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0521479312 - Institutional Design in Post-Communist Societies: Rebuilding the Ship at Sea
Jon Elster, Claus Offe, and Ulrich K. Preuss

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The authors of this book have developed a new and stimulating approach to the analysis of the transitions of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia to democracy and a market economy. They integrate interdisciplinary theoretical work with elaborate empirical data on some of the most challenging events of the twentieth century. Three groups of phenomena and their causal interconnection are explored: the material legacies, constraints, habits, and cognitive frameworks inherited from the past; the erratic configuration of new actors, and new spaces for action; and a new institutional order under which agency is institutionalized and the sustainability of institutions is achieved. The book studies the interrelations of national identities, economic interests, and political institutions with the transformation process, concentrating on issues of constitution making, democratic infrastructure, the market economy, and social policy.

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INSTITUTIONAL DESIGN IN
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Rebuilding the Ship at Sea

JON ELSTER, CLAUS OFFE, AND
ULRICH K. PREUSS

with

FRANK BOENKER, ULRIKE GOETTING, AND
FRIEDBERT W. RUEB



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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xi
1 Introduction: agenda, agency, and the aims of Central East European transitions	1
1 The particular character of the Central and East European transitions	3
2 The role of military force and conflict	6
3 The political context: weak agents, diverse aspirations	11
4 The agenda: economic interests, political institutions, national identities	17
5 The demise of European state socialism	21
6 Consolidating the new order by institutionalizing agency: who shall be in charge?	27
2 Mapping Eastern Europe	35
1 Introduction	35
2 Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary at the outset of transformation: comparative country profiles	37
3 The demise of communist rule: modes of extrication	48
4 The shadow of the past: methodological remarks	60
3 Constitutional politics in Eastern Europe	63
1 Constitution making	64
2 Constitutional structure and provisions	80

Cambridge University Press

0521479312 - Institutional Design in Post-Communist Societies: Rebuilding the Ship at Sea

Jon Elster, Claus Offe, and Ulrich K. Preuss

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

viii

CONTENTS

4 Building and consolidating democracies	109
1 Introduction	109
2 The choice and consequences of the electoral systems	111
3 Political parties, cleavage structures, and party systems: the prospects for party competition	131
5 Building capitalism in Eastern Europe	156
1 Introduction	156
2 The state of the economic reform: constraints, dilemmas, paradoxes	158
3 Bringing the state back out	161
4 The furnishing of capitalism	183
5 The long road to functioning markets	194
6 Social policy transformation	203
1 Introduction	203
2 The old welfare regime and the reform ambitions after 1989	204
3 Reform policies since 1989: institutional continuities and changes in the realm of social policy	208
4 Management of social protection: from state command to interest coordination	234
5 Comparative assessment: state of reform and performance	244
7 Consolidation and the cleavages of ideology and identity	247
1 Categorical conflicts and class conflicts	247
2 Ethnic and other “identity-based” cleavages	254
3 Politico-ideological cleavages	261
4 Conclusion	267
8 Conclusion: the unfinished project	271
1 Criteria and prerequisites of consolidation	271
2 Evaluation of the outcomes of the transition process in the four countries under study	274
3 How to explain the ranking	292
4 Concluding observations	305
<i>References</i>	309
<i>Index</i>	346

Cambridge University Press

0521479312 - Institutional Design in Post-Communist Societies: Rebuilding the Ship at Sea

Jon Elster, Claus Offe, and Ulrich K. Preuss

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgements

The topics that we deal with in this book have two things in common: they are evidently of great consequence for the evolution of a new socio-political and economic order in Central East Europe, and these consequences, as well as the mechanisms that bring them about, are largely uncertain and untested. Also, the authors of this book share two features: their interest in Central East European transformations has been relatively recent, and they therefore had to operate (as is the case with quite a number of recent authors in the emerging field of “transitology”) without the benefit of the comprehensive experience, expertise, and linguistic competence that has normally been accumulated throughout a career by “area specialists.”

It is for these kinds of deficiencies that we had to start with, that we depended on the help of others to an uncommon extent in the conduct of our research. Gathering data in the countries under study, conducting interviews, tracking down key agents and key events, making contact with the “local” theories about the trajectories of change in post-state-socialist societies, and refining our typologies and interpretations were all tasks that could not be accomplished, or accomplished to the extent to which we actually succeeded, without the assistance of people who, within as well as outside of academia, were willing to help with the tasks of data collection, with sharing their knowledge and insight, and with following the project with critical attention as its findings emerged. We wish to express our sincere gratitude to all of them, while none of them should be blamed for the shortcomings of our analysis.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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We have also tried to compensate for our collective lack of long-standing “area-expertise” by designing a rather elaborate scheme of specialization and division of labor among the six persons – three senior and three junior by age and academic seniority – that have (hopefully) cumulatively cooperated in writing this volume. Thus drafting responsibilities were allocated for the individual chapters. The chapters were drafted, before undergoing a lengthy process of joint discussion and subsequent revisions, by the following persons: Offe (chapter 1), Boenker, Goetting and Preuss (chapter 2), Elster and Preuss (chapter 3), Rueb (chapter 4), Boenker (chapter 5), Goetting (chapter 6), Offe (chapter 7) and Preuss (chapter 8).

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Abbreviations

AG TRAP	Arbeitsgruppe Transformationsprozesse der Max-Planck-Gesellschaft
CEPR	Centre for Economic Policy Research
CERGE-EI	Centre for Economic Research and Graduate Education Charles University, Economics Institute of the Academy of Science of the Czech Republic
CEE	Central Eastern Europe
CEU	Commission of the European Union
CMEA	Council for Mutual Economic Aid
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ECO	Economic Co-operation Organization
ECPR	European Consortium for Political Research
EECR	East European Constitutional Review
EUI	European University Institute, Florence
ILO-CEET	International Labour Office / Central East European Team
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPSA	International Political Science Association
iw-trends	Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft-Trends
NBER	National Bureau of Economic Research
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RFE/RL	Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty
SSRC/ACLS	Social Science Research Council/American Council of Learned Society

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xii

ABBREVIATIONS

UCEMET	University Council for Economic and Management Education Transfer
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations/Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNICEF-ICDC	UNICEF – International Child Development Centre
WIIW	Wiener Institut für Internationale Wirtschaftsvergleiche
WZB	Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin
ZERP	Zentrum für Europäische Rechtspolitik an der Universität Bremen