Conclusion

The aim of this book was to explore the ideas, strategies, activity, and social background of the most influential actors of the Hungarian democratic transition, the intellectuals. I was interested in who carried out the transition, where they came from, and what kind of ideas they were driven by. As opposed to Poland where the intellectuals formed an alliance with workers and employees, creating an enormous mass movement, the starting and negotiating of the Hungarian regime change as well as the organization of movements and the formation of parties were mainly done by the intellectuals. They formed an alliance with some active groups of the older generations but most importantly with technocrats of the late Kádár era. Most of the society had been in a state of political passivity up until 1988.

The democratic opposition of the 1980s mainly consisted of dissident intellectuals who had been fired from their employment, “free-floating” intellectuals of the humanities and social sciences, and students. The group of dissidents can mainly be interpreted as a human rights movement. In the beginning, the dissidents strove to mediate between power and society, that is, they preferred the tactics of persuasion and considering progression over the revolutionary tactics. Their aim was to strengthen civil society in which self-conscious citizens, relying on their moral autonomy, take the fight against the dictatorship on the basis of the ideas of human rights. However, the concept of civil society paradoxically had both an inclusive and an exclusive meaning. It was inclusive because there were no ethnic, religious, age, gender, or class restrictions. Anyone could join the movement. Yet it was exclusive in the sense that the Hungarian meaning of the term civil society referred not to a class alliance but, out of necessity, it remained within the
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boundaries of a middle class political organization. As it turned out, intellectuals had a privileged position in the concept of civil society.

On the other hand, this book was only in part about the dissidents. For its aim was to understand the character of the Hungarian transition with respect to the dynamics of transformation. Therefore, I devoted separate sections to the late-1980s period of networking and party formation, to the main actors of the Roundtable talks (including the organizations of EKA in particular), and to the composition of the party groups with a rather intellectual character in the first freely elected legislature. Afterward, a separate chapter discussed the role of the activists of a new movement for the protection of democracy, the Democratic Charter.

Which were the factors in the Hungary of the 1980s which helped a group of intellectuals organize and gradually become, from a relatively closed countercultural community, the flag-bearer of a political change of historical importance? Returning to the Jerome Karabel’s criteria outlined in the beginning of the book,1 we can derive the following conclusions.

According to Karabel, the first criterion of the revolt of intellectuals is that the intellectuals exist as a well-organized, politically radical yet subordinate social group or they are connected to such a group. That the Kádár regime detached intellectuals from the broader social groups of workers and employees did strengthen the identity of this group, but most of the intellectuals turned away from politics. Therefore, they were successfully put at the regime’s service. Intellectuals were in a relatively privileged and isolated position at the same time, but from the mid-1970s they were forced into a subordinate position in a political sense. Their isolation did not mean that they were either radical or politically organized. Reform intellectuals—most of whom were party members—existed as a subordinate faction of cadre bureaucracy, and they used their knowledge and proposals to push the party apparatus toward the direction of reforms.

Dissidents, on the other hand, took part in this only minimally. While their group was not particularly radical in international comparison, they ended cooperation with the system. In the beginning, the dissidents undertook the role of a mediator, trying to mediate between the state and society. Back then they did not even think that they would be able to give voice

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1 Karabel, “Toward a Theory of Intellectuals and Politics.”
to the oppressed society. Beyond the “new evolutionist” strategy of radical reformism, the position they could consider was that of the truth-teller, which was exercised by the groups of the democratic opposition via the limited publicity of samizdat journals. They were legitimized by their outsider stance which became important when the change took place. By then political discourse had changed and—because of the democratic opposition, the reform intellectuals, and also in part the more open media intellectuals—the Gouldnerian culture of critical discourse had gained ground. Political radicalism and opposition organization started to develop only in the second half of the 1980s.

The regime change did not end democratic social movements at one stroke. Indeed, new groups joined the political sphere. Politically active intellectuals organized into a movement in an attempt to defy the right-leaning government that sometimes seemed to revise the principles of 1989. The Democratic Charter was supported not only by the liberal and socialist parties: a cooperation of artists, journalists, and movement intellectuals who enjoyed the newly experienced freedom of the press was forged. This could happen in such way because the new political elite itself was still amateur and divided.

