intersections

East European Journal of Society and Politics

Making Sense of Difference

Social Sciences
in the Central and East European Semi-Periphery

Intersections. East European Journal of Society and Politics
is an Open Access peer-reviewed electronic journal.
When citing an article, please use the article's DOI identifier.

Table of Contents

ESZTER BARTHA & GÁBOR ERŐSS *
Fortress, Colony or Interpreter?
Reviewing Our Peers

* [bartha.eszter@tk.mta.hu] (Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Hungary); [eross.gabor@tk.mta.hu] (Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Hungary)

Who are we? What have we been doing?

These questions may refer to all kinds of group identities, whether national, generational or professional. The main issue that we addressed in the call for this second, thematic issue of *Intersections* was to interrogate the historical and academic specificity of the Eastern (East-Central or Central) European region. What renders the region specific and what kind of knowledge needs to be produced in order to grasp this specificity without falling into the trap of universalism or parochialism? What has been the role of the region's intellectuals and how has this role been transformed since the collapse of state socialism? In other words, we asked questions and demanded confessions about our own professional identity and academic achievements in the context of the social sciences in the East-Central European periphery, and in an environment characterized by a largely unequal distribution of funding and academic career opportunities.

Inspired by two essential but controversial articles, written in 1991 and 1996 respectively, we urged our authors to re-open the discussion about academic relations and knowledge transfer between East and West in order to test whether or not the seemingly very heterogeneous scientific products of the region can bring about some sort of local way of looking at things and people, and whether or not critical discourse produced in the East can formulate a coherent reading of talking back to the West and can participate in the production of global knowledge on an equal footing.

In the special issue of *Replika* Anna Wessely (1996 [1991]) argued that social sciences in this region are embedded in a socio-historic context that Norbert Elias calls "Kultur" (as opposed to civilisation) and Immanuel Wallerstein calls "semi-periphery" (as opposed both to the centre and to the periphery). Also, modernisation has taken a specific shape in this region: it has been a one-sided, state-controlled process, unaccompanied by the development of civil society, while many members of these societies have experienced the type of social relationship described as characteristic of the "stranger" by Simmel. Jewish intellectuals in the region certainly had this experience and could therefore act as interpreters between various cultures. Mention must also be made of the specific process of embourgeoisement in countries of the region such as Hungary, where this process was dominated by 'strangers' (Jews and Germans). This special type of modernisation shaped not only the social experience of these countries but also the epistemological perspectives of their social scientists.

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 4-11.
BARTHA, E. AND G. ERŐSS: FORTRESS, COLONY OR INTERPRETER?

5

Eastern Europeans in general experienced the secular coexistence of various ethnic, religious, and linguistic communities on the territories of belatedly evolved nation states – a situation which generated a therapeutic intent expressed through languages of translation such as Mannheim's sociology of knowledge, Freud's psychoanalysis, and Wittgenstein's philosophy of language games, which all refer to a pre-theoretical background, whether *Weltanschauung, Lebensform,* or *Unbehagen.* A similarly motivated refusal or apprehension to follow the rules of academic social science has given rise to a specific genre – sociography – in many East European countries, especially Poland, Hungary and Romania. This academic output – to which György Szerbhorváth's essay in this issue refers – is characterised by undifferentiated and metaphorical social discourse that blend fiction, political pamphlet, essay and formal scholarship. In the debate that followed György Lengyel called this the "problem-oriented" approach (as opposed to the "paradigm-oriented" scientific methods).

Eastern Europe invented public sociology decades before Michael Burawoy (2005) theorised about it. The most striking example of this posture is that of social scientists-activists devoted to the study *and* emancipation of the Roma in Hungary and elsewhere, active as researchers, experts and public intellectuals at the same time, both before and after 1989.

While obstacles to this approach and the subsequent movement that it brought into being were hardly scarce after 1989 either, this cognitive stance (if it has ever dominated the region at all) has been progressively marginalised in the field of social sciences, and mainstream social science has become hegemonic. To formulate it in Wessely's provocatively normative terms: the region's social scientists didn't take this *chance* after 1989 – they didn't cultivate their difference enough.

Why? Csepeli, Örkény and Scheppele (1996) argued that East European social sciences acquired an "immune deficiency syndrome", as they were "colonialized" by Western peers, who ascribed them the role of raw data suppliers, while carrying out massive brain drain. This aspect of being colonized by the West is addressed and critically dealt with in almost all papers in the issue, and it is also discussed in the interview with Zsuzsa Ferge, Miklós Hadas and Iván Szelényi moderated by Judit Durst.

A tough debate followed Csepeli's, Örkény's and Scheppele's article. Rudolf Andorka (Andorka, 1996) disagreed with "almost everything" they said and urged social scientists to cooperate with their Western colleagues more. However, paradoxically enough, he sort of corroborated Csepeli's conclusion by admitting that "Hungarian sociologists are less involved in theoretical discussions on the character of the transition going on in these countries", i.e. that they had indeed become rough data suppliers (Andorka, 1996: 127). Zuzana Kusá was "astonished by the accuracy of the authors' analysis in regard to the state of social sciences (certainly sociology) in Slovakia", claiming that "the «invisible hand» of the domestic market for sociological products will force us into the position of data collectors" (Kusa, 1996: 129 and 135).

Indeed, many Eastern European scholars can rightly feel that there is a massive decline in political and academic interest in the region, which has put local actors in an unfavourable position in the global hierarchy of knowledge production. This decline of interest is best shown by the gradual disappearance of departments of Eastern European history in Western countries, including Germany and Austria.

Knowledge-producing institutions and techniques – while determining our professional identities – remain the means of producing and reproducing global inequalities in power, prestige, influence and capital. Coloniality in knowledge production seems to be an apt keyword to grasp both the institutional and epistemological sides of global inequalities in academic life. Firstly, as stressed in the papers and the interview published in this issue, global knowledge is mainly produced at Western universities, thanks to unequal funding and publishing opportunities. Secondly, and even more importantly, concepts developed originally for Western societies are imported and imposed on the specific Eastern social structures and development, which thus loses its specificity and becomes a region without a history (of its own). Postcolonial criticism can therefore be readily applied to liberate Eastern European social sciences from this Western bias.

The papers presented in this thematic issue, together with the interview with three famous Hungarian sociologists, who have worked in different academic milieus, are all engaged in a fruitful discussion about Eastern European specificity and the ways in which this specificity can be addressed without reproducing Cold War stereotypes or entering into a self-enclosed realm of producing parochial knowledge of provincial countries, which can therefore be rightfully dismissed by the West. We start with Júlia Szalai's paper, which, while recognizing the essential *structural* inequalities of knowledge production, gives a historical analysis of the differing forms of sociological knowledge related to the Cold War environment and the division of the world into the socialist and capitalist camps, which shaped the mental framework of the sociologists belonging to the two camps and their understanding of what sociology is. It is worth recapitulating some of her thoughts in this introduction. The establishment of the bipolar world order and the rise of the welfare state gave sociology a remarkable position in the Western world, for it seemed an apt science to deal with relations between the individual and the state and to transmit knowledge for policy-makers. The practitioners of sociology enjoyed an accordingly high social and academic prestige as they were frequently called upon to share their opinion with the public and to set the agenda for a wide discourse outside of academia. The 1960s strengthened this role of public sociology in the West, for many expected the coming of the world revolution or at least the political victory of the Left, which envisaged intervention in the market and necessitated further social engineering.

Sociology followed a different trajectory in the East, where it was not until de-Stalinization took place that social engineering and scientific methods could replace the rigid Marxist-Leninist dogma which had been used as a legitimating discourse and also as part of education (Marxism-Leninism was a compulsory subject at universities). Sociologists soon became either dissident intellectuals or active supporters of the reform movement, whose aim was to establish socialism with a human face. The Marxist revival of the 1960s went hand in hand with sociology becoming the queen of social sciences, as Iván Szelényi put it in the interview.

While the reform movements were halted everywhere in Eastern Europe after the violent oppression of the Prague Spring, Hungary was, indeed, a specific case, where there was only a partial retreat from the reform movement. Ágnes Gagyi's paper nicely shows how the integration of the national economy in the global world system went hand in hand with the building of a new expertise: scholars who later became either critical sociologists or neoliberal policy-makers or entrepreneurs. But

before 1989 the governmental intention to build up a "feasible socialism" rendered sociology a very prestigious science.

One can indeed argue that this was the golden age of sociology, which coincided with the golden age of East European studies. The region was interesting for the West because (for varying reasons) it wanted to understand what kind of system socialism was and what made Eastern Europe 'specific' – both in comparison with Soviet Russia (from which 'Central Europe' was distinguished) and in comparison with the capitalist West. The historical school, which could boast of scholars such as Zsigmond Pál Pach, György Ránki, Iván T. Berend and Emil Niederhauser, and which drew heavily on Marxist intellectual heritage, produced works which placed the Eastern European specificity in a long durée context and read the region's backwardness (or belated or incomplete modernisation) in the global context of capitalist development. In sociology, social stratification and class formation were topics where Eastern European scholars' work paralleled that of their Western counterparts (Zsuzsa Ferge and Iván Szelényi are examples of such specific Eastern "inputs"). The work of dissident intellectuals also received attention because they were critical of the ruling regime and highlighted some of its neuralgic points (poverty, high suicide rates or criticism of the nomenklatura were all among the taboo topics).

The defeat of the Left and the rise of neoliberal capitalism placed Western sociology in a markedly different context. As Júlia Szalai notes, society and the individual become two separate entities, which are investigated in distinct disciplinary frameworks. The fragmentation of sociology went hand in hand with the loss of the appeal of macro theories and the formerly popular grand topics of class formation, social stratification or the functioning of socialism. Given the fact that sociology was largely linked to the leftist revival of the 1960s and that the anticipated world revolution failed to materialize, sociology has lost its public appeal.

The change of regimes opened up new opportunities for Western scholars to act as social engineers and help create democratic institutions and a working civil society from scratch. While their concepts were somewhat shaken by the crisis of the welfare state, they were still in a better epistemological position than their East European counterparts, whose originally Marxist concepts were all seen as belonging to the dustbin of history. Their quest for new concepts and ideologies coincided with the Western political and economic "conquest" of the region, thus completing the colonization of the mind.

To escape a pessimistic end, Júlia Szalai brings positive examples where Western concepts were reformulated in order to account for specific Eastern European phenomena. By reinterpreting the content of Western paradigms, she argues, a productive East-West dialogue can take place, where, in turn, specific Eastern European scholarship can be interesting and relevant for the West. She demonstrates this with the example of the exclusion of the Roma minority, and the interpretation of the second economy in Hungary.

The argument of the colonization of the mind and the global hierarchies of knowledge production structures is taken further in Madina Tlostanova's paper 'Can the post-Soviet think?'. While Júlia Szalai argues that mutual uncertainties (and mistrust), more than an intentional conquest on behalf of Westerners, played a crucial role in the formation of East-West relations (thus she prefers to call it "domesticated domination" and "the erosion of professional solidarity"), Madina Tlostanova speaks

of an omnipresent coloniality in knowledge production, from which Russia (together with many other countries of the periphery and semi-periphery) is excluded. Coloniality of knowledge – a term coined by the international decolonial collective – refers to a condition which we mentioned above: that modernisation has produced a set of concepts and categories through which the colonised subject interprets his/her own history. Since the concepts were originally developed to account for Western development, in the East this history – alongside modernity – appears to be incomplete, partial or non-existent. Above all, Madina Tlostanova argues, modernity is a knowledge-generating system in which the colonial subject is denied rationality. The knowledge produced in the West thus becomes the means of female oppression and racial differentiation.

Madina Tlostanova demonstrates coloniality in knowledge production with the example of post-socialist Russia. While Soviet studies prospered during the cold war, the collapse of state socialism and the subsequent collapse of the bipolar world order rendered Russia an impoverished semi-peripheral country, one that is struggling to keep together at least some of her former colonies. The Russian academy is almost invisible in the West – Russian scholars can make their way into the Western academy only at the price of accepting the Western master-narrative and producing histories based on the use of Western concepts and paradigms. Through this lens, Russian history appears to be essentially incomplete, partial and inferior in comparison to the West. Madina Tlostanova offers ample examples to demonstrate the working of the colonized mind, while she remains highly critical of "indigenous" literature, characterised as it is by imperial orthodoxy. Thus, it seems, it is hard to find a way out of this epistemological trap: either coloniality in knowledge production or its transfer to Russia's former colonies, which have to accept Russian superiority in the interpretation of their own histories. This is what Madina Tlostanova calls double colonial difference. In addition, de-linking from the West often produces parochial scholarship, suitable for the power games of imperial Russia, but rightfully dismissed in the West.

The application of the coloniality of knowledge to the East gives us even less hope than the argument that there is a global inequality of funding and publishing opportunities which prevents Eastern European scholars from rendering themselves visible in the West. How can we make ourselves visible if we can but produce theories which have long ago been surpassed in the Western academy? How can we overcome coloniality in knowledge production and develop something really different and specific to our region, which at the same time has a global reference? Madina Tlostanova argues that we should create a self-reflexive social science which has an empirical relevance – and train self-reflexive individuals who do not accept ready-made truths at face value and who are ready to engage in a critical dialogue. The picture is somewhat darkened by the fact that she is highly critical of the existing Soviet academic system, which seems to work to precisely the opposite end.

Norbert Petrovici applies the above thesis to the socialism/postsocialism divide, arguing that it produces narratives that are liable for the epistemic provincialization of the regime. During the Cold War the socialist system was the specificity of the region, which needed to be theorized and interpreted in order to understand the functioning of the "enemy" (or, for many Western leftists, the functioning of an existing Marxist experiment). With the collapse of state socialism, not only was the Marxist-Leninist

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 4-11.

BARTHA, E. AND G. ERŐSS: FORTRESS, COLONY OR INTERPRETER?

9

legitimating discourse thrown into the dustbin, but many Eastern European intellectuals felt an urgent need to get rid of the whole Marxist intellectual heritage and produce new legitimating narratives for the new elite. This aspiration coincided with Western attempts to marginalize the positions of the Eastern left, which for them smelled of Communism – regardless of the transformation of the postcommunist elite. Thus the functioning of socialism was re-interpreted, and old totalitarian theories, which had once been discredited in the Western academy in the 1970s, again came to dominate the discourse about state socialism.

Norbert Petrovici argues that, thanks to this, the *critical* agenda of Eastern European scholars is left unexplored. While it is true that many Eastern European scholars participate in producing the self-Orientalizing narrative on "socialism" and "postsocialism", and that, by doing so, the East is taken out from the normal flow of history (a typical symptom of coloniality in knowledge production), even Western scholars sympathetic to the Eastern concerns fall into the trap of Orientalizing. Norbert Petrovici demonstrates this with the example of labelling socialism as a shortage economy, one which elicited a fierce debate in anthropology. He argues that Western critical scholars are likewise blind to the essential global framework in which much of the Eastern knowledge is produced, and thereby they tend to reproduce Orientalizing discourses as if the East would indeed be unable to produce anything other than outdated Western theories. The Western critical scholars thus deny the right of the Eastern scholars to have a critical agenda, thereby usurping the right for themselves essentially to speak on behalf of the East. Norbert Petrovici argues that there is a great deal of critical knowledge accumulated and practiced in the East that needs to be taken into account. He also discusses Szelényi's under-urbanisation thesis to illustrate, as he notes, how epistemic enclavizations are produced when emptying the region of history and attributing it to the West. The undertone of the narrative is that the modernity run by the socialist state is a partial modernity, a mock modernity of an industrial economy constrained by the systemic need of a primary sector which cannot be superseded. There is an alternative reading proposed by Bodnár (2001) that can be taken further, since there are parallel processes in the West: unpaid labour and partial monetization of labour runs through all the history of capital accumulation. But, once again, the critical intent is lost if we remove Eastern Europe from "history proper" and put the region on another track. Similarly, de-industrialization took place in the West even though the West did not have socialism and socialist cities – it is, therefore, worth focusing on the essentially *global context* of development, rather than on the socialist "other" and thereby reproducing Orientalizing narratives.

Norbert Petrovici's urge to accept the voice of the Eastern European critical scholar dovetails with the call from Júlia Szalai for a productive East-West dialogue and with the de-colonized mind and self-reflexive individual that Madina Tlostanova urges. The same is true of the position of Ágnes Gagyi, who in her paper gives an excellent example of how to interpret a local case study in a global context. She uses the example of the FRI (Financial Research Institute) in Hungary to demonstrate how global processes of the development of capitalism impacted on Hungary's policy-makers, and how internationally-recognized expertise was established in FRI originally to give intellectual munition to economic reforms. She concentrates on the linkages between the dynamics of the national economy, economic policies and broader shifts in the integration of national economies into the world economy, as conditioned by

the transformations of the world economy itself. She also offers a discussion of the place of FRI in the reform process as well as an analysis of the historical and intellectual roots of the document *Fordulat és reform* (Change and Reform), which was a declaration of the position of the FRI authors *vis-à-vis* the state of the reform. In May 1987 the Institute was closed by the Ministry of Finance, and some of its former colleagues were invited to work in the state apparatus, while the bulk of them founded a private research company, Financial Research Institute. While most became supporters of neoliberal economic policy, some, like Erzsébet Szalai, maintained their left-wing critical position even after the change of regime.

György Szerbhorváth focuses on an issue which has been partially dealt with in the above papers: the act of borrowing from different genres, which has a long tradition in Eastern European sociology. He discusses the issue of how far literature can inform sociology, and, indeed, to what extent literature is concerned with topics of Hungarian "realities". Sociography was a remarkably successful genre in interwar Hungary, where writers assumed a role not only as transmitters and interpreters of the voices of the "folk" but also as social reformers. Anna Wessely, in a text quoted above, and speaking of sociography and other mixed genres, argued that we need to stay in touch with the specific Hungarian/Central European social experience. György Szerbhorváth shows that Hungarian literature has not lost its critical potential since 1989; on the contrary, it is precisely on the basis of these premises that real art and literature has been produced.

Our intellectual journey takes us back to where we started: how can Eastern European sociology be presented to the West? Where is its place? And how should we create a sociology in this new context that speaks both to the East and the West? Are we "special", or rather "incomplete, partial or lacking any real history and modernity"? Has the regional specificity of social science ever existed? If so, what are its characteristics that are still relevant, 25 years after the end of the political East-West divide and the outbreak of this debate? Can Eastern social science enlighten its Western peers? Or only provide them with data, meaning that the best we can do is to be contented with producing parochial knowledge? At the end of the journey we are still struggling with the same questions – but we hope that the papers have offered, if not answers, then illuminating intellectual munition to think further and go beyond historically rooted stereotypes reinforced by the region's specific experiment to establish an alternative to capitalism.

Elemér Hankiss was someone who personally and ideally incarnated this East-West intellectual dialogue. The leading humanist philosopher, literary historian and sociologist, who died recently and to whom a posthumous interview is dedicated in this Journal, asked and tried to answer universal questions (e.g. why and how humans build a symbolic world that protects them from all kinds of threats) inspired by his own Central European experience of a civilisation that had been collapsed and resuscitated so many times.

All the main questions discussed above recur in the interview with Zsuzsa Ferge, Miklós Hadas and Iván Szelényi, moderated by Judit Durst, which completes our thematic issue. In their own way, all of the three great scholars contributed in practice to the productive East/West dialogue which Júlia Szalai calls for. Their specific achievement was to integrate local knowledge into a global framework and thereby step out of the trap of coloniality in knowledge production. They are critical

Eastern European intellectuals who received international recognition. The crisis of sociology, the very nature of social science, the East/West divide and coloniality, and the appearance and increasing appeal of new disciplines (gender studies, postcolonial studies, anthropology, etc.) are viewed differently by the three scholars, but they share a common concern for public sociology. Sociology cannot be practised from the ivory tower – and part of the Eastern European specificity is the rapidly changing social terrain, one that is often prone to radical ideologies and neo-nationalism. We have discussed at length that the region has been marginalized in the Western academy. Recent developments (the ongoing war in the Ukraine, the establishment of autocratic governments, and the strengthening of radical right-wing populism[1] in the region) anticipate a renewed interest, however – an interest that is won at a very high price. There is an increasing need for self-reflexive, critical social scientists who can act as interpreters between the East and West. While sociologists such as Zsuzsa Ferge, Elemér Hankiss, Júlia Szalai, Miklós Hadas and Iván Szelényi provide an example of how it has been possible to assume this role, the papers written by a younger generation of critical sociologists suggest that there is hope for the continuation of this tradition.

References

Andorka, R. (1996) The uses of international cooperation in the social sciences. In Hadas, M. and M. Vörös (eds.) *Colonization or Partnership? Eastern Europe and Western Social Sciences. Replika Special Issue.* Budapest: Replika kör. 125-128. [First published in Hungarian in 1991]

Bodnár, J. (2001) *Fin de Millenaire Budapest. Metamorphoses of Urban Life.* Minneapolis, MN and London, UK: University of Minnesota Press.

Burawoy, M. (2005) For public sociology. *American sociological review,* 70 (1): 4-28.

Csepeli, Gy., A. Örkény and K. L. Scheppele (1996) Acquired immune deficiency syndrome in Social Science in Eastern Europe. In Hadas, M. and Vörös, M. (eds.) *Colonization or Partnership? Eastern Europe and Western Social Sciences. Replika Special Issue.* Budapest: Replika kör. 111-123.

Kusá, Z. (1996) The Immune Deficiency: Acquired or Inherited? In Hadas, M. and M. Vörös (eds.) *Colonization or Partnership? Eastern Europe and Western Social Sciences. Replika Special Issue.* Budapest: Replika kör. 129-155.

Wessely, A. (1996) The Cognitive Chance of Central European Sociology. In Hadas, M. and M. Vörös (eds.) *Colonization or Partnership? Eastern Europe and Western Social Sciences. Replika Special Issue.* Budapest: Replika kör. 11-19.

---

[1] See the first issue of Intersections: 'Mainstreaming the extreme'.

JÚLIA SZALAI *
Disquieted Relations: West Meeting East in
Contemporary Sociological Research

* [szalaij@ceu.edu] (Central European University, Budapest)

Abstract

The history of the past 25 years of collaboration between 'Westerners' and 'Easterners' in social science research has been accompanied by a good deal of ambivalence. While the collapse of state-socialism suddenly opened a spacious terrain for such collaborations with acknowledgeable gains in their academic contacts, professional outlook and income, old and new Eastern entrants experience the degradation of their expertise and a forceful new positioning into acting as service providers instead of being regarded as equal intellectual partners. Many go as far as labelling the new forms of collaboration as outright 'colonisation'. Their sharp critique embraces the new experiences of Western domination in setting the concepts and methods of research and it also addresses the exploitative structures of the academia that serve this domination with a highly unequal distribution of funding. The secondary positions and peripheral roles that 'Easterners' occupy in access to opportunities for publishing comes in addition, together with the complains about their marginalisation in participating in the influential areas of policy-making where the role of respected advisors with readily acknowledged knowledge and expertise is regularly awarded only to 'Westerners'.

The history of the past 25 years of collaboration between 'Westerners' and 'Easterners' in social science research has been accompanied by a good deal of ambivalence. While the collapse of state-socialism suddenly opened a spacious terrain for such collaborations with acknowledgeable gains in their academic contacts, professional outlook and income, old and new Eastern entrants experience the degradation of their expertise and a forceful new positioning into acting as service providers instead of being regarded as equal intellectual partners. Many go as far as labelling the new forms of collaboration as outright 'colonisation' (Csepeli et al., 1996; Einhorn, 2006). Drawn under this umbrella term, their sharp critique embraces the new experiences of Western domination in setting the concepts and methods of research and it also addresses the exploitative structures of the academia that serve this domination with a highly unequal distribution of funding. The confusions due to the prevailing linguistic barriers[1] and the secondary positions and peripheral roles that 'Easterners' occupy in access to opportunities for publishing come in addition, together with the complaints about their marginalisation in participating in the influential areas of policy-making where the role of respected advisors with readily acknowledged knowledge and expertise is regularly awarded only to 'Westerners'.

It would be useless to deny that much of the frustration of the 'Easterners' is justified. Their criticism is all the more warranted because the sharp inequalities of research have grown to a permanent trait of East-West collaborations during the past decades and these inequalities have become built-in elements of the emerging institutional structures of decision-making, funding and distribution. As a rule, 'Easterners' very rarely get into the position of leading cross-country cooperation, and their reduced share of sponsorship remains in place due to the self-fulfilling secondary role that they play in such encounters. This situation has grown to become self-sustaining and it rarely allows for a breakthrough of the Eastern partners. In light of these developments, 'colonisation' as a powerful metaphor renders an understanding that grasps subordination and marginalisation.

Still, this metaphor denotes only part of the story. For frustration tends to shadow the gains that these collaborations have brought about in career terms, well-being and also in new forms of mobility for the 'Easterners'. For paying justice in this regard, one has to notice that participation in East-West collaboration has provided new sources of earnings that helped, in turn, to personally countervail the great losses of the post-socialist transition crisis and that even has provided for decent advancing in income and wealth. Besides, the new collaborations opened new possibilities for becoming parts of a Western lifestyle and of enjoying a vast array of consumer advantages that were never known before. As for the younger generations of

---

[1] The linguistic barriers in East-West communication are partly owed to the Easterners' limited command of English as the lingua franca of cross-national research endeavours. However, this hindrance is slowly waning by the entrance of the new generation of sociologists who received better language education in secondary schools and who often got (part of) their professional training in Western universities. At the same time, there is a more complex array of linguistic difficulties and misunderstandings that follows from the departing traditions of theories and concepts in Eastern and Western social science and that seems to persist in their collaborative encounters (Csepeli et al., 1996; Offe, 2014).

researchers, the new cooperations opened access to a multitude of grants and appointments at prestigious Western universities whereby longer-term career perspectives of those coming from the East have started to become rather similar to their Western counterparts. In addition to all these, the 'Eastern perspectives' of some key features of the post-socialist transition have become continuously represented in the general social science discourse[2] – even if such representations often have been characterised by a certain degree of one-sidedness and a simplified understanding. In short, if looked upon in retrospect, the new East-West collaboration of the post-socialist era has been filled with genuine ambivalences: it has certainly brought about new openness and new advantages while it has given rise to new currents of hierachisation and new forms of degradation as well.

This complex situation of gains and losses is far from being evident. Whether we describe it as 'colonisation' or seek other concepts for its characterisation, it seems important to identify the sources and the factors that shape the contentious situation and that maintain its unbroken reproduction.

In this paper, I would like to avoid the inconclusive exercise of 'weighing' the advantages against the losses and trying to dispense justice to one over the other. Instead, I would like to show that much of the controversies that characterise contemporary East-West collaborations follow from the histories that predated the post-socialist encounters. In this context, I would like to reveal those unfulfilled expectations and decade-long frustrations that were brought in by many of the 'Westerners' and that have shaped their aspirations regarding the 'curative potential' of post-socialist East-West collaborative research. By tracing the history of their professional socialisation and some of the figurative political experiences that impacted their academic profile and pursuits, I will show that a vast group of the most dedicated sociologists who were motivated by genuine interest in the post-socialist transformation entered the new comparative endeavours with a great deal of uncertainties and highflying expectations. Often these scholars were driven by nostalgic ideas of hoping for the coming of a new 'golden age' of the exceptional disciplinary position and high prestige of sociology that had been lost some decades before but that still has carried the imprint of the one-time experiences of broad public influence and the concomitant high reputation of the sociological profession.

Prior to the evolving of the new East-West initiatives, Eastern sociology also had its own history. In this context, I find it important to go back some decades and summarise those dilemmas that followed from the collapse of the Marxist framework that had shaped the scholarly education and also the routines and skills of the profession. In addition, the rise and the growing public influence of dissident research is also an organic part of this history, together with the early efforts for keeping Eastern sociology in pace with the West. The collapse of state-socialism suddenly changed these constellations: much of sociology's widely acknowledged earlier

---

[2] See, for example, the invigorated debates about the new elites (Etzioni-Halevy, 1997; Dogan, 2003; Walder, 2003), the insightful revisiting of the construction of nationhood and national identities (Gellner, 1996; Brubaker, 1996; Eriksen, 2003), or the recent inventions in the sociological discussions of race and ethnicity (Jenkins, 1997; Brubaker, 2004), etc.

achievements were thrown out of the basket of new research and, by following the mainstream flows, these became gradually erased from the memory of the discipline. I will point out that, due to their historical devaluation, the 'Easterners' also entered the new cooperation with the West with certain nostalgias and a great deal of uncertainties that were mingled with efforts to wipe out the Marxist past. As an outcome, 'Easterners' took part in the new international collaborations with shaken self-esteem and with painstaking efforts to turn much of their energy to make their new partners forgetful about the 'socialist past'. Consequently, a lack of historical roots or the radical denial of these have made Eastern sociologists extremely vulnerable and disposed them to marginalisation in professional and existential terms alike.

By this exercise of mirroring the two historical trends of Eastern and Western sociology, I will try to show that the manifold inequalities of the new East-West encounters follow more from what the two sides brought to the cooperation due to their own prehistories than from outright efforts at subordination and exploitation. By an attempt to see these cooperations in the context of larger-scale changes in social science, and specifically in sociology, this discussion will look at the changed role that sociology occupies within the academia; further, it will also try to bring up the contemporary disciplinary aspirations for regaining a leading role in shaping the public discourse and, especially, in influencing policy-making – both in the East and the West. The break that the collapse of state-socialism brought about affected these histories in very different ways. For those from the West, the post-socialist condition largely extended the opportunities: it invited a reformulation of the old questions about the state and the market, the relationships between the public and private domains in everyday life, or the forms of participation of ordinary people in the new fora of democracy. Hence, such old-new inquiries implied a direct continuation of the earlier professional contributions of Western sociology and this frequently justified the ambitions of sociologists in retrospect. The concurrent history of Eastern sociology is entirely different: for the most part, the collapse of state-socialism brought confusion and hesitation regarding the scientific relevance of one's earlier work rather than opportunities for a trustful continuation. For the 'Easterners', the new era has rendered the chance of a prolongation and extension only by exception, rather, it has required a thorough, and often painful, revision of the earlier professional achievements and it has urged for bravely throwing away old concepts for the sake of uncertain new understandings. As we will see, 'Westerners' and 'Easterners' thus arrived at their juncture in 'transitology' with greatly differing aspirations and expectations: one emphasised continuation and the extension of Western traits, the other underscored the peculiarity and the unprecedented character of the post-socialist condition. These two strands hardly could be mingled in a peaceful and productive way. Given their unequal positions in letting their voice be heard, 'Westerners' took a lead within a short while and thus their conceptualisations started to rule the stage. However, this development followed more from their drives due to their own history than from any naked ambitions for power.

The historical approach is no less critical than the one claiming 'colonisation'. But the consequences and the lessons for action greatly differ. The historical analysis calls for a deeper scrutiny of concepts, approaches and experiences and makes a quest for their mutual exchange. It argues for an outcome of increased equality as much in

participation as in the share of intellectual influence. The 'colonisation' approach applies a more radical rhetoric and makes claims for equality mainly on political grounds. It may even leave concepts and methods as they are while it turns sharply against the consequences of their scholarly application. While I accept this latter approach as justified in a large number of cases, this paper is devoted to the first proposition of considering the contemporary efforts for amalgamating the historically conditioned shortcomings of Eastern and Western sociological inquiries. In this contextualisation, the discussion puts into the spotlight some experienced weaknesses of theory and concepts while it pays less attention to the distributional aspects of East-West collaboration that are, in turn, in the focus of the 'colonisation' approach. Due to their differing orientations, the two approaches of 'historical heritage' and 'distributional injustices' are in a sibling relation: together they provide an ample framework for critically looking at the ambiguities and the true advantages that the past 25 years of collaborative efforts have brought about.

Before entering the detailed discussion along the proposed lines, a note of clarification is needed. It has to be underlined that this paper speaks only about sociology. Although one can assume that many of the developments were similar in a number of other social sciences, my knowledge about these is too limited to engage in generalised argumentations. Additionally, sociology has occupied a rather particular position among the social sciences: its ambitions and capacities for providing a general framework for exploring and discussing the major traits of Western modernity single out some specific dilemmas that have been less characteristic for other social sciences which, in contrast, have confined themselves to longer-term traditions in applying the established framework and concepts of their specific field of professional expertise and research.

Sociology and the public discourse: West and East [3]

While the tensions in East-West collaboration appear as conditioned by a degree of insensitivity and indifference toward the peculiarities of post-socialist transition on the part of the 'Westerners', closer scrutiny of the phenomenon may reveal certain currents that are sometimes called the 'crisis of sociology' and that reflect on the changed role of the discipline which has evolved quite independently from the new situation that the collapse of state-socialism has generated. In what follows I will attempt to outline these changes and consider their implications for the role of sociology and the much altered social function of the sociologist in the West. I will try to show that these changes have induced confusions in professional identity and the arising confusions importantly affected the ways and means of entering the newly opened opportunities for cross-country cooperative research with Eastern involvement.

The story dates back to the postwar years, more precisely, to the first postwar period of the 1950s and '60s. After experiencing devastation on a scale that never had been seen before, these were the decades of new societal commitments: by (re)discovering the praised value of the individual and putting it into the focus of politics, the postwar Western societies and states expressed their unconditional dedication to change the social construct for providing safe conditions for all and for defending the rights and the well-being of all their individual members. As a response to the challenges, these were the decades of the emergence of the modern welfare state as a construct to meet the grandiose commitment by embodying a new view of the individual and a new framework of postulating social equality as one of the fundamental values of Western liberal democracy of the time. For expressing the worth of the individual, the new era invented the *citizen* as the addressee of rights and entitlements on a universal scale. The new broadening of the concept of citizenship

---

[3] At this point I have to clarify the meanings of the two geopolitical terms of 'East' and 'West' as used in this paper for denoting certain strands of sociology. In its broadest sense, the division refers to the geographical origins of scholars and their works as defined much in line with the old Cold War borders. At the same time, this broad geographic distinction is insensitive to the great variations in theoretical foundations, concepts and fields of interest in Western sociology and it also washes away their varied impacts on Eastern sociology. Given the specifications by field and lead concepts within the discipline, it would be far beyond the scope of a single paper and far above the capacity of me as a single author to attempt to provide an all-inclusive encyclopedic account of the developments ranging from the sociology of the family to the sociology of religion and to environmental sociology (Smelser 1988). My aspiration is more modest than this. By focusing on the East-West encounters, I consider primarily those British and American trends of thought that had a fertilising impact also on German and French sociology and that are characterised by a lasting involvement in neo-Marxist approaches to the changing relations between the state and the market, the conditions of democratic participation and the civilising process in general (Orum 1988, McAdam-Mc Carthy-Zald 1988, Bottomore 1982, Giddens 1993a and b). Such an embedding of ideas made a large group of leading Western sociologists interested in late state-socialism and then the post-socialist transition. As to the East, this discussion considers the developments of sociology in Central and South-East Europe. Given the peculiar features of sociology in the former Soviet Union and the now independent post-Soviet republics, these make a specific cause for comparative research, however, they are not addressed in this account. Further, the still authoritarian postcommunist states of the East (Albania, Mongolia, China) also are left out of the discussion.

beyond its constitutional and legal meanings, the emphasis on social rights as the historically acquired precious property of all members of society was a great political achievement, but beyond it, it provided the point of departure of conceptualising the individual for the terms of politics and policies and also for looking at him in his embedded relation to society-at-large. It was far from incidental that T. H. Marshall's famous *Citizenship and Social Class* (1950) became a bestseller of the era, and it generated new thinking all over Europe and also in the United States (Bottomore, 1982; Bottomore, 1992; Giddens, 1993b; Quadagno, 1994; Pierson and Castles, 2012). Beyond its immediate claim on the multifaceted implications of citizenship, this work provided a new framework for looking at the dividing line between the private and the public, at the individual and the social, and at personal freedom and democracy in a unified framework.

This new approach directly affected what sociology could reveal so far. For finding the principles and the methods for speaking in a unified conceptual language about people's immediate experiences and the social-institutional framework of conditioning and shaping such experiences belonged to the earlier core dilemmas of sociological research. What is more, the great constructs of sociology focused on structure and power, while approaching the individual sphere was left for the most part to distinct disciplines, namely to psychology and anthropology. This disciplinary separation implied that not only the concepts but also the legitimate methods differed, and nobody would have thought of mingling them into one coherent approach. The new invention of the citizen utterly changed this situation: the individual entered the social realm and this way the need for a unified understanding emerged as an urgently addressable quest. It was sociology that was to fulfil the task (Himmelstrand, 1982, Vidich and Lyman, 2000).

The fertilising effect was remarkable. The decades in question witnessed an extraordinary richness of sociological research. It is not by coincidence that many of the works on social stratification, mobility, social class and the various forms of capital (in the footsteps of Coleman's and Bourdieu's theoretical inventions of the multiplicity of capitals) (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1987) were born by motivations of the holistic approach to the relationship between the individual and society, and many among them quickly became later continuously cited classics of sociology (see e.g. Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1987, Portes, 1998; Putnam, 2000). But beyond these welcome developments, there was an unexpected new one: sociology's capacity to shape and control the public discourse. This was a novel and surprising development, indeed. Suddenly, sociology found itself in an earlier unknown situation: the walls separating the scientific discourse from the everyday parlance of the lay public disappeared, together with the particular vocabulary and specific rules of reasoning that had characterized social science (Gans, 1995). The man of the street started to speak by using the categories and notions that had freshly left the scientific workshops and the new results of social research found their way to shape the thematic landscape of public discourse. By its essence, the new fusion reflected a unique concourse of two currents: the interest of sociology in representing the individual in his/her social embedding, and the interest of the public in finding ways to frame the social relations of the individual and society with the principles of equal honour and of an as-equal-as-possible content of the living conditions (Giddens, 1993a).

Sociology turning into the language of public discourse was a natural development on these grounds. The two domains of scholarly and lay discourses for exchanging ideas and experiences had a lot in common. Both spoke about the multifaceted relation between the citizen and the state in shaping the principles of people's rights and entitlements and both addressed the specific contents of the inequalities that could be revealed within this framework (Myrdal, 1965; Abel-Smith and Townsend, 1965; Giddens, 1993a; Gans, 1995). In the wake of such shared interests sociology became a fashion and sociologists appeared as the designers tailoring public thinking with the vast and brave gestures of self-assured expertise of the time. The new fashion reached also the media: sociologists became regularly invited figures providing informed commentaries about the key questions of the day. In these and similar capacities, sociologists appeared as the voice of a public striving for informed participation in matters of democracy, and thus they became entrusted by the particular role and responsibility of safeguarding the fundamental values of the democratic polity (Skocpol et al., 2008).

This role and responsibility became as much the source of professional identification, as the envied aspiration of the profession. In short, it gave the foundation of a credo that was meticulously elaborated by one of the most popular readings of the time, C. W. Mills' famous *The Sociological Imagination* (1959). This important essay was a call and a contemporary diagnosis at the same time. It called for the fulfilment of the democratic dream of advancing the Marshallian triad of citizenship, and it was also a diagnosis of the strongholds and the structural weaknesses of the dream. It argued for advancement toward equality and, in concordance with that of ordinary people, it provided a critique of the limitations hindering the full realisation of the dream. Mills framed his work around the prevailing vision of the time by positing the relationship between the individual and society as the constituent of a grand order for providing and guaranteeing participation along the ideas of equality in enjoying citizenship.It was in this conceptual framework that he underscored in details those traits of the grand order that work toward the reduction of inequalities in its contents and potentials and that point toward the foundation of social justice as a structural constituent of modern society.

This coherent portrait became the most important document of the time that provided the most refined argumentation for the public role of the sociological profession. The imprint proved lasting. Although the 'golden age' of sociology as the representation of public good ended for reasons that I introduce below, the remembrance of the 'golden era' remained in place as a norm and as a dream, and it has become decisive for the shaping of thinking and acting 'sociologically' for many decades to come. As I will argue, it was to a large extent this imprint that motivated many Western sociologists in turning toward the East after the collapse of state-socialism. Together with the lessons rendered by the circumstances of profound change in the role of sociology during the 1970s and '80s, the lasting messages of the 'lost paradise' were not forgotten and these motivated much of the dilemmas and the choices of sociologists in their attempts at reformulating the public mission of the profession in the new era. These reformulations were filled with a great deal of nostalgic beliefs about the Eastern reinvention of citizenship and its potential liberating power that, due to their knowledge and expertise, would assign the 'role of the master'

to the heirs of a once celebrated and influential sociology of the subject, i.e. to the contemporary Western experts of democratisation and the state. (I will return to this point below.)

Although it is difficult to mark the end of the 'golden age' by certain distinct developments, it can be stated with certainty that it came with a growing skepticism regarding the viability of the enhancement of democratic citizenship in the framework of the welfare state. The skepticism turned into the announcement of the 'crisis of the welfare state' and into loud claims of fundamental revisions when the oil crisis of the early 1970s signalled in painful ways the unfeasibility of the old order by challenging its very foundations of full employment and the universal entitlements of the citizens for a vast array of public provisions (Mishra, 1984; Alber, 1988; Williams, 1989).

Although the changes seemed to be temporary at first sight, they marked lasting and terminal alterations. At any rate, the era of an orderly arrangement of guaranteed social inclusion along the notion of citizenship came to an end. The order became fragmented, citizenship lost much of its universal appeal, and everyday social experience faced large and ever growing groups of the marginalised and those whom Zygmunt Bauman calls 'the outcasts of modernity' (Bauman, 2004). The presence of the outcasts marks an end of the industrial era and witnesses the costs of transition to the post-industrial phase. For sure, the changes cannot be withdrawn and their impact reformulates the position of the individual: fragmentation becomes a danger of everyday life, and attempts to avoid it give rise to earlier unforeseen struggles for power.

It is easy to see that the mission of sociology as framed by the 'golden age' could not be maintained in the deeply altered conditions. Sociological thinking and research faced the turn and gave departing responses. Interest in the structural relations and especially in examining how changes in the distribution of power affect the post-industrial conditions has become an important terrain of theory and empirical investigations that, while continuing the earlier traditions, reshape its questions along a good deal of depersonification: the individual disappears from these studies and is implicitly viewed as a mere derivative of the macro-level conditions. However, this statement needs some correction. The individual does not fully disappear from the stage, but its figure is relegated to different tracks of research. The message is clear: the earlier order providing safe spaces for citizens as individuals is over, and sociology has the mission of sorting out the departure by conceptualising 'society' and the 'individual' as two separate entities to be approached in *distinct disciplinary frameworks*. In line with this message and in reflection of the increased role of *cultural representations* in circumscribing and conditioning the social place of the individual, *cultural studies* as a new branch of social research gains ground with the ambition to reflect on the individual as the second arm of the departure (Hall, 1980, Sarder and Van Loom, 1994; During, 2003). The turning toward the individual as a self-contained entity is underlined by another concurrent development: the growing influence of psychology and, especially, the flourishing of new approaches in *social psychology* during the 1970s and '80s (Harré 1979, Parker and Shotter, 1990, Fox and Prilleltensky, 1997). Interest in the individual gave rise to a new language that has reflected on the core concept of *identity* and that has expressed the *limitations of freedom* in the form of identity formation (Tajfel, 1981; Turner, 1985). Together with

the rich representation of cultures, communication and the symbolic languages of self-expression, cultural studies and social psychology have jointly painted a picture of the lonely individual and his efforts to establish social contacts through cultural exchanges that are shaped by the diverse motivations of adjusting, departing and revolting. With an eye on the 'package' that Western sociology brought on the stage of East-West cooperation around the collapse of state-socialism, it seems rather important to emphasise that the disciplinary departure of macro-oriented social research and studies of the individual proved to be terminate. While this departure entailed a healthy and attractive expansion of theoretical and methodological choices, it also carried the risk of imposing an ex ante fragmentation of the social order and, via this disciplinary fault, hindering the genuine development of reflexive social research.

In these processes of change, sociology has lost its public appeal. The shaping of the public discourse around identity and its cultural-symbolical representations was channelled in mostly from psychology as the new disciplinary hero of the time that 'teaches' the public by providing useful advice on orientation and by consolidating people in their worries and confusion. Meanwhile, sociology has marched toward *social engineering*: by giving up its ambitions and also its capacities to address problems of the street, its new research results on social institutions, on the interests and behaviours of the elites – and outstandingly, those of the bureaucratic elite – turned sociologists toward partnerships in policy-making projects and toward new advisory roles in reasoning and designing welfare state reforms (Nystrom and Starbuck, 1981, DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, Graziano et al., 2011).

This second layer of the heritage is no less important than the nostalgic memories of the 'golden age'. It is worth noting that the significant shift in sociologists' identification and their views about the role of their profession pulled Western sociology and sociologists into a direction of East-West cooperation that they saw perfectly fitting their ambitions. After all, the post-socialist transition is nothing else but a grandiose experiment of 'social engineering' and thus it provides a most natural invitation for such Western expertise. In combination with the earlier described longing for the lost public influence, 'Westerners' saw a huge and heroic task in front of them: by offering the lead in research, they would primarily work for the advancement of rank-and-file citizens of the new democracies, but for doing so, they would draw the lessons from the post-industrial changes and act in the institutional domains in the first place. In sum, 'Westerners' arrived at the new East-West cooperations with rather coherent ideas. Although their views were unclear about the actual status of the individual in their own society, this was compensated by a deep knowledge about the conditions that surround the individual if looked at as the citizen. The implied uncertainty coloured their role expectations regarding East-West collaborations. They favoured macro-level research on the institutions framing citizenship and largely excluded from the competence of sociological scholarly activities a more psychology- and culture-driven approach to the individual. Although the motives are understandable, still we have to establish that these demarcations of the professional borders deprived Eastern sociology from sharing the results and methodologies of a holistic approach to the mutuality between the individual and society as it had been earlier developed in the West.

Eastern sociology arrived at entering cooperation with the 'Westerners' with a cluster of different uncertainties. Toward the 1980s, training in Marxist ideology and research quickly became devalued: Marxism as such was denied and for the most part, sociologists did not have an alternative framework to retreat to (Mucha, 2009). They were growingly puzzled by the spreading of workers' rioting against 'their own' regime, or by witnessing the increase of inequalities in income that apparently slipped the control of the Party, or by experiencing the emergence of new poverty, etc. Marxism in its official ideological understanding was silent about all these pressing issues of the time. Among the involved sociologists of one-time believers now in a search for a way out from Marxism, losing ground gave birth to a quick drop of self-esteem, a general feeling of shame and fears of becoming deprived of earlier positions and influence as a penalty for past engagements. From this perspective, being invited for cooperation under Western lead came as a safe heaven and many among the former Marxist 'Easterners' were ready to pay the price for such an escape by being subordinated as second-rank actors in the new arrangements. This was the dominant pattern in countries were the walls of East-West demarcation were maintained until the ultimate falling down of the state-socialist regime (Keen and Mucha, 2003).

However, the picture was more complex in countries were a gradual expansion of the East-West cooperations took place prior to the regime change, namely in Hungary, Poland[4], and the former Yugoslavia (Lemon and Altschuler, 1998). In these countries, important internal splits characterised sociology. Part of the leading representatives of the profession became deeply involved in the dissident movements and provided research to reveal *oppression* and the *violation of human rights.* Due to their oppositional stand, these researchers often had to go underground and it followed that they were excluded not only from the opportunities of East-West cooperation but also from travelling to the West or from accessing 'Western' literature (Michnik, 2014). The second group of one-time Marxists as the earliest participants of such cooperations usually was politically accepted by the regime but they also became 'disloyal' and started to distance themselves from the prevailing order. This development directly followed from their participation in such collaborations: the learning of new concepts and new methodologies made them open to the *dysfunctions of Marxist research* earlier than was acknowledged by the mainstream of domestic social science. The regime reacted sensitively to such a distancing: their betrayal was paid for by depriving these one-time Marxists from their positions in the academia and by banning their participation in the 'dangerous' East-West cooperations. By being expelled, many found their way to the dissident movement and contributed to the developing of an alternative sociology (see e. g.

---

[4] Polish sociology was an exception among the exceptions. Apart from the darkest years of Stalinism between 1952 and 1956, continuity of research and teaching was maintained throughout the entire period of state-socialism. Although sociologists had to navigate within the framing of the official ideology of vulgar-Marxism, they enjoyed a rather high degree of freedom in defining their own research agenda and also in entering cooperation with the Western academia. Due to these developments, several of the leading figures of Polish sociology (e.g. Ossowski, Ossowska, Nowak, Szcepanski, Sokolowska, Wesolowsky) became internationally recognised and frequently cited authors of influential works in comparative sociology (Kwasniewicz, 1994).

Konrád and Szelényi, 1979). Often they became the heroes of deeply critical studies on the true situation of workers in industry or of their eye-opening on the power struggles of local bureaucracies. In the early 1980s in Poland, many joined the Solidarność movement and gained leading positions among the movement's advisors. In Hungary, many of these dissident one-time Marxists became key figures of the emerging new political parties in 1989-90 and, in correspondence with their former underground work, they took a lion's share in preparing the educational and welfare programmes of the first freely elected governments.

The evolving of a third group was a telling sign of the gradual erosion of the ideological-political strength of the regime. It embraced a quickly growing number of those for whom it was not the useability of Marxism that mattered. With *modernisation* as the concept in the focus, they asked new questions. The main issue for them was to find out whether state-socialism contributed to the preservation or even the deepening of the peripheral position of East European societies? This central question was approached by meticulous research on a wide collection of institutions and important phenomena that ranged from the quality of the workshops in the socialist firms to the (re)discovery of system-specific poverty and to the studying of family-relations as the domain remaining relatively free from the interventions of the omnipotent state (see e.g. Musil, 1980; Ferge and Miller, 1987). It followed from the interest in modernisation and the adjoining critique of the rule of the state as the very source of the reproduction of backwardness that this new strand of research turned to Western concepts and did so mainly for normative reasons. It was the Western approach to the state that opened the path to reveal the consequences of washing away the clear separation between the private and the public; it was the notions of emancipation, equity and equal opportunity that helped in demonstrating how mandatory full employment of women became a form of oppression and exploitation; it was the notion of a free right to property that helped to reveal deprivation from freedom as the baseline of socialist production; etc. It seems important to underline that the applied Western concepts had true liberating implications in the given context: their self-chosen (and thus free) usage implied that Eastern sociology considered itself as an integral part of the Western tradition and the sociologists of the 'modernisation track' saw themselves as the committed messengers of this tradition. This did not only imply that they gradually took over the positions from the one-time Marxists in East-West comparative research, but their domestic influence was on the rise as well (Kulpinska and Maurice, 1982; Ferge, 1987).

The critical voice of this strand of sociology on the shortcomings of socialist modernisation was heard by the public. The issue was in the heart of the worries and fears of wide groups of society: for many, the maintenance of the ties to the West was not only a theoretical issue but an existential question of keeping close the family contacts with those who had left for the West in the subsequent waves of repression. It was perhaps this deep involvement and the hoping for reforms and developments toward 'catching up' that suddenly created the space for sociology to become the voice of the public. In a similar vein to as it took place in the West, though with some two decades' delay, sociology gave a language, the concepts and the line of reasoning to people's aspirations and fears. It was the 'modernising track' that promptly sensed the needs and that translated its research results into the questions and suspicions of the

public discourse of ordinary people and this way elevated their impressions and frustration to the reputable position of scientific truth. It goes without saying that such an exchange between sociology and the public remained restricted and fragmented within the given order. The regime quickly recognised the involved ideological-political danger and turned to its customary tools of repression: it often blocked travel to the West and denied permission for publication or even did not regret incarceration (Michnik, 2014). Nevertheless, the process of erosion could not be halted: new oppositional journals, the popular 'flying universities', public meetings at trade union units and workers' hostels, 'oppositional' seminars at state universities, etc. were spreading the word and it was increasingly difficult to ban all of them. Such a popularity of sociology matched the one-time similar currents in the West, though the sources were different. As we saw above, it was the celebration of the individual as the one possessing the enriching rights of the welfare state that gave sociology the role of public representation in the West. In the East, it was the apparent signs of *modernisation 'from below'* against all repressions 'from above' that gave pride to people and that assigned the voice of the public to the 'modernisation track' as the widely praised and celebrated, democratic organ of criticism and hope on behalf of the people.

Although this potential of an influential strand in sociology remained in place until the collapse of the old regime, its contribution was not enough to preserve such an exceptional status. The post-socialist transition washed away the 'modernising-issue', better to say, it profoundly rephrased it. It took departure from a taken-for-granted approach to the state-socialist past as the source of reproduced backwardness and, together with its measures and tools, looked at the systemic change as the only possible way of catching up. In this context, the Western concepts that earlier had fulfilled a liberating function suddenly turned artificially enforced and alien, and Western sociology once rendering solidarity now appeared as a 'coloniser'. But as it seems in retrospect, this claim was as much fuelled by 'Eastern' disappointments as by the triumphant new scholarly domination of the West. At any rate, the concepts and research findings contributing to the public discourse and helping the phrasing of popular claims suddenly vanished: their old context disappeared with the collapse of the regime, and new notions and ideas did not come in substitution. The frustration over the diminishing public appeal of their work faced most of the 'modernisers' with difficult choices. They had either to accept the twisting around of their concepts and, together with this, go along with the newly strengthened Western positions that many of them regarded fake and inappropriate, or they had to find new areas of research that were immune to the Western interventions and try to build up a new career with reputation nearly from scratch. As we will see below, many followed this latter path, and they contributed to new, unexpected successes of important segments of Eastern sociology.

