

10

Post-Communist Democratization and the Practice of Sociology in Central and Eastern Europe¹

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INTRODUCTION: STUDYING CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE AND ITS SOCIOLOGY

For a little more than a decade now, since the very beginning of the post-Communist era in Europe, we have been systematically investigating the transformations of sociology in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). Our own approach has been a combination of the 'emic' and 'etic' (insider's and outsider's observations). We have been interested in the ways sociology in individual countries and in the whole region was shaped by structural conditions and in the ways sociology tried to influence the development of individual societies.

In the early 1990s, we began a research project on the history of sociology of the region starting with the so-called 'Khrushchev's thaw', to the beginnings of the post-1988 transformations. The results were published in the US in 1994 (Keen and Mucha, 1994), and in Poland in 1995, in Polish. One of the 'failures' of sociology of the region prior to the transformation is considered to

be that it did not anticipate the collapse of the Communist system. However, generally speaking, political restrictions on the topics addressed and on the publication of findings were very strong, although sometimes applied in an uneven manner. Therefore, it was very difficult, and in many countries virtually impossible, to study empirically and theoretically the phenomena which would lead to such a transformation. It was impossible to freely publish the findings and to start a public discussion on actual social processes. What is perhaps more interesting is that even free Western political sciences and sociology did not anticipate the collapse.

We would like to make two qualifications before continuing. First, in this paper we do not intend to deal in depth with comparisons between Western and Eastern European sociology, then and now. Second, we do not believe that sociology, and particularly macro-sociology, is a 'natural science' that could precisely predict future events. We believe that only some trends can be extrapolated. What we mean by the 'failure' to anticipate transformations is

that the sociology of 1956–89 was not able to recognize the tensions within the European Communist societies and their potential for radical social change.

Many structural and often dramatic changes took place during this period. Some political units ceased to exist, i.e., the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Union. New nation-states emerged out of the ruins of old ones, and even now the nation-building processes are not complete in the region. The futures of Bosnia Hercegovina and Serbia's historic province of Kosovo, populated overwhelmingly by Albanians and now practically a UN protectorate, of Albania, Macedonia, and even of Ukraine (with her still strong division between the Russian-speaking eastern part and the Ukrainian-speaking western part) are not clear. Other dramatic changes have occurred within individual Eastern and Central European nations. These include rapid and often superficial political liberalization and democratization, economic transformation, an increasing role of market mechanisms and free competition, as well as their consequences: very high unemployment and the growing visibility of poverty. We have witnessed rapid Westernization (and particularly Americanization) of the popular culture, and a reappearance of strong ethnic tensions and overt ethnic conflicts.

We must also recognize changes resulting from world transformations: cultural and economic globalization with its positive and negative aspects, the Internet and the communications 'revolution', and most recently the war against terrorism with all its ramifications, including new answers to the old dilemma 'security versus freedom' and the redefinition of some ethnic groups' struggle for sovereignty.

HISTORY OF SOCIOLOGY IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE POST-WORLD WAR II

Societies and sociologies of CEE differed from each other in many respects.

Historically, some countries had developed fully, very complex social structures and national cultures, and some were rural and peasant societies. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, some were dominated by autocratic orthodox Russia, some by equally autocratic Islamic Turkey, others by politically and culturally tolerant Roman Catholic Austria–Hungary. Still others were partitioned between the then superpowers. Some had more, some less developed economies. In some, the dominant religious organization supported political organizations of foreign origin, in others, it opposed them and rather supported the national culture.

After 1948, not only the level of economic growth but also the character of economic structure differentiated these societies. In particular, the presence of small-scale private economic activity in agriculture, manufacturing, and the service sector seems to have been important. In some, religious culture and institutions opposing the Communist ideology were strong, in others they were not. In some, terror played an important role in public life until 1989, in others political domination was exercised using milder means.

In Poland, sociology had a very long and rich, non-Marxist intellectual and institutional tradition. In other countries of the region sociology actually emerged from Marxist historical materialism.² Even in Poland, however, where it was possible to continue non-Marxist traditions in purely theoretical social sciences, it was difficult to engage in public discussion with Marxism and with Communism.

