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Disquieted Relations: West Meeting East in
Contemporary Sociological Research

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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’.

Keywords: state socialism, colonisation, East-West cooperation, Roma studies, second economy, citizenship, history of sociology

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 barriers¹ 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 discourse² – 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 hierarchisation 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-McCarthy-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 where 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 where a gradual expansion of the East-West cooperations took place prior to the regime change, namely in Hungary, Poland⁴, 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, Szczepanski, Sokolowska, Wesolowski) 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.

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 distribution 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 feudal 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 cosmopolitanism 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 adaptable 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.

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