But before turning to such options, it is important to note that, in addition to losing ground in important intellectual domains, the breakdown of the importance of sociological research followed also from the weakness caused by the never overcome internal divisions of the profession. By taking their scholarly aspirations and the roles that they played in gradually delegitimising the state-socialist regime, the two influential paths of alienating from the ruling doctrines would have brought about solidarity and

cooperation between the 'dissidents' and the 'modernisers'. However, expressions of such a solidarity and efforts for cooperation on the ground of scholarly reciprocity rarely took place; instead, a great deal of mutual suspicion and criticism followed. The political dividing lines were so sharp and the gap was so deep that the potentials of common grounds of a natural domestic cooperation remained unnoticed by both parties. In this way, the very precious results of dissident research on the structural foundations of human rights violation and also on the systemic character of growing inequalities of all kinds remained captivated as 'oppositional' themes. However, these contributions later could have been capitalised on by serving the freshly liberated Eastern individual, and this way they easily could have contributed with the Eastern experience to the above described strong and influential strand of Western sociology. But this remained a missed opportunity. At the same time, new East-West research about social stratification and also about poverty – the most famous contributions of East-West cooperation prior to the regime change – could have provided a fruitful framework for understanding the nature of human rights violation and also the spontaneous silent struggles of an ever growing number of individuals and groups amid the falling apart of the state-socialist order. But the opportunity was missed also at this end: such extensions did not come into being before the collapse of the old regime. Instead, sociologists representing the two strands maintained their distance and argued for it by their different positions that neither of them wanted to risk. Upon the collapse of state-socialism, representatives of both strands expressed frustration and came with self-criticism over their earlier position and behaviour. Former dissidents acknowledged the accomplishments of those who early engaged in East-West collaborations by introducing a new culture of thinking and doing research. Further, they recognised that this way sociology contributed in an unnoticed way to the reframing of the public discourse and also to the thematisation of certain social problems – especially, poverty – that could not be openly handled due to the strong tabooisation of the phenomenon as a public issue. The other side of the 'modernisers' also expressed its praising of the contributions that dissidents made in addressing human rights issues within the framework of sociological research and went as far as proposing a fresh moulding of the two tracks by turning to the limitations of citizens' rights in the new conditions of the post-socialist transition. While the reflections of mutual acknowledgement and self-criticism were important for opening the door for new research associations, these came too late to provide for the evolution of a new, independent and self-assured Eastern sociology. While the divisions were washed away by such gestures and expressions of recognition, this was not enough for building up a new professional unity. All partners had something to mention with regret; and all of them felt a great deal of uncertainties regarding the potential consequences of their personal-professional past. The new circumstances did not help to find the new ways out of such personal-professional troubles. Much of the earlier research results lost relevance due to the collapse of the state-socialist regime, and sociologists were in a rather uncertain state of mind regarding the best way of continuation. Originality in suggesting new concepts and methods with relevance to the new conditions was missing and it was not straightforward to find the path for applying the available theoretical attempts at addressing the emerging old-new social relations of the transition.

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 12-37.

SZALAI, J.: DISQUIETED RELATIONS

26

Exceptions to the rule: cases of Eastern emancipation

While uncertainties and the painful experiences of viewing the great bulk of earlier research as waste products characterised the state of Eastern sociology and the troubled mindset of most of the sociologists upon the collapse of the old regime, there were some notable exceptions to the rule. In some areas and with regard to a range of topics, an opposite trend could be established. Instead of a decline, an increase of professional and public interests could be registered that gave prestige to the evolving new research and that made the involved sociologists recognised public figures with influence on the public discourse and also on policy-making. This was an exceptional development, nevertheless a new trend that is worth a closer look and study. As I will try to show, such developments that run against the dominant current came about in areas where the post-socialist experience could not be coupled and compared with similar phenomena in the West. Nonetheless, Eastern sociology discovered that certain Western concepts can be fruitfully reinterpreted and applied for the investigated subjects, what is more, it was such inventions that propelled the new research and that conditioned its new but firm inclusion into the Western science by concurrently maintaining the Eastern identity of the subject and also of its 'Westernised' new professional approach. Such a mingling of Western concepts and their unmissable Eastern reinterpretation represented an earlier unknown form of cooperation: the actors might have been exclusively 'Easterners' but they proudly accepted and practiced the role of the 'messenger' of the West by showing that, besides producing brand new results, their new research worked toward a (re)union of the Western and Eastern disciplinary cultures. Of course, such fusions could take place only in certain singular domains and amid exceptional conditions. As I will attempt to show, such a cultural unification could shape itself when the studied phenomena were generally considered as unparalleled 'Eastern' products but their 'Western-style' reframing brought up certain general implications and generated new questions also for the West.

Let me introduce here two of such examples: the rise of sociological work on Roma; and new research on the social, political and cultural transformation of the one-time second economy and its implications on social development. As I will show, the sources of success are different in these two cases, however, they also have an important aspect in common, namely the above-mentioned innovative transformation of Western concepts and the capacity to reason their new Eastern reinterpretation. Before going into details, it has to be added that these new areas of research drew Western cooperation rather late and more as a result and less as a point of departure. On the ground of their pioneering role, 'Easterners' could preserve a degree of independence and also an acknowledged influential role that helped them in establishing structures of professional equality and in drawing a share from research funding that matched their acknowledged status. These were momentous developments, indeed.

Let me turn first to sociological work on the 'Roma question'.

As is well known, research on Roma was born together with the collapse of state-socialism. Before, such research was an exception and it was usually run by

scholars who were emblematic figures of the dissident underground movements. Framed as part of a general critique of the state-socialist regime, the predicament of Roma was primarily seen in their studies as an extreme violation of human rights and as an extreme form of forceful subordination. For the most part, such early research initiatives were invoked by scholars turning to dissident activists whose disciplinary affiliation hardly influenced their work beyond their shared commitment to engaging in research that was framed by the traditions of the *settlement movement* and that found deep embedding into the Roma community as a precondition of a truthful and reliable inquiry. Against this tradition, it was perhaps the only example of the study of István Kemény and his colleagues in Hungary in which the cause of Roma was approached by a clear-cut sociological perspective (Kemény et al., 1976). Their research put into the focus racialised inequalities and demonstrated the systemic character of the all-round deprivation and deep poverty of Roma. However, this study remained undisclosed for the wider public, and its results became accessible only upon a thorough political and scholarly reevaluation well into the 1990s.

At the same time, sociological interest in the 'Roma question' has been on a speedy rise from the early years of the transition onwards. One hardly finds comparable examples of the expression of interest by looking at other topics: year after year, the number of articles on one or another aspect of the problem became multiplied and Roma studies occupied a significant proportion in the distrtibution of academic funding (Dupcsik, 2009). However, these new studies had little in common with earlier research. This was not due to a neglect of the heritage, rather, it followed from recognising that the collapse of the old rule profoundly changed its framing. Studies of Roma embodied true discoveries but also a political commitment to a group of people who quickly became the primary losers of the ongoing economic and socio-political transformation. In addition to viewing such developments as a continuation and also as a conversion of human rights violation as represented by many among the former dissidents, the new 'movement' of Roma research also attracted a great number of the one-time 'modernisers'. Their contribution gained ground by showing the feudalist traits of Roma exclusion and the conservation of old patterns of servitude. Although such contributions helped to conceptualise and refine important empirical findings, they were short of providing explanations for the systemic character of the 'Roma issue'. It became clear that the explanatory framework for discussing the Roma cause was not readily at hand: there remained an analytical gap in addressing the macro-level associations of the systemic nature of deprivation and subordination that, besides producing and reproducing poverty, hit Roma on *ethnic grounds*.

This analytical gap was filled by the fortunate discovery of sociologists who proposed to look at the situation of Roma through the lens of *minority studies*. Conceptualising Roma as an indigenous minority suddenly opened new pathways for research. From an earlier exotic issue, research on Roma turned into one of the powerful cases of demonstrating the problematic state of minority rights all across the democratic polity. The proposed approach opened the way to reinvigorating and purposefully applying the Marshallian triad of *citizenship*. Research in this direction showed that even the political rights of Roma were incomplete as many of their communities, especially in Romania and the West-Balkan states, remained excluded

from voting rights as the foundation of democratic participation. Studies on social rights revealed massive exclusion and called attention to the problem of harsh discrimination and all-round segregation as its most widespread manifestations. In the context of research on the cultures of daily living, the concept of *multicultural citizenship* gained a new meaning, and Eastern sociologists could fulfil a pioneering role in providing lively interpretations of the concept mainly in education, health and housing.

At the same time, the new conceptualisation of Roma as the potential subject of multiculturalist rights and entitlements opened toward another influential strand of research formerly rather in the focus of anthropology and psychology than in the mainstream interest of sociology – and this was the concept of *ethnic identity*. The concept of identity enjoyed broad professional and public interest: new Europeanisation as the meeting and moulding of cultures brought the issue into the forefront with relevance to the majorities of the nation-states as much as for the minorities. What is more, the historically shaken Eastern identity, its rehabilitation, and its conversion from multigenerational separation to free cosmopolitism in a uniting Europe has been a much discussed key problem among the current cultural issues. This broader framing gave importance to Roma identity that appeared as a compound of ethnic pride and threats against human integrity and also as a concept of individuation and a notion of community cohesion.

The fusion of the two strands of research framed around the concept of minority and identity proved very productive. This way new sociological work that mobilised two important Western concepts was able to come up with a unique representation of a unique issue, and as such, it gained genuine reputation as much in the East as in the West. It followed that the new sociology of the 'Roma issue' slowly started to influence the critical political and public discourse, and sociological expertise was praised and mobilised by policy-making. In a certain sense, Roma studies earned recognition and influence resembling those of the postwar Western sociology on citizenship. It is not by coincidence that it was trained sociologists among the members of the European Parliament who took the lead of claiming an international recognition of Europe's Roma and of proposing the drafting of national Roma strategies for social inclusion and genuine democratic participation. Although all this took place amid a growing public support of anti-Roma sentiments and the spreading of populist racism and the outright violation of Roma rights also in a number of Western democracies, the cause of Roma could not be swept out of the public domain, and Eastern sociologists had an important contribution to this rather new state of affairs.

Their impact has been remarkable also in new research. Comparative studies on Europe's 'coloured people' proposed a new overarching framework for approaching the troubled state of immigrants and the deprivations that Roma suffer. Such research seems to have a fertilising impact on studies of multiculturalism – this time more from the angle of daily cohabitation than from the perspective of constitutional and legal arrangements. In this sense, 'Easterners' justifiably and proudly can see their pioneering work on Roma as propositions for initiating broader research questions, while by looking at the political implications, they can justly see themselves as the actors working toward equality and mutuality in scholarship.

The second story of the transformation of the one-time second economy and its role in the restructuring of post-socialist societies is different. Perhaps the strongest and the most widespread in Hungary, but exerting increasing influence from the early 1980s onwards all over the region, the second economy played an outstanding role in the gradual destruction and cultural-political undermining of the state-socialist formation. However, attempts at approaching the phenomenon had to face peculiar difficulties, for the very existence of the second economy appeared as a puzzle that did not fit into any of the established Western conceptual frameworks. This became clear from the failed attempts of suggesting a range of different contexts. For in a structure of the overpower of the planned economy, the second economy could not be considered as a *market* proper, however, it showed important features of 'market-like' functioning. Similarly, under the cultural-political and ideological overpower of the socialist state, it could not be considered as the terrain of *citizens' activity*, although it demonstrated an impressive strength of cultural innovations and people's efforts for accommodating modernised conditions away from the state-ruled sphere. Yet again, involvement in the second economy was not a *civil movement* of opposition and public resistance either, although at a closer look at people's mode of participation and their 'tricks' in negotiating a degree of limited freedom for withdrawal from their 'socialist duties' to the framework of privacy, resembled many of the new social movements of the time that dropped the old notions of structure and leadership and organised around the spreading of new behavioural patterns in the private domain. In brief, the second economy was a product of late-socialism that Western sociologists and political scientists in their striving for concepts that could be applied without reservations were inclined to leave aside as a terrain of specific 'Eastern research'.

At the same time, the importance of this particular terrain in the post-socialist transformation was early and aptly recognised by 'Easterners', especially, by sociologists who formerly committed themselves to engaging in work within the above described 'modernisation' framework. By quickly finding the appropriate Western concepts and designing innovative methods, they turned research about the transformation of the second economy to one of the success stories of the post-socialist sociological inquiry. Three concepts played the key role in these studies: the first was a reinterpretation of the notion of *modernisation*; the second was a new framing of *small entrepreneurship*; and the third was, once again, the concept of *citizenship* – but this time mostly the historical-cultural aspects of the concept.

Looking at the heritage of the second economy by focusing on its recognisable modernising potential meant studying from closeness the knowledge, skills and behavioural patterns that had been developed in a way in silent but widespread opposition to the state-socialist order. It was appropriate to ask what role this heritage could play in the transformation process. By framing its reshuffling in the terms of modernisation, the engaged Eastern sociologists could point out new forms of the civilising process and reveal the ways of acquiring new cultural capital that can become the foundations of 'transformation from below'. This new research could take a critical stand regarding the then much heard gloomy Western forecasts about a quick proletarianisation of the one-time socialist middle-class and it could also demonstrate the specificities of the civilian ways of combating impoverishment amid the transition crisis. The 'Westerners' had little to add here; instead, by focusing research on

privatisation in its classical forms, their contributions to the arising 'transitology' tried to circumvent the issue of the second economy as something that would 'die out' within a short while and thus does not deserve special attention.

The picture was equally complex when the heritage was approached by asking questions about its potential in informing entrepreneurship. Here again, the Eastern contribution was able to enrich general knowledge. It was true that a part of the former informal family enterprises was converting into registered small business within a short while. However, most of the heirs of the one-time informal businesses did not follow this path. Although they may have registered as entrepreneurs to enjoy preferential loans and some tax-exemptions, they refused to participate in a textbook-like way: they practically did not invest into the business and when asked they said that they made all efforts to avoid risk-taking and did not have any plans for growth. In brief, they were entrepreneurs with consumer traits, modernisers in lifestyle, and consumers in the garment of entrepreneurship – but above all, they testified self-defensive strategies for a peaceful survival. In brief, the established category of entrepreneurship could not be applied to their case. It followed that Western transitologists had yet another reason for trying to avoid the sphere and concentrate on 'ordinary' big business. Nevertheless, the 'empty space' that they left behind could be fruitfully filled by Eastern research. Its contribution deserved recognition within a short while: work in this area opened a new path in economic sociology that turned to the alternative cultures of entrepreneurship in non-Western societies as a new field of scholarly research. Later works on the 'Chinese miracle' or on the revisions of the typology of the relationship between the state and the market in Latin America or in South Asia grew out of these one-time innovations of Eastern sociology and demonstrated a notable revival of the entire disciplinary domain (Berger and Huntington, 2003).

A new understanding of the concept of citizenship as framed within the transformation of the one-time second economy put into the focus the historical-cultural aspects of the notion. Inspired by Marshall's historical arguments about the gradual evolution of social rights, this strand of the research revealed how the unique role of the second economy transformed gender relations in the family and how this gradual transformation served as a basis for conceptualising a wide array of welfare rights upon the collapse of state-socialism. It was shown that the informal family businesses under socialism functioned as units of acquiring the cultural elements of modernised relationships of agreements and contracts in production and it was also demonstrated how such contracts were taken as new models for the 'atypical' forms of employment that were quickly spreading and that were benevolently slowing down the risks of unemployment in the early years of economic transformation. At the same time, the weaknesses of citizenship were also shown. It turned out that the cultural heritages of the second economy were strictly shaped by the evolving class relations: rewards for earlier participation in the informal family businesses enriched the social rights of the middle and upper classes. However, people and families in the lower echelons of the social structure were greatly restricted in or actually fully left out from enjoying the new welfare rights – and it was their limited involvement in the former second economy that justified the differentiations (though mostly in an implicit way).

The findings of Eastern sociology about the cultural potentials of the family did not remain without reflections: it was the feminist movement in the first place that, besides turning with interest to comparative endeavours, discovered the political potential. For in their follow-up analysis, families as the heirs of the second economy clearly demonstrated 'the political significance of the private' and also the strong intersectionality of class and gender in the working of the new post-socialist welfare state. By looking at the phenomenon as a new demonstration of the historicity as involved in citizenship, this strand of Eastern research granted important theoretical and empirical foundations to a later development of studies on the 'variations of capitalism' (Greskovits and Bohle, 2012) while it also fertilised the nascent field of comparative welfare state studies. This way 'Easterners' opened new pathways to Western sociology to give up its exclusively institutional approach to the post-socialist transition and to enter meaningful comparative inquiries about the types of public-private relationships by recognising their particular Eastern formations.

The two cases of studies discussed above provide a few important lessons. Both the extensive research on Roma and the innovative approaches to the heritage of the second economy grew out from a rather peculiar relationship of Eastern and Western sociology. Given the specificities of the two fields of study, these hindered the straightforward application of ready-made Western concepts and methodologies. Such a state of affairs withheld Western sociologists from initiating new cooperations; they better turned to more classical topics and fields where their expertise was considered to be on safe grounds. Such a withdrawal opened new opportunities for Eastern entrance to the 'neglected' areas and it freed the hands of Eastern sociologists to propose well-fitting concepts and methods to study these 'abandoned' fields. However, the truly great invention of the 'Easterners' was their smart way of avoiding parochialism by turning to established Western concepts and theories and innovatively reframing their content so as to make those apt for comparative East-West understanding. This impressive potential of Eastern sociology has produced stunning new results which earned, in turn, some new positions for Eastern scholars who have become recognised as influential partners in international cooperations. The message of their success is as important for the West as for the East. For the West, this success demonstrates the emancipatory potential of 'Eastern' research and thus calls for a more cautious approach to 'variations within sameness'. For the East, it shows the right for departures in history and calls for a more liberated and more courageous turn toward the heritage of the past as a source of future advancing. Whether these messages will come to be heard, is a question of current and future research. But the examples are on offer, for sure.

Conclusions

Our brief overview of the respective histories of the heyday and the descent of "Western" and "Eastern" sociology as important precedences of entering their collaborative endeavours upon the collapse of state-socialism revealed a rather complex picture. It turned out that, in addition to the much criticised structures of "colonisation" with clear power relations of ruling and subordination, much of the disquietingness that has been experienced in such collaborations originate from

different sources. In an important part, the tensions and the disappointments rather follow from deep-rooted uncertainties and confused professional identities of the partners entering the cooperation, however, the sources of uncertainties and the manifestations of frustrations remarkably differ in the case of the 'Westerners' and the 'Easterners'. An influential part of Western sociology has become unsure in applying its concepts and methods amid the lasting crisis of the welfare state and the ambivalences that accompany the notion of citizenship. For them, the currents of the post-industrial age questioned the very foundations of equal social membership and the structurally conditioned practicing of social rights for all. While also many among the Western researchers were lastingly affected by the collapse of Marxism, alternative post-Marxist theories have helped them to find new frameworks for their research.

The crisis of concepts and methods was deeper among the 'Easterners' whose majority had to experience losing ground in the foundation of their professional identity as well as facing existential challenges and a break of their career-paths due to the quickly and profoundly changed needs and conditions of the transition times. Further, Eastern sociology was deeply divided along political lines, and mutual fears and suspicions among the 'dissidents' and those who were politically accepted contributed to the erosion of professional solidarity, a general weakness of 'conflict-avoiding' conceptualisations and the shakiness of empirical research. Although Western theories, concepts and research traditions exerted some impact on Eastern sociology prior to the systemic change, the new collaborative initiatives found the partners in a strained search for new research concepts and tools.

However, their positions were unequal from scratch. As I tried to show, disappointed and unsure Westerners still had a reservoir of concepts to retreat to: these were the 'unfashionable' but now renewable concepts of democracy, citizenship, family and the variations of public-private relationships in late capitalism. These concepts did not properly fit the post-socialist condition in the East. Nevertheless, the notions could still be proposed as 'norms' to assess the departures and to offer new analytical frameworks for exploring their causes and manifestations. The 'Easterners' were in a more difficult position. Apart from a few examples of originality in conceptualisation due to the uniqueness of the approached 'Eastern' phenomena, the immediate past of the collapsed old rule did not entail easily adapteable lessons for the post-socialist course. In the general atmosphere of 'quickly catching up to the West', important groups of sociologists felt to be pushed from inside of researching their own societies according to their own traditions and thus turning to the West and accepting 'Westernized' notions without reservation seemed for them the only way out. True, these different predispositions of the 'Westerners 'and the 'Easterners' provide a fertile soil for the latter to accept subordination and degradation as prices for their paralysing weaknesses. I assume that much of the built-in inequalities of contemporary East-West cooperation follows less from aggressive Western attempts at ruling and subordination than from the silenced diffidence of the frustrated 'Westerners' meeting and curatively 'mastering' the fears and the incapacity of the 'Easterners'– and what comes out of such an encounter is at best paternalistic with 'domesticated domination'.

Such an alternative diagnosis of revealing the troubled histories of the partners does not question that these cooperations are full of inequalities and unintended, but

still hurtful, injustices. Nevertheless, the acknowledgement of weaknesses and uncertainties in the background involves a different therapy. While the 'colonisation diagnosis' calls for combatting subordination and the second-rank status of 'Easterners' primarily on political grounds, the 'uncertainty diagnosis' suggests the strengthening of the 'Eastern positions' via new and innovative research and also through the exploration of the potentials of East-East solidarity. The political struggle for the emancipation of Eastern sociology (and also of the Eastern sociologists) implies institutional actions and the framing of the tensions in East-West cooperation along collective professional terms. The potentials for individual struggle are very limited: it is the 'colonising' structure to be criticised and altered, and this could be done through organisational channels and in the framework of the rather powerful professional associations. An 'Eastern' recognition struggle could also count on the support of many sympathetic 'Westerners' but perhaps its main advantage could be the strengthening of East-East solidarity and cooperation which, in turn, might give increased opportunities for lessening the inequalities in East-West cooperations.

The case with overcoming the disciplinary uncertainties is different. Individual researchers have a significant space for influencing and orienting the disciplinary discourses about theory, concepts and methodology provided, that the uncertainties are acknowledged at both ends. The outcome of such personal efforts and struggles rarely is the prompt changing of the mainstream way of thinking and acting. Nevertheless, such efforts may bring about genuine new results and, what is perhaps even more important, these might contribute to an exchange toward overcoming the uncertainties in a cooperative way. This might be attractive also for the Western participants as a way of entering in-depth conceptual deliberations which, in turn, might liberate them from the captivity of the half-heartedly applied normative approaches that many of them regard as second-best orientation toward the post-socialist societies. Further, an open dialogue about theories and concepts comes as an enrichment for them: the mutual recognition of historically conditioned uncertainties and the critical contributions of the 'Easterners' to correct the failures of a 'norm-fitting' enterprise can bring about intellectual vividness and the promise of regained originality.

I am aware that this latter proposition might sound too optimistic for many of my Eastern colleagues. Nevertheless, some exemplary efforts along this line have taken place in sociological research of the past two and a half decades and these have concluded in acknowledgeable success: the revealed new results of Eastern contribution found their way also to mainstream Western sociology and, parallel to this, 'Easterners' gained substantial reputation and longer-term safe involvement in East-West collaborative research (Bruszt and Stark, 1998; Einhorn, 2002; Ladányi and Szelényi, 2006; Young and Kaczmarek, 2008; Boje and Potucek, 2011) . The lessons of the past 25 years of cooperation when Easterners turned around the wheel (or instigated Westerners to go along in such an exercise) can perhaps be fruitfully capitalised on in thinking about the preconditions of more balanced endeavours in East-West research. For this purpose, it is important to recall that certain strands of research were blossoming amid the conflictual conditions of East-West collaboration, and what is more, such successful strands contributed to new recognition and improved positions of Eastern research in general. In my optimistic reading, all this

means that 'Eastern' sociology has its reserves of autonomy and prosperity. However, much of these reserves is frozen and overlaid by fears and deeply felt frustrations of being incapable to escape the flows of 'colonisation'. But perhaps much of what seems 'colonisation' is 'negotiable domination' of the similarly uncertain partners. A dialogue out of the traps at both ends may help to bring up the genuine motives. However, initiating such self-sacrificing exchanges of histories and identities needs a good deal of courage from both parties. But the intellectual gains, a recollected self-assurance of all partners, and the peaceful and prosperous cooperative relations might well pay for the investment.

References

Abel-Smith, B. and P. Townsend (1965) *The Poor and the Poorest.* London, UK: G. Bell and Sons.

Alber, J. (1988) 'Is There a Crisis of the Welfare State? Crossnational Evidence from Europe, North America and Japan'. *European Sociological Review*, 4(3): 181-205.

Bauman, Z. (2004) *Wasted Lives: Modernity and Its Outcasts.* Cambridge, UK: Polity.

Berger, P. L. and S. P. Huntington (eds.) (2003) *Many Globalizations: Cultural Diversity in the Contemporary World.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Boje, T. P. and M. Potucek (2011) *Social Rights, Active Citizenship and Governance in the European Union.* Munich: Nomos Publishers.

Bourdieu, P. (1986) The Forms of Capital. In J. Richardson (ed). *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education.* New York, NY: Greenwood. 241-258.

Bottomore, T. (1982) 'Introduction'. In Bottomore,T, S. Nowak and M. Sokolowska (eds.) *Sociology: The State of the Art.* London, UK: Sage. 27-35.

Bottomore, T. (1992) 'Citizenship and Social Class, Forty Years On'. In Marshall, T. H. and T. Bottomore: *Citizenship and Social Class.* London, UK: Pluto Press. 55-94.

Brubaker, R. (1996) *Nationalism Reframed. Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Brubaker, R. (2004) *Ethnicity without Groups.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bruszt, L. and D. Stark (1998) *Postsocialist Pathways: Transforming Politics and Property in East Central Europe.* Cambridge, MA.: Cambridge University Press.

Csepeli, Gy., A. Örkény and K. L. Scheppele (1996) The Colonization of East European Social Science. *Social Research,* 63(2): 487-510.

DiMaggio, P. J. and W. W. Powell (1983) 'The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields', *American Sociological Review,* 47(2): 147-160.

Dogan, M. (ed.) *Elite Configurations at the Apex of Power.* Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill.

Dupcsik, Cs. (2009) *A magyarországi cigányság története* (The history of Gypsies in Hungary). Budapest: Osiris.

During, S. (ed.) (2003) *The Cultural Studies Reader.* London, UK: Routledge.

Einhorn, B. (2002) *Cinderella Goes to Market: Citizenship, Gender, and Women's Movements in East Central Europe.* London, UK: Verso.

Einhorn, B. (2006) *Citizenship in an Enlarged Europe.* Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Eriksen, T. H. (2003) *Ethnicity and Nationalism.* London, UK: Sage.

Etzioni-Halevy, E. (ed.) (1997) *Classes and Elites in Democracy and Democratization.* New York, NY: Garland.

Ferge, Zs. and S. M. Miller (eds.) (1987) *Dynamics of Deprivation.* Aldershot, UK: Gower.

Ferge, Zs. (1987) 'The Dynamics of the Reproduction of Social Relations'. In Ferge, Zs. and S. M. Miller (eds.) *Dynamics of Deprivation.* Aldershot, UK: Gower. 148-173.

Gans, H. (1995) *The War against the Poor.* New York, NY: Basic Books.

Gellner, E. (1996) *Conditions of Liberty. Civil Society and Its Rivals.* New York, NY: Penguin Books.

Giddens, A. (1993a) 'What Do Sociologists Do?' In Giddens, A. *Social Theory and Modern Sociology.* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. 1-22.

Giddens, A. (1993b) 'Nine Theses on the Future of Sociology'. In Giddens, A. *Social Theory and Modern Sociology.* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. 22-52.

Graziano, P., S. Jacquot, and B. Palier (2011) *The EU and the Domestic Politics of Welfare State Reforms.* Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Greskovits, B. and D. Bohle (2012) *Capitalist Diversity on Europe's Periphery.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Hall, S. (1980) 'Cultural Studies: Two Paradigms'. *Media, Culture and Society,* 2(1): 57-72.

Himmelstrand, U. (1982) 'Innovative Processes in Social Change: Theory, Method and Social Practice'. In Bottomore,T., S. Nowak, and M. Sokolowska (eds.) *Sociology: The State of the Art.* London, UK: Sage. 37-67.

Jenkins, R. (1997) *Rethinking Ethnicity.* London, UK: Sage.

Kemény, I., Zs. Csalog, G. Havas, and K. Rupp (1976) *Beszámoló a magyarországi cigányok helyzetével foglalkozó, 1971-ben végzett kutatásról* (Report of the 1971-study on the Gypsy population of Hungary). Budapest: MTA Szociológiai Kutatóintézete.

Keen, M. F. and J. Mucha (eds.) (2003) *Sociology in Central and Eastern Europe. Transformations at the Dawn of the New Millennium.* Westport, CT and London, UK: Praeger.

Konrad, G. and I. Szelenyi (1979) *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power.* Brighton, UK: Harvester Press.

Kulpinska, J. and M. Maurice (1982) 'Trends in the Development of the Sociology of Work: In Search of Identity'. In Bottomore, T., S. Nowak, and M. Sokolowska: *Sociology: The State of the Art.* London, UK: Sage. 263-277.

Kwasmiewicz, W. (1994) 'Dialectics of Systemic Constraint and Academic Freedom: Polish Sociology under Socialist Regime'. In Keen, M. F. and J. Mucha (eds.) *Eastern Europe in Transformation: The Impact of Sociology.* Westport, CT and London, UK: Praeger.

Lemon, A. and D. Altschuler (1998) 'Kinek a társadalomtudományát gyarmatosították?' (Whose social science was colonised?). *Replika*, 33-34(4): 61-65.

Ladányi, J. and I. Szelényi (2006) *Patterns of Exclusion: Constructing Gypsy Ethnicity and the Making of an Underclass in Transitional Societies of Europe.* New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Marshall, T. H. (1950) *Citizenship and Social Class and Other Essay.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

McAdam, D., J. D. McCarthy, and M. N. Zald (1988) 'Development and the World Economy'. In Smelser, N. J. (ed.) *Handbook of Sociology.* London, UK: Sage. 739-775.

Michnik, A. (2014) *The Trouble with History.* Morality, *Revolution and Counterrevolution.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Mills, C. W. (1959) *The Sociological Imagination.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Mishra, R. (1984) *The Welfare State in Crisis.* London, UK: Wheatsheat.

Mucha, J. (2009) 'Sociology in Central and Eastern Europe or East European Sociology: Historical and Present'. *Sociológia: Slovak Socological Review*, 41(6): 506-525.

Musil, J. (1980) *Urbanization in Socialist Countries.* Armonk, NY: Sharpe.

Myrdal, G. (1965) 'Preface'. In Seligman, B. B. (ed.) *Poverty as a Public Issue.* New York, NY: The Free Press, V-IX.

Nystrom, P. C. and W. H. Starbuck (1981) *Handbook of Organizational Design.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Offe, C. (2014) Europe Entrapped. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Orum, A. M. (1988) 'Political Sociology'. In Smelser, N. J. (ed.) *Handbook of Sociology.* London, UK: Sage. 393-425.

Pierson, C. and F. G. Castles (eds.) (2012) *The Welfare State Reader.* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Portes, A. (1998) 'Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology'. *Annual Review of Sociology, (*24): 1-24.

Putnam, R. D. (2000) *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community.* New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

Sarder, Z. and B. Van Loom (1994) *Introducing Cultural Studies.* New York, NY: Totem Books.

Skocpol, T., A Liazos and M. Ganz (2008) *What a Mighty Power We Can Be: African Anerican Fraternal Groups and the Struggle for Racial Equality.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Tajfel, H. (1981) *Human Groups and Social Categories.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Turner, J. (1985) 'Social Categorization and Self-Concept: A Social Cognitive Theory of Group Behaviour'. In Lowler, E. J. (ed.) *Advances in Group Processes.* Greenwich, CT: JAL. 77-121.

Vidich, A. J. and Lyman, S. M. (1994). Qualitative methods: Their history in sociology and anthropology. In Vidich, A. J and S. M. Lyman (eds) *Handbook of qualitative research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. 23-59.

Walder, A. (2003) 'Elite Opportunity in Transitional Economies. *American Sociological Review,* 68 (6): 899-916.

Williams, F. (1989) *Social Policy.* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Young, C. and S. Kaczmarek (2008) 'The Socialist Past and Postsocialist Urban Identity in Central and Eastern Europe'. *European Urban and Regional Studies,* 15(1): 153-70.

MADINA TLOSTANOVA *
Can the Post-Soviet Think? On Coloniality of Knowledge, External Imperial and Double Colonial Difference

* [madina.tlostanova@gmail.com] (Russian Academy of National Economy and Public Administration, Russia)

Abstract

The article considers the main challenges faced by the post-Soviet social sciences in the global configuration of knowledge, marked by omnipresent coloniality. In disciplinary terms this syndrome is manifested in the social sciences versus area studies divide from which the post-Soviet is either excluded or equalized with postcolonial discourses. The situation can be described as a general invisibility of the post-Soviet space and its social sciences and scientists for the rest of the world and the refusal of the global North to accept the post-Soviet scholar in the capacity of a rational subject. The reasons for this complex intersection of the post-Soviet, postcolonial and other post-dependence factors are both internal and external, political and epistemic. Following the methodological principles of decolonial option the author analyses such specific elements of the post-Soviet stagnant configuration in knowledge production as the external imperial difference and the double colonial difference, the geo-politics and body-politics of knowledge the way they are reflected in the knowledge production and distribution, paying specific attention to possible ways out of this epistemic dead-end.

Keywords: post-Soviet, coloniality of knowledge, imperial and colonial difference, disciplinary implosion, epistemic racism

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 38-58.
TLOSTANOVA, M.: CAN THE POST-SOVIET THINK?

39

Preliminary remarks

The title of this article was prompted by Singaporean political scientist Kishore Mahbubani's book *Can Asians Think? Understanding the Divide Between East and West* (2001). He took a compromising position advocating the use of Western technologies and a restricted number of principles facilitating their successful implementation (such as meritocracy, education, and justice), but at the same time, accentuated the importance of maintaining the local values and cultural, ethical, social, religious and gender models, which should never be erased in favor of some generalized homogenized globalized modernity. Mahbubani's main argument is not against Western liberalism as such, although he demonstrates that democracy or political openness are not necessary for successful economic development or even for belonging to modernity in its diversified contemporary sense (Mahbubani, 2009). He just draws the attention to the fact that the West itself often violates the rules it has set and therefore loses its right to teach others how to be, its privilege to divide people into those whose rights matter and who are allowed to think, and those whose lives are dispensable and who are not considered fully rational subjects.

Asking his provocative question Mahbubani certainly does not have any doubts about his own and his fellow Asians' ability to practice rationality. What he means is why and how it happened in history that Asians were not given a chance to use their cognitive abilities to the fullest in order to join modernity on an equal basis with the West and what they should do in order to reverse that situation. Mahbubani's project thus honestly and with good faith attempts to divide the rhetoric of modernity from the logic of coloniality (Mignolo and Tlostanova, 2007) assuming that we are dealing with the situation of equal opportunities and that the Orient is to be blamed for its own failures. But it is not possible to sustain this position because the rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality cannot really exist without each other. The dewesternizing position exemplified by Mahbubani, remains blind to the coloniality of knowledge (Mignolo and Tlostanova, 2012) that this article will address in relation to the post-Soviet space and its inhabitants. Alas, in this case the answer to Mahbubani's question might be less optimistic and the reasons lie in a combination of the coloniality of knowledge, external imperial difference, and double colonial difference.

What is coloniality of knowledge?

Coloniality of knowledge is a typically modern syndrome, consisting in the fact that all models of cognition and thinking, seeing and interpreting the world and the people, the subject-object relations, the organization of disciplinary divisions, entirely depend on the norms and rules created and imposed by Western modernity since the 16th century, and offered to humankind as universal, delocalized and disembodied. Coloniality of knowledge is a term coined by the international decolonial collective (Mignolo and Escobar, 2009) whose main task has been for over two decades to critically analyze modernity and its darker side – coloniality, to trace the genealogy of modernity's violence in relation to its internal and external others, as well as to restore the alternative genealogies of decolonial struggles in order to offer ways of delinking

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 38-58.

TLOSTANOVA, M.: CAN THE POST-SOVIET THINK?

40

from modernity/coloniality and decolonizing our being, knowledge, perception, gender, and memory. Global coloniality is different from colonialism though its origins go back to the colonization of the New World. Yet colonialism is a historical and descriptive term which does not attempt a deconstruction of epistemic and discursive grounds of the modern/colonial project and seldom ventures into the depths of the philosophy of science in order to manifest its dominant colonialist roots. Global coloniality by contrast continues long after colonialism is over and flourishes in unexpected and not evident spheres of modern disciplines and academic divisions, in the production and distribution of knowledge, as well as in geo-historical and geo-political situations that do not render themselves so obviously to any postcolonial interpretation, which is the case of the post-Soviet spaces and thinkers.

Global coloniality is always manifested in particular local forms and conditions, remaining at the same time a recognizable connecting thread for the wholesome perception and understanding of otherwise often meaningless and cruel dissociated manifestations of modernity. Ontological othering in modernity has epistemic roots because modernity above all is a knowledge generating system and not as much an objective historical process. It is an idea that describes certain historical processes in particular ways and manages to force everyone to believe that it is an objective ontological reality. Once the idea of modernity was created, it legitimized the system of knowledge that created it. Both became instruments for disavowing other systems of knowledge and pushing other historical processes outside modernity. The making of epistemic modernity went hand in hand with epistemic coloniality, that is, with colonization of knowledge by either absorbing its content or by rejecting it.

Enrique Dussel demonstrated that the darker *ego conquiro* eventually leads to the lighter *ego cogito* 'subjugating the other, the woman and the conquered male, in an alienating erotics and in a mercantile capitalist economics' (Dussel, 1995: 43). Philosophy and science which habitually focus on relations with and to objects rather than inter-human communications, and particularly, communications with the Other, are only the darker sides of the master morality of female oppression and racial differentiation. Decolonizing knowledge then means destabilizing the usual subject-object relationship from a specific position of those who have been denied subjectivity and rationality and regarded as mere tokens of their culture, religion, sexuality, race, and gender. For such people stressing the subjective specificity of our knowledge would be different from the start, from a mere postmodernist claim at situated knowledges. Becoming epistemic subjects and looking at the world from the position of our own origins, lived experiences, and education, we can then regard as objects of our study the Western imperial formations and thinkers who created institutions of knowledge that became the measure of all possible knowledges.

Zero point epistemology and disciplinary decadence

Most modern disciplines being ideological and epistemic products of the West, are grounded in what Santiago Castro-Gomez called the hubris of the zero-point (Castro-Gomez, 2005), that is, an arrogant urge to take the vantage point of the observer and occupy a specific secure place exempt from reality (an observer who cannot be

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 38-58.
TLOSTANOVA, M.: CAN THE POST-SOVIET THINK?

41

observed) and seemingly free from any subjective biases and interests, claiming to be emanating pure and uncompromised Truth. Such an Archimedean position, hiding the interconnection of geo-historical location and epistemology and body-racial and gendered epistemic configurations, is also a view point grounded in certain languages and categories of thought automatically eliminating anyone who writes and thinks in a different language or uses categories and concepts unknown to the West. Castro-Gomez expresses this syndrome in the following way:

> The co-existence of diverse ways of producing and transmitting knowledge is eliminated because now all forms of human knowledge are ordered on an epistemological scale from the traditional to the modern, from barbarism to civilization, from the community to the individual, from the orient to occident (...) By way of this strategy, scientific thought positions itself as the only valid form of producing knowledge, and Europe acquires an epistemological hegemony over all other cultures of the world. (Castro-Gomez, 2007: 433)

In the post-enlightenment world this zero point epistemology shifted its source and authority from God to Reason (and from theodicea to ratiodicea) making it possible for specific groups to assume such a secure and undisputed locus of enunciation.

This leads to a meaningless proliferation and implosion of disciplines, particularly in the humanities and social sciences. Disciplines are often losing any links with reality and social practices, concentrating on their own, often invented solipsist problems instead. This alarming tendency has already led to many calls for undisciplining the disciplines as a way of their overcoming (Castro-Gómez and Mendieta, 1998) in order to save them for the future but also to remain faithful to social reality. Lewis Gordon entitled this phenomenon a 'disciplinary decadence'(Gordon, 2006), when a 'method facilitates the epistemic rejection of reality' (Gordon, 2010: 201) and scholars concentrate on the problems of frozen and de-ontologized disciplines and not human beings in the real world, thus rejecting unpleasant truths and turning to pleasant self-deceptions or deliberate acts of bad faith (a rethought Sartrean'mauvaise foi') instead, as a form of war against social reality and fleeing responsibility and freedom of choice through presenting one's opinion as universally true and one's discipline as a 'rationalization of itself as world' through continued practices or even rituals of the discipline (Gordon, 2010: 54). A way out of this dead-end for Gordon lies in a critical good faith, a teleological suspension of disciplines and a willingness to rediscover anew the ideas and goals that disciplines were based on at their birth and subsequently forgot.

Gordon's opinion is supported by many other non-Western scholars (Sandoval, 2000; Smith, 1999). To cope with disciplinary decadence we must turn to those intersecting fields which are intended to shape political and intellectual coalitions with other others and eventually work for the emergence of coalitional consciousness transversal in relation to both Western and non-Western theorizing and activism.

Intersections. East European Journal of Society and Politics, 1 (2): 38-58.
Tlostanova, M.: Can The Post-Soviet Think?

42

Trans-disciplinarity in Western theorizing

A recent Western mainstream example of a similar (though stemming from a different impulse) tendency to dismantling the disciplines, is to be found in Rosi Braidotti's model of critical antihumanist posthumanism which results in rethinking traditional humanities and social sciences. Braidotti claims that critical post-humanism is 'delinking the human agent from the universalistic posture, calling him to task (...) on the concrete actions he is enacting' (Braidotti, 2013: 223). For anti-humanists subject becomes more and more complex, problematic and relational, as well as framed by sexuality, corporeality, empathy, affectivity and desire. They strive to offer more positive alternatives instead of negative common vulnerability of human and non-human forms of life that global bio-genetic capitalism has to offer today. The sources of critical anti-humanism lie not only in feminist, postcolonial, poststructuralist thought, but also in contemporary critical environmentalism with its struggle for new concrete forms of universality, which are based on respect for all that lives. This is opposed to Western humanism, rationality and secularity linked with sanctified science and technology. Still speaking from a privileged vantage point, though being more open to various alternative positions and sometimes attempting to appropriate and alter them for her own discourse, Braidotti links posthumanism with a move beyond anthropocentrism and expanding the notion of life towards the non-human or *zoe* – in a way echoing Giorgio Agamben (Agamben, 1998), but reinterpreting *zoe* in a positive and constructive way as a non-human vital force of Life and erasing the previously stable boundary between the *bios* and the *zoe*. Zoe-centered egalitarianism for Braidotti is the core of the post-anthropocentric turn. It is opposed to today's political economy of turning human and non-human matter into a commodity.

Such re-branded humanities and social sciences marked by a refusal to follow the model of positive and absolute knowledge accumulation, would require a drastic change in the direction of post-anthropocentric, transdisciplinary, ethically charged inquiry in which the identity of humanistic practices will be altered 'by stressing heteronomy and multi-faceted relationality, instead of autonomy and self-referential disciplinary purity'(Braidotti, 2013: 145). This does not mean that the new humanities would abandon the crucial aspect of humanities as such – the transformative impact of the humane dimension in increasingly inhumane contexts. But, according to Braidotti, the humanists of the twenty first century should not stand on the defensive or be nostalgic of the classical humanities that we lost forever. Instead we should work on finding new ways for the post-anthropocentric humanities to evolve, such as inter- and trans-disciplinary areas between the humanities, the social sciences and the hard and natural sciences (examples include death studies, trauma studies, peace studies, humanitarian management, ecological-cum-social sustainability studies, etc.), and also to develop ever more rigorously the epistemological self-reflexivity and extroverted disciplinary culture.

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 38-58.
TLOSTANOVA, M.: CAN THE POST-SOVIET THINK?

43

The geo-politics and the body-politics of knowledge

These bright perspectives for the future trans-disciplinary disciplines would be entirely true and quite attractive if it was not for today's persisting and even increasing power asymmetry in the production and distribution of knowledge, to which Braidotti remains largely blind for the reasons of her privileged body-politics and geopolitics of knowledge. The geopolitics and body-politics of knowledge represent epistemic and political projects formulated by the experiences and memories of historical agents who were erased as cognitive subjects. The geopolitics of knowledge refers to the local spatial and temporal grounds of knowledge. The body-politics refers to individual and collective biographical grounds of understanding and thinking rooted in particular local histories and trajectories of origination and dispersion. Locality here is understood not merely as a geo-historical location but also as an epistemic correlation with the sensing body, perceiving the world from a particular local history (Mignolo and Tlostanova, 2006).

If Foucauldian bio-politics deconstructs the management of power and its struggle for the right of interpretation, the decolonial body-politics displaces epistemology from its Eurocentric location to the non-Western and non-hegemonic locales and bodies marked by racial, sexual, religious, ethnic and other differences which allows one to render them as dispensable lives, sub-humans, second class citizens and practitioners of condemned religions. The non-European people who have been denied the right and ability to think, who experience various forms of epistemic racism, are the ones who feel persistent power asymmetries in the production and distribution of knowledge in the most painful way.

They can identify with Walter Mignolo's dictum, paraphrasing Cartesian 'Cogito ergo sum' into 'I am where I think':

> I am where I think' sets the stage for epistemic affirmations that have been disavowed. At the same time, it creates a shift in the geography of reasoning. For if the affirmation 'I am where I think' is pronounced from the perspective of the epistemologically disavowed, it implies 'and you too,' addressed to the epistemology of the zero point. In other words, 'we are all where we think,' but only the European system of knowledge was built on the belief that the basic premise is 'I think, therefore I am', which was a translation into secular terms of the theological foundation of knowledge (in which we already encounter the privilege of the soul over the body) to secular terms (Mignolo, 2011: 169).

The 'sanctioned ignorance', in Gayatri Spivak's well known formulation (Spivak, 1999: 164) of the West towards the homogenized non-West, including its periphery and semi-periphery, of the appropriation and trivialization of any knowledge produced outside the West and more and more even just outside the Anglo-American context, has been thoroughly analyzed and criticized within such critical discourses as radical postcolonial theory (Eze, 1997), non-Western feminism (Mohanty, 1984), various alter-global discourses (Shiva, 2006). Take for instance, Egyptian writer and gender activist Nawal el Saadawi who detected this syndrome in a Wellesley conference on women and development:

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 38-58.
TLOSTANOVA, M.: CAN THE POST-SOVIET THINK?

44

'The well meaning US organizers (...) had no idea how maternalistic and condescending they sounded, in both words and attitudes, when they read papers or talked at the participants, telling them how to behave (...) For the US organizers, power was not the issue, because *they* had it, and thought it normal for us not to participate (...) The organizers had the capacity to turn the Third World women's protests into 'personal defects' (Saadawi, 1998: 148).

But powerful critical interventions such as this have not so far changed the general modern logic of knowledge production which is still grounded in rigid taxonomies, effective annihilations and sly appropriations. An interesting example is to be found in the case of intersectionality which has gone from a radical Black feminist stand-point discourse (Hull et al., 1982) to a blurred and depoliticized reinterpretation within contemporary European mainstream feminism. Intersectionality has lost or started to hide its locality, its rootedness in a particular local history, assuming a position withdrawn from any locality. Today it is more and more a position of belonging to some vague common global transnational feminist culture (Carbin and Edenheim, 2013). But such a fogging is unable to hide the persistent power asymmetries for whose revelation intersectionality was coined to start with. The question arises once again – who speaks in and of intersectionality and from what position is the enunciation made? Who enunciates intersectionality? Is the enunciation in intersectionality a new discipline? And in what intersection of intersectionality does the enunciation take place? An alarming tendency is that too often the subject who speaks of intersectionality is not really located in any of the intersections she discusses, but openly or more often surreptitiously stands above as the observer, and remains untouched by the intersection in question. The more important it becomes to focus on different tangential genealogies of knowledge, being, gender, perception, and to shift the emphasis from the enunciated to the enunciation.

The lighter and the darker sides of the cold war disciplinarity and its aftermath

Western social sciences have for a long time ignored the collapsed USSR and there were many reasons for that. The enemy was conquered and it was not important any more to spend as much money on the sovietological area studies as before. This tendency is obvious already in Francis Fukuyama's 'end of history' discourse (Fukuyama, 1992) after which came a typical Western understanding of the post-Soviet in temporal rather than spatial sense, rendering irrelevant millions of people who still struggle with their existence in the territory to the East of the West. As a result many grants and programs were redistributed along different geopolitical divisions that were more fitting for the new situation in which the post-Soviet world was a void. Russia and many of its former and present colonies could not fit the architecture of knowledge and the emerging post-cold war corporate university (Chomsky, 1997; Readings, 1996).

As is known, in the cold war university social sciences rather than humanities took the central position both in their imperial version (the term 'social sciences'

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 38-58.
TLOSTANOVA, M.: CAN THE POST-SOVIET THINK?

45

usually referred to the studies of the West and conducted by Western researchers, and it was here that new theoretical and meta-theoretical models, schools, and general approaches usually emerged in sociology, anthropology, history, and political science) and in their colonial version of area studies, usually more applied and descriptive in their nature, and having more concrete and not always attractive geopolitical goals. Deniz Kandiyoti observes that knowledge production about the world is still a metropolitan (Euro-Atlantic) affair (Crossroads Asia, 2015). Edgardo Lander adds that 'the problem resides in the colonial imaginary from which Western social sciences constructed their interpretation of the world' (Lander, 1998: 71).

Social sciences as a product of the cold war academia have been actively questioned and criticized in the last twenty five years everywhere, including in the West itself. As for their area studies version here as well many Western specialists have been radically rethinking the previous colonizing approaches to the study of the other. Such is a recent initiative *Cross-Roads Asia Network* in Bonn which is attempting to rethink area studies through what they call a post-area studies approach grounded in thematic figurations and mobility and thus stressing dynamic changeability, flexibility and complex interaction of and in the East as its defining feature in contrast with usual Orientalist interpretations (Crossroads Asia). The socialist world was studied somewhere in between but certainly closer to the colonial side, within its separate area studies model of sovietology. It existed on substantial financial support until 1989, when this peculiar form of area studies failed to offer any sufficient over-all models to explain the collapsed USSR which stopped to be regarded as one homogeneous region and started to be redistributed along different lines.

Some of its parts drifted in the direction of the object of study within the still flourishing Western area studies. This shift is obvious in David Chioni Moore's article in *PMLA* forcefully applying postcolonial theory to post-socialist reality (2001). However it proved difficult to lump together Eastern and South-Eastern European countries, Central Asia and the Caucasus, Russia proper and Siberia without taking into account the complex interplay of colonial and imperial differences and intersecting experiences of various subalternized empires and their internal and external others. It is important that the application of the postcolonial theory to the analysis of the post-Soviet and wider, post-socialist world was done first by a Western scholar (and not even by diasporic postcolonial scholars in the West who were less ready to equate communism with colonialism but also were more sensitive to obvious differences between the two models). Sadly, there were no efforts from the side of the post-Soviet researchers themselves to have their say about their own experience and set the stage for the future separate discourse. This was an alarming indication of a more severe (than in the global South) case of coloniality of knowledge in the case of the failed socialist modernity. There were sporadic interesting works on the post-Soviet condition, written by Western scholars and several diasporic thinkers from the former Soviet republics claiming a more European belonging (Ukraine, Belarus, Baltic countries) (Chernetsky, 2007; Bobkov, 2005). Methodologically they followed the Western social sciences and the humanities. But with few exceptions their Eastern European genealogical traces have interfered in the process of assimilation into the global knowledge production system, whereas the previous exotic attraction of the

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 38-58.

TLOSTANOVA, M.: CAN THE POST-SOVIET THINK?

46

socialist other, a dissident fighter contesting an inhuman regime, did not work any more. Russia itself has become almost non-existent both as a subject (producer of knowledge) and as an object of study for social sciences. It has lost its former secure central place in the sovietologic brand of area studies as well as its integrity as a geopolitical region (for area studies often precede, imagine and model the future real political re-divisions).

The imperial difference and the post-Soviet coloniality of knowledge

The asymmetrical knowledge configuration is no news and a number of non-Western scholars have recently started to discuss the possibilities and tools for going beyond the mere recognition model and elaborating alternative methods, perspectives and optics (Mignolo, 2014). However the collapsed Soviet Union and its present remnants, some of which are independent states while others still remain satellites and quasi-colonies of Russia, is a region whose recent local history has affected the global situation yet did not allow its inhabitants to become knowledge producers and has in some cases even withdrawn this privilege if they had it before. In a way this trajectory was the opposite to the usual logic of the non-Western world slowly entering the space of rationality which we find in postcolonial cases. In the post-Soviet case the shift is reversed, from the second world to the global South or to a strange limbo of the poor North which refuses to be equalized with the poor South and which in addition to that has its own South and East of the poor North (Tlostanova, 2011). Jennifer Suchland attempted to articulate various versions of the emerging post-socialist critique which would consciously avoid reproducing the geographic ideologies of the Cold War knowledge production and in applied postcolonial theory to make sense of our complex experience (2011: 109). Suchland accurately stressed the failure of the old Western sovietology and the new (but methodologically parochial) Eurasian programs still rehearsing the cold war discourses of dissent (2011: 105), to understand or sufficiently explain the complex post-socialist pattern. The post-Soviet condition as its part has been determined by external imperial and double colonial difference transparent in the West/East and North/South divisions. Colonial difference refers to the differential between the first class capitalist empires of modernity (the so called heart of Europe) and their colonies, as the absolute others of the first world or the global North today.

Imperial difference refers to various losers which failed to or were prevented by different circumstances and powers from fulfilling their imperial mission in secular modernity taking as result various second-class places. Importantly, they were intellectually, epistemologically and culturally colonized by the winners and developed a catching up logic, an array of psychological hang-ups, schizophrenic collective complexes, ideologies of the besieged camp or alternatively, victory in defeat and consequently lapses into imperial jingoism and revenge.

Imperial difference is not homogeneous as it is further divided into internal and external versions. The former refers to the European losers of the second (secular) modernity which subsequently became the South of Europe, while the latter means

the not-quite-Western, not-quite-capitalist empires of modernity, for instance the Ottoman Sultanate or Russia as a paradigmatic case of such a Janus-faced racialized empire which feels itself a colony in the presence of the West and plays the part of a caricature civilizer mimicking European colonization models and missions in its own non-European colonies. The external imperial difference which was coded as colonial in the West, generated Russia's secondary status in European eyes and consequently, an open or hidden orientalization. At the same time within Russia itself there is a specific version of secondary Orientalism as a direct result of secondary Eurocentrism. The imperial difference generated an open or hidden orientalization of Russia by the West. This sensibility can be defined as a balancing between the role of an object and that of the subject in epistemic and existential sense. Western Orientalist discourses have been transmuted in secular modernity as specific ways of representation and interpretation of Russian non-European colonies, which were used as replacements of the missing Orient and coded as such. In the end both mirrors – the one turned in the direction of the colonies and the one turned by Europe in the direction of Russia itself—appear to be distorting mirrors that create a specific unstable sensibility of Russian scholars in the humanities and social sciences.