During the period from 1948 to 1989, to some extent the situation in CEE resembled that of countries under colonial and authoritarian rule. Whether they had the internationally recognized 'political sovereignty', as in the case of Bulgaria, Hungary or Czechoslovakia, or did not, as in Estonia and Latvia, most societies in this region were totally dependent on the Soviet metropolis in the areas of domestic and international politics, economy, and culture. Exceptions were

Albania, Romania, and Yugoslavia. Individual freedom was not respected. There was no parliamentary democracy in the Western sense of the term. Although the region differed from those of African or Asian colonies, the population and culture (including social sciences) in the socialist 'metropolis' of the Soviet Union was as politically suppressed as those of the peripheries or semi-colonies.

Terror, indoctrination, and very strict political control made it barely possible either in the Soviet Union or in the rest of CEE to develop free culture, including freedom in the teaching of sociology, uncensored research projects, and uncensored publications. Quite a few sociologists were jailed or expelled from their countries, and the social sciences were placed under very strict surveillance. Political authorities needed descriptive social science and the information it might provide. Occasionally, they used this information in public administration. But they did not allow sociology to serve as a conscience of society and to play reflexive and critical functions other than revealing to the rulers, but not to the public, the consequences of their policies. Sociology, therefore, influenced public life, and was respected by some representatives of the political authorities; but free research teaching, and publication were forbidden.

SOCIOLOGY IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE SINCE 1989

In the year 2000, we began a second phase of our project, to investigate the achievements and failures of sociology in CEE during the decade that had passed since the systemic transformation (Keen and Mucha, 2003). In this new phase, we asked our collaborators from sixteen countries of East-Central Europe³ to address the following questions:

1. Was 'de-Communization' of sociology an important issue in the internal politics of sociology?
2. What changes had occurred in the teaching of sociology, including new curricula and textbooks?
3. What were the relations between academic sociology on the one hand and public and private research centers on the other?
4. Which aspects of the socioeconomic transformation were considered to be the most important research problems?
5. Was nationalism and ethnicity an important research problem?
6. What happened to the former research and teaching cooperation with other CEE scholars?
7. What did research and teaching cooperation with Western sociology look like?
8. Were sociologists involved in local and national politics?
9. Were sociologists considered and consulted as experts by the governing bodies at local and national levels?
10. How was research and teaching financed?

We believe that the 'sociological transformation' was not only a reaction to recent structural changes in the whole region and in individual societies, but also influenced by the different historically rooted cultures, the economic systems that existed before Communism and during the period 1948–88, and the ways in which the Communist system was actually administered in individual countries.

It was not possible in the reports we eventually received to devote as much attention to each of these issues that they deserved. In addition, we cannot adequately address all of those here, in a paper as short as this. Therefore, in this presentation, we concentrate on only three aspects of the post-1989 transformation of sociology in the region. Other issues are discussed in Keen and Mucha, 2004.⁴

The first of the three aspects is the political and intellectual milieu of post-1988 sociology. From our understanding, the post-1988 political and intellectual milieu was determined by two factors: the hypothetical presence of a political atmosphere 'demanding' de-Communization of the public sphere, including sociology; and the decreasing role, and even condemnation, of Marxism

in intellectual discourse. The second aspect concerns the widespread development of teaching sociology in the universities at the undergraduate, as well as at graduate, MA, and PhD levels. The third aspect is emergence of new research areas, not available before 1989.

'DE-COMMUNIZATION' AND 'DE-MARXIZATION' OF SOCIOLOGY

We are fully aware of the fact that Marxism and Soviet, as well as Romanian and Yugoslavian, styles of Communism are analytically two different things. However, during the period 1948–88, Marxism was considered by most of the parties involved, i.e., the ruling elites, the general public, and a large number of sociologists, to be one and the same as Communist ideology. This 'Marxism–Communism identification' was not deconstructed after 1988, and the criticism of Communism implied a criticism of Marxism. However, de-Communization and de-Marxization of sociology had their peculiarities in individual countries to the extent that Communism and Marxism meant different things in each of them.

