

DEALING WITH COMMUNIST PAST: THE CASE OF ROMANIA

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This article analyzes the significance of the activity of the Presidential Commission for the Analysis of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania (PCACDR) and the impact of its report on the basis of which the communist regime was condemned as criminal and illegitimate. The author also situates the Romanian case within the larger discussions on the role of overcoming a traumatic past in post-authoritarian democracies. PCACDR rejected outright the practices of institutionalized forgetfulness and generated a national debate about long-denied and occulted moments of the past. The Commission's Final Report answered a fundamental necessity, characteristic of the post-authoritarian world, that of moral clarity. It set the ground for the revolutionizing of the normative foundations of the communal history, imposing the necessary moral criteria of a democracy that wishes to militantly defend its values.

Keywords: communism, memory, dealing with the past, legitimacy, Leninist legacy, perpetrator, democracy

On December 16th 2006, the Romanian President condemned the communist regime as “criminal and illegitimate” throughout its existence. His speech was based upon a Final Report drafted by a Commission for the Analysis of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania (PCACDR). I had the honor of chairing this commission. From 2006 until present, the topic of dealing with communist past has been at the forefront of public debate in the country. In the present article I will analyze the significance of the commission's activity and the impact of its report, while situating it within the larger discussions on the role of overcoming a traumatic past in post-authoritarian democracies.

For the first time in Romania's contemporary history, the PCACDR rejected outright the practices of institutionalized forgetfulness and generated a national debate about long-denied and occulted moments of the past (including instances of collaboration, complicity, etc). The activity of the commission was “a state, public history lesson” during which the “truth” about the communist totalitarian experienced was “officially proclaimed and publicly exposed” (Ash, 2002), that

is, acknowledged. It was an exercise of “sovereignty over memory” (Snyder, 2002) an attempt to set the stage for resolving what Tony Judt called the “double crisis of memory”:

On the one hand cynicism and mistrust pervade all social, cultural and even personal exchanges, so that the construction of civil society, much less civil memory, is very, very difficult. On the other hand there are multiple memories and historical myths, each of which has learned to think of itself as legitimate simply by virtue of being private and unofficial. Where these private or tribal versions come together, they form powerful counterhistories of a mutually antagonistic and divisive nature (Judt, 2002, 173).

The post-1989 practice of state-sponsored amnesia created two main dangers: the externalization of guilt and the ethnicization of memory. As both Dan Diner and Gabriel Motzkin argued, the process of working through the communist past raises a crucial problem: “How can crimes that elude the armature of an ethnic, and thus-long term, memory be kept alive in collective remembrance?” (Diner, 2003, 86) The domination and exterminism of a communist regime generally affected all strata of the population; terror and repression were engineered from within against one’s people. Therefore, “the lack of specific connection between Communism’s theoretical enemy and its current victims made it more difficult to remember these victims later” (Motzkin, 2003, 202). When no *Aufarbeitung* took place, the memory field was left for ‘alternative’ interpretations.

On the one hand, the evils of the communist regime were assigned to those perceived as *aliens*: the Jews, the national minorities, or other traitors and enemies of an organically defined nation. Such line of perverted reasoning unfolded immediately after my nomination as Chair of the PCACDR. I became the preferred target of verbal assault, including scurrilous slanders and vicious anti-Semitic diatribes, targeted the commission’s president (Tismaneanu, 2006, 2007). The Commission itself was labeled as one made up of foreigners (*alogeni*); entire genealogies were invented for various members of this body, all just to prove the fact that the ‘real perpetrators’ are forcing upon the nation a falsified history of its suffering. Upon delivering the condemnation speech, the President and some members of the Commission were showered with threats and imprecations by the representatives of the xenophobic and chauvinistic Romania Mare Party. Unfortunately, as an indication of the deep-rooted malaise of memory in Romania, very few MPs of the other mainstream parties publicly objected to this behavior (Nicolae Vacaroiu, then President of the Romanian Senate, did nothing to stop this circus).