Russia projected its own inferiority complexes onto its non-European colonies in the Caucasus and Central Asia through its self-proclaimed modernizer and civilizer role. The Russian colonies either felt the double dictate of coloniality of knowledge in its modern Western and Russian/Soviet versions, or, regarding themselves as standing higher on the human scale (within the same Western modern epistemic system, grounded in taxonomizing people into those who have the right and the ability to produce knowledge and those who are doomed to act as objects of study and consumers of theories produced in the West) than the Russian subaltern empire, have refused its dictate and negated its epistemic authority, choosing a direct European influence instead and dreaming to become at some point fully integrated.

The lacking post-Soviet studies and the subaltern position of the post-Soviet researchers

In contrast with postcolonial theory, which has early developed into a separate disciplinary sphere and has been rather quickly institutionalized in academia, whereas its main practitioners from the start have been the postcolonial others themselves, who made it to the West, the post-Soviet discourse has never been legitimized other than in the area studies form in the West and later in the semi-periphery of the ex-Socialist world where once again, the Western influence and money determined the specificity and the optics of analyzing the Soviet and post-Soviet experience. The previous trajectories of knowledge were violently erased and the scholars who wanted to join the global knowledge production club were offered to start from scratch ignoring both the previous general Soviet experience and Soviet knowledge as outdated and ideological throughout, and also – particularly in the case of non-European colonies, ignoring their own local histories and genealogies of thought, or rather what was left of them as a result of the forced Soviet modernization.

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 38-58.
TLOSTANOVA, M.: CAN THE POST-SOVIET THINK?

48

This manipulation turned out successful in the case of the older generation of scholars (and I do not mean the remaining orthodox Marxist-Leninists or today's extreme right nationalists) who were sick and tired of the Soviet censorship and double think, and who tended to idealize the West, which they seldom ever visited, as a manifestation of freedom, democracy and equality (Akhiezer, 1998; Pelipenko and Yakovenko, 1998; Afanasyev, 2001; SAQ 2006; Podoroga, 1993). These scholars did not realize for a long time that the new model of knowledge they were offered or chose willingly to adopt after the collapse of the Soviet Union was not an objective Truth, just one more possible opinion. They were not ready to accept that social sciences as such could never hope to be free from ideology, not necessarily Marxist-Leninist any more. Hence their efforts to make a new Truth out of whatever Western theory they came across and used to replace the previous Marxist dogmatism. A typical example of such secondary Eurocentric and westernizing/modernizing stance is Yuri Afanasyev's book *Dangerous Russia* in which the well-known Soviet-post-Soviet historian offers a powerful critique of the contemporary state of affairs in Russia, seen through the Annales school perspective, but fails to offer any persuasive positive program because for him the only ideal we should follow is the romanticized Western liberal model with which we must finally catch up. Naturally Afanasyev links Russia's dangerous qualities with its presumably archaic Asiatic nature, calling it a "Tatar-Mongol Russian empire overburdened with its Horde genetics" (2001: 75). This prevents the country from "developing" and becoming "quite civilized". It is a clear case of a Russian historian mimicking Western methodologies, emanating Western Orientalist myths and civilizational constructs with almost the same fervor which he had to apply before, when transmitting the historical materialist dogmas.

In a quite problematic taxonomy offered by M. Sokolov and K. Titayev (Sokolov and Titayev, 2013), this group of scholars would be defined as "provincial" as opposed to "indigenous" – the term Sokolov and Titayev use in an extremely derogative and racist sense (which tells us a lot about contemporary younger Russian scholarship as well) meaning in fact the so called national brands of science insulated from the rest of the world. The latter is a continuation of the Soviet positionality and is not even worth discussing. As for the reformed Soviet social scientists to whom I referred above and many of whom were quite critical in their ideological and cognitive stance, they have become post-structuralists, structural functionalists, civilizational theorists and Bourdieuseans overnight, yet often continue suffering from typically positivist Soviet-Marxist and ratiodicean principles of cognition, making their discourses a bit outdated from the start.

The younger generation of the post-Soviet scholars, both post-imperial and postcolonial, have often been indoctrinated by the Western system of knowledge directly in the West having free access to study abroad programs , which has become possible only in Perestroyka years, and additional social and cultural capital connected with a good command of foreign languages (Bikbov, 2014; Vakhshtain, 2011; Chukhrov, 2011; Shakirova, 2012; Megoran and Sharapova, 2013). The youngest of them sometimes did not even go through the Soviet ordeal, yet early on discovered the ulcers of neo-liberalism and the distortions of embodied democracies, as well as later the suffocating neocolonial and nationalist environment of their post-Soviet nation-states. This diverse experience and an early exposure to multiple truths,

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 38-58.
TLOSTANOVA, M.: CAN THE POST-SOVIET THINK?

49

knowledge models and verification systems, was generally quite favorable, but in most cases have still resulted in a secondary Eurocentric and derivative stance largely due to their more pragmatic attitude to social and academic status. These younger scholars did not go as far as to question the Western monopoly of knowledge production and distribution or chose to abstain from its criticism in order to gain access to this very system.

An interesting example is presented in the way a young sociologist Victor Vakhsthain has refurbished the older Soviet journal *Sociology of Power* (2014) to make it more attuned to global academic norms. The journal indeed improved a lot and is comparable to Western sociological publications, as it speaks the same language and discusses similar problematics. But there is a darker side to this mimicking that is precisely a lack of any individualized face, a narrow focusing on exclusively Latourian sociology with a complete and almost arrogant neglect of anything else, and hence a quick turning of the journal into yet another small island of corporate culture, a closed community with its own precise interests and falsely esoteric discussions repeating and reproducing the actor-network theory verbatim. The question is then, which is better? A Soviet style besieged academia, a post-Soviet national(ist) home-bred brand of academic discourses or the Westernized parroting excluding anyone who is not a Lacanian, Latourian, Habermasian, etc.

A lot of these younger academics are making their dazzling careers based on translating, commenting and sometimes retelling the works of the Western luminaries, which they often substituted for any real original scholarship. When and if these younger people come back home to study their own regions and already carrying with them the hubris of the zero point, and someone else's point at that, it takes them some time to realize that no matter how diligently they copy the Western teachers, their own place in the scholarly hierarchy has remained secondary and subservient with very few exceptions, a place of the native informant and not a producer of theory which remains a privilege of the West. And it is only then that very few of these younger scholars have started to problematize the coloniality of knowledge. Most of them are still invisible in academia as they are at the stage of finishing their PhDs and have not yet started to publish their works widely (Aripova, Kudaibergenova, Gevorgyan-Dovtyan). In Russia and in most of the post-Soviet countries, the traditions of secondary Eurocentrism and the intellectual dependence it reproduces, remain quite powerful and there is no book or even article yet, which I could offer here as an example of a serious critique of the Western monopoly on knowledge and a viable post-Soviet response to it. These sensibilities no doubt exist but have not yet been shaped into a coherent discourse.

The invisibility of the post-Soviet social sciences for the West is not only a product of the global epistemic structural asymmetry. The kind of social sciences produced in the USSR or its remnants today with very few exceptions are really mediocre and derivative, mostly reproducing the outdated Western methods and tools without realizing or criticizing their geopolitical contextuality, and more and more alarmingly, lapsing into quasi-religious orthodoxy replacing research. Such studies seldom appear in global academia not because they are Russian, but because they are insulated from the global scholarship on their own initiative – through the familiar besieged camp model, through a fixation on pre-post-structuralist stages in

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 38-58.
TLOSTANOVA, M.: CAN THE POST-SOVIET THINK?

50

social sciences, through ignoring the vital problematic of post(neo)colonial conflicts and global challenges. Interestingly enough even today's decidedly jingoistic forms of Russian scholarship actively engaged in and by official propaganda, are mostly non-original and stemming from previous Western conservative and essentialist (rather than constructivist) sources (Dugin, 2014). This happens due to the chronic inability of the zone of external imperial difference to produce any independent knowledge. The Janus-faced empire whose links with its own epistemologies have long been lost and forgotten, sinks deeper and deeper into extremist militant forms of self-exclusion and intellectual revanchism.

Freeing oneself from coloniality of knowledge is a long and painful process which requires learning to unlearn in order to relearn but on different grounds and sometimes actually creating and remaking these grounds (Tlostanova and Mignolo, 2012). Post-Soviet space and particularly Russia are not ready to discuss their own previous experience or today's unfortunate condition other than in the forms of nostalgic lacquered Soviet myth (as we find in today's propaganda, including its scholarly versions) or in the form of the no less simplified but negative anti-Soviet annihilation unconditionally idealizing the West. What is needed instead is an honest critical discourse which would be able to finally get rid of the intellectual dependency and the catching up modus and start to develop its own knowledge about itself that would be original and vigorous enough not to be immediately racialized and subalternized in the global North.

The post-Soviet internal coloniality of knowledge vis-à-vis the global epistemic coloniality

Inside the remaining shrinking zone of Russian influence there is its own smaller scale version of the same intellectual racism and power asymmetry in relation to the former non-European parts of the USSR which are not regarded as a potential knowledge producers if their scholars do not repeat the Russian colleagues' ideas hat in hand and chose to bypass them through referring to the 'authentic' Western modernity or delink from modernity as such and turn to their own epistemic traditions instead.

As a secondary empire in modernity Russia has never managed to occupy the position of a rational subject and stayed at the level of producing culture (literature, ballet, etc.) and natural resources. The only exceptions were the sporadic attempts to revolt against the Western intellectual dominance through decolonizing impulses of a subalternized empire such as the Slavophile movement in the nineteenth century and later the Eurasianists whose ideas are often trivialized in contemporary Russian neo-imperial reactionary political movements and in the works of their social theorists. These paradoxically dissenting imperial discourses (as opposed to official conservative imperial imaginary and sciences) still applied Western methodological and theoretical tools even if they were aimed at destroying the Western epistemic dictate. This chronic intellectual dependency could not be overcome even in the case of the massive application of religious discourses in what stood for social sciences.

In the second half of the twentieth century even this meager resource of independent knowledge was cut off and the resulting post-Soviet social sciences

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 38-58.
TLOSTANOVA, M.: CAN THE POST-SOVIET THINK?

51

emerged as pale copies of the long forgotten Western originals. When these copies are further recopied in Central Asia or the Caucasus it becomes a doubly colonized knowledge losing any links with reality and any activist edge. As a result the post-Soviet space emerges as marked with many silences and omissions, unspoken resentments and continued scorns between Russian and non-Russian, secondary European and non-European subjects. The latter are often even less aware of their discrimination and not ready to formulate their own stance than in the case of postcolonial or women of color and other such discourses of dissent (Kasymova, 2005; Tekuyeva, 2006)

This indicates thoroughly colonized minds marked by one maniacal urge to become a peripheral part of someone else's modernity, even at the expense of their own kind. Besides, the former (Russian post-imperial scholars) in contrast with many honest and open-minded European researchers, are not really expressing any interest in coalitions with the Orientalized others, sticking to their own agendas which belatedly repeat and reproduce the Western ones.

Any scholars elaborating their own critical post-Soviet theory formulated from the border position between the Western and Soviet/Russian modernity/coloniality without subscribing to any of them, are immediately marginalized. In the present political situation their position would never be legitimized as it is opposed to the official state mythologies. In relation to the ex-colonial post-Soviet social scientists, the neo-imperial intellectual racism acquires subtler forms than in the case of guest workers, because it is obvious from the start that these people cannot be branded entirely subhuman or backwards. It quickly becomes apparent that they can speak and think. The very existence of this group of people is making many Western and Russian researchers feel uncomfortable as it destroys their progressivist taxonomy grounded in Orientalist stereotypes, pigeonholing Asian people as stereotypically downtrodden and retarded Orientals/Muslims who are supposed to reject their culture to become pale copies of Soviet or Western modern subjects (Tlostanova, 2010).

An author-critic forum on decolonial theory and gender research in Central Asia published in an area studies journal *Central Asian Survey* (Megoran et al., 2012) revealed this persisting epistemic power asymmetry when some Western researchers refused to complicate their simple picture of Central Asia with more nuanced and subtle categories and subjectivities, relying on presumably objective 'facts' that they had found during their short trips to local archives and subsequently universalized (and demonstrating a sad lagging behind in realizing that there is no history without interpretation and no interpretation has a monopoly on truth that examples and cases do not have an ontological existence beyond the choice and the uses of a scholar). Central Asian researchers mostly agreed on the continuing discrimination and Orientalism in relation to themselves in Western dominated academia, yet refused to question the generally accepted Western scientific terminology and approaches defending them, once again, as presumably objective and uncontaminated by locality and/or ideology and silently agreeing that knowledge is always produced in the West.

The latter is a manifestation of mind-colonization which in case of the ex-colonial others has resulted in unhealthy self-orientalising and self-negation or in Duboisean terms – in a peculiar double consciousness which is very hard to resolve. In the Caucasus and Central Asia the Soviet modernity is replaced with either the

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 38-58.
TLOSTANOVA, M.: CAN THE POST-SOVIET THINK?

52

Western progressive model or the pedaling of official national(ist) discourses. The complex indigenous cosmologies discordant with modernity/coloniality are erased or negatively coded even in the works of local scholars themselves who are forced to buy their way into the academic sphere through conforming to Western mainstream research.

As for Russia, it has been increasingly dogged by a largely self-infused controversy that does not allow it to move forward, backward or beyond. The still not quite collapsed empire sinking deeper and deeper into chronic periphery is stuck in under-expressed models, unfinished decolonisations, interrupted repentances, never sufficiently demythologized consciousness, and therefore it strives to assemble bits and pieces of often mutually exclusive elements such as national fundamentalism, mock Soviet, neo-imperial, neoliberal and other ideologies, anachronisms, epistemic inconsistencies, that are so typical of today's disjointed mechanism of cultural processes. This complex layering and struggle of various competing forms of epistemic colonialities leads to a stagnation.

It also leads to conceptually conflicting movements affecting academia in the most painful way. Social sciences find themselves in the grip of both ideological servility and necessity of serving the power to survive, and recent unsubstantiated demands of this very power to make the local social sciences globally competitive in their knowledge production. The chronic inability to produce original models of critical thinking comes from the typical Russian intellectual inferiority complex (a colonial complex at that) often externally resolved in its opposite – a fundamentalist jingoist besieged fortress stance deflated as quickly as it emerges as it has no solid ground and therefore cannot have a voice of its own. On the one hand, Russia is rapidly turning into a culturally and religiously fundamentalist police state suspecting any research supported by Western grants or even just resembling the Western sources in its style or manner of presentation and thinking, in being 'foreign agents'. On the other hand, this mock Soviet renaissance in today's corporate-cum-administrative university which is a product of an unsuccessful experiment of breeding the worst qualities of the Soviet and neoliberal educational systems, is accompanied by an opposite movement when professors are told under pain of dismissal to force our way into global scholarship through publishing abroad, increasing our citation rates, getting grants, as the power is trying to forcefully improve Russia's scientific rating applying a mixture of the old Soviet hasty five year plan approaches and the neo-liberal corporate scientometric principles.

The epidemic of rating and index anxiety in today's post-Soviet space is particularly harmful for social sciences and the humanities where there can be no single truth or verification mechanism, where there are no absolute authorities and where the strive for multiplicity of interpretations have long become a norm. All of this does not fit the scientometric craze within which the falsely venerated words like Scopus, Web of Science, Academic Journals Database in fact stand for gadgets and institutions with quite specific disciplinary and ideological, corporate and managerial genealogy and philosophy far from being objective or disinterested, and yet offered as some unquestionable criterion of scientific quality corresponding to the philosophy of science of at least 50 years ago, The rating-index anxiety itself is a manifestation of a typical for the post-soviet space inferiority complex and efforts to hide behind the

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 38-58.
TLOSTANOVA, M.: CAN THE POST-SOVIET THINK?

53

bureaucratic requirements a lack of any real scholarly achievements or healthy inter-academic communication (Jibladze, 2013; Ivakhnenko, 2013; Tlostanova, 2013).

There are other elements in this contradictory mixture, such as the shadow economy models transferred to universities: researchers are often required to literally bring money to their administrative bosses and institutions (through unfairly divided grants, network marketing for trapping the prospective students and other such methods). Finally, there is the good old Russian and Soviet tradition of treating a university professor as a state official who is supposed to be loyal to the regime and if not – immediately fired if not imprisoned.

Possible ways out?

Real ways out of the complex intersection of internal and external epistemic asymmetries in the case of the post-Soviet space are not in recognition claims – asking the global North to recognize the Russian and post-Soviet presence in knowledge production is ineffective and meaningless. Instead of that we should delink from the losing battle and from the logic of catching up and dependency discourses in the sphere of knowledge production (Lander, 2000), and concentrate on creating a relevant social science which would be well aware of other models, including the latest Western and especially non-Western ones (to which so far Russian scholars condescendingly remain blind because of their old imperial attitudes), but would not simply repeat them or apply them to a different material.

Restoring an essential vital link of any social science with social reality and experience, would lead to attempts to create a serious but still missing critical conceptualization of the history of the Soviet modernity. Instead of that in Russia we find the familiar thoughtless reproduction of the cold war knowledge architecture, disciplinary decadence as an effort to hide the absence of any relevant existential, epistemic or at least political and social projects behind the disciplinary implosion and tightening disciplinary boundaries and restrictions supported by such still existing Soviet bureaucratic institutions as the Higher Attestation Committee which is responsible for inventing and banning disciplines, and strangles any inter-disciplinarity (or trans-disciplinarity) in the bud. Russian social sciences are plagued by their chronic accent on the enunciation from and in the disciplines and not on who is the enunciator and what are the problems themselves crossing the disciplines in today's more and more complex social world. Russian social sciences continue to reproduce the unfortunate model of reactive description of what has already happened applying the outdated and often conservative approaches to make sense of what is described. There are almost no models projected into the future or attempting to model this future other than in mythic/reactionary or rationalist neoliberal/way.

Coming back to the question asked in the beginning we must conclude that so far the post-Soviet space has not been able to demonstrate to the world and to itself that its inhabitants can indeed think. This does not mean that the situation has to stay like that forever, but there is almost no time left to reverse it. Coloniality of knowledge in the conditions of external imperial difference in Russia, in the USSR and today, including the darker side of its secondary colonial difference, generates severe

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 38-58.
TLOSTANOVA, M.: CAN THE POST-SOVIET THINK?

54

stagnation in social sciences which prevents these disciplines from becoming a part of global science. Some of the complex reasons for this unfortunate conjuncture at the intersection of external and internal circumstances were briefly addressed in the article. They cannot be taken to stereotypical notions of both the cunning West defending its monopoly on knowledge production and underdeveloped Russia as a permanent Sahara of social sciences.

The only way out of this frozen bipolarity is a conscious willingness on the part of the few post-Soviet social scientists capable of doing it, to decolonize knowledge and to get rid of the self-colonizing syndrome as well. The value of any independent social approaches then would be linked with their ability to disavow the epistemic grounds of the rhetoric of modernity and it disciplines and methods which in the dominant system are presented as the only legitimate ones and existing forever, and turn to the goals and tasks of academia that have been long forgotten, such as the crucial aim of the university to shape not a submissive and loyal narrow specialist in some applied science but first of all a critically thinking self-reflexive and independent individual, never accepting any ready-made truths at face value, truly and unselfishly interested in the world around in all its diversity and striving to make this world more harmonious and fair for everyone and not only for particular privileged groups. And is this not ultimately the true mission of a vigorous decolonized social theory?

References

Afanasyev, Yu. (2001) *Opasnaya Rossiya* (Dangerous Russia). Moscow: RGGU.

Agamben, G. (1998) *Homo Sacer. Sovereign Power and Bare Life.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Akhiezer, A. (1998) *Rossiya: Kritika Istoricheskogo Opyta (sotsio-kulturnaya dinamika Rossii)* (Russia: a critique of historical experience ([a socio-cultural dynamics of Russia]). Novosibirsk: Sibirsky Khronograf.

Bikbov, A. (2014) *Grammatika Poryadka* (A grammar of order). Moscow: Izdatelstvo Vysshei Shkoly Ekonomiki.

Bobkov, I. (2005) Etika Pogranichya. Transkulturnost kak Belarussky Opyt [The ethics of borderlands. Transculturality as a Belorussian experience]. *Perekrestky* (3-4): 127-36.

Braidotti, R. (2013) *The Posthuman.* New York, NY: Polity Press.

Carbin, M. and S. Edenheim. (2013) The Intersectional Turn in Feminist Theory: A Dream of a Common Language? *European Journal of Women Studies.* 20 (3): 233-248.

Castro-Gomez, S. (1995) *La hybris del punto cero: ciencia, raza e ilustración en la Nueva Granada (1750-1816)* (The Hubris of the Zero Point: Science, Race and Illustration in New Granada [1750-1816]). Bogotá: Editorial Pontificia Universidad Javeriana.

Castro-Gomez, S. (2007) The Missing Chapter of Empire: Postmodern reorganization of Coloniality and Post-Fordist Capitalism. *Cultural Studies,* 21 (2-3): 428-48.

Castro-Gómez, S. and E. Mendieta (1998) (eds.) *Teorías sin Disciplina (Latinoamericanismo, Postcolonialidad y Globalizacion en Debate).* México: Miguel Ángel Porrúa.

Chernetsky, V. (2007) *Mapping Postcommunist Cultures: Russia and Ukraine in the context of Globalization.* Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Chomsky, N. et al. (1997) *The Cold War and the University.* New York, NY: New Press.

Chukhrov, K. (2011) Byt i Ispolnyat. Projekt Teatra v Filosofskoy Kritike Iskusstva (To be and to perform. A theater project in the philosophic art criticism). SPb.: European University Publishing House.

Crossroads Asia. Conflict. Migration. Development. http://crossroads-asia.de/ Accessed: 20-01-2015.

Dugin, A. (2014) *Chetverty Put* (The Forth Way). Moscow: Akademichesky Proyekt.

Dussel, E. (1995) *The Invention of the Americas. Eclipse of "the Other" and the Myth of Modernity.* New York, NY: Continuum.

Eze, E. Ch. (1997) The Color of Reason: The Idea of 'Race' in Kant's Anthropology. In Eze, E.Ch. (ed.) *Postcolonial African Philosophy.* New York, NY: Blackwell. 103-140.

Fukuyama, F. (1992) *The End of History and the Last Man.* New York, NY: Free Press.

Gordon, L. (2006) *Disciplinary Decadence: Living Through in Trying Times.* Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.

Gordon, L. (2010) Theory in Black: Teleological Suspensions in Philosophy of Culture. *Qui Parle: Critical Humanities and Social Sciences,* 18 (2): 193-214.

Gordon, L. (2010) Philosophy, Science, and the Geography of Africana Reason. *Personality. Culture. Society.* 12 (3): 46-56.

Hull, G. , P. B. Scott and B. Smith, (1982) *All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men but Some of Us are Brave.* New York, NY: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York.

Ivakhnenko E. (2013) Filosofsky Fakultet v Usloviyakh Nastuplenija Akademicheskogo Kapitalizma (A School of Philosophy in the conditions of Academic Capitalism advance). *Visshee Obrazovaniye v Rossii (Higher Education in Russia),* (2): 62-73.

Jibladze E. (2013) How far from Europe? – Higher Education Reforms in Georgia. *Caucasus Social Science Review.* 1.1. http://openjournals.gela.org.ge/index.php/CSSR/article/view/212/246 Accessed: 14-06-2015.

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 38-58.
TLOSTANOVA, M.: CAN THE POST-SOVIET THINK?

56

Kasymova, S. (2005) Genderny poryadok v postsovetskom Tadzhikistane (Gender order in the Post-Soviet Tadzhikistan). In Kasymova, S. (ed.) *Gender: Traditsii i Sovremennost* (Gender: Traditions and Modernity). Dushanbe: Shkola Gendernogo Obrazovanija. 177-197.

Lander, E. (1998) Colonialism and Eurocentrism in Latin American social thought. In: Briceño-León R. and H. R. Sonntag (eds.) *Sociology in Latin America.* Pre-Congress Volume. Proceedings of the International Sociological Association, Regional Conference for Latin America, Montreal, Canada.

Lander, E. (2000) *La Colonialidad del Saber: Eurocentrismo y Ciencias Sociales. Perspectivas Latinoamericanas.* Buenos Aires: Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales. [CLACSO] and UNESCO.

Mahbubani, K. (2001) *Can Asians Think? Understanding the Divide between East and West.* Hanover, NH: Steerforth Press.

Mahbubani, K. (2009) *The New Asian Hemisphere: The Irresistible Shift of Global Power to the East.* New York, NY: PublicAffairs.

Megoran, N., C. Haris, S. Sharapova, M. Kamp, J. Townsend, N. Bagdasarova and M. Tlostanova. (2012) Author-critic forum: decolonial theory and gender research in Central Asia. *Central Asian Survey,* 31 (3): 355-367.

Megoran, N. and S. Sharapova (2013) (eds.) *Central Asia in International Relations: The Legacies of Halford Mackinder.* London, UK: Hurst & Company.

Mignolo, W. (2011) I am where I think. Remapping the Order of Knowing. In Lionnet, F. and S. Shih. *The Creolization of Theory.* Durham, UK and London, UK: Duke University Press. 159-192.

Mignolo, W. (2014) Spirit out of Bounds Returns to the East: The Closing of the Social Sciences and the Opening of Independent Thoughts. *Current Sociology Monograph.* 62 (4): 584–602.

Mignolo, W. and A. Escobar. (2009) (eds.) *Globalization and the Decolonial Option.* London, UK: Routledge.

Mignolo, W. and M. Tlostanova. (2006) Theorizing from the Borders. Shifting to Geo- and Body-Politics of Knowledge. *European Journal of Social Theory.* 9(2): 205-221.

Mignolo, W. and M. Tlostanova. (2007) The Logic of Coloniality and the Limits of Postcoloniality. In Krishnaswamy, R. and J. C. Hawley (eds.) *The Postcolonial and the Global: Connections, Conflicts, Complicities.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press. 109-123.

Mignolo, W. and M. Tlostanova. (2012) Knowledge Production Systems. In Anheier, H.K., Mark Juergensmeyer and Victor Faessel (eds). *The Encyclopedia of Global Studies.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. 1005-1010.

Mohanty, Ch. T. (1984) Under Western Eyes. Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses. *Boundary 2*, 12 (3)-13 (1): 333-358.

Moore, D. Ch.(2001) Is the Post- in Postcolonial the Post- in Post-Soviet? Towards a Global Postcolonial Critique. *PMLA,* 116(1): 111-128.

Pelipenko, A. and Yakovenko, I. (1998) *Kultura kak Sistema* (Culture as a System). Moscow: Yaziki Russkoy Kulturi.

Podoroga, V. (1993) *Metafizika Landshafta* (The Metaphysics of Landscape). Moscow: Nauka.

Readings, B. (1996) *The University in Ruins.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Sandoval, Ch. (2000) *Methodology of the Oppressed.* Minneapolis, MN and London, UK: University of Minnesota Press.

Smith, L.T. (1999) *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and indigenous Peoples.* London, UK: Zed.

Saadawi N. (1998) *The Nawal El Saadawi Reader.* London, UK: Zed.

Shakirova, S. (2012).Gender policy and nation-building in Kazakhstan: parallel or conflicting processes? Downloaded from: Academia.edu (12.04.15) https://www.academia.edu/5439557/Gender_policy_and_nation-building_in_Kazakhstan_parallel_or_conflicting_processes

Shiva, V. (2006) *Earth Democracy. Justice, Sustainability, and Peace.* London, UK: Zed.

Sokolov, M. and K. Titayev. (2013) Provintsialnaya i Tuzennaya Nauka (Provincial and indigenous science). *Antropologichesky Forum* (Anthropological Forum), (19): 239-275.

Sotsiologiya Vlasti (Sociology of Power). (2014) 4. Special issue: Sociology and Utopia. The Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration.

South Atlantic Quarterly. (2006) Special Issue: Double Critique: Knowledges and Scholars at Risk in Post-Soviet Societies. Summer, 105(3). (eds.) Mignolo, W. and M. Tlostanova.

Spivak, G. Ch. (1999) *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Suchland, J. (2011) Is there a Postsocialist Critique? *Personality. Culture. Society.* 13(4): 103-114.

Tekuyeva, M. (2006) *Muzhchina i Zhenschina v Adygskoi Kulture: Traditsii i Sovremennost* (Man and woman in the Adyghean culture: traditions and modernity). Nalchik: El-Fa.

Tlostanova, M. (2010) *Gender Epistemologies and Eurasian Borderlands.* New York, NY. Palgrave Macmillan.

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 38-58.
TLOSTANOVA, M.: CAN THE POST-SOVIET THINK?

58

Tlostanova, M. (2011) The South of the Poor North: Caucasus Subjectivity and the Complex of Secondary "Australism". *The Global South*, 5(1): 66-84.

Tlostanova, M. (2013) Konturi universiteta 21 veka s kontekste krizisa moderna (The 21st century university contours in the context of the crisis of modernity). *Visshee Obrazovaniye v Rossii* (Higher Education in Russia), (1): 24-36.

Tlostanova, M. and W. Mignolo. (2012) *Learning to Unlearn. Decolonial Reflections from Eurasia and the Americas.* Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press.

Vakhshtain, V. (2011) *Sotsiologia Povsednevnosti i Teoriya Freimov* (A sociology of the everyday and the frame theory). SPb.: European University Publishing House.

ÁGNES GAGYI *
A Moment of Political Critique by Reform Economists in Late Socialist Hungary:
'Change and Reform' and the Financial Research Institute in Context

* [agnesgagyi@gmail.com] (Eszterházy Károly College, Eger, Hungary)

Abstract[1]

The paper addresses this issue's subject of the question of East/West hierarchies in academe, and the conditions of the epistemic position and public authority of East and Central European scholarship, through a case study of a major institute of Hungarian reform economics, the Financial Research Institute (FRI), and a moment of political critique by its experts in 1986, asserted in the political pamphlet 'Change and Reform'. Through placing the expert and political critique developed at FRI into that context, the paper contributes to a perspective on ECE social science that goes beyond measuring local scientific paradigms to Western ones, and which understands the epistemic position and public authority of local social science as shaped by formative interactions embedded in a common global history.

Keywords: Hungary, socialism, reform economics, world system, sociology of science, Financial Research Institute

To address the theme of the present issue of Intersections, this article provides a contextual analysis of a case of political critique by economic experts of the Financial Research Institute (FRI) in late socialist Hungary. Referring to earlier debates on parochialism vs. colonization by Western scholars and sponsors (Hadas and Vörös (eds.), 1996), the call for the present issue refers to the conditions of the epistemic and public position of ECE social sciences. The article will address that question through pointing out how the dynamics of reform economic thought and its relation to politics at FRI are aligned with changes in its macro (geopolitical) and institutional context. By pointing out these linkages, it argues for a perspective in understanding the comparative place of ECE scientific output which, beyond East-West hierarchies within the European academic context, looks at local social science as the articulation of broader geopolitical and institutional interactions.

The paper relies on a rich background of previous studies, which it does not address directly. The historical, sociological and anthropological contexts of economics have been emphasized by authors such as Callon (1998) or McCloskey (1994). The place of economics in the context of the Cold War and semi-peripheral development projects, the raise of the neoliberal paradigm, and its significance in the processes of global financialization, semi-peripheral crises and restructuring, including post-socialist transitions in the former Soviet Bloc, have widely been addressed (e.g. Mirowski and Plehwe, 2009; Babb, 2001; Gao, 2002; Bockman, 2000; 2011; Seleny, 1993; Eyal, 2000; Fabry, 2011; Shields, 2012; Ban, 2014; Szelényi et al., 2001; Drahokoupil, 2008; Böröcz, 1999; Melegh, 2011). The paper follows this body of literature not only in its broader field of empirical reference, but also in its understanding of changes within economics as related to international flows of communication, shaped by geopolitical and institutional positions and interests.

The phenomenon of reform economics was born into a specific historic juncture of economic and political transformation in socialist countries, under the internal and external pressures, intellectual opportunities and efforts connected to those transformations, and as part of the international communication among socialist reform models as well as East-West academic exchange. Hungarian reform economists often referred to this process as one of autonomous cognition: it is economic 'reality' that they recognized, and then strove to adjust policies to (Csaba and Szamuely, 1998). Macro-narratives of the reform process might mitigate this intellectual agency of reform economists, yet stick with the immediate identification of reform thought and objective pressures, when arguing that it was 'the whip of necessity' of external economic pressure that engendered marketization (Fabry, 2011). The aforementioned tradition of the historical-sociological study of the Cold War and neoliberal economics teaches us to look beyond such immediate causalities, and to see reform economics as a complex social development, defined by and interacting with its context.

Of the various contextual aspects of the formation and effects of reform economics, I will concentrate on the linkages between the dynamics of the national economy, economic policies, the political and institutional role of economists, and broader shifts in the integration of national economies into the world economy, as conditioned by the transformations of the world economy itself. This logic of

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 59-79.
GAGYI, Á.: A MOMENT OF POLITICAL CRITIQUE BY REFORM ECONOMISTS IN LATE SOCIALIST HUNGARY

61

questioning is prevalent in a strain of research which looks at the relation of economics and economic policies from the perspective of the world system and dependency traditions, conceptualizing problems of national development as functional dynamics within the whole global economy (e.g. Hirschman, 1958; Cardoso and Faletto, 1979; Babb, 2001; Gao, 2002; Przeworski, 1991; on Hungary: Szegő, 1989; Böröcz, 1999; Melegh, 2011).

Within that tradition, the article's own line of thought relates more closely to the concept of structural heterogeneity, as introduced by the Latin American structuralist school of dependency (Prebisch, 1949), referring to the internal heterogeneity and polarization of social and institutional structures of dependent economies as a consequence of dependence, and to later applications of that approach in the sociology of science (Beigel, 2014). Similarly to this approach, the article conceives of the internal dynamics of the reform economics field as constituted by broader factors of world economic integration. Writing on Hungarian reform economics and its aftermath, József Böröcz conceptualized the structure of the field of economics in a similar vein: as one constituted less by internal scientific rules than by economic and political factors linked to the broader shift of Hungarian politics and economy towards marketization and Western integration. He argued that reform economics is not to be understood by its coherent internal rules, but rather as a moment in expert debates moved by external factors, which, after 1986, shift the same actors' interests toward new positions as apologetic defenders of Western integration (Böröcz, 1999).

The article follows that style of conceptualization, and points out the links between changes internal and external to reform economists' thought. However, studies in the world system and dependency traditions, including Böröcz's, do not claim that internal and external factors would not be interlinked in the case of core countries' economic areas. The historical-sociological tradition of studying mainstream economics, referred to above, also implies the contrary. What the article argues through the example of FRI is that economic reasoning and its public manifestations happen at a certain point of global history as an articulation of broader processes.

The history of reform economics in Hungary, including FRI, is an empirically well-researched field. Previous research has followed the social-institutional construction of reform thought (Bockman, 2000), as well as its links to the broader transformation of the socialist system (Seleny, 1993). Studies have looked at East-West intellectual communication in reform thought (Bockman and Eyal, 2002; Bockman, 2011), political coalitions of reform economists (Eyal, 2000; Szalai, 1989a), their specific professional and institutional interests (Kovács, 1984; Bockman, 2000), and their positions within the institutions of Western reintegration (Drahokoupil, 2008). Hungarian reformist thought has been placed in a comparative history of ideas framework in regional and global perspectives (Wagener, 1998; Kovács and Tardos, 2004). In its account of FRI and its context, the article will rely on that existing literature, published interviews of FRI researchers, and their contemporary publications.

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 59-79.
GAGYI, Á.: A MOMENT OF POLITICAL CRITIQUE BY REFORM ECONOMISTS IN LATE
SOCIALIST HUNGARY

62

The novelty of the present account does not consist of bringing up new empirical data relative to existing literature on Hungarian reform economics. Its contribution to existing knowledge in this field is in pointing out the links between shifts in Hungary's political-economic integration in response to global systemic shifts, the corresponding changes in the institutionalization and institutional power of economics, and the changes in the content and political role of reform economics. Through pointing out those links in a case study of FRI, the article contributes to the debate over the relationship between Eastern European and Western European/North American social science by shifting the focus from a comparative measurement of academic paradigms to the embeddedness of local theoretical dynamics into an interconnected history, reaching beyond academic institutions and East-West relations. Although that perspective is present in the sociological study of reform economics of the financialization era (as in Babb, 2001; Gao, 2002; Bockman, 2011; Mirowski, 2009), it has not become an evident part of social scientific self-reflection in CEE. Joining the continuation of earlier debates on parochialism vs. coloniality in the topic of the present issue, the article aims to contribute to moving the debate over inferiority/superiority of social scientific paradigms towards the contextual understanding of the making and the use of those paradigms within the same history.

Socialist market reforms as a chapter of semi-peripheral development

The history of economic reform under socialism in Hungary is linked to long-term characteristics of the country's semi-peripheral development. While economic and political debates over possible paths of development at given historical moments tend to translate that long-term heritage into questions of immediate political choice over real promises of upward mobility within the world economic hierarchy, research in a long-term world systemic perspective maintains that the history of the global semi-periphery over the modern period reveals the limits of such hierarchical movement more than its transcendence by individual success stories (Martin, 1990). From a world system perspective, the question of semi-peripheral development is not about the normal story of semi-peripheries catching up with the core of the global economy (as implied by modernization theory, Rostow, 1960), but rather about such ambitions being born from, but also locked into the polarization inherent to the global economy. Following this approach, the present paper understands political and ideological debates surrounding the formation of reform economics as linked to momentary power coalitions struggling over models of world economic integration, rather than having an empirical referent in the success or failure of Hungary's evolution to a central position in the global economy.

The literature on semi-peripheral development distinguishes typical strategies of such ambitions for semi-peripheral advancement, linked to the structures of interests and opportunities provided by local class relations and surrounding world economic shifts (Martin, 1990; Chase-Dunn, 1988; Brenner, 1989). Within CEE history, the alignment between economic strategies pursued by local elites and the opportunities provided by world economic relations has been pointed out by various

authors, especially regarding the alternation between liberalizing and protectionist strategies, as well as agricultural and industrialist priorities, depending on the volatility of export markets and available foreign capital (Chirot, 1976; Janos, 2000; Kagarlitsky, 2008; Szentes, 1990; Kozma, 1996 on Hungary). Opportunities for these strategies and their proponents were largely determined by world economic cycles. Waves of economic reform under socialism occurred under similar pressures, and were similarly determined by shifts in the world economy.

Before World War II, Hungary suffered from severe debt (reaching insolvency in 1931); its semi-peripheral characteristics, namely a relative lack of technology and capital vis-à-vis the core, were enhanced by it losing much of its internal market and economic capacities after 1920. As Hungary engaged in a Stalinist effort of resource centralization and industrialization after the war, the problem of Western debt already resurfaced as early as 1952. Like elsewhere (Arrighi, 1990), import substitution industrialization required technology imports from the core, creating an export pressure for hard currency. After de-Stalinization, Hungary sought to solve this problem through transferring Western technology to Comecon markets on the one hand and selling Soviet energy and raw materials to non-socialist markets on the other. With the oil price hikes in the 1970s, the terms of this trade became unfavourable. Under the consequent hard currency pressure, Hungary prioritized export industries, and later succumbed to hard currency loans (Vigvári, 1990; Gerőcs and Pinkász, 2015).

The New Economic Mechanism in Hungary

With de-Stalinization, between 1953 and 1956 the earlier model of Stalinist development was challenged under the political leadership of Imre Nagy. Party leader Mátyás Rákosi promoted the Stalinist programme of resource centralization and industrialization, and was supported by the corresponding sectors of heavy industry, the party apparatus, the Secret Police, the National Planning Office, and the upward social mobility of the members of the working class and peasantry in general. Imre Nagy, an agricultural economist himself, promoted the relaxation of the centralized industrialization effort, and a greater reliance on economic sectors in less need of such an effort, set free from the severe constraints of the plan through marketizing reforms. He was supported by agriculture, light industry, officials in finance and commerce, intellectuals, political prisoners, and generally those whose interests were harmed by Stalinization, and who strived for greater room for manoeuvre in various environments. Professionals in positions as state controllers and political economists were linked to the structures supported by Rákosi, and economists striving for professional autonomy to Nagy's influence (Rainer, 1996: 525-537).

Nagy brought together a group of economists to work on a reform programme. He re-established a professional environment for economics, previously de-institutionalized as a 'bourgeois pseudo-science'. Economists allied with Nagy followed his critique of Rákosi and the Stalinist model. Throughout the political struggle between Rákosi and Nagy, the fate of their critique depended on the state of those struggles. To avoid outright political attacks, economists developed an increasingly

technicist language, where politics was translated into the realm of expertise and 'reality' (Bockman, 2000: 178). While both Stalinist and reform economists thought the Hungarian profession suffered from 'backwardness', (Csató, 2004), Nagy's allies used that argument to set political economic (Stalinist) dogma against a new reality that gave weight to Nagy's political line. From 1954 on, reform economists allied with Nagy began to develop the idea of the 'economic mechanism' as an objective, autonomous economic model that substituted direct administration with a system of economic incentives. This notion was to constitute the basis of economic reform by 1968.

In 1956, the removal of Rákosi by Khrushchev and the repression of the revolution brought an end to the Rákosi-Nagy struggle. The new leader, János Kádár, put in office by Soviet leadership, engaged in a politics of compromise, reducing political pressure on citizens, gradually allowing commerce with the West, and substituting the aggressive centralization of resources with a politics favouring living standards, similar to Nagy's line. From 1962 on, previous 'hardliner' and 'softliner' economists worked together under the leadership of finance minister and central committee member Rezső Nyers to prepare the economic reform.

Kádár's economic politics were marked by the revolution as well as by broader geopolitical processes. In the Soviet Union, de-Stalinization was followed by a scheduling of economic reform for 1965 in 1961, a gesture which gave a green light to reform experiments in satellite states. During the 1960s, the West European postwar economic revival resulted in an overproduction of technology. Western countries began to look for markets in Eastern Europe, meeting a need for import technology and export dependence on the socialist side. Joint ventures and East-West commerce with satellite countries began to flourish (Kozma, 1996). Market reforms in the region converged with a growing interest in Western credit and the IMF – by 1966-68, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Romania had all attempted to join the IMF.

The tendency toward market reform was aided by East-West knowledge exchange. Starting in 1956, the US National Security Council supported educational exchange with socialist countries, with the aim of strengthening internal critique based on Western professional knowledge. The Ford and Rockefeller foundations started associated exchange programmes. In Hungary, the Ford Foundation worked closely together with the State Department, focusing on reform economists who would have the most impact on the new mechanism (Bockman, 2000: 259-264).

The Hungarian New Economic Mechanism (NEM) was prepared and implemented in the tradition of the reform idea initiated under Nagy, but also in compliance with the broader processes described above. It emphasized supply and demand over planning, and substituted direct administrative tools with a system of incentives favouring profitability. This system aimed to favour agriculture and companies with better technology and Western export capacities (generators of convertible currency), and disfavour lower technology industry which could only export to Comecon countries.

Changes in institutional and professional power during the reform process

In terms of institutional affiliation and preferences, the Ministry of Finance was the centre of the 'mechanism movement'. Bockman notes that the intellectual role of the Ministry of Finance in the preparation and implementation of the NEM was closely linked to its institutional capacities, and directly linked to mechanism questions. It dealt with company finance, incomes, financial balances, forging tools to measure company success when prices did not reflect demand and costs and to pressure companies to produce necessary quality and quantity (Bockman, 2000: 277).

The ministry was not only the centre of reform preparation, but also became its main bastion in terms of institutional power. The NEM reduced the significance of the classic loci and actors of direct planning. It weakened ministries for particular economic branches and substituted branch-based central committee economic divisions with that of the Economic Policy Division under Rezső Nyers. It weakened the institutional centre of planning, the National Planning Office, and transferred much of decision-making to the territory of the Ministry of Finance: company finances, the national budget and financial balances (Bockman, 2000: 301).

In terms of professional personnel, controllers, engineers and technicians working on the concrete details of fulfilling the plan lost position and decision power to economists and accountants dealing with decisions based on financial concerns. More economists were trained and employed in the apparatus, new research institutions were created, while the general numbers of state personnel were reduced (Bockman, 2000: 296-298). The foundation of FRI in 1968, as the official research institute of the Ministry of Finance, with the task of doing research for and aiding the work of the apparatus, was part of this transformation of the economy, and of the consequent shift in institutional and professional power (Wilcsek, 1970).

The halting of the reform process and the politicization of the struggle for the second wave of reform

The 1968 reforms were to be followed by a second wave, scheduled for 1972. Brezhnev's about-turn after 1964, the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 in response to Dubcek's reforms, and Soviet leaders' critique of market reforms in Hungary in 1969 all worked against that plan (Tőkés, 1996: 103). Within the Hungarian party, reformers lost position – Nyers himself was removed from the Politburo from 1974 until 1988. However, Nyers remained member of the Central Committee. Basic economic institutions of the NEM, such as the system of economic incentives, remained in place, as did its new institutions and their professional employees (Seleny, 1994: 31-32).

From 1972 to 1974, the turn in economic policy brought a different wave of reforms from that scheduled by NEM. Central party power, big industry and industrial unions were the main beneficiaries of the change. In 1972, 50 of the biggest companies were exempted from the general system of incentives as 'privileged

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 59-79.
GAGYI, Á.: A MOMENT OF POLITICAL CRITIQUE BY REFORM ECONOMISTS IN LATE SOCIALIST HUNGARY

66

enterprises'. Instead of economic autonomy and market-like rules, this move favoured centrally targeted and technologically intensive development. However, from 1973 on, the boom in oil and raw material prices required new efforts to restore the balance of payments (Berend, 1990: 234). Based on the supply of cheap credits from petrodollars, the leadership resorted to Western loans, with the aim of using them for technological development in industry. Wages of industrial workers were raised as a part of favouring big industry against agriculture. Ambitions for industrial development aided by foreign loans were not fulfilled. High technology Western exports did not grow to balance the problems with the current account deficit and the growing state debt. Finally, after Paul Volcker raised the US federal funds rate, Hungary's debt increased exponentially (Vigvári, 1990).

The new turn towards reforms aided actors and institutions allied with the NEM reform process, whose influence or gains had been toned down by the conservative turn, to use the situation to struggle for a new round of reform, against industry-based centralization. In this struggle, a specific discourse was formed around the alignment of several actors on behalf of reforms. Throughout the years, one major ally of reform economists became the IMF, whose significance grew in line with the amount of state debt (Bockman, 2000: 329). Two further local expert groups allied with economists in the reform struggle: sociologists and dissident intellectuals. Within this system of alliances, a consensual form of the criticism of socialism developed, which came to embody intellectual common sense in the years leading up to the regime change. Contrary to the technicist language of the earlier mechanism movement, this new version of reform discourse touched on social and political matters, and increasingly formulated expert criticism as political critique (Bockman, 2000: 325-326). Within that reformist alliance, all analysis seemed to point in the same direction: world economic requirements, social inequalities and democratic deficits all necessitate marketization and the rolling back of party-state power.

A common reference point for economists and sociologists was the second economy, an existing practice which they pushed to legalize as part of the expansion of market activity. Reform economists relied on sociologists' findings on the second economy being beneficial for workers and small entrepreneurs to argue that the expansion of market relations would alleviate the hierarchical social relations imposed by state planning (Gábor, 1979; Seleny, 1993: 142). By 1982, pressured by political tensions resulting from austerity and the need to increase working hours under the threat of debt crisis, the party accepted the legalization of the second economy.

In the struggle for new reforms, economists increasingly came to include a reference to democracy in their arguments, simultaneously with their rapprochement with political dissidents. The conservative turn of the early 1970s stifled Marxist intellectual critics of the system. Influenced by the Helsinki accords in 1975, intellectual critics of the system increasingly relied on the principles of human rights and democracy. KOR's success in Poland inspired Hungarian political dissidents, but they lacked similar possibilities for worker mobilization. Finally, they allied with social scientists producing an empirical critique, and with reform economists (Csizmadia, 1995; Szalai, 1989). By the beginning of the 1980s, the reformist consensus integrated economic, social and political critique. Reform economists developed their arguments within that consensus, claiming that the rule of the market and the restriction of the

role of the state is the condition of economic democracy, and democracy at large (Szalai, 1995; Bockman, 2000: 356).

FRI in the struggle for reform. Monetarist and institutionalist critiques

Efforts towards a new reform agenda engendered reorganizations at FRI, too. In 1975, minister of finance Lajos Faluvégi entrusted a new director, István Hagelmayer, professor of finance at the Karl Marx University of Economics, to recruit a new research staff, capable of the theoretical preparation of economic reforms. Faluvégi also initiated a general wave of hiring of young cadres at the ministry. Compared to the average age of around 50 at the ministries, Faluvégi reduced the average age at the Ministry of Finance to 29 in 1976, and to an even lower level in the 1980s (Pogány, 1998). It was this wave of reorganization that coagulated the professional group of researchers at FRI who later became known as the reform economists behind 'Change and Reform' (Antal et al., 1987a), a document considered a milestone in the Hungarian regime change for stating an economic critique combined with the need for political change.

Alongside their research work, FRI collaborators also worked in the reform planning process. The content of the criticism they developed remained closely linked to FRI's position within the reform process. The preparations for a second wave of reform, gaining in strength from the late 1970s, concentrated on two spheres: the strengthening of financial regulation – meaning both expanding the realm of the system of incentives and strengthening the balance of the national budget – and the reorganization of large companies, in order to roll back their privilege from under the incentive system. Correspondingly, the two main areas of study and criticism that developed in FRI in this period were monetarism and an institutionalism concentrating on state-company relations.

The monetarists, a group of freshly-graduated young people like György Surányi, László Asztalos and Lajos Bokros, were hired during the latest wave of personnel change. This group, known as the 'finance boys', were trained in Western monetarism, and, with references to Friedman and Hayek, argued that the only way out of the economic downturn was full liberalization coupled with financial rigor. That they occupied this standpoint did not mean that they became stigmatized as enemies of the system. On the contrary, this was a time when the Ministry counted on the expertise of FRI in its financial reforms, and a moderate pressure was exercised upon the institute to conduct investigations relevant to those reforms. László Antal, head of the academic department of FRI, himself an institutionalist, but also an expert in Hungarian finance, set the 'finance boys' as an example for the rest of the researchers (Pogány, 1998). Very soon, they were included in the apparatus work of the second wave of reform.

The activity of the 'finance boys' at FRI fits rather closely the narrative according to which criticism of the socialist economy implied the internalization of Western neoclassical and monetarist theories, and the legitimation of IMF requirements by experts trained in the same tradition. FRI monetarists, indeed,

quoted neoliberal classics, participated in training courses held by the IMF and the
World Bank, and later followed careers moving between leading functions in
government, business, and consultancy, with Surányi becoming head of the National
Bank as soon as 1990, and Bokros minister of finance by 1995. However, to go
beyond narratives emphasizing purely individual agency or external pressure, it is
worth considering the story of FRI monetarism together with that of institutional
critique.

The institutionalist wave of research at FRI started as soon as the wave of
reorganization began, not long before the 'finance boys' arrived to the institute. László
Antal arrived at FRI in 1977 to head the scientific division, having worked as
counsellor in the ministry since 1968. He began to investigate the inadequacies of the
reform process relying on his experience in the apparatus. In 1979, he published an
influential paper entitled 'Development – with some digression' (Antal, 1979), in
which he set forth the argument that stood at the base of the later work of FRI
institutionalists. The paper stated that the fate of reform process did not depend on
the formal elements of the price and regulation system – that is, monetary regulation,
a term as yet avoided in socialist economics – nor on the specific measures of
economic policy, but on the relations between economic government and company
structure.

Antal argued that the system of direct command under Rákosi had created
systematic bargaining relationships between large companies and governing bodies,
and that this system was left unchanged by the 1968 reform. Through those
incremental relationships, in the new environment of decentralization that wished to
encourage competition in profitability, companies that were large and important
enough could achieve various bargains that exempted them from the requirements of
the reform. He claimed that by the second half of the 1970s individual bargains to
circumvent regulations and stimuli prescribed by the 1968 reform gradually formalized
into a mechanism of the 'division of regulators' (Antal, 1979: 97-98).

The only solution, according to Antal, was to quit correcting the individual traits
of the regulatory system one by one, and to embark on a radical reorganization of the
interconnected institutional system of economy and regulation.

From 1976, Erzsébet Szalai coordinated a series of studies at FRI on
investment in seven large companies in the processing industry. She arrived to
conclusions similar to Antal's (Szalai, 1981). In 1978, Éva Voszka and László Lengyel
carried out a collective research into the relationship between company structure and
company growth. From 1977, a cross-department team under the coordination of
László Lengyel conducted a wide spectrum research project in the Hungarian Ship
and Crane Factory over several years (Csanádi et al., 1984). At the turn of the decade,
Éva Voszka wrote on the organizational changes in steel and machine industry
companies during the reform process. In 1982 she started on a new research path,
focusing on the sociological analysis of decision making in bodies in economic
government (Voszka, 1984). At the end of the 1970s, Mária Csanádi looked at the
relationship between company size, profitability and distribution of state subsidies in
the period between1968-1980 (Csanádi, 1980). Later, she continued to work on the
structure of relationships between state apparatus and economic decision-makers, and
arrived at a formalized theory (Csanádi, 1995; 2002; 2006). Erzsébet Szalai also

continued her empirical work based on the institutional-relational questions characteristic to the group, and in 1989 emerged with a concluding work (Szalai, 1989b). Relying on empirical material that reached from the mid-1970s to the second third of the 1980s, she presented the characteristics and dynamics of the interrelation between large company interests, large company pressures, and reform efforts of varying intensity. The second half of the book translated the analysis into the political terms of social interests and power relations. It claimed that the crisis of the 1968 reform process should be seen as a crisis in interest harmonization, the mechanism of interest integration being systematically distorted by the bargaining relationship between large companies and economic government.