People who carefully followed the heated political debates which took place on Communism in CEE during late 1980s and early 1990s would be surprised to see to what little extent 'de-Communization' affected sociology. There were, in our opinion, good reasons why 'de-Communization' was not radical. We believe that the most important of them were the slow but significant ideological and political transformations in some CEE countries which had already taken place in the mid-1980s (Hungary and Poland), before the systemic transformations at the end of the 1980s; the nearly completely a-theoretical character of the 'Soviet Marxism' which, in addition to political control, did not stimulate public theoretical and ideological debates and did not encourage scholars to be loyal to this particular way of thinking;

the avoidance of theoretical debates under socialism, as a scientific communication strategy used to provide for the protection of the sociological community against political interference; a rapid growth in the demand for sociology teachers following 1989, allowing senior professors in sociology to easily find employment whatever their former political and ideological orientation; other, more important ideological issues which displaced the Marxist debate, first and foremost the meaning of liberalism after Communism, as well as postmodernism.

During the socialist (Communist) period, nearly everything, and especially sociology, was subordinated to the political authorities. Many sociologists belonged to the Communist Party, either persuaded by the leftist ideology or due to the fact that Party membership helped in promotion. However, in Poland the proportion of sociologists was much smaller than in other social disciplines, such as economics and philosophy. In this country, real Party control over sociology decreased at the beginning of 1980 (but not outside the academic centers of Warsaw, Cracow or Poznan), after the 'Solidarity' revolution. In many other countries this control decreased in the mid-1980s as a result of the 'perestroika' effect. In Czechoslovakia, it only let up in 1989. In many countries, where over-representation of Marxism was mandatory in university courses and in publications, it was institutionally enforced. In Poland, for instance, many works were published on Marxism and in the 'Marxist spirit'; they were apologetic and not at all critical. Theoretical research, as well as large empirical research projects, were politically and financially supported (although not solely in Poland or Hungary) above all when they were carried out within the Marxist frameworks. According to our Lithuanian author, in that nation Marxist Communist ideology enforced on sociologists a utopian model of man, censorship, and institutionalized lies, bureaucratic as well as utopian management of scholarly work, and were neither scholarly nor socially significant or relevant

research topics. Other scholars from post-Soviet Europe underline the fact that in their pre-1989 empirical sociology, Marxist quotations were politically enforced, but what really mattered for sociologists was empirical merit, methodological quality, and statistical significance. An important consequence, say the Estonian authors, was the complete lack of theoretical debates and interpretations of research findings. Polish scholars stressed that the former system's important consequence was the politically enforced absence of some topics, such as systemic change, political organization of society, and cultural differentiation of society. In Czechoslovakia, it was forbidden even to read Western sociological publications. In Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia, many scholars lost their research and teaching jobs when they were officially defined as deviating from the 'Party line'.

All of this changed in the second half of the 1980s, although in some countries only at the very end of this period. The most significant changes were of an institutional character. Communist Party academies educating party functionaries, some of which granted academic degrees in sociology, were dissolved and many older professors of sociology and other disciplines retired. Others, however, found teaching jobs in newly emerging institutions of higher education. In Yugoslavia, the 'Marxist' centers were closed. Communist periodicals that had published Marxist oriented analyses were also closed. At the universities, former chairs and institutes of Marxism-Leninism were renamed into chairs and institutes of philosophy and/or sociology. It seems to us that this constituted the most significant actually existing 'de-Communization' that took place. The democratization of academic life that quickly followed disbanded the old institutional system once and for all.

What happened to Marxism? What happened to people who represented it? As we said above, in some countries a public sphere for non-Marxist interpretation of social worlds was allowed prior to 1989. Poland,

though not at the provincial universities, Hungary, Romania, and Yugoslavia were good examples. In Hungary, it was possible in the 1980s (but not earlier) to overtly criticize Marxist sociology of social structure. It was also possible to work in the Communist Party social research institute if one was not a Party member. It was not allowed to criticize the 'Party line' in public or abroad. Therefore, some of our collaborators, such as our Hungarian contributors, do not even mention Marxism when asked to identify the interesting theoretical approaches. In Poland, after the early 1980s, Marxism was no longer an issue for students majoring in sociology in the major academic centers mentioned above. Only after 1989, in the view of the Byelorussian and Bulgarian scholars, was there no longer a necessity to criticize so-called Western 'bourgeois science', and the theoretical basis of sociology broadened significantly.

