

Whither Central and Eastern Europe?

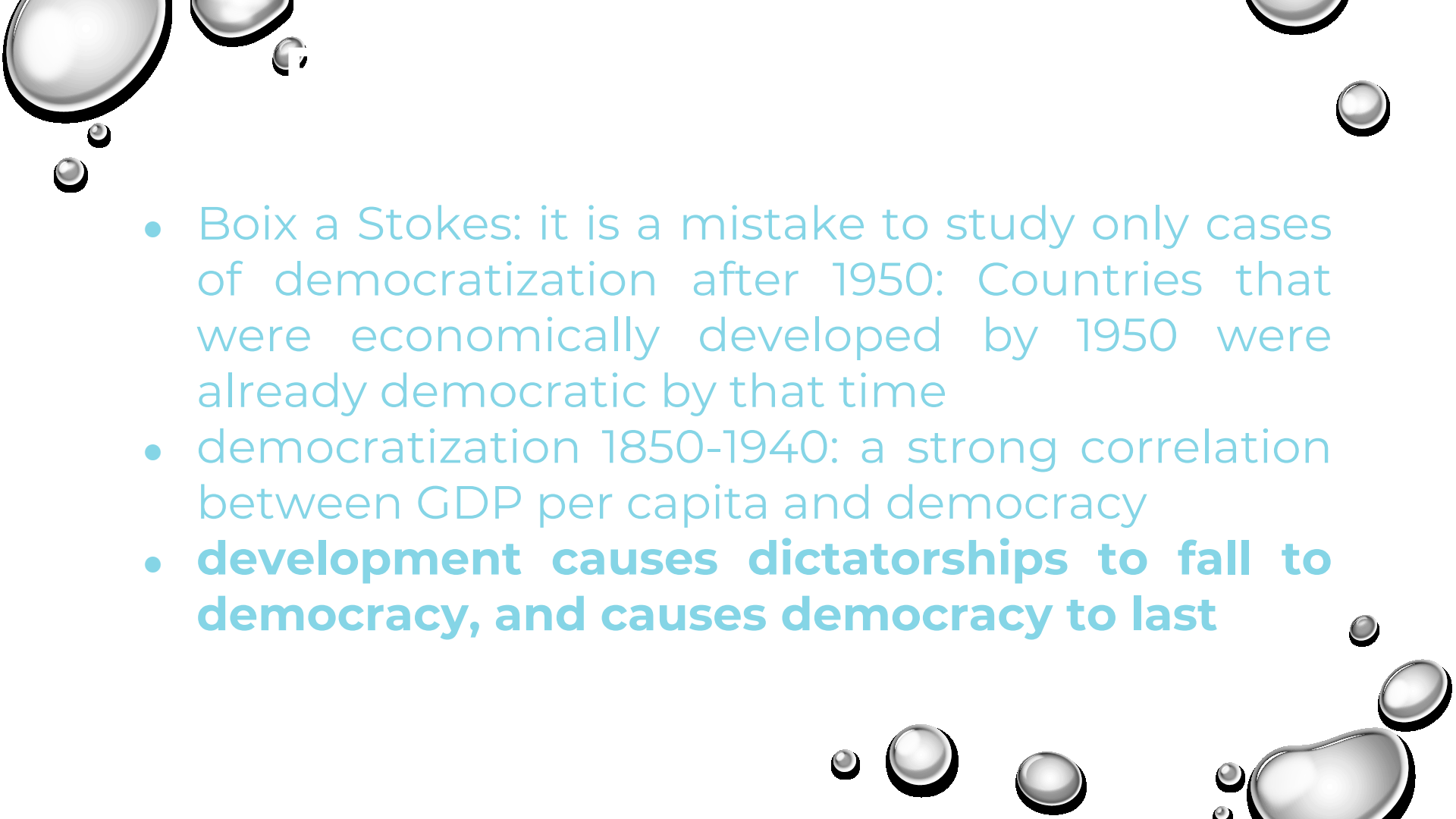
Post-Communist Politics PMCb1109
Autumn 2024
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- **Robert DAHL:** Polyarchy/democracy
 - 1. Control over governmental decisions about policy is constitutionally vested in **elected officials**
 - 2. chosen and peacefully removed in relatively frequent, fair and **free elections**
 - 3. all adults have the right to vote
 - 4. most adults also have the right to run for the public offices
 - 5. citizens have an enforced right to freedom of expression
 - 6. have access to alternative sources of information
 - 7. have an enforced right to form political parties and interest groups