What institutionalists proposed was a deep organizational reform that could break the networks of state company bargains. This could be read as an argument for marketization and privatization. However, institutionalists did not link their criticism of the new mechanism to the argument that the crisis would prove the inferiority of the socialist economy. They did not think that the NEM did not work because there was too much state intervention and too little of a market based on incentives. Antal claimed that both direct planning and the idea of a perfect system of incentives lose from sight the substantial world of social and political relations that shape the economy and economic governance alike: "The ideal of a consequent centre or company interests that can be modelled on the daily needs of the plan go back to a way of thought that works with an image of the economy devoid of society and politics on the one side, and with economic and social processes reduced to planned stages on the other" (Antal, 1979: 16). He thought the formation of economic policy already happened as a process of interest harmonization – as a product of the economic mechanism. The economic policy that would be declared as serving the interest of society in general was itself the result of a process of conflict of partial interests and their harmonization. "Planning does not only mean that a process or a central rule of behavior is thought over previously, but it also an expression of the relationship between economic actors, in as much it is part of the mechanism by which resources are distributed between them" (Antal, 1979: 22).

This nuanced picture of social and political power relations with respect to economic policy was made oblique by the reform consensus of the era, emphasizing the opposition between illegitimate and ineffective rule by the party state, and a supposedly harmonious world of the market, civil society and democracy. As soon as its contenders began to efficiently bring down the party state, the main questions of the regime change appeared exactly on that territory of economic, social and political relations. By that time, however, the position of reform economists had changed.

'Change and Reform': a moment of political critique

In 1985, contrary to the reform propositions of IMF and local reform economists, the party engaged in a programme of economic acceleration, supported by big industry and its trade unions. This attempt at reinforcing the base of central power failed decisively, as the Plaza Accord in 1985 depreciated the dollar in relation to the Japanese yen, a significant part of Hungary's debt being denominated in the latter

currency. This failure reinforced the positions of both local and IMF advisors. From 1986 on, marketizing reforms proceeded with an unprecedented pace. In 1985, however, reform economists momentarily felt that a new wave of company lobbying had gained strength over reform plans, and that economic acceleration without reforms would lead to an economic catastrophe for deeply indebted Hungary.

New developments in the dissident movement added to the political zest of reform economists. By 1985, FRI researchers had established links with the nascent democratic opposition, some of them even publishing articles in samizdat journals. In summer 1985, László Antal, László Lengyel and Erzsébet Szalai took part in the first formal gathering of the democratic opposition at Monor, under the group identity of 'reform economists'.

The halting of the second wave of reform, as well as the oppositional verve of the Monor meeting, inspired FRI researchers to declare their perspective on the country's situation. They initiated a collective writing process that involved authors and discussants not only from FRI but also from apparatus positions and other research institutes. The outcome was not intended to be a scientific paper but rather a declaration of the position of authors vis-à-vis the state of the reform. In this gesture, a public position of economic experts voicing their professional opinion as a political standpoint was solidified: the 'reform economist' as an agent of the regime change.

'Change and Reform' contained the standpoints to which experts working in the reform process had arrived by 1985. Bearing the mark of the various mindsets of the authors, it spoke of monetary rigor as well as of the need to transform company-state relations and redistributive mechanisms. From a political perspective, its most important conclusion was that partial reforms would not be enough to save the country from economic crisis. Necessary reforms would imply transforming the relations between state leadership and the economy – a conclusion that was backed by various institutionalist and monetarist arguments (Antal et al., 1987a).

The political significance of the document stood not in the novelty of its claims but in its positioning. The editors had already contacted reform communist leaders before the document was actually written. They asked for political protection, but also hoped that their opinion could acquire influence through the internal power struggles wrought within the party. However, 'Change and Reform' was also leaked out to national as well as international audiences. It gained publicity in the international press and among the reform-minded party nomenklatura throughout the country. In March 1987, the Economy Panel of the party put 'Change and Reform' out for debate. In its official concluding statement, the Economy Panel stated that it accepted the document's evaluation of the country's economic situation, but upheld that economic acceleration was necessary along with the reforms proposed in the document. The statement rejected the exclusivity of monetary rigor as being an oversimplification. It emphasized the necessity of state command alongside monetarist measures, and the role of the party in bringing the reform process into effect. A shortened and slightly changed version of 'Change and Reform' was decided to be published in Economic Review, together with the official statement of the Economy Panel (Pogány, 1998: 48-60). By the end of the same year, full Hungarian and English versions of the document were published (Antal et al., 1987a; 1987b).

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 59-79.

GAGYI, Á.: A MOMENT OF POLITICAL CRITIQUE BY REFORM ECONOMISTS IN LATE SOCIALIST HUNGARY

71

The closure of FRI. The institutional reorganization of expertise

In May 1987, freshly-appointed minister of finance Péter Medgyessy announced that FRI would be closed by the ministry. The closure was widely attributed to the political waves generated by 'Change and Reform' (Farkas, 2008). Medgyessy himself provided motivation for it by mentioning the rationalization of state institutions prescribed by the 1985 reform (Pogány, 1998: 62). However, he did not mean fully to get rid of the expertise that has built up at FRI. FRI monetarists Lajos Bokros, László Antal, László Asztalos and György Surányi, by that time a World Bank consultant, were invited to work at the apparatus. The bulk of the institutionalists founded a private research company, Financial Research Institute plc, and continued their work there.

The business plan for Financial Research Plc. was to continue research that relied on income from consultancy work for the apparatus and private parties. This business activity came to be more than a side-programme. In 1987, when FRI was closed down for austerity reasons, its annual budget was 3 million forints of the state budget. By 1989 Financial Research Plc. had an income of 160 million forints (Polgár, 1998: 394). The income was generated from consultancy to company leaders, and activities that experts of the apparatus, including FRI, developed during the preparations of the 1985 reform (Matolcsy, 1998: 347). Such recycling of apparatus/expert knowledge was part of the second-economy activities of intellectuals across academic institutions. At FRI, however, it not only involved advice on existing rules, but also active help in starting the process that became later known as 'spontaneous privatization' (Matolcsy, 1998: 347), a process whereby company managers created several smaller companies outside the state company and shifted the company's assets to those firms through multiple moves of issuing, buying and selling shares and bonds. Between 1987 and 1990, this process shifted large amounts of state property into private hands, typically to company managers and political decision-makers (Stark, 1990).

The institutional research into the Hungarian reforms survived the closure of FRI in the narrow sense that it influenced the work of several authors. What ceased to exist with the closure of FRI was its functional role that shaped the critique formulated within it. In 1987, FRI was split into a monetarist group of experts working for the Ministry of Finance, with no sociological and political interest in the coalitions of political and economic power, and a private research company financed by and working *for these coalitions*. In the hottest years of political debates about the regime change, both FRI's monetarist and institutional critique vanished from public politics, the scene where it previously made its appearance as 'reform economics' with a political edge.

The institutional critique developed in FRI appeared in but did not penetrate the roundtable talks at which Hungary's peaceful regime change was negotiated. Claims were made, here and there, that privatization should consider the equal participation of citizens in the redistribution of state property, or that self-management should be recognized as one type of company management (Stark, 1990). Erzsébet Szalai herself argued at the 1985 Monor meeting and the 1989 roundtable talk on

property reform that the decentralization of the economy should go hand in hand with its democratization, and workers should participate in the reorganization of companies. László Bruszt, relying on FRI research material, also argued at the opposition's roundtable talks that, without democratic social participation in the process of marketization, the economic and political power that had been accumulated in the networks of company leaders and apparatus functionaries – to name this formation, he used the word 'oligarchy' – would allow them to retain their dominant position. (Bruszt, 1995) None of these arguments came to have a significant effect. Looking back, both Szalai and Bruszt conclude that the reason they were not listened to was not that there were stronger positions in the debate, but because, in the context of roundtable discussions, debates on economic issues were beside the point (Szalai, 2000; Bruszt, 1995).

> At the Hungarian roundtable talks, a new political class was born. (...) The new rules were created by those most interested in them – the future winners and losers in an electoral competition. In that light, it is not surprising that the Hungarian roundtable talks did not bring any agreement on economic issues. Debates over the economy were crippled by a structural characteristic of the roundtable, namely that its participants were parties, and not organizations of work or capital – not economic bodies, not company coalitions, not organizations of employers and not unions. (Bruszt, 1995: 131-132)

The silence in political negotiations over the issues formerly raised by FRI institutionalists went hand in hand with intense activity on the side of company-state coalitions. The period of roundtable talks was also the high point for spontaneous privatization. As Bruszt summed up the 1989 situation: "It is a paradox of today's Hungary that while we are evolving towards democracy, the density of corruption cases grows. (...) While the political negotiations with the opposition have already started, the oligarchy still rules the game of economic power, most of all, the redistribution of the right of use and the right of property" (Bruszt, 1995: 48-49).

Conclusion

This paper has addressed the question posed by the theme of this issue on the conditions of the epistemic position and public authority of social science in Eastern and Central Europe, and the relationship between local and Western paradigms. It has pointed out connections between the dynamics of reform economics, reform process and world economic integration in late socialist Hungary, to demonstrate that, beyond comparisons within academic fields, broader contextual connections can help us understand local academic output and its public use as part of, rather than lagging behind, or being separate from, contemporary global processes.

This paper has focused on contextual connections at several points which stood at the forefront of economic policies and debates in the era, and which the paper considered as part of long-term dilemmas in Hungary's semi-peripheral development strategies: the question of import substitution industrialization and centralization,

Intersections. East European Journal of Society and Politics, 1 (2): 59-79.

Gagyi, Á.: A Moment Of Political Critique By Reform Economists In Late Socialist Hungary

73

dependence on Western technology imports, and the resulting pressure for hard currency. While these aspects do not cover the whole range of global interactions that defined Hungarian development during the era, the paper has put them forward as illustrative of the connection between internal economic debates and global aspects of Hungary's economic development. Focusing on the case of FRI experts, and their political pamphlet in 1986, the paper has illustrated how the epistemic position and public usage of economic expertise changed in line with changes in world economic integration, geopolitical shifts, and the consequent institutional reorganizations of economic expertise.

By 1952, Hungary's long-term problem of Western indebtedness resurfaced after the first wave of Stalinist import substitution industrialization. With de-Stalinization, Imre Nagy challenged the Stalinist politics of Mátyás Rákosi, and proposed a programme of decentralization, raising living standards and favouring agriculture (with export capacities) over industry. Nagy's politics provided a space for economic experts, who used a technical, objective language to protect expert positions against the highly political nature of economic debates. After the 1956 revolution, under János Kádár, Hungary engaged in a series of marketizing reforms, and specialized in importing Western technology to sell it on Comecon markets, and in selling Soviet oil and raw materials on non-socialist markets for hard currency. Besides the revolution itself, this shift was aided by Western overproduction of technology and its search for new markets, and by the 1961 scheduling of economic reform in the Soviet Union. Reform economists also received attention from US funding agencies for intellectual exchange. The New Economic Mechanism introduced in 1968 reorganized institutional professional power from experts dealing with the fulfilment of the plan to experts dealing with the financial aspects of economic incentives introduced by the NEM, most significantly from the National Planning Bureau to the Ministry of Finance. The FRI was founded as the official research institute of the Ministry of Finance as part of that reorganization.

From 1972, in line with Brezhnev's politics, especially on Czechoslovakian reforms, and Soviet critiques of Hungary's reform process, there was a political turn towards centrally targeted and technologically intensive development instead of economic autonomy and market-like rules. To finance development efforts, the government resorted to cheap credits following the boom in petrodollars after 1973. This strategy of using Western loans for competitive technological development did not succeed. The lack of hard currency remained an increasing problem, and, as the Volcker shock changed the directions of the global flows of capital, its public debt became Hungary's number one concern.

In that context, various actors and institutions allied with NEM used the situation to struggle for a new round of reform against industry-based centralization. The Ministry of Finance, and FRI within it, was reorganized to serve the preparation of the new wave of reforms. Within FRI, two groups of experts were formed: institutionalists dealing with institutional reorganization, especially with the role of 'privileged companies' and state-company networks within the new centralized effort, and monetarists dealing with the preparation of market-based incentives. While the two groups' diagnoses diverged on whether it was institutional networks or a lack of market mechanisms that withheld economic development, their criticism of

centralization served as a basis for consensus. Throughout the 1970s, that consensus connected into a broader discourse of political criticism, where IMF experts, sociologists and dissident intellectuals converged in a strain of argument in which world economic requirements, social inequalities and a lack of democracy all pointed towards the necessity of marketization reforms – a consensus bound to collapse in the later years of transition.

Despite reform economists' advice, from 1984 Hungary's government engaged in the politics of economic acceleration. That effort crumbled with the 1985 Plaza accord. After 1986 the position of experts arguing for marketization strengthened, and liberalizing reforms unfolded with an unseen pace. However, between 1984-1986, reform economists felt that, despite their work within state institutions, Hungary was taking a road towards economic catastrophe. FRI economists, also encouraged by their participation at the first official meeting of dissidents in 1985, edited a political pamphlet, 'Change and Reform', which summed up their earlier institutionalist and monetarist critiques, leading to the political conclusion that the relationship between state and society needed to be changed.

After the publication of 'Change and Reform', FRI was closed down. Monetarists were invited to work in the apparatus on the reforms unfolding after 1986, while institutionalists carried their knowledge on state-company networks over to a private research company to advise the same networks in the process of privatization. As the expertise accumulated in FRI entered the process of the regime change, its political aspects vanished from the public sphere.

References

Antal, L. (1979) Development – with some digression. *ACTA Oeconomica,* (23): 257-273.

Antal, L. et al. (1987a) Fordulat és Reform [Change and Reform]. *ACTA Oeconomica,* (38): 127-213.

Antal, L. et al. (1987b) Fordulat és Reform [Change and Reform]. *Medvetánc,* 1987 (2): 318.

Arrighi, G. (1990) The Developmentalist Illusion: A Reconceptualization of the Semiperiphery. In Martin. W. G. (ed.) *Semiperipheral States in the World-economy.* Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group. 11-42.

Babb, S. (2001) *Managing Mexico: Economists from Nationalism to Neoliberalism.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Ban, C. (2014) *Dependenţă şi dezvoltare: Economia politică a capitalismului românesc* [*Dependance and development: The political economy of Romanian capitalism*]. Cluj-Napoca: Tact.

Beigel, F. (2014) Publishing from the Periphery: Structural Heterogeneity and Segmented Circuits. The Evaluation of Scientific Publications for Tenure in Argentina's CONICET. *Current Sociology,* 62 (5): 743-765.

Berend, I. T. (1990) *The Hungarian Economic Reforms 1953-1988.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Bockman, J. (2000) *Economists and Social Change: Science, Professional Power, and Politics in Hungary, 1945-1995.* Doctoral dissertation. San Diego, CA: University of California.

Bockman, J. (2011) *Markets in the Name of Socialism: the Left-wing Origins of Neoliberalism.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Bockman, J. and G. Eyal (2002) Eastern Europe as a Laboratory for Economic Knowledge: The Transnational Roots of Neoliberalism. *American Journal of Sociology,* 108 (2): 310-352.

Brenner, R. (1989) Economic Backwardness in Eastern Europe in Light of Developments in the West. In Chirot, D. (ed) *The Origins of Backwardness in Eastern Europe: Economics and Politics from the Middle Ages until the Early Twentieth Century.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. 15-52.

Bruszt, L. (1995) *A centralizáció csapdája (The Trap of Centralization).* Szombathely: Savaria University Press.

Callon, M. (1998) Introduction: The Embeddedness of Economic Markets in Economics. *The Sociological Review,* (46): 1-57.

Cardoso, F. H. and E. Faletto (1979) *Dependency and Development in Latin America.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Chase-Dunn, C. (1988) Comparing World Systems: Toward a Theory of Semiperipheral Development. *Comparative Civilizations Review,* (19): 29-66.

Chirot, D. (1976) Social Change in a Peripheral Society: The Creation of a Balkan Colony. New York, NY: Academic Press.

Csanádi, M. (1980) *A differenciált erőforás-elosztás és a támogatások újratermelődésének néhány összefüggése (Selective Resource Distribution and Some Aspects of the Regeneration of Subsidies).* Budapest: Pénzügykutatási Intézet Tanulmányai.

Csanádi, M. (1995) *Honnan tovább? A pártállam és az átalakulás (From Where Onwards? The Party-state and the Transformation).* Budapest: MTA Közgazdaságtudományi Intézet.

Csanádi, M. (1998) Az ember azért írja le az eseményeket, mert mint kutató egyszerűen nem bír magával: résztvevő megfigyelő (One Writes Down Things because as a Researcher Cannot do otherwise: a Participant-observer). Interview by Mihancsik, Zs. In Pogány, Á. and H. Volosin (eds.) *Lámpások az alagútban: Emlékek a Pénzügykutatóról (Lanterns in the Tunnel: Memories of the Financial Research Institute).* Budapest: Pénzügykutató Rt. – Perfekt Rt. 292-307.

Csanádi, M. (2002) *Party-states and their Legacies in Post-communist Transformation.* Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.

Csanádi, M. (2006) *Self-Consuming Evolutions: A Model on the Structure, Self-reproduction, Self-destruction and Transformation of Party-states, tested on the Romanian, Hungarian and Chinese Cases.* Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.

Csanádi, M., G. Lamberger, L. Lengyel, M. Polgár, E. Szalai, and É. Voszka. (1984) (eds.) *Egy nagyvállalat kapcsolatainak rendszere: Esettanulmányok a Magyar Hajó- és Darugyárról (The Interrelations of an Enterprise: Case Studies on the Hungarian Shipyard and Crane Factory).* Budapest: Pénzügykutatási Intézet Tanulmányai.

Csató, K. (2004) Indulások és újraindulások. Közgazdasági Szemle, új folyam, 1954 (Starts and Restarts. Közgazdasági Szemle, New Stream, 1954). *Közgazdasági Szemle,* 51 (10): 987-997.

Csizmadia, E. (1995) *A magyar demokratikus ellenzék (The Hungarian Democratic Opposition).* Budapest: T-Twins.

Drahokoupil, J. (2008) *Globalization and the State in Central and Eastern Europe: The Politics of Foreign Direct Investment.* London, UK: Routledge.

Eyal, G. (2000) Anti-politics and the Spirit of Capitalism: Dissidents, Monetarists, and the Czech Transition to Capitalism. *Theory and Society,* 29 (1): 49-92.

Éber, M. Á., Á. Gagyi, T. Gerőcs, Cs. Jelinek, and A. Pinkász (2014) 1989: Szempontok a rendszerváltás globális politikai gazdaságtanához (Perspectives for a Global Political Economy of the Regime Change in Hungary). *Fordulat* 7 (21): 10-63.

Fabry, A. (2011) From Poster Boy of Neoliberal Transformation to Basket Case: Hungary and the Global Economic Crisis. In Dale, G. (ed.) First *The Transition, Then The Crash: Eastern Europe In The 2000s.* London, UK: Pluto Press. 203-228.

Farkas, Z. (2008) „A dolgok elrontásában világbajnokok vagyunk." A gazdaságpolitika négy évtizede Antal László (1943–2008) szavaival ("We are World Champions in Ruining things" Four Decades of Economic Policy in the Words of László Antal). *Mozgó Világ,* 34 (11): 119–128.

Gábor, I. (1979) The Second (secondary) Economy: Earning Activity and Regrouping of Income Outside the Socially Organized Production and Distribution. *Acta Oeconomica* (35): 291-311.

Gao, B. (2002) *Economic Ideology and Japanese Industrial Policy: Developmentalism from 1931 to 1965.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Gerőcs, T. and A. Pinkász (2015) *Debt-ridden Development in Europe's Eastern Periphery.* Paper presented at the 39th Political Economy of the World System conference. March 19-21, Berlin.

Hadas, M. and M. Vörös (1996) (eds.) *Colonisation or Partnership? Eastern Europe and Western Social Sciences. Replika Special Issue.* Budapest: Replika Kör.

Hirschman, A. O. (1958) *The Strategy of Economic Development.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Janos, A. C. (2000) *East Central Europe in the Modern World: The Politics of the Borderlands from Pre- to Postcommunism.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Kagarlitsky, B. (2008) *Empire of the Periphery: Russia and the World System.* London, UK: Pluto.

Kovács, J. M. (1984) A reformalku sűrűjében (In the Thick of Reform-bargaining). *Valóság,* (3): 30-55.

Kovács, J. M. (1994) Which Institutionalism? Searching for Paradigms of Transformation in Eastern European Economic Thought. The Political Economy of Transformation. In Wagener, Hans-Jürgen (ed.) The Political Economy of Transformation. Heidelberg: Physica-Verlag HD. 85-94.

Kovács, J. M. and M. Tardos (2004) (eds.) *Reform and Transformation in Eastern Europe: Soviet-type Economics on the Threshold of Change.* London, UK: Routledge.

Kozma, F. (1996) *Külgazdasági stratégia (External Economic Strategy).* Budapest: Aula.

Martin, W. G. (1990) (ed.) *Semiperipheral states in the world-economy.* Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group.

Matolcsy, Gy. (1998) „Engem a nagy történelmi kihívások mindig elcsábítanak." Interview by Mihancsik, Zs ("I have Always been Tempted by Great Historic Challenges"). In Pogány, Á. and H. Volosin (eds.) *Lámpások az alagútban: Emlékek a Pénzügykutatóról (Lanterns in the Tunnel: Memories of the Financial Research Institute).* Budapest: Pénzügykutató Rt. – Perfekt Rt. 342–362.

McKloskey, D. (1994) *Knowledge and Persuasion in Economics.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Melegh, A. (2011) Living to ourselves. Localizing global hierarchies in state socialist Hungary in the 1970's and 1980's. *Journal of Modern European History,* 9 (2): 263-283.

Mirowski, P. and D. Plehwe (2009) *The Road from Mont Pèlerin: The making of the neoliberal thought collective.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Pogány, Á. (1998) A Pénzügykutatási Intézet története (The History of the Financial Research Institute). In Pogány, Á. and H. Volosin (eds.) *Lámpások az alagútban: Emlékek a Pénzügykutatóról (Lanterns in the Tunnel: Memories of the Financial Research Institute).* Budapest: Pénzügykutató Rt. – Perfekt Rt. 9–74.

Polgár, M. (1998) „A döntés mindenkit felháborított: először elhatároztuk, együtt maradunk…" Interview by Bossányi, K ("Everyone was Outraged by the Decision: First we Decided to Stay Together…"). In Pogány, Á. and H. Volosin (eds.) *Lámpások az alagútban: Emlékek a Pénzügykutatóról (Lanterns in the Tunnel: Memories of the Financial Research Institute)*. Budapest: Pénzügykutató Rt. – Perfekt Rt. 384–395.

Prebisch, R. (1950 *The Economic Development of Latin America and its Principal Problems*. New York, NY: United Nations Department of Economic Affairs.

Przeworski, A. (1991). *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Seleny, A. (1993) *The Long Transformation: Hungarian socialism, 1949-1989:* Doctoral dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Shields, S. A. (2012) *The International Political Economy of Transition: Transnational Social Forces and Eastern Central Europe's Transformation.* London, UK: Routledge.

Szentes, T. (1990) *A kelet-európai átalakulás és a világgazdaság (Eastern European Systemic Change and the World Economy)*. Budapest: Aula.

Rainer, J. (1996) *Nagy Imre: Politikai életrajz. Első kötet: 1896-1953 (Imre Nagy: Political Bibliography. First Volume: 1896-1953)*. Budapest: 1956-os Intézet.

Rostow, W. W. (1960) *The Stages of Economic Growth*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Stark, D. (1990) Privatization in Hungary: From Plan to Market or from Plan to Clan. *East European Politics and Societies*, 4 (3): 364–366.

Szalai, E. (1981) *Kiemelt vállalat – beruházás – érdek (Privileged State Enterprise – Investment – Interest)*. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.

Szalai, E. (1989a) The New Elite. *Across Frontiers*, (5): 25-31.

Szalai, E. (1989b) *Gazdasági mechanizmus, reformtörekvések és nagyvállalati érdekek (The New Economic Mechanism, Reforms and Large-company interests)*. Budapest: Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó.

Szalai, E. (1995) The Metamorphosis of the Elites. In Király, K. B. and A. Bozóki (eds.) *Lawful Revolution in Hungary, 1989-1994*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press. 159-176.

Szalai, E. (1998) OSI Research Report. http://rss.archives.ceu.hu/archive/00001071/01/71.pdf Accessed: 20-07-2014.

Szamuely, L., and L. Csaba (1998) *Rendszerváltozás a közgazdaságtanban - közgazdaságtan a rendszerváltozásban (Economics of and in Systemic Change)*. Budapest: Közgazdasági Szemle Alapítvány.

Szegő, A. (1989) Világgazdasági függés, eladósodás, válság (World Economic Dependence, Indebtedness, Crisis). *Eszmélet*, (1): 65–99.

Szelényi et al. (2001) *Making Capitalism without Capitalists. The New Ruling Elites in Eastern Europe.* London, UK: Verso.

Tőkés, R. (1996) *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution: Economic Reform, Social Change and Political Succession 1957-1990.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Vigvári, A. (1990) (ed.) *Adósság: Tanulmányok adósságunk múltjáról, jelenéről és jövőjéről (Debt: Papers on the History, the Present and the Future of our Debt).* Budapest: Szakszervezetek Gazdaság- és Társadalomkutató Intézete.

Voszka, É. (1984) *Érdek és kölcsönös függőség (Interest and Mutual Dependence).* Budapest: Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó.

Wagener. H. H. (1998) (ed.) *The history of East European Economic Thought in the Postwar Period.* London, UK: Routledge.

NORBERT PETROVICI*

Framing Criticism and Knowledge Production in Semi-peripheries – Post-socialism Unpacked

* [norbertpetrovici@gmail.com] (Babes-Bolyai University, Romania)

Abstract[1]

More than two and a half decades after the demise of actually existing socialism, much of the contemporary literature produced about CEE is still organized around a dichotomy between socialism and post-socialism, transforming the region in an epistemic enclave. This paper clarifies the agency of scholars from both the West and the East in producing these epistemic landscapes. It contributes, in particular, to the analyses that describe peripheries-developed devices that contribute to the asymmetries between the core and its academic hinterlands. I address the positioning games played by the CEE scholars, the modalities in which their various critical agendas became embedded in global fluxes of ideas, and their important role in co-producing the self-Orientalizing narrative on 'socialism' and 'post-socialism'. Following the debate between Thelen (2011; 2012) and Dunn & Verdery (2011) over postsocialism as a strategic case, my contention is that epistemic enclavisation of the region spring from those types of global partnerships, which forged critical alliances predicated on attributing history to the West and taking out the East from the 'normal' flow of history. I further develop this point through an example, the understanding of socialist urbanization in the 1980s and 1990s. I show why the over-emphasis on socialism/capitalism, socialism /post-socialism differences and the underestimation of similarities is a wrong analytical option. I plead for a more Gramscian understanding of counter-hegemonic alliance-making.

Keywords: socialism, post-socialism, post-colonialism, coevalness, referential history, underubanization, partial-proletarization

Intersections. East European Journal of Society and Politics, 1 (2): 80-102.
Petrovici, N.: Framing Criticism and Knowledge Production in Semi-peripheries

81

An Epistemic Oasis

More than two decades after the demise of actually existing socialism, much of the contemporary literature produced about Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) is still organized around a dichotomy between socialism and post-socialism (Gille, 2010; Tlostanova and Mignolo, 2012). Social transformations of the last two and a half decades periodically swayed the epistemic balance between rejection and embracing of a special regime conferred by the status of 'post', which came with the fall of actually-existing-socialism (Stenning and Hörschelmann, 2008). The region seems to continue to emerge as a distinct epistemic oasis. The concepts with the greatest explanatory potential and with the greatest academic coverage (bureaucratic collectivism, mirror comparison, redistribution, shortage economy, dictatorship over needs, the politics of duplicity, informal economy, fuzzy property, recombined property, managerialism) have transformed, arguably, the CEE into a space with its own rules of composition, different, and most of the time incomparable with the rest of the world (Stenning and Hörschelmann, 2008; Pobłocki, 2009; Gille, 2010; Thelen, 2011). In this essay I question the mechanisms and the responsibility for the production of this particular knowledge regime by proposing some twists in the narratives liable for the epistemic provincialization of the region.

The provincialization of CEE is hardly a surprise if integrated in a greater time frame. CEE became the internal other of capitalist Europe in the struggles of imperial formation across the continent in the Renaissance era, of the 16th and 17th centuries (Tlostanova and Mignolo, 2012) and the industrial-agrarian labor division of the Enlightenment era of 18th and 19th centuries (Boatcă, 2003; Boatcă and Costa, 2012; Dzenovska, 2013). Central and Eastern Europe became a land of beasts, vampires and werewolves at the end of the 19th, and then again at the end of the 20th century the object of modernization endeavors, the Orient of Occident (Pobłocki, 2009; Todorova and Gille, 2010) in need of new institutions to reshape a 'traditional society' (Boatcă, 2003). The current temporal division between the socialist and its post-epoch played, in various disguises on such transition discourses, the role of re-iterating a geo-epistemic boundary through which the region was re-created as a special island with its own laws, which seemingly escaped global capitalist history. The challenge to produce a non-Orientalizing narrative about CEE (Todorova and Gille, 2010; Boatcă and Costa, 2012) was not without a response.

In the last decade the post-colonial and de-colonial options played a great role in taking up the task of reconstructing knowledge production about CEE beyond the socialist and post-socialist dichotomy. Several special issues appeared in the attempt to wed post-colonial and post-socialist debates (Mignolo, 2006; Owczarzak, 2009; Tulbure, 2009; Kołodziejczyk and Şandru, 2012; Ştefănescu and Galleron, 2012; Jelinek and Pinkasz, 2014). Also a new wave of scholarship questions the structure of power relations and unequal flows that sustained the old cold war boxing games,

which confined the region to area studies (Chari and Verdery, 2009; Poenaru, 2011). Poignant analyses give voice to the disciplinary concern about the subordination of the CEE semi-peripheral knowledge production to the metropolitan agendas in anthropology (Pobłocki, 2009; Buchowski, 2012), feminist studies (Mizielinska and Kulpa, 2012), history (Dzenovska, 2013), sociology (Blagojević and Yair, 2010; Oleksiyenko, 2014) and economics (Schueth, 2011). The disciplinary analyses of the regimes of knowledge production have the great merit of making visible the link between the power struggles over the organization of post-1950s world system and the importance of CEE over defining the soul of capitalism in opposition to socialism and its successor, post-socialism.

In most of these accounts Eastern European scholars are no mere passive recipients. On the contrary, our complex agencies are fleshed out consistently. The constitution of the epistemic subjects and borders are made into an active domain of inquiry. Both Eyal and Bockman (Bockman and Eyal, 2002; Bockman, 2011) aptly show that neoliberal ideology, with its emphasis on competition, entrepreneurship and decentralization, is a global collective product in which the socialist East, as the 'other' of capitalism, was an important strategic site for testing globally developed ideas about the institutional arrangements needed for stimulating efficiency.

While I fully agree with this diagnostic, the exact mechanisms are not fully fleshed out. This paper further clarifies the agencies of CEE scholars and extends the analyses that describe how peripheries contribute to the asymmetries between the core and their academic hinterlands (Pobłocki, 2009; Medina, 2013; Oleksiyenko, 2014). To this end, I address the positioning games played by the CEE scholars, the modalities in which their various critical agendas became embedded in global fluxes of ideas, and their important role in co-producing the self-Orientalizing narrative on 'socialism' and 'post-socialism'. My contention is that the various degrees of epistemic enclavisation of the region spring from the various types of disciplinary and theoretical global partnerships, which forge critical alliances predicated on attributing history to the West and excising the East from the 'normal' flow of history. For the Western scholar the impetus to create the partnership comes from the universalizing effect given to her by the critical agenda of embedding local struggles in metropolitan conversations. For the Eastern Scholar, the drive is to give weight to her critical contentions by showing that all the potentialities implied in the counterfactual of the scholarly account is already unfolding in other places. The West is most of the time the baseline of history; the East is populated by different laws and different ontological regimes. These types of global alliances are not specific to CEE. On the contrary, current criticism on postcolonial agenda (Chibber, 2014) or decolonial agenda (Bessire and Bond, 2014) reveal similar hidden partnerships in creating ontological areas operating under different 'laws', which escape global history, in need of different epistemic outlooks.

Beyond doubt, these critical alliances are unfolding in a highly unequal power field, where knowledge production gives Western and Eastern scholars asymmetrical powers to name. While these asymmetries gained attention in recent literature (Pobłocki, 2009; Blagojević and Yair, 2010, Thelen, 2011; Boatcă and Costa, 2012; Buchowski, 2012; Dzenovska, 2013; Oleksiyenko, 2014), the CEE 'scholars' critical agenda was left under-examined. Yet, many of these agendas and visions of the region have been critically engaged for their role in the local and global narratives instrumental in legitimizing CEE capitalism (Bockman and Eyal, 2002; Poenaru, 2011; Simionca, 2012). A counter-hegemonic epistemic counter-point can by formulated only by an investigation of our institutional and epistemological alliances, to make Gramscian reformulations and tactical shifts against the economic subsumption and metropolitan power games possible. Firstly, I address the issue of the colonial structure of knowledge production in CEE by reexamining a Thelen (2011; 2012) and Dunn and Verdery's (2011) key debate over what is socialism and its posts. Secondly, I discuss the CEE 'scholars' agencies in the East-West transactions and some of the critical assumptions underpinning the narrative about socialism. In the third section I address two implicit aspects of post-socialism-as-an-operational-concept: when and where socialist modernity started – and I flesh out the implicit auto-colonial montage in some positions circulated as a response to these questions. I conclude by arguing for a more complex strategy of positioning in the face of hegemonic attempts to appropriate criticism.

The Western Critical Scholars

The access to defining the region is highly unequal and follows closely the contours of the global flows of capital. To quote Blagojević and Yair's (2010: 350) statistics: "In 2006, for example, the ISI coded information from 1,768 social science journals. Of those, 95% were published in eight Western countries. The major English-speaking bloc, the USA, England, Canada, and Australia, accounts for 83.5% of all journals; the West European bloc, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland and France, adds 11.3% of all ISI recorded journals." To these we may add the highly skewed system of prestige around Western scientific conference and funding schemes (Blagojević and Yair, 2010; Oleksiyenko, 2014). As Buchowski (2012) rightly observes, the most circulated and cited edited volumes on post-socialism were edited by Western scholars, published at Western universities and comprised works by authors at Western Universities. Also, no 'native' theories from within the discipline of the authors were actually engaged. This is hardly news as self-reliance, structural blindness to other voices outside the very center, and metropolitan parochialism are well documented by the sociology of science (Medina, 2013; Oleksiyenko, 2014). These patterns are hard to argue with because the metropolitan knowledge production has the capitalist logic of self-fulfilling prophecies on its side. What is deemed universal and scientific are actually contextual and normalizing instruments that gain objectivity through their capacities of producing the world described (Steinmetz, 2005; Petrovici, 2010). What socialism and post-socialism are arguably falls under the same production scheme.

In a pivotal debate, Thelen (2011; 2012) addresses some of these issues in an effort to capture the colonial underpinnings of 'socialism' and 'post-socialism'. Her thesis is that socialism and successor 'posts' did not escape the narrow parochialism of the metropolitan episteme, as Verdery's (1996; 1999) and Dunn's (2004) hallmark research show. Her proof lays in arguing that core academic parochialism emanates from its Orientalizing economicism. Thelen questions what came to be the bedrock of socialism as an operational concept: the shortage economy framework. The basics were laid down by economists, most notably by Kornai (Kornai, 1980; 1992), and were embraced by the whole social science field dealing with the CEE. Thelen argues that the neo-institutionalist formulation is to blame for creating the entity called 'socialism' as opposed to 'capitalism'. Thelen holds that the multitude of everyday practices that constituted CEE societies were glossed over and boxed in a totalizing container by equating socialism with its peculiar economic system. Through such a move socialism became a mirror for capitalism. She writes: "highlighting the institutional 'otherness' of socialism renders invisible similarities in the production process" (2011: 47-48).

While I agree that the interdependencies, conversations, influences and resemblances are obscured if socialism is mirroring in opposition capitalism (see also Stark, 1986), I point to three problems: First, Thelen holds that the major problem of importing the neo-institutionalist framework is the fact that it equates CEE societies with their economies, and all formal and informal rules become isomorphic with those of the economic institutions. Her main accusation is that of economicism. Second, she contends that the imports from neo-institutionalism smuggles into anthropology a rational choice approach. Third, she puts the weight of economicism and rational choice on the shoulder of the Western scholar responsible for importing "Western economic theory" (2011: 48) into anthropology, with the (un)intended consequence of Orientalizing: socialism as the Other of capitalism. Kornai's neoinstitutionalism is relegated by Thelen to a Western theory and "a dominant perspective on actors as maximizing individual utility" (2011: 44). In her view, the most important scholar guilty of such colonial imports is Katherine Verdery, but others, like Elizabeth C. Dunn are also responsible for recent reformulations of such theoretical positions. Dunn and Verdery (2011) took up the challenge of formulating a response.

Dunn and Verdery's response to Thelen's first imputation rightly points out that the relation of production, property and the nature of the firms are no illegitimate disciplinary import from economics. These are just a paradigmatic option, namely Marxist options. Their endeavor, as much as that of similar anthropological work, consisted exactly in unpacking the nature of property and labor relations in the particular regional power constellations, given the public ideological claims of a classless society. Far from being copycats of Kornai, Dunn's and Verdery's work, among others, aimed at understanding the nexus of power-culture in various spheres of the society, including economy.

Dunn and Verdery did not respond to Thelen's second allegation. The charge of rational choice is indexed as part of the greater accusation of economicism and is not dealt with directly. It is packed as part of the point that the issue of property and

relations of production are part of the Marxist paradigm. Authors such as Kornai are not directly neo-institutionalists, at least in their first formulations, but Marxists.

Dunn and Verdery address the third charge by admitting that while Kornai became popular while teaching at Princeton, his major discoveries are due to his experience as a local, as an employee to the newspaper *Szabad Nép* and then as an employee of a Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy. While his arguments, like his 1992 magnum opus *The Socialist System* are indebted to the neoinstitutionalist framework and are formulated while based in a Western institution, he based them on local insights. Kornai is relegated here to the position of a very important informant, not to his rightful position of an intellectual participating in global debates.

> Contrary to Thelen's dismissal of Kornai's indigenist perspective, then, his own experience was crucial to his understanding of socialist political economy. His early critique of it owes less to neoinstitutionalism than to a Marxist dialectical analysis, with Marx's terms reversed. Where Marx takes up the problem of surplus, Kornai takes up the problem of shortage; where Marx examines the constraints posed by demand, Kornai looks at the constraints of supply, and so on. Kornai's interactions with Western economists undoubtedly influenced his thinking (see Bockman and Eyal, 2002), and after 1989 he became an open advocate of neoliberalism – but this was after years of attempting to reform state socialism from within a more complex intellectual framework, which Thelen misrepresents. (Dunn and Verdery, 2011: 253)

While the response to the first criticism does justice to debates in anthropology and sociology, Dunn and Verdery's response to the second and third imputations, I argue, are actually symptomatic for the organization of the academic field and the East-West power/knowledge transactions. This is not to say that their response is inadequate, but rather that in this conversation both parties are obscuring and misrepresenting important structuring aspects of what holds together a complex colonial partnership. Dunn and Verdery's failure to respond to Thelen's accusations are reveal the structure of the partnership. The question is: what does it mean to engage a local scholar in western scholarship? And in this particular debate the answer has at least three dimensions.

First, the contribution of Bockman and Eyal (2002) is cited here in order to acknowledge the fact that Kornai was influenced by Western economics, yet these 'influences' are heavily understated. In Dunn and Verdery's formulations, it seems that Kornai's stakes were local, a conversation with fellow Marxists against the phony ideological Marxism of the nomenklatura. Yet, the very point of Bockman and Eyal's (2002) paper was to show that neoliberalism as a global ideology and its Eastern incarnation was no post-socialist accident, but had its roots in the global neoclassical debates of the 50s and 70s, where socialism played a major role as a laboratory for testing concepts and methods developed jointly by economists from the two sides of the Wall. As Bockman (2011)'s subsequent work eloquently shows, many neoliberal concepts and the trust in the magical powers of the self-regulating markets are rooted

in the left-wing criticism of the socialist state and economy. It is no mere accident that Kornai turned neoliberal.

Second, neo-institutionalism gained currency in the 1980s as a heterodox approach in economics and as backbone of contemporary new economic sociology and anthropology (Smelser and Swedberg, 2005; Hann and Hart, 2011). Neo-institutionalism shows that the rationality of the actors is bound by the choices available in a given context of enforced informal and formal rules, positing various organizations, like the firm or networks, at the center of the analysis. Kornai (1980; 1992) offered a thick network of concepts describing the various formal and informal rules which constrains the socialist firm and supply networks, redirecting the rational economic game towards a competition over supply, as opposed to the capitalist firm interested in competition over offer. This was in Kornai and latter translations into sociology a very important point of alliance in the global academic networks using the neo-institutionalist perspective. The bounded rational actors living in the socialist societies were producing irrational outcomes, given the formal and informal rules governing their collective behavioral games. Thelen on the one hand misses the very important point that Kornai uses a version of 'bounded' rationality, and Dunn and Verdery ignore the important strategic aspect of this neo-institutionalist approach, a key conceptual device used to forge global alliances beyond the initial Marxist interest in property and relation of production.

Third, Thelen's accusations of colonialism are harsh words to an anthropologist's ear. The colonial aspect of knowledge production is a central concern for anthropology as a discipline, especially for the metropolitan anthropologist part of the history of Western imperialism. Beginning with the 1980s this concern became the major epistemic vantage point from where anthropology recreated itself under the influence of poststructuralist and postcolonial knowledge/power nexus, thematized as *Writing Culture* (Clifford and Marcus, 1986). Dunn and Verdery's response appropriates this tradition as a metropolitan guilt-relieving narrative. Kornai becomes an indigenous Hungarian scholar, and other local Hungarian, Romanian and Austrian scholars were mobilized as ingredients in Verdery's work. The purpose of this theoretical mélange was to use the local conceptual voice, and to analyse the local context through local concern, and local agendas.

> After 1989, it is no surprise that anthropologists questioned these claims of radical distinction, interrogating the very terms of the Cold War *as set by people in socialist societies themselves.* [...] Why wouldn't Western anthropologists study these things? Since the goal was to study socialism and post-socialism, it made sense to study those elements that defined the parts of social life Eastern and Central Europeans had decided were at the heart of the problem. [...] Thelen attributes the noxious influence of neo-institutionalism in (post)socialist anthropology to the Hungarian economist Janos Kornai (1980). [...] She asserts that Verdery merely 'translates' Kornai, bringing his supposedly neo-institutionalist ideas into anthropology without modification. She seems to have missed Verdery's having combined Kornai with Konrád and Szelényi's (1979) Weberian approach and Pavel Campeanu's (1987) and Eric Wolf's (1982) Marxist analyses, among other influences. [...] The whole point of

creating separate ideal types of socialism and capitalism was to enable understanding socialism's operation *in its own terms*, rather than through the Cold-War prism that saw it as defective by capitalist standards. (Dunn and Verdery, 2011: 253-254)

To reiterate a point I have already made: all of these scholars cited as Verdery's influence are truly global scholars, part of transnational scholarly networks (Bockman, 2011). To take the 'local scholars' seriously does not mean to 'combine' them into a coherent theoretical framework. It means to engage with them, their critical agendas and their concepts, to point out their problematic political and theoretical alliances, as one does with her peers. In addition, taking 'local popular' concerns, agendas, and phantasms seriously means, as well, engaging them critically. People's phantasms may be utterly wrong, they might project utopian desires upon capitalism as a way to criticize socialism (Fehérváry, 2013), or they may become anti-communist as a way to criticize capitalism itself (Simionca, 2012), or anti-communism may be used to further neo-liberalism (Poenaru, 2011). The effect is a black boxed socialism opposed to capitalism. Neither Dunn's (2004), nor Verdery's (1996; 1999) work falls into such traps as they at least partly engage with local scholars and local popular concerns. But when it came to defend their work from accusations of colonialism, the writing culture metropolitan episteme was their language of choice – a highly positivist episteme, contrary to its initial intent (Rabinow et al., 2008), assuming that the local can be captured through observations, descriptions and giving voice to the indigenous concerns and visions (Comaroff, 2010). It is exactly through such epistemic vehicles that local critical agendas that are problematic remained unquestioned, have been globalized and became part of the knowledge/power alliances that once again shape the local context.

To wrap up, in this debate both positions are paradoxical. Thelen solicits to de-Orientalize socialism, yet no Oriental voice speaks as an agent in her account. Thelen attributes all agency of creating a strong theory of what-was-socialism to the Western Scholar, while ignoring and erasing the agency of the 'local' scholars in such theoretical endeavors. Kornai becomes in this account the Eastern émigré scholar intoxicated by Western theories, and gaining global preeminence through Western academia. Western scholars imported his economic theories into the anthropological field, operating once more an Orientalizing move. As a consequence, colonial charges for the Western scholar follow naturally. Thelen's narrative has the strange effect of wiping off Eastern European scholars' agencies completely and rendering them as mere victims of inconsiderate Western scholars. Kornai is transformed into a theoretical zombie bitten by the sharp Western neoinstitutionalist teeth and all the anthropology on CEE becomes infested by the colonial gaze. Also, what is only hinted at, but not fully developed is that the reverse of 'economicism' is 'culturalism'. It looks like a paradigmatic coup against Marxism in anthropology and a plea for a more 'culturalist' view (Hann and Hart, 2011) disguised as criticism against Western colonialism.[2] (Petrovici, 2012)

---

[2] Thelen exemplifies the colonial nature of economicism in anthropology through a section on the friendship factory networks, as instances of informal ties that structure the impersonal life of the socialist

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 80-102.
PETROVICI, N.: FRAMING CRITICISM AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION IN SEMI-PERIPHERIES

88

Similarly paradoxical is the fact that while Dunn and Verdery gave voice to indigenous scholars and people, no Oriental agency is left after combining these voices into a choir. An important concern formulated by Thelen was that the 'otherness' of socialism and its 'posts' obscure important similarities in the production process. Yet Dunn and Verdery did not question their own agenda of still defending the game of mirroring oppositions between socialism and capitalism. On the contrary, this concern was dealt with by Dunn and Verdery in the metropolitan dominant episteme of 'writing culture', i.e., they used indigenous voices to make a theoretical synthesis and local popular voices to understand 'socialism's operation in its own terms'. Yet, with such a strategy the critical agenda of the engaged scholar disappears and is predicated on minimizing Eastern 'scholars' global alliances. Also, problematic local popular phantasms are minimized and only the heroic part of 'indigenous' resistance is made visible. The unintended effect of such epistemic underpinning is that the Eastern critical agendas are packed together and are further allowed to populate our knowledge/power world unexamined.

In this debate, the two opposing positions form a powerful partnership of precisely the types described by Bockman and Eyal (2002), whereby all agency is invested into one part of the scientific network, namely the Western part. The agreed upon point is that (academic) history is made in the West and the East is without history. This 'transfer of history' is made through, on the one hand, attributing all intentions, theories and major conceptual distinctions to the West, and, on the other hand, by the desire to give voice to the Eastern terra incognita, the land of unknown intellectuals and popular resistances. So let us pause briefly and look at how 'indigenous' voices frame their discontent and why the Western scholars alone are asked to bear the weight of agency and history.

The Eastern Critical Scholar

My contention is not that the operational concept of socialism, based on Kornai's shortage economy framework, is fraught with insidious neoliberalism. Rather, I want to highlight the fact that Kornai was not just an indigenous scholar, but an intellectual who formulated his theories on two different scales. At one level he was polemical with the local communist state. At another level he formed alliances with Western scholars in the effort to produce a global critical discourse against the state. It is the very interplay of these scalar levels that is central: Kornai's criticism of the socialist state was formulated within alliances with the scholars who did similar work against the capitalist state. Kornai was harnessing global fluxes of ideas located in the hegemonic center against the local state, while being an active part in the production of these

---

organizations. She argues that while similar processes have been reported in the Western organizations by [sic] neoinistitutionalist researchers like Granovetter (1995), the narrow *homo economicus paradigm* prevented similar analysis *on* Eastern organizations. She states that only a more theoretical attuned framework to the cultural aspects of the economic life could do justice to the multiplex work related ties. This description misrepresents the field, work related relations were very important aspects in Marxist analysis of relations of productions in the region (Burawoy and Krotov, 1992; Petrovici, 2012).

global fluxes. What is invisible in Thelen's, Verdery's and Dunn's accounts, is the implication of his double scalar critical stakes in the concept of socialism.

Kornai, as other scholars from CEE, formulated his theoretical frame in a conceptual language that is already in dialog with a homogenized Western modernity. In addition, his criticism of socialism was positioned in a 'different' East, an exteriority to the unfolding Western history. Yet, exactly this comparative move is imagined to make the right for the East to become part of 'normal' history, the Western one, possible. For Kornai the socialist state in the CEE region distorts the rationality of the inter-firm competition through lax budgets constraints, as opposed to the West, where hard budget constraints are in place. His critical contentions were constructing the region as an island, with different operating laws, removed from the 'baseline' of history, as unfolding in the West. Yet the hope was to reinscribe the region in a future 'normal history'. Eastern Europe becomes in such an account a place with a different temporality, and this is hardly a surprise. However, Kornai's theories are not just another instance of blunt colonial hegemony, where the subaltern is overwritten. He uses comparative inversion, as do many other scholars from CEE, as part of a more general critical strategy.

Fabian (1983) in his now classical *Time and the Other* warns against the *Western* colonial temporality that construes *the non-Western Rest* through the 'denial of coevalness' by means of Othering as *backward* or *primitive.* Or, in the critical re-formulation proposed by the theorist of history Bevernage (2015), the West becomes the naturalized 'referential coevelness', the baseline of history from where all time lines are evaluated. A particular type of coevalness, one that is still responsible for Otherning, emerges as the *non-Western Rest* and is recognized by the *West* to pertain to the same timeline, sharing the same past and making possible similar projected futures, yet the present is reserved only to the 'advanced' West. In this conceptual language, the above double scalar alliance, as illustrated by Kornai, works in two steps. Critical theory hopes to become agentic by showing how history may be made. The revealed exteriority of the East is just an invitation to become part of the history, the Western history, the major timeline where contemporary history flows with full force. Second, by making visible what keeps the CEE region outside the advanced history of the West, critical agendas imagine themselves to become possible hooks to cling to other actors for changing things. Or, at least, the fantasy is that some leverage point is gained: that of having an actual effect. *Referential coevalness* becomes the analytical/political hope for a better future. Ironically, this type of strategy has become increasingly an epistemical/political prescriptive strategy.

In a review of the debates of the epistemological literature that addresses the CEE Othering, Baer (2014) posits the politics of time as a major theme organizing various critical positions. She observes that there are two generations of theories. The first, starting in the mid-1990s, argues against the 'backwardness' of CEE theories (Lengyel, 1996; Wessely, 1996; Hann, 2002; Lengyel, 2004). The second, starting with mid-2000s argues against the substation of local theories with the 'advanced' global ones (Pobłocki, 2009; Blagojević and Yair, 2010; Buchowski, 2012. Mizielinska and Kulpa, 2012; Oleksiyenko, 2014). In Fabian and Baverange's terminology, the positions against the Othering of CEE are formulated as strategies of opposing false recognitions and assimilations on the same timeline with the West. More blatantly,

these theories prescribe an epistemic strategy *against referential coevalness*. Ironically, both generations use the double scalar move and transform Kornai's type of political-epistemic strategy into a normative and regulative standpoint: first, the processes and theories from the region that model them are posited as different from Western ones; second, this makes possible a shared future with the advanced West. Let us examine both of these epistemic strategies briefly.

The first generation of theories responded against the allegation of 'underdeveloped' CEE theories and the need to 'catch up with the West' by arguing that Eastern Europe has particular ways of conceptualizing phenomena and, therefore, locally related theories (Blagojević and Yair, 2010: 344; Baer, 2014). Probably the most succinct formulation of these ideas was given by the influential debate from the mid 1990s in the Hungarian journal *Replika* (Hadas, 1996; Lengyel, 1996; Wessely, 1996). Just take Lengyel's (1996; 2004) contention that the CEE knowledge production's specificity rests on its social *problem solving orientation*, while Western knowledge production is *paradigmatically orientated*[3]. The first type of knowledge is the result of the constant recruitment of the CEE scientist into policy based research projects, while the second type of knowledge is the result of sound and fundamental research programs. I certainly understand the critical intentions of this distinction, the specific academic Hungarian conjunction in which it was formulated, and that it may have captured some real tensions relevant for the larger CEE context (Petrovici, 2010). During socialism, in Hungary most of the institutionalization of social sciences was done by the state through the Academy of Sciences and a dense network of research institutes. These institutes were mostly responding to the knowledge requirements of the planning apparatus and reformist nomenklatura. The universities played a much lesser role in the actual knowledge production (Némedi, 2010). Yet criticizing this distinction in this specific institutional conjunction is self-Orientalizing. Giving weight to a critical conceptual distinction by placing Eastern Europe in another regime of knowledge/power as opposed to the 'normal' West has to be confronted as such: a problematic phantasm. It misrepresents Western scholarship as value-free, neutral, free from power games, interested in producing real knowledge in a very static environment, which rarely recruits scientists in putting forward reform agendas in favor of capital or against capital. In addition, criticism framed like this misrepresents Eastern scholarship as captured by the state and businesses, instrumental for policy, without some serious internal censorship about what is true or false. Conversely, the Eastern scholar becomes organically linked to her political milieu. Such distinction may very well offer the chance to any interested third party to legitimize institutional reforms mimicking the 'proper' Western academic institutions and market-like organizations in order to stimulate a more competitive science in the East[4]. Also, it has

---

[3] Hadas (1996) and Wessely (1996) make similar contentions about the specificity of the CEE regime of knowledge, the importance of the political stakes and the poetical character of the intellectual endeavors.