On the whole, 'post-Soviet' sociology within Eastern and Central Europe found it quite easy to get rid of the Marxist labels and quotations. In some post-Yugoslavian countries, a bibliometric analysis was carried out, which showed that Marxist citations almost totally disappeared from sociological periodicals. In Yugoslavia, however, due to the famous, very critical Zagreb Praxis School in Marxism, active in the 1960s and 1970s (it was later dissolved and the scholars were either fired or jailed or exiled) Marxism was treated by many intellectuals quite seriously. Therefore, in Serbia, in the 1990s, there was a heated public debate on Marxism (the so-called *Marxismus Streit*) which revealed two positions from which Marxism was criticized: nationalistic and anti-nationalistic (liberal). According to some participants, however, this was not as much a discussion about Marxism, as one on Yugoslavian authoritarianism. Marxism was only a politically accepted guise. In Russia, after a few years of complete abandonment, Marxism has begun to return to sociology. Now, it is one of many theoretical perspectives which inform sociological research. Due to

the transition to a market economy, many scholars are particularly interested in the theory of alienation.

In Poland, today's mainstream sociological community accepts many sociologists who were active in the Communist Party until its dissolution in 1990. Several sociologists who had been academic teachers of a more or less apologetic Marxism continue to participate very actively in public discourse. Almost none of them continue his/her former Marxist interests. Many of them, in their research programs and university lectures, now stress the merits of Weberian theory, the virtues of economic liberalism, and of the 'social teaching' of the Roman Catholic Church. Only exceptionally do these former Marxists belong to the post-Communist party Alliance of Democratic Left. Nowadays, some of them have strong political connections with post-Solidarity, right-wing political parties. Today, some senior professors of sociology who used to be strongly allied to the senior Communist Party apparatus carry out very interesting and fruitful analyses of the processes of political democratization in Poland. They deal well with democracy and in democracy, in general and in central sociological institutions. They take important initiatives for the sociological community.

This lack of the 'deep de-Communization' of sociology has caused concern among some scholars who considered it to be an aspect of a more general lack of coming to terms with the socialist (Communist) past. A discussion of this problem was published in an influential right-wing daily, *Zycie*. A Polish sociology professor in Germany wrote in 1998 that there had been no debate in Poland on the relations between social sciences and Communism in this country after 1989: nobody was fired, nobody was criticized in public, and even the most corrupt were let off. In the next several issues of *Zycie*, the opinions of a small number of scholars of various pre-1989 biographies were published. They stressed that in 1998 it was too late to start any 'de-Communization' of

sociology, that Polish scholarly mediocrities had not been only of the Marxist character, and that now many sociological mediocrities represented clearly anti-Marxist views and could be found in the right-wing and pro-Church intellectual circles. They underlined the fact that ideological 'conversions' were natural consequences of deep social transformations and did not have to mean opportunism. It seems that not only in Poland but also in other CEE countries the full 'de-Communization' and 'de-Marxization' will come only with generational transition. Most probably, Marxism will reappear within the general spectrum of sociological theoretical and methodological orientations in Eastern and Central Europe.

NEW EDUCATION IN SOCIOLOGY

Sociology has been a university major in several CEE countries for decades. Until recently, the Soviet Union was an exception and it was only possible to study sociology there at the doctoral level. At the lower levels, some courses were offered (e.g., in Byelorussia) in empirical sociology and sociological research methods (mostly statistical), and the graduates who completed these courses could be employed as sociologists in the social research centers. Now, every university in the post-Soviet nation-states has a sociology program. Teachers are on the one hand researchers from the old time 'laboratories of empirical sociology', and on the other hand former lecturers of Marxism-Leninism and scientific Communism, though retrained through special courses.

