

## The Uses of International Cooperation in the Social Sciences

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Comments on the article  
by Csepeli-Örkény-  
Scheppele

*Rudolf Andorka*

ences is significant. Many scholars entered politics and had to, at least temporarily, abandon the social sciences, as it became clear that it was impossible to combine the role of politician and scientist (Kornai 1992). The brain drain toward the business sphere in Hungary is numerically much more significant, as salaries in business are about four times as high as in science and higher education. A few Hungarian social scientists also left for foreign countries. In Hungary, not only are the salaries low, but in addition, the financial support for research expenditures is very low and has diminished in real terms since 1991. In 1995, the Hungarian Research Foundation (OTKA), the main source of research finance in the social sciences, obtained only 40 per cent of the sum obtained from the state budget in 1991 in real terms. Scientists also have to face difficulties in publication as a consequence of the financial crisis of scientific journals and publishing houses.

We should not, however, forget about the very important improvements since 1990: no political constraints limit the choice of research themes, the interpretation of the results, and the adoption of scientific theories. In addition we live in a unique laboratory for the social sciences: social changes are exceptionally rapid and far-reaching and therefore provide extremely interesting topics for research.

I completely disagree with almost everything György Csepeli, Antal Örkény and Kim Lane Scheppele state in their article about the character of the contribution of Western social scientists to the study of Hungarian society. Colonization is, indeed, a concept in vogue in the international sociological literature, but it should not be used in evaluating the activity of our Western colleagues when they do research on the present transformation.

Obviously the social sciences in Eastern Central Europe have to face a lot of new difficulties since the system change. The salaries of researchers in the research institutes of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and of professors at the Universities have declined in real terms. The possibilities for supplementing their salaries with second incomes quite very varied. Few of them are able to earn much extra income by doing real scientific work (e.g. writing books). The brain drain from the social sci-

What are the types of involvement of foreign sociologists in research on the transformation in Hungary and what are their uses for Hungarian sociology?<sup>1</sup>

There are several examples of surveys performed by foreign financial resources, through commercial Hungarian public opinion polling organizations, the data of which was analysed by foreign sociologists. The New Democracies Barometer surveys (Rose, Haerpfer 1992, 1993, 1994) belong to this category. The first analyses of the data on almost all "new democracies" in Eastern Europe provided much interesting information on economic behaviour, attitudes toward the market economy and satisfaction versus dissatisfaction. Among others things, these surveys confirmed what we Hungarian sociologists used to feel: that Hungarian society is on the whole very dissatisfied and extremely pessimistic. On the basis of the published data, combined with other survey results, I was able to formulate a hypothesis on the deep crisis of anomie and alienation in Hungary, produced by the long decades of totalitarian and authoritarian systems (Andorka 1994).

A second type of involvement of Western sociologists is when the financial resources are provided by foreign sources and the research is led by Western sociologists, but Hungarian sociologists are involved both in the planning of the survey and in the interpretation of the results. The survey in 1993 on stratification and transfer of elites in the transformation in Eastern Europe (main investigators: Iván Szelényi and Donald Treiman) is a typical example. The final results and analyses are not yet published; nevertheless it might be stated that the character of elite exchange in Hungary (an important part of the elite being exchanged was able to maintain its privileged position after the regime change) and other political developments (the large percent of floating voters, most of all among the poorer strata) are better understood (Szelényi et al. 1993; Andorka, Lehman, Spéder 1993).

A third possibility is surveys carried out in Hungary similar to surveys in foreign countries. An example is the Hungarian Household Panel Survey, which included many questions from the questionnaires of the German *Sozio-Ökonomisches Panel* and from the German *Wohlfahrt-Survey*. On the basis of this data the changes of income, employment, living conditions, attitudes, anomie, etc. in Hungary, the former East Germany and the former West Germany can be compared. One big difference between the East German and Hungarian transformation is very well documented: while in Eastern Germany the average per capital personal income increased, in Hungary it declined to a significant degree. On the other hand, the loss of employment was greater in East Germany, and it seems that in Hungary the innovative adaptation of society to the changed economic conditions is proceeding more rapidly (Andorka, Headey, Krause 1995).

The fourth type of involvement of Western sociologists in the analysis of Hungarian data is when they simply utilize data from Hungarian surveys that is freely available for foreign research. Abramson and Inglehart (1995), in addition to using data from 39 other societies, also used Hungarian data from the 1990–1991 World Values Survey. Although they do not go into a detailed analysis of the Hungarian results, for us Hungarian sociologists they present a most interesting further research problem: why is Hungarian society

the "most materialistic" or the "least post-materialist" among all the 40 countries included in the survey?

Hungarian sociologists are less involved in theoretical discussions on the character of the transition going on in these countries. This is not the place nor the occasion to evaluate these theories critically. I simply would like to state that the upsurge of interest by theoretical sociologists is very welcome, as it provides Hungarian sociologists with the possibility of viewing a wide range of possible theoretical interpretations and of selecting the theory or combining the elements of different theories they find most appropriate. In the medium term it would be desirable, however, for Hungarian sociologists themselves to engage more actively in the theoretical debate developing in international sociology.