[4] Lengyel (2004) almost makes this step himself when talking of the fate of the socialist research institutes: "While marketing firms do applied research in the narrow sense, the research institutes of ministries could function more as think tanks – although they hardly ever did so" (2004: 153). He argues that the research institutes could have been excellent "think tanks". It is not very clear in what way he uses this label, but we have to give him credit that he refers to its classical meaning, i.e., organizations that

the potential to attract those third parties with a neoliberal agenda of academic marketization in the West by putting the university on its 'right track' of problem-oriented science, like in the 'experimenting' East. However, regardless of the shortcomings of these various positions, the debate signaled the necessity to look at the peripheral knowledge production and the local disciplinary histories.

In the second generation of theories that debate the colonial character of knowledge production in CEE the argument was switched from the necessity to appropriate the local disciplinary past to putting it into global debates. Nonetheless, this strategy is far from breaking with any referential coevalness. In the concise comment of Baer (2014: 27): "the 'struggle' against intellectual 'discontinuity' Pobłocki (2009: 239) – meant as a quest for one's own ancestors as a means to provide an alternative to the theoretical mimicking of Anglophone anthropology – ends up emphasizing a favouring of the past as the prism to apprehend the present and, more importantly, «the West» as the basic category of reference". Take for example, Blagojević and Yair's (2010) very perceptive analysis of the colonial nature of the sociological knowledge production and the highly unequal chances for publication and prestige building for the CEE scholars. The whole tension of the paper is constructed, in a sophisticated reevaluation and appropriation of the 1996 *Replika* debate, on the observation that CEE is almost like a living social laboratory given the frequent changes that permit the formulation of precise observation over the causes and processes at work in various phenomena. Yet, publishing in an academia strongly dominated by American and Western European universities often means taking up the parochial metropolitan parlance. Unfortunately, as Blagojević and Yair argue, this self-taming paves the road to irrelevance. I find an epistemic position that plays the card of the (radical) disjunction in the production of the semi-peripheral spaces very unproductive compared to the core capitalist spaces. Core capitalist spaces are also living laboratories, especially under the neoliberal capitalist free markets and diminishing welfare provisions. The glorious postwar thirty years of the 20th century are long gone. Life is prone to changes and massive instabilities both in the East and West. While I sympathize with the critical intent of Blagojević and Yair, no greater critical leverage is actually obtained by arguing for 'difference'.

Criticism and subversion of Otherning, argues Bevernage (2015), is always a complex Gramscian game against hegemonizing coevalness by the capitalist centre. Negating coevalness, as a fight for a different past and present, may be a political strategy to formulate a counter-hegemonic future. The new generations of critical epistemologies on CEE are acknowledging the necessity for a different past and the struggle for intellectual continuities, yet it puts coevalness in highly problematic terms of a common future.

Today's neoliberal arrangements can be seen as multifarious ways in which capitalist accumulation tried to use and capture the hopes for the future by integrating into new organizational arrangements criticisms against bureaucracy and autocracy on the shop floor, pervasive commodification and enclosures, patriarchy, and conjugal

---

simultaneously perform both research and advocacy for particular type of social policy linked with the private sector, most of the time sustained by market forces to further a particular agenda.

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 80-102.

PETROVICI, N.: FRAMING CRITICISM AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION IN SEMI-PERIPHERIES

92

family (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005). The amphibian character of neoliberalism as policy packages of privatization, marketization and financialization, and its incredible polymorphous tactics (Peck and Theodore, 2012) can be linked exactly to the ability to capture and use popular projects about the future, moral ideas and practices, criticism and local discontent. As aptly shown by Simionca (2012) in CEE the criticism of the Taylorist type of production, controlling bureaucracies, on the one hand, and the ethics of popular entrepreneurship and striving towards independence, on the other hand, were all captured by the anti-communist discourse and blended together, paradoxically, to legitimize neoliberalism. Contemporary popular and high culture concepts of socialism and post-socialism are floating signifiers operating exactly in such a regime of meaning (Poenaru, 2011). Yet, this observation points to the need to place epistemology and knowledge production within their ontological milieu.

After reviewing the solutions of the two generations of theories on Othering knowledge practices of CEE, Baer (2014) argues that the only way to avoid reproducing the existing hierarchies of knowledge is to take the radical potential of social sciences further, in particular in anthropology, and apply it to the very production of knowledge. The anthropology of anthropology may offer the chance to understand the production of the contemporary (Rabinow *et al.*, 2008) and comprehend the disciplinary practices as part of the wider world. While I find this proposal refreshing, it still seems that it places the politics of time outside politics at large. Time, as such, is hardly a substance that exceeds various societies. Yet, this point alerts us to the fact that there are no *a priori* possibilities in constructing a politics of time for or against coevalness detached from the materiality of the power flows. On the contrary, given the complex political economy of the capital accumulation games and processes of class formation and decomposition of any epistemic strategy has to take into account the production of time and space. Our nodal epistemological concepts and the politics of method cannot avoid the scrutiny of our hopes and critical endeavors highly linked with everyday emotionalities and livelihood that give consistency to seemingly inescapable ontologies.

Where and when does history begin?

To further develop this point, I trace the particular turning points in the referential coevalness of a homogenized West. I then examine possible alternatives by focusing on a different ontological framework that takes into account the political economy of accumulation and class formation. That means a change from meta-theoretical considerations to the actual theory. This change offers the chance to better differentiate between two regimes of meaning for 'knowledge alliance'. One concerns the *institutional* aspects of shared organizations, boards, journals, and projects by scholars across political and economic formations. The other the *epistemic* aspects, in terms of concepts, theories and research objects commonly engaged by scholars across space. From the possible candidates I focus on urbanization. Take for example Buchowski's (2012) charge that beginning with the 1980s, Eastern European scholars in the field of anthropology are relegated to the status of ethnologist by their Western colleagues, while social sciences in general are predicated on their interest in the

urban. 'Metropolitan anthropologists' research interest shifted from peasants to urban populations and industrial settings while Eastern ethnologists remained loyal to villagers." (2012: 24). Modernity, socialism and postsocialist capitalism are deemed to be an urban phenomenon. A subtle devaluation of what is deemed disciplinary was done by a change in the focus of the field on the urban.

This is somehow ironic given that CEE played a central role in the *New Urban Sociology* of the 1970s and 1980s (Sassen, 2000; Milicevic, 2001). The *New Urban Sociology* is probably one of the most radical movements in social science that emerged in the 1970s bringing together scholars with different disciplinary backgrounds, interested in the urban unrest of the 1960s and the post-1970s wave of capital globalization (Hutchison *et al.*, 2015). These scholars were unique in their theoretical endeavor of reengaging with Marx, Weber, Trotsky and Lenin and had a lasting impact on the social sciences, being responsible for the 'spatial turn' of the 1990s (Sassen, 2000; Hutchison *et al.*, 2015). If we follow the institutional alliances, the very process of the institutionalization of this theoretical movement started in Varna, Bulgaria where the conference of the *International Sociological Association* (ISA) was held in 1970 and had as its first chair, for the newly proposed research committee on regional and urban planning, a Polish sociologist, Janusz Ziółkowski, one of the future activists in the *Solidarność* movement (Milicevic, 2001). The new committee was a joint project of Western and Eastern European scholars, with CEE academics forming the bulk of it, and aimed at opening critical debates about social inequalities by mainstreaming the issue of space. The Statement proposal of what was to become the *ISA Research Committee 21* on *Regional and Urban Development* was put forward at a meeting in Budapest, Hungary, in 1972, and was a bold argument about the crisis of sociology given its subordination to the planning and legitimizing needs of the managerial and ruling classes[5]. In 1974 the British sociologist Ray Pahl became the chair of the committee, marking also a change in composition; the Western Scholars became demographically dominant and held, from then on, most of the steering positions. Pahl was elected chair given his practice in state planning and his theoretical contribution on urban managerialism, a shared interest with most of the CEE scholars involved in or studying centralized regional planning (Milicevic, 2001).

The International Journal of Urban and Regional Research (IJURR) of the *ISA RC21*, became a major beacon of the *New Urban Sociology* movement, and, despite the major shift in composition of the committee, it retained the original focus on planning[6]. Exactly in the pages of this journal, in the global East-West transactions, the 'under-urbanization' thesis formulated by Iván Szelényi (Murray and Szelényi, 1984) gained major academic coverage, along other regular contributions on the socialist city (Milicevic, 2001). In CEE there were many narratives and various contending critical agendas on the urban-rural exchanges and the processes of urbanization. However,

---

[5] The document was signed by Rainer Mackensen (FRG), Enzo Mingione (Italy), Jiri Musil (Czechoslovakia), Ray Pahl (UK) and Iván Szelényi (Hungary) (see, Milicevic, 2001)

[6] In its 1977 scope and perspective statement IJURR announced that it "would focus more on the critical analysis of ideologies of planning, trying to make the system of conflicting interests in urban and regional development transparent, to demonstrate the social and class interests behind the different forms and strategies of planning and state intervention" (Milicevic, 2001: 772).

Szelényi's thesis became central since it addressed explicitly the greater CEE rural population contingencies relative to the urban ones and it was formulated in the major outlet of the *New Urban Sociology* movement in comparative terms with capitalist urban spaces (Bodnar, 2001).

Given the centrality of CEE scholars in the institutionalization of the *New Urban Sociology* and their centrality in formulating the theoretical focus of the movement, Buchowski's (2012) cry on the colonial effects of reorienting the research on the urban seems almost ridiculous. However, this unease disappears when considering that much of the implicit epistemic CEE spatial silencing is rooted in the particular interplay of what is deemed consequential, strategic, far reaching processes of the modern or its converse, non-modern. That is, a clearer image can be drawn if the *epistemic alliances* are taken into account formulated within the *institutional alliances,* which became gradually skewed towards the West. Ironically, at the epistemic level, in much of the critical agenda of Eastern critical history also starts with modernity and its major instantiation: the urban. Conversely, much of the conceptualization of what happened in the village done by Eastern scholars themselves is already formulated in a dialogue with Western scholarship in an already self-Orientalizing montage. Let us follow the issue of modernity in the socialist and postsocialist urban/rural divide and the 'under-urbanization thesis' briefly. This illustrates how epistemic enclavisization is produced when emptying the region of history and attributing it to the West.

To put it in Szelényi's (1996) reappraisal, in an edited volume on the CEE cities published in an **IJURR** book series: in the socialist East "the growth of urban industrial jobs seems to have been much faster than the growth of the permanent urban population" (1996: 292). The proletarization processes produced cities where urbanization lags behind the industrialization processes. The term is coined in contrast to the 'overurbanization' of the peripheries and the 'regular' urbanization of the core capitalist countries. The naming of the process is indicative in that this is a piece of an auto-colonial discourse that postulates the 'Western capitalist path' is the 'normal' path. That is also obvious from the fact that the commuter and the urban villager are proxies for the supposedly failed modernity of the socialist city. The commuter, as a 'double dweller' of city and village, instead was the actor who simultaneously exploited the resources of the factory and of the household farm. The 'urban villager' was the urbanite strongly dependent on informal exchanges with the village, through the extended family or informal ties in these narratives. These putatively failed modern actors stand for greater systemic failures.

The critical intent behind such a formulation was that socialist accumulation was predicated on under-investment in agriculture, the need for extensive land exploitation and large amounts of raw labor. Only by treating the peasant labor with dignity would a real modernization actually become possible. The 'under-urbanization' is a triple effect: the need to control the expansion of cities in order to prevent shrinkage of available land for agriculture; the need to redirect investment resources toward manufacturing in industry and to avoid 'unproductive' investments in infrastructure; and finally, the need to control the possible dangerous concentration of urbanites of the dictatorial state. However, the undertone of this narrative is that the modernity run by the socialist state is a partial modernity, a mock modernity of an

industrial economy constrained by the systemic need of a primary sector, which is impossible to be superseded.

As Bodnar (2001) rightly argues, the whole issue has to be put into an alternative frame to avoid the auto-colonial 'montage of the socialist city'. Her solution is to read the socialist economy as a strategy of a developmentalist state in the periphery of the capitalist world system, with fair success in renegotiating a semi-peripheral position. The effect of this change of perspective is that 'under-urbanization' permits the qualification of "the greater retentive force of agriculture and the thereby emerging combined income-earning strategies that have historically accompanied east-central European industrialization" (2001: 28).

This alternative reading proposed by Bodnar can be taken further and directed towards different institutional and epistemic alliances with voices from below. Feminist autonomists (Dalla Costa, 2012), third worldist (Quijano, 2000) and their contemporary various heirs in anthropology (Kasmir and Carbonella, 2014; Carrier and Kalb, 2015) have already argued that minimizing the cost of wages, through speculating on partial monetization of the means of subsistence and unpaid reproduction costs, sits at the core of the capitalist accumulation processes. The retentive force of agriculture is a response to the accumulation imperative to minimize the cost of reproduction of the labor force (Troc, 2012; Petrovici, 2013). The process of enclosure of land and available spatialized resources is a major instrument which uproots populations, producing a proletariat in need for wage. It was the classical path of the English industrial revolution and one of the major instruments of accumulation through dispossession and class decomposition in the peripheries (Kasmir and Carbonella, 2014). The actually-existing-socialism urbanized some of the reproduction costs to minimize their wage costs on the local level and used the unpaid reproduction labor of the rural household simultaneously. Moreover, the combined income-strategy did not lose its actuality and hardly can be relegated to a failed modernity. Today it is played out by the very iconic figures of modernity, multinationals who relocate their production facilities in suburban and rural areas in Eastern Europe (Petrovici, 2013). Partial urbanization becomes a means to a legitimate end: to profit from low wages of populations with rural households or the cheap products of this households used by multinational's employees.

History existed all along in the Eastern Europe village and the industrializing city. The production of the peasant and partial proletarianization of the urbanite was as 'modern' as the socialist bureaucracy and predates, in the region, socialism (Boatcă, 2003; Wallerstein, 2011). But more importantly, it is underpinned by parallel processes at work also in the purported 'cradle' of modernity, the Western city. Unpaid labor and partial monetization of the labor runs through all the history of capital accumulation. In Szelényi's formulation and subsequent use the critical intent is finely engrained in the proposed concepts. But, once again the weight of criticism comes from taking out CEE of the flux of the history and putting the region on another track. Unfortunately, this type of framing criticism is still here. In many current narratives, the socialist space enters history, de facto, through its insertion in the capitalist dynamism, global influences, post-Fordist inequalities, and Western imported institutional frameworks that foster and compel the region to compete

(Sýkora and Bouzarovski, 2012). The post-socialist cities are central in this reinscription of history.

Most of the current debates are organized around opposing the socialist city to the post-socialist city and often posit a radical discontinuity between the two (Sýkora and Bouzarovski, 2012). In spite of the fact that the analysis ultimately pushes scholars to argue that "CEE cities are more European than socialist" (Bertaud, 2006: 91), the general framework within which urban phenomena are addressed claims that "the most pervasive effect on the structure of socialist cities was the absence of real estate markets" (Bertaud, 2006: 91), plus the chaotic administrative control over specific land uses through planning. Therefore, in this framework, the post-socialist allocation of land use through competitive markets marks a radical transformation, a restructuring of the socialist city. This narrative obscures the lines of continuity in the region and silences other types of discontinuity beyond a facile opposition. In such stories, actually existing socialism turns into the evil 'other' of capitalism. We are led to believe that socialism means chaotic planning in the absence of reliable information, administrative immobility, cumbersome bureaucratic coordination, and spatial homogenization policies. With such a ludicrous 'brother' capitalism is easily equated with market coordination without the need for perfect information, spatial dynamism, speed of transformations, strong competition that favors the tendency towards supply/demand equilibrium, spatial fragmentation and heterogeneity. The former socialist subjects are relevant in the postsocialist 'capitalism' only as bearers of "some strong socialist values and working class identities clashing with the entrepreneurial spirit of capitalism" (Baločkaitė, 2010: 65).

To get back to Buchowski's (2012), we need to supplement the criticism of the colonial effect of the disciplinary East-West division of labor with a more precise mechanism that capture also the agency of the Eastern scholar and their alliances, since highly critical concepts and agendas are put together and formulated in self-Orientalizing concepts exactly by the Eastern scholars. Giving weight to criticism by relegating CEE to an 'alternative modernity' to make possible a bright future turns invisible that producing hope and capturing criticism is how capital accumulation works. On the contrary, an attention to the politics of time and space suggests an ontology where the global power games and the local forces are interconnected. In order to avoid Epistemic enclavisation of the region may be avoided through an ongoing search for alternative alliances from below and counter-hegemonic repositioning.

Conclusion

The analytical work done on Central and Eastern Europe by the double work of putting socialism into a mirrored opposition with capitalism and putting socialism into a mirrored opposition with postsocialism, have transformed the region into an island with seemingly different social processes. I have argued in this paper that these narratives were coproduced in partnership by Eastern and Western Scholars. The strongly asymmetrical networks that unfolded in these partnership are molded after the global capital fluxes, giving Western scholars access to an academic infrastructure

where naming is still a privilege that emanates from the core. Critical scholars have pointed out the epistemic parochialism of the self-relying metropolitan core and the asymmetry in terms of disciplinary recognition that emanates from this self-centeredness. I pointed to the fact that such descriptions are not precise enough since the complex agencies of the Eastern scholars and the specificities of their theoretical alliances are not fleshed out. Following the debate opened by Thelen (2011; 2012) and Dunn and Verdery (2011) I made visible the implicit meta-theoretical assumption pertaining to both positions and the games of placing agency in order to make productive recruitments possible and build academic networks. I further followed the modality through which Eastern scholars framed their critical theories in which they make visible the contrafactuals that would transform the region for the better. CEE is portrayed in these critical agendas as a place not yet on the right track of history, as its Western counterpart. Through strategic institutional and epistemic alliances, some of the CEE scholars rescaled themselves exactly by making visible to other scholars from outside the region in what way CEE is a strategic illustration of the metropolitan agenda. CEE became an epistemic oasis in the global partnership between the critical Eastern scholars claiming the right to history and the Western scholars incorporating their distinctions in the metropolitan critical agendas.

However, such types of framing are easily captured in the power games that come with the geographies of dispossession and accumulation. CEE is not the only region that was boxed in an ontological straightjacket with different rules of composition. Instead, it is part of a larger process of creating epistemic borders by creating different ontological textures across the globe (Bessire and Bond, 2014; Chibber, 2014). Therefore subversion and critical theory is always a complex Gramscian game of tactical shifts, of creating new alliances, of reformulating in order to make possible new strategic positions. CEE did not escape the global networks of scholarship with its colonial gaze of fixing the debates about the region in the juxtaposition of indigenous-metropolitan. More precisely, much of the underpinnings of socialism and its posts were constructed in conversation with the West through comparisons, inscribing this methodology in politics of time where the future is imagined as the convergence point between the West and the East. Capitalist 'normality' becomes a fantasy instituted exactly through the game of inversion, putting the East as an inverted West. Restoring the future may just seem to be possible by supplementing the present with what it lacks. Engaging the production of the contemporary more vigorously has the potential of reconfiguring our epistemologies about the region by looking on the political economy of space and time production. In this paper I illustrated this approach by following the particularities of a concrete example, that of the under-urbanization. Given its epistemic consequences for the region, I have flashed out a different analytical strategy along these lines, in which alliances with the dominated are formed and searched from below.

References

Baer, M. (2014) Think Globally, Act Locally? Anthropological Strategies in/of East-Central Europe. *Cargo. Journal for Cultural/Social Anthropology,* (12): 19-34.

Baločkaitė, R. (2010) Post-Soviet Transitions of the Planned Socialist Towns: Visaginas, Lithuania. *Studies of Transition States and Societies,* (2): 63-81.

Bertaud, A. (2006) The spatial structures of Central and Eastern European cities. In S. Tsenkova and Z. Nedovic-Budic (eds.) *The Urban Mosaic of Post-Socialist Eastern Europe: Space, Institutions and Policy.* Dordrecht: Springer. 91-110.

Bessire, L. and D. Bond (2014) Ontological anthropology and the deferral of critique. *American Ethnologist,* (41): 440-56.

Bevernage, B. (2015) Against Coevalness: A Belated Critique of Johannes Fabian's Project of Radical Contemporaneity and a Plea for a New Politics of Time. *manuscript,* Anthropological Theory (forthcoming).

Blagojević, M. and G. Yair (2010) The Catch 22 syndrome of social scientists in the semiperiphery: Exploratory sociological observations. *Sociologija,* (52): 337-358.

Boatcă, M. (2003) *From Neoevolutionism to World Systems Analysis: The Romanian Theory of „Forms Without Substance" in Light of Modern Debates on Social Change.* Opladen: Leske und Budrich.

Boatcă, M. and S. Costa (2012) Postcolonial Sociology: A Research Agenda. In E.G. Rodríguez and M. Boatcă (eds.), *Decolonizing European Sociology: Transdisciplinary Approaches.* Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing.

Bockman, J. (2011) *Markets in the Name of Socialism: The Left-Wing Origins of Neoliberalism.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Bockman, J. and G. Eyal (2002) Eastern Europe as a Laboratory for Economic Knowledge: The Transnational Roots of Neoliberalism1. *American Journal of Sociology,* (108): 310-352.

Bodnar, J. (2001) *Fin de Millenaire Budapest Metamorphoses of Urban Life.* Minneapolis, MN and London, UK: University of Minnesota Press.

Boltanski, L. and È. Chiapello (2005) *The New Spirit of Capitalism.* London, UK and New York, NY: Verso.

Buchowski, M. (2012) Intricate relations between Western anthropologists and Eastern ethnologists. *Focaal,* (63): 20-38.

Burawoy, M. and P. Krotov (1992) The Soviet Transition from Socialism to Capitalism: Worker Control and Economic Bargaining in the Wood Industry. *American Sociological Review,* (57): 16-38.

Campeanu, P. (1987) *The Origins of Stalinism: From Leninist Revolution to Stalinist Society.* Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 80-102.

PETROVICI, N.: FRAMING CRITICISM AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION IN SEMI-PERIPHERIES

99

Carrier, J.G. and D. Kalb (2015) *Anthropologies of Class*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Chari, S. and K. Verdery (2009) Thinking between the posts: postcolonialism, postsocialism, and ethnography after the Cold War. *Comparative Studies in Society and History,* (51): 6-34.

Chibber, V. (2014) *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital*. London, UK: Verso.

Clifford, J. and G. E. Marcus (1986) *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Comaroff, J. (2010) The End of Anthropology, Again: On the Future of an In/discipline. *American Anthropologist,* (112): 524-38.

Dalla Costa, M. (2012) Women's Autonomy & Renumeration of Care Work. *The Commoner,* (15): 198-234.

Dunn, E.C. (2004) *Privatizing Poland: Baby Food, Big Business, and the Remaking of Labor*. New York, NY: Cornell University Press.

Dunn, E.C. and K. Verdery (2011) Dead ends in the critique of (post) socialist anthropology: Reply to Thelen. *Critique of Anthropology,* (31): 251-255.

Dzenovska, D. (2013) Historical agency and the coloniality of power in postsocialist Europe. *Anthropological Theory,* (13): 394-416.

Fabian, J. (1983) *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Fehérváry, K. (2013) *Politics in Color and Concrete: Socialist Materialities and the Middle Class in Hungary*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Gille, Z. (2010) Is there a Global Postsocialist Condition? *Global Society,* (24): 9-30.

Hadas, M. (1996) Bartók, the Scientist. In Hadas, M. and M. Vörös (eds.) *Colonization or Partnership? Eastern Europe and Western Social Sciences. Replika Special Issue*. Budapest: Replika kör. 59-71.

Hann, C. and K. Hart (2011) *Economic Anthropology: History, Ethnography, Critique*. Cambridge, UK and Malden, MA: Polity Press.

Hann, C. M. (2002) Preface and Acknowledgements. In Hann, C. M. (ed.) *Postsocialism: Ideals, Ideologies, and Practices in Eurasia*. London, UK and New York, NY: Routledge.

Hutchison, R., M. Gottdiener and M.T. Ryan (2015) *The New Urban Sociology*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Jelinek, C. and A. Pinkasz (2014) 1989. Bevezető a Fordulat 21 Számához (Introduction for the 21th issue of Fordulat). *Fordulat,* (21): 5-7.

Kasmir, S. and A. Carbonella (2014) *Blood and Fire: Toward a Global Anthropology of Labor*. London, UK and New York, NY: Berghahn Books.

Kołodziejczyk, D. and C. Şandru (2012) Introduction: On colonialism, communism and east-central Europe – some reflections. *Journal of Postcolonial Writing,* (48): 113-6.

Kornai, J. (1980) *Economics of Shortage.* Amsterdam: North Holland Pub. Co.

Kornai, J. (1992) *The Socialist System: The Political Economy of Communism.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Lengyel, G. (1996) Economic Sociology in East-Central Europe: Trends and challenges. In Hadas, M. and M. Vörös (eds.) *Colonization or Partnership? Eastern Europe and Western Social Sciences. Replika Special Issue.* Budapest: Replika kör. 33-51.

Lengyel, G. (2004) On the origin and variety of problems in current Central and East-European sociology (a reflection on the article of Keen and Mucha). *European Societies,* (6): 149-157.

Medina, L.R. (2013) *Centers and Peripheries in Knowledge Production.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Mignolo, W.D. (2006) Introduction: Double critique. Knowledges and scholars at risk in post-Soviet societies. *South Atlantic Quarterly Summer,* (105): 479-499.

Milicevic, A.S. (2001) Radical Intellectuals: What Happened to the New Urban Sociology? *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research,* (25): 759-83.

Mizielinska, J. and R. Kulpa (2012) *De-centring Western Sexualities: Central and Eastern European Perspectives.* London, UK: Ashgate Publishing.

Murray, P. and I. Szelényi (1984) The City in the Transition to Socialism. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research,* (8): 90-107.

Némedi, D. (2010) Traditions and Ruptures in Hungarian Sociology 1900–2000. In S. Patel (ed.), *The ISA Handbook of Diverse Sociological Traditions.* London, UK: Sage. 152.

Oleksiyenko, A. (2014) On the Shoulders of Giants? Global Science, Resource Asymmetries, and Repositioning of Research Universities in China and Russia. *Comparative Education Review,* (58): 482-508.

Owczarzak, J. (2009) Introduction: Postcolonial studies and postsocialism in Eastern Europe. *Focaal,* (53): 3.

Peck, J. and N. Theodore (2012) Reanimating neoliberalism: process geographies of neoliberalisation. *Social Anthropology,* (20): 177–185.

Petrovici, N. (2010) Corrupt Knowledge and the Quest for Objectivity: A Critique of the Romanian Positivist Sociology. *Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai-Sociologia,* 55 (1): 221-238.

Petrovici, N. (2012) Workers and the City: Rethinking the Geographies of Power in Post-socialist Urbanisation. *Urban Studies,* (49): 2377-2397.

Petrovici, N. (2013) Neoliberal Proletarization along the Urban-Rural Divide in Postsocialist Romania. *Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai-Sociologia,* 58 (2): 23-54.

Pobłocki, K. (2009) Whither anthropology without nation-state? Interdisciplinarity, world anthropologies and commoditization of knowledge. *Critique of Anthropology,* (29): 225-252.

Poenaru, F. (2011) "Tismăneanu Report" as Autobiography. History Writing at the End of (Soviet) Modernity. *Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai-Sociologia,* 56 (2): 19-38.

Quijano, A. (2000) Coloniality of power and Eurocentrism in Latin America. *International Sociology,* (15): 215-232.

Rabinow, P., G.E. Marcus, J.D. Faubion and T. Rees (2008) *Designs for an Anthropology of the Contemporary.* Durham, UK: Duke University Press.

Sassen, S. (2000) New Frontiers Facing Urban Sociology at the Millennium. *The British journal of sociology,* (51): 143-159.

Schueth, S. (2011) Assembling International Competitiveness: The Republic of Georgia, USAID, and the Doing Business Project. *Economic Geography,* (87): 51-77.

Simionca, A. (2012) Neoliberal Managerialism, Anti-Communist Dogma and the Critical Employee in Contemporary Romania. *Studia Sociologie* 57 (1): 125-149.

Smelser, N.J. and R. Swedberg (2005) Introducing Economic Sociology. In N.J. Smelser and R. Swedberg (eds.) *The Handbook of Economic Sociology.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 3-25.

Stark, D. (1986) Rethinking Internal Labor Markets: New Insights from a Comparative Perspective. *American Sociological Review,* (51): 492-504.

Ştefănescu, B. and I. Galleron (2012) Postcommunism: An Other Postcolonialism?. *Word and Text, A Journal of Literary Studies and Linguistics,* 2 (1): 5-12.

Steinmetz, G. (ed.) (2005) *The Politics of Method in the Human Sciences: Positivism and its Epistemological Others.* Durham, UK: Duke University Press.

Stenning, A. and K. Hörschelmann (2008) History, Geography and Difference in the Post-socialist World: Or, Do We Still Need Post-Socialism? *Antipode,* (40): 312-335.

Sýkora, L. and S. Bouzarovski (2012) Multiple Transformations: Conceptualising the Post-communist Urban Transition. *Urban Studies,* (49): 43–60.

Szelényi, I. (1996) Cities under Socialism and After. In G. Andrusz, M. Harloe and I. Szelényi (eds.) *Cities after Socialism. Urban and Regional Change and Conflict in Post-Socialist Societies.* Oxford, UK: Blackwell. 286-317.

Thelen, T. (2011) Shortage, fuzzy property and other dead ends in the anthropological analysis of (post) socialism. *Critique of Anthropology,* (31): 43-61.

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 80-102.

PETROVICI, N.: FRAMING CRITICISM AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION IN SEMI-PERIPHERIES

102

Thelen, T. (2012) Economic concepts, common grounds and 'new'diversity in the Anthropology of post-socialism: Reply to Dunn and Verdery. *Critique of Anthropology,* (32): 87-90.

Tlostanova, M.V. and W.D. Mignolo (2012) *Learning to Unlearn: Decolonial Reflections from Eurasia and the Americas.* Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press.

Todorova, M.a.N. and Z. Gille (2010) *Post-Communist Nostalgia.* London, UK and New York, NY: Berghahn Books.

Troc, G. (2012) Patterns of Migration and Economic Development in Southern Danube Micro-region. *Studia UBB Europaea,* (57): 85-116.

Tulbure, N. (2009) Introduction to special issue: Global socialisms and postsocialisms. *Anthropology of East Europe Review,* (27): 2-18.

Verdery, K. (1996) *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Verdery, K. (1999) Fuzzy Property: Rights, Power and Identity in Transylvania's Decollectivization. In Burawoy, M. and K. Verdery (eds.) *Uncertain Transition: Ethnographies of Change in the Postsocialist World.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. 53-81.

Wallerstein, I. (2011) *The Modern World-System III: The Second Era of Great Expansion of the Capitalist World-Economy, 1730s–1840s.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Wessely, A. and Gy. Csepeli (1996) The Cognitive Chance of Central European Sociology. In Hadas, M. and M. Vörös (eds.) *Colonization or Partnership? Eastern Europe and Western Social Sciences. Replika Special Issue.* Budapest: Replika kör. 11-19.

Wolf, E.R. (1982) *Europe and the People Without History.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

GYÖRGY SZERBHORVÁTH *
Who's The Star Of The Show?
On the Advantages and Disadvantages of and the
Relationships between Sociography, Sociology and
Literature

* [horvath.gyorgy@tk.mta.hu] (Center for Social Sciences, Hungarian
Academy of Sciences, Budapest)

Abstract

In this essay we try to recall that the history (but also the present) of
Hungarian sociology or sociography is often represented as a 'crisis-
history', and the question often arises of whether it can say anything
relevant about the past and present, about the thing we call 'reality' or
'life'. It is also a resurfacing charge that Hungarian literature is in a
crisis, too – that it doesn't say anything 'valid' or 'realistic' about
Hungarian society. Nevertheless, here we examine whether
Hungarian literature can inspire sociologists by showing topics which
could be perhaps considered as taboos, and whether it can or could
contribute to the formation of historical memory. Furthermore, we
give a sketchy overview of its points of contact with social sciences,
first of all with sociology and sociography, as well as with politics, and
the role that professionals in these areas assign to themselves. It is
done in a context in which humanities and arts are often charged by
political actors of being useless. Some time ago, sociology and
sociography were considered dangerous (as well as 'bourgeois')
because of their critical stance, as disciplines that needed to be
controlled. On the other hand, Hungarian writers are regularly
accused of not dealing with Hungarian 'realities', while their role in
the intellectual sphere is rapidly diminishing.

Keywords: sociology, essayism, ethimology, Hungarian sociography, critical literature

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 100-112.

SZERBHORVÁTH, GY.: WHO'S THE STAR OF THE SHOW?

101

Crisis discourses

Recently, philosopher and public intellectual Gáspár Miklós Tamás criticised contemporary Hungarian Literature: "in the 1980s more significant literary works were published in six months than have been published in the quarter of a century since the change of regime" (Tamás, 2015). But how is the word 'significant' – as applied to literary works – to be operationalized? Sales figures are irrelevant, not just because of changing reading habits, but because, before 1990, under state socialism, the state supported certain works (and journals too) in such a way that they were published in over a hundred thousand copies, while prices were subsidized. Later, the state gradually withdrew its support from culture (as the revenues dedicated to this purpose from the lottery decreased). The National Cultural Fund's autonomy has also gradually decreased. Irrespective of whether left, liberal, or conservative (though the interpretation of these terms is increasingly problematic in Hungarian politics), opinion has often been that there are too many people in the humanities, and that we need engineers and skilled workers instead of communication studies graduates. But this narrative is well known here: during socialism some – in point of fact, leftist – philosophers, such as Ágnes Heller or Mihály Vajda, were chased abroad. In 2011 another 'philosopher scandal' broke out: if philosophy needs only pen and paper, how did our renowned philosophers spend millions? At the end no misuse of funds was established. The 'scandal' had wide international resonance, as for instance Jürgen Habermas protested again a witch-hunt seemingly targeting left-liberal philosophers who had been dissidents under the previous, socialist regime.

Gáspár Miklós Tamás is not the only one to be nostalgic; the doyen of Hungarian literature, the 85-year-old Pál Réz, is of the same mind. The literary journal he edited, *Holmi*, ceased to exist in 2015, not only for financial reasons, but also because Réz and his colleagues at the editorial board saw no point in continuing, with no young generation to continue the journal founded in 1989. Réz regrets not having reached the standards of their ideal, the legendary journal *Nyugat* (1908-1941); moreover, rather pre-empting Tamás's words, he says "It is bizarre that during the communism there were more significant writers active than during the years of freedom". Réz adds: "most good Hungarian literature is left-wing, and thus it was necessary that the journal had more left-wing writers than right-wing ones, but we also had the latter" (Réz, 2015).

This sentence shows the extent to which Hungarian literature is embedded in politics. Being politically engaged is a sort of requirement on the Hungarian literary scene: a political confession which requires you to take your side.

Asked by political weekly *Magyar Narancs* after Tamás' article, elderly writers and literary historians agreed with him and Pál Réz, adding that though some important works have been created since 1990, these were written by authors who were active and wrote important works before 1990, like Péter Esterházy, Péter Nádas, György Spiró and Imre Kertész. Though Kertész's novel, *Faithless*, representing the Holocaust through the eyes of a 15-year-old boy, was first published in 1975, it remained almost unnoticed by Hungarian readers until its author won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2002, while the active role of Hungarian authorities and citizens in the deportation and looting of Jews was also a taboo. (Today it is no longer

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 100-112.
SZERBHORVÁTH, GY.: WHO'S THE STAR OF THE SHOW?

102

a taboo, but in the Holocaust Memorial Year in 2014 the Hungarian government erected a statue – amidst heated professional debate and civil protests – which sends the message that only the German occupiers, not Hungarians, were responsible for the Hungarian Holocaust.)

Géza Morcsányi, former director of the eminent publishing company *Magvető,* states that the impact of literature is gradually diminishing, for the following reasons: "the end of Enlightenment, the next crisis of multiculturalism, and here, in Eastern Europe, the end of the adult education specific to the socialist era, as well as a technological revolution which has democratized and profaned culture at the same time"; in general, the leading role of intellectuals is coming to an end (Hamvay, 2015).

However, famous Hungarian social historian Gábor Gyáni points out that while *public history* dominates public life, some important historians are propagandists and ideologists (that is, pseudo-academics) rather than historians; at the same time, "we can't forget about literature, which tells stories of history in a more enjoyable way (and with greater empathy) than historians' history does. Moreover, the historical novel is experiencing a renaissance in this country." He thinks that a good historical novel creates more excitement among readers, even among the intellectual public: "it emphasizes the constantly recurring situations of life, events strongly connected to a given historical time, and the connected experiences, and it can make the reader conscious of its timeliness through an experience of recognition" (Gyáni, 2013). Gyáni mentions György Spiró's novel *Captivity* as well as Pál Závada's oeuvre.

Dysfunctional roles and searching for roles

The role of the writer is a constant topic in Hungarian literature. In the 19th century, the era of romantic nationalism, it was self-evident that the role of the writer, of the poet, was to *lead their nation through all odds*, as one of the most influential poets of the period, Sándor Petőfi, wrote in 1847, and generate a Hungarian civic revolution. It is still an 'obligation' for the Hungarian writer to participate in the excavation of realities, irrespective of the actual political regime; this was the case after WW1, when the so-called 'populist' (leftist rural) writers went around villages and wrote sociographies (though sometimes right-wing writers would do the same), worried for the nation, exploring its decadence, writing about child poverty and single-child family models (when families decide to have only one child to keep the family property together). Committed socialist writers also tried to remain up-to-date and on-the-field, even though a school preferring aesthetic principles over political ones also emerged in Hungarian literature. Moreover, once upon a time, one of the most, if not the most, influential writer of the era, Kálmán Mikszáth (1847-1910), was not just president of the journalists' society, but a parliamentary deputy from 1887 till the end of his life. The other highly influential and popular writer of the period, Mór Jókai (1825-1904), was also a deputy.

Writers were not absent from the parliament of the socialist era either – though they also played a crucial role in initiating the 1956 revolution – and from the beginning of the 1980s they took a leading role in demolishing taboos, though not only in unmasking the dictatorship. They also took part in reviving open anti-

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 100-112.
SZERBHORVÁTH, GY.: WHO'S THE STAR OF THE SHOW?

103

Semitism: writer István Csurka, a founding figure of national radicalism and president of the Hungarian Truth and Life Party (Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja) since 1993, spread such ideas in the parliament.

Sándor Csoóri's infamous 1991 essay, entitled *Nappali Hold* (Daytime Moon), created a strong media response by reviving conspiracy theories in Hungarian public life about the Jews dominating Hungary.

Before the change of regime and during the transition, historians, philosophers and sociologists played an important role alongside writers. The first president of the free Republic of Hungary was writer Árpád Göncz, while others became officials, ambassadors, and members of parliament. There is no doubt that in the last two decades writers, along with social scientists and artists, have become pushed into the political background, and today professional politicians dominate this scene, in alliance with the oligarchs.[1] In the last legislative period only one writer, Endre Kukorelly, was in parliament, for a total of 30 months; his work (2014) - *Országházi divatok (Parliamentary Fashions)* -, a diary-like autobiography, doesn't give us the same glimpses of this milieu as Jókai's and Mikszáth's works, characterised as they are by their vitriolic tone and unveiling style. However, we can learn how crazy Hungarian politicians are about football: during big, international matches the parliament is practically empty, which is at the same time an excellent indicator of the state of democracy in this country.

Where should sociologists stand?

It is not our role to decide if Hungarian literature and social sciences – history, anthropology, or sociology – are in crisis. As we saw in the case of literature, the question is constantly on the table, but, as it is impossible to quantify it, only heavy statements can be made, which cannot be clearly verified or falsified: what we consider a masterpiece today might after some years become a boring piece of artwork, or vice versa. The question would be better approached from another perspective: that of the topics they avoid or address. We would like to cite the positive examples below to refute the argument that Hungarian writers since 1990 have been unable to write about the period following the change of regime, or that they have failed to write about deep social problems (the precedent to this is that writers in the West were expected to produce the 'grand novel' of the 1956 revolution) (Szilágyi, 2009).

In his 1997 lecture W. G. Sebald analysed the themes of German writers after WW2, and asked why they forgot to write about the bombings of German cities by the Allies (Sebald, 2014). Six hundred thousand civilians died during the bombings, and millions lost their homes. There are a few short stories and novels which dealt with the issue, but Sebald considers most of it low quality, Kitsch, a repertoire of common places with a Nazi rhetoric, a repetition of stereotypes. Thus, collective amnesia went hand in hand with the writers' silence (though he could add that of the

---

[1] Some writers call this new regime a cleptocracy (Schein, 2014).

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 100-112.
SZERBHORVÁTH, GY.: WHO'S THE STAR OF THE SHOW?

104

social sciences, too), and he asks what could be behind this. Were people ashamed, or did they want to forget?

Perhaps the same question could be asked in the case of Hungarian literature or social sciences as well. We have to reemphasize the generational difference: those who stepped into adulthood around and after 1990, having had such a different life experience, have other priorities.

But let us make a small detour towards sociology and sociography. Bulcsu Bognár (2006) recalled Niklas Luhmann's almost apocalyptic vision, in his *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft*, published in 1998, in the introduction of which Luhmann says "no important development has happened in Sociology in the area of social sciences in the last hundred years since the time of the classic founding fathers", and thus follows a past-oriented approach that evokes the classics. Luhmann continuously complains that sociology mostly produces empty talk and data, which in fortunate cases turns into literary forms rather than producing some general theory. He suggests taking impulses from other disciplines, a strategy he calls 'nomadic behaviour'. This means that sociologists have to migrate to places where something useful, some new and deep sources, can be found. Let them travel. (Nevertheless, Luhmann envisioned an abstract migration, himself being a classic ivory tower academic who has never been away from his study for more than three days.)

What is Hungarian sociology capable of, what route should it take, what are its national or regional characteristics (if any), and what should it concern itself with? These questions are often asked. In June 1991, not long after the change of regime, during a conference of the Hungarian Sociological Society, György Csepeli and Anna Wessely spoke about the cognitive potential of Central European sociology (Csepeli and Wessely, 1992): how could Hungarian sociology be presented in an era of newly increased interest in East European societies, where is its place, and how should sociology be done in this new context? They argued that we need to stay in touch with the specific Hungarian/Central European social experience, which allows us to do sociology as no one else does. This means that intellectuals and academics also have a duty to work out social reform programmes. Finally they expressed their confidence that we won't be robbed of this cognitive opportunity, and will turn into interpreters between the two parts of Europe.

In the following debate some questioned whether such a program could be successful, and whether sociology can play a significant role in shaping public life. Hungary's place between East and West is relevant again, especially in everyday politics. Though sociology has become professionalized in the last 25 years, as new departments and research institutes have opened in cities around the country.[2]

Public opinion polls took place even during the socialist period, and after the change of regime many such companies appeared on the market. Meanwhile sociologists debated the nature of measuring in social sciences in the journal *Replika Vol. 1991, No. 2-3,* and interviews were published about the professionalization of sociology in the same issue.

---

[2] In Budapest, the capital city, this already started in the 1960s, when sociology was no more declared as a bourgeois pseudo-science, even if the communist party elite still looked upon sociologists with suspicion, fearing them to be dissidents and critics of the regime (Gábor, 1992).

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 100-112.
SZERBHORVÁTH, GY.: WHO'S THE STAR OF THE SHOW?

105

Before 1990 some thought that sociology came into fashion because it broke away from 'the terror of ideology'. In the 50s this science was silenced – says Tibor Kuczi (1991) – but poetry became more popular; the latter "juxtaposed subjective perception and validity of experience" with the all-knowing nature of the regime (1991: 70-71). In 1994, Júlia Szalai and Pál Tamás wrote about the crisis in (Hungarian) sociology (Tamás, 1994). After 1990, sociography resurfaced, and here we need to jump back a bit to the beginning of the 20th century, to the first attempts in Hungarian social sciences, and the commitment of social scientists to social reforms and political engagement. World War I disrupted this process, and Hungarian sociology turned into a black sheep between the two world wars because many of the so-called radical sociologists had been active during the period of the Hungarian Soviet Republic in 1919. However, within the Hungarian Ethnographic Society a social science section was formed in 1920, which founded the journal *Társadalomtudomány*. At an institutional level, sociology has remained part of the university structure, and sub-disciplines of sociology have continued to develop (Saád, 1996).

We need to recall this because this was a time when the writer came on stage in the role of sociographer. Dénes Némedi overviews this issue in his key monograph (1985), emphasizing that at the turn of the century there was a theoretical need, that they wanted to learn about reality, but this need to reform society was intertwined with political ambitions. Thus the role of academic and politician had already merged before 1914 (1985: 9-11). At the same time, the European assessment that writers and intellectuals cannot be supporters of the ruling regime or of the bourgeoisie became widely accepted in the rejuvenated Hungarian literature of the beginning of the century (1985: 14). But from 1920 on, in Horthy's Hungary, this sort of literary 'opposition' was restrained, and some of writers tried to get closer to power (1985: 14). The movement of the so-called folk or rural writers begins at this point, also the 'urban' vs. 'folk' debate, but among the folk writers the leftists were dominant, focusing on the 'people', the peasants and the village instead of the 'rotten city', because only they can rejuvenate Hungary. "Moral and national, that is: folk" became the alternative they searched for (1985: 16). This form of social research became a movement in the 1930s: the sociographer is dedicated, and it is not professionalism that matters, but rather serving the national goals of the people, beyond daily politics (1985: 17).

Hungarian social science thinking was characterized by essayism, which became widespread exactly because of developmental dysfunctions in institutional academe and due to its backwardness. The major work of the period is Gyula Illyés' *A puszták népe* (1936), which is today taught as a transition between Sociology and Literature. It is a description of society, which merges elements of scientific and artistic description. But primarily it can be considered a confession-like reminiscence which familiarizes us with the misery and deep poverty of bonded workers living on the Hungarian *puszta*. Some of the 'folk writers' thought in a resigned way that it would not be the village folk, the peasantry, who would 'save' the country. Gábor Gyáni says, quoting Némedi and Bognár, that this kind of special sociography cannot be considered an academic venture because it describes society on a confessional basis (based on the author's own experience). Thus, even though some, like Erdei, had academic

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 100-112.
SZERBHORVÁTH, GY.: WHO'S THE STAR OF THE SHOW?

106

ambitions and methods, sociographers between the two world wars produced literature rather than academic work (Gyáni, 2013a).

Some of the rural writers, and people like Ferenc Erdei who also dealt with theoretical issues, became part of or subservient to the power structure after the end of World War II and the Communist take-over.

Amidst the super-optimism of the new world, descriptions of the remaining or apparently newly-emerged problems were not welcome in the one-party system, and during the repression following the 1956 revolution many writers were imprisoned. The question remained of who would write about what is happening, or what was happening. Gyáni points out that "though novel and history differ from each other, from some novels one learns more about the past than from the historical sources". Gyáni mentions John Lukacs, a historian of Hungarian origin living in the US, according to whom *Édes Anna* [Dezső Kosztolányi, 1926] better describes the 1919-1920 counter-revolution period than historians do. However, Gyáni criticises this approach by stating that those who say such things have not done research in the area of social history or of the history of mentality (Gyáni, 2013b).

Thus we cannot say that literature can replace history or social sciences as such, but there is a tradition of a socially embedded and politically engaged literature, one which is confusing, problematic, and inspiring all at the same time. The question, to follow Gyáni, is if those novels have social relevance, and what their influence is on social research.

Hungarian literature and society yesterday and today

So-called Kadarism (named after its defining political character, János Kádár) stretched from 1957 to 1989. This era was characterised by what is called double-talk: one could speak about social problems, but this could not be paired with any open criticism of the regime. György Konrád, who was noted as a sociologist as well as a short-story writer and novelist, published his *A látogató* (*The Visitor*) in 1969, considered to be the new starting point for Hungarian literature. In this novel, Konrád writes about his experiences as an official of the child protection authorities in the capital. In the novel, the official has to take care of a child whose parents committed suicide. The book is a picture of an era after the defeat of the revolution, of the apocalyptic, grey world of the 60s, but the appearance of suicide is also an important element, as Hungary had stood at the top of world-wide suicide statistics since the 1960s.

Thus, important sociographies were written, in parallel with the institutionalization of sociology, like Zsolt Csalog's ones about the Roma – which counted as a criticism of the dictatorship. The worker-writer Sándor Tar chronicled the poor and hopeless living on the margins of society. He also wrote about the guest workers of the former German Democratic Republic (1976), and about workers commuting to Budapest (1978). Péter Hajnóczy, who also began as a worker, managed to provoke the regime with his sociography *Elkülönítő* (*Quarantine*) (1978), which dealt with mental patients, healthcare and alcoholism, all increasingly relevant

in that era. (Hajnóczy died in 1981, at the age of 39, himself a victim of alcoholism and drug addiction.)

Though a central image of Hungarian writers is related to self-destruction (alcoholism, cigarettes, irregular lifestyle, etc.) which is often linked to the national tragedy (what else to do in a dictatorship except drink like the Russians?...), and while the author himself is worried for the nation, the era also produced another type of author (not to mention the darlings of the regime). It was György Aczél, the defining cultural policy-maker, who introduced the policy of the three Ts: *tilt, tűr, támogat* (meaning: ban, tolerate, support). György Moldova was one of the originally tolerated, later supported writers who wrote sociographies based on commissions from the ministry. He is still active, and since the change of regime has published even more in almost all genres: with more than a hundred books and more than 15 million total copies,[3] his is a unique achievement not just in the Hungarian context. It is the paradox of the era that with the permission and support of the ministries he explored some segments of reality, delivering an apology for and criticism of the regime at the same time, writing about the miners, about the difficult situation facing the worker-women in the textile industry, about the hopeless situation of the railways, about smuggler truck-drivers, or about the police and crime. His reportage novel, *Bűn az élet* (*Life is a crime, 1988*), was commissioned by the Ministry of the Interior; he received information from the ministry, which later turned out to be false. It was published in more than half a million copies in a country of ten million, and while it paradoxically described how a police state was turning into a state based on the rule of law, with the policemen in it continuing to violate the law, his uncritical reporting of anti-Roma statements would contribute to the spreading of anti-Roma sentiments and misconceptions, especially to the spreading of the concept of 'Roma crime', referring to it as a constantly increasing and significant phenomenon, suggesting that "crime is in their blood", and that the Roma do not want to work. In vain do sociologists and anthropologists prove day by day that this concept lacks any basis in fact.

What can be done?

New themes have recently emerged in sociographical literature. Gyula Szilágyi's sexual-sociological sociographies tell of the sexual lives of people from the region beyond the Tisza river, about their everyday culture (Szilágyi, 2005), of the loneliness of people living in big cities, and their sexual lives (Szilágyi, 2007).

We would merely point to some recent works here, like Zoltán Tábor's sociography *Cigány rulett* (*Roma Roulette)* (2014) which is a reportage book, a social description in the style of a literary novel, written about eleven settlements where a series of racist murders took place in 2008-2009, killing six Roma and injuring five. We learn not about the attackers who chose their victims randomly, but about the

---

[3] On this oeuvre, see Révész, S. (2013a) Kritikai szervilizmus – Moldova György pályaképe I. (Critical Servilism – György Moldova's Biography I). Magyar Narancs, (48) November 28. and Révész, S. (2013b) A nemzeti szellem megtestesítője - Moldova György pályaképe II. (The Embodier of National Spirit – György Moldova's Biography II). Magyar Narancs, (50) december 12.

Intersections. East European Journal of Society and Politics, 1 (2): 100-112.

Szerbhorváth, Gy.: Who's The Star Of The Show?

108

coexistence of 'Hungarians' and 'Roma', about the lagging, vegetating settlements, it is about people, Roma and non-Roma unemployment, about life strategies, hopelessness; all this is important in connection to the increasingly widespread and hatred-inducing phenomenon of Hungarian national radicalism.

So the role of writer and sociographer have become merged again, and if this does not involve a false need for nation-saving, or the distortion of the past, these works can certainly contribute to the construction of a non-distorted historic memory, to identity formation and to the perception of reality. The relationship of literature to sociology can be more complex than we think, and while the former can be inspired by the latter, the results and methodology of the latter can also help the former. László Szilasi, who published his much acclaimed novel in 2014 (Szilasi, 2014a), said in an interview (Szilasi, 2014b) that he had done fieldwork for the book, which is about a homeless person, and that his aim was to turn public attention to this problem because "literature is a specific form of consciousness, it communicates things which none else does, and moreover it does so in a world in which images dominate over texts" (Gaál, 2015).

The adverse lives of the countryside have in the last decade appeared in the works of Krisztián Grecsó, who belongs to the younger generation. In his novels, István Kerékgyártó writes about the privatization crimes related to the change of regime, the 'nouveau riche', and about homelessness, ministerial corruption and the decline of certain social strata in Budapest; László Garaczi's autobiographical novels tell of the often absurd situations of Hungarian life since the 1960s. Lajos Grendel relates the life of Hungarians in Slovakia in a unique tone, while László Végel that of Hungarians in Vojvodina. György Dragomán hails from Romania, and his works describe the sinister socialism in Romania, while another author from Transylvania, Ádám Bodor, also shows us fates hopeless in a distinctly East European way, even if his world is often an abstract one.

Ferenc Barnás' *A kilencedik* (The Ninth, 2006) and Szilárd Borbély's *Nincstelenek* (*The Dispossessed, 2013*), both write about the deep poverty of the 60s and 70s, and each could equally take place in a Hungarian village today, just with even less chance for their characters to break out. Poverty was deep even at that time, but most of the people could feel that they did not just live from one day to the next, that, even if in slow steps, they could grow, and perhaps their children could go on to college.

Barnás and Borbély break away from the representation of poverty as the literature of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century (Margócsy, 2014; Bíró-Balogh, 2014) constructed it, namely that the poor man is the real, honest Hungarian, who preserves his sense of national belonging, that his poverty is organic, authentic, that in fact it matches the Hungarian character, unlike the Western bourgeois lifestyle which only weakens national identity (moreover, the bourgeoisie and capitalism and *business-making* are usually linked to the Germans and the Jews; we should not forget that until the 1850s in Budapest, the so-called 'city of sin', more people spoke German than Hungarian).