- **A) explanations that emphasize deep-seated factors**

- economic factors ▶□ modernization ▶□ political progress (democracy)
 - S.M. Lipset (1959): GDP per capita leads to democratization and strengthens democracy
 - **criticized by:** Przeworski et al.: the birth of democracy is independent of the GDP per capita
 - however, the likelihood that democracy survives increases with sustained economic growth
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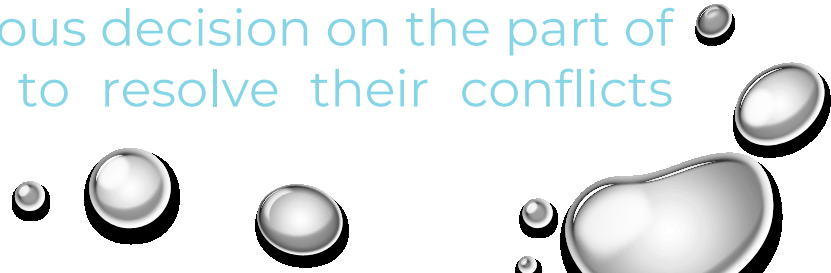
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- Boix a Stokes: it is a mistake to study only cases of democratization after 1950: Countries that were economically developed by 1950 were already democratic by that time
 - democratization 1850-1940: a strong correlation between GDP per capita and democracy
 - **development causes dictatorships to fall to democracy, and causes democracy to last**





- **B) actor-centered explanations of democratic transitions:**

- D. Rustow: a dynamic model of transition
- you do not need democrats for democracy to emerge
- A prolonged and inconclusive political struggle between competing groups of elites may lead to a situation that they decide to compromise and adopt democratic forms of rule
- democracy is a result of a conscious decision on the part of elites to adopt impartial rules to resolve their conflicts (POL, HUN?)





RUSSIA

KAZAHKSTAN

Black Sea

Caspian Sea

TAJIKISTAN

- freedom house DATA
- **Democracies:** Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia
- **Autocracies:** Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan
- **Defective Democracies:** Albania, Georgia, Macedonia, Moldova, Mongolia, Ukraine
- a link between character of the regime and geographical location of the countries
- **WHY?**