The other structural criterion of the revolt of intellectuals, according to Karabel, is the lack of a strong bourgeoisie. This obviously refers to capitalist societies. This criterion cannot be interpreted for the state socialist period of Hungary for there was no bourgeoisie out of the very nature of the system, albeit certain signs of petty embourgeoisement had appeared by the 1980s due to the strengthening of the second economy. However, this typically had happened out of necessity, by overwork and self-exploitation, in an ambivalent form in a gray zone at the periphery of the public sphere. In general, the effect of petty embourgeoisement through forced entrepreneurship did not affect the activity of the dissidents. However, the lack of strong bourgeoisie could be interpreted after the regime change when the movement of opinion-molder intellectuals, the DC gained significant political influence.

2 Michnik, “A New Evolutionism.”
5 Szelényi, Socialist Entrepreneurs.
Later, after 1994 we can find no examples for such a *par excellence* intellectual movement.

According to Karabel’s third criterion, if “free-floating” intellectuals in the great organizations exist in relatively high numbers compared to applied professional intellectuals, the chances of revolt may increase. As professional intellectuals lose their critical potential due to organizational indoctrination, opposition intellectuals can count on them only if the inevitability of change becomes widely acknowledged. In Hungary, this criterion was more or less fulfilled, one could find a number of freelance intellectuals among the dissidents. Intellectuals could exist in universities, research institutes, and certain hidden jobs in the system, which therefore allowed their status to approach Mannheim’s concept of “socially unattached” intellectuals. The movements of this layer—while it was relatively isolated from society—were not always restricted, which meant that some of their representatives could visit country universities, community centers, writer camps, and other non-official events. Some reform intellectuals were considered reliable fit into this circle, too, and they could even visit factories or plants as well. However, this was conditional upon maintaining at least formal loyalty to the party (i.e., party membership). Yet organizational indoctrination was not particularly strong. Pro-regime, communist indoctrination had specifically emptied by the 1980s. The economic decay and political stagnation of the system rapidly impaired its indoctrinating effect, opening the way for intellectuals calling for modernization and the rule of law.

All this could be observed even more clearly in the years immediately after 1989. Transnational corporations had not arrived in Hungary yet, journalism was completely reformed, the role of independent media grew. This meant that, in the years after the regime change, intellectuals had not been caught in the corporative ethos of capitalist corporations yet, and therefore a relatively high number of unsettled, “free-floating” intellectuals trying various roles could appear among their ranks.

The fourth, fifth, and sixth criteria of Karabel are closely related. According to the fourth criterion of the activation of intellectuals, if the regime is moderately repressive (i.e., it has no intention or opportunity of full oppression) that opens room for maneuver for dissidents. This was also

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described in other words by O’Donnell and Schmitter: they regarded moderation of the system as an antecedent, not simply to intellectual activism but also to democratic transition. The softening and disintegration of the Kádár regime, the politics of opening and liberalization, the state of political vacuum of the transition years, and the rapid social changes of the years preceding the regime change created the way for the joint activism of intellectuals. However, they were also joined by other layers at this point. The paradox of intellectual protest in the Hungary of the 1980s was this: when they could not act, they were alone, but when they could finally act, they were no longer alone. This was another reason why no one could realistically anticipate the change of 1989 leading to the class power of intellectuals.

These circumstances are related to the fifth criterion, the weakness or dividedness of the political elite. In the 1980s, the oppressive nature of the Kádár regime diminished because the economic decay of the country forced it to borrow Western loans to maintain living standards. In exchange, the creditors urged further reforms, or the moderation of the treatment of the opposition. This, in turn, contributed to the dividedness of the regime’s leadership: it became more and more visible that, behind the old leaders growing detached from reality, reformer and hard-liner successor candidates were battling. This enlarged the room for maneuver for the regime opposition. The weakness of the political elite could also be observed in the period of the democratic transition when rapid changes in the highest echelons of politics took place. The political elite of post-communist democracy was characterized by inexperience, dividedness, and mutual distrust, which created favorable circumstances for a new movement politics for the protection of democracy and constitutionalism. The DC lost its intellectual-movement character when it openly endorsed one political side before the 1994 elections. Then, politicians took the initiative and used the movement as a tool, leading to the insignificance of the Charter.

The sixth criterion holds that intellectual may lead the opposition if the state is unable to protect its citizens from the growing economic, political, or military influence of other states which put significant groups of the nation into a disadvantaged position on the international stage. From this, Hungary experienced economic decay which led to growing indebtedness, new depen-

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1 O’Donnell and Schmitter, *Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*. 
dency and, eventually, to the severance of old dependency by 1989. The years after 1990 were characterized by two-digit unemployment and inflation above 30 percent, which created popular disillusionment toward the government, the political class, and party politics in general. This increased the prestige of intellectuals as a “last resort” and the unusually strong trust toward intellectuals.