As Csepeli, Örkény and Scheppelle explicitly and very critically refer to the cooperation in teaching within the framework of TEMPUS, I would like to state that the project in which the Department of Sociology of the Budapest University of Economic Sciences cooperated with the Universities of Bamberg, Mainz and Groningen produced not only teaching programs, but also readers in stratification (Andorka, Hradil, Peschar, 1995) and in family sociology (by Cseh-Szombathy, Clason and Vaskovics, in print). Most of the resources of this JEP were used for teaching Hungarian students. The participation of students from the universities of Germany and the Netherlands was an important advantage for the Hungarians students, as they learned something about the "culture" of Western universities through these personal contacts and cooperation.

Thus I do not see that any "virus" imported through the "Western Colonizers" is endangering Hungarian sociology. The problem is rather how to find the time and energy needed to exploit the possibilities offered by the very rich data sources resulting from cooperation with foreign sociologists. We have to abandon our comfortable research life of the previous decades, when a researcher was never criticised for not publishing, but instead might have been strongly criticised for publishing something unpleasant for the power elite. Since the regime change we, too, have to face the "publish or perish" dilemma.

In these circumstances Hungarian social scientists might choose between several alternative strategies for a research career:

1. They might decide to find definitive employment in Western universities. This alternative is very tempting, as the income of social scientists in Western countries is far higher than in Hungary. Due to the high quality of university education of social scientists in Hungary, Hungarian social scientists can easily find a lower or medium level job in one of the numerous Western colleges and universities. In view of the considerable and increasing mobility of scientists among the advanced countries, there is nothing unusual or objectionable in this strategy. Those who choose it are certainly not "renegades". It would be obviously advantageous if they would not completely lose their contacts with Hungarian sociology, i.e. if they would give lectures, participate at conferences and publish in Hungary.

2. An intermediate strategy is to combine a job in the West with long stays in Hungary. Janos Kornai is the outstanding example: he spends one semester each year at Harvard teaching and the second semester in Hungary doing research. Ivan Szelényi follows a similar strategy. Both are completely present in Hungarian economic sciences and sociology.

3. The third possibility is to live in Hungary, participate fully in teaching and research, struggling with all the difficult everyday problems of Hungarian life, and maintaining

<sup>1</sup> In the following I shall take all the examples from my own research experience. Obviously, other Hungarian sociologists could refer to similar experiences of their own, but I do not feel authorized to evaluate their experiences in cooperating with Western sociologists.

scientific contact with the Western colleagues through short visits, attending conferences and research seminars and, last but not least, profiting from the visits of Western scientists in Hungary.

The three strategies might obviously be combined. My advice for young social scientists is to spend one or two semesters as Ph.D. students in some Western universities, which are, indeed, not at all schools of "janissaries", then return to a scientific job in Hungary and combine the maintenance of foreign contacts through short visits with teaching and research in Hungary. I do not see any inherent conservatism and provincialism of Hungarian universities and research institutes, mentioned by Csepeli-Örkény-Scheppele, which prevents these young scientists from getting a job.

I would like to emphasize simply that all the three strategies are completely legitimate and none of them ought to be judged in depreciative terms. The only bad strategy, in my opinion, is the withdrawal from cooperation with foreign social scientists.

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## The Immune Deficiency – Acquired or Inherited?

### Comments on Csepeli-Örkény-Scheppele: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome in Social Science in Eastern Europe

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not simply the presence of a body (which may be, as the authors write, only an "empty shell"), but rather the presence of mutual communication and reflexivity, then the Slovak sociological community appears to be near its death agony.

I was astonished by the accuracy of the authors' analysis in regard to the state of the social sciences (certainly of sociology) in Slovakia, as if their analysis had been elaborated with the case of Slovak sociology directly in mind. I could stop here and limit myself to complimenting the authors' sociological imagination: the study is a remarkable and familiar analysis of the complex conditions of social sciences in Eastern Europe; it enables us to observe the individual professional troubles of doing sociology within wider institutional frameworks; it discloses several coincidentally operating factors of our situation, and illuminates their mutual amplification, and so on. It would be, indeed, more convenient and safe (though certainly unfair) to avoid elaborating on my conviction that the present state of Slovak sociology supports the plausibility of the conclusions Csepeli et al. I am not sure if I can manage to do what the authors have done admirably; to rise above solidarity commitments, and to break a tacit game of our successful incorporation into the world's social science. A low ability to whip myself out of the group whose state

My impression of the paper by Csepeli et al. was mixed. Although a response to a similarly accomplished paper usually starts with the sentence "I have read the paper with great pleasure," it seems to me impossible to repeat the standard pattern in the present context; it would sound almost morbid, as if I were admitting to having read a coroner's report with pleasure.

If the concern at hand is the social sciences in all the Eastern European countries, it could be an exaggeration to compare the authors' diagnosis with a coroner's account. However, regarding the situation in Slovakia, such a comparison does not sound so inappropriate. I am not thinking of the "institutional body" of Slovak sociology in using this metaphor; research and educational institutions, a professional journal, and even the professional association, have survived, and the majority of researchers are busy with data collecting and processing. But if I take as an indicator of sociological life