Being poor is not a strength anymore, and the village world, especially the male one, is aggressive, with alcohol all-pervading. It is a taboo topic that Jews were deported with the help of local villagers, and that their property was ransacked.

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 100-112.
SZERBHORVÁTH, GY.: WHO'S THE STAR OF THE SHOW?

109

Pál Závada began as a sociologist, writing sociographies of family and village history about his own native village (Závada, 1986); he later wrote about the Hungarian, Slovak and Jewish population of his village in Békés county. His latest novel (2014), the 620-page *Természetes fény* (*Natural Light*) is an enormous enterprise supplemented with contemporary photographs from the pre-World War II era, from WWII itself, and the years closely following WWII. This literary work is also a social ethnography, and social, economic and minority history, ethnography, sociography; borders are washed away, but it is definitely a novel. Reality gets mixed up with fictitious elements, more narrators tell the story, which is the story of the war, the Holocaust, and the story of crimes committed by Hungarian soldiers on the territory of the former Soviet Union. But we can also read about how unwillingly villagers received the Jews returning from concentration camps, or how the Slovaks in Hungary, becoming nationalists in the coma of the war, were resettled in place of the Hungarians deported from Slovakia, how they changed their identity there, and later how they remembered all these events. It is a huge historical tableau which serves as an important addition to many popular research topics, such as remembering and forgetting, historical memory and its questions, how these intertwine with identity and contemporary nationalisms, or the radicalization of certain social groups in crisis situations.

Let us say a few words about writing for the theatre, too. Some playwrights not only discuss the most acute problems, and do not simply describe the present situation, but also break important taboos. Such is the work of Csaba Székely's Bánya trilógia (Mine trilogy), describing the rough world of Transylvanian villages inhabited by Hungarians and Romanians, where alcohol prevails, and where the immorality of the priests is also portrayed on stage. András Urbán from Serbia, active in the ethnic Hungarian theatre of Szabadka (Subotica), is not only a socially engaged author, but also examines topics such as the relationship to WWII (in the play *Neoplanta*) or the question of state borders, the relationships between Hungarians living on the two sides of the Serbian-Hungarian border, as well as their relations with the Serbs (Passport-trilogy): questions of identities and mutual representations. Urbán, before directing his trilogy, made his actors conduct (quasi-)sociological studies, interviewing people of different nationalities, professions, and ages, e.g. about the Hungarian-Hungarian relationship.

Béla Pintér's theatre is characterised by his excellent humour, but also for his sensitivity to problems such as healthcare services, mental illness, alcoholism, parental roles, abortion, orphancy, collaboration and problem of informants during socialism (one still unresolved in Hungarian politics and public opinion), the relationship of media and politics, the arts, folk music and folk world, evangelism, and the new evangelical churches (Pintér, 2013).

On the advantages and disadvantages of history

Since Nietzsche (but not just him) this self-reflexive question is more present in social sciences than in natural sciences: historians, sociologists, writers etc. cannot just pass by the history of their field (Némedi, 1996).

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 100-112.
SZERBHORVÁTH, GY.: WHO'S THE STAR OF THE SHOW?

110

According to Nietzsche, as is well known, the study of history is needed, and, as Dénes Némedi put it: "the legitimacy of sociology in its classic period, in fact until the 70s, was supported by the way it saw itself competent on the subject of society, considered both as an integrative framework and as the set of issues conceived as 'problems'. Sociology is also needed, thought many at the beginning of the century, because there are many phenomena and 'problems' which cannot be grasped in medical-hygienic, economic or political terms. Primarily, it is about poverty and all the 'problems' related to it: deviance, segregation based on place of living, and so on." According to the historian of sociology, the question of advantage/disadvantage, and thus of its legitimacy, was not an issue till the 70s.

Do sociology, sociography and literature still contribute to individual and/or collective self-understanding, or are they redundant because they are not able to participate in social change?

Hungarian literature and sociography played a leading role in breaking taboos and exploring social reality. Meanwhile writers, intellectuals and creative people were constantly exposed to attacks from the regime – a familiar phenomenon in the whole region of Central-Eastern Europe and the Balkans. Until 1990 their persecution was continuous almost everywhere: in more fortunate cases they were forced to emigrate, while in other cases they were imprisoned or 'only' prevented from working and forced to survive as physical workers or unemployed. Nowadays one does not hear about such cases: anyone can write or research whatever they want (if they have the funds to do so), but their writings often do not reach their readers, or the mainstream, and public media is silent about their findings. This kind of silence and exclusion from the public media is a form of censorship, which, ultimately, signals that the regimes in power in this region find critical intellectuals dangerous.

And the real question is an eternal one: can reality be grasped, how is society – and within it the writers, sociologists, or the mass media – able to describe itself? In general, what does it mean to observe it, and can the description of what has been observed be considered a description of reality? In short: how does the "construction of reality" works? One can understand the 'war' between actors on the political scene, and also between the actors on the intellectual and artistic scene: what is at stake is who is to say what 'reality' is.

Sociology and literature have the advantage, though, that unlike mass media, which is controlled, influenced, and manipulated by politics, they are not built on schemes, are not produced on the basis of scripts, nor does they force news (or facts) into pre-set frames, but always search for something new.

Translated by Zsuzsa Árendás

References

Bíró-Balogh, Tamás (2014) *Szegényekben gazdag irodalom (Literature Rich in Poor People).* Paper presented at the conference on poverty held by the journal 2000. Budapest, December 5.

Bognár, B (2006) Nemzeti szociológiák klasszikus szociológiája (The Classical Sociology of National Sociologies). *Szociológiai Szemle*, (1): 103-115.

Csepeli, Gy. and A. WESSELY (1992) A közép-európai szociológia kognitív esélye (The Cognitive Prospects of Central European Sociology). *Replika*, (1-2): 1-7.

Gaál, B. (2015) *Szilasi László: A harmadik híd egy ismeretlen társadalomba vezet.* http://szegedma.hu/hir/szeged/2015/02/szilasi-laszlo-a-harmadik-hid-egy-ismeretlen-tarsadalomba-vezet.html

Gyáni, G. (2013) Nemzet, kollektív emlékezet és public history (Nation, Collective Memory and Public History). In Gyáni, G. (ed.) *Nép, nemzet, zsidó (People, Nation, Jew).* Bratislava: Kalligram. 173-210.

Gyáni, G. (2013a) A paraszti individualizáció Erdei Ferenc felfogásában (The Peasant Individualization in Ferenc Erdei's perception). In Gyáni, G. (ed.) *Nép, nemzet, zsidó (People, Nation, Jew).* Bratislava: Kalligram. 42-70.

Gyáni, G. (2013b) Falusi elidegenedés avagy individualizáció Németh László Gyász című regényében (Rural alienation or individualization in László Németh's novel, Gyász). In Gyáni G. (ed.) *Nép, nemzet, zsidó (People, Nation, Jew).* Bratislava: Kalligram. 28-41.

Hamvay, P. (2015) „Nincs többé elegancia" - Morcsányi Géza, a Magvető Kiadó leköszönő igazgatója ('No more elegance' – Géza Morcsányi, resigning director of Magvető Kiadó). *Magyar Narancs*, (10) March 5.

Kuczi, T. (1991) „Magánnyelv" – szociológia – közbeszéd („Personal Language" – Sociology – Common Talk). *Replika*, (2-3): 69-80.

Kukorelly, E. (2014) *Országházi divatok (Parliamentary Fashions).* Budapest: Libri.

Margócsy, I. (2014) *Nincstelenség és sorstalanság a kortárs irodalomban (Poverty and Fatelessness in Contemporary Literature).* Paper presented at the conference on poverty held by the journal 2000. Budapest, December 5.

Némedi, D. (1985) *A népi szociográfia 1930-1938 (FOLK SOCIOGRAPHY 1930-1938).* Budapest: Gondolat.

Némedi, D. (1996) Minek a történet? (What is History for?). *Replika*, (23-24): 173-181.

Pintér, B. (2013) *Drámák (Dramas).* Budapest: Saxum.

Révész, S. (2013a) Kritikai szervilizmus – Moldova György pályaképe I. (Critical Servilism – György Moldova's Biography I). *Magyar Narancs*, (48) November 28.

Révész, S. (2013b) A nemzeti szellem megtestesítője - Moldova György pályaképe II. (The Embodier of National Spirit – György Moldova's Biography II). *Magyar Narancs*, (50) december 12.

Réz, P. (2015) *Nem olyan jó a magyar irodalom (Hungarian Literature is Not That Good)*. Magyar Narancs, September 04, http://magyarnarancs.hu/konyv/rez-pal-nem-olyan-jo-a-magyar-irodalom-91619 Accessed 10-03-2015

Schein, G. (2014) *Esernyők a Kossuth téren (Umbrellas in Kossuth Square)*. Pécs: Jelenkor.

Sebald, W. G. (2014) *Légi háború és irodalom: A rombolás természetrajza. (Air War and Literature: On the Natural History of Destruction)*. Budapest: Európa.

Saád, J. (1996) Magyar szociológia-történet: minek a története? (Hungarian History of Sociology: What's History?) *Replika*, (23-24): 161-173.

Gábor, K. (1992) A magyar szociológia intézményesüléséről: Interjú Huszár Tiborral (On the Institutionalization of Hungarian Sociology: Interview with Tibor Huszár). *Replika*, (1-2): 31-47.

Szilágyi, Gy. (2005) *Tiszántúli Emanuelle (Emanuelle from the Trans-Tisza Region)*. Budapest: Osiris Kiadó.

Szilágyi, Gy. (2007) *Nagyvárosi Emanuelle (Emanuelle from the City)*. Budapest: M-érték Kiadó Kft.

Szilágyi, Zs. (2009) Rendszerváltás Abszurdisztánban (Change of Regime in Absurdistan). *Kortárs*, (6) http://www.kortarsonline.hu/regiweb/0906/szilagyi.htm Accessed 10-03-2015

Szilasi, L. (2014a) *A harmadik híd (The Third Bridge)*. Budapest: Magvető.

Szilasi, L. (2014b) Drezda bombázása: 1975. (Bombing of Dresden: 1975). *Élet és Irodalom*, (51-52): 20.

Tábor, Z. (2014) *Cigány Rulett (Roma Roulette)*. Budapest: Európa Könyvkiadó.

Tamás, G. M. (2015) *Kikérem Magamnak (I Object)*. HVG, February 25, http://hvg.hu/velemeny.nyuzsog/20150225_TGM_Kikerem_magamnak Accessed 25-02-2015

Tamás, P. (1994) A sündisznó és a súrolókefe. Szociológia és társadalmi gyakorlat az új Kelet-Európában (The hedgehog and the scrub brush. Sociology and Social Practice in the New Eastern Europe). In Kemény I. and L. Gábor (eds.) *XXX. 1963-ban alakult meg a Szociológiai Kutatócsoport*. Budapest: MTA Szociológiai Int. MTA Társ. Konfliktusok Kut. Közp. 327-350.

Závada, P. (1986) *Kulákprés. Család- és falutörténeti szociográfia. Tótkomlós 1945-1956 (Kulákprés. Family and Village Historical Sociography)*. Budapest, 1986.

Závada, P. (2014) *Természetes fény (Natural Light)*. Budapest: Magvető.

Lost Mission or Interdisciplinary Realignment?
The plight of sociology and the role of the sociologist
from the (semi-)periphery

Zsuzsa Ferge, Iván Szelényi, Miklós Hadas – three prominent and acclaimed social scientist in the field not only of the Hungarian but also of international sociology and social sciences.

Szelényi, an Emeritus Professor of sociology and political science at Yale University, and a former dean of Social Sciences at New York University Abu Dhabi; Ferge, a Professor Emeritus at Eötvös Loránd University of Sciences, Budapest; and Hadas, a professor at Corvinus University in Budapest and a visiting professor at Central European University – not only have made outstanding contributions to their discipline, but also greatly influenced many of their student's work.

Judit Durst is one of them. She has currently been working on a comparative monograph on Szelényi's and Ferge's work in the context of the birth of Hungarian critical sociology - the interview below is part of this project.

Judit Durst. The central topic of the current issue of *Intersections* is whether social scientists in Hungary, Central-Eastern Europe or other (semi-)peripheries of the world have a specific role, a specific voice. This question refers back to the question raised earlier in the journal *Replika,* edited by Miklós Hadas. This issue from 1996 asked if mainstream sociology colonizes sociologies of the (semi-)peripheries.[1]

But before we begin discussing this, I would be interested in how you see "our science': the situation of sociology within the social sciences. Iván has recently written an essay for Michael Burawoy about this topic.[2]

Iván Szelényi. Sociology as a discipline is in a multiple crisis. I think the primary crisis is that when sociology was at its peak, say in the 60s and perhaps the 70s, it had a clear political mission. At that time, the best students wanted to study sociology. In this respect, there was no difference between Hungary, the United States of America, England, or Australia.

But this was due to political reasons. There was a strong leftist political movement in the world. It seemed that some kind of left alternative was feasible. By the way, this applied both to the East and the West. In Hungary, we also thought in the 60s that some kind of reform can transform socialism into socialism with a human face. The Western student movements hoped that capitalism could also turn capitalism with a human face. And sociology played a pioneering role in this among the social sciences. The quality of our students was as good as in economics, and most likely better than in political science. And political scientists, good political scientists, in fact did sociology.

This came to an end in the 70s. The left lost its significance, and in particular students lost their interest in the left. Many say that in the 60s teachers were conservative and students were radical leftists, while today students are conservative and among the older generation of teachers who have stayed in university faculties since the 60s, a few are still leftist and radical. Thus it is a mission crisis. Sociology has lost its political function.

J.D. "The other reason for the crisis of sociology is that we are having a methodological crisis" – Iván recently said this in a discussion with Tamás Kolosi, moderated by Imre Kovách, in the Hungarian Institute of Sociology [3]. What is the nature of this crisis?

I.Sz. Perhaps this might be a crisis for the whole of social science, but economists and political scientists think that they can overcome it, while we sociologists believe that we

[1] Hadas, M. and M. Vörös (1996) (eds.) *Colonization or Partnership? Eastern Europe and Western Social Sciences.* Replika special issue. Budapest: Replika kör.

[2] Szelényi, I. (2015) *The Triple Crisis of Sociology.* http://contexts.org/blog/the-triple-crisis-of-sociology/ Accessed: 20-04-2015. Also in: Global Dialogue *5* (2)

[3] Kovách, I. (2014) Beszélgetés Kolosi Tamással és Szelényi Ivánnal a társadalmi egyenlőtlenségekről (Discussion with Tamás Kolosi and Iván Szelényi about social inequalities). *Socio.hu,* (13): 1-17. www.socio.hu/uploads/files/2014_3/kolosi_szelenyi.pdf Accessed: 18-06-2015.

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 113-133.
LOST MISSION OR INTERDISCIPLINARY REALIGNMENT? - AN INTERVIEW

115

can't. One can even argue in this respect sociology still may be in a better shape than economics or political science.

What is this methodological crisis? Simply that the problem of causality has become a central issue in social science. In other words, one can't be a serious researcher if one doesn't test causality. The problem is how on earth one can test causality in a serious way. The only method is through experiment. But to experiment one needs an assignment. It means not a random selection, not a random sample, but a random assignment. That there is a group which is exposed to a treatment, and I form another group, the so-called control group, which is not exposed to such treatment. Now, this experimental method has spread wildly in economics, and nowadays almost everyone who considers himself/herself important tries to do this.

J.D. But you also said in the discussion mentioned above that this method has very little to do with realities.

I.Sz. Well, yes. But it is terribly scientific. In the last fifteen years, this **experimental** modelling has started in economics. They try to put on a scientific appearance. But it is the same in political science– today 'old school' politologists, like Martin Lipset hardly count as political scientists. Only those become assistant professors in a department of political science who make experiments, and whose articles look like the articles in the discipline of economics. Those who make models. From plastic data. From artificial data. And the results which these professors produce from such data usually have no external validity. And the catastrophe is that they make theories out of this later on, and to top it all economists listen to these theories, and decide on the basis of them whether budgets need to be balanced or not. But their data is often gained on the basis of responses from thirty middle-class, mostly white students. That's why this data is plastic.

This experimental method is taken seriously in the academic world – though more in the United States of America than in France or the UK – and those who work with this method consider themselves to be respectable academics.

Let me add something to this. The problem of sociology is that our major method is survey research based on random samples. Our main issue is representativeness. By the way, this is also precisely the advantage of sociology, because it gives external validity to what we say. At the same time, a survey is not suitable for measuring causality. Survey researchers have tried other technologies: panel studies and life history interviews, for example, are both good ideas but do not resolve the fundamental problem: sample selection bias (in panel studies, you lose population over time, while in life history studies you have a serious problem with 'memory', as people tend to remember their own lives rather selectively).

The real solution to the causality problem is if we say that science is what makes causal statements and establishes causal relationships. But for this one needs to conduct experiments. And we can't conduct them. Perhaps we need to draw the conclusion that social sciences are not, in the strict sense of the word, sciences. And maybe after a while economists and political scientists will realize that they are on a wrong track because they are trying to make something (a 'real science') out of social science which it is just not capable of.

J.D. Well, I could have many reflections on this, but this discussion is not about me, so I'd rather ask others for their opinion. Zsuzsa and Miklós, what do you think of what Iván has raised? And I must have a final question for Iván: if I understood you well, only natural science can be considered science, because it makes scientific causality statements and produces cause-effect relationships?

I.Sz. It depends. If you say it in German, naturally Wissenschaft is a much more comprehensive term. A Wissenschaftler is someone who works with 'knowledge', who knows everything about the (researched) topic... But if one says 'science' in English, then yes, science is a body of knowledge where causal relationships can be tested, hypotheses can be falsified.

But to avoid misunderstandings between us: I didn't make a value judgement but an analysis of the current state of sociology. The question was the place of sociology among the social sciences. And I replied that while in the 60s sociology was the queen of the social sciences, today it is their maid. And the reason for this is that it has lost what earlier made it the queen: its political function.

J.D. Zsuzsa, what is your opinion about Iván's analysis of the situation?

Zsuzsa Ferge. I would definitely set apart the two questions raised by Iván, the epistemological and the methodological one, because they are of different types. Methodology should be discussed separately from the question of what is a science and what isn't. For me the latter is a much shorter question.

Iván has an enormous advantage over me because in the last couple of decades he has breathed in the international air, where, how should I say, information was flowing. But at the same time, I think his disadvantage is that the information, impressions, experiences, and expectations come from a North American domain. I certainly think about the relationship of science and Wissenschaft in a different way: that Wissenschaft is science in general, while the English word 'science' has become limited to the natural sciences in accordance with the American concept. Also, I firmly believe that science is not made by examining causalities. Have mathematicians ever spoken of causality? Of experiments? History also doesn't make for experimental modelling... So I think Iván is afraid, as Tamás Kolosi was also afraid of it in the already mentioned discussion,[4] that we will move towards cultural sociology, human sociology etc. And I don't want to say much more about this because I don't believe that it will really take us anywhere. I will allow that some think we need to do a science type of sociology – let them try. If they don't succeed, they will do something else. Iván always does different things, too.

For me, our science (discipline) begins with an interest in the relationship between man and society. Then I try to raise an interesting question out of this whole process/story, with its entire history, and try to define its terms and concepts. I think what Iván calls a "science' is when we try to work on the concepts and (re)create them

---

[4] Kovách, I. (2014) Beszélgetés Kolosi Tamással és Szelényi Ivánnal a társadalmi egyenlőtlenségekről (Discussion with Tamás Kolosi and Iván Szelényi about social inequalities). *Socio.hu*, (13): 1-17. www.socio.hu/uploads/files/2014_3/kolosi_szelenyi.pdf Accessed: 18-06-2015.

from the phenomena we deal with, instead of purely writing about the phenomenon as it is present in its natural being.

And what am I interested in? For instance, why is there an interrupted continuity in many processes? That a politically rather indifferent nation can be drawn into a crazy, let's say, Nazi ideology, or nationalistic ideology. And then the same population, (seemingly? or effectively?) stuck into these ideologies, all of a sudden forgets, or suppresses these emotions, and seems to become something totally different.

Then a few decades pass, a social rupture happens, and earlier madnesses can be revoked again. It means that there is a strong path-dependency which may return with certain interruptions. We already found such a path-dependency in our research carried out at the beginning of the 80s, at that time in the lives of successive generations.

It would be good to understand what has happened in sociological terms to society, to people's life circumstances, to the political system of manipulation; what has happened to symbolic and also to real violence, to economic violence in the last period. Who has practiced it, with what purpose, and what experiences have people gained when they went through certain routes of social mobility?

For instance, as far as I can see, most of our troubles are rooted in the unprocessed history of social mobility over the last fifty years. No one asked about and no one reflected on what it meant to change the social context – not only spatially but also in regards to social relations and customs.

So there are important unanswered questions. And we should create precise concepts to ask and answer these questions properly. Than we should see which methods would be best placed to respond to them: survey, interview, thinking, imagination, parallels, or all of these together. It becomes science as soon as I put rationality before instincts. Because we have to acknowledge that Jane Austen was right when she wrote that sense and sensibility will not work without each other.

It is another issue as to how different fields of study develop out of each other. I have created a new field of study in Hungary, called social policy – a doctoral school already exists in this discipline. Meanwhile, I am aware of that this is not a science in the strict sense of the word; it's more of an amalgam. Iván, you were a partner in setting this up, but many colleagues were against this. We have separated social policy from sociology, as there is specific knowledge here: from budgeting to chronic poverty and the handling of these issues, which do after all need to be taught. Sociology is not able to absorb all this. This is how we became fragmented.

Let me go back a bit to the question of crisis. I think that the role of the intelligentsia – especially of the small fragment of it engaged in the so-called human social sciences – depends on the times one lives in. In nice, peaceful times, it's better to have a mid-level type of Mertonian theory. But in times when social tensions are enormous, and one can see that the entire society, both the global and the Hungarian society, "is going somewhere" [down the slope], in such a context this bunch of people does indeed have a role, a responsibility to invent a "calling cry": to say something

similar to what Beck has said about the "risk society"[5], or what Bauman has said about the "liquid society"[6], what Standing has said about precarity[7], or Piketty, who works as an economist as well as a semi-sociologist, has said about the incredible role of global inequalities.[8]

Thus I do not know whether sociology is needed. And perhaps Iván is right that nowadays we sociologists don't have a lead role but a serving maid role. On the other hand, during the launch of our recent research report, 'Jelentés a civil társadalomról'[9] ('Report on Civil Society'), Spiró, Závada and Vekerdy[10] all said that no one will read this book in its original form; however, it is very important that hard social facts are collected in this report. Such facts indicate that while on the one hand the state says that it will do this and that, on the other hand, it has to a smaller or larger extent done exactly the opposite for the last twenty years. Children for instance, who are in our research focus, have less and less of a future or even a present. This report with our research findings cannot become a call for a programme on its own, but can be turned into one. Thus, sociology does have a social role, after all.

J.D. Miklós, what do you think about all this, about the way Iván has described the current state of sociology?

Miklós Hadas. I fully agree that sociology has never had (and will probably never have) such a significant position among the Western social sciences than it had in the 1960s and 1970s, when this was the science which provided the language of the legitimate discourse related to social changes. I would add that in the 1980s in Hungary (and in Poland, and partly in Czechoslovakia) sociology had a similar importance – as was sharply pointed out by Tibor Kuczi at that time. The right-wing 'ancien regimes' were served by a sociology based on a structuralist-functionalist, Parsonian harmony theory, which was later opposed by a conflict theory sympathetic to the political Left after the world war. Marx was on their flags, along with other reform Marxists, led by Gramsci, Althusser, and György Lukács. The most important representatives of that new generation were armed with a large ego and with theory-making ambitions, and made a significant direct or indirect impact on the political sphere – from Bourdieu to Touraine, Beck and Habermas through to Giddens.

I would emphasize that we are mostly talking about European and non-American sociologists in this context. Sociology fought a double war of independence: with philosophy (and later with economics) within the sphere of social sciences, and against the Right, in alliance with leftist parties and movements, in the political sphere. This process lasted for two or three decades, during which really significant changes took place in western societies.

---

[5] Beck, U. (1992) *Risk Society. Towards a New Modernity.* London, UK: Sage Publications.
[6] Bauman, Z. (2000) *Liquid Modernity.* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
[7] Standing, G. (2011) *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class.* London, UK: Bloomsbury.
[8] Piketty T. (2014) *Capital in the Twenty-First Century.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
[9] Ferge, Zs. and Á. Darvas (2014) *Civil jelentés a gyerekesélyekről, 2012-2013 (Independent Report on Children's Opportunities 2012-2013).* Budapest: Gyerekesély Közhasznú Egyesület.
[10] All are well-known Hungarian public intellectuals and authors.

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 113-133.
LOST MISSION OR INTERDISCIPLINARY REALIGNMENT? - AN INTERVIEW

119

The European Left gained dominant positions in politics, and the notion of the welfare state could in many places become part of social practice. Just to mention the most important European states: in Germany Schmitt and his party got into power in the 70s, in France Mitterand in the 80s, and in the UK Tony Blair and his Labour rose to power in the 90s. Thus many of the demands of sociology, feeling solidarity with the Left, were realised.

At the same time – and none of you referred to this development – new sciences have emerged during this period, new epistemologies, which were sympathetic to the goals of sociology in a political sense, but which, in other respects, were also rivals to it. These were the new studies emerging out of social movements, and at the beginning took their place on the margins of the academic sphere, and later on moved to more influential academic positions. Within a relatively short time they have restructured the academic world in both an organizational and an epistemological sense. Which were these new studies? For instance postcolonial studies, gender studies, cultural studies, and minority studies, which represented and legitimised previously peripheral, subaltern forms and positions of knowledge against the still dominant holistic vision of the masculine, upper-middle class, heteronormative, mostly unreflective viewpoint of the conflict theory- inspired sociology of the 1960s and 70s.

F.Zs. Do you think that these have all become sociologies in recent years?

M.H. I don't think that they are all sociology, because if we look at what these new studies feed on and learn from than we can see that there are many references other than sociology. Among them there are interpretive anthropology, the deconstructionism of Derrida, the philosophy of Heidegger, literary theory, structuralist linguistics, semiology, and so on, not to mention that one needs to consider the cross-references among the new studies too.

Zs.F. But you can find all this in the discipline of sociology.

M.H. Maybe yes, maybe not, but nevertheless there is a shift: conflict theory sociology has been losing its academic and social significance since the beginning of the 80s. Obviously it has to do with the growing importance of a modern social science: the rise of economics, which is indicated by the increasing significance of rational choice theory within sociology, alongside the institutionalization of the neo-functionalist backlash – let's just think of the increase in popularity of J. C. Alexander, Boudon or Luhmann!

J.D. I think what you say is very important. Iván talked about mainstream sociology, but these non-mainstream 'studies' have reformed sociology a lot. And I think good students are enrolled in departments for these other studies. At least in the UK where I am familiar with the situation.

M.H. What I have just tried to articulate is that social sciences are not in crisis at all; the power relations have merely been restructured. Some new viewpoints,

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 113-133.
LOST MISSION OR INTERDISCIPLINARY REALIGNMENT? - AN INTERVIEW

120

approaches, methodologies and reflected epistemologies have emerged and become resynthesized; these were partly present in sociology earlier, but with less emphasis. And these new disciplines have played an important role in challenging the illusions of the quasi-scientific measuring of causal relationships (illusions which are still present in American sociology, dominated as it is by quantitative methods), and they have presented alternative knowledge-producing techniques as legitimate, too.

Let me get personal for a moment! I don't think that we can speak in a genuine way without being personal and self-reflexive. Many of us social scientists feel that we need to reflect upon our situational embeddedness, on the position from where we speak, and on the framework of reference and system of embeddedness which can be contextualized as a legitimate knowledge horizon for our statements about scientific truth. I had to realize during my career that though I define myself as a sociologist first of all, and I have worked in the same sociology department for the last thirty years, I would feel uneasy if I had to identify only with this discipline. Because I am also a gender researcher, I deal with the theory of sociology, the sociology of science, sociology of sports and am interested in cultural phenomena in the widest sense, but I am also open to qualitative methodologies used by anthropology, and all this, as a follower of Norbert Elias, I try to do from a long-term figurational historical perspective. And I am proud that once, when a text of mine appeared in BUKSZ [Budapest Review of Books], the editors put after my name "Miklós Hadas, historian".

I would rather put it this way: we feel that sociology is in crisis if we insist on its old identity, the image we formed of sociology in the 60s and 70s. But if we accept that there is an interdisciplinary realignment taking place, and that accordingly we have to position social sciences and within them sociology in a new way, then we can consider it necessary that the importance of our discipline has decreased. I think it is exactly in this context that as a dean, Iván considers it reasonable to start not a sociology department but a department of social research and public policy in Abu Dhabi. I consider an academic and his knowledge interesting if they don't lock themselves up in the ivory tower of their discipline acquired at a young age, but is capable of creating a new subdiscipline (like science studies, for instance), in some situations with the necessary flexibility, reflecting on the changes of their era, and absorbing and implementing elements of other studies and disciplines. To me, Bruno Latour, Donna Haraway and Michael Foucault belong to this 'interesting academics' category.

J.D. In this context, where can we place Hungarian sociology? How do you see it: are we really on the semi-periphery or periphery? As we know, twenty years ago in Replika there were voices claiming that the mainstream uses Hungary for brain drain, and in terms of data, this region, Eastern Europe, is a goldmine. Meanwhile did we manage to change our position towards the mainstream? Did we succeed in achieving autonomy or partnership instead of 'colonized victimhood' as described earlier?

I.Sz. I leave it to my colleagues to decide. I would only add in general, but with a huge generalization, that the curiosity about our region has dropped significantly. In the 60s it was extremely interesting, because it was not known where this socialism was

heading to. From Zagreb to Budapest, from Warsaw to Prague, it seemed that development led to a more human form of socialism, which enormously excited our colleagues in the West, and the best people came here to study the situation. Transitology also brought some kind of interest, though the biggest players in transitology came from the American academy. But even transitology has ceased to exist by now. In the 90s perhaps there was still something, but practically it was already a dying field. What should I say, if it were not for this small issue of Putin or Orbán, the whole subject would have lost its significance. Putin is interesting because it seems that maybe things are not fully resolved, and thus they might give some money to research Putin...

M.H. And his clones.

I.Sz. So something will happen again. Putin invented an interesting new game in 2000. He has reset the agenda of transitology.

M.H. Iván mentioned how we appear as a [research] subject in an international context. But if we are talking about ourselves as academics hailing from Eastern Europe and about our position in the international scholarly world, we can report about positive developments, too. I think Hungarian sociology can be considered a normally functioning semi-peripheral western sociology, unlike the period twenty years ago, when without any doubt we were only part of the periphery. Now there are already researchers from Hungary, my former students among them, who were able to integrate into the Western academic world and become full members of it. There are also those, and I would mention József Böröcz first of all, who were able to take their unique position of knowledge, which in a global sense comes from their peripheral embeddedness, and succeed in making it the central part of their oeuvre. Böröcz found the structural homologies which exist between Hungarian semi-peripheral and the Indian, Far-East and Latin-American semi-peripheral situations.[11] Thus we possess that *differencia specifica* from where we can raise questions which could be homologous to the Indian subaltern or the viewpoint of immigrants in France. We also have excellent young researchers who already do their research from this new, interdisciplinary position, impregnated by many different studies. I think a particularly strong generation is beginning its career right now in Hungary, whose members are already the students of our generation. They are fully equipped with the 'language capital', the abilities, skills, and the theoretical and methodological knowledge necessary for an international career.

Zs.F. For me the important question is what (Hungarian) sociology wants? Does it want to tell something to Hungary, about Hungary, or to get some Hungarian viewpoint accepted in the world?

The key problem is the language. It is an enormous problem. Iván has perhaps already got to the point, and you too, Judit and Miklós, where you say what you want

---

[11] Böröcz, J. (2009) *The European Union and Global Social Change: A Critical Geopolitical and Economic Analysis.* London, UK and New York, NY: Routledge.

to say in English. I say in English what I can express in English. And still, I do speak English. But look at, say, Ági Losonczi, whom I consider one of the most original Hungarian sociologists. She is the only one who has dealt with that specific issue of what has happened to people here in the last few decades. No one even knows her name outside Hungary.

J.D. I would like to add only one thought, and I will be interested in your opinions. I consider it positive that London (UCL, Goldsmiths, King's College) is full of Eastern European anthropologists from Romania, Slovakia, Hungary, the Czech Republic, who all communicate well in English. During one of our workshops, Keith Hart, the well-known economic anthropologist, who coined the term 'informal economy', told me something interesting. He said that he is not interested in the Roma in research about usury, let's say, or other economic anthropology studies, because they are only an individual group (from a scientific point of view). Rather, he is much more interested in the theoretical relevance of studies related to the Roma: for instance, their contribution to one of the central questions of economic anthropology, the problem of precarity. He is interested in what solutions the researched group can offer to this problem. So these young East European anthropologists are already writing for an international (academic) audience. But here I think the fundamental question is Zsuzsa's one, namely who the audience for these texts is.

M.H. Recently I have followed the strategy that I write my texts in English, and if required I translate them to Hungarian. Let me tell you what we are working on right now, as it is relevant to our topic here: we are preparing a very interesting Norbert Elias special issue with British colleagues for the sociological journal 'Erdélyi Társadalom' ('Transylvanian Society') from Cluj [Romania]. Globally relevant knowledge appears in it, for instance in the study written by Judit Durst, where she analyses the social exclusion of Hungarian Roma immigrant communities in both the Canadian and the UK contexts, and their in-group relationships according to the 'the established and the outsiders' theory of Norbert Elias. We feel a mission to point out the opportunities hidden in Elias's works to our colleagues at home, because he is a relatively under-interpreted author in Hungarian sociology.

And just very briefly about my own position, which is also an answer to your question, but a sad answer. In this special issue, my paper on the gender relevance of the Eliasian civilising process theory is written from a position in which it can't be identified that the author is Hungarian, because I try to answer such universal questions about the long-term process of Western type gender order where it becomes irrelevant if the author is Hungarian, Spanish or apparently British. And my illusion is that this way I can influence different academic areas in an inspiring way.

J.D. This is a clear position. Now I ask Iván: what kind of audience are you writing for? I would be glad if you would reflect on your own oeuvre. What do you consider important in your work?

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 113-133.
LOST MISSION OR INTERDISCIPLINARY REALIGNMENT? - AN INTERVIEW

123

I.Sz. When I went to New York, I insisted that they give me the title of professor of social sciences. By the way they gave me a name too, which I very modestly requested to be that of Max Weber Professor of Social Sciences.

I am a Weberian infected by Marxism. In this sense I have always practiced interpretive sociology throughout my life, because I cannot do anything else. Well, sometimes I did some number crunching too. Mostly, I need some support to do this. But I like it when data is available, otherwise... Eric Olin Wright said that there is this bullshit Marxism from which he wants to distance himself. I also try to keep myself at a distance from, put a bit crudely, bullshit sociology, which is not working on the basis of data. Which is not data sensitive.

J.D. What is bullshit sociology?

I.Sz. Simple: if one is not ready to tell me under what circumstances he is willing to 'accept defeat', what kind of data do I have to show that he accepts he was wrong.

J.D. Miklós, what is your opinion of this? I ask it specifically in the context of Michael Burawoy's call for public sociology.[12]

M.H. In connection with the 'public sociology' debate, my impression was that the North American science-based tradition from which Burawoy speaks to announce his programme of public sociology is very far from the European model, where the ethos of science was always based on non-falsifiable, speculative statements, and in which the idea of social science and the responsibility of social scientists as public intellectuals could peacefully coexist. In this respect I consider Jürgen Habermas a typical character who produces speculative mega-narratives, but who finds it important that he should react to everything that happens in society and politics with self-reflection as a public intellectual and as a public academic. Let me also briefly refer to Pierre Bourdieu! I consider his self-reflexive project a failure. In what is practically his last work, entitled '*Science de la science et réflexivité*',[13] he writes about the requirement of self-reflection as a normative *ars poetica* – not just for himself, but for every sociologist. I find the last part of this book, where he tries to analyse his own career, highly debatable. In my opinion here the self-reflexion unfortunately turns into self-apology.

J.D. Zsuzsa, what do you think about this 'scientific' question, and that of who the audience for your work is?

Zs.F. In sociology, if we look at it from an interest point of view, there are two roads. One is when I try to implement what I am saying internationally, to get into an international circle of scholars and achieve some sort of recognition. Whether with the hope of belonging to a recognized group of my choice, or perhaps with the hope

[12] Burawoy, M. (2005) For Public Sociology. *American Sociological Review*, 70 (1): 4- 28.
[13] Bourdieu, P. (2001) *Science de la science et réflexivité (Science of Science and Reflexivity)*. Paris: Éditions Raison d'agir.

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 113-133.

LOST MISSION OR INTERDISCIPLINARY REALIGNMENT? - AN INTERVIEW

124

that they will invite me to Harvard as a visiting lecturer, or that they accept me as an international authority – it doesn't really matter here.

And there is the other route, which I represented with Ági Losonczi. Maybe it is no accident that I did not stay abroad, either here or there. I am only interested in Hungary, which tried to kill me, throw me out, and isn't too nice to me now, either.

True, I got involved in a few international research projects. There was a research project with five countries on social policy after the change of the regime in 1989. I like comparative international research. But what I am more interested in is what is happening here in Hungarian society. And if I look at it, I don't care if I mix into my reaserches and my explanations of my research findings various theories from other disciplines such as history or social psychology or any other conceptual framework which I have access to.

I'm not interested in how many pieces they will tear sociology apart into. I think this tearing apart happens when some personal interests are at stake. Gender studies and these various other studies – are these sub-branches of what we call sociology in a wider sense? Or completely separate disciplines? I don't know.

I.Sz. I believe we handled this issue at UCLA very well. Gender studies is important, Asian American studies is terribly important, and Native American studies is also very important. We called them interdisciplinary instructional programs. These were not departments in their own right, since they do not have their own discipline. A discipline is something which has its own theory and methodology. So if someone was appointed here, they would have to have a tenure- home in one of the disciplines but that person did most of his/her teaching and at least some of his/her research within this interdisciplinary instructions programme. I find this a perfect solution.

M.H. I would like to add that there are two extremely important new elements in the emergence of *other studies*. One is that the given study – gender, postcolonial, cultural – tries to research things from a certain perspective, an alternative knowledge position which was previously the viewpoint of the subaltern (women, colonised people, members of minority groups, etc), and thus the oppressed point of view. The second new element is that during the institutionalization of this new epistemological position these studies have stepped out from the nationally embedded viewpoint which – as Zsuzsa has also suggested – most traditionally educated sociologists identify with. So it is not simply that gender studies or cultural studies are interdisciplinary fields but also that these new disciplines are able to grasp the slight differences and cultural variations of globalization, which sociology, constructing its research subject from its own national context, was less able to do.

Zs.F. Sorry to interrupt you, Miklós, but if we look at the Roma poor, is that a new sociology? Because the same kind of change of viewpoint takes place there.

M.H. Not really, because when Hungarian sociology – unlike anthropology – deals with the Roma, it does it usually not from the Roma point of view but from the macro perspective of social inequalities and stratification. But there is no doubt that recently, like in your own child poverty-related project in Szécsény, the Roma point of view has

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 113-133.
LOST MISSION OR INTERDISCIPLINARY REALIGNMENT? - AN INTERVIEW

125

become more significant. Thus, the cognitive position of the subaltern becomes increasingly legitimate in disciplines grounded in modernity, and thus in sociology, too.

Zs.F. I would raise one more thing related to what Miklós said earlier, namely how it is when in-depth research constrained to one country can take us to generalized concepts and models. A textbook example is Elias' work on Mozart, where he writes only about Mozart, but it ultimately tells us about how a given social time, social space and social relations enable the specific emergence of a genius. And he manages to make a general theory out of this particular case.

Another example is Bourdieu who knows "nothing else" except France and Algeria, but the concepts which he develops out of these cases are ones that can be useful for many of us scholars. And there are other widely-known concepts developed by "classic' sociologists, like Marx's class struggle, Weber's legitimacy concept, and so on. I can also use concepts like 'field' or 'habitus' from Bourdieu.

I would just add about sociology that I do not really mind how it is called, but it has to deal with questions which are relevant from the point of view of social relations. Burawoy's public sociology made this a basic issue. I am not sure how I personally relate to it because it has so many meanings. One meaning is whether it is worth filling up all those not widely read and utterly boring American sociology journals with a variety of cluster analyses? Or whether it is worth shouting demagogue things on television as Bourdieu shouted in his last years.

J.D. Zsuzsa, what does this expression of public sociology mean to you?

Zs.F. It means that as a social researcher I feel a responsibility towards society and try to exercise it according to my means. However, as I try to write articles understandable for lay people and to get them published in different media, I have slightly distanced myself from the right to be called a social scientist. A scientist does not do such things. On the contrary, I think a researcher can do such things. Of course one cannot always be engaged in public sociology as a sociologist, because it is impossible not to go into deeper and deeper layers, into more complex approaches. Also, if you don't have new professional research findings, you have nothing to 'popularize'.

J.D. I think all three of you have become more and more engaged in public sociology. Miklós publishes his articles in the popular media, and Iván writes more and more journalistic pieces, not to mention Zsuzsa. You all took up the role of translator/interpreter and I think this is a positive development. But I know it is a matter of individual judgement.

I.Sz. Let me tell you something about Burawoy, because I know his work well, and I know him as well. He is a close friend. I will try to be brief. One should not forget that Michael is a revolutionary Marxist- Leninist. For him the role of social sciences is to increase people's awareness and to help them establish a better world. He is inspired by Gramsci. When he converts this into public sociology as the president of the

American Sociological Society, he softens it so that it becomes acceptable to non-revolutionary Marxists and it provides a programme which says, OK, maybe it is not socialism which we have to build.

I am also committed to critical theory. I also like to write in a way understandable to the public, though I do not always succeed in this. No wonder I do not get into the American Sociological Review or the American Journal of Sociology too often. But I think that since 1989 there has not been an Archimedean point from critical social science like what socialism used to be. There is no good society. Thus irony is the main tool of critical research for me. It comes from Socrates of course, and I think a bit along the lines of Nietzsche and Foucault. It means that my role is not necessarily to tell people what they should do. Michael Burawoy thinks that we, social researchers, can find out and we can help people to understand what they should do.

J.D. That this should be the role of public sociology?

I.Sz. Yes, indeed. But I think this is not my job. My role is simply to implant some action alternatives into people's heads so that they are not under the impression that this is the only thing they can do.

I think my role is to ask questions and to ask "are you certain about this?" "Couldn't you do something else?" By the way this is an ancient thought, so to speak. Weber did the same. The task of social sciences is not to tell people what to do but to indicate what they might do.

J.D. Zsuzsa, if I understand right, for you or for Miklós, Burawoy doesn't say very new things, because he is banging on open doors. This is essentially what you have been doing for the last fifty years.

Zs.F. And I try to do it independently of any doctrines. This is what you have to do, as Iván just explained.

I.Sz. Just to add one more thing. Loic Wacquant's critic of ethnography is a parallel story to Burawoy. Wacquant himself makes all the mistakes for which he is blaming other ethnographers, such as Elijah Anderson and Mitch Duneier. Both of them I consider to be giants. By the way this is a problem with Burawoy too. As we know there are two schools in anthropology. One is the Chicago School, with Howard Becker, Mitch Duneier and Elijah Anderson; the other is the Berkeley School. I find Howard Becker more convincing, because of his concept of 'Immersion'. It means that the role of ethnographers is to go into the field, to become immersed in the field, and to understand what people are doing there. And because he is a participant observer coming from outside, or observant participant as Elijah Anderson so wittily puts it, he can say something about those things which they cannot see. By the way, this kind of research also has a mobilizing effect.

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 113-133.

LOST MISSION OR INTERDISCIPLINARY REALIGNMENT? - AN INTERVIEW

127

J.D. Let us now turn back to Burawoy and his public sociology. Miklós, would you shortly summarize your criticism of this manifesto? Because you wrote a rather serious criticism of Burawoy.

M.H. I wrote a criticism in three parts, with the title 'Much Ado About Nothing'. The Hungarian text appeared in *Replika*, and the English one in *American Sociologist*.[14] My main claim is exactly what Zsuzsa has stressed, that Burawoy in many respects bangs on open doors.

J.D. Can you tell us what Burawoy says, as perhaps readers don't know exactly.

M.H. He wants to say what Iván just summarized so precisely! One of my main problems with this text is that it is of very low quality. In the first part of my criticism I try to prove that Burawoy's argument is conceptually confused, inconsequential, and contradictory, because it is not really clear what he is talking about when he speaks about the different types of sociological knowledge. In the second part I develop an alternative model, where I place the work of the social scientist in a three-dimensional space. These three dimensions are: prestige, influence, and position within the chain of action, within which I distinguish between different forms of activities and epistemological positions, from the public intellectual through the university teacher to the pop sociologist. In the last part I talk about the norms which form the basis of my vocation as a social scientist.

J.D. What is a pop sociologist?

M.H. A pop sociologist is someone who formulates ungrounded statements about social issues while gaining significant media attention.

J.D. Is this the same as the populist sociologist?

M.H. Yes, you could say that. By the way, pop psychologists are much more popular, but there are pop sociologists, too, who try to make bombastic and not sufficiently supported statements about poverty, inequality, gender, sexual habits with the help of the popular media.

What I tried to say in this article on the basis of this three-dimensional space is that we need to obtain sufficient prestige in our given professional space, and then we have to try to make the biggest possible impact by using our prestige as public scientists or public intellectuals. Furthermore, we need to take part in the chain of action, based on the opportunities we have, but strictly separated from our professional activities. So let's be activists if that's what is required.

---

[14] Hadas, M. (2007) "Much ado about nothing"? Remarks on Michael Burawoy's Presidential Address. *American Sociology*, 38: 309- 322. http://burawoy.berkeley.edu/PS/TAS2/Hadas.pdf Accessed: 18-06-2015.
Hadas, M. (2006) Sok hűhó semmiért. Burawoy esete a szociológiával (Much Ado about Nothing. Burroway's Case with Sociology). *Replika* (56-57): 229-244.

Now, what does it mean to be public sociologists or public intellectuals? Exactly what Zsuzsa has just mentioned. Let us attempt to speak not only to our scholar colleagues. Let's fight against the trashy pop sociologists. Let's take part in public debates, let's acquire some room for ourselves in the public space. Let take opportunities to get invited on television or radio. Let's publish articles in newspapers. And let's hold 'Introduction to sociology' type lectures for non-sociologists.

At the same time, let us not tell people what to do, because we are not in that position. But let's choose topics, research topics, and here I go back to Weber, which is of outstanding social significance from that cognitive position, where we stand. And indeed, let's become activists. But let us separate our activism from our professional activities.

J.D. A well-formulated position... And why, as a gender researcher, are you interested in the Roma issue? Why are you becoming active in this area which you have not researched previously?

M.H. I don't define myself exclusively as a gender researcher. I consider myself a social scientist. However, as a social scientist, I am embedded in various ways and have a broad range of interests. Currently, as I mentioned earlier, my main research topic goes beyond the Hungarian context and concentrates on long-term historical changes. But as a Hungarian citizen, mostly living and working in Hungary, I think it is my duty to convert the knowledge I possess into practice. If you want, it is a matter of conscience for me to use my knowledge and energies for the benefit of the public. Following this imperative, two and a half years ago I established the so-called *Katalizátor Hálózat* ('Catalyst Network'), where I work as an activist with my academic and NGO colleagues, friends and allies, and try to help in discovering and establishing synergies between state, church, market, and civil initiatives, all aiming at treating chronic poverty in Hungary – especially among Roma.

J.D. Thank you, you have summarized this very well. Iván, it's your turn! What do you consider your role as a sociologist to be? Is the role of the public intellectual important for you? What about the role of university lecturer? Perhaps that's the most important one. Once you said that if they ask what your profession is on an aeroplane, you reply that you are a teacher. And it seems you also find the role of the translator to be important, as you publish in newspapers quite a lot.

I.Sz. I think my role is to write down and also to say what I see, in the most precise way possible. Kolakowski had his typology of the intelligentsia; he wrote this at the beginning of the 60s. According to him one of these roles is the role of the court clown who spells out things which no one else dares to say. Neither the priest nor the academic can say these things. The court clown is the only one who is allowed to tell jokes which can actually hurt. I see myself in this role of the court jester, with the right amount of self-irony.

J.D. Can the role of jester accommodate the role of the activist?

I.Sz. No.

J.D. You have never taken up the role of the activist. Why not?

I.Sz. I just tell jokes, and the audience either laughs at it or it doesn't. I am an Orthodox Weberian in this sense. I believe that scholarship and politics are two different vocations. As a private person I can become a politician, but the question is whether I will misuse the power which comes from my academic position or not.

M.H. But Weber took part in politics; he was active.

I.Sz. Yes, indeed. It was quite a big problem that he got involved in politics. He made a lot of bad moves in politics. And he also had that foolishness about the charismatic leader. If he had kept it on an analytic level, it would have been better...

J.D. Zsuzsa, do you see the role of the academic and civil 'activist' as compatible?

Zs.F. Every question is an intervention – what Iván calls subversion. I enter someone's life and, by stepping in, I do something there, and it leaves all kinds of trace. Alternatives open up, there is a flash. Some time ago we thought that it was absolutely forbidden to act on the basis of invoked solidarity. From all of our 'investigative' interviews we came back frustrated at the beginning of the 60s. You went inside the home of a Roma family, their chronic poverty was revealed, you discussed with them how things are, and then you were tempted to leave them a hundred forints, otherwise they will die of hunger, but you couldn't. It would have been against (scientifically codified) ethics to start practicing charity as actors. There was an incredible wall between our real action and our symbolic aggression. This has visibly softened by now.

I believe I am somewhere in-between Miklós and Iván. I think, until the change of regime, my role was what Iván has just described, that of critical investigation. Since the change of regime, as the three big actors in the power structure, the market, the state, and civil society, have started to function more freely, the situation has become slightly different. The market is allowed to do anything, the state is as it is, and then it is the role of civil society to nudge both to do something different. Thus since then I am much more like a civil actor, and, likewise, my works, as far as they can be called academic, are also related to civil society, discussing what can be done to make things less bad.

I am fine with doing less science and being more active in more civil organizations. When for five to six years I led the Szécsény social experiment intended to improve chances for children, I was more a bystander with the eye of a researcher than an actor. The 'real' work – in children's homes, after-school programmes (*tanoda*), at IT points, with families – was done by knowledgeable professionals. I am not expert at fieldwork. What I know is observation, summarizing

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 113-133.
LOST MISSION OR INTERDISCIPLINARY REALIGNMENT? - AN INTERVIEW

130

empirical findings, and I considered my role to synchronize work, to interpret field experiences and to generalise them.

J.D. Now, let me ask you the last question. Who is your audience? Who do you write for? Is it important for the world of politics to listen to you? Does it matter to you whether NGOs use your research findings? So that there is some public use for all the work you invest into your academic exercises – or is it enough for you if four-five people, your colleagues, read your papers? Obviously I am talking about the two extremes.

Zs.F. Let us reverse the question. Naturally, I would be glad if (other than scientific recognition, which of course I also long for) what I try to say would reach many people. The Internet is an especially good tool for this. Obviously, the message has to be composed accordingly, to make it understandable, so that it gets through. I have a grandson who is among the 'young revolutionaries' (they have for instance established the 'Hallgatói Hálózat' [Students' Network]), and is an Internet expert. He checks what reaches whom for me. My writings in the newspaper *Népszabadság*[15] are read by, say, 14 thousand people, while the same thing posted on Facebook is read by many more.

Regarding politics. Foreign journalists came and asked my colleagues about poverty. My colleagues explained the situation. The journalists responded: OK, but two weeks back we visited your minister and your state secretary, and they said exactly the opposite. So how does this work?! My colleagues asked them why they did not invite the politicians along. The journalists replied that they tried, but the minister said that they would not sit down and talk with professionals.

I.Sz. I am going to tell you something terribly banal, but let me start first with an anecdote. I had a dear friend; he has already passed away, a son of a businessman from Brooklyn, who studied sociology at university. His father asked him what the hell this sociology was. He tried to explain with this and with that, but the old man did not understand. Then the father says, aha, now I've got it. You want to be a *do-gooder*. And he says, my son, if you want to be a do-gooder, why don't you open your shop first, earn lots of money, and then you can do good. Now, I am not a do-gooder. And here comes the terrible banality, the self-justifying, moralizing bullshit. I claim that, interestingly enough, social sciences have the opportunity morally to justify what they do, if they so wish. My concern is to give voice to those who do not have a voice. This was already written by Peter Berger in 1964. I always agreed with this. This is a nice way out, as I do not have to say that I am a good man and that's why I deal with those whom the society mistreats; instead I can say that I do so because it is more interesting.

---

[15] One of the most read Hungarian daily newspapers.

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 113-133.
LOST MISSION OR INTERDISCIPLINARY REALIGNMENT? - AN INTERVIEW

131

J.D. I see... Miklós, what is your *ars poetica*?

M.H. It's difficult to answer that, because there is no straight answer. I agree with Virginia Woolf that our personality is extremely complex, thus our personality layers are built on each other like trays in a waiter's hands. Perhaps the easiest answer would be that what I write or do is the result of an urge for self-expression, of a Narcissistic projection. It means that my need for self-reflection, which is there inside me regarding my social environment in a wider sense of the word, is searching for opportunities to break out. I tried my hand at many areas during my life: as a person dealing with music and theatre, the artistic world seemed to me the most comfortable realm – until I reached thirty. So I could be flippant and say that I have been dealing with certain things and topics to meet my own intellectual needs – but this wouldn't be precisely true.

J.D. I think this is very true indeed. And important.

M.H. Very important, but I have changed a lot in the last thirty years.

J.D. And along with that your research topics have changed, too.