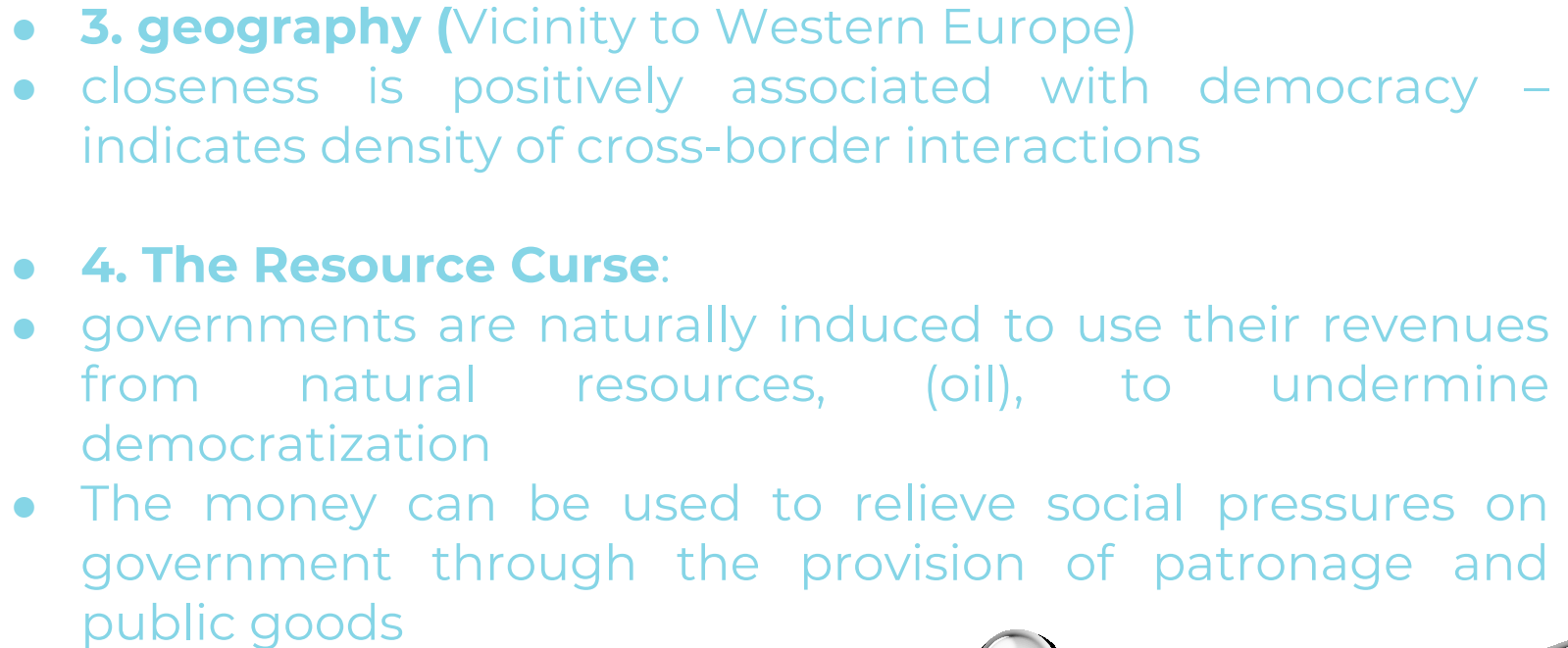


1. Political legacies:

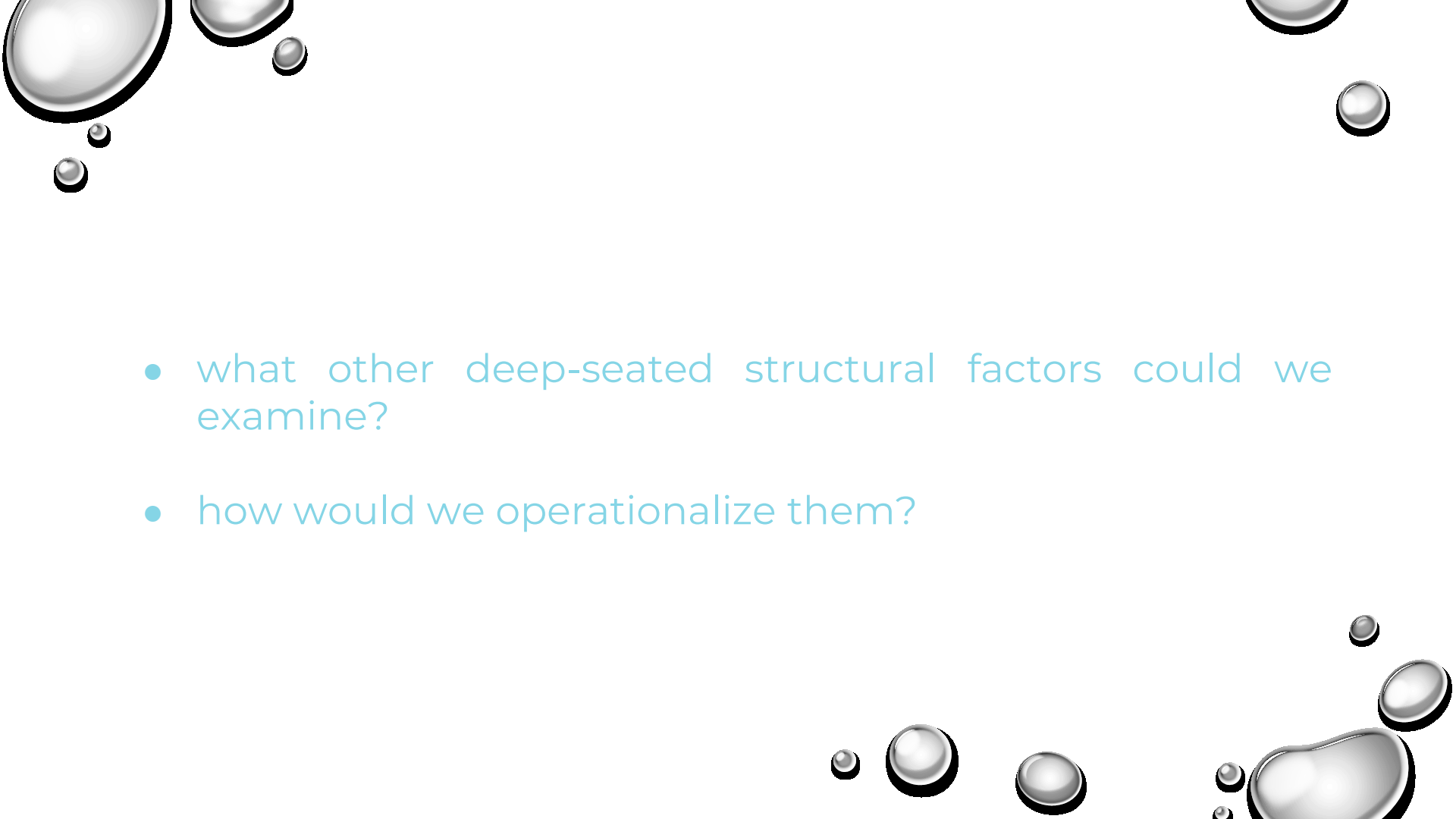
- Based on the status on the two pre-communist attributes of **bureaucratic state legacies** and **the balance of power** between communists and their challengers at the introduction of communist rule:
- bureaucratic-authoritarian (Czechoslovakia) and national-accommodative (Hungary) vs. patrimonial communism (Bulgaria) and colonial periphery (Kazakhstan)