The seventh criterion of the emergence of intellectual activism is that the borders isolating social groups are sociologically so strong that prevent their effective joint activity. This is when the intellectuals undertake the role of representing other social groups. As I suggested above, dissidents as well as the greatest portion of intellectuals of liberal arts were successfully isolated from other groups of society by the Kádár regime. Thus, intellectuals had been unable to build a broad social coalition against the dictatorial regime up until 1988. After 1990, the intellectual movement organized already in the environment of freedom of speech, press, and association, but the DC still remained—in the first period of its existence—an intellectual movement relying on a broader base. Nonintellectual actors started flowing into the movement only from 1993.

Finally, as an eighth factor, Karabel mentioned the possibility that the society might have historically developed cultural patterns of resistance to power which can be conjured up as symbolically imprinted messages in times of crises. Such patterns existed in Hungary, although they were mainly related to the tradition of violent revolutions, including the so-called “Kossuth song” of 1848 or the national flag with a hole from 1956. The role of the intellectuals was to translate the cultural patterns of revolution in such a way, according to the requirements of nonviolent transition, that they would not lose sight of the goal of the lawful revolution. Because of this, the early references to the revolution of 1956 later gave way to references to peaceful historical new beginnings. In 1989, participants of the transition often referred to the revolution of 1956, but in fact 1989 signaled a break with the revolutionary tradition of 1956.

What all this shows is that the status of the Hungarian dissident intellectuals in the 1980s mostly met the points Karabel mentioned as the antecedents of the revolt of the intellectuals. However, it did not meet the criterion that the ratio of free-floating intellectuals was high within their ranks. In the first decade, the movement of the dissidents was small, isolated, and
essentially limited to certain segments of the middle-class layer of Budapest. Thus, intellectual “New Class formation” was never on the agenda of the dissidents. Rather, they always focused on mediation, dialogue, broadening the group, changing the frames of the public, and forming alliances with other critical groupings. Moreover, when in the exceptional year of 1988 mass demonstration took place and the movements of politics unequivocally turned toward democracy, intellectual movements became more open as well. When the time for mass politics arrived, opposition politics lost its exclusive intellectual character. This is summarized by Table 28 below.

Karabel’s criteria appeared even more eminently in the years after the regime change when, after the “constitution-maker” role of the intellectuals, their movement role temporarily came to the fore again. The public in these years saw the intensifying conflicts between humanistic intellectuals who could mold opinion with great erudition on the one hand, and democratically elected politicians referring to that legitimacy on the other hand.

In Hungary, rapid political pluralization preceded the first free elections. Thus, no great umbrella organization covering all the opposition groups appeared like Solidarity in Poland, or Civic Forum in Czechoslovakia. Competition among parties developed already before the challenge of democracy, thus the communist–anticommunist cleavage became just one among many. The two most important new political parties grew out of intellectual circles (the company of historians, sociologists, writers, philosophers, and others), and therefore the political scene was occupied by these cultural “tribes.”

In the first few years after the elections, the various topics and interpretations of symbolic politics were the main issues on the public agenda.

I made several statements throughout the book with respect to the role of intellectuals and the regime change in Hungary. I showed that intellectuals can be conceptualized in various ways, but I did not accept either particular definition as an exclusive one. My reason for this was, first, that during the long decade of Hungarian intellectual politics I have encountered numerous ideal types of politically active intellectuals. In this period, intellectual groups described by the classical definitions of Benda, Gramsci, Mannheim,