M.H. This kind of public responsibility, which occasionally culminates in activism – which, by the way, I do not consider as something compulsory for all, and I fully respect the opinion of 99 per cent of my colleagues who do not want to become activists – comes from my personal habitus that I like to generate conflict, to go out and resist. This is a sort of macho disposition in me, which I do try to practice with sufficient self-reflection. Nevertheless, I consider 'The Birth of the Modern Man' (*Modern férfi születése*) as my most important book. I write it for an audience of social scientists with the hope that it will be used by sociologists, anthropologists and historians. And certain things, like my appearances as a public sociologist or public intellectual, are for the society or context to whom I am expressing myself. And this is not merely the Hungarian context. I also have works like 'Sex and Revolution' (*Szex és forradalom*), a short book of ten monologues on sexuality, or a co-publication with Gyula Zeke 'The Life of a Useless Man' (*Fölösleges ember élete*) which are meant for a broader audience. My appearances as a public sociologist or public intellectual always correspond to an actual social context. And I want to emphasize that this context is not restricted to Hungary.

J.D. Thank you Miklós. And Zsuzsa, what about your selection of topics, where do they come from? Or, I could also ask, how is your personal *habitus*, your life history, present in your work? Why are you always researching inequalities? You mentioned earlier that this is your permanent topic, and all that changes is the angle you look at it from...

Zs.F. Look, all such answers are arbitrary. I believe that there is always a personal history element behind every topic selection. I had a relatively protected childhood. Then another period came, when I was a pariah at high school and then in France,

Intersections. East European Journal of Society and Politics, 1 (2): 113-133.
Lost Mission or Interdisciplinary Realignment? - An Interview

132

too, where I did not speak French, at a secondary school in Versailles, which was a rich, middle-class lycée. I was a Hungarian in a society which does not like foreigners. And a Jew in a context where Jews were a minority.

But as a woman I have never suffered any inequality. I never faced gender injustice, I never experienced this feeling of oppression. But I did experience poverty, and the misery emerging from having a minority status. I believe the whole inequality problem grew out of this. But this is only half of the story.

The other half is my family background. I come from a leftist community, and this worked in such a way that when I reached Paris I had to start dealing with the Paris commune and its attached parts. The family was penetrated with the ideology of the French revolution, so it was relatively easy for me to turn towards this topic. Thus I think that with this beginning, its predispositions and philosophy, and my own life experiences, when everyone had already been killed, and so on, I ended up in a triple inequality. These were most likely all defining factors for my academic topics.

J.D. Thank you. Iván?

I.Sz. Well, I think questions come from theory. Which field of investigation do I choose, what questions do I ask, which phenomena do I study: these are not accidental, but guided by theory.

J.D. But where does the theory come from which interests you? Where does the choice of topic come from?

I.Sz. Well, I somehow believe that an interesting or valid theory is what I try to navigate with. I would only add that I am not particularly attracted to the habitus of the social scientist who is overly occupied with their self-importance, and who tries to reify their own theories. In other words, the scholar who tends to mould the data so as to justify the theory.

Zs.F. Forgive me for interjecting, Iván, but when you started to look at urban development with ghettoization and segregation at its centre, you did not have any theoretical choice, you were driven by social outrage.

I.Sz. Yes. I was interested in that topic. Why I was interested in it, it is difficult to say. For sure, I believed that it was a relevant thing, that it had social relevance. So it was interesting.

Zs.F. If you look at your own life, it was full of various situations which made you sensitive to this kind of thinking.

I.Sz. Yes and no. You know, all through my life I was very fortunate. I was born with a silver spoon in my mouth.

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 113-133.
LOST MISSION OR INTERDISCIPLINARY REALIGNMENT? - AN INTERVIEW

133

J.D. So you are saying that it is purely intellectual interest that leads you.

I.Sz. Yes. I used to ask, what motivates me. The fact that I am curious. And what am I curious about? I am curious about things which do not have a straightforward answer.

J.D. A great many things do not have a straightforward answer.

I.Sz. Yes. I am mostly interested in the oppressed, the exploited, because they do not know enough to understand the mechanisms of their exploitation and oppression.

J.D. Miklós, would you reflect on this last question, of what influences your choice of topics?

M.H. In my case the influence of one's life history and self-reflection is very important. I can say that during my whole life I dealt with those things which were important for me as a teenager or a youngster. Though with a certain time shift. As a teenager, I was a musician and a sports person, and later on as a sociologist I reflected on this.

This has since shifted towards a wider social responsibility and larger topics, where the experience of my own masculinity has played an important mediating role. Here I had to face the fact of what a nasty, petty and sexist man I was. If you like, in a certain sense I still apologize for this, because I can see that I committed many sins against women, as I lived and thought the way those macho men whom I now so strongly condemn.

J.D. Thank you very much for the discussion. For me, it was very exciting and instructive – and I hope our readers will feel the same way.

Translated by Zsuzsa Árendás

Sociology and Beyond[1]

[1] The interview in the field of history of profession was made under the research program no. 101046 „Voices of 20th century – Qualitative resources of Hungarian sociology" of OTKA in 2013. The research program has been running since 2012. This text is the edited version of the full interview, edited by Máté Zombory. The original record and the transcript can be found at the 20. század hangjai Archívum és Kutatóműhely
(Available at: http://www.20szazadhangja.hu/szakmatortenet).

Being a genuine East-Central European intellectual, the interests of **Elemér Hankiss (1928-2015)** have never been restricted by the institutional and disciplinary borders of scholarship. Working between the worlds of literature, political science, sociology and philosophy, and even between scholarship and politics, Hankiss has always been interested in the great questions of human existence. By the 1980s he was an institutionally acknowledged scholar in Hungary (in 1996-1998 he was director of the Institute for Sociology at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences); this was followed by impressive international recognition (he was a professor at Stanford, then at the Bruges and Florence University Institutes).

Elemér Hankiss: Oh Lord! How did I end up in the field of sociology? In my young years as a literary historian I was engaged in literary theory. We had a team back then: we carried out the structuralist revolution in Hungary against traditional socialist literary theory, literary history writing; we claimed that history and biographies are superfluous and that the internal structures and internal systems of the artworks must be studied instead. Among other things, we analysed what value systems can be found in artworks, and the range of positive, negative and other values within them. And that was the moment when I started to contemplate why I was looking for these in certain works, and why not in society, in the human mind. Why I was looking for these in a reflection, in a secondary substance. And there was also the aspect that, even back then, questions which belonged to the field of philosophy arose in my mind. Since, on the one hand, I lacked an adequate philosophical background, and, on the other, I had been attacked by the party's ideologues, I had not really had the courage to engage in philosophical or ontological arguments. In effect I slowly tended towards literary psychology, ending up in the field of social psychology – in other words, sociology. I have always been interested in exclusively those fields of sociology which concern social consciousness. I once participated in a survey when we were organizing a sociological value survey. As a matter of fact, this was my primary profession for 15 years: we conducted surveysone after the other, partly co-operating with Americans and others. This way we tried to locate the values system of Hungarian society in international comparison. This was our main occupation: we called ourselves the Value Sociology Workshop. Róbert Manchin, now chairman and managing director of Gallup Europe, and another excellent person, Árpád Szakolczai, now professor of sociology at Cork University, were also in the group. Actually we three were the ones who worked on the surveys, with a lot of help and a great group of interviewers, from which a bunch of people emerged who are now notable scholars, such as László Bruszt, currently a professor at the European University Institute in Florence.

We wrote a large book, 600 pages in length, entitled *Continuity and Disruption*, in which we concluded that Hungarian society is more individual than American society. It is that, but in a very negative and bad way. We used the concept of negative individualization. A certain kind of selfishness, in contrast to responsible bourgeois individualism. When the book was complete, I took it to Magvető Kiadó;[2] three weeks later, early one morning, I realized there was a miscalculation in it. I requested for it to be returned, but we did not have the energy to fix it. So the book exists as a manuscript, but we never wrote the new edition, and it has never been published. Neither in Hungarian nor in English. And that was around the time that I got tired and sick of this "surveyworld", because I found it extremely impersonal and inefficient as a method. There is a great need for this, we need to know what people think, how their health is, and therefore sociology cannot exist without surveys, but they involve a great amount of idle hours: until the surveys, methodology and the huge amount of encoding are prepared, we have to deal with an enormous amount of data for years and get next to nothing out of it. I don't want to hurt anyone's feelings, because it has to be done, but doing this for 10-14 years was enough for me.

---

[2] Hungarian publishing company

Then I started writing essays in social psychology or sociology, which were published first, if I recall correctly, in *Social Traps*[3], than in *Diagnosis*[4] and the last part in *Diagnoses 2*[5]. In the 1990s I was living in the US where I wrote a book, entitled *Eastern European Alternatives*[6], which summed up the ideas, utopias, plans and claims made by an intellectual reformist elite in Hungary in the 1980s. This is how I finished my sociological studies, or rather I returned to the topic in a book titled *New Diagnoses*[7], and then in *Traps and Mice*[8] in 2009.

We can say that I lived a double life, because I wasn't truly interested in Hungarian society or Eastern European problems from the 1990s onwards. Firstly because it was very popular, researched by scholars wiser than me, and secondly, I don't know why, but lost interest in it. I started to orientate towards what was called *philosophical anthropology* by the Germans and now also by the Americans. The problems of human life on an empirical basis but in a philosophical sense. Arnold Gehler and Max Scheler started it, and because of this and many other things I started to become more interested in the place humans have in the world. [Questions such as] the meaning of life, how to deal with the fact that people are only a little, insignificant point in an endless universe, and how people can create their own world. This is the problem of *building a human universe*, the idea of Peter Berger and others, the question of how can we create a human space in this endless and empty universe, a human shell, from symbols, religions, ideologies, art, science and institutions; a shell that makes us feel safe and says that there is freedom and that our lives are meaningful and have dignity. I told you that you won't hear a lot from me [about the sociological profession] because I have left the field of sociology. I am a capricious person: I always dare to switch to new fields, which can be quite self-destructive because you cannot become a professor at Harvard if you change your field of interest three or four times in your life...You have to start studying cockchafers as a child to win a Nobel Prize at the age of 70 for it. One who switches fields a lot will not win a Nobel Prize, but it is more interesting.

---

[3] Hankiss, E. (1979) *Társadalmi csapdák (Social Traps)*. Budapest: Magvető.

[4] Hankiss, E. (1982) *Diagnózisok (Diagnoses)*. Budapest: Magvető.

[5] Hankiss, E. (1986) *Diagnózisok 2 (Diagnoses 2)*. Budapest: Magvető.

[6] Hankiss is almost certainly referring to the time spent at The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington DC (1987-88). The book had been published before his study visits in America (Stanford University, Georgetown University): Hankiss, E. (1989) *Kelet-európai alternatívák (East European Alternatives)*. Budapest: Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó.; Hankiss, E. (1990) *East European Alternatives*. Oxford: Clarendon.

[7] Hankiss, E. (2002) *Új diagnózisok (New Diagnoses)*. Budapest: Osiris.

[8] Hankiss, E. (2009) *Csapdák és egerek. Magyarország 2009-ben – és tovább (Traps and Mice. Hungary in 2009 and Further)*. Budapest: Manager.

Máté Zombory: *In one of your books you mention that there lies a certain kind of constant undercurrent beneath your different topics, after all.*

E.H. Indeed. I wrote about this in my book *The Faces Of A Country.*[9] Now, as I slowly get closer to death, I have started to think about what I have done in the last hundred years and whether there is something that sums this whole thing up. And I found around three or four things. The first thing was being an outsider. I was living my happy childhood, biking across the pathways of Nagyerdő in Debrecen until I turned 16. I thought I was the king of the world in those days. Then the war broke out and our entire family was dragged into the depths, and from that moment on I considered the world, or life, as my mother called it, an alien world. I still feel this way. Not only personally, but I believe the whole of mankind lives in a very cold, alienated world in which it is very hard to live as a human being. It is really difficult to create our own human world. Becoming an outsider after the war was a big shock to me, and then the communist era came, in which I was considered completely excluded as a class enemy, and I was not able to achieve anything, as I had not been willing to participate in the party and other things. I had to work as an outsider, and I was treated as a "tolerated" person, even here [at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Institute for Sociology]. They took me in. First Iván Vitányi involved me in the work of the Institute for Popular Education, and then I got into the Institute for Literary Studies by some lucky chance which I still don't understand. That is how I got here, to the Institute for Sociology, because I was getting more and more interested in sociology. But I was only a "tolerated" person here, too, so technically I was still an outsider: a dubious man who came from the outside with a troubled past, who had been imprisoned in '56, a man whose parents were bourgeois, a man who did not belong here. Then 1989 came and I was elected a member of the Presidency of State Television for two and a half years because we thought we had to do something for the country – it did not quite work out like that. I was never a member of any party, and I would be hated by one party because they thought that I belonged to the other one, and that other party thought the same about the first one. This kind of standing in-between amused me. I see it as a very important thing, but one pays a high price. A really high price.

The second thing is the fact that I was a student at Eötvös Collegium from 1948 to 1950, until I got kicked out. It was a fantastic place. It was modelled on the French *École Normale Supérieure* and it was a place for free thinking. French, English, American, German philosophical and sociological thinking, and all the natural sciences, physics. There we were together, all in one place, about fifty of us, all young men with excellent school records. We were taught to explore the secrets of the world. That you have to be at the top and try to discover the great secrets of existence. It went like this for many years, with a great library and wonderful teachers such as Dezső Keresztury, Domonkos Kosáry, Dezső Pais and János Horváth. And all of us

---

[9] Hankiss, E. (2012) *Egy ország arcai: válogatott szociológiai írások 1977-2012 (Faces of a Country: Selected Writings from the Field of Sociology 1977-2012).* Budapest: L'Harmattan.

thought that we were going to be the next Nobel Prize winners; we were raised like that.

The third thought is the wickedness of the world. The terrors of fake socialism are hard to bear. People have always wanted to deal with science; the question of secrets has always excited them the most. However, because of the everyday horrors – plenty of people suffered, a lot of our teachers went to prison, there were too many troubles – it was impossible not to focus on these problems and write about them. This is how I became a public figure, and entered the circle of the journal *Valóság*; and into the circle of the former version of another excellent journal entitled *Kritika*. They published several things which did not fit into socialism, but it was possible to write about many things in a metaphorical language. For example, every single word of the *Diagnoses* is against the system, but it was written in a way that made its publication possible. We made a contest out of writing things which were prohibited. The censorship was rather poor, full of loopholes. Many people felt that the world was wrong and we felt like we had to improve it. There was a great opportunity to do so. It was like dancing in the chains of socialism, but it was a useful dance. Telling the public what was wrong with the system and what should be done differently: it was a terribly strong driving force.

The fourth thing is the question of the reasons why – why we are doing all of this. Because it is obvious that we need to fight for everything, and especially against human suffering. However, there are plenty of pointless things in life. Human lives, 70-80 years pass by, and when one looks back after 70 years on what he has done, and says Jesus, life has passed by doing nothing. This was the fourth driving force, and this search for the meaning of life has become even more important for me in the last 15 years.

M.Z. *You said that you were the ones who carried out the structuralist revolution. How did you first encounter structuralism?*

E.H. Well, first I worked in foreign trade, and then, in 1953, I started to work at the Széchényi Library with Dezső Keresztury. This was when I started to explore the questions of structuralism, and to explore the internal processes of a work of art. Then somehow I made it to a conference abroad: they didn't take me off the train, which is what had usually happened before, but by some accident they didn't do so this time, so I was there, somewhere in Switzerland in the mid-1960s, where I met Lajos Bíró, who was working at the Institute for Literary Studies at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. He knew the Russian formalists well. Some nights we took long walks and had great conversations. And then in six months he asked me to work for him on this basis. I was more than happy to do so, so I said yes, of course.

M.Z. *Did you have any relationships with the structuralists?*

E.H. Not personal ones. We read their works, but the Russian formalists were also very important. Scholars like Block and his colleagues, the people at the Tartu School, the Spanish and the Czechs. The Austrian formalist school was also extremely

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 134-145.

SOCIOLOGY AND BEYOND

139

important. I would say Roman Jacobson was probably the most well-known figure, and Roland Barthes was the most famous French author.

M.Z. *So it was not only about literature.*

E.H. It was not only about literature, because structuralism had a powerful branch in anthropology, led by Lévi-Strauss, and it was also powerful in the history of art or music – for example, Iván Vitányi and his colleagues worked in the field of music as structuralists. Four or five of us formed a sort of travelling circus as structuralists; we met every week and learnt from each other. This kind of travelling circus included György Szépe, who died recently, Iván Vitányi, Vilmos Voigt, Endre Bojtár, Csaba Pléh (more or less) and myself. Mihály Szegedy-Maszák was also in the group, at a distance, and we went around the country and said very dangerous things which completely shocked literary historians, men and women, everyone. We had a lot of fun.

M.Z. *Could you please share a memorable moment from the travelling circus?*

E.H. Well, I once visited Lajos Kassák's widow–Lajos Kassák was blacklisted at that time. She was living somewhere in Óbuda, and she had plenty of pictures, catalogued, so I suggested we could make an exhibition based on the pictures. She was happy to do so, and we set out the pictures made by Kassák in one of the rooms of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and meanwhile we gave a speech on structuralism. In spite of the fact that we did not ask for permission, it took place without any trouble. Even though there was quite a crowd, the official literary historians were in a different world and did not really pay attention to the pictures. So we did things like this. Obviously, the fact that we were "structuralist villains" was already a sufficient reason for rebellion. We were sentenced, and I was personally convicted by a decree of the party. They called us "value nihilists". Even though we had no idea what that meant exactly.

M.Z. *What was the system's problem with structuralism?*

E.H. They didn't like it at all, because it had neither a historical nor economic approach, so it was neither about the economy determining mental existence, nor about history determining literature, nor about literature as a document of history. It was neither about literature only representing human values nor about Hungarian literature in fact being propaganda about the socialist human. It was about there being no history, no humans, no socialism, and the work of art being an autonomous thing. And it was a huge idea, because at that time everything had to be seen as a determined historical moment. And this idea also carried a secondary meaning which we could only say very carefully, namely that humans should become as autonomous as artworks have become. But the artwork is pre-existing, because it works under different rules from humans, society or history. The artwork is the fantastic, great victory of autonomy. It was a very important matter for us back then to have such timeless autonomous things while everyone was talking about socialism. For us, it was one of the anchors of freedom. So they just couldn't take that.

M.Z. *What did you exactly mean when you said that you were attacked by the ideologues of the party?*

E.H. Well, for example there was that decree of the party about me which was printed too. We were also attacked by the leaders of the party in newspapers. There were members of the party who attacked us, the class enemies and ideologically different and dangerous people, heavily and roughly. This was going on, and we were aware of it. The triple policy [prohibit-tolerate-support] of Aczél was already in existence in the late 60s and the 70s, and you had to make a decision [as to where you belonged]. There was a prohibited "democratic opposition", János Kis and others, and there was a "tolerated" and a "supported" group. The supported ones were Gyula Illyés, László Németh *et al*, while we were the tolerated ones, always on the edge of getting killed. Maybe it was not morally necessary at that time, but I felt like I wouldn't be able to live my life without having some effect on society if I believed that there is a chance to make things better. So I had to try to do what was possible, to tell the public, in a weird metaphoric language. This was one standpoint. Meanwhile the prohibited group was more courageous: they only wrote in samizdat and had no communication with the system at all. To be honest, even today, I still see myself as a "bridge man" because I cannot tolerate that, instead of thinking and trying to work together, the country is being ruined by the fights and the foolish hatred between the two main parties. We have to try to build bridges between them wherever possible. Maybe it is a mistake, but even today, I still believe in this.

M.Z. *It is interesting that everyone who you worked with in this workshop is now living abroad.*

E.H. Yes, it is

M.Z. *But you stayed. Is it a coincidence or how did it happen?*

E.H. No, it was my stupidity. I was offered a scholarship abroad as early as 1948, but I was not allowed to leave; then I could have left in 1956 but I didn't, I don't even know why, because of family affairs. Later, when I was allowed to visit conferences abroad in the middle of the 60s, I could have stayed; I was invited to a lot of places, I was even invited to Harvard, but I didn't leave. It was a major disadvantage, because, although some serious work was being conducted in Hungary, we lived in an intellectual wasteland. There were small workshops doing excellent things, but a significant part of the philosophers practised Marxism, which I think was completely sterile. The others tried to do good and different things, for example the book of Szelényi and Konrád,[10] which was written around that time, but it was the exception. So the intellectual fizz, which if I would have left... I had the chance to go to Paris and America. One could have heard a lot of great scholars in Paris back then: Adorno was still alive,

---

[10] Konrad, G. and I. Szelényi (1979) *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power. A Sociological Study of the Role of the Intelligentsia in Socialism.* New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Horkheimer, Foucault and everyone who mattered was there, Lévi-Strauss and others. Or in America, at a good university, for example Stanford or Yale, we could have got into the trends of modern thinking. We heard of it from a huge distance. And we lived in a more or less intellectually anaemic milieu, which was a great misfortune. So, in this way, it was a bad decision not to emigrate. But it also had its advantages. The advantage was that everything was a matter of life and death here. If I had emigrated to America I would now be sitting here, talking about the same things, perhaps an overweight professor at Harvard, riding my high horse with my accent; I would be talking to you very decently and politely, but with condescension in my voice. Or, on the contrary, I would exaggerate our equality. Here in Hungary we had to take responsibility for every single sentence we wrote. It was not possible to reach extraordinary heights and write beautiful things, no. Every single sentence had its social significance. It was an enormous advantage. So, in fact, our existential thoughts deepened, but we didn't have enough time and knowledge to deepen our scholarly thoughts; we didn't have the intellectual atmosphere in which to write world-class things, which was a very big problem. There were a few exceptions, but they were extremely rare. The other thing is that we lived in constant fear, and always felt we needed to do something for society. So when one started work at home in the morning and the news came at noon that something terrible had happened again, it was a must to write something, to write a public article, and a lot of time was spent writing these articles for *Valóság* and many other great journals. These were quite important things; if only it would still be possible to write these! Later in the 70s, radio programmes were sometimes allowed, too. So, staying in Hungary had both its advantages and disadvantages. Looking back on this, I should have left in 1956 at the latest; I could have achieved more in my academic career.

M.Z. *Could you also tell me about being in prison? You mentioned it several times earlier.*

E.H. It might be related to sociology in the sense that I met Pista Kemény there [in 1956]. I have to say that prison was good both personally and professionally – it was a useful challenge to see if you are able to hang on. When they took me in, early in the morning, I was shaking with fear. I was wondering what was about to happen – the rumours were terrifying. Although we were hiding, they caught us. They didn't beat us; it was just the psychological torture that went on for three or four months. It was not only you being tortured; it was watching how your cellmates were treated. That was terrible. Sometimes their fear of death was worse than your own. Yeah, they were facing horrible sentences. The prison was good for seeing what you are able to bear. I mean, to see if you are able to act like you write, like a man should act. I can't claim that, if I had been physically tortured, I would have been able to keep it together, but I can tell you one thing: I was able to bear a wide range of psychological torture. It is useful to try it, to challenge yourself that you are able not just to speak but to stand up for your thoughts. Looked at like this, it was useful from an academic perspective as well. That's all. The rest is not worth telling.

M.Z. *Why not?*

E.H. Because these are like stories from the battlefront: we are just not interested.

M.Z. *All right. But I would like you to tell me more about István Kemény.*

E.H. I don't even know if I had known him before prison. I knew who he was, but I don't think I had met him personally. We were both smiling awkwardly and shrugging that we are here. We talked a lot, but it went on for no more than a couple of weeks, as we were then separated, and completely different kinds of people were put next to me, or I was put next to others. It was there that our intellectual connection evolved. He told me about his research on poverty, which he was already engaged in. At that time I was still a literary theorist. I heard from him for the first time how exciting it is to look into society – especially the lower layers of society and their problems. So poverty as a shocking basic problem: he explained it to me for the first time in my life, and this became an important introduction for me. We often met later during the research, and we met several times in Paris after he defected. So there was quite an intense intellectual connection between us. I think that as a sociologist he was smiling at my amateur attempts at the subject. If I had been him, I would have smiled at what I was trying to do.

M.Z. *You said earlier that you got tired of the survey world. How did you manage to get out of that world?*

E.H. Let me tell you something about the shift from literary theory to sociology. One book of mine in the field of literary theory was entitled *A népdaltól az abszurd drámáig.*[11] It was full of literary analysis. I studied how it had been possible to put so much information into the 3-verse poem called *Októberi táj* by Dezső Kosztolányi that, when someone reads it, the vision of an autumn landscape comes to life. I was doing this because the poem has a rich inner structure of rhymes, rhythm, sounds and symbols. It has a terrific structure. In another paper I was studying who the addressee of the poem was. I looked at whom poems, Hungarian and not Hungarian ones, were addressing. The connection between the poet and their addressed audience is a relation which has a social aspect. I have a paper entitled *A halál és a happy ending.*[12] It is about the catharsis of tragedies. My doctoral dissertation, *Az irodalmi mű mint komplex modell*,[13] has a long chapter about this effect. How does literature have an effect? This is where the social aspect comes into the picture. We also analysed the structure of the values of the poems in a structuralist way. We looked for example at the way in which positive and negative experiences shift from one moment to the next

---

[11] Hankiss, E. (1969) *A népdaltól az abszurd drámáig. Tanulmányok (From the Folk Song to the Absurd Drama).* Budapest: Magvető.

[12] Hankiss, E. (1977) *Érték és társadalom. Tanulmányok az értékszociológia köréből (Values and Societies Essays in the Sociology of Values)* Budapest: Magvető. 203-231.

[13] Hankiss, E. (1985) *Az irodalmi mű mint komplex modell. Tanulmány (The Literary Work as Complex Model. Essay).* Budapest: Magvető.

Intersections. East European Journal of Society and Politics, 1 (2): 134-145.
Sociology and Beyond

143

in O'Neill's plays. Happiness–unhappiness, hope–hopelessness, relationship–nothingness, meaning–meaninglessness. If you look at it, there is no paragraph that doesn't have at least one or two shifts. This is the shifting of values. Basically, human values are very important.

And then I got to know some psychologists, became familiar with their circle, and started wondering whether it was time to check – not by interpreting literary works, but directly – the pulsing of values in society, the human material. How does this structure of values come to form in the human brain? This is why the brilliant László Füstös was significant: thanks to him, we made three-dimensional maps of values using modern methods. We tinkered with sticks and balls for days or weeks to distinguish the exact distance between each value. And from this – plus I had already published similar studies before – I could deduce the kinds of dimensional shifts that exist. If you tell me that "the king sits in the carriage", then it is a simple case. But if you say that "the queen sits in a coal cart", then there we find a dimensional shift. And there are plenty of similar shifts in literature and also in people's brains, especially now, as I am reading about quantum mechanics – there are fantastically interesting things in that. The oscillation. That there are real values in each literary work I have reviewed. To what end is there oscillation between different values, primarily between ontological dimensions? Existence and non-existence, time and timelessness, moving and standing still, life and death, beautiful and ugly. Oscillation is permanent. This pulsing, this oscillation is the source of beauty. And this is what I look for in dramas, poems and novels as well. And this is why I left the field of literary theory: because the oscillation was so thrilling, so philosophical, that I would have had to change to philosophy, which I did not know anything about – and could not, because the comrades were at my throat as it was. They did not allow it; this would have been such a capital sin in the zhdanovist world that it simply couldn't be done. And I wouldn't have dared, either. Later, in my last book, I tried to create the philosophy of this, too. But I would have needed to work on it all my life to do so, because it connects to – you will laugh – physics. Well, at least I hope so; I was too lazy to sit down to discuss it with physicists, but they are the ones who use the word 'oscillation'. The idea of oscillation is essential and I have to get together with them sooner or later to work out whether these two types of oscillation – physical and conscious – have any common ground.

Therefore I started to research the sense of value in society, partly via these surveys, and partly in *Diagnosis* studies. But I will give you another example. We conducted experiments like the waste container experiment, which is quite often discussed but not that important. We had an outstanding Austrian colleague here and we started a conversation about social traps, which we were not aware of before. He talked for hours. Later I read up on this and wrote a booklet about social traps. One of these traps is about cars heading home on a Sunday evening. The highway is full and everyone is on edge. A deckchair falls off the top of a car, blocking the traffic, but everyone avoids it instead of stopping and getting it out of the way, even though it would not take much effort to do so. The lonely hero is missing. Everyone is impatient, they won't wait anymore. If one of them stopped, the others would crash into them, so why should they be the one? There is no lonely hero. We repeated it in Pest. We put a waste container out on in the middle of Szép Street, went into an

apartment with a camera-crew, and filmed what happened from a balcony. The container was there and the cars avoided it continuously. And everyone who watches the video says how great it is that in the end a young man came and dragged it away. He was not a driver, but at least someone pulled it away. This runs as a heroic story nowadays, but that's not how it happened. The young man came out, lifted the bin and ran away with it. He stole it. It's not a problem, though: the situation was solved. It was possible to fill a short booklet with such things, because we knew –from the specialist literature –that these are important, and we wanted to enrich the book with experiments like this one.

M.Z. Social Traps *and* Diagnoses *were a big hit. You found a voice which works very well. Yet you have just claimed that in the 1990s you became less and less interested in Hungarian society and Eastern European narratives. You wrote* East European Alternatives*, you went to the United States of America, and then it seems like this represented an end to something.*

E.H. It is a great question, because I don't know the answer. As a matter of fact there was a serious change in 1995-96. I was at Georgetown University, Washington DC.[14] It was hard work. There was frenzied rivalry between the people there. Besides me there were two other Eastern Europeans. While Eastern European problems were in focus at one of my seminars at Georgetown, there was already a seminar on the problem of freedom. What crossed my mind in connection with Eastern Europe, as we used to call it back then, is the ironic freedom of Eastern Europeans: this was, in point of fact, more a concept analysis; a concept analysis in the field of the history of science, or a concept analysis in the field of the history of ideas. My seminar at Stanford was again on this, the question of freedom; the other was on the change of Western civilization over the past fifty years. In the field of sociology, and especially in the field of political science, very few sets of variables can be studied in academic papers. And a question like the question of freedom is so complex that an interplay among dozens of variables must be analysed. And I was more interested in that. And the change of an entire civilization in a few decades is even more complex. There are such interesting connections in it, it started to intrigue me more and more. And, in effect, even from here, I moved forward in my book, *The Human Adventure*.[15] Yes, I was at Stanford for a year with a scholarship, at the best place in the world: the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences. It is next to the university, up in the hills, in a beautiful place. And a lot of psychologists, historians, and all kinds of real intellectuals were there, with whom we always had lunch, and there was such effervescence, such a surge of thoughts, that the first version of *The Human Adventure* was written actually there, due to this ambience, and only in part by myself. This was when I discovered so-called philosophical anthropology. Here, in fact, I was

---

[14] The presentations of the conference organized in 1995 were published in Hankiss, E. (1999) (ed.) *Europe After 1989: A Culture in Crisis?* Washington, DC: Center for German and European Studies, Georgetown University: Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University.

[15] Hankiss, E. (1997) Az emberi kaland. *Egy civilizáció-elmélet vázlata (The Human Adventure. An Essay in the Theory of Culture)*. Budapest: Helikon.

Intersections. East European Journal of Society and Politics, 1 (2): 134-145.

Sociology and Beyond

145

no longer that interested in the processes and the structure of society, but rather in the questions of human life. This obviously correlates with age and ageing too. Or with the fact that this is what has always intrigued me. It was only overlaid by layers which let this seep through, and these allowed me to move towards thinking about this, to dig deep. *The Human Adventure* is specifically about how people, humankind and human cultures, form their symbolic protective layer in which the illusion of freedom, equality and justice can be found. A certain kind of security, freedom, as well as the hope that our lives have a meaning, that we have a role in the world. And, well, I'm still stuck on this. In my last book, already published, *A Nincsből a Van felé*,[16] the question is the same. In it, the questions regarding the possibility or impossibility of finding the meaning of human existence are more direct. I have already left the field of sociology behind.

Translated by Fanni Kövesdi and Ákos Gosztonyi

---

[16] Hankiss, E. (2012) *A Nincsből a Van felé. Gondolatok az élet értelméről (From There Is Not to There Is. Thoughts on the Meaning of Human Existence)*. Budapest: Osiris.

ANDRÁS SCHWEITZER *

The Contemporary Relevance of István Bibó's
Theoretical Framework for Analyzing and Settling
Territorial and State-Formation Conflicts

* [schweitzerandras@gmail.com] (Eszterházy Károly College, Eger,
Hungary)

Abstract[1]

International policy makers, even those with a genuine resolve for
peacemaking, often shy away from getting involved with political
conflicts where the principle of self-determination clashes with that of
the territorial integrity of a state, or devise ad hoc plans that lack the
potential to become a lasting solution. In the Cold War context of the
1970s social scientist István Bibó observed and explained this
phenomenon and suggested a mechanism to correct it. His idea was
to set up a special international court for impartial political arbitration
and to solve "territorial and state-formation conflicts" by the principle
of national self-determination. He proposed to recognize the global
territorial status quo as the "constitution of international relations" but
to "amend it" by fostering ethnic-linguistic separation in the special
case of irreconcilable conflicts. Viewed from today Bibó's case studies
of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Cyprus question have shown
remarkable foresight and several of his specific suggestions have
become core elements in road maps for solving them. Additionally, in
contemporary political and scientific discourses on other ethnic-
territorial conflicts, opinions seem to shift in line with his views as
experiences of the last decades seem to corroborate the validity of his
analytical framework and general policy recommendations.

Keywords: István Bibó, ethnic conflicts, international relations, nationalism, self-determination

International territorial conflicts fueled by ethnic-nationalism have been widespread phenomena for a long time. Their number has been growing at a slow and steady rate since massive decolonization began after 1945, with a marked upsurge immediately after the end of the Cold War (Sadowski, 1998). The questions of why these kinds of conflicts arise and how they could be settled peacefully are favorite topics of popular, elite, and scholarly discourses.

Should the secession of Crimea be viewed as morally different from that of Kosovo? Was the (incomplete) ethnic partition the right solution to grant peace in Bosnia and Kosovo? Should it be applied to find a compromise for the Cyprus dilemma? Should Cataluña be allowed to hold a referendum on independence as Scotland was?

In the 1970s political thinker István Bibó offered a longue durée historical framework to explain "territorial and state-formation conflicts" and suggested a set of principles upon which internationally recognized and durable peace arrangements can be based[2]. As I will argue in the following, his study is worth revisiting in the light of contemporary theoretical discourses especially because his case studies have shown remarkable foresight and several of his specific suggestions have since become core elements in road maps for solving the conflicts he analyzed.

Bibó is a well-known author in Hungary, but this particular essay of his is less so. Nevertheless, it has been the focus of a couple of papers in Hungarian. A detailed and critical revision of the historical and political descriptions in the case studies (pointing to alleged inaccuracies) was written by Mihály Dobrovits in 2002 (Dobrovits, 2002). The case studies were briefly discussed by Gábor Kardos two years later in a Hungarian history magazine (Kardos, 2004), while his essay was introduced and compared to different interpretations of nation, nationalism, and self-determination in Gábor Kovács's Bibó monograph (Kovács, 2004).

In a journal article in 2009, I called attention to the contemporary applicability of Bibó's suggested scheme and the validity of his observations regarding the Arab-Israeli and the Cyprus conflicts, arguing that "the medicine he prescribed" for these conflicts "still has not expired" (Schweitzer, 2009). Two years later Gusztáv Molnár also emphasized the relevance of Bibó's peace scheme to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in a brief foreword to the publication of a shortened version of Bibó's essay (Molnár, 2011).

Several presentations dealt with Bibó's conflict resolution methodology at the "Bibó 100" centenary conference at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 2011, which were then published the following year as essays in a comprehensive book on contemporary reception of Bibó's works (Dénes, 2012). Stefano Bottoni referred to the work from the point of view of 20th century East-Central European ethnic conflicts; Gusztáv Molnár discussed it as containing the essential starting points for a future Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement; Gábor Kardos in the context of contemporary legal interpretations and applications of the principle of self-

---

[2] This is an unusual stance in clear contradiction for example with one of the conclusions of Stefan Wolff, who in a comparative study found that "it is not possible to determine a single unique and optimal model for the solution of ethno-territorial cross-border conflicts" (Wolff, 2003: 244.)

determination and of political arbitration[3]; and myself focusing on international political developments in the Middle East and East-Central Europe that had corroborated the applicability of his overall framework to solve ethnic-territorial conflicts.

The present paper is the result of my ongoing research of the subject, and is an enhanced version of a draft that was presented at the Eniugh Fourth European Congress on World and Global History, held at the École normale supérieur, Paris, 4-7th September, 2014. It is an attempt to introduce Bibó and his essay on "territorial and state-formation conflicts" to a wider audience, and to discuss its contemporary scholarly and political relevance. Besides, it also aims to relate some of his concepts on ethnic conflicts and peacemaking to a selected number of present-day foreign policy problems discussed by international legal and political thinkers. Following this interdisciplinary approach I wish to help a future groundwork of connecting Bibó's respective ideas to international scientific and foreign policy debates, from where, I believe, they are unduly and regrettably missing.

István Bibó: the scholar and the democrat

István Bibó was a Hungarian political thinker addressing problems related to social sciences, legal philosophy, international law and history; he was also one of the few Hungarian intellectuals who managed to ever remain a humanist and liberal democrat despite the most unfavorable circumstances of 20th century Hungarian politics. He resisted different intellectual and political temptations of national-conservative authoritarianism, fascism and communism, and upheld his tolerant, benign yet firmly principled ways through failed revolutions and oppressing regimes of all colors.

Bibó was born in Budapest in 1911, attended the Piarist Grammar School, and studied law in universities in Szeged, Vienna and Geneva in the 1930s. He then worked as a trainee in the Royal Court of Appeals and then the Royal Court of Justice, and from 1938 at the Ministry of Justice. He took part in wording anti-fascist manifestos and political programs. Following the German occupation of March 19th, 1944, Bibó used his ministry post to save several people with Jewish origin from deportation (Dénes, 2013). He was arrested and held captive for a few days by the Arrow-Cross fascist authorities in October 1944, then went into hiding.

In early 1945, after the end of the Nazi occupation of Budapest he was invited to work at the Interior Ministry of the provisional government, and from July 1946 was a professor at Szeged University. He published some of his major political works during this time. However, in 1950, he was removed from all his positions and went to work at the University Library in Budapest. On October 31st, 1956, Bibó took part in reviving the National Peasant Party, as a nominee of which he joined Imre Nagy's coalition government on November 3rd, as minister of state.

---

[3] His paper has also been published in 2011 as a post-script to Bibó's essay in the 6th of the 12 volume series of Bibó's oeuvre edited by Iván Zoltán Dénes.

A day later, at a historic moment that perhaps best summarizes his life, he was the only person in the Parliament building surrounded by Soviet tanks as he was drafting a proclamation to Hungarians and to the wider world. As the sole legitimate representative of the Imre Nagy government he declared that Hungary does not want to pursue anti-Soviet policies and that there is no justification whatsoever for the presence of foreign forces. He called on the Hungarian people to show civil resistance and not to accept any future puppet government. He also asked for the wise and brave decision of the great powers and the United Nations Organization. After producing some further manifestos and political drafts he was arrested in May 1957 and was sentenced to life imprisonment by the Supreme Court on August 2nd, 1958. He was freed in the 1963 amnesty, and from then on until his retirement, he worked at the library of the Central Statistical Office and was denied the right to publish. He died in Budapest on May 10th, 1979. His funeral became the first event where various dissident groups made a joint appearance.

One of his major studies, The Paralysis of International Institutions and the Remedies: a Study of Self-determination, Concord among the Major Powers, and Political Arbitration (Bibó, 1976) upon which this paper is based, was written while in retirement, and was partially published in London. It is a study without footnotes, partly due to Bibó's typical essay-like style, partly due to the fact that he worked at home and had no access to the (mostly 'western') literature that had influenced him. Nevertheless, in the foreword of his study he included a list of the authors whose works had a major (at times adverse) impulse on his thoughts. Among them are Guglielmo Ferrero on the legitimacy principle; Bertrand Russell, Raymond Aron and Robert M. MacIver on the prospect of 'humanizing' power; Johan Huizinga on the distinction between patriotism and nationalism; Arnold Toynbee on the struggle for a global state; Hans Kelsen and Alfred Verdross on the state of the international community; Leland Goodrich and Edward Hambro on the charter of the United Nations; Sarah Wambaugh on referendums; Rolin Farouharson on the theory of voting; Robert Stephens on the Cyprus question; Fred J. Khouri, Maxime Rodinson and Jean Pierre Alem on the Arab-Israeli conflict. However, his train of thought on territorial and ethnic conflicts is based mostly on his own original ideas and several decades of contemplation.

Bibó's theory on settling ethnic-territorial conflicts

The starting point of Bibó's essay is the confusion of the international community as to how to handle the growing number of ethnic-territorial conflicts. "The number of unresolved situations, which languish in a more or less static condition, has increased alarmingly. Cease-fire lines and truce demarcation lines take the place of final national boundaries; states are arbitrarily and illogically brought into being as temporary solutions to particular and pressing problems; and repeated armed clashes between nations and nationalities, with all the inevitable repercussions, seem a permanent part of the contemporary world scene" (Bibó, 1976: 1).

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 146-167.
SCHWEITZER, A.: THE CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE OF ISTVÁN BIBÓ'S THEORETICAL
FRAMEWORK

150

Bibó mentions several reasons, which led to the 'paralysis' of international institutions. The political reality of the time – the bipolarity of the international order – was one reason. Another is that superpowers turned negotiations (at the UN and elsewhere) into public relations shows. As he saw it the rationale behind conducting open negotiations was, in part, a serious mis-perception of what had gone wrong in the international arena during the first half of the 20th century: secret diplomacy was viewed as a democratic deficit and was identified with imperialist ambitions. For Bibó there was nothing wrong with secret negotiations, on the contrary, he viewed them as absolutely vital in order to reach compromise agreement. He asserted that it is the compromise itself that ought to be transparent and not the process of give and take that led to it.

But the principal problem that Bibó found to effectively hinder efforts for peacemaking was the lack of a clear legal base to start from.

> To all appearances, the international community does possess some generally accepted and much-respected principles. For instance, it is widely held that the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence of states must be acknowledged in the interest of peace and stability. Also, that the people's right to self-determination must prevail to ensure the correct demarcation of states and to limit abuses of power. These and similar principles are often tied into a nice bouquet and offered like a patent medicine as a cure for the world's ills. However, when it comes to applying these principles to a practical situation, it seems that they are relevant to everything except the specific problem under review. Unfortunately the principles cited are either pure generalities, or are too easily played off one against the other (Bibó, 1976: 2-3).[4]

He believed that the paralysis could be cured by the application of a clear methodology, a general political action to tackle stubborn, acute conflicts. This model was at one point summarized by him to be based on a Principle, a Power, and a Procedure (Bibó, 1990b: 688)[5].

The *Procedure* was suggested by Bibó to be impartial political arbitration by judges – respected scholars of international affairs – of an international body to be established, which would make an advisory or binding resolution on problems of territorial conflicts, outlining the basic framework of a future peace treaty. The nature of the decision is neither fully legal nor fully political, therefore the judges should be neither "jurists specialized in strictly codified international law" nor "active politicians deeply involved in international or domestic power politics", but instead "international officials with experience in mediation and conciliation, scholars of law or politics, political essayists or journalists, national and international politicians not in the focus

---

[4] Whenever possible I will use the English edition of his essay (Bibó, 1976) as reference. However, that edition (which, for political reasons, preceded the Hungarian publication by 14 years) is just a part of his whole draft. Where his original reasoning is missing from the English edition, I will quote the Hungarian text in my own translation, except for the Cyprus case study, which was published recently in English (Bibó, 2013).

[5] Coincidentally, the three words show alliteration in Hungarian too (elv, erő, eljárás).

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 146-167.

SCHWEITZER, A.: THE CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE OF ISTVÁN BIBÓ'S THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

151

of power politics and known to be conciliatory in their attitudes, especially politicians of traditional neutral countries, etc., or the kind of people who have had experience as United Nations mediators appointed by the Secretary General" (Bibó, 1976: 136)[6].

Power could come from the joint action of great powers, which are capable to use coercion to impose a peace treaty and if needed also to give security guarantees to it. Bibó, though a democrat by conviction, accepted in principle both the European Concert of the 19th century (also known as the Vienna system of international relations or the Congress System after the Congress of Vienna 1814-1815, in which European monarchs decided on political arrangements) and the United Nations created after World War Two (with a special role given to the five permanent members of the Security Council) as legitimate institutions to have the final say in questions of international political status.

The *Principle*, upon which, according to Bibó, arbitration should be based and the great powers should act to enforce is self-determination, understood to be the principle of democracy per se in international relations. It stood in opposition to the concept of the monarchic-feudal principle, which was what granted legitimacy to questions of sovereignty and of territorial allocation of states during the 17th and 18th centuries. After the Napoleonic wars the monarchic-feudalistic principle was again applied by the Congress of Vienna and it had not fully ceased to be a standard of international relations until after the First World War. In contrast, the European peace system at Versailles was based on the principle of self-determination – albeit only partially and imperfectly[7].

According to Bibó the selective application of the principle of self-determination – a mistake that had been done in Versailles and all too many times since then – seriously delegitimizes peace arrangements and plants the seeds of future conflicts. If the principle had been fully applied the Versailles treaties could have granted undisturbed international relations for many decades. Contemporary peace arrangements could also last for the foreseeable future[8], if based on the above criteria.

---

[6] In the English publication, which was meant to influence officials of the United Nations, more emphasis is put on that organization. The Hungarian version on the other hand contains even specific examples for what kind of people Bibó had in mind for the function: Bertrand Russell, Salvador de Madariaga, and Walter Lippmann. (Bibó, 1990a: 512)

[7] According to Bibó, besides several boundary arrangements by which significant populations of one nation were attached to states of another against their will, one of the most significant manifestations of the deficiency that delegitimized the Versailles system and served as a factor for the rise of Nazism was the prohibition of Austrian-German unification (Anschluss). He had frequently warned about other, less serious compromises on the principle of self-determination in the name of geographic, economic, strategic or other rationales. As he wrote just after the Second World War about possible territorial arrangements in East-Central Europe: "What military significance can it have (...) to change for strategic reasons a piece of the border between two small East-European states from Small Hill to Big Mountain? The probability that this change will ever have a military significance is, say, 10 per cent; that this significance will be beneficial to mankind is at most 5 per cent. On the other hand, the likelihood that the grievances of the population carved out by the new strategic border will serve as kindling for future war is 100 per cent. The aim to avoid the dependence of one or the other state on timber or oil import is hardly worth rendering it unable to make peace with its neighbor." (Bibó, 1986: 246)

[8] "It would be a tragic misconception to leave matters unresolved or badly resolved due to the conflicts of power blocks, which last ten, twenty or, at most, thirty years, while these matters left seething can be a threat for as long as a century, and while a lasting and legitimacy-inspiring arrangement could bring peace

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 146-167.
SCHWEITZER, A.: THE CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE OF ISTVÁN BIBÓ'S THEORETICAL
FRAMEWORK

152

Bibó knew of course that the application of self-determination is far from being unambiguous, and that international law does not give a clue to easily reconcile it with territorial stability. Nevertheless he believed that these are not opposing concepts. According to him "self-determination is the ultimate governing principle, whereas territorial stability is not so much a principle as the institutional reality of international law" (Bibó, 1976: 75). He tried to further clarify the way he understood the relation between these two legal notions by comparing the ensemble of states and their territorial status to the role of a constitution. With this he meant to point out that territorial changes should be exceptional events. "The constitution is, generally speaking, not meant to be changed", but it is necessary to change it "whenever there is a danger that a stipulation or institution of the constitution may become false or ineffectual, with risk of shaking the whole edifice" (Bibó, 1976: 76). Similarly "the fact that it is desirable for there to be changes in compliance with self-determination does not mean that the peoples should constantly re-determine their future", self-determination is rather a governing principle to be applied in settling disputes (Bibó, 1976: 76-77).

Bibó's interpretation, including his innovative constitution analogy may be unique, but it is not in contradiction with mainstream contemporary legal understanding of self-determination.

There is a wide array of opinions on the legal status of the principle of self-determination. At the one extreme are those who submit that the right to self-determination constitutes jus cogens, a peremptory norm of international law (Ian Brownlie, Hector Gros Espiell), at the other extreme there are those, who think that self-determination is "unworthy of the appellation of a rule of law" (J.H.W. Verzijl) (Hannum, 1996: 44-45)[9].

International legal scholars are usually in agreement that in general territorial sovereignty of states is a more powerful right than national self-determination. As a leading Italian jurist observed in a landmark publication on the matter more than two decades after Bibó's essay: "the dogma of State sovereignty has constituted a powerful bulwark against the full acceptance of the principle into the body of international legal rules" (Cassese, 1995: 317) and as a result "self-determination appears firmly entrenched in the corpus of international general rules in only three areas: as an anti-colonialist standard, as a ban on foreign military occupation and as a standard requiring that racial groups be given full access to government" (Cassese, 1995: 319).

Nevertheless self-determination can have a meaning for a minority without the right to form their own state. "It is a false option to state that the right of self-determination exists either as a right of secession or does not exist at all. On the contrary, we have to try to keep in force as much of the contents of the right of self-determination as can possibly be kept in force without coming into conflict with the principle of territorial integrity" (Tomuschat, 1993 : 38).

---

once and for all or, put more humbly, within humanly reasonable time." (Bibó, 2013: 578). The implicit prognosis written some time before 1974, that the cold war (the "conflicts of power blocks") would last no longer than 30 more years, is in itself exceptional foresight.

[9] The author presenting the array of opinions himself thinks that the status of self-determination as a "right" in international law is questioned only with difficulty.

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 146-167.
SCHWEITZER, A.: THE CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE OF ISTVÁN BIBÓ'S THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

153

There are certain authors who see secession as legitimate in specified cases. The so-called Just Cause theorists for example advocate it if a minority suffered (and would continue to suffer) grave injustices being subject of a given state. Contrary to them Bibó did not claim that self-determination prescribes a legally binding line of political action against state sovereignty in any case. He did not advocate its acceptance or application as legal imperative prescribing secession but as theoretical basis for an exceptional political decision and action, i.e., as a principle which alone makes it possible to construct legitimate (therefore permanent) political solutions to otherwise irreconcilable contemporary ethnic-territorial conflicts.

The case studies of Bibó

The text that was smuggled out to the west and published in 1976 was not appreciated as much as Bibó hoped it would. A capsule review by Foreign Affairs for example read as follows:

> A provocative essay by a Hungarian intellectual, Minister of State during the 1956 Revolution, which convincingly analyzes the need for international institutional mechanisms to provide a just world order based on democratic principles. His conclusions - that new approaches to great-power understandings and impartial international arbitration are urgently required - raise more questions than they answer.[10]

Part of the reason for the mixed reaction was the quality of the translation, which lost some of the clarity and elegance of the original version. But a bigger deficiency was that the essay came to be published without the case studies which could perhaps have answered many of the questions that the historical-theoretical part raised for ordinary readers and for the reviewer at Foreign Affairs.

> The original manuscript did contain two long and detailed sections showing how Bibo's argument could be applied to two difficult concrete cases: Cyprus and the Arab-Israeli conflict. The specific nature of these have, however, dated them somewhat and they would have made this book a forbidding length, so as editor I have taken the responsibility of not publishing them, at least for the moment, but simply of putting copies in the Library of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, of the British Museum, the Library of Congress and the New York Public Library. They may be copied but not published. They were appendices to the general argument, which is all translated (Bibó, 1976: viii).

---

[10] The author of the review was Edward L. Morse, then a senior research fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, today a leading energy economist. (Morse, 1977).

Contrary to the assessment of the editor, Bernard Crick, I think the application of the theory on "two difficult concrete cases" is more revealing than the remaining – and arguably somewhat overwritten – historical-philosophical skeleton of the theory, which deals more with the changing sources of legitimacy in history and with vaguely answered organizational questions of the possible future political arbitration than with the suggested methods to solve conflicts. In fact Bibó not only demonstrated his methodological framework for conflict resolution in the case studies, but also outlined the answers to theoretical questions, which perhaps should have been more clearly dealt with in the first part of the text[11].

Also, as I will argue later, the case studies, which were written between 1965 and 1974, and have not been published in English until very recently[12], have not been "dated" at all. They are very relevant even after almost half a century – despite such radical changes in circumstances as the Turkish occupation of Cyprus, the end of the Cold War, the Israeli-Egyptian and the Israeli-Jordanian peace agreements, the establishment of a Palestinian Authority in Gaza and the West Bank, etc. Relevant not only in that the solutions offered in them are still basically valid, but also in that they provide answers to why later attempts at reaching a peace agreement have gone wrong.

Cyprus

Bibó viewed the Cyprus conflict as the last remaining process of the delineation of the Greek and Turkish nations. If the island hadn't been ruled by the British in the early 1920s its future would probably have been decided by the treaty of Lausanne in 1923 as was done in the case of other disputed regions of the East Mediterranean.

The crises of the Cypriot state and the causes of the political stalemate have several causes: external (demographic, strategic and international political factors), mental (like the burdens of the history of Greek-Turkish relations), legal (that there is no fundamental "legal fact" that could be used to serve as basis to determine legitimacy).

A substantial underlying fact of the conflict is that the population of Cyprus has never been bound by the common thought and feeling of being part of a Cypriot nation. In the course of history the political unity of Cyprus had always been created by outside forces.

> The Cypriot nation has never existed in either the Wilsonian or the Leninian sense; Cypriot political unity was achieved by belonging to a broader state formation or foreign invasion. Shared historical fate never meant a shared historical experience, a shared state or national consciousness that could have

---

[11] One example of this is the question of why the involved parties and the great powers would trust an international jury to judge their political conflicts. This question is dealt with in the Cyprus case study. Bibó's answer is that a peace agreement based on the principled ruling of an impartial tribunal would be better for everyone affected than the ambiguous status quo, which threatens all of them with an unexpected change in circumstances and a unilateral fait accompli. (Bibó, 2013: 577-578) It is again electrifying, that these words were written just a little time before the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974, which completely changed the rules of the game.

[12] The case study on Cyprus finally appeared two years ago (see: Bibó, 2013), and the whole essay with both case studies were (re-)translated recently and are ready for publication.