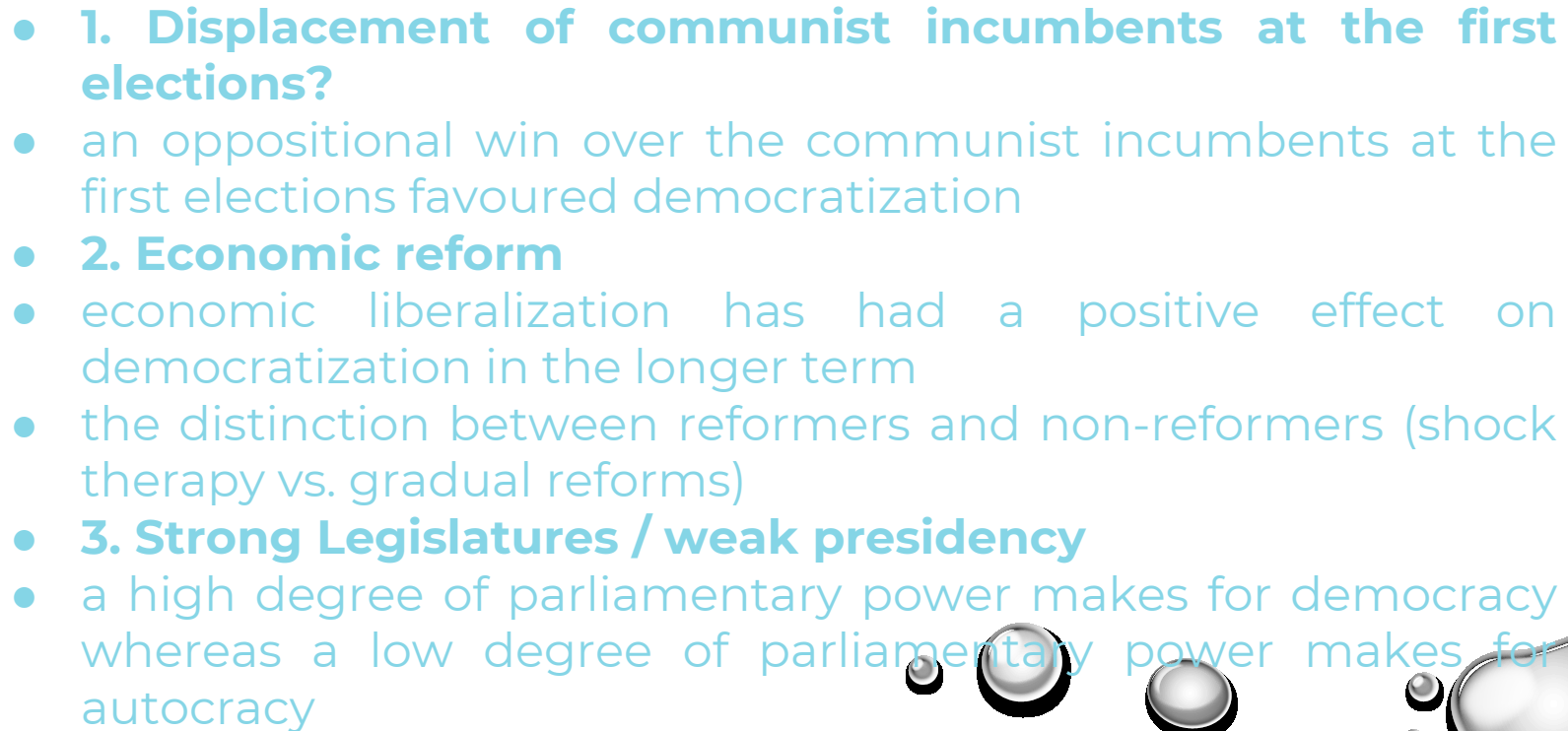
2. Modernization:

