

Mayia Shulga

Book project: *Democracy and “Economic Welfare”: Engaging Democratic Theory with Lay Ukrainian and Russian Insights*

(Work in progress, please, do not cite without permission)

Chapter 2: The Elite Competitive Conception of Democracy, Its Social Ontological Assumptions, and Their Consequences for Studying Democracy

Introduction

Learning from and critically engaging with lay¹, and in this case Russian and Ukrainian, democratic thinking is an important component of my dissertation and what I maintain should be a form of democratic scholarship. In view of this goal, democratic theory must, at the very least, be geared toward seeking and capable of grasping lay democratic ideas well. In this chapter I shall ponder this issue and demonstrate that insofar as democratic scholars adopt a Schumpeterian view of democracy and implicit in it ontological assumptions, they end up disinterested in exploring lay conceptions of democracy, reluctant to learn from lay ideas, and incapable of adequately understanding lay democratic thinking.

Let me briefly remind that in the previous chapter, as a starting point of discussion, I highlighted those aspects of lay Russian and Ukrainian democratic views that immediately stand out in empirical literature. I maintained that these lay ideas about democracy can be initially characterized as ambivalence, where evaluations of democracy are sometimes positive and

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 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.

sometimes negative, and where views of democracy are intimately connected to matters of what is often grouped in the literature under the rubric “economic welfare”. Through summoning surveys, open-ended interviews, ethnographic, historical, and social movement studies of post-communist decades, I pointed out how in some instances democracy is defined by lay actors as “economic welfare” in the form of various socio-economic safety nets, protections, and guarantees. In other instances, democracy is also defined as worker’s collective self-management regarding such “economic welfare” matters as working hours, shifts, production, pension funds, wages, and benefits. This understanding of democracy is quite unusual from the standpoint of leading scholarly conceptions of democracy.

Also, I accentuated how lay positive views of democracy as well as skepticism about democracy in turn entangle certain conceptions of human rights, freedom, equality, lawfulness, state, power, and individual’s political efficacy – all of which are not unfamiliar themes in democratic theory. However, I insisted that lay Ukrainian and Russian democratic ideas are still uncommon because matters of “economic welfare” are often brought to the fore in thinking about freedom, rights, equality, lawfulness, state, power, and efficacy. In the previous chapter I indicated that unusual lay Russian and Ukrainian understanding of democracy as well as “economic” dimensions of lay democratic views are accommodated in scholarly conceptual frameworks with difficulty. However, my discussion was mainly descriptive and it is not until this chapter that I begin to examine thoroughly these scholarly conceptual frameworks and demonstrate their weaknesses and inadequacies.

Furthermore, based on the exposition in chapter 1, we must also be cognizant that lay Russian and Ukrainian democratic discourses are not merely a web of unusually understood concepts and categories, such as democracy, freedom, rights, politics, and etc. For instance, we

get a sense how Russian and Ukrainian lay democratic views are embedded in broader reflections about the workings of their society. Also, even upon this surface glance into lay democratic thinking it is plausible to assert that it is deeply entangled with everyday experiences of living and acting within Russian and Ukrainian societies. Finally, lay democratic ideas encompass not only descriptions, but also explanations of and expectations from their social environment. While I will be exploring the relationship between lay ideas and social context in greater depth in chapters 3 and 4, we can already specify that lay Russian and Ukrainian democratic thinking has conceptual, explanatory, evaluative, and practical dimensions and these dimensions are difficult to separate into autonomous strains of thought. This is worthwhile to keep in mind as we examine whether scholarly conceptual frameworks provide avenues for inquiring into and understanding Russian and Ukrainian lay democratic ideas well.

Chapter 2 is divided into two parts in the course of which I develop my argument that the Schumpeterian framework discourages interest in lay conceptions of democracy as well as it is inadequate for understanding ‘unusual’ lay Russian and Ukrainian democratic beliefs. Thus, (I) I begin by outlining a Schumpeterian view of democracy and underpinning its social ontological assumptions. I also clarify ways in which Schumpeterian approach to democracy and social ontology enter post-communist survey and interview-based literature. In view of that I highlight strong parallels between the elite competitive assumptions and conceptions on one hand, and Dahl’s democratic theory on the other. Survey and interview scholars on post-communist democratic beliefs often draw on Dahl, rather than Schumpeter. Then, (II) on the example of survey and interview-based literature on Russian and Ukrainian democratic beliefs I turn to delineating problematic implications of grounding research in the Schumpeterian framework.

I. The elite competitive model of democracy and its underlying social ontology

Since the elite competitive model and its ontology is a target of my criticisms, in this section (A) I first specify in what sense I use the terms ‘elite competitive’, ‘model’ and ‘social ontology’, as well as derivatives of the latter terms such as ‘points of reference’, ‘theory’, ‘assumptions’, ‘social vision’, ‘conceptual frameworks’, ‘conceptual vocabulary’, and ‘conceptions’. As I do that, I also relate the character of my investigation to ‘facts vs. values’ dichotomy which is often a starting point in assessing merits of democratic scholarship. (B) Then I focus on laying out central aspects of Schumpeter’s social ontology and highlighting how it underpins the elite competitive model of democracy. Finally, (C) I show how the ontological assumptions and vocabulary of the elite model is reflected in post-communist survey and interview-based studies.

(A) Approaching the elite competitive model: beyond facts vs. values dichotomy

A familiar to many today 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.² A few historians of political ideas point out that democratic thought encompassed different features in earlier centuries and such aspects of politics representation, rule of law, and constitutionalism at some point were often associated

² For example, 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. 547-56; 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

with undemocratic impulses.³ Related, it was also more common for intellectuals to fall into two broad schools, either those who sought to advance, theorize, and defend popular rule, or those 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 embracement of democracy is rather associated with the beginning and the latter half of the twentieth century.⁴ In contrast to that, 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.⁵ 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 democratization of society that he witnessed in his time.⁶ And yet, as David Held notes and

³ 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

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

⁵ 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

⁶ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, pp. 269, 270, 282-5

concurr, Schumpeter is considered by many an important figure and contributor to *democratic* scholarship.⁷ As some have argued, lack of careful attention to socio-contextual factors and authorial intentions in our assessment of intellectual legacies and ‘democratic’ contributions may have led to us harboring scholars with anti-democratic aspirations in the realm of democratic scholarship.⁸ But even the social theory of someone like Frederick Hayek, who made even fewer attempts to hide his aversion to popular rule, is still characterized by Held as supplying us with a model of ‘democracy’. Hayek suggested that if majorities must participate in governance, it should be restricted to people over age 45 voting only once in their life to elect legislators into an upper legislative assembly for the period of 15 years, and that universal suffrage should be limited to electing officials into the lower legislative assembly constricted by the upper assembly.⁹

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.¹⁰ 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.¹¹ Others may be more familiar with Schumpeter being

⁷ Held, David, 1987. *Models of Democracy*, p. 164

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

⁹ Held, David, 1987. *Models of Democracy*, pp. 243-55. Also, see Hayek, Frederick, 1960, *Constitution of Liberty*, Chicago University Press, p. 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. 11-7.