8 Tamás, “The Legacy of Dissent.”
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Table 28. The possibility of intellectual protests: Theoretical criteria and practical realizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical criteria</th>
<th>The Political Context in Hungary (1980s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intellectuals are a well-organized, but subordinate group</td>
<td>Dissident intellectuals are a minority group among intellectuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The lack of strong bourgeoisie</td>
<td>The lack of bourgeoisie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The share of free-floating intellectuals is relatively</td>
<td>Marginalized dissident intellectuals and the relatively less indoctrinated reform intellectuals interact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>large vis-à-vis applied intellectuals living under</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>organization indoctrination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately oppressive regime</td>
<td>Declining dictatorship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dividedness of the political leadership</td>
<td>The gradually growing dividedness of political leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak state</td>
<td>Gradually weakening party state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation of the social layers from each other</td>
<td>Isolation of the social layers from each other and the lack of solidarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historically developed cultural patterns of resistance</td>
<td>Historically developed cultural patterns of resistance exist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and others existed at the same time and almost in parallel, each group representing certain typical traits of intellectualism. But actors were present also from the New Class theories and the subsequent and different approaches related to the names of Foucault, Bauman, and Bourdieu.¹⁰ In these theoretical frameworks the intellectuals were observed as participants within the discursive communities, cultural communities, and specific knowledge communities, each bound together by the practice of reference to culture, cultural capital, or specific professional knowledge. Finally, intellectual movements and negotiations of the Hungarian opposition also created situations which were in the focus of Karabel’s above-described approach, while the dynamics of the regime change allowed for such effective “interventions” as Eyal and Buchholz describe,¹¹ which elevated certain actors into the category

¹¹ Eyal and Buchholz, “From the Sociology of Intellectuals to the Sociology of Interventions.”
of intellectual celebrity in a short time. But regardless the different types of activists, the big picture framed the dynamics of a rolling transition in which actors tended to replace and rotate themselves in the given structures.

As the revolving stage of the rolling transition featured every type of intellectuals or public-intellectual behavior, it would have been a mistake to narrow the subject of the book right at the beginning by an early chosen definition about the intellectual. Some people opted for one or another type of political activity as intellectuals, while others defined the intellectuals by their participation in the public life. I did not define intellectuals by the power they hold, because I did not regard it self-evident that intellectuals strive for power or define themselves in the dimension of power. The model of rolling transition does not reinforce this automatism, quite the contrary: even when intellectuals dominated the stage, they never considered themselves united by their status group or social position. It is not evident that the intellectuals’ thinking is defined by their power aspirations or, even if they are influenced by such aspirations, that such aspirations are more definitive than in the case of nonintellectuals. However, this resulted in instructive situations after 1989, when academia, politics, media, and business were equally open to intellectuals and this variety of gravitational attractions gave rise to a new layer of hybrid intellectuals.\footnote{Medvetz, \textit{Think Tanks in America}.}

The 1989 regime change in Hungary was preceded by an extensive, decade-long work of preparation. Alongside the state, a “second society,” the circle of dissidents, and later the movement of the democratic opposition came into being. But it was also related to Hungarian peculiarities—particularly the nature of the Kádár regime—that there was no such strong dividing line between state and society as the one in Poland. There was regular communication between outsider dissidents and insider, often party member reformers, which was reinforced by the mutual openness of these groups toward each other. It was easier for the dissidents to find their way to the reformist party intellectuals than the (politically passive) layers of workers. While dissidents lived in the “second society,” workers, employees, and agricultural laborers lived (also) in the “second economy.” However, this did not imply connection between them as the concepts of second economy and second society indeed referred to two very different social segments.
Conclusion

The dialogue of opposition intellectuals and the reform intellectuals related to the party slowly resulted in a new community of expression, the culture of critical discourse. This was used by the two regime-critical groups to successfully overshadow the traditional communist elite, while they could also distinguish themselves from the society. Besides the rhetoric of civil society, the issues of human rights, equal human dignity, as well as the surviving constitutional rights, overlain by socialist legalism, were the fundamentals of the politics of emancipation. These ideas stemmed from the thoughts of István Bibó’s Anglo-Saxon liberal philosophy, as well as the paradigm change of US foreign policy which made the idea of human rights a political issue. The nascent Hungarian democratic opposition was equally influenced by the nonviolent initiative of Charta ’77 in Czechoslovakia and the self-organizing and self-limiting nature of the Solidarity movement in Poland.

Nevertheless, the language of human rights, civil society, radical reform, and market economy did not prove to be robust enough in a social sense, for the broader masses of people. Dissidents and reformers communicated in a different way from the people, which caused problems with respect to developing social relations. They tried to overcome this disadvantage by country tours, discussions and forums in university clubs, community centers, and other circles of informal institutions—that is, by doing tough work. They did not preach revolutionary tenets but the ideas of radical reformism. Although they could not foresee the regime change either, they tried to raise awareness that the country was in a crisis and only choosing radical reforms provide a nonviolent way out. Waking up and mobilizing society had come to fruition by 1988, but this could not fundamentally change the elitist nature of the regime change.

