own private benefit without a say or input from the society at large. Through making economic demands and critiques, lay Ukrainians and Russians point to their lack of power and autonomy in the bargaining process over economic resources and their economic fate. They see extreme economic dislocation and impoverishment as a result of the decision making done by a few for the benefit of a few, while leaving out from consideration the economic welfare and economic interests of the majority of the population. By making economic demands, lay Russians and Ukrainians

struggle to affirm their power, rights, and citizenship in a context where crucial social forces and institutions are controlled externally to them and used for private gain.

I engage lay beliefs about the social world not only interpretively, but also critically. I identify what features of their thinking are confusing and self-defeating. Thus, I argue that certain aspects of lay conceptions of power are ambiguous and contradictory, entail a misguided representation of social reality, and limit their democratic aspirations. Lay actors may not always be consistent in identifying sources of economic power and control. There are at least three different discourses; in the first, power is seen to reside exclusively at the state level; in the second, – at the level of government and financial tycoons; and in the third, - at a class level. I argue that insofar as lay actors only focus on government as a usurper of power and a cause of economic dislocation, they miss addressing class inequality that also accounts for undemocratic distribution of power and resources. Democratization should not just be about holding government officials accountable to people, but it should also be about holding the ownership class democratically accountable and economically empowering workers through rights and protections.

Furthermore, we see wide-spread apathy, cynicism, self-deprecation, an internalized sense of inferiority, occasional authoritarianism, and withdrawal from the political process among Russian and Ukrainian non-elites. I demonstrate that while these attitudes are debilitating from a democratic perspective, they are not accidental and do not prove the inherent intellectual inferiority of the masses or their incapacity for democratic politics. While aspects of lay views of democracy may be flawed and self-

defeating, they are understandable responses to power relations in Russia and Ukraine, and to recent political and economic history.

Lay people make sense of their social world in the context of long term political oppression, extreme socio economic dislocation, and a rollback of democratic movements in the 1990s. Critical theorists of democracy and power such as C. Pateman, S. Lukes, and J. Gaventa stress that we need to take seriously the affects of social institutions that close avenues for wide-spread popular participation and influence.⁴ A low sense of efficacy, ambivalence, and ambiguities in political consciousness of non-elites are symptoms of larger problems with the social institutions that foreclose channels for meaningful influence, participation, and political learning. If lay actors report apathy and a low sense of efficacy, it is because often they are interpreting their social world correctly. They withdraw themselves politically because they realize that they have no real voice and influence in the decision making that affects their lives. The economic realm is largely privatized and government representatives cannot address lay concerns because they are tied in with the economic elites and their interests, and because the very structure of the new economy eliminates public control of economic institutions and wealth. Lay voices tell us that the social conditions of their societies are deeply undemocratic. Lay Russians and Ukrainians offer a timely democratic critique of political economy in so many ways that democratic theory must take them seriously.

⁴ Gaventa, John. 1980. *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley*. Clarendon Press; Pateman, Carole, 1976, *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge University Press; and Lukes, Steven. 1974. *Power: a Radical View*. Macmillan Press.

b) Reclaiming an Argument About Democracy in the Economic Demands of Lay Russians and Ukrainians

1) Socio-Economic Context: the Creation of New Classes, Deterioration of Living Standards, Poverty, and Wealth Concentration

In order to evaluate and reclaim lay emphasis on economic matters in their democratic thinking, we need to begin by establishing some of the most conspicuous features of the socio-economic context of post-communist transitions to which lay actors are responding. In this section I highlight two contradictory but simultaneous trends: economic displacement and poverty on the one hand, and rapid enrichment and concentration of wealth and economic resources on the other. Also, I bring attention to a pattern of policies designed to take away whatever few social and economic protections that non-elites in Russia and Ukraine did have.

The very early years of transition from state-run to market economy in Russia and Ukraine are defined by a wave of swift economic reforms known as “shock therapy”. Among other things, these reforms encompassed curtailing government regulation of industries, privatization of state assets, price liberalization, and drastic cuts in social programs and safety nets.⁵ Shock therapy was accompanied with alarming demographic

⁵ Aslund, Anders, Peter Boone and Simon Johnson, “How to Stabilize: Lessons from Post-Communist Countries,” *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, no. 1, 1997; *World Development Report 1996: From Plan to Market*. 1996. Oxford University Press, part I and II; Sachs, Jeffrey. 1993. *Poland’s Jump to the Market Economy*. Cambridge: Massachusetts; *The Ukrainian Economy: Achievements, Problems, Challenges*. Ed. I.S. Koropeskyj. Harvard University Press, 1992; Haavisto, Tarmo (ed.) 1997. *The*

and economic indicators. Frequent change in ownership, closure, and restructuring of state enterprises led to massive rates of unemployment, low or unpaid wages, yearlong wage arrears, and loss of benefits. In 1998 in Russia, over \$10 billion was owed to about 20 million workers.⁶ Price liberalization brought hyperinflation and instability of a nascent financial system caused millions of people to lose their life savings they held at Soviet banks through bank bankruptcies and fraud. The first decade of the transition is also associated with an unprecedented human and labor flight. For example, Ukraine's total population decreased from 53 million in 1993 to 48.5 million by 2001.⁷ Those who emigrate to work abroad list low wages, unemployment, and the need to repay loans as the primary reasons for leaving, and about two thirds of them have small children and families waiting at home.⁸

Transition to a Market Economy: Transformation and Reform in the Baltic States. Edward Elgar Publishing, p. 6; Havrylyshyn, Oleh; Marcus Miller; William Perraudin; et al. 1994. "Deficits, Inflation and the Political Economy of Ukraine," *Economic Policy*, Vol. 9, No. 19, Oct., pp. 353-401.

⁶ See Kubicek, Paul. 2002. "Civil Society, Trade Unions and Post-Soviet Democratisation: Evidence from Russia and Ukraine," *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 54, No. 4, Jun. p. 610. Also, see reports on how wage arrears have been responsible for alarming rise in alcoholism and suicide among non-paid workers in Mandel, David. 2004. *Labour After Communism: Auto Workers and Their Unions in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus.* Black Rose Books.

⁷ "The social economic situation in the countries of the FSU: case studies of Ukraine, Russia, and Moldova". Prepared by JDC-Brookdale Institute, August 20, 2003
Available at: http://www.claimscon.org/forms/allocations/The%20Social%20and%20FSU%20JDC_.pdf;
http://www.undp.org.ua/files/en_80896eng_full.pdf, pp. 74-77.

⁸ "Status of Observance of Ukrainian Migrant Workers' Rights in the Receiving Countries." Special Report of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights.
Available at: http://www.ombudsman.kiev.ua/S_Report1/g12_5.htm and
http://www.ombudsman.kiev.ua/S_Report1/zm.htm; "Labor Migration in Eastern Europe and Central Asia."
Available at: www.unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001395/139530e.pdf, *International Labor Migration.*
Edited by Singh Bolaria and Rosemary Von Elling Bolaria. Oxford University Press, 1997, Tiuriukanova, Elena.
"Female Labor Migration Trends and Human Trafficking: Policy Recommendations." *Human Traffic*

In the Soviet era, many state-owned enterprises and industries supplied housing, childcare, vacation packages, soup kitchens, and other social benefits to their workers. Work compensation was understood not only in terms of wages, but also essential goods and services that workers received.⁹ However, with the dismantling of the socially administered economy and a push to modernize plants by reducing operating costs, many of these workers' benefits were eliminated. Moreover, as enterprises and industries became privatized, national budgets that depended on state ownership of productive wealth thinned. Nation-wide social programs and services in post-communist years got drastically reduced and underfinanced. Privatization of education and healthcare, and unloading the operation cost of these services on the population ensured that for many they became inaccessible. Studies of poverty in post-communist countries point out that essential medical care became out of reach for many poor who had to make formal and informal payments for it. Moreover, access to those services that remained is often inhibited by complicated and humiliating application procedures. Deteriorating public health services, undernutrition, lack of heat, poor hygiene, and stress contributed to increased illness, while access to affordable and quality health care was disappearing. "As a result, the poor increasingly resorted to self-treatment, home remedies, or faith

And Transnational Crime: Eurasian And American Perspectives. Edited by S. Stoecker and L. Shelley. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005, Malarek, Victor. The Natashas: Inside the New Global Sex Trade. Arcade Publishing: New York, 2003.

⁹ Although there were many problems with the timely and efficient provision of these essential material goods, the point is that was common for Soviet workers to count on guaranteed access to them and to other services as compensation for their work. When workers started organizing and calling for more efficiency in the system of distribution in the late 1980s, by no means did they image dismantling of the system of social guarantees as an aspects of their empowerment and economic improvement. See Christensen, Paul T. 1999. *Russia's Workers in Transition: Labor, Management, and the State under Gorbachev and Yeltsin*. Northern Illinois University Press, 1999, pp. 42-88, 94.

healers, avoiding the formal health care system until illness or injury became life-threatening or chronic.”¹⁰

Extreme economic dislocation is not peculiar to the era of shock therapy and to the wave of initial economic reforms. As economic liberalization reforms materialized, many studies still point to alarming demographic developments such high levels of poverty, increased unemployment, high mortality, declining birth rates, the AIDS epidemic, sex trafficking, increased rates of abortion, and unprecedented levels of emigration.¹¹ Sharp poverty that befell many Russians and Ukrainians is new and it cuts across various social and professional groups, with the exception of the top political and economic elite, who were able to convert power over resource allocation into ownership

¹⁰ “From Soviet Expectations to Post-Soviet Realities: Poverty During the Transition,” Dudwick, Nora, Elizabeth Gomart, Alexandre Marc, and Kathleen Kuehnast, ed. 2003. *When Things Fall Apart: Qualitative Studies of Poverty in the Former Soviet Union*. The World Bank, Washington D.C, p. 25.

¹¹ Iatridis, Demetrius S. ed., 2000. *Social Justice and the Welfare State in Central and Eastern Europe; the Impact of Privatization*. Greenwood Publishing Group; Clarke, Simon, 2002. *Making Ends Meet in Contemporary Russia: Secondary Employment, Subsidiary Agriculture, and Social Networks*. Cheltenham, UK; Northampton, MA : E. Elgar; Clarke, Simon. “Poverty in Ukraine,” available at: http://www.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/complabstuds/russia/Poverty_Ukraine.doc

“The social economic situation in the countries of the FSU: case studies of Ukraine, Russia, and Moldova”. Prepared by JDC-Brookdale Institute, August 20, 2003; Available at: http://www.claimscon.org/forms/allocations/The%20Social%20and_FSU%20JDC_.pdf; “Ukraine’s Social and Economic Background,” Human Rights Watch Report. Available at: <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/ukraine0803/3.htm>; April 16, 2008, “UNDP Conference on Poverty in Kyiv and Ukraine’s European choices” available at: http://www.undp.org.ua/files/en_80896eng_full.pdf, pp. 74-77; Revernko, Andrey. “Poverty in Ukraine”, *Institute of Economic Forecasting, Ukrainian Academy of Sciences*; Ochkina, Anna. “Present-day Russia needs a renewal of the feminist movement.” *Links International Journal of Socialist Renewal*, <http://links.org.au/node/829>; Wanner, Catherine and Nora Dudwick, 2003. “Children Have Become a Luxury’: Everyday Dilemmas of Poverty in Ukraine,” in ed. *When Things Fall Apart: Qualitative Studies of Poverty in the Former Soviet Union*. The World Bank.

of important assets.¹² The impoverished are labeled as the “new poor” to connote a *newly* created social class that is unaccustomed to such high levels of destitution and (albeit initially) reacted to it with outspoken resistance and indignation.¹³ Some of the attempts to cope with the crisis encompassed sharp reduction in household consumption, selling furniture, appliances, clothing, jewelry, cars, and personal artifacts of value. In some cases people sold centrally located apartments, bought cheaper housing outside of the city, and lived off the difference. In some cases people borrowed from professional moneylenders and were forced either to surrender apartments they had unwisely offered as collateral or to go into hiding. Moreover, subsistence gardening and farming became important survival strategies, even in the city.¹⁴

Today, a very large portion of the population in both Russia and Ukraine live in poverty, while more new wealth is generated and concentrated in a few hands. The GDP per capita indicators show slow but steady increases for the two decades after the disintegration. There have also been increases in consumption, industrial production,

¹² Silverman, Bertram and Yanowitch, Murray. 1997. *New Rich New Poor New Russia: Winners and Losers on the Russian road to Capitalism*. ME Sharpe; “From Soviet Expectations to Post-Soviet Realities: Poverty During the Transition,” Dudwick, Nora, Elizabeth Gomart, Alexandre Marc, and Kathleen Kuehnast, ed. 2003. *When Things Fall Apart: Qualitative Studies of Poverty in the Former Soviet Union*. The World Bank, Washington D.C., p. 22.