¹⁰ Held, David, 1987. *Models of Democracy*, p. 143, 159, 164, 171

¹¹ 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*, Vol. 32, No. 2. (May),

situated in a ‘liberal democratic tradition’ insofar as the tradition refers to attempts to “defend *and* limit the political rights of citizens” or, similarly, to attempts to “give a well-defined *but* minimal role to the citizen”.¹² In this chapter, I use the term ‘elite competitive model of democracy’ to refer to Schumpeter’s influence on democratic scholarship. In addition, in my use 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 and society that may be embedded in other ‘models’ of democracy as well.

In chapters III and IV I shall return to different views of ontology in the philosophy of social science, particularly in critical realism. For purposes of this chapter, I use the term in the following sense: “For most English-speaking philosophers, ontology came to refer increasingly to the question of what entities are presupposed by our scientific theories. In affirming a theory, one also takes on a commitment to the existence of certain entities.”¹³ So, by social ontological assumptions I refer to theories, hunches, and convictions that democratic scholars hold about features of society, main social actors, main social tendencies and problems, the scope of

pp. 239-267; 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, p. 142-3, 145, 172; Cammack, Paul, 1997, *Capitalism and Democracy in the Third World: The Doctrine for the Political Development*, Leicester University Press, p. 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

¹² 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

¹³ White, Stephen K., 2000, *Sustaining Affirmation: The Strengths of Weak Ontology in Political Theory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 3

politics, human capacities, and social structures. Note that it is hard to have a clear distinction between social ontology and an author's social vision and motivations. For instance, assumptions and beliefs about what belongs to the scope of politics and 'public' realm can be part of both one's 'social ontology' and '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 social ontology that a particular democratic theory presupposes. In this section I specifically highlight those social ontological assumptions inherent in Schumpeter's elite competitive model of democracy that, as I show in the next section of the chapter, are problematic because, among other things, they do not generate interest in lay democratic thinking, they do not allow capturing lay democratic beliefs adequately, 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 the one hand and outlining a conception of democracy on the other. Rather, I depart from a view that it is hardly possible to neatly separate social ontology on one side and view of democracy on the other as they interknit and require 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 can not possibly mean 'rule of the people' but only elite politics rests on ontological presupposition that human political capacities are limited and 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 common sense. Moreover, in Schumpeter’s elite model of democracy, emphasis on social hierarchies as a feature of society to reckon with and to maintain provides impetus for arguing that democracy can only be about elite politics and for conceiving democracy compatible with social hierarchies.

My terminology in many ways is inspired 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.¹⁴

However, I also wish to distance my understanding of ‘model of democracy’ from Held’s for a few reasons. First, 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.¹⁵ With this lay out, 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”

¹⁴ Held, David, 2006. *Models of Democracy*, p. 6-7

¹⁵ Held, David, 2006. *Models of Democracy*, p. 3

and “liberal or representative democracy”.¹⁶ 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 than are suggested by these too general notions alone.”¹⁷ Thus, the language of ‘models’ in the sense that Held uses is not be very helpful for pointing out how apparently different ‘models’ may be grounded in the same ontology and share core theoretical aspects. In contrast to Held, I use the term ‘elite competitive model’ as an organizing term for certain social ontological assumptions about the scope of politics, lay actors’ political capacities, and a particular view of democracy that may be shared by other ‘models’ as well.

Second way in which I do not follow in Held’s footsteps is because he 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.”¹⁸ I do not take the dichotomy of ‘facts vs. values’ for granted, and I do not share a view that the subject matter of democratic scholarship can be easily reduced just to facts and values. I contend it is naïve to believe that factual and evaluative statements in democratic theory can be easily separated. The most obvious example, which is also central to my investigation, is the

¹⁶ Held, David, 2006. *Models of Democracy*, p. 4

¹⁷ Held, David, 2006. *Models of Democracy*, p. 5

¹⁸ Held, David, 1987. *Models of Democracy*, p. 7

very definition of democracy. For example, in commenting on what is often perceived as ‘non-normative’, ‘non-ideal’ theory of democracy by 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 *judged* ‘democratic’...”¹⁹ 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. 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 character of its impact on American democratic 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 how actual democracies work”²⁰. My goal is to highlight that Schumpeter’s elite conception of democracy is grounded in a conservative vision and has very specific limitations on how research on lay democratic beliefs and democracy is carried out.²¹ Paradoxically, consequences of following Schumpeter ‘democratic’ theory espouse a type of aristocratic-conservative politics and social vision from which very many democratic scholars would seek to and do disassociate themselves. However, I maintain that transcending these aristocratic-

¹⁹ Pateman, Carole. 1970. *Participation and Democratic Theory*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 15-6, emphasis added.

²⁰ Held, David, 1987. *Models of Democracy*, p. 164, also see pp. 7-9

²¹ 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. On Schumpeter’s conservatism, see Medearis, John, 2009, *Major Conservative and Libertarian Thinkers: Joseph Schumpeter*, Continuum.

conservative effects cannot be achieved by ‘checking’ one’s values before doing research, but only by giving up on using the assumptions and conceptions of the elite competitive model of democracy altogether.

Furthermore, in contrast to Held’s understanding of democratic theory, I contend that the dichotomy of ‘is vs. ought’ makes us myopic with respect to issues of conceptualization, research design, and interpretation that cut across and go beyond factual and normative statements. I am interested in analyzing how theoretical vocabularies that democratic scholars bring to their research have consequences for how and what research questions are posed, how and what ‘facts’ and ‘observations’ are collected, as well as how and what ‘empirical findings’ are conceptualized and interpreted.²² In particular, I demonstrate how Schumpeterian conceptual framework and implied in it ontological assumptions structure the process of knowledge production. I argue this framework has a series of problematic consequences for what questions are asked about democracy, society, and Ukrainian and Russian lay beliefs and what not, for sorts of things that are observed about democracy, society, and lay beliefs and what not, and for how research findings are couched.²³ Of course, any other conceptual framework and

²² On problems of conceptualization and interpretation in social science and critiques of the notion of self-evident facts, data, and observations, see Topper, Keith, 2005, *The Disorder of Political Inquiry*, Harvard University Press, p. 76, pp. 159-63; 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

²³ In this aspect of my exploration I 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 methodological and conceptual choices become visible only from a point of a different theoretical framework, pp. 159-63. I will return to the question of alternative methodological and theoretical democratic notions in chapters III and IV. Also, the idea that certain conceptual choices in democratic theory have consequences for studying democracy has been briefly

assumptions structure the process of knowledge production – our conceptual vocabularies and social visions are necessary for carrying out research. My point is not to reject the place of conceptual frameworks in democratic scholarship in general, but to demonstrate inadequacies and weaknesses of the Schumpeterian framework specifically. For example, as I showed in chapter I, lay Russian and Ukrainian democratic beliefs do not only often encompass unusual, i.e. ‘economic’, understanding of freedom, human rights, efficacy, rule of law, and equality, but are also a medium through which these lay actors show understanding of their societies and their problems. However, as I shall demonstrate, Schumpeterian vocabulary prevents scholars from pursuing and adequately understanding such democratic views. Furthermore, it is not only that those who follow in Schumpeter’s elite competitive footsteps obscure substantial elements of lay democratic views, but they also disregard what these lay voices can tell us about the societies in which they live that has relevance to democratic politics and democratic change. I do not direct my research to questions of ‘how democracy operates’ or ‘what democracy ought to be’, nor do I think of democratic scholarship as consisting of only some such questions. The problem of *what lay actors think about democracy and how scholars can learn from them*, which is so central to my investigation, escapes the parameters of the debate set by the ‘facts vs. values’ dichotomy. Also, the dualism of facts vs. values cannot help us in disclosing and understanding problematic consequences of ontological assumptions that we hold, implicitly or explicitly, and the conceptions with which we approach our objects of study – democracy, lay actors and society. I contend that the Schumpeterian framework makes it easy to dismiss lay actors democratic insights and it hides from our view certain social structures, practices, and institutions that upon closer examination are difficult to treat with neglect in relation to democracy.

touched upon in Held, David, 2006. *Models of Democracy*, Stanford, pp. 6-7, and Pateman, Carole, 1976. *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 13-6.