The first graduates of sociology (at the MA level) came out of the post-Soviet universities in the mid-1990s. In Byelorussia, thirty first-year undergraduates are accepted every year out of one hundred to one hundred and twenty candidates. In Estonia (which is a very tiny nation) six hundred first-year undergraduates are accepted annually for the four-year BA program. A fraction of

graduates is accepted for a one-year MA program. PhD studies were completed abroad up to now, mainly in Finland. In Russia, there are 200,000 students taking courses in sociology. In the Ukraine, university education has four steps: BA, 'specialist', MA, PhD, and habilitation. Since the mid-1990s, about one hundred graduates (at the BA level) of sociology have completed their studies within private and public institutions of higher education. BA programs in sociology are quite new, emerging in the early 1990s as a way of coordinating the whole higher education system within the unifying Europe.

In the post-Soviet Slavic countries, their own new, as well as the new Russian language textbooks are studied. However, some Western texts are also translated into Russian and into national languages. The most popular Western authors are Neil Smelser and Anthony Giddens. In small non-Slavic nations, for instance in Estonia, in addition to Russian texts, Russian translations of Western books are used as texts.

Throughout CEE, sociology became very popular among students at both public and private schools, though less so than economics, business administration, management, political science, and law. As we mentioned above, old teachers of Marxism-Leninism who have the formal qualification (habilitation degree⁵) and are not yet of retirement age, participate in teaching. Students use both domestic and Western textbooks. In Romania, Poland, Hungary, and former Yugoslavia this was also the case before 1989. It seems to us that with the exception of some Polish universities, the curricula are relatively rigid and the proportion of mandatory courses is quite high. Students from many countries have taken advantage of the educational exchange programs of the European Union, first called Tempus, and later Erasmus/Socrates. The Open Society Institute (Soros Foundation) has been supporting both research and higher education programs.

There are various systems of university education in various countries, and sociological

studies are not organized in the same way throughout the region. We already mentioned the differences within the former Soviet Union. In Bulgaria, the system of education is based on the four-year BA program, and some graduates later take one year of the MA program. One can then enroll for the PhD program at the Academy of Science or at the University of Sofia. In Hungary, in Slovakia, and in Poland, as a rule, and there are many exceptions to this rule, regular studies entailed a five-year masters program. Now, they are in the process of changing into three levels – BA, MA, and PhD. In Hungary, two Budapest universities conduct a joint doctoral program. In Romania, the basic education is a four-year, though in some schools three-year, BA program, followed for a small number of students by three more semesters for the MA.

Let us look a little closer at the situation in Poland. It is to some extent unique, as any example would be, but it also reflects the transformation in teaching sociology in the whole region. There are many candidates in five-year MA programs in sociology (starting in 2007, three-year BA programs) at the public universities financed by the state. Sociology, as a major at MA level, has been expanded from a few traditional centers such as Warsaw, Cracow, Poznan, Katowice, Lublin, to several new academic centers. Now, nearly twenty public institutions of higher education, including all public universities, have at least BA programs. Sociology is also offered as a paid BA (and then MA) degree program for students in the 'non-public' Collegium Civitas in Warsaw and in the 'non-public' Warsaw School of Social Psychology. Similarly, a paid extramural three-year BA program is available for students in many other 'non-public' schools. At the BA and MA levels together, about 15,000 students are now majoring in sociology. Graduates of BA programs can, after an entrance exam, study sociology at the MA level at the same school from which they graduated. However, they may have to go to another school if they studied at one without an MA program in sociology.

As in the case of other attractive university disciplines, there are not enough senior professors in Poland to educate all of the students according to the state quality of education requirements. Therefore, many senior faculty members have several academic jobs. Young scholars' promotions are often delayed because they have no time to conduct the independent research that would lead them to the habilitation degree. There were also problems with Polish textbooks. Only since the beginning of the year 2000 have good original Polish textbooks begun to be published.

There are new specializations within the general major in sociology. The most important are 'social policy' and 'social work'. BA and MA programs in them are offered by public and private schools. These programs are usually paid by students and are extramural. An exceptional but important phenomenon is the post-graduate two-year interdisciplinary program in cultural and social gender identity – gender studies, offered initially only by the Institute of Applied Social Sciences of Warsaw University. This institute, along with the Institute of Sociology of the same school, also offers an MA program in sociology. Recently, the number of schools offering this program has increased.