¹³ “From Soviet Expectations to Post-Soviet Realities: Poverty During the Transition,” Dudwick, Nora, Elizabeth Gomart, Alexandre Marc, and Kathleen Kuehnast, ed. 2003. *When Things Fall Apart: Qualitative Studies of Poverty in the Former Soviet Union*. The World Bank, Washington D.C., pp.21-2.

¹⁴ “From Soviet Expectations to Post-Soviet Realities: Poverty During the Transition,” Dudwick, Nora, Elizabeth Gomart, Alexandre Marc, and Kathleen Kuehnast, ed. 2003. *When Things Fall Apart: Qualitative Studies of Poverty in the Former Soviet Union*. The World Bank, Washington D.C, p. 24. Also, see Clarke, Simon, 2002. *Making Ends Meet in Contemporary Russia : Secondary Employment, Subsidiary Agriculture, and Social Networks*. Cheltenham, UK ; Northampton, MA: E. Elgar.

construction activity, and service industry investment, both domestic and foreign.¹⁵ However, according to World Bank data, poverty in Russia and Ukraine has more than doubled since the onset of disintegration of USSR.¹⁶ Despite the expectations encouraged by economic growth, the poverty rates in these countries have been dangerously high throughout the past few years. Tremendous economic dislocation, along with coping mechanisms initially thought to be temporary or pathological, had become a normal aspect of everyday life for millions of people.¹⁷ According to government official data and human rights reports, the average poverty rate in Ukraine in 2001 was at 30%, varying by region, while in the Transcarpathian region the poverty rate that year was at 46.6%. This means that on average every fourth Ukrainian does not have enough resources to meet the minimal requirements for her physiological survival.¹⁸ In 2011, every fourth working family in Ukraine lives below the poverty line, and the national poverty rate remained stable at around 30%.¹⁹

¹⁵ Statistical data on economic activity, GDP/capital, wages, and other economic indicators. State Statistics Committee of Ukraine. Available at: <http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/> ; Also, see April 16, 2008, “UNDP Conference on Poverty in Kyiv and Ukraine’s European choices” available at: http://www.undp.org.ua/files/en_80896eng_full.pdf, pp. 73.

¹⁶ “How Has Poverty Responded to Growth?” *World Bank Report*, 2003, pp. 80-1 Available at: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTECA/Resources/ch2-poverty.pdf>

¹⁷ “From Soviet Expectations to Post-Soviet Realities: Poverty During the Transition,” Dudwick, Nora, Elizabeth Gomart, Alexandre Marc, and Kathleen Kuehnast, ed. 2003. *When Things Fall Apart: Qualitative Studies of Poverty in the Former Soviet Union*. The World Bank, Washington D.C., pp. 21-2.

¹⁸ “Status of Observance of Ukrainian Migrant Workers’ Rights in the Receiving Countries.” Special Report of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights. Available at: http://www.ombudsman.kiev.ua/S_Report1/gl2_5.htm and http://www.ombudsman.kiev.ua/S_Report1/zm.htm

¹⁹ See “Expert: A Quarter of Ukrainian Working Families Below the Poverty Line” at <http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine/expert-a-quarter-of-ukrainian-working-families-are->

At the same time, the transition to a market economy created a class of “new rich” who now own and have the power to direct and manage industries and enterprises, as well as the labor force entangled in it. Privatization, i.e. distribution of national capital, occurred largely behind closed doors via dubious deals among people who already occupied positions of political and social power.²⁰ For example, during the privatization process in the transition to a market economy, most of the workers who were granted privatization vouchers from the state were misinformed, pressured, and often outright deceived into selling their privatization vouchers to their directors, who became sole owners of enterprises.²¹ Also, many enterprises and energy resources were secretly distributed among the political elites and their family members. It is difficult to demarcate the boundaries between the economic and political elites in post-communist Russia and Ukraine. Studies about the role of oligarchs in Russia’s democratic

[116981.html](#) and “Ukraine in 2015: Millenium Goals Adapted for Ukraine” at <http://www.undp.org.ua/en/millennium-development-goals/mdgs-in-ukraine>

²⁰ “Ukraine’s Timoshenko denies government plans to review 29 privatizations”. May 16, 2005 Available at: <http://www.forbes.com/afxnews/limited/feeds/afx/2005/05/16/afx2030153.html>; Schroder, Hans-Henning, and Claudia Bell. “El’tsin and the Oligarchs: The Role of Financial Groups in Russian Politics between 1993 and July 1998.” *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 51, No. 6. (Sep., 1999), pp. 957-988; Matsuzato, Kimitaka. “Elites and the Party System of Zakarpattya Oblast’: Relations among Levels of Party Systems in Ukraine.” *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 54, No. 8, Dec, 2002, pp. 1267-1299; Matsuzato, Kimitaka. “Semipresidentialism in Ukraine: Institutional Centristism in Rampant Clan Politics,” Hokkaido University Slavic Research Center Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, Kyrgyzstan, and Russian ethnic republics. Matsuzato, Kimitaka. 2001. “All Kuchma’s Men: The Reshuffling of Ukrainian Governors and the Presidential Election of 1999,” *Post-Soviet Geography and Economics*; Kubicek, Paul. 2000. *Unbroken Ties: The State, Interest Associations, and Corporatism in Post-Soviet Ukraine*. University of Michigan Press.

²¹ Pickles, John. 1998. *Theorizing Transition: The Political Economy of Transition in Post-Communist countries*. New York: Routledge, introduction; Kubicek, Paul. 2002. “Civil Society, Trade Unions and Post-Soviet Democratization: Evidence from Russia and Ukraine,” *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 54, No. 4, Jun. p. 611, and Blasi, Joseph R., Maya Kroumova, Douglas Kruse. *Kremlin Capitalism: Privatizing the Russian Economy*. Cornell University Press, 1997.

consolidation point to an astounding power exerted by financial elites on the political leaders, which suggests they are two different social groups. At the same time, political leaders themselves are often the persons who have direct stakes in finance, energy, and a variety of other industries developing out of previously state-owned ventures.²² This is the reason why in post-communist Russia and Ukraine, economic and political elites are either one and the same, or they are closely connected.

For example, one of the major controversies in Ukraine's presidential race of 2004 has been the alleged "dirty" privatization schemes under the leadership of a 1996-2004 president Kuchma. Kuchma's opposition, a group of so-called new, non-apparatchik pro-Western elites led by Yuschenko, promised to recall Kuchma's privatizations, return the "stolen" property to the state, and then transparently resell it to a buyer offering a fair price. A famous steel plant located in Eastern Ukraine, which in the mid 1990s had been "sold" for a tenth of its value to the president's son-in-law and his partner, Ukraine's industrial billionaire Ahmetov, was returned to Ukrainian authorities in 2005. It shortly was sold to a British billionaire, owner of Mittal steel industries throughout Europe, in a reality TV-auction.²³ This case demonstrates the complexity of power structures in post-communist societies. Political leaders and/or their family members control social resources by virtue of their political position, but they also

²² Schroder, Hans-Henning, and Claudia Bell. "El'tsin and the Oligarchs: The Role of Financial Groups in Russian Politics between 1993 and July 1998." *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 51, No. 6. (Sep., 1999), pp. 957-988.

²³ Gow, David. "Mittal Buys Ukraine's Steel Mill in Reality TV Auction." *Guardian Unlimited*, October 25, 2005. Available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/ukraine/story/0,15569,1599972,00.html>

control social resources by virtue of becoming a capital owning-class. Of course, not all political leaders are capital owners, and not all capital owners are political leaders, but there is a considerable interlay and mixing between the two.

2) Democratic Vision in Lay Economic Demands and Critiques

Lay Russians and Ukrainians respond to the conditions of extreme socio-economic dislocation and disempowerment that define their lives. They advance a set of economic demands that they identify with democracy and a set of economic critiques which show in what ways they do not have democracy in their societies. Lay Russians and Ukrainians associate democracy with economic security, social protections and safety nets, public intervention in the economy, social equality, and economic and social rights. Also recall that scholars who come across such views, due to their scholarly frameworks, overlook or dismiss such ideas as having nothing to do with democracy, as simply materialistic, apolitical, and inviting state paternalism and authoritarianism. However, scholars fail to see that lay people's economic demands are about gaining collective control and power over important aspects of their lives, such as job security, work compensation, pensions, and access to essential goods and services, to mention some, and these demands are democratic. Through their economic critiques, lay Russians and Ukrainians point out how disempowered they are, that they lack a meaningful voice and influence over their livelihoods, but are at the mercy of social forces and actors external to them.

As scholars of democracy, we are interested in studying and understanding power because democracy has to do with leveling out the power field between groups and classes in the society.²⁴ At a very basic level, we know that achieving genuine democracy means eliminating various forms of domination and inequality between groups and classes.²⁵ For example, if people are economically beholden to another class or a group of people, they are not in the position of dignity that allows them to negotiate and bargain equally in the activities that affect their lives. In contrast, democracy is about creating possibilities for all persons to be able to influence their lives in a meaningful way and not be a subject to the will and interests of a dominant class or a social group. That is why when we speak about democracy, we generally emphasize such ideals as equality of classes, genders, and races; equality of rights and freedoms; inclusion, acceptance, and respect; empowerment, participation in decision making, and a sense of political efficacy. These democratic ideals can be contrasted with undemocratic ones such as inequality of power, rights, and freedoms among groups; classism, racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of exclusion and oppression; dictatorship, tyranny, monopolization of power, a sense of political impotence, and people's inability to influence the course of events in society and in their individual lives.

In their economic critiques, lay Russians and Ukrainians respond to inequality of power they observe in the economic realm. Privatization of the economy brought about not only inequality of wealth, but also inequality of power and rights with respect to

²⁴ G.D.H. Cole, *Guild Socialism: A Plan for Economic Democracy*, p. 14.

²⁵ G.D.H. Cole, p. 16.

decision making about worker's compensation, benefits, working hours, and pricing of products of necessity. Capitalism is much more than simply a market economy; it is also a particular arrangement of power in the society.²⁶ Lay Russians and Ukrainians advance a discourse of economic democracy in response to privilege, exclusive economic citizenship, and exclusivity of economic rights in their societies. They offer a democratic critique of political economy in their societies by pointing out that the labor force, resources, and wealth are controlled and managed privately and for private gain, excluding from consideration the voices and economic interests of the non-elites.