(B) *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 intellectual legacies, and on critical treatments of the elite competitive conception of democracy. In particular, I significantly draw on John Medearis's study of Schumpeter's democratic thought to make my point about the kind of ontological assumptions that permeate 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."²⁴ 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."²⁵ My goal in this section is to highlight the practical significance of Schumpeter's elite conception of democracy

²⁴ Medearis, John. 2001, *Joseph Schumpeter's Two Theories of Democracy*, Harvard University Press, p. 4, 8

²⁵ Medearis, John. 2001, *Joseph Schumpeter's Two Theories of Democracy*, Harvard University Press, p. 4, emphasis in original

because it is this and not the transformative 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.”²⁶

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 comparing Schumpeter’s two theories of democracy and revealing 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.²⁷ While I want to highlight that the elite conception of democracy is grounded aristocratic-conservative social ontology, it is not to

²⁶ Medearis, John. 2001, *Joseph Schumpeter’s Two Theories of Democracy*, Harvard University Press, p. 8, 4

²⁷ 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

say that 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 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.”²⁸

In Schumpeter’s social vision, I argue, two ontological notions are especially prominent. First, it is the view that the ‘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 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 hierarchical structures and elite domination in the ‘economic’ realm.²⁹ Also,

²⁸ Medearis, John. 2001, *Joseph Schumpeter’s Two Theories of Democracy*, Harvard University Press, p. 14

²⁹ 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); 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

democracy on this account is defined *as just and only* an institutional framework or method for selection of *political* leadership.³⁰ 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).³¹ 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*.³²

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 a 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

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

³⁰ 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

³¹ 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

³² 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

monarchist values and institutions in Europe, he recognized that a wide range of social practices in bourgeois societies still were deeply inegalitarian.³³ Yet, the rise of social democratic parties at the turn of the twentieth century and democratic movements pointed 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 object 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 understanding of the crisis of the 20th century capitalist society as historically inevitable delegitimation of hierarchical features of capitalism and spread of democratic movements, tendencies, and expectations in connection with socio-economic structures, 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.³⁴ 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

³³ 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

³⁴ 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?')

capitalism. The system consists of the narrow functioning and mechanics of the economy.³⁵ 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 system's survival.³⁶ However, it is the changing cultural beliefs that would present a challenge to capitalism.³⁷ Schumpeter maintained that beliefs that challenge legitimacy of capitalism arise out of advanced development of the capitalist system itself because such system nurturers practices and values of rationalization. Rationalization of society in turn, Schumpeter believed, lead social groups to question the legitimacy of 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 contact, hostility of intellectuals to capitalism, an spreading democratization in capitalist society all point to "capitalism exhausting itself".³⁸ Schumpeter saw socialism inevitable: "Socialism of a very sober type would almost automatically come into being."³⁹

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.⁴⁰

³⁵ 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

³⁶ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, pp. 42, 73-80, 120

³⁷ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, p. 162

³⁸ 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

³⁹ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, pp. 131, 143-219

⁴⁰ 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*

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. Worker council movement was making it possible to speak about sovereignty of workers and their role in influencing the institutions and practices of work as democracy.⁴¹ Schumpeter was deeply troubled by force of these democratic ideologies, movements, and 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.⁴² Schumpeter's intellectual legacies and his 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 a creation of a conservative movement or party, led by members of Austrian aristocratic circles do not simply provide an insight into Schumpeter practical politics but reveal his understanding and theorization of changes that the society of his time was undergoing.⁴³ Schumpeter has been 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

Schumpeter's Two Theories of Democracy, Harvard University Press, and Medearis, John, 2009, *Major Conservative and Libertarian Thinkers: Joseph Schumpeter*, Continuum.

⁴¹ Medearis, John. 2001, *Joseph Schumpeter's Two Theories of Democracy*, Harvard University Press, p. 46-9, 59-64

⁴² 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

⁴³ 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

conservative interests: the technique of Tory democracy”.⁴⁴ It is beyond the scope of this chapter to recreate all of Schumpeter’s written work that pertain 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:

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 so 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.⁴⁵

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 ‘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.⁴⁶ Yet, it is not that such institutions and practices are unrealistic, but 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,

⁴⁴ Quoted in Medearis, John. 2001, *Joseph Schumpeter’s Two Theories of Democracy*, Harvard University Press, p. 38

⁴⁵ Quoted in Medearis, John. 2001, *Joseph Schumpeter’s Two Theories of Democracy*, Harvard University Press, p. 38

⁴⁶ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, pp. 262, 269, 284, 285

but that it is not static is a fact”⁴⁷). Schumpeter argues that there is supposedly plenty of evidence where common people display anything but rationality, responsibility, awareness, and logical consistency in matters of politics.⁴⁸ 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.⁴⁹ In addressing the notion of popular rule Schumpeter maintains that the whole idea could be no further removed from the reality of politics – belief in ‘popular rule’ is a sand house:

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.”⁵⁰

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.⁵¹ Schumpeter’s disdain with non-elite meddling in the affairs of government is further highlighted through his insistence to maintain 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

⁴⁷ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, pp. 203, 204-5

⁴⁸ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, p. 256

⁴⁹ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, p. 260-1

⁵⁰ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, p. 260-2

⁵¹ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, pp. 269, 270, 282-5

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.⁵²

Some have taken an issue with Schumpeter's supposedly 'realistic' and 'innocent' theory of human nature and human capacities – he has been challenged on empirical grounds.⁵³ 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 challenged, 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 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..."⁵⁴ Of course, Schumpeter does not celebrate such attempts to subvert the essence of capitalist enterprise and he does not welcome a 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. Moreover, he expresses concerns over the loss of

⁵² Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, p. 295

⁵³ Pateman, Carole, 1976, *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge University Press

⁵⁴ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, p. 214

respect for leadership and loss of discipline among the workers in the industry.⁵⁵ 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.⁵⁶ 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 to visualize situation in which *socialism might be the only means of restoring social discipline.*”⁵⁷ 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.⁵⁸ Instead he uses ‘socialism’ to designate practices of state control and factory discipline, as well as he 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”.⁵⁹ Consequently, Schumpeter’s disdain

⁵⁵ 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

⁵⁶ Quoted in Medearis, John. 2001, *Joseph Schumpeter’s Two Theories of Democracy*, Harvard University Press, pp. 63-4

⁵⁷ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, pp. 214-5

⁵⁸ 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

⁵⁹ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, p. 217

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.”⁶⁰ 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, it is his antipathy to participation of working, non-elite, or ‘lower’ social classes that structures the elite competitive model of democracy.