In the long decade of transition, there were 2,037 people who openly embraced the opposition form of protest to the regime or protested the defects of democracy. As I presented, 91 percent of them (1,845 people) were intellectuals, including those young people who became intellectuals in these years.¹³ Such dense participation of this social group did not characterize the democratic transformation of other Central European countries. In Hungary, a transformation not revolutionary in kind brought about revolu-

¹³ The number of participants obviously depends on the selected events. However, the proportion is roughly the same with some more or less events.
tionary results. Here, the Bastille was not demolished by a single storm but by the coordinated, yet not always conscious, cooperation of various groups. Exploring this, I isolated five phases to be able to identify the actors of each period more closely, as well as the character of their activity. I called these phases as dissident, open network-builder, negotiating, parliamentary, and new pro-democracy movement periods.

The Roundtable talks of 1989 ended up as a special form of elite settlement\(^{14}\) of the emerging counter-elite and the representatives of the decaying party elite and its satellite organizations. The parties reformed, not only their own relationship but the political institutional system as well. The crowning moment of this was the adoption of a new constitution in terms of content. To describe this process, I needed to examine elite theories as well as theories of intellectuals. The elite settlement happened without the direct, continuous participation of society but not against their will: The people of the streets expressed its volition time and again and demonstrated in mass protests that they supported the regime-changing forces.\(^{15}\) The adoption of the new constitution was accompanied by a referendum in the issues that were left unresolved by the Roundtable talks, thereby lending democratic reinforcement to the regime change’s result. This was followed by the free elections, both national and local. The turnover in these elections was not high compared to other countries in the region, but it was enough so that the voters, closing a nonrevolutionary process, expressed their consent.

Elite groups standing out of opposition intellectuals were able to cooperate at the Opposition Roundtable, but this did not mean that the general distrust between them disappeared or even faded. Distrust is a natural element of every politics, but an excessive deficit of trust may manifest even in such institutional changes that later turn out to have a boomerang effect. In Hungary, such was the unreasonably high number of laws requiring two-thirds majority, which remained too numerous even after the pact between MDF and SZDSZ in 1990. Laws that require two-thirds majority do not allow the government to govern, that is, to use the mandate it was given by the voters. At the same time, such laws give unjustifiable “governmental” responsibilities to the opposition. Thus, laws requiring two-thirds majority

\(^{14}\) Burton and Higley, “Elite Settlements.”

\(^{15}\) Renwick, “The Role of Non-Elite Forces.”
blur the responsibility of the government and the opposition and hamper
the realization of governmental politics just as the opportunity of the oppo-
sition to develop an alternative. Maybe it is not unfounded to suppose that
mutual reservations would have had a much smaller effect on politics if the
opposition parties had not been dominated by the representatives of a sin-
gle social group.

One of the greatest revived cleavages, the well-known populist-urban
divide, ensured the survival of the two constructions of Hungary’s history
and future. The populists believed themselves to be the faithful representa-
tives of the popular will. At first, they did not even want to establish a
party because they wanted to represent the nation as a whole. They held that
Hungary must follow its own way and a specific “Hungarian ideology,” as
opposed to importing foreign patterns. When legality hindered justice, they
regarded the latter’s value as higher. Liberals wanted to rebuild the country
following Western models, and they emphasized the importance of “return
to Europe.” In contrast, the populists and the conservatives opined that
Hungary had always belonged to Europe and therefore its “Europeanization”
is needless. While the populists spoke the language of “tradition,” the liber-
als spoke the language of “progress.” While the populists wanted to acceler-
ate the process of the regime change, the latter believed that it would have
been a mistake to “revolutionize” the transition ex post, and they focused on
the democratization of the new constitutional system instead. The popu-
lists accused the Antall government of lacking a deeper commitment to the
Hungarians and selling out the country as the victim of a conspiracy of for-
eign capitalists. The most influential representative of this position was the
writer-politician, István Csurka.\footnote{Csurka, “Néhány gondolat.”}