It is common to hear lay references to “new masters”, i.e. employers, who have the power and a legal right to control, shape, and influence the livelihood of those who work for them.²⁷ In such discourses we find concerns about the inequality between the wealthy and powerful “top” and the impoverished and powerless “bottom”. In conversational Russian and Ukrainian, the word ‘bottom’ [Rus. *Nizu*, Ukr. *Nuzu*] is often synonymous with ‘people’, ‘masses’. The word ‘top’ [Rus. *verhushka*, Ukr. *verhushka*] is also often used with a rhyming neologism *kormushka*. *Kormushka* translates as a bird house – in application to the social realm it signifies a group at the top of the social ladder (as birdhouses are at the top of the trees) who have access to all the resources (as birdhouses have food in them). Most often, by the “top” lay people mean government

²⁶ Amin, Samir. 2003. *Obsolescent Capitalism: Contemporary Politics and Global Disorder*. Zed Books: New York, p. 96-97.

²⁷ See my overview and discussion in ch. 1.

officials, the state, or industrialists and the financial circles, or a combination of all of the above.²⁸

Through these critiques lay Russians and Ukrainians express their understanding of how their societies are structured. They point to inequalities in power that result in inequalities in wealth, because those social groups that have a say in the decision making are looking out for their private interests. “Privatizatsia” (Rus.: privatization) is often bitterly referred to by the rhyming neologism “prikhvatizatsia” which plays on the verb “prikhvativat” (to grab, grip, or clutch).²⁹ One respondent characteristically combines a view of the present social order, power, monopolization of economic resources, and injustice: “They [officials and business elites] pilfered and plundered the whole economy. The common people call privatization *prikhvatizatsia*. Whoever was nothing became everything. They completely plundered the government, the whole economy.”³⁰ Democracy, in contrast, is understood as a form of society that exists for the sake of itself and invests in all of its members, not for the sake of a privileged class or a group of people: “Democracy is for the majority...But we don’t have democracy and never will. Those at the top live by their own rules and those at the bottom live by theirs. Each has its own goal.”³¹

²⁸ Ries, “Honest bandits,” p. 295, 308, and p. 312, ft. 11; Kluegel et al, “Accounting for the Rich and the Poor,” p. 190.

²⁹ Ries, “Honest Bandits,” ft. 11, p. 312. But note that Ries refers readers to studies by neoliberal scholars McFAul and Perlmutter (1995) “for realistic [by which she means neoliberal] assessments of the privatization process.”, p. 312, ft. 11.

³⁰ Carnaghan, *Out of Order*, p. 166.

³¹ Alexander, *Political Culture*, p. 131.

Through their economic demands and critiques, non-elites show they want to share and participate in the economic life of their countries in which their own lives are deeply embroiled. Lay Ukrainians and Russians insist on having social safety nets and protections, economic rights, or a guaranteed access to certain material necessities because they seek to gain some footing in an otherwise unequal social environment where their interests get ignored and their efforts to survive economically get undercut by the interests and priorities of powerful groups. It is an attempt to elevate themselves from the position of hopelessness and powerlessness to a position where in fact they can count on having some voice in their economic well-being. Through economic demands lay Russians and Ukrainians seek to gain a sense of efficacy and control. When a certain level of material well-being is collectively guaranteed through rights and provisions, it helps people previously deprived feel more empowered in their economic fates. Lay emphasis on economic welfare is a call for democratization of the society such that basic needs and interests of people are actually met and not ignored.

Scholars often trivialize economic life, while lay actors emphasize that it constitutes the bulk of their everyday experiences in which they have little voice and power. As was summarized in chapter 1, the scholarly literature consistently shows that the majority of lay Russians and Ukrainians are preoccupied with economic concerns – surveys, interviews, and ethnographic studies reveal persistence of economic anxieties, fears, disappointments, hopes, and demands. Matters of economic life are not trivial as they constitute such a large portion of lay people’s daily experiences and problems. In a representative study by the New Democracies Barometer, in 2004, in response to the

question “what kind of problem needs immediate attention?” 76 percent of respondents state low level of salary/pension, 53 percent of respondents – unemployment, 41 percent of respondents - increasing prices for public utilities, 38 percent of respondents - corruption and bribery, and 38 percent of respondents - cost of medical care and bad medical care system. In response to the question “please, evaluate the material condition your family lives in”, 30 percent of subjects state that “money is not enough for our nutrition”. In response to the question “how would you describe the economic situation of your family”, 55 percent say “bad or very bad”. In response to the question to “describe how your family’s economic situation changed during the past 10 years”, 40.4 percent say “definitely worsened”. In response to the question “how much are you satisfied with the social security system (medical care, pensions, employment)” 51.9 percent state “very dissatisfied”.³² Lay Russians and Ukrainians want to be a part of deciding the stakes and they want their interests and grievances to be considered, rather than be forced into the realities and decisions controlled by actors external to them.

Due to the progressive weakening of the social net protections, elimination of social guarantees inherited from the Soviet past, and lack of labor protections³³, more

³² Nikolayevskiy, Valeriy N. “Presidential Elections in Ukraine, 2004: Sociological Dimensions.” Report prepared by the School of Sociology at Kharkiv National University, Ukraine, pp. 30-6
Available at:
<http://www.intas.be/documents/news/F7%20Workshop%20Jan%2005/presentations/Presidential%20Elections%20in%20Ukraine-2004%20by%20Nikolaevskiy.pdf> Also, see an extended survey overview of similar reports for Russia and Ukraine in ch. 1.

³³ See a discussion of pressure from IMF and World Bank on Ukrainian and Russian authorities to reduce social spending, Simon, Rick. 2000. *Labour and Political Transformation in Russia and Ukraine*. Ashgate Publishing LTD: England; “From Soviet Expectations to Post-Soviet Realities: Poverty During the Transition,” Dudwick, Nora, Elizabeth Gomart, Alexandre Marc, and Kathleen Kuehnast, ed. 2003. *When Things Fall Apart: Qualitative Studies of Poverty in the Former Soviet Union*. The World Bank, Washington D.C, p. 24.

people than not find themselves reporting a sense of dislocation, inefficacy, and general disempowerment in post-communist Ukraine and Russia.³⁴ Lay discourses about economic dislocation that are so common in post-communist Russia and Ukraine are discourses about the reality of disempowerment. They show how so many ordinary people confront realities of powerlessness, oppression, and a lack of rights, recognition, and inclusion in social life. Economic rights, such as a right to employment, living wage, social services, and social protections are considered essential in gaining full citizenship in the society. Without them, personhood is reduced to nothing:

The most important rights are opportunities for having a job, to realize oneself, to receive a decent pay for this work, to be able to build a home with this money, to eat well, and to be able to buy all necessary clothes. It is about social protection. Of course, while at it, it would be good to have freedom of conscience, thought, will, and so forth, but if a human being is hungry, if he is socially unprotected, if he has no profession, no work, no money, then all the other rights are simply a zero and a letter on a paper that means nothing.³⁵

Qualitative studies of the poor show that respondents report depression, even suicidal feelings, resulting from “loss of employment and social position; loss of confidence and self-respect; loss of opportunities to participate in social, cultural, and intellectual life; and, most profoundly, a lost sense of stability and predictability that had previously allowed them to plan their future.”³⁶ Economic dispossession is closely

³⁴ See my survey of public opinion studies on this issue in ch. 1.

³⁵ Diligenskii, “Rossiskii gorozhanin”, pp. 84-5.

³⁶ “From Soviet Expectations to Post-Soviet Realities: Poverty During the Transition,” Dudwick, Nora, Elizabeth Gomart, Alexandre Marc, and Kathleen Kuehnast, ed. 2003. *When Things Fall Apart: Qualitative Studies of Poverty in the Former Soviet Union*. The World Bank, Washington D.C, p. 23.

connected to disempowerment – a very real loss of control and influence over one’s life. In 2006, one worker at a Kherson engineering plant, where ownership changed frequently and wage arrears continued, could not tolerate oppressive working conditions and hung himself in the middle of the factory.³⁷ Bemoaning loss of employment security and loss of decent and stable incomes is not simply a sign of economic misfortunes that befell certain members of the community. Rather, the reactions and self-understandings of the new poor show us that the problem of economic dislocation cuts through the democratic questions of human worth, social exclusion, disempowerment, and oppression. Furthermore, disempowerment has grave psychological consequences: “Poor men and women expressed feelings of shame and guilt for failing to fulfill ritual and social obligations, and of depression at their exclusion from social and ceremonial life.”³⁸ Even advocates of economic liberalization in post-communist countries acknowledge the disturbing consequences of economic reforms: “reforms have had very strong distributional effects, greatly increasing open inequality in incomes and consumption together with unemployment and the disruption of social status and meaning”.³⁹

Lay Russians and Ukrainians bemoan the economic displacement that they experience. They are telling us that it is a form of social exclusion of a whole segment of

Also see Mandel, David. 2004. *Labour After Communism: Auto Workers and Their Unions in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus*. Black Rose Books.

³⁷ “Kherson Factory Occupied” from Oct. 2, 2009, available at: <http://www.socialistworld.net/print/3444>

³⁸ “From Soviet Expectations to Post-Soviet Realities: Poverty During the Transition,” Dudwick, Nora, Elizabeth Gomart, Alexandre Marc, and Kathleen Kuehnast, ed. 2003. *When Things Fall Apart: Qualitative Studies of Poverty in the Former Soviet Union*. The World Bank, Washington D.C, p. 23.

³⁹ Aslund, Anders, Peter Boone and Simon Johnson, “How to Stabilize: Lessons from Post-Communist Countries,” *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, no. 1, 1997.

population from meaningful control of their economic fate. As a former participant in workers' strikes in the early years of transition states:

The situation hasn't improved. *There is still no democracy. Individual freedom without economic well-being is a deception.* And since [Ukrainian] independence, our economic situation has continued to deteriorate in connection with the breakdown of economic relations... If we didn't live too well before, now it's much worse... Everything is now directed toward speculation.⁴⁰ Especially since the collapse of the Union, the government's goal has been to foster a new bourgeois stratum that would serve as its social base. In agriculture, workers make 6000-9000 coupons a month. A kilo of meat costs 10 000. So the more you work, the poorer you get. And it's all the more demoralizing when you see the new bourgeois raking in millions through speculation.⁴¹

We may only imagine what it is like to have worked for a month and your month worth of pay is not enough to buy a kilo of meat at a grocery store. This is not just about millions of families experiencing hunger and malnutrition. It is also about having to cope with a psychologically traumatizing realization that one is insignificant and unworthy as a human being and as a member of that society, without economic rights, without a voice, and without consideration.

In their economic critiques, lay actors stress that they are cornered into the mode of survival where every day is defined by long hours of necessary and mundane work not conducive to their development, growth, and happiness, and where their relationships with family and fellow community members are severed. They reject reducing their life

⁴⁰ The term used to describe business activity, before 'entrepreneurship' and 'business' replaced the term 'speculation' in the late 1990s.

⁴¹ Mandel, *Rabotyagi*, pp. 264-6. Note that this respondent references the very first years of Ukraine's independence, marked by hyper-inflation and price liberalization.

to mechanical motions, and instead, they long for a free life beyond satisfying basic bodily functions:

In principle, we are not free. We go to work from bell to bell. We spend the whole day at work. We see our kids when we come home tired, sometimes not at all. It's necessary to prepare something to eat. It's necessary all the same to think how we can get out of this situation, how to buy something when there is not enough money to live on. We also have to think how to clean after we've had to economize on soap and detergent. That is, it turns out we have practically no freedom. In what other ways can they take away our freedom?⁴²

Lay people resist having many of their life activities constrained by their purchasing power, which strips them of the sense of choice, freedom, and self-sufficiency. They point out that they have no control about whether their families will be able to survive through the next day, month, or year, whether they will be able to afford clothes for their children, proper diet, education, or medical assistance. They dream about emotional and psychological freedom from anxiety and uncertainty about their economic future. While longing for material security, they dream about life not consumed by material concerns:

To breathe freely... to breathe, in that sense that one should be able to enter any store... to buy some kind of food or clothing and not have to choose that which is cheaper instead of that which you like. I think that a person who has finished their work in good faith, should be able to come home with a clear conscience and be able to peacefully relax. And, not have to think about what is waiting for you the next day.⁴³

Thus, when lay actors in Ukraine and Russia identify economic welfare as an important aspect of democracy, they are bringing our attention to ways in which

⁴² Carnaghan, *Out of order*, p. 180.