C) Influence of Schumpeterian ontology and elite conception of democracy in survey and interview-based studies of democracy

Many have pointed out that Schumpeter’s elite competitive model of democracy has greatly shaped Anglo-American democratic scholarship.⁶¹ Such prominent authors as Downs, Lipset, Dahl, Almond, Huntington, Diamond, Stepan, Linz, Przeworski, O’Donnell, and Schmitter, who are considered seminal contributors to American democratic scholarship, explicitly acknowledge Schumpeter’s influence on their work.⁶² Some seminal authors in survey

⁶⁰ Schumpeter, J.A. 1976. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. Harper and Row, p. 302

⁶¹ 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, p. 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, p. 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

⁶² 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*.

literature on post-communist transformation also acknowledge Schumpeter's influence on their work and it is not uncommon to find reference to "Schumpeter's classic definition".⁶³ However, many contemporary followers of these prominent scholars rarely cite Schumpeter directly. The goal of the following is to demonstrate that Schumpeterian ontology and conceptions, even if not explicitly acknowledged, are very prominent on the terrain of survey and interview-based studies of post-communist democratic beliefs. 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 contemporary scholars are strict Schumpeterians. The fact that many today seek to distance themselves from Schumpeterian 'elite' and 'minimalist' vision of democracy must be recognized. For example, many suggest that the elite competitive conception of democracy is too narrow and emphasis on just 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.⁶⁴ For example,

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

⁶³ 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

⁶⁴ For example, 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.

Schumpeter was suspicious of parliamentary politics, universal suffrage, government responsiveness to the electorate, and free press, unless their ‘radical’ fallouts were subdued to leadership of national elites (i.e. Schumpeter’s plan for Tory democracy).⁶⁵ So, putting emphases on free press and government responsiveness is important and clearly is an advance away from Schumpeterian social vision. However, more serious limitations and problematic consequences of the elite competitive model do not stem from it being too narrow or too thin. I contend that the assumptions and conceptions embedded in the elite competitive model are flawed in their own right and they cannot be ameliorated by adding more things to the ‘list’ of definition of democracy. Overcoming conservative consequences of the elite competitive model requires transcending this framework altogether.

Let me reminisce that in the elite competitive model of democracy, two ontological notions are especially prominent. First, it is the view that the ‘economic realm’ has little to do with the impetus of democratic politics. Second, it is the view that mass, i.e. ‘lower class people’s’ political capacities are inherently and naturally limited and they 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 hierarchical structures and domination and power of one small class of people in the ‘economic’ realm. Also, democracy on this account is defined *as just and only* an institutional framework or method for selection of *political* leadership. Due to accentuating that the elite leadership is the

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

⁶⁵ 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

only thing that democracy can possibly 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 his *Polyarchy* on the other. Survey and interview scholars on post-communist democratic beliefs often cite Dahl, rather than Schumpeter, and importantly, 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.⁶⁶ 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.⁶⁷ For example, in Dahl’s

⁶⁶ 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; 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

⁶⁷ Dahl, Robert, 1956, *A Preface to Democratic Theory*. The University of Chicago Press, p. 131, n. 12

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 (some survey scholars on post-communist transformations argue there is a clear distinction between elite theory of Schumpeter and someone like Dahl⁶⁸). And yet, I contend that in spite of apparent disjunction between Schumpeter and Dahl there are strong parallels in their ontological assumptions and view of democracy.

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?"⁶⁹ *Polyarchy* is about how to become a democracy, it is about democratization. Dahl's view of democracy, that end goal of transformation, stresses competition between parties and elections – this 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

⁶⁸ 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

⁶⁹ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 1

preference. These, then, appear to me to be three necessary conditions for a democracy, though they are probably not sufficient”⁷⁰

We can also see that for Dahl, unlike Schumpeter’s elite competitive conception, it is not enough for presence of elections, i.e. competition for votes, to qualify society as democratic. In addition to “[everyone’s] right to vote”, “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.”⁷¹ 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 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.⁷²

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, and 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

⁷⁰ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 1-2, emphasis added

⁷¹ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 2-3

⁷² Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 127, 131-2

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]”.⁷³ Such 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 singles out, from Dahl’s discussion it is unclear who else and why regards “institutional arrangements” that he highlights as approximation of democracy, i.e. popular rule. It is even less clear why only Dahl and several intellectuals are to be consulted on the issue of what popular rule entails.⁷⁴ 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.”⁷⁵ Presumably, many “young people” in the 1960s’ 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”⁷⁶), but 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 utopian to take seriously into account – talking about it would be idealistic rather than realistic, especially in

⁷³ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 9, n. 4

⁷⁴ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 17

⁷⁵ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 9

⁷⁶ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 17

regards to “third world countries”.⁷⁷ However, apparent skepticism about “utopian” social transformations in America does not prevent Dahl’s book length interest in another utopian project of social transformation of third world countries into polyarchies.⁷⁸ I shall return to this point later, but it is difficult to imagine how a survey, interview, or interpretive scholar following Schumpeter-Dahl’s democratic theory can be motivated 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 ‘socio-economic’ realm and inequalities in democracy. On the one hand, 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”.⁷⁹ 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 democracy. But on the other hand, in his later work Dahl addresses issues of democratizing that subnational, private space – e.g. the workplace, education, - governed by undemocratic principles.⁸⁰ 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 Schumpeterian in spirit *Polyarchy*. While Dahl appears to accentuate the role of citizens in his democratic theory, this role is narrow and well defined: the

⁷⁷ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, pp. 9-11, 14

⁷⁸ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 11

⁷⁹ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 14, also see pp. 60-81 – “socio-economic” realm, i.e. wealth, distribution of resources, severe inequalities are examined as potential preconditions for democracy or as not affecting chances for stability of democracy, but not as matter of democracy and a sphere to be governed by democratic principles.

⁸⁰ 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

role of lay actors is to signify preferences to the government but it is definitely not about self rule and not about contesting and defining the scope of democracy. 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 structures and organization of society.⁸¹

Let me draw attention to two examples that show 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 “intellectuals who are, at heart, liberal or radical democrats disappointed by the transparent failures of polyarchies” on behalf of “intellectuals who have actually experienced life under severely repressive hegemonic regimes.”⁸² In this sense, reflections of intellectuals about democracy are quite important for Dahl to an extent that they affect whether the outlook about 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 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, 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

⁸¹ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 26, 29

⁸² Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 17

and Ukrainian actors think about democracy and their societies, not to mention adequately grasping, learning from and engaging with these lay democratic ideas.