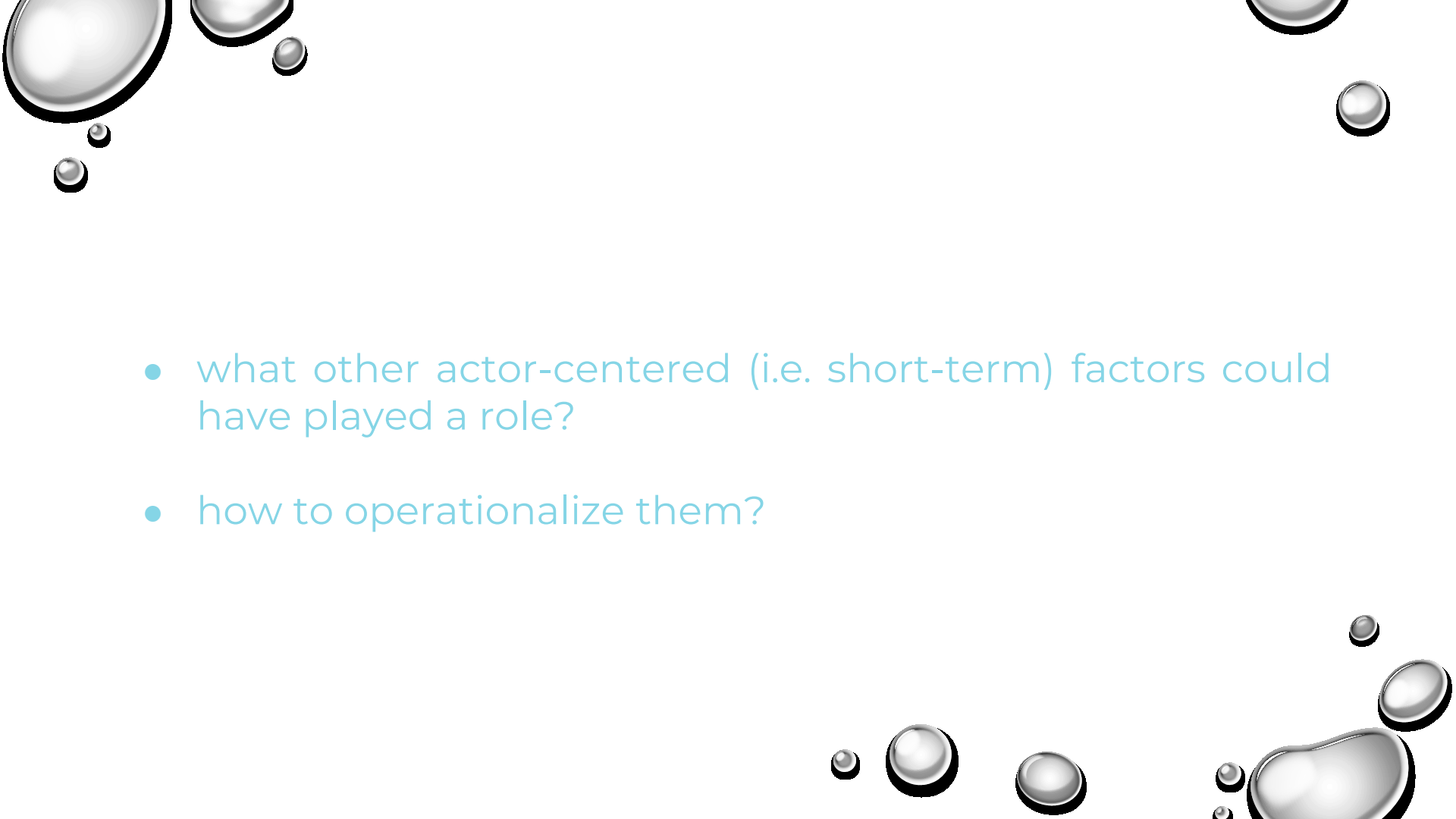
- the first GDP figures after the breakdown of communism
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- **3. geography** (Vicinity to Western Europe)
 - closeness is positively associated with democracy – indicates density of cross-border interactions