⁴³ Alexander, *Political culture*, p. 97, emphasis added.

economic dislocation represents their disempowerment and lack of control over their lives. It is not a democracy when so many persons live their daily lives confined to a voiceless struggle for physical survival, when their life choices are severely constrained, and when they feel their worth as human beings is not recognized as they have no rights, protections, or say in the economy.

Proponents of economic liberalization and privatization of productive resources believe the root of the problem of extreme social dislocation is in the inadequately implemented reforms. They believed that post-communist dislocation is temporary and once the shock of initial economic reforms is overcome, the economy stabilizes, and political institutions begin to function properly for sustaining market relations, inequity would lessen.⁴⁴ Some Schumpeterian scholars consider that economic impoverishment is a result of lack of individual responsibility and initiative on the part of lay actors who have economic grievances.⁴⁵ Such scholars suggest that non-elites who are dispossessed may have to learn to take risks and work harder in order to succeed economically.⁴⁶ In

⁴⁴ Aslund, Anders, Peter Boone and Simon Johnson, "How to Stabilize: Lessons from Post-Communist Countries," *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, no. 1, 1997; *World Development Report 1996: From Plan to Market*. 1996. Oxford University Press, part I; Sachs, Jeffrey. 1993. *Poland's Jump to the Market Economy*. Cambridge: Massachusetts; *The Ukrainian Economy: Achievements, Problems, Challenges*. Ed. I.S. Koropeskyj. Harvard University Press, 1992; Haavisto, Tarmo (ed.) 1997. *The Transition to a Market Economy: Transformation and Reform in the Baltic States*. Edward Elgar Publishing, p. 6, also see an emphasis on relevant political reforms outlined in World Bank report *World Development Report 1996: From Plan to Market*, part II; Havrylyshyn, Oleh; Marcus Miller; William Perraudin; et al. 1994. "Deficits, Inflation and the Political Economy of Ukraine," *Economic Policy*, Vol. 9, No. 19, Oct., pp. 353-401.

⁴⁵ See an extended discussion of these scholarly diagnoses and prescriptions in chapter 3.

⁴⁶ More explicit statements in Alexander, *Political culture*, p. 121, and for more veiled references to individual responsibility and an idea that the state should not be responsible for individual economic failure, see Gibson, 1992, "Democratic values," p. 341; Reisinger et al., 1995, "Public Behavior and Political Change," pp. 944-5; and McIntosh et al., 1994, "Public Meets Democracy," p. 485, 492; Finifter, Ada W., and Ellen Mickiewicz, 1992, "Redefining the Political System of the USSR: Mass

contrast, lay Russians and Ukrainians show us that the root of the problem of economic disparities and impoverishment is in the undemocratically organized economy, where economies are managed privately for selfish gain, without consideration or concern for the non-elites. Millions of people who are impoverished, struggling, and without meaningful access to basic goods and services are in such a position because they do not have a say and their bread and butter interests are not represented in economic decision making. They are excluded from social citizenship and they are at the mercy of the new ‘owners’ of their lives.

In chapter 1 and 3 I also stressed how many scholars consider judicial equality an important component of democracy. However, they do not extend this equality to the economic realm which is insulated from democratic analysis in their frameworks. As a result, lay Russian and Ukrainian emphasis on equality of power in the economic life is misunderstood and dismissed as having little to do with democracy.⁴⁷ Of course, we can see that lay views of democracy are superior to scholarly views because lay actors do not arbitrarily presume that economic life must be protected from democratic influence and oversight. Lay actors advocate more democracy, while scholars insist on limiting and

Support for Political Change.” *American Political Science Review*, 86:857-74; Finifter, Ada W., 1996, “Attitudes toward Individual Responsibility and Political Reform in the Former Soviet Union,” *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 90, No. 1, March, pp. 138-52; Rose, Richard, William Mishler, and Christian Haerpfer, 1998, *Democracy and Its Alternatives*. John Hopkins University Press, p. 172.

⁴⁷ See a summary in Smolar, A., 1996, “From Opposition to Atomization”, p. 37. McIver et al, “Public meets market democracy,” for pp. 495-6, 511, where the author’s conceptual framework is grounded in a dichotomy between freedom and equality, and preferences for freedom are interpreted as public support for democracy, and preferences for equality are interpreted by these scholars as the leftovers of the communist past or simply as egalitarianism, but in either case, as conservatism and an impediment to democratization in the region. As these authors derive and endorse a notion of democracy from Dahl’s *Polyarchy*, equality in the judicial sense is considered an essential feature of democracy in their conceptual framework.

curtailing democracy, overlooking a variety of ways in which non-elites are disempowered and excluded from participating and sharing in rights, decisions, freedoms, and prosperity in their societies.

Interpreting lay beliefs as a response to the post-communist social context can also help explain the democratic ambivalence that so many public opinion scholars have reported but have been unsuccessful in understanding and explaining.⁴⁸ I suggest that simultaneous bitterness and disappointment with “democracy”, as well as democratic movements, calls for democratic reforms, and enthusiasm about what democracy can bring do not represent lay confusion about democracy or their undemocratic proclivities. Rather, ambivalence is a response to undemocratic and oppressive political and economic conditions in Russia and Ukraine.

There are many studies that point to wide-spread disillusionment with the new democracy in post-communist countries. For example, in 2009, the Pew Global Attitudes Project reports that in Ukraine 30 percent of people approve of the change to democracy [defined as multiparty politics] (compared to 72 percent in 1991) and in Russia – 53 percent (compared to 61 percent in 1991).⁴⁹ In 2005, a survey was conducted to evaluate citizen satisfaction with democracy and the overall political and socio-economic situation in Ukraine. According to the survey results, a little more than 80 percent of Ukrainians

⁴⁸ See my overview of numerous survey, interview, and ethnographic reports on this in ch. 1.

⁴⁹ “The End of Communism is Cheered, but Now with More Reservations: The Pulse of Europe 2009, Twenty Years after the Fall of the Berlin Wall.” According to this report, in 2009 85 percent of East Germans approve of change to democracy, i.e. ‘multiparty politics’, as well as 80 percent of Czechs, 71 percent of Slovaks, 70 percent of Poles, 56 percent of Hungarians, 55 percent of Lithuanians, and 52 percent of Bulgarians approve.

were dissatisfied with the economic and political situation in the country, and close to 60 percent believed they cannot influence government decision making.⁵⁰

Lay skepticism about “democracy” and attempts to dismiss it as either irrelevant or devious constitutes a critique of political economy, and democratic critique at that. In their skepticism about the new democracy, lay actors refer to social arrangement in which they feel powerless and cornered. Respondents see the new democracy as “whatever was good for people in power, which meant that government officials were free to escape responsibility for their actions and enterprise managers could lavish high salaries on themselves while workers barely earned enough to feed their families.”⁵¹ According to Yavlinsky, in post-Soviet societies “democratic reforms have become associated in too many minds with robbing the people and imposing hardship on the many for the benefit of the few.”⁵² Here is an excerpt from an interview where a respondent expresses a common attitude of deep disillusionment with post-communist changes and a sense of economic disempowerment:

Oy, I don't know what democracy is, but I understand that we got what we wanted. We want to read books, watch movies, go abroad. We got all that. It is possible to say more now on the television, in newspapers, and on the radio. You can say everything. Only there's no work, no money, and soon there won't be anything. Therefore, the word democracy – that's when everything is possible, but in the end it turns out you can't do anything.⁵³

⁵⁰ “Public Opinion in Ukraine: November 2005,” pp. 9, 12-3, and for comparison, see Buerkle, Karen et al, “Public Opinion in Ukraine After the Orange Revolution, April 2005.”

⁵¹ Carnaghan, *Out of Order*, p. 171.

⁵² Yavlinsky, Grigory A., 1995. “To Russian Democrats: Don't Unite”, *The New York Times*, 14, Sept., p. A27.

⁵³ Carnaghan, *Out of Order*, p. 171, emphasis added.

Taking into account the realities of post-Soviet widespread socio-economic dislocation, it is not a surprise that many lay people want to conclude that post-Soviet citizens hardly have any power, rights and freedoms.⁵⁴ If we look at the balance of power and ability to control social resources and wealth, many ordinary people indeed have no democratic rights and no say in the management of and access to economic wealth.

But it is precisely this social arrangement that is labeled as “democracy” according to the new cultural and ideological trends. Lay actors wonder, what is the use of freedom of speech and voting *alone*, when power over economic decisions and resources is not distributed equally? It is not so much the rejection of freedom of speech and voting per se, but of “democracy” when so limited, incomplete, and nearly meaningless in the context of problems that lay actors struggle with. That is why interview scholars report so many lay people’s bitter remarks and much disgust with the duplicity of officials and those in power, who use “democracy” as a cover-up and who orate about people’s rights to create an appearance of legitimacy.⁵⁵ Lay people’s critique of post-communist political economy is a demand for more democracy; it is an attempt to introduce the democratic ethos into economic matters. But since the vocabulary of the officially endorsed democracy provides no language to articulate such demands and critique, it appears as though lay actors are displaying undemocratic sentiments because they are preoccupied with ‘economic’ concerns.

⁵⁴ See Diligenskii, “Rossiskii gorozhanin”, p. 83, and my summary in chapter 1.

⁵⁵ See my overview and discussion of such responses in ch. 1.

Lay discourses stand in sharp contrast to prominent but short-sighted scholarly prescriptions that economic life should be left to market mechanisms, in other words, that it should not be a subject to democratic control.⁵⁶ Also, recall insistence in scholarly literature that in order for democratic transitions to run smoothly, Russian and Ukrainian citizens need to learn to separate and compartmentalize their economic and political lives.⁵⁷ Mainstream scholars of democratic development in post-communist countries who struggle with interpreting lay Russian and Ukrainian economic critiques suggest that lay actors mistakenly conflate democracy and capitalism, so that in their rejection of market economy lay actors mistakenly reject democracy.⁵⁸ Such scholarly advice amounts to something quite difficult to explain because it is wrought with inconsistencies and arbitrary containment of the democratic ethos. Scholars insist on insulating the economic realm from democratic analysis and they cannot comprehend that lay criticisms of market economy are cast in democratic terms. Scholars suggest that disappointed Russians and Ukrainians should embrace democratic values, but they should stay away from applying them to the economic life. Finally, according to scholars, it is not acceptable to reject democratic values, while it is more tolerable to be critical of the market economy (of course, it remains unclear from what ideological standpoint it is allowed to criticize the market economy). Lay Russians and Ukrainians do not

⁵⁶ See my overview and discussion of this question in ch. 3, section C.

⁵⁷ For example, Mishler, William and Richard Rose, 1997, "Trust, distrust, and skepticism: popular evaluations of civil and political institutions in post-communist societies." p. 436, ft. 12. For a lengthy overview of scholarly work on this question see chapters 1, 2, and 3.

⁵⁸ See Carnaghan, *Out of Order*, p. 171, Alexander, *Political Culture*, pp. 127-33, and for a more detailed overview of scholarly suggestions, see chapter 3.

mistakenly reject democracy; rather, they teach scholarship on democracy about the importance of overcoming the minimalist bias in conceptualizing democracy and about the importance of applying a democratic ethos to the economic life.