The second example that demonstrates echoes of Schumpeter's social ontology in Dahl's work concerns Dahl's discussion about the place of lay democratic beliefs in democratic theory and practice. On this 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 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".⁸³ And even as far as political activist are concerned, their beliefs are important 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.⁸⁴ 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".⁸⁵ However, Dahl's ontological position with respect to the role and weight of lay beliefs in democratic practice and theory is 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 what political activists' beliefs can tell scholars about society, democracy, and transformation, but in what way "individuals' beliefs influence...the structure and functioning of institutions and system" and insofar as

⁸³ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 126-7

⁸⁴ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, pp. 125, 126, 132

⁸⁵ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 125

“political activists believe in the legitimacy of polyarchy.”⁸⁶ Beliefs of the “inactive or excluded strata” may become important insofar as they may be mobilized by various political leaders with democratic (in Dahl’s sense) or undemocratic intentions.⁸⁷ 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.

II. Consequences of adopting Schumpeter’s conception of democracy and ontology in survey and interview-based literature

In this section, on the example of post-communist survey and interview based literature, I examine implications of grounding research on democracy and lay democratic beliefs in the ontology and vocabulary of the elite competitive model. My critique should not be construed as a suggestion that democratic scholars ‘smuggle’ conservative values into their research when it is supposed to be value free. Rather, I focus on highlighting what happens when scholars follow (perhaps often unreflectively) the vocabulary and logic of the elite competitive model. In this section, I investigate consequences of adopting Schumpeter’s conception of democracy whose meaning is static, that does not extend to the ‘economic’ realm, and that does not recognize lay actors as legitimate political subjects with valuable reflections upon the scope of their rule, their problems, and workings of their society. *I argue that insofar as democratic scholars adopt a Schumpeterian view of democracy and implicit in it ontological assumptions, they end up either disinterested in lay Russian and Ukrainian conceptions of democracy or incapable of adequately*

⁸⁶ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 126, 132

⁸⁷ Dahl, Robert, 1971, *Polyarchy*, Yale University Press, p. 131

understanding and appreciating lay democratic thinking. This implication should be taken seriously because carelessness about and inability to accommodate lay democratic ideas is counterintuitive for democratic theory. Democratic theory is a theory of popular rule, and prima facie, such theory cannot dismiss the way in which lay actors understand their problems, their interests, and their role in exerting influence over social institutions and practices that affect their lives. And given that lay Russian and Ukrainian democratic views are often enmeshed in these people's demoralizing experiences of acting and interacting within Russian and Ukrainian social context, social structures, economic institutions, and practices (see chapter 1), those who adopt the elite model also end up missing important lessons about undemocratic features of societies that these lay ideas point to.

A) Instrumentalizing or dismissing lay Russian and Ukrainian conceptions of democracy

In this section I suggest that since lay thinking in general is devalued in conservative social ontology, since the meaning of democracy is conceived of as static and unchanging, and since the 'economic' realm is divorced from democratic oversight, lay conceptions of democracy with 'unusual' focus on matters of 'economic welfare' cannot possibly be taken seriously by scholars who use the elite competitive model as a point of reference. This implication can be seen in two broad tendencies in survey and interview based research on lay Russian and Ukrainian democratic beliefs. The first and more popular tendency that I highlight is a very narrow and instrumental view of lay democratic beliefs. On this account, lay democratic views are not seen as a system of meaning that entails 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. Furthermore, these lay attitudes are interesting insofar as they help to predict behavior or help to maintain a particular form of

society that scholars themselves label as democracy in the beginning of their investigation. The second and more extreme tendency is explicit delegitimizing of lay Russian and Ukrainian conceptions of democracy as aberrant and suspect because these lay views do not fit scholarly preconceived categories. Although, it is important to bear in mind that in general there is very little sustained interest in lay post-communist conceptions of democracy.

Studying lay understandings of democracy is not a prominent research agenda in survey and interview-based literature. As a rule of thumb, even if scholars admit that democracy is a contested conception, this acknowledgement is in the beginning of their investigation and is usually resolved by references to work of a seminal author. As one of many such examples, Rose and colleagues make an attempt to justify the meaning of democracy they use by references to prevailing cultural wisdoms or colloquial use.⁸⁸ Such approach can potentially signify scholarly interest in lay actors' conceptions of democracy. However, the grip of the elite competitive model's assumptions does not allow these scholars to consider such possibility even after they appear to have acknowledged that there is such a thing as colloquial use of democracy. While themselves 'western' scholars studying post-communist societies, they fail to follow up on recognition that colloquial uses of democracy might differ from context to context. Shortly, Rose and colleagues immediately resort to Dahl's authority on the subject of democracy's meaning and functioning.⁸⁹ And I have already discussed that Dahl's democratic theory does not encourage scholars to look after lay actors' conceptions of democracy, Dahl's conception of democracy is fixed and static, nor does he think that lay democratic thought is any rich or interesting.

⁸⁸ Rose, Richard, William Mishler, and Christian Haerpfer, 1998, *Democracy and Its Alternatives*. John Hopkins University Press, p. 27-8

⁸⁹ Rose, Richard, William Mishler, and Christian Haerpfer., 1998, *Democracy and Its Alternatives*. John Hopkins University Press, p. 28

I contend, lay beliefs enter democratic scholarship grounded in the elite competitive ontology in a narrow form, stripped of their meaningful aspects. On this account, lay democratic views 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. These attitudes are interesting insofar as they help to maintain a particular form of society that scholars label as democracy in the beginning of their investigation, but lay democratic thinking is never really meant to influence scholarly views of what counts as democracy. It is not uncommon to stumble upon research agendas in survey and interview-based literature such as “mass attitudes *towards* democracy”, “mass perceptions about democracy”, or “mass democratic *values*”, rather than more forceful ‘lay democratic *thought*’ or ‘lay democratic *theory*’. The qualifiers such as “attitudes”, “perceptions”, and “values” not demean lay democratic thinking through implying that lay actors cannot possibly have a vibrant and valuable understanding of democracy and the society in which they live and often suffer. Such scholarly frames also reflect prominence of Schumpeterian ontological assumptions and conceptions in studies of democracy. Lay democratic ideas cannot be reduced to a set of attitudes and values - they encompasses certain definitions, meanings, explications, and theories of the social world, but all of this is overlooked in research that is grounded in the vocabulary and logic of the elite competitive model.

Thus, even though it appears there is a scholarly attention to public opinion in post-communist societies, it is because of the arguments that democracy (as conceived by scholars) requires on the part of citizens a commitment to certain values, norms, institutions, and practices.⁹⁰ So, insofar as public opinion generates scholarly interest in survey and interview-

⁹⁰ 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*:

based scholarship, this interest is instrumental – public values are supposed to predict 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.”⁹¹ For example, for Almond and Verba, the seminal authors of the ‘political culture’ paradigm, the ultimate interest is in what political culture can do for 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.⁹² It is true that there is no scholarly agreement about how much political culture or public opinion matters⁹³, what particular values are constitutive of democratic political culture⁹⁴, or where democratic attitudes come from.⁹⁵ But, I contend, these scholarly

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

⁹¹ Fleron, Frederic J., 1996, “Post-Soviet Political Culture in Russia: An Assessment of Recent Empirical Investigations,” p. 231

⁹² On interest in stability of ‘democratic’ institutions as a main motivation for writing *Civic Culture*, 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

⁹³ 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

⁹⁴ 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

⁹⁵ 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 social and economic sources of democratic values, see Inglehart, Ronald, 1977, *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles Among Western Publics*; 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

debates do not change the character of survey and interview-based intervention in democratic scholarship that I want to highlight here – lay beliefs are of interest insofar as they contribute to fostering or impeding a particular set of institutions defined by scholars as democracy, but not as a source of insights about democracy and society.

