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## Introduction

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*Replika* is a social science quarterly founded by Hungarian sociologists in their thirties. It was first published in 1990. As its name suggests (*replika* comes from the same latin root as *reply*), its primary aim is to encourage intellectual debate and to facilitate interdisciplinary dialogue between the different social sciences and humanities, both in Hungary and within the East and Central European region. The main profile of *Replika* is to publish articles written by leading Hungarian social scientists, whose theses are confronted by the critical comments and reflections of their colleagues – often representatives of other academic disciplines.

During its first three years, *Replika* intended to offer a critical alternative to mainstream sociology in Hungary; then in 1993 we expanded the journal's fields of interest. Eminent philosophers, historians, economists, psychologists, and cultural anthropologists have published here since then. *Replika* is, actually, among the most prestigious social scientific quarterlies in Hungary; a number of its articles have become compulsory reading at universities and the quantity of manuscripts we receive is considerably higher than our publishing possibilities. *Replika* plans to publish English language special editions every year in order to foster the reintegration of East and Central European social sciences into the international academic community.

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The idea of publishing this volume came up at a dinner in Australia, where two American and two Eastern European sociologists confronted the culturally constructed and institutionalized miscommunication that often characterizes the encounters between "Western" and "Eastern" social scientists (see the first few paragraphs of Miklós Hadas' essay in this volume). In order to facilitate a more active negotiation of specific professional interests and cultural dispositions between the two parties, we decided to initiate a hopefully productive dialogue with this special issue of *Replika*.

The volume starts with a thematic section that contains articles discussing the institutional reproduction of the East-West division in academic and political discourses. The persistence of this geopolitical division can be situated in various historical traditions of constructing social and cultural difference between "center" and "periphery," "civilization" and "backwardness," or the "First" and the "Second" worlds. The essays in this section explore how these categories and their permutations shape both intellectual reflections and everyday practices in Eastern Europe, and influence the research agendas of Europeanist social sciences.

The opening article, written in 1991 by *Anna Wessely*, argues for the possibility of a distinct Central European voice in the social sciences. Its epilogue, however, written only a year after the original essay, already laments that the opportunity now seems missed due to a profound lack in funding, research personnel, and socially and politically relevant research agendas. Instead of revitalizing the ideal of *Mittleuropa*, social scientists in East-Central Europe either leave their profession or join research projects devised by Western academic institutions and sponsored by Western foundations. *Deborah J. Cahalen* traces the persistence of the East-West division in Europe in the institutionalization of the Cold War paradigm. The Cold War defined politics as the most important research field for Eastern European studies, and privileged political science as the proper discipline to set the research agenda. The ascent and prosperity of "Transition Studies" clearly indicate a continuity in preferring political science to any other social sciences in the investigation of post-communist East European experience. *David A. Kideckel's* essay explores various institutional and discursive forces that reproduce the categorical division between Eastern and Western Europe but also calls attention to several other subdivisions within Europe which inform both macropolitics and academic practices. Since all of these demarcations are historical and cultural products, they influence different research agendas concerning Eastern Europe in different ways and might have different relevance and significance in studying local, regional, or transnational issues.

The second section contains three articles concentrating on different historical aspects of paradigm-construction in East European social sciences. *György Lengyel* argues that Western-type economic sociology is "paradigm-oriented," while in Eastern Europe these kind of researches are "problem-oriented": their primary aim is to understand relevant social aspects of economic life. Most of these diverse sociological approaches lack a sufficient level of conceptualization and their contribution to the development of recent social scientific paradigms is relatively weak; but they do address socially relevant questions, and may help to find the "lost sociological imagination."

In his comment on Lengyel's article, *Tibor Kuczi* points out that East European sociologists do not perceive their society as typical or model-like but rather as lopsided or transitional. In this paradoxical situation, the more professionalized or paradigm-oriented a national sociology is, the less it is able to grasp what in native intellectual discourse is considered to be "the reality." By drafting the professional trajectories of some Hungarian composers in 19th and 20th century, *Miklós Hadas* outlines the perspectives of East European social sciences, differentiating between four models of modernizing national arts and sciences on the semi-peripheries. Referring to Béla Bartók's *oeuvre* as a model-case, Hadas asserts that a scholar can be capable of contributing to the construction of a paradigm of universal validity starting out from 'differentia specifica' of his indigenous topic.

The third thematic section investigates the reception of Western feminist discourses and theories by East European women and men, and explores their adaptations to "Eastern" practice – be it in the arena of family life, social politics, or cultural critique. The articles included here discuss three major interconnected issues, implicitly or explicitly. They try to account for, first, the political apathy of women and the lack of women's movements in post-socialist Eastern Europe; second, the difficulties of dialogue between Western feminists and East European women; and third, the reluctance of East European social scientists towards applying feminist perspectives in their analyses of social institutions and cultural practices.