3) Labor Movements and Workplace Democracy

In chapter 1 I briefly referenced a lay discourse on workplace democracy in Russia and Ukraine, which includes a set of more specialized views as compared to the broader economic demands I discussed above. Ideas about workplace democracy gained currency under Gorbachev during the *perestroika* years in response to excesses of state, bureaucratic, and managerial control over working collectives, and later in response to privatization and capital owners' control. To many participants in the Ukrainian and Russian labor movements of 1989-1998 and those who were specifically introduced to the discourse of industrial democracy, democracy has to do with a democratic balance of power between the state, workers, supervisors, managers, and owners of means of production. In these formulations, democracy means respect for human dignity in the workplace, freedom of speech in the workplace, workers' ability to elect managers, and workers' participation in the decision-making about production policies, wage rates, benefits packages, pensions, and work shifts.⁵⁹ Democracy encompasses workers' ability to press their concerns to their supervisors and freedom of speech "within the confines of

⁵⁹ See Siegelbaum, L. H. and D.J. Walkowitz, ed., 1995, *Workers of the Donbass Speak: Survival and Identity in the New Ukraine, 1989-1992*; Crowley, *Hot Coal, Cold Steel*, Mandel, David, 1994, *Rabotyagi: Perestroika and After Viewed From Below. Interviews with Workers in the Former Soviet Union*; Clark, Simon, et al., 1993, *What about the workers?*; Christensen, *Russia's Workers in Transition*; Simon, Rick, 2000, *Labour and Political Transformation in Russia and Ukraine*.

labor responsibilities”, “standing up for one’s point of view...including in the factory meetings.”⁶⁰ Here, ability to have a say in matters of economic life, namely in the realm of work, is seen as democratic:

In the Soviet times we were taught to listen and accept *the views of those above us – managers, party leaders, [enterprise] directors*. It was part of the social norm to respect and listen to and internalize the decisions and opinions of those above us. This is what prevents democracy from happening...*democratization cannot be about silencing voices and idealizing leaders’ decisions and realization of leaders’ interests and priorities.*⁶¹

For example, studies of 1989 strikes in Russia show that workers’ frustration with low wages, low pensions, inadequate health and social insurance, food shortages, and concerns with deteriorating local infrastructures such as poor public transportation systems, decaying streets, and public housing disrepair found their way into arguments for greater self-management. They called for implementation of Gorbachev’s policy of enterprise democratization which they believed would give them greater autonomy from dysfunctional and out of touch state bureaucrats to manage their productive activities and communities (as I already mentioned, many Soviet enterprises were responsible for maintaining community services, workers’ housing, and etc.)⁶²

Similarly, workers’ deep concerns with their deteriorating living standards following unprecedented economic crises in the 1990s found their way into arguments

⁶⁰ Alexander, “Political culture,” p. 128.

⁶¹ Diligenskii, “Rossiskii gorozhanin,” p. 74, emphasis added.

⁶² Christensen, Paul T. 1999. *Russia’s Workers in Transition: Labor, Management, and the State under Gorbachev and Yeltsin*. Northern Illinois University Press, 1999, pp. 42-88, 94.

that accompanied the 1991 strikes in Russia and Ukraine which questioned the economic and political elite's aptitude to make to make sound economic decisions. The strikes again called for granting the enterprises rights to self-management, but this time they came to be viewed as best guaranteed by Gorbachev's resignation, dismantling of the Soviet Union, and regional economic autonomy from the national center.⁶³ Finally, in the 1998 miners' strikes and parallel strikes in other industries in Russia and Ukraine, the demands again encompassed economic issues such as unpaid wages, inflation, low pensions, and workers' deteriorating living standards. These concerns made their way into arguments for resignation of the presidents, votes of no confidence in legislative bodies, and in general arguments denouncing post-Soviet political and economic reform programs.⁶⁴

Democracy involves equitable distribution of power and rights between groups and classes, and this equality is what opens a way to democratic participation in decision making, where inclusion rather than exclusion of voices and interests is the goal. However, in organizations that are structured undemocratically, leaders and owners have legal (albeit exclusive) rights to decide and control their worker's livelihoods, be that in terms of their wages, working hours, benefits, or leaves. Such unequal and undemocratic rights are obtained by virtue of their structural position in society – they are owners of resources and they get a legal privilege in decision making concerning their workers'

⁶³ Christensen, Paul T. 1999. *Russia's Workers in Transition: Labor, Management, and the State under Gorbachev and Yeltsin*. Northern Illinois University Press, 1999, pp. 88-94 and also see Simon, Rick. 2000. *Labour and Political Transformation in Russia and Ukraine*. Ashgate.

⁶⁴ Simon, Rick. 2000. *Labour and Political Transformation in Russia and Ukraine*. Ashgate.

lives and the disposal of wealth created in the process of work.⁶⁵ Privatization of capital and economic institutions creates a social arrangement where one class or group of people is beholden to another and their interests and priorities. Lay Russian and Ukrainian discourses on workplace democracy bring our attention to the importance of democratizing such social institutions and relations by giving more power and voice to workers over their economic fate, daily routines, and life initiatives. From this standpoint, democracy entails a struggle to transform hierarchical social structures and social power associated with it.⁶⁶ As expressed in the following statement, workplace democracy involves giving workers greater power over their lives, rather than enslaving them to the will and interests of their employers and supervisors:

He ran things with terror...the director was like a tsar...Sometimes it ran to moral humiliation...When my mother died, the director refused to sign my application for a leave without pay, which I needed in order to attend her funeral...There were many cases like that. When, in 1989, the situation became heated [referring to strikes], there was an outburst of emotion in our collective. *After that it was next to impossible to turn back to absolute obedience. People wanted to live as human beings, they wanted democracy, they wanted to settle their problems themselves; they did not want anyone to interfere...People have just begun to regard themselves as human beings. In the past they were like slaves, but now they have started to respect themselves.*⁶⁷

⁶⁵ G.D.H. Cole, pp. 18-19.

⁶⁶ See G.D.H. Cole on this, p. 25; Isaac, Jeffrey C. 1987. *Power and Marxist Theory: A Realist View*. Cornell University Press, pp. 5, 38, 80, 97; and see C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959, p. 174, 194.

⁶⁷ Siegelbaum and Walkowitz, *Workers of the Donbass Speak*, pp. 148-9, emphasis added.

Similar views are highlighted in a study of transformations at one mine in Russia's Southern Kuzbass which began in 1988, where an ethnographer examined a women's collective, the lampovaya, which became the first collective in the mine to remove its line manager through democratic vote. Reflecting on the event, a miner proudly remarks: "Democracy came first to the lampovaya."⁶⁸ Electing their own managers was not the only aspect of democratic practices at the mine – through collective action women miners have been able to succeed in a campaign for a change in their shifts – grafik - to reflect their interests and priorities. Changes in managers and grafik gave women workers an opportunity to combine their home and work lives more conveniently and to exert some influence on their daily routines.⁶⁹

Lay demands for economic democracy provide a framework through which we can reveal and evaluate undemocratic relations of power, undemocratic decisions, and suffering connected to that. In lieu of workplace democracy, enterprises are structured undemocratically where workers are deprived of voice in the decision making about the matters that directly affect their livelihood – working conditions, wages, working hours, and etc. Not only do workers become beholden to their employers and owners, but they are also exploited since they are not in an equal position to bargain for their interests and benefits. Workers voices are silenced and their interests unrepresented, while the social class that does have real power to make decisions represents only their own

⁶⁸ Ashwin, "Redefining the Collective," pp.245-73.

⁶⁹ Ashwin, "Redefining the Collective," p. 255.

interests and stakes. Inequality of power in the workplace is accompanied with inequitable distribution and exploitative control of resources.

In October 2009, a big solidarity march took place in response to on-going wage arrears and poor working conditions at a Kherson engineering plant owned by Alexander Oleinik, who is also a leader of the Ukraine's Party of Regions. Over one thousand turned out, with many local youth, residents and trade union members from other cities joining in. At the front of the march were the leaders of the workers' council, left activists, and students from Simferopol University. Reacting to their disempowerment and exploitation, workers carried placards such as, "Make the oligarchs pay for the crisis", "Give the workers wages and control of the factory", "We no longer expect miracles, we'll take over the factory ourselves", "Today Kherson, tomorrow the whole Ukraine". In reply to those politicians from the Communist Party who offer little real support to Ukraine's workers, the main slogan of the march was "Don't settle for crumbs, carry on with the strike".⁷⁰ Such slogans carry a democratic message that is urgent in the context of real power inequality and dispossession.

The discourse on workplace democracy is not exclusive to lay actors and the question of democratizing industrial life is explored in academic democratic theory.⁷¹ However, applying democratic values to the economic realm is largely avoided, unaddressed, and frowned upon in scholarship on democracy (see my discussion in

⁷⁰ "Kherson Factory Occupied" from Oct. 2, 2009, available at: <http://www.socialistworld.net/print/3444>

⁷¹ For example, see seminal Dahl, Robert. 1985. *Preface to Economic Democracy*; Pateman, Carole, 1976, *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge University Press; and Cole G.D.H. 1920. *Guild Socialism: A Plan for Economic Democracy*. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co.

chapters 2 and 3). While so many scholars draw on R. Dahl's work on democracy, it is very uncommon to draw on that portion of his work that has specifically to do with democratization of enterprises and firms.⁷² I suggest that compelling lay discourses on workplace democracy help to reevaluate scholarly dodging of democracy in economics. Given the undemocratic relations of power, unequal economic rights, and lack of real labor protections in post-communist Russia and Ukraine, it is astounding that so many scholars disregard or overlook the democratic demands of lay actors that they study. Lay Russians and Ukrainians teach us that democracy, among other things, should entail reducing inequality of power between social classes. Such inequality allows the privileged groups to control nothing less than their workers' lives, as well as to control social resources and wealth. Lay Russians and Ukrainians call for a democratic intervention in the economy and in their working life over which they have little control.

Lay arguments about economic democracy have a lot of muscle, and much contemporary relevance and urgency. Democratic theory stands to gain much by re-introducing these concepts into contemporary scholarly conversations. Let these insights be voiced not only by prominent democratic theorists but also by millions of people whose lives are enmeshed in and often defined by ideas that we scholars may be taking with such ease as simply something we write about. Let these insights be voiced by those who should themselves be the locus of democratic power. By engaging with lay voices from Russia and Ukraine, democratic theorists can see that important pieces of the

⁷² See Dahl, Robert, 1970, *After the Revolution: Authority in a Good Society*, Yale University Press, and Dahl, Robert, 1985. *A Preface to Economic Democracy*, Prentice-Hall.

democratic puzzle have been left out. It should strike us that we lost sight of some priorities that should be crucial for anyone interested in democracy and democratization.

c) Critiquing Some Aspects of Lay Thinking about Democracy: Beliefs in a Problematic Social Context

While democratic theory has much to learn about the place of economic concerns in a democracy by listening to lay voices, not everything in lay perspectives connects well to the impetus of democratization. Any theory or body of knowledge has certain flaws and errors, and lay thinking about democracy in Ukraine and Russia is not an exception. In this section of the chapter I show that apathy, political alienation, and retreating economic demands are not conducive to democratic empowerment of non-elites and why democratic theorists should be critical of such views. I also argue that when lay actors locate the locus of social power to which they feel beholden exclusively at the level of the state, it provides an incomplete representation of social reality and thwarts their democratic aspirations. I do not examine lay beliefs in a vacuum, but as before, in the context of power relations and larger social and economic processes that surround them. While these lay attitudes and views are debilitating from a democratic perspective, they are understandable, given the highly repressive and unresponsive social conditions and institutions that define the environment in Russia and Ukraine.