Miller and colleagues characterize this dominant approach to public opinion and democracy in empirical literature as following: “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.”⁹⁶ However, even though Miller and colleagues adopt a non mainstream approach and design an actual study of lay Russian and Ukrainian conceptions of democracy, there is still a strong sense in which lay beliefs are treated instrumentally – they are important for predicting an outcome but not seen as a reservoir of valuable thought that democratic scholarship can engage with.⁹⁷ To summarize the points presented above, it is in this instrumental and not meaningful role that lay Russian and Ukrainian views about democracy enter the scholarly

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

⁹⁶ Miller, Arthur H., V.L. Hesli, W.M. Reisinger, 1997, “Conceptions of Democracy among Mass and Elite in Post-Soviet Societies,” p. 159

⁹⁷ Miller, Arthur H., V.L. Hesli, W.M. Reisinger, 1997, “Conceptions of Democracy among Mass and Elite in Post-Soviet Societies,” pp. 157-163. While Miller and colleagues submit that emphasis on freedom of speech, movement, and action dominates lay Ukrainian and Russian views of democracy, this study must be taken with a grain of salt. The reason is because from the review of their data and codification techniques it is difficult to establish whether Miller and colleagues have displayed sensitivity to potentially different and unusual meaning of freedom in lay Ukrainian and Russian understanding when collecting and interpreting interview data (I will return to lay Ukrainian and Russian conceptions of freedom shortly).

investigations in survey and interview based studies. Furthermore, even the very scarce survey and interview research about mass conceptions of democracy in post-communist countries is structured by a guiding interest to predict a relationship between lay democratic views and the type of transformation that is likely to take place in the region. A handful of scholars who notice lack of attention to lay conceptions of democracy never fully transcend the limitations of the elite competitive model and continue to treat the conceptions they uncover instrumentally.⁹⁸

It is common for survey scholars to be careless about exploring and engaging with lay views about the meaning of democracy because the logic of the elite competitive model establishes an assumption that lay actors' political thought is inherently uninteresting, the meaning of democracy is fixed, and "stuff of economics" is not within the scope of democratic thought and action. Scholarly treatment of the 'unusual' character of lay post-communist democratic views varies. For example, a handful of scholars observe 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, because it may help to explain why the new social institutions enjoy low levels of public support.⁹⁹ In

⁹⁸ 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," and Simon, Janos, 1998, "Popular conceptions of democracy in postcommunist Europe," In *The Postcommunist Citizen*

⁹⁹ For example, see 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; Miller, Arthur H., V.L. Hesli, W.M. Reisinger, 1997, "Conceptions of Democracy among Mass and Elite in Post-Soviet Societies," pp. 157-163. 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.

some less benign references we are told 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, there is a contention that often post-communist citizens invest democracy with a set of expectations that were legitimate during the Soviet era, but are no longer legitimate in transforming societies: “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.”¹⁰⁰ On this view, mass conceptions of democracy are interesting to study insofar as they show how confused post-communist masses are about the true meaning of democracy and how it may negatively affect prospects for democratization (as defined by scholars) in the region, but these lay conceptions cannot possibly influence the debate about democracy. And of course, there are recommendations that post-communist citizens are yet to learn the real meaning of democracy, as opposed to the meaning they inherited from the past.¹⁰¹

For instance, Simon indicates that due to “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. However, even after

¹⁰⁰ 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 address the issues of “Soviet conceptions of democracy” and its reemergence in post-soviet lay thinking, Alexander, “Russian Political Culture”, pp. 127-131.

¹⁰¹ 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 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

having reported statistic that many respondents did not feel they had real influence on the decision making in the workplace, he quickly forewarns:

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.”¹⁰²

Elaborating results of 2000 survey in Ukraine, Carson begins a section on ‘the meaning of democracy’ in a following way:

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.¹⁰³

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.¹⁰⁴ 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, and provision of basic material necessities, they comment that “such tenets of democracy as freedom of choice,

¹⁰² Simon, Janos, 1998, “Popular conceptions of democracy in postcommunist Europe,” In *The Postcommunist Citizen*, p. 84, emphasis added

¹⁰³ Carson, Thomas, 2000, “Attitudes Toward Change, the Current Situation, and Civic Action in Ukraine – 2000,” Source: International Foundation for Election Systems, p. 11, emphasis added.

¹⁰⁴ Diligenskii, G.G. 1998. *Rossiskii gorozhanin kontsa devianostykh: genesis postsovetского 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

speech, and voting were mentioned less frequently” and that “Ukrainians may not be committed to the freedoms a democracy embodies.”¹⁰⁵

While survey and interview-based research may be an extremely valuable source of information and 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 vocabulary of the elite competitive model defeats the very promise of both survey research and democratic scholarship. Treating lay conceptions of democracy instrumentally i.e. lay democratic beliefs as a possible means to an end that scholars are interested in, or simply delegitimizing meaningful aspects of lay Russian and Ukrainian democratic beliefs is quite consistent with the ontology of the elite competitive model. But aside from disinterest in lay thought, the elite competitive model also has an implication of obscuring lay Russian and Ukrainian democratic ideas – ‘undesirable’ elements that have to do with socio-economic matters are filtered or flagged by scholars as not belonging to the scope of democracy. Not only does this lead to mischaracterizing the force of lay Russian and Ukrainian democratic thought, but it also prevents democratic scholars from understanding the challenges that post-communist transformation poses for the vast majority of people. Upon closer reflection, it will become difficult to justify overlooking these challenges in studies of democracy.

B) Obscuring or mischaracterizing the “economic” emphases of lay democratic thinking

For example, aside from a very common disinterest in lay Russian and Ukrainian conceptions of democracy, let me highlight further a variety of ways in which ‘economic’ elements of lay democratic views are mischaracterized, misunderstood, or dismissed in survey

¹⁰⁵ 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.

and interview based studies. Implication of grounding research in the vocabulary and ontological assumptions of the elite competitive model can be seen in the following several tendencies stemming from ontological separation of “economics” from the scope of democratic action and critique (while lay Russian and Ukrainian democratic ideas do not necessarily conform to such separation). For example, lay Russian and Ukrainian emphases on and connections to matters of ‘economic welfare’ in relation to democracy can be diverted and lost in the course of scholars applying certain conceptual dichotomies, such as economics vs. politics, and materialistic vs. democratic, to mention some. These scholarly dualisms contribute to obscuring rather than grasping the character of lay Russian and Ukrainian democratic beliefs. Moreover, through the prism of the elite competitive model of democracy, ‘economic’ elements of lay Russian and Ukrainian democratic beliefs may not only become misplaced, but they are sometimes are denigrated and labeled as undemocratic. In addition, ‘economic’ elements of lay Russian and Ukrainian democratic ideas may be lost through scholarly application of narrow conceptions of democracy, politics, freedom, rights, power, equality, lawfulness, efficacy, and individual choice that exclude the ‘socio-economic realm’ from consideration. And finally, displacement and mystification of the ‘economic’ character of lay Russian and Ukrainian views about democracy can be seen when ‘economic’ elements are introduced as ‘causes’ of (non)support for what scholars define as democracy.