But the government was attacked, not only by the more and more radical
populists but also by the liberal protectors of democracy. The starting point
of the left-wing and liberal intellectual movement, the DC was that Hungary
was not sufficiently democratic yet and the people were not involved in pol-
itics to an adequate degree. In the name of an interpretation of democracy
that embraced the various forms of political participation, the signatories of
the Charter opposed the existing elite democracy that was based on a prin-
principle of representation which restricted pluralism to the multiparty system. \(^{17}\) Although this was partially a newer version of an old debate (namely that of emphasizing the priority of representative or participatory democracy), the spokespersons of DC claimed that they were “more democratic” than others. They mobilized tens of thousands of people for demonstrations against the growing radical right. As a result, they kept the issue of the quality of democracy on the agenda and contributed to the fall of the conservative government on the 1994 elections. By this time, however, it had already become clear that the voters were less interested in symbolic politics: after freedom, they desired security. The people understood that a new hierarchy of social inequalities was forming in these critical, unformed years, and they also knew that their actions might affect their entire life. The voters wanted to hear more, not about freedom but equality and the opportunities of dignified life. Therefore, they voted for the party which promised that its coming to power meant that “expertise comes to power.” The regime-changing, ideology-driven parties and their intellectual elite were more and more rejected.

The rhetorical battles of the years after the transition were mainly about the possession of historical memory and the realization of one of the competing visions of the future. Identity politics was, in a significant part, a symbolic fight for the possession of the “only true” memory of history. The ideas about the future of the country entailed similar battles, albeit the EU was attractive enough so that every parliamentary party supported Hungary’s joining to the Union. The debate around historical memory and vision was the last great battle of the opinion-molder intellectuals, who could use the credibility they had accumulated before and during the regime change to influence the identity of the new democracy.

The case discussed in this book, supports the argument for the model of rolling transition. To sum up, by rolling transition, I mean an incremental, nonviolent, elite driven political transformation which is based on the rotation of agency and it results in a new regime. This is led mainly by different groups of intellectuals—from bohemian, artistic, academic, free-floating types to different professionals and organizational intellectuals—who do not construct a vanguard movement or a New Class organization but create an open-network which might transform itself, if necessary, into dif-

\(^{17}\) Demokratikus Charta.
Conclusion

ferent political parties. The rolling transition gives the impression that the opposition is weak and fragmented, but it turns out that weak ties could be more powerful in shaping the political dynamics and achieving success.\textsuperscript{18} Outsiders are more willing to join nonviolent campaigns than violent ones because the threshold of participation is lower\textsuperscript{19} and trust-based solidarity-networks can be enlarged more effectively. Newcomers can easier have a voice. The intellectuals participating in the rolling transition were forced by the conditions to become more inclusive and to perform better than it was originally expected. Under pressure these intellectual groups were able to find a common denominator in political action, just as in making and remaking political strategy. They could therefore make themselves attractive for broader social strata. Despite their spontaneity and relatively slow tempo, these features make the rolling transitions viable alternatives to violent revolutions, coup d’états, elite settlements, or technocratic-managerial reforms.

When the rolling transition ended the political positions of the new powerholders became strong again. The halo of regime-changing action had lost the moral driving force it once had, and governance took on a routine-like, “post-revolutionary” image. The intellectuals of the humanities and social sciences, who had played significant, active roles in the political battles of the regime change, retired relatively quickly. They were named as “politocracy”\textsuperscript{20} or “hybrid intellectuals”\textsuperscript{21} referring to those intellectuals who were able to influence political processes substantially, often appeared in the media, and were politically active at the same time. They were replaced by the managers of the regime’s operation. In the years before the appearance and dominance of capitalists, in the period of “post-communist managerialism”\textsuperscript{22} the ideology of modernization veiled traditional cleavages and tried to project the vision of a secure, ideology-free, democratic capitalism.

The democratic regime born out of the chaotic situation after the transition required new adaptation: the atomized society had to rebuild the network of its interest relations. The “post-intellectual” wild capitalist era was equally defined by the cult of individualism and the reconstruction of inter-

\textsuperscript{18} Granovetter, “The Strength of Weak Ties.”
\textsuperscript{19} Chenoweth and Stephan, \textit{Why Civil Resistance Works}.
\textsuperscript{20} Konrád and Szelenyi, “Intellectuals and Domination in Post-Communist Societies.”
\textsuperscript{21} Medvetz, \textit{Think Tanks in America}.
\textsuperscript{22} Eyal, Szelenyi, and Townsley, “The Theory of Post-Communist Managerialism.”
Conclusion

est groups. Social actors were led by the vision of an imaginary capitalism from which they expected to prosper. In the next years, various “-cracies”—technocracy, meritocracy, plutocracy, partocracy, kleptocracy—took the place of such concepts of the 1980s opposition as human rights, civil society, and political community. The new concepts competed in a game characterized by “now or never” changeable rules. But a description of consolidation, as well as the analysis of the predominant ideas and actors of post-transition settings, belongs to another discussion.