There are several, albeit contending, explanations for why lay thinking and attitudes toward politics in Russia and Ukraine appear to be problematic. Many argue that quiescence, apathy, acceptance of paternalism, and political alienation are inherent

civilizational and cultural characteristics of non-elites in Russia and Ukraine.⁷³ Others assert that such a public mentality is a product of the oppressive political system that existed during the seventy years of Soviet rule.⁷⁴ Moreover, decades of experience under the Soviet authoritarian system precluded the masses from forming coherent, stable, and meaningful opinions on political issues, not to mention developing a sense of democratic politics.⁷⁵ In other words, the scholarly consensus in such studies is that the masses in Russia and Ukraine are politically inept, inherently undemocratic, and culturally backwards. In contrast, I suggest that it is implausible to blame Orthodox cultural characteristics or the Soviet political system for lack of political consciousness among and misconceptions among the masses. Contrary to these mainstream contentions, I argue that a contextual reading of lay beliefs helps us see that their views are a response

⁷³ For example, see White, Stephen, 1984, "Political Culture in Communist States: Some Problems of Theory and Method," *Comparative Politics* 16, April, pp. 351-65, and McDaniel, Tim, 1996, *The Agony of the Russian Idea*; Romanovich, Nelli A., 2003, "Demokraticheskie Tsennosti I Svoboda 'Po-Russki,'" pp. 35-9; and Huntington, Samuel, 1996, *The Clash of Civilizations*, pp. 158-70.

⁷⁴ Gozman, Leonid and Alexander Etkind, 1992, *The Psychology of Post-totalitarianism in Russia*; Kuzio, Taras, 1998, *Ukraine: State and Nation Building*, and Polokhalo, Volodymyr, 1997, *The Political Analysis of Postcommunism: Understanding Post-Communist Ukraine*, pp. 41-65.

⁷⁵ For arguments about a relationship between soviet authoritarianism and poorly developed political consciousness, see Gozman and Etkind, *The Psychology of Post-totalitarianism*, p. 21; Jowitt, Kenneth, 1996, "The New World Disorder," p. 28; Migranian also argues that living under the authoritarian system for seventy years, Russians have lost the capacity to think and act independently, Migranian, Andranik, 1990, *Rossia v Poiskakh Identichnosti: 1985-1995*. A similar argument is made by social critic and editor of *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, Polyakov: "today this intellectual infantilism or idiocy remains", Polyakov, Yuriy, 1997, *Ot Imperii Lzhu – k Respyblike Vrania*, p. 11. On less rigid assessments of how undeveloped mass political belief systems in post-communist countries are, see Miller et al, 1995, "Comparing Citizen and Elite Beliefs Systems in Post-Soviet Russia and Ukraine"; Miller and Wolchik, ed, 1994, *The Social Legacy of Communism*; Reisinger et al, 1994, "Political Values in Russia, Ukraine and Lithuania: Sources and Implications for Democracy," p. 185. Also, see Simon "Popular conceptions," pp. 84, 115-116, McIntosh et al, 1994, "Public Meets Democracy in Central and East Europe 1991-1993", pp. 483-512; Moodie, Eleanor, 2005, "Different Meanings of Democracy in Post-Communist Europe."; Gibson, 1998, "A Sober Second Thought", is rather blunt in insisting that there exists an unquestionable 'immaturity' in the political consciousness of Russians as a result of their Soviet past, p. 821.

to the deeply undemocratic environment in which lay actors live, be that Soviet communism *or* post-Soviet liberalism. I argue that long term political oppression combined with extreme socio economic dislocation and a rollback of democratic movements in Russia and Ukraine in the late 1980s and 1990s contribute to lay actors' curbed democratic enthusiasm and self-defeating beliefs.

In chapters 2 and 3 I showed that it is quite common for scholars of democracy to assume that the masses have inherently limited capacities for political thinking and action. This assumption helps to reinforce another common tendency to advocate limited political participation for lay actors. Such claims are short-sighted and prejudiced as they overlook the effects of power, inequality, oppression, lack of information, and dispossession on lay political views. Scholars are wrong to assume that the free market era is marked by openness, plenty of opportunities for political participation, pluralism, and freedom. Scholars are also wrong to assume that lack of interest in political participation, counter-intuitive preferences, and poorly developed political consciousness is the fault of lay actors themselves. I explore and highlight the oppressive conditions of the social environment in Russia and Ukraine to show that such assumptions are unfounded. Rather than seeking to justify a moderated exclusion of ordinary people from the political process for holding 'problematic' views, democratic theorists should instead emphasize changing oppressive and undemocratic social structures, as well as the lack of social opportunities that give rise to such beliefs.

As I summarized in chapter 1, there is a certain degree of ambivalence in Russia and Ukraine where democratic resistance gets replaced with apathy, retraction of

democratic demands, succumbing to power, and authoritarian reversals. In the critical literature, scholars explain such patterns in the political thinking of disenfranchised groups as a result of oppressive and closed social conditions. For example, Pateman stresses that apathy and a low sense of efficacy are expected responses to the environment in which non-elites experience disempowerment. Lay actors espouse apathy and political alienation because they are responding to social conditions in which their voice does not matter or makes no significant difference. Apathy and political withdrawal are responses to undemocratic features of the social world in which lay actors live.⁷⁶

Pateman stresses that political consciousness grows and develops in conditions of political participation. Involvement in the political process and in decision making serves as a learning environment, whereby political actors learn to identify, formulate, and defend their political interests, preferences, demands, and agendas.⁷⁷ When conditions for political participation and influence are limited, opportunities for learning get foreclosed. As a result, aspects of non-elite political thinking may be easily retractable, self-defeating, ambivalent, or too modest. Lack of meaningful political participation, which curtails political learning, creates an environment of ignorance and insecurity. This is why research on groups in unequal and non-participatory political contexts shows that such groups may lack a coherent set of demands or lack an ambitious set of political interests and preferences. Moreover, when relations of power relax and social institutions

⁷⁶ Pateman, Carole, 1976, *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge University Press.

⁷⁷ Pateman, Carole, 1976, *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge University Press.

open up to non-elite influence (such as in times of social movements and democratic transformations), the non-elite's initial demands and interests may be vague, partial, ambiguous, volatile, easily retractable, poorly articulated, or susceptible to manipulation by the dominant groups.⁷⁸ Thus, ambiguities and self-defeatism in lay political thinking must be explained and evaluated in the context of continuous political repression. I argue that the apparent quiescence of labor in Russia and Ukraine in the face of disempowerment is a response to long-term political oppression, exclusion, and continual defeats of their attempt to mobilize and affect change.⁷⁹

1) Apathy, Political Withdrawal, and Alienation as a Response to Undemocratic Economic Environments

While placing expectations on equity in the distribution of resources and on democratic intervention in economic matters, many lay actors simultaneously suggest that it may be better to succumb to the reality of life and give up on these ideals altogether. Non-elites in Russia and Ukraine offer a discourse that it is fruitless to expect

⁷⁸ For some examples of applied studies on this subject, see McAdam, Doug. *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*. University of Chicago Press, 1982; Estrich, Susan, 2001. "Real Rape" in *Understanding inequality: the intersection of race/ethnicity, class, and gender*. Ed. by Barbara A. Arrighi, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers; Garson, David, 1973. "Automobile Workers and the American Dream", *Politics and Society*, 3, pp. 163-79; Gaventa, John. 1980. *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley*. Clarendon Press, Oxford.

⁷⁹ For articulation of these methodological insights, see Gaventa, John. 1980. *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley*. Clarendon Press, Oxford.

much economic protection and fairness in the existing political order.⁸⁰ This discourse espouses democratic hopelessness and a view that at the end of the day, realistically speaking, people are left to their own devices when it comes to their economic survival. Counting on the state to guarantee a democratic distribution of resources, wealth, and services to all members of society is seen as too wishful thinking. Thus, some people give up expectations of collective control and intervention in the economy, and instead adopt an individualistic approach to economic life “imposed on the majority by life”.⁸¹ They come to believe that they have no one to rely on other than themselves, family, friends, and luck in their struggle for survival.⁸² Some now begin to view economic welfare as a matter of individual responsibility rather than collective control.⁸³ Widespread poverty is becoming a more socially accepted phenomenon even to the poor families themselves and some even begin to blame it on individual failure rather than on dysfunctional and unfair economic system.⁸⁴

Individuation of economic life is closely connected to political apathy and withdrawal. Such sentiments are reported in several studies that show how lay Russians

⁸⁰ Romanovich, “Demokraticheskie tsennosti,” p. 44; VTSlOM, May 1995, cited in Clark, Goss, and Kosova, 2003, *Changing Attitudes Toward Economic Reform*, p. 32; also see a detailed summary of such views in chapter 1.

⁸¹ Romanovich, “Demokraticheskie tsennosti,” p. 44.

⁸² Romanovich, “Demokraticheskie tsennosti,” p. 44; Diligenskii, *Rossiskii gorozhanin* p. 92.

⁸³ Diligenskii, *Rossiskii gorozhanin*, p. 56; Rose, Richard, William Mishler, and Christian Haerpfer., 1998, *Democracy and Its Alternatives*. John Hopkins University Press, p. 172.

⁸⁴ “From Soviet Expectations to Post-Soviet Realities: Poverty During the Transition,” Dudwick, Nora, Elizabeth Gomart, Alexandre Marc, and Kathleen Kuehnast, ed. 2003. *When Things Fall Apart: Qualitative Studies of Poverty in the Former Soviet Union*. The World Bank, Washington D.C., pp. 21-2.

and Ukrainians find political institutions irrelevant to helping them solve the real problems in their lives.⁸⁵ In the words of one respondent, the Russian government “is nothing but a giant mafia up there. We must simply try to live on our own down here and get by without politics.”⁸⁶ They adopt a stance of political withdrawal and alienation, because politics is now seen as a distant and remote activity that has little connection to their everyday bread and butter concerns. Carnaghan points out: “Many of my respondents...suffered from passivity in the face of power. As a group, they were highly skeptical about the possibilities of positive change [in their lives].”⁸⁷ Political apathy is expressed not only in general skepticism towards political institutions but also towards political participation. Many people discard the possibility and effectiveness of organizing, mobilizing, protesting, or pressuring the government in one way or another:

I am disappointed, disappointed, not satisfied with anything. I know that abroad, of course, many people join these types of [civic] organizations. But I think they have different problems. When, in general, *there is only one problem here now, and that's to survive*, to survive so that you don't feel humiliated. When you go to some store and see expensive products and food, and you can't afford it yourself. I don't know. I never experienced that until now...⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Diligenskii, *Rossiskii gorozhanin* p. 92; Rose, Richard and Ellen Carnaghan, 1995, “Generational Effects on Attitudes to Communist Regimes: A comparative Analysis”, pp. 28-56.

⁸⁶ Ries, “Honest Bandits,” p. 308.

⁸⁷ Carnaghan, *Out of order*, p. 8; also see Siegelbaum and Walkowitz, *Workers of the Donbass Speak*, p. 206 and Alexander, *Political Culture*, p. 131.

⁸⁸ Howard, *The Weakness of Civil Society*, p. 140, emphasis added. Also see interviews with former participants in workers' movements in Mandel, David, 1994, *Rabotyagi: Perestroika and After Viewed From Below. Interviews with Workers in the Former Soviet Union*. Monthly Review Press, New York.

The direction and dynamics of the transition seem inevitable and insurmountable for many lay Russians and Ukrainians. Their political withdrawal is connected to fatalism: “protesting against the inevitable simply makes no sense...to the extent that change is expected by electing a new government, it is only tactical emendation of the transitional program. The continuation of the real misery is expected regardless of who wins.”⁸⁹

Of course, such lay views manifest a debilitating stance from a democratic perspective and they do not represent a democratic program. Yet, we need to understand that they are not free choices but impositions; they are dictated by undemocratic circumstances that compel disenfranchised groups to adapt and cope by adopting undemocratic and defeatist attitudes. Survival in unresponsive and disempowering social systems entails a process of blocking or muting the oppressiveness of the situation in order to regain some sense of balance in one’s life. Accepting what seems to be unfair, rather than fighting it, is one of the coping mechanisms that allow members in disempowering and unequal environments to maintain sanity.⁹⁰

But most importantly, political alienation and cynicism are plausible interpretations of power relations in Russia and Ukraine. They are interpretations of social conditions in which lay actors have no citizenship rights, real power, or meaningful voice. I already highlighted in the first part of the chapter that the structure of the new economy in Russia

⁸⁹ Hopf, Ted, 2002. “Making the Future Inevitable: Legitimizing, Naturalizing and Stabilizing the Transition in Estonia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan,” *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 8, No. 3, p. 429.