In the first essay, *Susan Gal* argues that the thesis of political apathy in post-socialist societies is informed by ahistorical conceptions of "civil society," which themselves should be objects of critical investigation. Women do act politically, according to their self-interest, although in certain historically constructed ways that are different from the expectations of many Western feminists. *Mária Neményi* seeks to explain the present weakness of women's movements in Hungary in a socio-historical context. In the first two decades of state socialism, the socialist ideal of emancipated women confronted with the grim reality of a double burden: women were expected to perform as both productive workers and good mothers. The end of the 1960's in Hungary showed a "conservative turn" in social policies concerning women: the introduction of a child-care allowance in 1967 designated women as principal caretakers of child-raising, which led to a revival of the traditional conception of women's roles in society. The article contends that in this respect, the political changes of 1989-90 did not bring about significant changes in the lives of women.

*Jiřina Šiklová* draws a more optimistic picture about the situation of women in Czech society. The difficulty in disseminating feminist ideas is explained by a relative lack of tension between Czech men and women, which seems to persist through several decades and political regimes. Social researchers in general do not see the need to encourage feminist perspectives, since they do not yet treat gender discrimination as a serious social problem. *Jiřina Šmejkalová* identifies various obstacles in the Czech intellectual environment that hinder the incorporation of feminist thought and gender consciousness in academic and political discourses. Besides pointing to the prevalence of anti-feminist hostilities, which seem to travel freely through the borders between interpretive contexts, Šmejkalová indicates that Czech intellectual history is also unprepared for accommodating feminist theories. *Mădălina Nicolaescu* analyzes the impact of Western representations of femininity in Romanian journals for women and discusses whether one can speak of "colonization" of Romanian women by Western mass media. The author argues that the consumption of these images can be empowering for women because beyond the aesthetic pleasure they can obtain from it, they can also assume control over their own bodies which gives them a sense of self-esteem that they could not experience in the Ceaușescu regime. All this, however, does not mean that gender inequalities ceased to exist.

The last section is organized around a provocative article written by two Hungarian sociologists, *György Csepeli* and *Antal Örkényi*, and an American political scientist, *Kim Lane Scheppele* who claim that social science research in Eastern Europe is basically done from Western (mainly American) funds and under the leadership of Western scholars who employ Eastern counterparts as apprentices or informants whatever their reputation is in their home country. The essay uses strong metaphors (AIDS viruses, contamination, colonization) to incite a much needed debate on the status of social sciences in Eastern Europe.

The thesis did invite criticism from various directions; we collected three responses here. *Rudolf Andorka* completely disagrees with Csepeli and his co-authors and refuses their thesis on the Western colonization of Eastern European social sciences. He argues that there are significant improvements in the conditions for pursuing social scientific research in post-socialist societies and cites abundant examples of successful cooperation between Western and Eastern European sociologists. *Zuzana Kusá* mostly agrees with the

arguments presented by Örkény et al. and makes corroborative remarks based on her own experience and institutional perspective. She points out that Slovak sociologists have ceased to exist as an intellectual community; and, there is, in addition, a chronic ignorance among native scholars of each other's work. Kusá's important addition to the debate is the discussion of how macropolitical interests can still interfere in sociological research. *Alaina Lemon* and *David Altshuler* criticize the opening article for its generalizations and inaccuracies. They argue that the main thesis – on the exploitation of Eastern social scientists by their Western colleagues as mere data-collectors – is inadequate to describe the practice of ethnographic fieldwork. The history of the social sciences also show that theoretical influence has been reciprocal: numerous fields in “Western” social sciences and humanities are indebted to the work of Eastern European scholars.

The section ends with a closing response by the authors of the debate-opening article. In this essay, Csepe, Örkény, and Scheppele acknowledge some of the generalizations they made for the sake of the argument and clarify their points with more detailed examples. In supporting their main thesis, the authors argue that Eastern European social scientists can only be experts of their own cultural and geographical field at international conferences, and it is not likely at all that they are listened to as architects of general social theories. Certain differences between Western and Eastern social scientists in their professional opportunities become striking in closer inspection: Hungarian sociologists, for example, earn on average less than one tenth of the monthly salary their American counterparts make, while they have to pay sometimes 50 percent more for books than their luckier colleagues. The authors conclude the debate with the hope that contrary to the current trends, neither Eastern European nor Western social scientists will be forced in the future to put aside their own research interests and realign with a project dictated by the priorities of powerful Western funding agencies.

*the editors*

## CATEGORIES