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 146-167.
SCHWEITZER, A.: THE CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE OF ISTVÁN BIBÓ'S THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

155

bound together Greeks and Turks, in the way history forged a single nation out of the Germans, Frenchmen, Italians, and Rhaeto-Romans of Switzerland or the Finns and Swedes of Finland. Quite to the contrary, the experience of these two peoples paralleled all-Greek and all-Turkish historical experience; put otherwise, whatever brought victory and liberation for one, meant subjugation or downgrading to the other (Bibó, 2013: 573).

Bibó suggested that the conflict should be solved by international political arbitration – a decision by impartial international legal experts. His view was that Cyprus does not constitute a necessarily indivisible political entity, and the self-determination of the two communities should be granted equally. One of the problems is the lack of clear ethnic boundaries. "Had there been such clear ethnic borders in Cyprus, the island would probably have been divided earlier, perhaps under British colonial rule, and the subsequent integration into appropriate nation states would also have been carried out without major difficulty" (Bibó, 2013: 580).

The international tribunal should first agree on the demarcation: to draw "perhaps very winding borders, so as to have the smallest possible pockets of minorities on the wrong side, or to have roughly equal numbers on either side, which means a mutual guarantee against the temptation of oppression on the one hand, and more advantageous conditions for relocation if relations become strained" (Bibó, 2013: 581). The next step is to hold plebiscites among the Greek and Turkish speakers separately, to decide if they want to live in a common federal state (to be applied only if both sides agree), and if not, whether they want to have a separate state or one that is attached to the kin state (Greece and Turkey).

Arab-Israeli conflict

The Arab-Israeli conflict, according to Bibó, is basically the conflict between two nations (Arab and Jewish), which have been formed under very different circumstances. That the conflict is politically unresolved is manifested first and foremost by the fact that the neighboring Arab states do not recognize the existence of Israel. A principal attribute of the conflict is that the Arab policies are based on historic grievances, and that the Israeli mindset is inclined to rely on force in solving all discords. A psychological burden is that Israelis suspect the threat of genocide in Arab boasting about destroying Israel as a state, and "pushing the Jews into the sea".

And yet, as Bibó emphasizes, after all the wars that have been fought, neither side can expect to gain from further violence. An Arab aggression with the aim of liberating the occupied lands would be useless; it would turn global public opinion to Israel's side, granting it moral capital and support. Israel cannot improve its position by aggression either; it cannot hope to gain recognition and thus security even if it were to occupy Cairo, Damascus and Amman. Rather, such an expansion would lead to Arab terrorism and the unavoidable atrocities of Israeli occupation, which, in turn, would lead to the erosion of international moral support. And "sooner or later there would be no way other than withdrawal" which "would signal to the Arabs that the

much awaited turning point has come" and would bring with it on their part "the end
of all readiness for compromise" (Bibó, 1990a: 635)[13] .

In this situation, when one of the super-powers (USA) supported Israel and the
other (the Soviet Union) the Arab states (mainly Syria), their agreement and collective
action seemed vital to Bibó. Unlike in the Cyprus conflict this time partition was
gaining legitimacy, and it was only the atmosphere of mistrust and fear that inhibited
its acceptance.

Bibó suggested that the 1967 ceasefire line should serve as a demarcation (with
minor changes, which would grant Israel access to the Old City). According to him the
legitimacy of that temporary boundary is based upon several factors. First, the Arab-
Jewish population exchange – which was "proportional, mutual, irreversible, although
not at all voluntary or legitimate" – went on along this line. Second, this line has
withstood the crisis of 1956 when Israel tried to modify it to its benefit. Third, after
the war in 1967 and 1973 the main demand of the Arab states was the return to this
provisional line (although its change had been their political aim beforehand. Fourth,
the only – more or less – concrete resolution of the UN (Security Council resolution
242) also called for the return to this line as a precondition of peace[14], and the great-
powers are basically in accord in this principle.

As a first step in the peace process that Bibó recommended, the UN Security
Council needs to make a binding resolution about a detailed peace plan, and then the
great powers should pressure the parties to accept it. The execution of the peace plan
should start with the partial evacuation by Israel of the occupied territories, then
followed by the recognition of Israel by the Arab states, and finally the restoration of
the ceasefire line as an international border. The procedure presupposed security
guaranties by the great powers. (Bibó also raised the possibility of the formation of a
new Palestinian Arab state on the occupied land, and that the refugees after 1967
should have the right to total repatriation and restitution, while the refugees of 1948-
49 should be compensated for financial losses but would be allowed to live in Israel
only in specifically justified cases (e.g., of family reunion) and in very limited numbers.

Some contemporary applications of the theory

Despite the decades that have passed since the writing of Bibó's essay, despite the
profound transformation of the international order and the nature of the conflicts he
analyzed, the solutions for the Cyprus and the Arab-Israeli conflicts presented above
are basically relevant and gradually gaining ground. This is partly due to the fact that in
these specific conflicts alternative peace proposals were tried and turned out to be
unworkable – as in several cases Bibó clearly warned they would. In the meantime,
especially with the collapse of the so-called Soviet bloc several ethnic-territorial

---

[13] Arguably, this is exactly what happened when Hamas and Hezbollah declared victory and filled the
power vacuum once Israel left Gaza and South-Lebanon respectively.
[14] It should be noted that Israeli legal experts and politicians debate whether the demanded Israeli
withdrawal "from territories occupied" in 1967 necessarily means withdrawal from all of the territories.

disputes turned into violent conflicts – which again showed the relevance of Bibó's
framework to analyze and solve these kinds of conflicts.

Cyprus

Perhaps the most dramatic change in the Cyprus conflict happened just months after
Bibó finished his essay. The attempted putsch by Greek-Cypriots demanding Enosis
(unification with Greece) and the Turkish invasion of the island in the summer of
1974 resulted in a de facto ethnic partition. The situation – albeit peaceful now – still
cannot be considered resolved, as the (Greek) Cypriot state does not have control
over the Turkish occupied northern part of the island, which is governed by a self-
declared separate state unrecognized by the international community.

After decades of mediation attempts, and several peace plans promoting
different bi-national federal schemes, foreign policy experts have frequently raised the
idea of de jure partition, which the international community, unlike Bibó, had ruled
out[15].

In the current situation Bibó would probably suggest the correction of the
ceasefire line for the benefit of the Greeks Cypriots, who, in turn, should accept that
the island, on which they form the majority, would be separated into two states if both
parties affirm that in referendums[16].

Arab-Israeli conflict

The Arab-Israeli conflict (now more appropriately called the Israel-Palestine conflict)
has also profoundly transformed in the last three to four decades. Israel has made
peace with Egypt and Jordan, and the so called Oslo peace process, even if widely
considered to be a failure, created autonomous Palestinian areas and the Palestinian
Authority. Meanwhile the conflict has transformed from being mainly a conflict
between Israel and Arab states into being a conflict where Israel is more in
confrontation with Palestinian movements and with Islamist forces[17].

With this transformation it became even more apparent that Bibó was right
when he said that Israel wouldn't be able to wish away the conflict by granting limited
autonomy to the Arabs on the occupied lands, and that forceful security guarantees of
the great powers would be needed to secure peace. It has also become a widespread
assumption that mediation would not be enough for the parties to resolve their

---

[15] I quote here only a few examples. "Going on past experience, the details of a formal separation are
likely to prove easier to manage than working out the details of reunification" (Ker-Lindsay (September 3,
2007)). "For more than three decades now, efforts to resolve the territorial dispute in Cyprus between its
Greek and Turkish residents have failed. Since reunification plans have been rejected, is it time to
officially partition the island?" (Khan (November 18, 2010)). "Opponents of a negotiated settlement
should, for once, speak honestly and tell people that partition would be preferable to an experimental, bi-
zonal, bi-communal federation that could go wrong, instead of serving them with false hopes and big
fantasies." (Cyprus Mail, 2014)

[16] The assumption that change of the boundary to more reflect popular self-determination would be the
Bibó's suggested solution today can be substantiated by his similar proposal in a territorial dispute of
another island: the Northern Ireland conflict. That happened to be a third case study he wrote after
finishing the Paralysis essay (Bibó, 1990b).

[17] In an essay of mine I pointed out this trend (Schweitzer, 2005) which has continued ever since.

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 146-167.
SCHWEITZER, A.: THE CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE OF ISTVÁN BIBÓ'S THEORETICAL
FRAMEWORK

158

dispute. Instead, active involvement of great powers would be needed in outlining a detailed peace plan, in forcing the parties to accept and implement it, and in providing powerful security guarantees.

> It is a futile and frivolous position – claimed by Israel and at times by representatives of certain great powers – that progress can only be achieved through direct negotiations between the parties without great power intervention. This phrase sounds as if it was meant to protect the interests of small countries from the aggressive interference of great powers, whereas it is indeed direct negotiation that contains the maximum amount of violence (the violence of the winner) after a war with such an outcome [in 1967], and it is the mediating intervention of the great powers that is able to hold back this violence (Bibó, 1990a: 655).

Bibó believed that the peace process, instead of letting the directly involved parties bargain about the essentials, should start with the elaboration of a detailed peace plan. Many analysts have come to the conclusion that one of the prime mistakes of the Oslo peace process (1993-2000) and also of negotiations based on the so called Road Map (2003-2008) was that the processes began without such a peace plan. Dealing with the final status questions was postponed time and again, and trust disappeared in the course of endless bargaining about successive steps.[18]

Another central assertion of Bibó's – besides the need for great power involvement and the need for a clearly stated final status result at the beginning of the peace process – was the continued legitimacy of the pre-1967 ceasefire line. Its legitimacy has been further strengthened in the last couple of decades. Israeli-PLO treaties of the 1990s referred to UN Security Council Resolution 242; Clinton's formula in 2000 and subsequent (albeit unofficial) Israeli-Palestinian peace treaties in 2002 and 2003 were based on it (Ayalon-Nusseibeh plan, Geneva Initiative); and in 2011 the American president declared its validity when talking about a possible future two-state solution: "We believe the borders of Israel and Palestine should be based on the 1967 lines with mutually agreed swaps, so that secure and recognized borders are established for both states" (Cohen, 2011).

Altogether, despite all the changes, after four decades Bibó would probably suggest essentially the same peace plan and the same procedure he proposed in his essay. Those politicians who believe in the possibility of an Israeli-Palestinian peace usually also rally around a similar scheme.

The dissolution of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia
Not only do conflicts that Bibó analyzed show the relevance of his theory, but so do a lot of those that appeared after his death. Bibó did not foresee the disintegration of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia (although he did emphasize the unnatural composition of the latter). Nevertheless, his theory on ethnic-territorial conflicts seems

---

[18] Some examples for analysts who share this interpretation of the events with me – which clearly verifies the validity of Bibó's (alas, practically unknown) forewarning – include Gershon Baskin and Yossi Beilin. (See: Baskin, 2002 and Shavit, 2001)

to be a very useful approach in analyzing the disintegration of these two East-Central European states.

A central question of a comparison of the two cases is: why did Czechoslovakia fall apart peacefully whereas the collapse of Yugoslavia caused the bloodiest war in Europe since 1945. This question has been answered in many different ways. Cultural explanations point to the difference between the Kalashnikov-waving partisan heritage of South Slavs vis-à-vis the anti-militarist civil traditions of the spiritual descendants of Good Soldier Švejk. An economic explanation may claim that while Slovakia was not viewed as an important "asset" by comparatively rich and strong Czechs, Serbs, constituting the "core" nation of Yugoslavia, were naturally more alarmed by the possibility of dissociating from the wealthier part of the federation: Slovenia and Croatia.[19]

While these are certainly important factors, using Bibó's framework it comes out as a vital fact that in the case of Czechoslovakia the internal border coincided with the ethnic-linguistic separation line. This was markedly different in the case of Yugoslavia. And it was an observable fact that the degree of aggression correlated with the extent of this discrepancy. There were many more Serbs living in Croatia than in Slovenia – they formed a clear majority in a significant part of the country that could have been attached to Serbia – and Croatia became independent with much more violence. Bosnia was the most ethnically mixed of all the republics of the Yugoslav federation, with the largest relative Serbian population, and out of the three it was indeed the country where the war was raging for the longest period of time, causing the most casualties.

Bibó did not live long enough to see the collapse of Yugoslavia but following his way of thinking, using his case studies as models one could have tried to design a peaceful settlement for the conflicts of that former country. The key of course would have been self-determination – understood to also mean the right to self-determination for the Serbian areas in Bosnia and Croatia. The basis of this hypothetical peace plan would have been Serbian recognition of the independence of Croatia and Bosnia – in exchange for territorial compensation. The exact contours of the agreement, including the new borders, would have been determined by international arbitration: the political decision of an impartial international jury. (In the Bosnian case the resulting Serbian area – which could decide to be either independent or a part of Serbia – would probably have been smaller than it is today to better reflect the original ethnic composition of Bosnia.) Since partition along clear ethnic lines would not have been fully possible to achieve, if the security of the inhabitants on the "wrong sides" of the border had necessitated it, the peace arrangement could have involved voluntary or even obligatory population exchange.

Such an arrangement may sound problematical and difficult to implement (and maybe even inhumane, as for the possible need of a population transfer), but it would

---

[19] The cultural factor is decisive in Misha Glenny's account of the violent collapse of Yugoslavia (Glenny, 1996). In Valerie Bunce's comparison of the dissolution of Czechoslovakia, of the Soviet Union and of Yugoslavia, the explanatory factors for the violent versus peaceful nature of the processes were found to be 1) the degree of decentralization of the federation, 2) the power of the largest nation versus its institutional endowments, and 3) the politicization of the military. (Bunce, 1999)

undoubtedly have been worth the price if we think of the hundreds of thousands who were killed, wounded, or fled in the course of the wars in Croatia and Bosnia. The same goes for Kosovo: self-determination (in this case probably ethnic separation) would have meant a Serbian recognition of independence in exchange for territorial compensation. This could probably have been a workable and generally acceptable formula.[20]

Policy debates in scholarly and political circles related to the theory

Even if Bibó's basic work on international peacemaking in ethnic-territorial conflicts was (partially) translated into English in 1976, his theory has not entered mainstream international political discourse. His ideas are not referred to in contemporary scientific debates and his ideas did not influence policy efforts of international peacemaking (as he would have wanted).

Nevertheless, in the past decades discussions have intensified about the problem of how to solve ethnic and territorial conflicts. Ideas similar to his suggestions have started to gain ground both in scholarly and political circles. In the following I will examine Bibó's theory and arguments in light of contemporary foreign policy debates on some of the questions he focused on.

Swiss-type confederation as a suggested solution

Switzerland has served as an appealing model for democratic restructuring of multi-ethnic states for more than a century. Once the Habsburg empire had turned into a dualist monarchy with the compromise of 1867 (Ausgleich) there were constant talks of its further federalization – Habsburg Archduke Franz Ferdinand being one famous advocate. A United States of Europe was thought to be the cure for great power rivalry on the old continent by many already in the inter-war era. During World War Two scores of confederation plans were designed by officials at the American Department of State and at the British Foreign Office – there was talk of a Scandinavian confederation, an Arabic one, an East-Central European one, to mention but a few. In 1947, a federal bi-national state was the minority proposal of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine. Up until today such a scheme has been the principal idea for solving the Cyprus question, a confederation of cantons was the envisaged solution of the Vance-Owen plan for Bosnia in the first months of the war, and a confederation was indeed established by the Dayton Peace Accord of 1995.

However, political conflicts stemming from unresolved questions of territorial status cannot be solved by forcing the parties to live together. This is something which

---

[20] Kosovo and Crimea are similar in many respects – both had an ethnic composition different from that of the state to which they had belonged – yet people in the West tend to judge the two secessions differently. From the point of view of the self-determination principle the fundamental difference is that in the latter case secession was initiated by an outside power (Russia), and self-determination of the local population was used only as a pretext for a land-grab. In contrast, the calls for the independence of Kosovo initially came from Kosovars and were fueled by oppression by the Serbian state.

seems to be verified by all of the above mentioned examples. And this had been emphasized 40 years ago by Bibó, who compared federation to marriage (neither being a panacea for peaceful coexistence) in the following way:

> Neither wipes out problems, but brings up many new, therefore one should not enter into it halfheartedly or with unresolved problems, nor clinging to it at all costs, for its own sake. It is not certain that the road leading from big to bigger is easier than from the small; there are indications that nations first have to be formed clearly in order to unify in a viable supranational integration; and to be able to be formed they often have to break or reject old or new dysfunctional federations that cannot offer them the dual prospect of nation formation and social development (Bibó, 1990a: 386).

Bibó would surely not rule out granting legality to the complete de facto separation of Bosnia or Cyprus along ethnic lines, if that was in harmony with the expressed self-determination of the peoples living there. Several analysts indicate that the formation of confederations does not seem to offer a viable long-term solution in these cases[21]. Unlike most of them, Bibó also knew why. His theory is based on the thesis that the best political solution for territorial conflicts (if the status quo cannot be maintained peacefully) is the one which is legitimate, i.e., the one which is based on national self-determination. Therefore the question in the cases of Bosnia and Cyprus is in essence similar to what was asked during the referendum in Scotland: where does the loyalty of its people go to, which is the "nation" the majority feels it belongs to.

The perceived danger of endless fragmentation

Bibó suggested that existing federations should be left to fall apart if the constituting nations so wish. He also advised unitary states to let minorities have the right for territorial autonomy or even complete secession. He assumed this to be beneficial to both sides, counter-intuitively also to the dominant nation, which can thus avoid a separatist movement growing violent.

> A state will gain a minority's loyalty according to its courage to grant minority rights or territorial autonomy, and it must be aware that such an attitude may be rewarded as much by stabilization and a strengthening of the minority's civil loyalty as by increased separatism. The state must also be aware that the more these rights are denied the stronger the possibility that a minority movement will become a separatist one. In other words the cause of a separatist movement

---

[21] For example: "Bosnia seems no closer politically to being a viable country now than it was fifteen years ago when the U.S.-brokered (and largely U.S.-imposed) Dayton accords ended the civil war that had cost more than 100,000 lives. Extinguishing that bloody conflict was no minor achievement, but it did not alter the reality that Bosnia and Herzegovina remained an unstable political amalgam of three mutually hostile ethnic groups." (Carpenter, 2011) or "Cyprus is a small place - far too small to be divided. But as recent discussions over Kosovo have shown, while it is certainly preferable to have different groups living side-by-side within single states, there are cases where bringing them together is seemingly impossible. In these cases, is it not better to let them go their own separate ways in a manner that is most likely to allow for cordial relations to develop in the future?" (Ker-Lindsay, 2007)

Intersections. East European Journal of Society and Politics, 1 (2): 146-167.

Schweitzer, A.: The Contemporary Relevance of István Bibó's Theoretical Framework

162

is never in the granting of minority status or territorial self-government, but in the dynamism of nation-formation which is only fomented by oppression. It may happen that a state of balance will not be achieved, either because of the authority's suspicion and lack of generosity, or because of the separatist minority's lack of even limited civil loyalt (Bibó, 1976: 98).

The example of Czechoslovakia shows that, even if the majority nation cannot hold a confederation together, by allowing gradual secession it can avoid the process becoming violent. The fact that Belgium is still one state despite the several-decade-long process of internal demarcation and decentralization suggests that leniency indeed has the potential to prevent secession. As the late president Václav Havel and ordinary Czechs remark, today the two nations have better relation than ever.

A recent comparative study on the matter also concludes that granting autonomy may not help keeping a state together but taking it away seems to be the wrong step. Ethnic groups with autonomy (because of the lack of motivation) and ethnic groups that never had autonomy (because of the lack of capacity) are much less likely to secede than those groups that lost their autonomy (Siroky-Cuffe, 2015).

Nevertheless, granting every national community the right to form their own state sounds for many as opening up the gates for endless fragmentation ("Balkanization") on a global scale. "A husband and wife may be divorced and go out of the presence and beyond the reach of each other, but the different parts of our country can not do this. They can not but remain face to face, and intercourse, either amicable or hostile, must continue between them" – goes the argument of Abraham Lincoln who utilizes the marriage metaphor, like Bibó, but with the aim to draw the "frightening vision of a world of a thousand squabbling nations divorced from one another politically but still cohabiting territorially" (Doyle, 2010: 11). With a somewhat similar approach, in 1998 a top article of Foreign Policy magazine titled "Ethnic conflict" showed a map of Africa divided by an uncountable number of separating lines into tiny bits inhabited by the different ethnic groups (Sadowski, 1998: 15). The map was meant to show the immense difficulty of redrawing borders to avoid civil wars like the ones that raged in Somalia and Ethiopia.

Bibó however did not suggest that the political atlas of the world should be rearranged to correspond to the global ethnic map. On the contrary, as mentioned before, he thought that the partition of states should be an extraordinary event in history, which should be prescribed by an impartial jury only in the case of otherwise unsolvable ethnic-territorial conflicts, where there is a demand for autonomy or secession on the part of a significant number of people forming the clear majority in a significant contiguous territory. Bibó understood the global territorial status of the existing countries as being the quasi constitution of the international community. While it was meant to stay forever, it might nevertheless need to be altered – very rarely, and only in order to more adhere to the basic defining principles, and ultimately for the benefit of all parties concerned.

The anti-partition argument

There is a third line of reasoning detectable in the international discourses on ethnic-territorial conflicts, which is related to Bibó's theory. It goes around the question

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 146-167.

SCHWEITZER, A.: THE CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE OF ISTVÁN BIBÓ'S THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

163

whether partition has the potential at all to solve ethnic conflicts, or on the contrary, that it even intensifies conflicts.

Existing research seems to be inconclusive. One quantitative analysis on a significant database seems to refute Bibó's claims. Its author, Nicholas Sambanis, concludes that "partition does not significantly prevent war recurrence" and "separating ethnic groups does not resolve the problem of violent ethnic antagonism" (Sambanis, 2000: 479) even if "in the most extreme cases" partition may be "necessary, indeed inevitable" (Sambanis, 2000: 482). And yet, this research does not contradict Bibó's theory. This becomes clear if one examines the specific examples on which Sambanis measured the effectiveness of partition. Most of them are not the kind of partition Bibó was suggesting: Cyprus in 1963, Yugoslavia-Croatia in 1991, Russia-Chechnya in 1994-1996, etc. In some cases the partitioned units were forced by an external or internal power to co-exist, and in most cases the geographical separation was not done along ethnic lines and did not fully address the question of self-determination for the involved national groups. Therefore the fact that they did not terminate aggression even corroborates Bibó's reasoning.

Other authors do find a series of conflicts where partition indeed re-established security.

> There have been no wars among Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey since their population exchanges of the 1920s. Ethnic violence on Cyprus, which reached crisis on several occasions between 1960 and 1974, has been zero since the partition and population exchange which followed Turkish invasion. The Armenian-Azeri ethnic conflict, sparked by independence demands of the mostly Armenian Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast, escalated to full-scale war by 1992. Armenian conquest of all of Karabakh together with the land which formerly separated it from Armenia proper, along with displacement of nearly all members of each group from enemy-controlled territories, created a defensible separation with no minorities to fight over, leading to a cease-fire in April 1994 (Kaufmann, 1996: 150-151).

One of the most overt promoters of solving ethnic civil wars through partition, David Kaufmann, suggests that separation prevents violence because once the ethnic groups have retreated into defensible, mostly homogeneous regions their security can be guaranteed without the need for pre-emptive ethnic cleansing. Ethnic separation changes the conflict from "mutual pre-emptive ethnic cleansing to something approaching conventional interstate war in which normal deterrence dynamics apply", so even if it "does not guarantee peace, but it allows it" (Kaufmann, 1996: 150).

Kaufmann's line of theoretical reasoning is seriously challenged in a paper based on case studies of Bosnia and Kosovo (Jenne, 2009). The author, Erin K. Jenne, not only questions that partition helps reduce violence but claims the contrary. One of the arguments of her thesis is that if Kaufmann was right then "violent conflict should occur primarily in ethnically-mixed rather that partitioned areas" (Jenne, 2009: 276), whereas, according to empirical evidence, in Kosovo the opposite is true. She assumes that in the two post-Yugoslav cases partition led to "institutional empowerment of ethnic extremists".

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 146-167.

SCHWEITZER, A.: THE CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE OF ISTVÁN BIBÓ'S THEORETICAL
FRAMEWORK

164

> De facto partition has ensured the electoral success of nationalist parties and policies; impeded property restitution and refugee return; permitted rent-seeking and corruption by nationalist elites; and segregated security and police forces along ethnic lines – creating a climate of extreme insecurity for ethnic minorities residing in the 'wrong' territory (Jenne, 2009: 285).

This argument however, while it seems forceful against Kaufmann's reasoning, could not be used against Bibó's line. The fact for example that Kosovar Albanian militants "have perpetrated nearly all the post-war harassment and violence against small pockets of ethnic Serbs, who hardly pose a threat to the Albanian majority" (Jenne, 2009: 284) is an argument against the logic of the deterrence theory, but it is completely in line with Bibó's claim that the central aim of partition should be the creation of separation that can be legitimized by national self-determination. The de facto partitions of Bosnia and Kosovo do not reflect this principle, because in both cases Serbs – forming the majority of significant areas adjacent to their mother country – are forced to live in a state where they don't feel they belong. Bibó's argument is in line with both Kaufmann's central claim and Jenne's findings, while it contradicts their respective reasoning. According to Bibó, in the cases of Bosnia and Kosovo it is not the logic of mutual insecurity but the remaining ambiguous status and the lack of legitimacy that hamper inter-ethnic harmony and empower ethnic extremists.

Conclusion

Leading foreign policy makers, even with a genuine resolve for impartial arbitration, have for decades shown confusion and devised ad hoc plans when dealing with political conflicts where the principle of self-determination clashed with that of the territorial integrity of a state. In the 1970s political thinker István Bibó suggested a mechanism to settle "territorial and state-formation conflicts" combining recognition of the global territorial status quo as the "constitution of international relations" with fostering ethnic-linguistic separation in the special case of irreconcilable national conflicts.

Using examples of ethnic conflicts I have argued that the theoretical framework of István Bibó is very relevant in analyzing today's conflicts. The further an applied method of international peacemaking was from what he suggested, the more stubborn the conflict remained. Contemporary analysts have tended to arrive at a similar conclusion to what István Bibó emphasized almost half a century ago: that in most cases of violent conflicts the best solution to secure a long-term peace is to open up the possibility of voluntary secession or partition along ethnic lines. The biggest difference between Bibó and these contemporary scholars is that to Bibó this procedure was not (only) a question of function (i.e., to best ensure peaceful co-existence) but a moral conviction based on the political view that in international relations self-determination corresponds to the principle of democracy. Ethnic partition is not a merit in itself, nor is it always the necessary solution. Nevertheless it usually helps solve ethnic conflicts because of the very fact that it establishes borders

that have the potential to be accepted as legitimate or "just" by the populations concerned.

Nowadays, leading diplomats of the great powers are reluctant to decide matters that they should – drawing a clear separation line between warring ethnic groups – and quick to come up with solutions on matters that they should not: deciding the future political-legal status of territories (often by forcing ethnic groups to coexist in some form of federal state of cantons). This is all the more strange as ethnic-national conflicts have been handled in many Western countries – peacefully and democratically – along the very lines that Bibó suggested (e.g.: the gradual territorial separation of the communities in Belgium, political-territorial status decided by referendums in Quebec, Scotland, and elsewhere). These principles and practices could and should also be applied in other parts of the world.

References

Baskin, G. (2002) *The Oslo Peace Process – Lessons Learned.* http://www.mideastweb.org/log/archives/00000017.htm Accessed: 30-01-2015.

Bibó, I. (1976) *The Paralysis of International Institutions and the Remedies. A Study of Self-Determination, Concord among the Major Powers, and Political Arbitration.* Hassocks, UK: Harvester Press.

Bibó, I. (1986) A kelet-európai kisállamok nyomorúsága (The Misery of the East European Small States). In Bibó, I. *Válogatott tanulmányok II.* (Selected Essays II.) Budapest: Magvető. 158-265.

Bibó, I. (1990a*)* A nemzetközi államközösség bénultsága és annak orvosságai – Önrendelkezés, nagyhatalmi egyetértés, politikai döntőbíráskodás (The Paralysis of the international community and its remedies. Self-determination, concord among the great powers, political arbitration). In Bibó, I. *Válogatott tanulmányok IV.* (Selected Essays IV.) 1935-1979, Budapest: Magvető. 283-681.

Bibó, I. (1990b) Észak-Írország kérdése egy lehetséges pártatlan politikai döntőbírósági döntés fényében. (The question of Northern-Ireland in light of a possible impartial political arbitration). In Bibó, I. *Válogatott tanulmányok IV.* (Selected Essays IV.) 1935-1979, Budapest: Magvető. 683-710.

Bibó, I. (2013) Document. The Dispute over Cyprus: Facts and Interpretations. *European Review.* 21 (4): 564-593.

Bunce, V. (1999) Peaceful versus Violent State Dismemberment: A Comparison of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia. *Politics and Society.* 27 (2): 217-237.

Carpenter, T. G. (2011) Time to Reconsider Partition for Bosnia. *European Affairs,* The European Institute, http://www.europeaninstitute.org/index.php/118-european-affairs/ea-february-2011/1242-time-to-reconsider-partition-for-bosnia Accessed: 30-01-2015.

Cassese, A. (1995) *Self-Determination of Peoples: A Legal Reappraisal.* Hersch Lauterpacht Memorial Lecture Series. Cambridge, MA and New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Cohen, T. (May 20, 2011) Obama calls for Israel's return to pre-1967 borders. CNN, http://edition.cnn.com/2011/POLITICS/05/19/obama.israel.palestinians/ Accessed: 30-01-2015.

Cyprus Mail (January 12, 2014) Our View: Gas role in talks the latest in long line of fantasies. http://cyprus-mail.com/2014/01/12/our-view-gas-role-in-talks-the-latest-in-long-line-of-fantasies/ Accessed: 30-01-2015.

Dénes I. Z. (ed.) (2012): *Bibó 100. Recepciók, értelmezések, alkalmazási kísérletek.* (Bibó 100. Receptions, Interpretations, Attempts at Application) (Eszmetörténeti Könyvtár 17). Budapest: Argumentum Kiadó – Bibó István Szellemi Műhely. 392-406.

Dénes, I. Z. (2013) Bibó István ellenálló és embermentő tevékenysége 1944-ben. (István Bibó – a resistant saving lives in 1944). *Aetas,* 28 (4): 131-144.

Dobrovits M. A. (2002): Idegenként összezárva – Bibó István esettanulmányai Észak-Írország, Ciprus és Izrael konfliktusairól (Strangers, held together – The case studies of István Bibó on the conflicts of Northern Ireland, Cyprus and Israel). *Világosság,* 43 (2-3): 32-55.

Doyle, D. H. (2010) (ed.) *Secession as an International Phenomenon – From America's Civil War to Contemporary Separatist Movements.* Athens, GA and London, UK: University of Georgia Press.

Downes, A. (2001) The Holy Land Divided: Defending Partition as a Solution to Ethnic Wars. *Security Studies,* Summer. 10 (4): 58-116.

Hannum, H. (1996) *Autonomy, Sovereignty, and Self-Determination: The Accommodation of Conflicting Rights.* Rev. ed. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Jenne, E. K. (2009) The Paradox of Ethnic Partition: Lessons from de facto Partition in Bosnia and Kosovo. *Regional and Federal Studies.* 19 (2): 273-289.

Kaufmann, Ch. (1996) Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Wars. *International Security.* 20 (4): 136-75.

Kaufmann, Ch. (1998) When all Else Fails: Ethnic Population Transfers and Partitions in the Twentieth Century. *International Security,* 23 (2): 120-56.

Kardos G. (2004): Bibó István nemzetközi konfliktuselmélete. A ciprusi, a közel-keleti és az északír konfliktus (István Bibó's international relations theory. The Cyprus, the Middle-East, and the Northern Ireland Conflicts). *Rubicon,* 15 (142): 47-49.

Ker-Lindsay, J. (September 3, 2007) *The unmentionable solution – part 2.* http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2007/sep/03/theunmentionablesolution part2 Accessed: 30-01-2015.

Khan, R. (November 18, 2010) *Cyprus: time for formal partition?* Al-Jazeera. http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/rizkhan/2010/11/2010111792144257228.html Accessed: 30-01-2015.

Kovács, G. (2004) *Az európai egyensúlytól a kölcsönös szolgáltatások társadalmáig. Bibó István, a politikai gondolkodó.* (From European Balance of Powers to the Society of Mutual Services. István Bibó, the Political Thinker) (Eszmetörténeti Könyvtár 3). Budapest: Argumentum Kiadó – Bibó István Szellemi Műhely

Molnár G. (2011): Egy „új" Bibó-tanulmány elé (Foreword to a „new" Bibó-essay) *Korunk*, (7) 37-40.

Morse, E. L. (1977) The Paralysis of International Institutions and the Remedies by Istvan Bibo. Capsule Review. Foreign Affairs, January. http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/30870/edward-l-morse/the-paralysis-of-international-institutions-and-the-remedies Accessed: 30-01-2015.

Sadowski, Y. (1998) Ethnic conflict. *Foreign Policy*, (111): 12-23.

Sambanis, N. (2000) Partition as a Solution to Ethnic War. An Empirical Critique of the Theoretical Literature. *World Politics,* 52 (4): 437-483.

Shavit, A. (2001) Interview with Yossi Beilin on the Oslo Peace Process. *Haaretz*, June 15.

Siroky, D. S. and J. Cuffe (2015) Lost Autonomy, Nationalism and Separatism. *Comparative Political Studies.* 48 (1): 3-34.

Schweitzer, A. (2005) A négyszer megoldott Izrael/Palesztina konfliktus es korunk "rejtett kérdése" (The Four-Times Settled Israel/Palestine Conflict and the "Hidden Question" of Our Age). *Külügyi Szemle*, 4 (3-4): 152-175. Translated and published in English at https://www.academia.edu/4822161/Andras_Schweitzer_The_Four-times_Resolved_Israel_Palestine_Conflict_and_the_Hidden_Question_of_Our_Times Accessed: 30-01-2015.

Schweitzer A. (2009) Ciprus és a közel-keleti konfliktus – Bibó István rendezési elképzelései mai szemmel (Cyprus and the Middle East conflicts. István Bibó's concepts for settlement in retrospect). *Mediterrán Világ*, (12): 169-184.

Tomuschat, Ch. (1993) Self-determination in a Post-colonial World In Tomuschat, Ch. (ed.) *Modern Law of Self-Determination.* Developments in International Law, v. 16. Dordrecht and Boston, MA: M. Nijhoff Publishers.

Winmer, A. (2013) States of War. How the Nation-State Made Modern Conflict. *Foreign Affairs,* 7th November http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/140245/andras-winmer/states-of-war Accessed: 30-01-2015.

Wolff, S. (2003) *The Transnational Dynamics of Ethnic Conflict Settlement. Disputed Territories. Studies in Ethnopolitics.* New York, NY and Oxford, UK: Berghahn Books.

Book Review

Bohle, Dorothee & Greskovits, Béla. Capitalist Diversity on Europe's Periphery. London: Cornell University Press. 2012.

The different paths of transformation from state socialism to capitalism followed by countries in the East Central European (ECE) region are often evaluated in the media in a rather simplistic manner. Such evaluations tend to divide countries into successful and laggard ones based on their economic indicators, usually GDP per capita (Simonovits, 2012; Pogátsa, 2014). However, the recently increased attention of political economists in the region's welfare regimes produced more accurate analyses of transformation patterns in the region, enabling a more nuanced judgment of the post-socialist development of certain countries in the region.

Compared to other writings published on the topic (Buchen, 2006; Myant and Drahokoupil, 2014), Bohle and Greskovits's work undoubtedly provides the most sophisticated analysis of welfare regimes in the ECE region that is based on firm theoretical groundings and a wide variety of data; it is also well-structured and clear. A hexagonal diagram illustrating the "scores" of different countries in the six indices of welfare state typology and numerous tables enhance theoretical clarity.

It should be acknowledged that although authors developed their typology of welfare states based on Esping-Andersen's (1990) classic categorisation (corporatist, liberal, social democratic), they were not afraid to modify the typology and adapt it to the region by categorising countries into corporatist, neoliberal and embedded neoliberal regimes, signalling the significant influence of neoliberalism on welfare state formation in the region. The decision not to categorise Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia also appears wise, as these countries are still undergoing a significant restructuring process and it is rather uncertain which category they will belong to, or whether they will eventually form a new category.

The authors present an intriguing diagnosis of the significant influence of neoliberalism on policy-making in the region. One of their most striking points is that despite the often nationalist rhetoric of governments, the Visegrád states compete for foreign direct investment (FDI) by offering large subsidies to transnational companies (TNCs). Since, as described by Böröcz (2012) and Éber (2014), supplies of production mostly come from core countries, the main benefit of attracting TNCs is that they offer employment. To put it bluntly, the population of the Visegrád countries pay large sums to TNCs in order to be provided with employment opportunities that are more stable than those offered by sweatshop production or by domestic companies suffering from a lack of capital and a low level of productivity. In a similar manner, taxpayers pay for unstable employment opportunities with bad working conditions in Romania and Bulgaria, ranked lower in the global hierarchy.

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 168-172.

BOOK REVIEW: BOHLE, DOROTHEE – GRESKOVITS, BÉLA. CAPITALIST DIVERSITY ON EUROPE'S PERIPHERY. LONDON: CORNELL UNIVERSITY PRESS. 2012.

169

Unsupported statements

Awarded the Stein Rokkan Prize, the book's significance for political economy is beyond dispute and it has the potential to, and most certainly will, serve as a basis for future comparative research in the region. However, it is exactly the high likeliness of the theory's wide applicability in the future that makes the deficiencies of Bohle and Greskovits's welfare regime typology worth highlighting.

Above all, data sets applied by the authors and conclusions drawn from them demand critical examination. It is hard to tell whether it is the lack of available and internationally comparable data on income transfers and public services in the region, or whether it is the authors' deliberate choice to limit the amount of data sets used in their research which accounts for the deficiencies in the book's empirical grounding. In any case, the data sets clearly do not suffice to support some of the authors' statements.

For example, measuring institutional capacities for opening and regulating markets based on the European Bank for Regional Development's indices such as "annual advance of reforms" or level of privatisation, price liberalisation, etc. (p. 25-29) can be misleading, due to the limited information these indices reveal about the competence and ability of the state to shape economic development.

As is mentioned in the book, Romania's and Bulgaria's economic regulatory institutions were set up as based on the recommendations of the IMF after the economic crisis in 2008 (p. 252-253), and yet these countries did not necessarily have the capacity and the possibility to tailor these institutions to their specific needs, let alone operate them successfully. In many countries, institutions were developed and economic reforms were conducted in a similar manner at the time of the regime change, and it is uncertain whether the mere implementation of reforms and the creation of certain institutions alone can inform us about a country's institutional capacity.

Another limitation stemming from the empirical grounding of the theory concerns the measurement of welfare spending. The study is based mostly on data on the extent of welfare spending, but the authors do not analyse the structure of welfare spending in depth (p. 35). Evaluating the differences between Baltic and Visegrád countries in the target groups (the former providing only meagre transfers to the elderly and the Russian minority), the authors do not refer to data on welfare transfers by different social groups, and therefore the authors' finding about the benefits of an embedded neoliberal welfare state as compared to a purely neoliberal one is questionable. Although targeting the middle class in the welfare redistribution of embedded neoliberal regimes is mentioned (p. 30, 154 and 160), its extent would have been worth presenting.

The authors' argument that the extensive welfare spending of the Visegrád states protected masses of people from falling into poverty following the regime change might be brought into doubt if more detailed data sets were analysed with regard to poverty rate by social strata, ethnicity, or the target groups of welfare spending. Bohle and Greskovits do make a few statements about target groups, and

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 168-172.

BOOK REVIEW: BOHLE, DOROTHEE – GRESKOVITS, BÉLA. CAPITALIST DIVERSITY ON EUROPE'S PERIPHERY. LONDON: CORNELL UNIVERSITY PRESS. 2012.

170

yet they appear as rather marginal statements in the overall judgement of the functioning of the respective welfare states (p. 160).

For example, data presented by the authors does not show whether the poorest are less protected from homelessness, or are provided with worse healthcare services, etc., in the Baltic countries than they are in the Visegrád countries. Instead, the higher unemployment rate of Estonian Russians and the high at-risk-of-poverty rate of the elderly in Estonia are presented as proof of the nationalist and neoliberal social contract in the Baltic. It is unlikely that the extreme segregation and impoverishment of disadvantaged groups in the Visegrád countries, probably manifest in its most extreme form in Slovakia's infamous 'Roma settlements', can be found in the Baltic states in the same way.

Applying a wider variety of data would definitely have given the theory a firmer grounding, yet it must be highlighted that obtaining comparable data on e.g. redistribution and institutional capacity in eleven ECE countries is difficult. Still, the limitations of the theory stemming from such difficulties would have been worth indicating.

Historical overdetermination

The authors devote a considerable part of their book to providing an explanation for the causes of distinct welfare state development in ECE countries. Since they focus on the countries' institutional and economic capacities (i.e. capacity of the political leadership and experts, skills of the workforce, industrial profile during state socialism) in their theory, it does not come as a surprise that they primarily consider economic and political history as the main determining factor of a country's development path.

The elaborate historical analysis is definitely the most valuable and empirically the richest part of the book, and history undoubtedly played an important role in the countries' post-socialist development. However, it appears from the book that the authors play down other factors in their theory, such as geography or electoral systems.

Geographical underdetermination

The lack of acknowledgement of the decisive role of geography in the rather similar development patterns of countries within one region is striking, especially since the authors' grouping of countries is based on geographic blocs. It is a weakness of the book that it does not evaluate countries by the characteristics of their trade, their proximity and connectedness to certain countries of the economic core, for example Germany, but largely provides historical explanations for welfare state formation in East-Central Europe.

This tendency primarily stems from the fact that the authors see geographic aspects in a rather limited way. For example, they refer to Finnish Nokia's and Swedish Electrolux's decision to locate their factories in the Visegrád countries instead of the Baltic, closer to their headquarters, as evidence of the inapplicability of

BOOK REVIEW: BOHLE, DOROTHEE – GRESKOVITS, BÉLA. CAPITALIST DIVERSITY ON EUROPE'S PERIPHERY. LONDON: CORNELL UNIVERSITY PRESS. 2012.

171

geographical explanations (p. 263). However, it is rather obvious that such a view, perceiving geographically advantageous locations exclusively in terms of their proximity to headquarters of TNCs, is rather simplistic and not able to explain the choices by TNCs regarding the location of their production sites. Proximity to and, above all, accessibility by main suppliers should not be ignored when looking for the reasons for the location choices of TNCs.

Electoral systems

The authors underpin their welfare state typology by distinguishing countries based on their political stability. However, they tend not to pay attention to the role that electoral systems have played in the countries' development.

As is common sense in political science, there is a high likeliness of the emergence of a volatile party system in a country which uses proportional representation in its electoral system, while in an electoral system based on constituencies (e.g. in Hungary) a stable party system is likely to be established. Accordingly, in the parliaments of Slovakia (and recently the Czech Republic), new parties appear much more frequently and governments are much less stable than in Hungary or Poland. An electoral system based on constituencies and limiting the ability of new parties to run for elections increases the chance of the stabilisation of two monolithic political blocks, political alternation, and fierce party competition.

Although the authors present "cut-throat party competition" as the main reason for Hungary's inability to conduct reforms and respond to economic challenges, the country's electoral system is not mentioned among the reasons for such political development. Similarly, even though Slovakia is categorised as an embedded neoliberal welfare state with a stable electoral system, in fact it is rather volatile: top politicians switch parties, establish new ones, or new politicians emerge rather frequently.

Despite its weaknesses, *Capitalist Diversity on Europe's Periphery* provides an excellent analysis of East-Central European countries. Its authors could have considered applying a wider set of data, examining a few more factors in explaining development paths, and clearly indicating the book's limits and choices made in research. Nevertheless, *Capitalist Diversity on Europe's Periphery* is an outstanding work which raises important questions and sets out relevant themes for further research.

Bence Kováts (bence.kovats@yahoo.com),
PhD student, Corvinus University of Budapest

References

Böröcz, J. (2012) Hungary in the European Union. 'Catching Up', Forever. *Economic and Political Weekly*. 47 (23): 22-25.

Buchen, C. (2007) Estonia and Slovenia as antipodes. In: D. Lane and M. Myant (eds.) *Varieties of Capitalism in Post-Communist Countries, Basingstoke*: London, UK: Palgrave Macmillian. 65-89.

Éber, M. Á. (2014) A centrum hitele. A Magyar állam külső eladósodásának történetéről. *Fordulat*, 21 (1): 64-84.

Esping-Andersen, G. (1990) *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Oxford, UK: Polity Press.

Simonovits, G. (2012) Túl jó volt nekünk a Kádár-rendszer. *Index*, 14 January. Available at: http://index.hu/gazdasag/vilag/2012/01/14/balti_modell/ Accessed: 14-06-2015.

Myant, M. and J. Drahokoupil (2014) *Putting Comparative Capitalism Research in its Place: Varieties of Capitalism in Transition Economies*. 14 February. Social Science Research Network [online], Available at: http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1561944%20 Accessed: 14-06-2015.

Pogátsa, Z. (2014) Tényleg elhúztak az észtek? *Világgazdaság Online*, 11 December. Available at: http://www.vg.hu/velemeny/publicisztika/tenyleg-elhuztak-az-esztek-440484 Accessed: 14-06-2015

Book Review

Hrzenjak, Majda (ed.). Politics of Care. Ljubljana: Peace Institute. 2011.

While conservative discourses about population decline and ageing society dominate the political agenda in many countries of the European Union, including Hungary, there is less dialogue about the unrecognized forms of care work which are almost exclusively carried out by women. The book 'Politics of Care', edited by Majda Hrzenjak, aims to shift attention to the wide array of care activities and the needs of different social groups that are affected by the care arrangements in societies, including local and migrant women, women from different class backgrounds, and the recipients of care services (children and the elderly).

In the introduction, Hrzenjak emphasizes the importance of applying a social justice approach when discussing care. She argues that, in order to organize care in such a way that it does not exclude care givers or care receivers from society, policy-makers need to have a social rights-based approach towards care. This approach involves securing labour rights for care givers and labour and social rights for both care givers and care receivers, and creating a system based on gender equality, in which women and men equally participate in care work. The social justice approach is thus based on the recognition of care work as both productive and indispensable in society, not marginal and derogatory.

The chapters of the book analyze the main perspectives of decision-makers regarding care work, the claims and needs of care givers and care receivers, and offer recommendations for a social care system that would recognize care activities and the rights of the citizens to care, labour, and social rights.

In the first chapter, Fiona Williams explains that there are two main approaches to care work in European politics: the social justice and the social investment approach. Williams argues that the social investment approach, which dominates care politics in the EU countries, fails to achieve the social integration of women, who, as family members or employees, perform the care activities. While the social investment approach seeks to integrate women into the labour market instead of the informal care activities they carry out as family members (mothers, grandmothers, daughters, etc.), the actual labour integration policies of this approach lead to the privatization of care activities and to the employment of informal care workers from lower classes, usually also migrants, in households for very low salaries. The social investment approach is based on the idea of increasing citizens' productivity and employability through taking parental leave, while the social justice approach conceptualizes care and a fair care regime for both care givers and receivers as citizenship rights. According to Williams, only through a shift from the social investment to the social justice approach could a fair organization of care activities be achieved in society. The social justice approach entails five major claims through

Intersections. East European Journal of Society and Politics, 1 (2): 173-176.

Book Review: Hrzenjak, Majda (ed.). Politics of Care. Ljubljana: Peace Institute. 2011.

174

which such a just care organization can be created: "gender equality claims for work/care reconciliation policies"; "trade union support for flexible working"; "support for disabled people"; "recognition of unpaid carers"; "advocacy for transnational care workers" (Williams, 2011: 20). Williams argues that by fulfilling these claims, all care activities would be recognized and rewarded.

In the second chapter Elin Peterson comes to similar findings by comparing the care regime in Southern European and Nordic countries, focusing on Spain and Sweden. She argues that, while Nordic countries, even if governed by conservative parties, focus on gender equality in care activities, this claim is almost completely non-existent in the care policies of other European countries. She also concludes that in terms of the recognition of work/life balance struggles the Nordic "feminist welfare states" are very progressive. However, like Williams, she criticizes all European welfare states for not dealing with class differences and exploitative forms of care work.

In the third chapter, Haskova, Uhde and Pulkrabkova analyze the different ways NGOs frame care work and desirable care policies. They focus on four types of NGOs which advocate for social groups affected by the care regime: majority women's NGOs; gender-conservative NGOs; NGOs advocating for migrants; and Roma people. The analysis shows that the only framework where there is a lot of shared understanding is the framework of redistribution, since all NGOs advocate for more state support for care activities. There is, however, no consensus in the case of the gender equality framework, since gender-conservative and Roma advocacy groups emphasize traditional family values instead of gender equality, while NGOs working with migrants do not concentrate on the issue of gender inequalities in relation to the social integration of migrant people.

In chapter four, Widding Isaksen and Stenum follow up on this intersectional approach by analyzing how the au pair system in Western European countries, initially established as a form of cultural exchange for young people, actually became a form of exploitative, underpaid work activity for migrant women. They emphasize the responsibility of trade unions and the ILO (International Labour Organization) to advocate for the often undocumented, underpaid migrant "au pairs" and for exploited workers, too, even though they are not formally hired through work contracts and therefore are not members of unions.

While the first part of the book concentrates on Southern, Western and Northern Europe, the fifth chapter, written by Hrzenjak and Humer, focuses on Slovenia, where informal, low-paid and unrecognized care work is not done by migrant care workers, like in Western Europe, but by local women. They argue that lower-class women and women who migrated to Slovenia from other post-Yugoslav countries during the war, and who are employed as care workers in the grey economy, face the same exploitative work conditions even though they did not migrate as care workers to Slovenia from poorer countries. Hrzenjak and Humer also emphasize that care work is not a homogenous activity, and while many women perceive it as

INTERSECTIONS. EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS, 1 (2): 173-

BOOK REVIEW: HRZENJAK, MAJDA (ED.). POLITICS OF CARE. LJUBLJANA: PEACE INSTITUTE. 2011.

175

degrading and do it out of desperation, for a lot of women it is a meaningful job, one that cannot merely be reduced to housework, since it involves emotional labour as well.

The next two chapters also emphasize the complexity of care work that has to be taken into consideration by policy-makers. The sixth chapter, written by Kreimer, analyzes home-care schemes in Austria, where care work is subsidized through cash transfers to the care recipients. Due to the low value of these transfers, most families can only afford informal care workers, who are not trained care workers. Kreimer argues that a clear definition of what care work entails, including home help and medical help, as well as higher allowances paid to care receivers, would together secure a high quality of care and promote gender equality.

In the last chapter of the book, Lanoix argues that care work is organized on a Fordist basis in a post-Fordist (service- and knowledge-based) economy. Care workers are poorly paid and unrecognized, while care work is perceived as housework done by interchangeable, assembly-line workers. This regime ignores the emotional and relational labour that care work entails. According to Lanoix, recognizing the actual value in care work would be the first step towards resolving the "care crisis" (the tension between the issues of an ageing society, women's integration into the labour market, and invisible, exploitative care work conditions).

"Politics of Care" provides a great insight into the dilemmas of care work in different parts of Europe, and the interrelations of the care, gender, and migration regimes, while it also highlights the importance of class and ethnic dynamics in the organization of care activities. The chapters address not only the responsibilities of the state in care politics, but also the responsibilities of other important social actors: the EU, local and international NGOs, and trade unions. They do not exclusively focus on welfare policies, but also deal with the political ideas about care, gender and class equality, and migration which frame those policies by recognizing or un-recognizing certain types of care and care givers.

The analyses offer many examples and explanations of why care policies without an intersectional understanding of care work and a social justice approach can fail both care givers, who do invisible or poorly paid work, and care receivers, who cannot afford care or receive low quality services.

Since there are numerous insights into care activities and care policies in different countries, there are also some contradictions and unanswered questions that remain unaddressed at the end of the book. Care work is a complex policy area, and a concluding chapter would have been very useful to address or at least pinpoint the dilemmas regarding care. In addition, based on the findings of all the chapters, it could have clarified exactly what kinds of policy the social justice approach should involve.

While all chapters emphasize that the now invisible, informal or poorly paid forms of care work should gain public recognition and that the redistribution of care work and resources should be more generous, there are no clear recommendations about what kinds of redistributive policy would provide more recognition. Kreimer argues that the allowances provided for care receivers to hire care workers should be more generous, while Williams and Peterson put more emphasis on more formal services being provided by the state instead of home-care workers being hired directly by care receivers.

It also remains unclear whether the social justice approach should entail the same elements in different European welfare states. In countries like Austria, Spain, the Czech Republic and Slovenia, care work is framed as an informal domestic activity for which family members are responsible, and people are reluctant to use state services. Meanwhile Nordic countries are more concerned about care and gender equality and the state's role in providing care services. Yet there are no clear answers in the book to the following questions: can privatized home care or direct subsidies to care receivers be part of a system of social justice approach towards care? What kinds of public service would such a system entail? Do all services need to be publicly provided without private partnerships? Overall, there are many questions about the redistribution and recognition of care that could have been addressed in a concluding chapter.

Moreover, there is also an unresolved policy dilemma about migrant work and care work in the chapters. While they all highlight the exploitative nature of the care work that migrant care workers do, they do not explain how both the care and migration regimes in European countries and in the countries of origin should be transformed in order to offer labour and social rights to migrant care workers. Widding Isaksen and Stenum emphasize the role of trade unions and ILO regarding the labour rights of migrant care workers. However, the fact that illegal care workers are exploited in the grey economy is to a large extent due to the migration regime. Stricter labour regulations therefore would not necessarily stop illegal migrant care work, but could lead to the stricter policing of illegal migrant workers.

To conclude, 'Politics of Care' provides a great insight into European policies affecting care work, a detailed critique of the dominant social investment approach towards care, and an outline of a social justice approach. It is an intersectional analysis of all aspects of care and all social groups involved in care politics. Some questions remain, however, about the systems of redistribution and the recognition of care, the specificities a regime based on the social justice approach would entail, and the contradictions of strict labour regulations and the migration regime – all questions that a concluding chapter could have addressed.

Katalin Ámon [amonkata@gmail.com],
Central European University, Center for Policy Studies