⁹⁰ For example, see Genovese, Eugene D., 1976. *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World The Slaves Made*. Vintage Books; Gaventa, John. 1980. *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley*. Clarendon Press, Oxford, and McAdam, Doug. *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*. University of Chicago Press, 1982.

and Ukraine is such that it escapes the control and influence of ordinary people. While the economic realm with its institutions, resources, and forces constitutes such an important part of their life, they have no control over it but are rather controlled by it. Their economic fates are influenced, managed, and defined by the will of others. They experience real economic dispossession - unemployment, inadequate wages and pensions, and cutbacks and cancellation of social programs and services – none of which they can stop. Those social institutions over which lay actors do have control via elections, such as parliament and the office of presidency, fail to address the economic concerns of non-elites because the officials themselves represent the new economic elite and also because the logic of the market economy precludes public control. Lay Russians and Ukrainians are correct to respond with apathy and political alienation to a degree that these attitudes present an accurate description of their social environment, which is closed to popular influence, unresponsive, and unequal.

And yet, I suggest, this mode of thinking, although understandable, is not beneficial to them or empowering in the long run. Rather, it is debilitating because it requires settling for less, settling for an inferior, vulnerable, and powerless position in the society. It requires accepting the injustices, inequality, and wretchedness of the present situation. Ironically, in this disempowering environment the most vulnerable groups now begin to attribute their economic misfortunes to their personal failure rather than to the failure of the social system to provide opportunities for everyone to prosper.⁹¹ Democratic

⁹¹ “From Soviet Expectations to Post-Soviet Realities: Poverty During the Transition,” Dudwick, Nora, Elizabeth Gomart, Alexandre Marc, and Kathleen Kuehnast, ed. 2003. *When Things Fall Apart: Qualitative Studies of Poverty in the Former Soviet Union*. The World Bank, Washington D.C., pp.21-2.

theorists, by way of participating in this conversation, cannot settle for fatalism and withdrawal as a feature of democratic politics. Neither can democratic theory accept personal failure as an explanation of wide-spread economic dislocation. There are lay discourses that rightfully implicate undemocratic relations of power in such economic outcomes and it is this kind of lay discourse that scholars of democracy should promote and develop, not the attitudes of self-blame and self-deprecation. Moreover, democratic theory should not be an advocacy of retreat, but advocacy of a need to overcome fatalism. Lay actors must continue demanding a more democratic distribution of resources, build up political militancy, stick to their expectations, and mount pressure on political leaders and economic elites in Russia and Ukraine.

There is also a lesson here for democratic theory about how power and inequality can be maintained. In addition to force and coercion that prevent a meaningful opposition to the status quo from rising, pushing masses into the survival mode and taking away means for change creates a sense that establishment is simply insurmountable, it is impervious to change and thus should be accepted. Quiescence does not prove consent to the direction of the post-communist transition and inequality as some observers suggest⁹², but rather show how subtle the operation of power can be. In social environments characterized by inequality between groups based on class, gender, race, or ethnicity, the political thinking of the disenfranchised groups is illuminating and has important democratic insights, but it may also reflect the interests and preferences of dominant groups, as well as the realities of long-term political exclusion and taming. It is

⁹² Hopf, 2002, "Making the Future Inevitable," pp. 429-30.

in this sense that beliefs of disenfranchised groups can both challenge and sustain oppressive social structures.⁹³ It is important to separate the empowering discourses of lay actors from the self-defeating and undemocratic ones.

For example, from the preceding discussion we can learn how authoritarian relationships can be maintained and reproduced through beliefs of both subjects and masters, specifically, their adherence to and buying into the economic paternalism and exclusive citizenship that define market relations. At the same time, in these conditions of subordination and deep inequality lay actors still manage to carve out a space for challenging the institutions of inequality, projecting their rights and affirming their human dignity and value, as I have shown in the first part of the chapter.⁹⁴ This insight can help those interested in democracy and democratization to appreciate education, transparency, and dissemination of information about politics as important tools in social transformation. Democratization does not only entail transformation of society, but a

⁹³ For theoretical treatment of these questions, see Giddens, Anthony, 1976. *New Rules for Sociological Method: A Critique of Interpretative Sociologies*, New York: Basic Books, p. 121, Isaac, Jeffrey C. 1987. *Power and Marxist Theory: A Realist View*. Cornell University Press, pp. 7, 30-40, 59, Bhaskar, Roy. 1979. *The Possibility of Naturalism: A Philosophical Critique of the Contemporary Human Sciences*. Humanities Press, p. 44, and Topper, Keith. 2005. *The Disorder of Political Inquiry*. Harvard University Press, p. 129. Also, see: Gramsci, Antonio, 1971. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. by Quinton Hare and G. Nowell-Smith, Lawrence and Wishart, London, pp. 206-78; De Beauvoir, Simone. 1989. *The Second Sex*. Transl. and ed. by H.M. Parshley, New York: Vintage Books; Fiere, Paulo, 1973. *Education for Critical Consciousness*. Seabury Press, New York, pp. 21-31; Bourdieu, Pierre, 1990. "Fieldwork in Philosophy," in P. Bourdieu, *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. For empirical exploration of how beliefs become a product of and also enable hierarchical social structures, see Genovese, Eugene D., 1976. *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World The Slaves Made*. Vintage Books, and Gaventa, John. 1980. *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley*. Clarendon Press, Oxford; Lukes, Steven. 1974. *Power: a Radical View*. Macmillan Press, and Estrich, Susan, 2001. "Real Rape", *Understanding inequality: the intersection of race/ethnicity, class, and gender*. ed. by Barbara A. Arrighi, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

⁹⁴ For this methodological insight I relied on Genovese, Eugene D., 1976. *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World The Slaves Made*. Vintage Books.

transformation of people's beliefs as well. Democratic theory should have lay actors as their primary audience and interlocutor and it should be a body of knowledge and ideas that can serve to empower disenfranchised groups.

2) Quiescence and Defeatism of Organized Labor as a Response to Political Repression

We can find quiescence and curbed radicalism even among those segments of population that are relatively more mobilized and organized, such as workers who carried out labor strikes and movements from the late 1980s into the 1990s in Russia and Ukraine. Studies of labor movements in Russia and Ukraine in late 20th century point out militant outbursts that coexist with workers' authoritarian attitudes and obedient acceptance of oppressive management and owners, and their radicalism tends to be short-lived.⁹⁵ Despite instances of labor mobilization in Ukraine and Russia during the perestroika era and in the early years of post-communist transformation, labor is

⁹⁵ The most poignant study of apathy and silence in the face of injustice and suffering is by Mandel, David. 2004. *Labour After Communism: Auto Workers and Their Unions in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus*. Black Rose Books. Also see Crowley, Stephen, 1997. *Hot Coal, Cold Steel: Russian and Ukrainian Workers from the End of the Soviet Union to the Post-Communist Transformations*. The University of Michigan Press; Simon, Rick. 2000. *Labour and Political Transformation in Russia and Ukraine*. Ashgate; Siegelbaum Lewis H. "We'll Remain in This Cesspool for a Long Time": The Miners of Donetsk Speak out", *The Oral History Review*, Vol. 20, No. ½, Apr. 1, 1992, pp. 67-86. For studies that point to similar tendencies in labor movements of the late 19th and early 20th century, see Zelnik, Reginald E., 1994, "On the Eve: Life Histories and Identities of Some Revolutionary Workers, 1870-1905." In Siegelbaum, L. H. and R.G. Suny, ed. *Making Workers Soviet: Power, Class, and Identity*, Cornell University Press; Kuromiya, Hiroaki, 1994, "Donbas Miners in War, Revolution, and Civil War." Siegelbaum, L. H. and R.G. Suny, ed. *Making Workers Soviet: Power, Class, and Identity*, Cornell University Press, pp. 138-158; Graziosi, Andrea. "At the Roots of Soviet Industrial Relations and Practices. Piatakov's Donbass in 1921." *Cahiers du Monde russe*, vol. 36, No. ½, Cultures économiques et politiques économiques dans l'Empire tsariste et en URSS, 1861-1950 (Jan. – Jun, 1995), pp. 95-138; Friedgut, Theodore H. *Iuzovka and Revolution. Vol 2: Politics and Revolution in Russia's Donbass, 1869-1924*.

relatively marginalized in these societies.⁹⁶ But it is important to understand that this marginalization is a product of the political environment in those societies. The disenfranchised position of labor helps in part to explain their often volatile democratic aspirations, retraction of political militancy, and relative quiescence.

As many scholars of labor movements in these societies stress, historically labor has been put in a subservient role to both the elite political and economic class, and there has been continuous repression, defeat, and rollback of labor movements. This is true about the fate of the mining workers mobilization in early 20th century in Russia and Ukraine, when attempts to democratize work conditions were always met with hostility, arrests, and repression by the local authorities who were in co-hoots with industrial owners.⁹⁷ Repression is part of the labor story in the Soviet era, exemplified by the Novochoerkassk massacre in 1962, when workers who launched a strike were met with tanks, arrests, and imprisonment by the Soviet regime.⁹⁸ And the fate of continual defeat, repression, and rollback continues to haunt workers' movements in the late 1980s and the 1990s. It is in these conditions that post-communist labor attempted to assert itself, but their eventual withdrawal and quiescence was a reaction to political repression and defeat.

⁹⁶ Kubicek, Paul. 2002. "Civil Society, Trade Unions and Post-Soviet Democratisation: Evidence from Russia and Ukraine," *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 54, No. 4, Jun. p. 604, 610.

⁹⁷ Zelnik, Reginald E., 1994, "On the Eve: Life Histories and Identities of Some Revolutionary Workers, 1870-1905." In Siegelbaum, L. H. and R.G. Suny, ed. *Making Workers Soviet: Power, Class, and Identity*. Cornell University Press and Kuromiya, Hiroaki, 1994, "Donbas Miners in War, Revolution, and Civil War." Siegelbaum, L. H. and R.G. Suny, ed. *Making Workers Soviet: Power, Class, and Identity*. Cornell University Press, pp. 138-158.

⁹⁸ Kubicek, Paul. 2002. "Civil Society, Trade Unions and Post-Soviet Democratisation: Evidence from Russia and Ukraine," *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 54, No. 4, Jun. p. 607.

Gorbachev's 1987 law on state enterprises planted the seeds for workplace democracy in Soviet enterprises and briefly created prospects for workers' empowerment.⁹⁹ However, subsequent political and economic transformation in the wake of the dissolution of the USSR led to stripping worker's councils of many of their rights. Moreover, the new labor code in 1998 and 2001 weakened the rights of unions in general.¹⁰⁰ For instance, El'tsin considered banning the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia (FNPR) which broke away from the communist party but also emerged as a critic of El'tsin's government. FNPR lobbied for wage increases and provisions for 'insider privatisation' through buy-outs by managers and workers. But fear of outright political repression tempered FNPR and over the years it avoided an explicitly political role; the organization "has eschewed radicalism".¹⁰¹

Post-communist economies are defined by ballooning of the service industry, such as banking, marketing, retail, petty trade, and sweatshops where often fewer than fifty people are employed. Pursuing labor mobilization or unionization in such enterprises is a difficult task as union laws are unfriendly and the few provisions that do exist are poorly protected, work stability is low, and employers are very hostile.¹⁰² Workers who seek

⁹⁹ See Christensen, Paul T. 1999. *Russia's Workers in Transition: Labor, Management, and the State under Gorbachev and Yeltsin*. Northern Illinois University Press, 1999, pp. 42-88, 94 and Ashwin, "Redefining the Collective: Russian Mineworkers in Transition," p. 254.