Postgraduate studies in sociology are a relatively new phenomenon in Poland. They existed in some Polish universities before 1989, but have grown only recently. Before 1989, the universities employed research and teaching assistants with MA degrees who were expected to teach and to conduct research leading to a PhD. In addition to major universities, postgraduate studies in sociology were introduced in two private schools. PhD studies in sociology at the Department of Sociology of the Central European University, funded by the Soros Foundation (Warsaw Branch; it was later moved to Prague and then to Budapest) started in 1997. In the academic year 2000–01, there were twenty-six postgraduate students coming from eleven countries, mostly from CEE, but also from Mongolia

and Kyrgyzstan from post-Communist Asia. The Graduate School for Social Research at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences was founded in 1992. In the academic year 2000–01, one hundred and sixty-two students from seventeen countries studied philosophy and sociology, among them were ninety-nine Poles, twenty-five Ukrainians and ten Russians.

Polish scholars have tried very hard to maintain or even improve the quality of education in this new situation of dynamic development in higher education, though without the requisite infrastructure, e.g. lack of new teachers, textbooks, and lecture halls. A semi-formal process of accreditation of individual academic disciplines started in 1998, and has been carried out by the University Accreditation Commission, which is independent of the Ministry of Education. In 2000, sociology was accredited at eight public universities, i.e. in Poznan, Lodz, Warsaw, Cracow, Torun, Katowice, Lublin, and Wroclaw. This process of accreditation was preceded by activities of the Conference of the Institutes of Sociology (KIS), an informal body that has been analyzing and coordinating syllabi and teaching standards since the mid-1990s. At the beginning of the year 2000, a formal accreditation process of all academic disciplines began.

To conclude, the teaching of sociology in CEE has changed more in some countries than in others. The common features of the process have been a rapid growth in the number of students, inadequate infrastructure, attempts to build a system including BA, MA, and PhD levels of education, changes in the curricula in order to bring them closer to classic and modern sociological theoretical perspectives, and to the analysis of the most important social phenomena characteristic for the modern and post-modern world. For the region, international cooperation also seems to be important.

There currently seem to be no ideological limitations in teaching sociology.

Sociology is popular because it offers job opportunities. Social work and social policy have become much more important than before, due to the emergence of the market economy and the accompanying problems, to the fact that societies are growing older and because national and local policy-makers pay more and more attention to the problems of the population. Market economies and democratization of CEE societies demand specialists in market research, media research, and public opinion polls. Thanks to the spread of university teaching of sociology, CEE societies have become a little more reflexive.

NEW RESEARCH TOPICS

As presented above, the ideological system that dominated CEE until the late 1980s resulted in the absence of some crucial, relevant research topics, such as the political organization of society and its transformation, cultural differentiation, and minorities. Due to the ideologically legitimized vision of homogeneity and consensus, many problems had been previously neglected.

All this changed in the aftermath of 1989, and as mentioned above, in some countries even earlier. New research topics emerged for at least two reasons: the socioeconomic and political transformation in the region and its immediate consequence; and the liberation of sociology itself. These topics are new in the sense that either the social phenomena (the subject matter) did not exist before, or if they did exist but for various reasons, such as the lack of funding, the lack of political approval for the research project, the enforced 'blindness' of scholars which prevented them from seeing some phenomena, or their fear of political consequences if they applied for funds or approval to do research at all, were rarely or never studied, or they are now studied in new ways.

In the former Soviet Union, particularly in Estonia, Lithuania, and Byelorussia, mass

media research, sociology of youth and education, life course analysis, analysis of standards of living, and of ways of life (lifestyles) were carried out during the Communist period and are all still very popular. Hungarians and Poles still study the rural population. Slovenes study social services and quality of life, as they used to. Naturally, all these subjects are now studied with new perspectives, through theories developed in the West. Therefore, there is continuation in the subject matter but not necessarily in the methodology and theory.

Industrial conflict has always existed but was very rarely studied. Ethnic composition is nothing new in each individual country of CEE, but it was not popular as a subject matter of sociology. Different kinds of elites always existed but it seems to us that they had been analyzed only in Poland, and again, not in the frameworks in which they are currently studied. Women had always had their own specific problems, but they were not studied as such. There were neither 'women's studies' nor 'gender studies'. During the last decade, ethnicity and gender relations became legitimate and very trendy subjects for teaching and research. However, the latter is very often ridiculed by conservative scholars.