In chapter 1 I discussed how human rights and freedom are prominent themes of lay Russian and Ukrainian understanding of democracy. Moreover, the meaning of human rights and freedom for lay Russians and Ukrainians, aside from civil-“political”, often has socio-economic connotations, such as a right to employment, a right to decent pay, a right to a basic standard of living, freedom from fear of poverty, freedom from economic insecurity, freedom to

stand up for one's point of view in the workplace, and so forth. Also, through examining a variety of responses I pointed out how such "socio-economic" conceptions of human rights and human freedom is related by lay actors to a broader rubric of self-realization and personal development. However, insofar as scholars ground their research in the assumptions and vocabulary of the elite competitive model of democracy, they are unable to capture and understand the type of democratic ideas that do not rely on a rigid exclusion of the "economic" realm from matters of politics and democracy. Moreover, many survey and interview scholars *are* interested and stress importance of such things as human flourishing, individual choice, and personal self-realization. However, if they continue to ground their theoretical framework, their survey questions and interpretations in the Schumpeterian separation of economics from the scope of democratic action and critique, they remain oblivious to both lay Russian and Ukrainian democratic aspirations and obstacles to these aspirations.

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)."¹⁰⁶ Alexander's interpretation and classification of responses bears the spirit of Schumpeterian bracketing of "economic realm" from the scope of democracy. Thus, even though Alexander

¹⁰⁶ 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.

appears to be interested in seeing lay Russians as free and living in conditions necessary for human flourishing (a non-Schumpeterian interest), Alexander's study is myopic as it is unable to relate challenges that long hours of work, poverty, unemployment, small wages, inability to afford medical care, to mention some, pose for personal development, individual choice, and self-realization. Furthermore, he delegitimizes lay Russian visions of freedom (which, as was seen in chapter 1, are quite rich and complex) by labeling the 'undesirable' elements in the thinking of his respondents as "conservative". There are more examples of scholarly inability to grasp the real character of lay views that the set out to study because the scholarly conceptions of rights, freedom, equality, efficacy, choice, and so forth, are grounded in Schumpeterian separation of "economics" from the scope of democracy.¹⁰⁷

Mischaracterization of lay Russian and Ukrainian democratic ideas may also manifest itself through application of certain dichotomies which reinforce the separation of "economics" from the scope of politics and democracy. For instance, consider the following lay view of freedom in response to an interviewer's question about sacrificing freedom for other values, such as order and security:

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?¹⁰⁸

Note that this example of lay conception does not fit well within the dichotomy of freedom vs. material security that underlies the interviewer's question to begin with – rather than an opposition, there is a meaningful connection between freedom and material security. Instead of

¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁸ Carnaghan, *Out of order*, p. 180

reflecting this, there is an obscuring and mystifying scholarly interpretation that Russians supposedly prefer material security to freedom, independence, and choice. And since freedom underlies democracy, Russians may not be as committed to democracy as one might wish.¹⁰⁹ Obviously, such characterization of lay views is inaccurate and does not capture the full meaning of responses the interviewer is confronted with. And, this inadequacy is a product of dualisms embedded in Schumpeterian separation of economics from the scope of politics and democracy used unreflectively.

The issue of the extent to which lay Russians and Ukrainians separate economics from politics has sparked some attention in survey and interview literature. 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...However, the question is empirical, not conceptual, and can be addressed with the data at hand.”¹¹⁰ This question is prominent for survey scholars because, given their interests in citizens’ (non)support of democratic institutions, it is important to separate citizen’s evaluations of macroeconomic performance and of their personal welfare and to get only at attitudes that citizens hold about new political institutions such as parliament, presidency, and elections. If lay people separate politics and economics in their understanding, by means of various control variables survey scholars may claim to get at whether or not lay people support new political institutions regardless of economic conditions. If lay people fail to distinguish between politics and economics, measures of mass (non)support for new political institutions will reflect (non)support of macro- and personal- economic welfare. Thus, even though there appears to be an interest

¹⁰⁹ Carnaghan, *Out of order*, p. 33, 176-7

¹¹⁰ 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

into the ‘unusual’ conflation of economic and politics, it does not extend to attempts to understand, appreciate, and engage with such thinking. The spirit of the elite competitive model of democracy dictates that an interest into lay ideas is instrumental and stuff of economics should be clearly differentiated from the realm of democracy.

In the context of this line of this apparent interest into the “economic” aspects of lay Russian and Ukrainian thinking, I suggest it is clear that the full character of lay democratic beliefs is misrepresented. As a result of ontological separation of economic from politics, lay views about economics enter survey and interview studies as “causes” of other attitudes. It is true that there is no agreement what is the precise nature of the connection between economics and politics is in lay Russian and Ukrainian thinking. Some scholars demonstrate 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 political stability”.¹¹¹ Other 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.¹¹² Another version of arguments that

¹¹¹ 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; 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

¹¹² 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

“economic attitudes cause political ones” is a contention that rather than evaluating political institutions and practices by reference to economic performance, many post-communist citizens simply prioritize materialistic and economic concerns over abstract political principles and may value democracy only as a presumed means to economic prosperity. Some survey scholars conclude that post-communist people’s commitment to democracy – new political institutions - is “instrumental” or “ephemeral”, i.e. people in post-communist countries care less about democracy and politics, and more about their economic well-being.¹¹³ Such a scholarly characterization of Russian and Ukrainian lay democratic thinking as “materialistic” also appears in studies of democratic movements.¹¹⁴ However, these interventions and apparent attention to “economic” elements of lay Russian and Ukrainian democratic views cannot grasp this side of lay democratic ideas. The reason is because in these scholarly conceptual framework economics is already separated from politics and survey questions and responses are structured and interpreted accordingly.

Survey scholars may characterize overwhelming popular concerns with “economic issues” as non political, or imply that “economic issues” are nonpolitical, and by extension, have

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*.

¹¹³ 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

¹¹⁴ 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. I will return to these literatures for further analysis in chapters 3 and 4. 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.”

nothing to do with democracy, matters of government, decision making, relations of power, freedom, and rights. In survey, interview-based and social movement studies that analyze the apparent connection between politics and economics, emphasis on “economic concerns” in popular thinking is often described as non-political: “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.”¹¹⁵ Hence, the labels that scholars use to describe lay thinking in post-communist countries: “materialist”, “apolitical”, or simply “economic”.¹¹⁶ Materialist concerns are contrasted with “postmaterialist”, i.e. political concerns such as “having more say in the decisions of government or freedom of speech”.¹¹⁷ When confronted with respondents’ aspirations to assert control over economic matters, and this is usually in the form of “state guarantees”, interview scholars characterize them as “conservative”, “authoritarian”, or “paternalistic”.¹¹⁸ But in any rate, ontological separation of economic from politics in scholarly conceptions does not help to understand fully meaningful aspects of lay Russian and Ukrainian democratic beliefs. The “economic” elements of lay democratic thinking remain obscured, mystified, or delegitimized.