¹⁰⁰ Kubicek, Paul. 2002. "Civil Society, Trade Unions and Post-Soviet Democratisation: Evidence from Russia and Ukraine," *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 54, No. 4, Jun. p. 610.

¹⁰¹ Kubicek, Paul. 2002. "Civil Society, Trade Unions and Post-Soviet Democratisation: Evidence from Russia and Ukraine," *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 54, No. 4, Jun. p. 609.

¹⁰² Kubicek, Paul. 2002. "Civil Society, Trade Unions and Post-Soviet Democratisation: Evidence from Russia and Ukraine," *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 54, No. 4, Jun. p. 612.

organizing independently are under attack both from employers and authorities; they can be fired (which is illegal), or in extreme cases incarcerated at mental institutions to deter others from doing the same.¹⁰³ Scholars of labor in Russia and Ukraine regrettably report that workers seem to internalize passive and slave-like mentality and accept the status quo.¹⁰⁴ In contrast, I suggest it is important to understand such beliefs in the larger context of political repression. Quiescence is not inherent to members of the disenfranchised groups and it is incorrect to ascribe passivity to their individual preferences and some natural lack of political motivation. There is a lesson for democratic theory that the source of political apathy and withdrawal lay in the undemocratic social structures within which lay people try to act, not in lay people's inherent dispositions.

3) Critiquing Ambiguities in Lay Conceptions of Power

Lay discourses about power in Russia and Ukraine are not always consistent, and I established at least three pronounced conceptions of power that simultaneously permeate lay political thinking. In the first conception, lay actors collapse together government officials, financial elites, owners of major social resources, enterprise

¹⁰³ See "Forced Psychiatric Assessment of a Ukraine Union Activist" from Nov. 4, 2010 available at: http://www.amnesty.org.uk/news_details.asp?NewsID=19069 and Kubicek, Paul. 2002. "Civil Society, Trade Unions and Post-Soviet Democratisation: Evidence from Russia and Ukraine," *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 54, No. 4, Jun. p. 617.

¹⁰⁴ Mandel, David. 2004. *Labour After Communism: Auto Workers and Their Unions in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus*. Black Rose Books. Also see Crowley, Stephen, 1997. *Hot Coal, Cold Steel: Russian and Ukrainian Workers from the End of the Soviet Union to the Post-Communist Transformations*. The University of Michigan Press; Simon, Rick. 2000. *Labour and Political Transformation in Russia and Ukraine*. Ashgate; Siegelbaum Lewis H. "We'll Remain in This Cesspool for a Long Time": The Miners of Donetsk Speak out", *The Oral History Review*, Vol. 20, No. ½, Apr. 1, 1992, pp. 67-86.

directors, and bankers as representing a power block.¹⁰⁵ In the second conception, they differentiate between economic and political elites, claiming that politicians are really pawns in the hands of the new owning class and that both elite conglomerates have different functions and powers in these newly transformed societies.¹⁰⁶ And in the last conception, lay actors perceive power to reside exclusively at the government level and they consider politicians and policymakers the true masters of society.¹⁰⁷ In this last discourse, the state is seen as “an instrument for managing and ruling the people, often against the people” and government is seen as social group that manages social resources to the detriment of ordinary people.¹⁰⁸

Given that post-communist social transformations clearly produced two classes of elites and power holders – government and the ownership class - it is this last view of power that is problematic. It is incorrect to claim that the locus of power over people’s lives in post-communist Russia and Ukraine resides only at the level of government. Such lay interpretations mystify the emergence of the whole class of people who now legally (but without transparency or accountability) possess tremendous power in managing economic resources, social wealth, and the labor force. In the first part of the

¹⁰⁵ Diligenskii, *Rossiskii gorozhanin*, p. 79, 93; Carnaghan, *Out of Order*, p. 172; Humphrey, Caroline, 1999, “Traders, ‘Disorder’, and Citizenship Regimes in Provincial Russia.”; and Ries, “Honest Bandits,” p. 295.

¹⁰⁶ Carnaghan, *Out of Order*, p. 171.

¹⁰⁷ Zdravomuslov, A.G. “Power and Society”, in Diligenskii, G.G., ed. 2000. *Rossia v ysloviakh transformatsii*. Moskva: Fond Razvitiia Politicheskogo Centrism, pp. 62-73, and Ries, “Honest Bandits,” p. 293.

¹⁰⁸ Ries, “Honest Bandits,” p. 308; Carnaghan, *Out of Order*, pp. 168-70; also see Diligenskii, *Rossiskii gorozhanin*, p. 74.

chapter I presented a more convincing approach to power relations that lay Russians and Ukrainians offer, namely focus on monopolization of economic power. And while in both Russia and Ukraine it is quite common for political elites to also be members of the ownership class and own plants, factories, supermarket chains, and etc., not all capital owners are politicians. It is easy to mix up and focus on state and political tyranny with respect to ordinary people's lives. However, lay critiques that clearly demarcate the economic realm from politics and focus on usurpation of power and rights in the economic realm are more powerful and more conducive to democratization in those societies.

In the example of 1998 miners' strikes in Russia's Kuzbass region, many of the interviewed miners had a lot of familiarity with the financial machinations in the administration of the mines, among the local officials, and middle man firms. These local elites and agencies were referred to as thieves stealing people's money through wage arrears, hiding profits, and sharply unequal distribution of the produced wealth. However, dissatisfaction expressed by the miners' movement was directed not against the enterprise and local centers of power, but against the federal state, especially the president.¹⁰⁹

Similarly, a focus-group-based study of (de)legitimization discourses in transitional states reports that Ukraine's respondents delegitimized the transition by

¹⁰⁹ Diligenskii, *Rossiskii gorozhanin*, p. 92. Also, see very similar observations made in Simon's study of labor movement in Eastern Ukraine in the late 1990s: Simon, Rick. 2000. *Labour and Political Transformation in Russia and Ukraine*. Ashgate.

blaming the state for country-wide and personal socio-economic failures.¹¹⁰ In summarizing lay Russian discourses of disillusionment about the course of the transition, Howard reports that politicians are seen as the target for blame as they are seen to have “stolen” much of Russia’s property and wealth, and even its dignity.”¹¹¹ But it is precisely such lay conceptions of power that lose their critical democratic edge, as they overlook the importance of holding the economic elites accountable to the rest of the society as well. They miss the point that as a result of socio-economic transformation and transition to market economy, power now *also* resides at a class level. Therefore, it is important to mount grievances not only against their government, but also against major financial and economic elites in their societies. It is important to question their privilege and their vision in the economic decision making over wages, benefits packages, prices, production policies, working hours, taxes, and etc.

Scholars of labor movements point out that while workers struggle to establish channels for their empowerment and increase their collective voice, their ideological orientations may have been inconsistent and at times self-defeating. For instance, along with the rhetoric of workplace democracy and worker empowerment, they may have stayed away from explicitly socialist rhetoric. The language of class has been and is looked at with suspicion as something from the failed past. Crowley points out: “the ironic tragedy for workers in post-communist societies is that just when class

¹¹⁰ Hopf, 2002, “Making the Future Inevitable,” p. 425.

¹¹¹ Howard, *The Weakness of Civil Society*, p. 140.

antagonisms have, in all likelihood, grown more pronounced than any they have experienced, the explicit use of class-based ideologies has become taboo.”¹¹²

However, as the discussion in the first part of the chapter shows, bringing class and socialist vocabulary into democratic thinking helps to reveal very disturbing and undemocratic tendencies in those societies. It is precisely the “socialist” focus on the economic realm and analysis of power, rights, freedom, and citizenship in the economic realm that helps to identify sources of economic dislocation, misery, and oppression. Lay discourses that I presented in the first part of the chapter show why class and socialist vocabulary must be reaffirmed, not expelled from democratic theory. Lay views of democracy that are grounded in economic demands and critiques show that a meaningful democratic project must include democratization of economic life. Such democratization would encompass granting non-elites economic rights, guaranteeing access to social programs and services, a guaranteed living wage, adequate compensation and benefits, and etc. Of course, such changes and policies would upset the unequal balance of power between the classes in the economy and would curtail uncontrolled monopolization of wealth in the hands of a few, but that is precisely the point.

4) Critiquing Self-Deprecation and Authoritarian Attitudes

While many studies of public opinion in Russia and Ukraine point out that lay people tend to be critical of the façade character of the new democracy that authorities

¹¹² Crowley, Stephen, 1997. *Hot Coal, Cold Steel: Russian and Ukrainian Workers from the End of the Soviet Union to the Post-Communist Transformations*. The University of Michigan Press.

offer to them (see my discussion of these issues earlier), there are also reports that show how some people tend to reject democratic principles altogether. Rather than offering a more powerful and radical democratic alternative, these lay actors question whether democratic values are at all appropriate in Russia and Ukraine, particularly the ideas that people should rule, have a voice, be empowered, have freedom of speech and press, and criticize government.¹¹³ In these cases, respondents tend to speak contemptuously about the political and intellectual aptitude of the common folk and call for a “strong hand” on the part of government.¹¹⁴ In such perspectives, the society is worse off when too many people are allowed to be “unruly” and speak up against authorities. Speaking up is seen as a destabilizing force that contributes to overall social disorder and disharmony.¹¹⁵

Such ideas are not very prevalent¹¹⁶, but it is worthwhile to consider how they are self-defeating and do a disservice to the very people who voice them and to the majority of people who have very little real power in these societies to begin with. This lay discourse of authoritarianism is based on an underlying assumption that all it takes to secure justice and equity for the non-elites is a strong devoted leader who knows best what is good for everyone. The leader should have no impediments in the form of political dissent when implementing his program of social improvement. Democratic

¹¹³ Alexander, *Political Culture*, pp. 127-33; Romanovich, “Demokraticheskie tsennosti,” p. 43. Survey was conducted by the Russian Independent Institute for Social and National Problems; Diligenskii, *Rossiskii gorozhanin*, p. 85.

¹¹⁴ Repnikov, A.V. “Power and Society in Russia – Tragedy of Misunderstanding”, in Diligenskii, G.G., ed. 2000. *Rossia v ysloviakh transformatsii*. Moskva: Fond Razvitiia Politicheskogo Centrismma, pp. 22-33.

¹¹⁵ Carnaghan, *Out of Order*, p. 171, Alexander, *Political Culture*, pp. 127-33.

¹¹⁶ See a more detailed survey of such perspectives in chapter 1.

theorists should criticize such views because authoritarianism does not guarantee (it does offer it) alleviation of suffering and economic dispossession that concerns lay actors.

Such ideas are problematic and unconvincing in several ways. Given the history of authoritarianism in both Russia and Ukraine, it is counter-intuitive to assert that leaders have the people's best interest in mind. Moreover, in present conditions politicians themselves often have direct stakes in and ties to big industrial enterprises and financial firms. It was established in the first part of this chapter that Russia and Ukraine are already undemocratic, i.e. authoritarian societies, where both economic and political power, as well as wealth, are highly concentrated. There are some quite powerful lay critiques of power relations in these societies, as we saw earlier. Those critiques of elites are much more convincing as they expose dangers and ills of concentrating power to make decisions and control resources in the society in the hands of a few rather than spreading it around democratically. Putting so much faith in the political leaders to do what is right and limiting any accountability by silencing the society only invites tyranny and distortion, and it does not speak to pervasive realities of usurpation of power in Russia and Ukraine.