Three new thematic areas of research have emerged due to the transformation. The first is the analysis of the socioeconomic aspects of transformation. Of necessity, important topics for investigation became the privatization of state-owned enterprises and its social consequences; industrial relations in remaining state-owned enterprises – in enterprises sold to foreign investors – and in new private companies, domestic and foreign; the new labor market and different strategies adopted by different actors in this market; information technology and its social consequences; the dynamics of class structure, including class-building processes, change, and reproduction of economic elites; unemployment in its various aspects; and the new poverty.

The second area is the new, liberal, and democratic politics, such as analysis of

political parties, which, in the Western sense, did not exist before 1989, political, especially parliamentary, elites; voting behavior; civil society, and NGOs. The third area is culture: culture versus economy as the factor explaining everyday behavior and everyday social processes; religion in its new forms such as the institutionalization of the role of major denominations, public religious rituals, private religion, new religious movements, and new spirituality; and cultural trauma resulting from the transformations. We have already mentioned mass media and ethnicity above. A topic studied in several CEE countries, but not in all of them, has been regional CEE cooperation and the tensions arising from it, and European enlargement, in the context of aspirations of some societies towards the European Union.

There are also topics specific to certain countries. The catastrophe in the nuclear power plant in Chernobyl in the Ukraine in 1986 affected both that country and Byelorussia. Only after 1988 was it possible to analyze the social consequences of this tragedy. Post-Yugoslavian sociologists conduct war-related research, studying social and cultural aspects of the wars themselves, refugees, displaced persons, returnees, ethnic relations after the wars, and diaspora resulting from the wars. Czech sociologists analyze immigration to their country from Eastern Europe, and the dangers of xenophobia.

CONCLUSION

CEE sociology and its internal development reflects the systemic transformation of the whole region, including specific features in individual countries. It has also become a tool for analysis of the processes of transformation, and of social self-reflection, and self-analysis. Some lessons can be learned from the analysis of sociology in CEE, which we believe extend beyond the regional context. The trajectory of sociology and social

sciences in CEE can become a case on which to study other regions of the world that are also embarking on a complicated road to democracy and the free market. Moreover, the new trends highlighted in sociology of CEE can be models for study of other countries 'in transition'. Thus there is a possibility of developing a comparative analysis of various aspects of transition to democracy in varied social contexts.

Increasingly, sociology in CEE has become similar to Western sociology. However, it is not necessarily unilateral imitation. Certainly, it should, in our opinion, take advantage of the achievements of that sociology, its theories of various ranges, its various methodologies, and research experiences. The challenge to Western scholars is to assess whether a comparative study of social processes of CEE sociology can help them to rethink their own societies. The same should be the case for Western sociology, its generalizations, explanation, and hypotheses. European Union funded research projects known as Framework Programs bring together universities from various regions of Europe to stimulate international cooperation.

NOTES

1. This paper draws partly upon our article (Keen and Mucha, 2006).
2. Croatian, Czech, Romanian, and Slovenian pre-Marxist sociology had existed, though.
3. Denes Nemedi and Peter Robert from Hungary, Mikko Lagerspetz and Iris Pettai from Estonia, Bohumil Buzek and Eva Laiferova from Slovakia, Franc Mali from Slovenia, Karel Turza from Yugoslavia, Vyara Gantcheva from Bulgaria, Ognjen Caldarovic from Croatia, Vanda Rusetskaya and Olga Tereschenko from Byelorussia, Petre Georgievski and Mileva Gurovska from Macedonia, Miloslav Petrussek from the Czech Republic, Ilie Badescu and Radu Baltasiu from Romania, Valery Masurov and Michael Chernysh from Russia, Natalia Pohorila from the Ukraine, and Janusz Mucha from Poland.
4. We have also paid attention to the subjective, individual aspects of sociology as practiced in CEE (see Keen and Mucha, 2006). They will not be discussed in this paper.

5. Habilitation degree is a 'second doctorate', a traditional precondition for full professorship in a number of European countries.

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