 - **4. The Resource Curse:**
 - governments are naturally induced to use their revenues from natural resources, (oil), to undermine democratization
 - The money can be used to relieve social pressures on government through the provision of patronage and public goods

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- The slide features a white background with several realistic, 3D-rendered bubbles of various sizes. These bubbles are positioned in the corners: a cluster in the top-left, a single one in the top-right, and a larger group in the bottom-right. The bubbles have highlights and shadows, giving them a metallic or glass-like appearance.
- what other deep-seated structural factors could we examine?
 - how would we operationalize them?

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- **1. Displacement of communist incumbents at the first elections?**
 - an oppositional win over the communist incumbents at the first elections favoured democratization
 - **2. Economic reform**
 - economic liberalization has had a positive effect on democratization in the longer term
 - the distinction between reformers and non-reformers (shock therapy vs. gradual reforms)
 - **3. Strong Legislatures / weak presidency**
 - a high degree of parliamentary power makes for democracy whereas a low degree of parliamentary power makes for autocracy

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- what other actor-centered (i.e. short-term) factors could have played a role?
 - how to operationalize them?

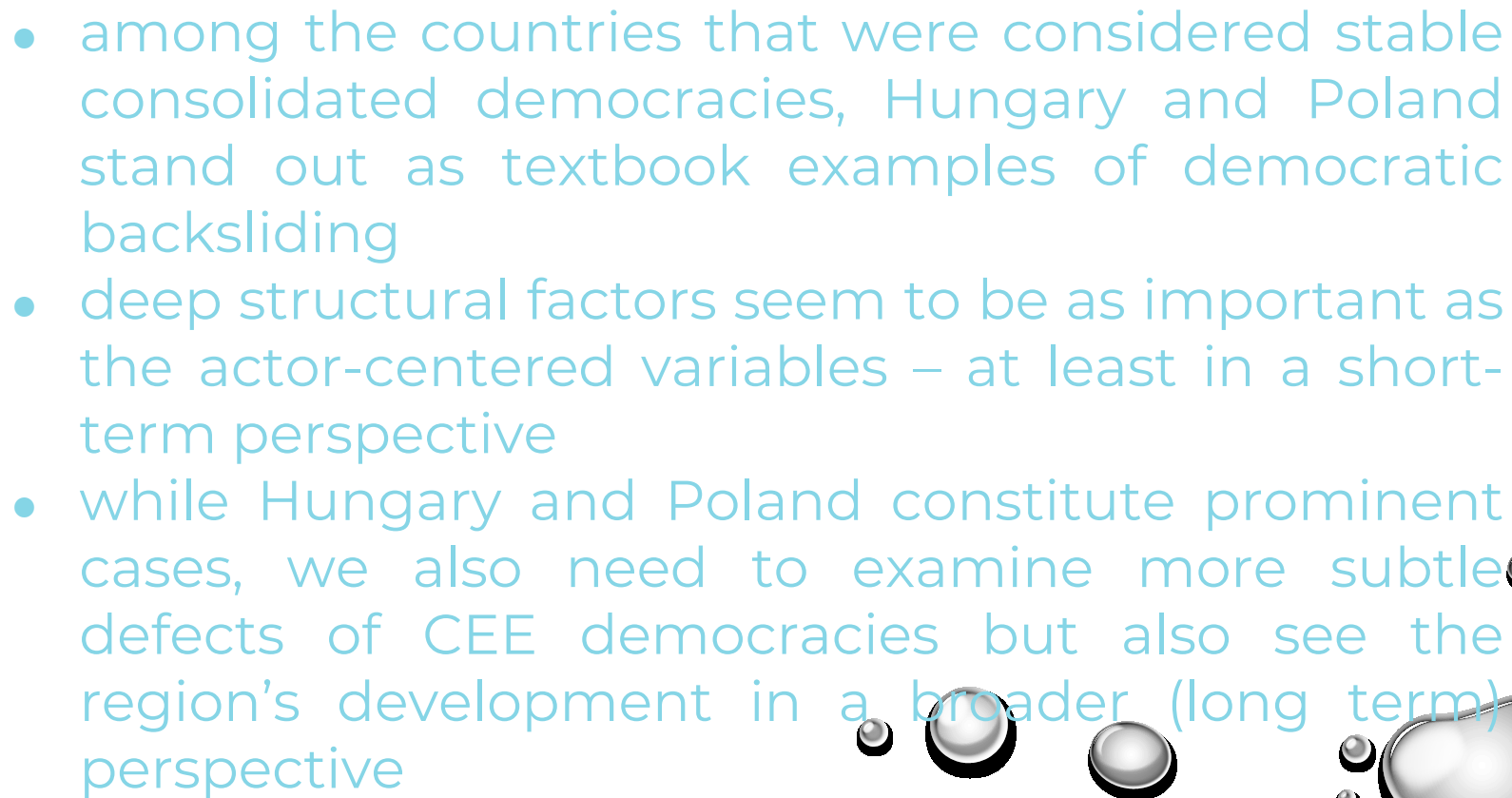
- in 2005, favorable political legacy & modernization & no resource curse & favorable geography --- met by 9 out of 11 cases of democracies, only Romania & Bulgaria had less favorable political legacy
- poor political legacy, low level of modernization & distance from the West is typical of all autocracies (only Russia crossed a minimal level of modernization/GDP per capita)
- **defective democracies:** none of the six defective democracies either had or lacked **all** the structural attributes
- when considering all four structural variables, **19 out of 26** countries are classified as anticipated theoretically

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- Where all three attributes are present, democracy is the expected political outcome: **communist displacement, economic reform and strong legislature** – met by 9 democratic countries (not in Rom and Bul)
 - **communist elite continuity, slow reforms and strong presidents** – met by 6 autocratic regimes (and three other cases – ARM, KGZ and RUS only met the first criterion)
 - Of the six defective democracies, four have the expected mixed combinations of attributes whereas two (Macedonia and Ukraine) exhibit the respective presence and absence of all attributes
 - when considering all actor-centered variables, **19 out of the 26** countries are classified as anticipated theoretically

- all 7 favorable conditions met by CRO, CZE, EST, HUN, LAT, LIT, POL, SVK, SLO; 5 out of 7 met by additional three states (ROM, BUL, MAC)
- no favorable condition existed in 4 cases: AZE, KAZ, TURK, UZB,
- One favorable condition met by TJK, two favorable conditions met by BEL, RUS, ARM, GEO and KIR
- In ROM and BUL, **EU political conditionality** had played a decisive role (external influence)
- defective democracies characterized by a great internal diversity and heterogeneity





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- among the countries that were considered stable consolidated democracies, Hungary and Poland stand out as textbook examples of democratic backsliding
 - deep structural factors seem to be as important as the actor-centered variables – at least in a short-term perspective
 - while Hungary and Poland constitute prominent cases, we also need to examine more subtle defects of CEE democracies but also see the region's development in a broader (long term) perspective

THANKS!



Thank you for your attention!

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