¹¹⁵ Mason, D.S., 1995, “Justice, Socialism, and Participation in the Postcommunist States,” p. 74. Also, Diligenskii, *Rossiskii gorozhanin*; Alexander, *Political culture*; and Simon, *Labor and political transformation*

¹¹⁶ For e.g., see Mason, “Introduction,” p. 9; Mason, “Justice, Socialism, and Participation in the Postcommunist States,” pp.74-7; Simon, *Labor and Political Transformation*; Diligenskii, *Rossiskii gorozhanin*; and Alexander, *Political Culture*. The terminology of “materialist vs. postmaterialist” values and attitudes owes to a seminal work of Inglehart, Ronald, 1979, “Value Priorities and Socioeconomic Change,” pp. 304-42 and Inglehart, 1990, *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society*, p. 442.

¹¹⁷ Simon, Rick, *Labor and Political Transformation*; Mason, “Introduction,” p. 9; Mason, “Justice, Socialism, and Participation,” pp. 74-7

¹¹⁸ 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

For example, 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.”¹¹⁹

Interestingly, while Alexander’s interviewees displayed a high interest in and a plethora of commentaries on their personal and country’s economic and social fate, as well as a variety of solutions, from speeding up the reforms, 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”.¹²⁰ Only his respondents’ references to candidates into Duma and presidency were characterized by Alexander as belonging to the “political” realm. Lay reflections on the matters of electoral candidates were 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 they term politics and economics in lay thinking, Mishler and Rose resort to wishful thinking that though it seems that the post-communist citizens evaluate all institutions holistically, without differentiating between political, civic, and economic, “over time as citizens acquire more experience with the institutions of state and

¹¹⁹ Alexander, *Political Culture* pp. 89-90, 73-5

¹²⁰ Alexander, *Political Culture*, pp. 72-101

society, the weak and inchoate distinctions they currently draw between civil and political institutions may crystallize and emerge with greater clarity and strength.”¹²¹

Scholarly inability to grasp and appreciate the “economic” focus of lay Russian and Ukrainian thinking is not only a problem of misunderstanding and misrepresenting the object of study – lay beliefs. I submit, it is also a problem of missing a whole lot of insights about Ukrainian and Russian contemporary societies. Lay democratic ideas do not just reveal to us how lay people think, but they *also* reveal something about the social situations, practices, institutions, and environments within which lay actors carry on their lives. Let me suggest here that due to static meaning of democracy in the elite competitive model of democracy, scholars struggle with accommodating ‘unusual’ views of democracy. In particular, they are compelled to dismiss not uncommon lay Russian and Ukrainian bitter views of their transforming societies. When lay Russians and Ukrainians withdraw their support from parliamentary and market institutions that now govern their lives, scholars offer a variety of explanations and interpretations, ranging from apology to reproach and impatience. These rejections of the new social order and skepticism about democracy are variously misinterpreted, while certainly revealed, in scholarly accounts. I contend the main scholarly tendency is to downplay, obscure, or to discredit lay Russian and Ukrainian skeptical views of ‘democracy’, to empty them of political, moral and democratic relevancy. For instance, 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 democratic

¹²¹ Mishler and Rose, “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

concerns.¹²² 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.”¹²³

When commenting on the role of the welfare state which constantly appeared in “every day conversation”, Alexander writes that “such comments indicated a broad popular desire for the state to watch over them... the state [for Russians] is not an ‘objective’ concept describing institutions and procedures: the state fulfils the role of protector.”¹²⁴ Scholarly separation of “economic matters” from democratic action and critique, which is evident in their clinging to the notion of ‘lean’ or ‘procedural’ state and politics as somehow essential for democratic societies, leads to misplacing the economic aspects of lay democratic thinking and displaying uncompromising intolerance towards lay aspiration to exert some influence over their “economic” fate.¹²⁵ Consider Alexander’s summarization of his respondents’ views of collective bodies:

...conservative views of the state explain the disorientation felt by many Russians. As if losing 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.”¹²⁶

¹²² Carnaghan, *Out of Order*, pp. 164-175

¹²³ Carnaghan, *Out of Order*, p. 169, emphasis added.

¹²⁴ Alexander, *Political culture*, p. 196, 120

¹²⁵ It is not uncommon to find scholarly emphasis on the “lean state” entangled with emphasis on “individual responsibility” [i.e. can’t blame capitalism for poverty and suffering, get off the couch and find work] as integral to democracy, as opposed to “social guarantees state”. 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

¹²⁶ Alexander, *Political culture*, p. 121. Also, on other examples where undesirable focus on “economic welfare” in lay democratic views is characterized as conservative, see Kullberg and Zimmerman, “Liberal elites, socialist masses”, p. 324

Unreflective separation of economics from the scope of democratic politics and practices leads Alexander to reproach and demean the [vast Russian majority] “losers” in the post-communist transformation rather than considering and exploring that the powerlessness his respondents reported over the direction of their life has something to do with undemocratic post-communist socio-economic institutions, structures, and practices.

Directly or indirectly many studies impart that post-communist citizens are skeptical of the new social order because they are confused and they are still learning,¹²⁷ because they are stressed by temporary economic hardships and social disorder accompanying transitions,¹²⁸ because they are disillusioned by the pace of the reforms,¹²⁹ because they are in the grips of the past, or they have wrong cultural preferences.¹³⁰ But lay Russian and Ukrainian reflections and insights are never perceived as *democratic* grievances and aspirations, again, for the reason of scholars’ separating matters of “economics” from democracy and politics. As a result, scholarly understanding of freedom, rights, equality, efficacy, choice, flourishing, self-realization, participation, and solidarity, i.e. classic democratic themes, while prominent in their studies, is

¹²⁷ 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.”

¹²⁸ 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.”

¹²⁹ Bahry, Donna, 1999, “Comrades into Citizens? Russian Political Culture and Public Support for the Transition,” Carnaghan, *Out of Order*; Alexander, *Political Culture*.

¹³⁰ 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?”

very narrow and impoverished. Not only are Schumpeter's followers unable to be interested in and grasp the full force, richness, and complexity of lay democratic 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.

In conclusion, I have shown consequences of grounding research on democracy and lay democratic beliefs in the assumptions and vocabulary of the elite competitive model. Schumpeterian framework is problematic because it encourages disinterest in lay conceptions of democracy and cannot help to capture the character of 'unusual' lay democratic thinking adequately. Moreover, scholars who use assumptions and conceptions associated with this framework cannot take seriously what lay actors might say about their societies – following in the footsteps of Schumpeterian vocabulary does not allow to look at Russian and Ukrainian democratic insights as worthy of learning from. Schumpeterian framework manifests its conservative force in delegitimizing and denigrating lay democratic beliefs as well as in removing from scholarly view exploration of social practices, problems, and structures that are based on unfreedom, lack of choice, inequality, domination, and privileging interests of a narrow class of people in a society. By following the assumptions and logic of the elite competitive model we continue to dwell on a type of 'democratic' theory that systematically brackets questions of unfreedom, powerlessness, and subjugation in these people's everyday experiences, i.e. in the "economic" or "social" realm. We also continue to dwell on a type of 'democratic' theory that dismisses the role and weight of lay views and interests born out of experiences of interaction with Russian and Ukrainian socio-economic structures and institutions which in many ways are still undemocratic. Of all people, scholars of democracy cannot be indifferent to this.