A further proof of narrow-mindedness came a few months later, when a critic of the *Final Report*, found no qualms in stating that: “if it weren’t for the stupid, but violent reactions of nationalists, extremists, etc., the Report would have

passed almost unnoticed by the public opinion that counts, the one from which one can expect change” (Șiulea, 2007). In reality, however, such utterances are indicative of a very interesting, though worrisome, post-condemnation phenomenon: the argumentative coalition against the Final Report of a self-proclaimed ‘new left’ with the national-Stalinists (those who perpetuate the *topoi* of the pre-1989 propaganda or those who are nostalgic for Ceaușescu’s “Golden Age”), and with the fundamentalist Orthodoxists. Such alliance can be explained in two ways: first, these are the faces of resentment, the people who were forced to confront their own illusions and guilt or those who stubbornly refuse to accept the demise of Utopia (what in Germany fell in the category of anti-antiutopianism) (Müller, 2000); second, these are those for whom, mostly because of ignorance, dealing with the communist past can be resumed to mechanical instrumentalization, for whom this redemptive act is a ‘strategic action’. The result of their mainly journalistic flurries is one that does not surprise the sober observer: a counter-trend of *malentendu* revisionism that does represent, because of its promise of facile remembrance, a latent danger for continuation of the strategy of legal, political, and historical *Aufarbeitung*.

The other danger that lies in a mis-memory of communism is the development of “two moral vocabularies, two sorts of reasoning, two different pasts”: that of things done to ‘us’ and that of things done by ‘us’ to ‘others’. Tony Judt sees this practice as the overall post-war European syndrome of “voluntary amnesia” (Judt, 2002, 163–6; Judt, 2005). In Romania, its most blatant manifestation was the denial of the Holocaust, of the role of the Romanian state in the extermination of the Jews.¹ But another manifestation of the syndrome can also be found in relation with the communist past. One of the master-narratives after 1989 was that, because of the Soviet imposition, the regime was not part and parcel of the national history. It was a protracted form of foreign occupation during which the population was victimized by foreigners and rogue, inhuman, bestial individuals. This discourse was and is based upon the topical trinity of *they & it vs. us*. In later years it went through finer qualifications: on the one hand, the “High Stalinism” period (roughly 1947–53, with maybe the added value of 1958–62), the so-called “haunting decade”, was blamed on the “Muscovites” (mostly Pauker, Luca, Chisinevski) and, sometimes, but in a redemptive key on Gheorghiu Dej as well (who also wears a historiographical cap of national awakener on the basis of his later years in power). On the other hand, the Ceaușescu period is seen as one of patriotic emancipation and self-determination from under the Kremlin iron heel. The distortions of such ‘healthy path’ are mostly blamed on Ceaușescu’s personality cult. It is no surprise that in some quarters, his execution was seen as the end of communism, of its evils and/or legacy. The overall conclusion of such normalizing gymnastics was similar to the above-discussed issue: the criminality of the

regime lay in its anti-national past, while its development of the Nation's interest and being can be separated from the degeneration of its leaders.

President Bănescu charged the commission with the task of producing a rigorous and coherent document that would examine the main institutions, methods, and personalities that made possible the crimes and abuses of the communist regime. In addition to its academic tasks, the commission was meant to pass moral judgment on the defunct dictatorship and invite a reckoning with the past, even though this would entail a painful, albeit inevitable, acknowledgement of crimes against humanity and other forms of repression. First of all, this initiative is a fundamentally symbolic step toward national reconciliation by means of clarifying and dealing with the past. Only in this way can Romanian society overcome the fragmentation typical of the "legacy of Leninism".² President Bănescu advocated a reinstitutionalization freed from the burden of the party-state continuities and the possibility for laying the foundation of a "posttotalitarian legitimacy" (Müller, 2000, 258). It is his belief that only in such fashion can one develop the not-yet-attained national consensus. The process of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* that it initiated imposes criteria of accountability fundamental to the re-enforcement and to the entrenchment of democratic values in Romanian society. For, as Jan-Werner Müller argued, "without facing the past, there can be no civic trust, which is the outcome of a continuous public deliberation about the past" (Müller, 2002, 33–4).

Following upon Ken Jowitt's footsteps, I consider that the fundamental Leninist legacy in Eastern Europe was the total fragmentation of society, the break of the civic bonds and consensus necessary for a healthy, democratic life (Jowitt, 1992; Tismaneanu et al., 2006). The tumultuous post-1989 years in Romania are the perfect proof for this thesis: sectarian interests, widespread authoritarian tendencies within the public and political spheres, anomie, etc., were all rooted in forgetfulness. The CPACDR did not find new 'truth', but it lifted the veil of denial over those truths that were widely known but stubbornly unacknowledged.³ In a country where the legal measures against the abuses perpetrated during the communist years are close to nonexistent and where the judicial system is rather weak and corrupted, it can be said that the Commission created the future prospects for justice.

The Final Report, besides its detailed accounts on the functioning of the various mechanisms of power and repression, also named names; it listed the most important people who were guilty for the evils of the regime. It did not stigmatize any group, its purpose was not inquisitorial; but it engaged in a truth-telling process essential for understanding the nature of responsibility for crimes and suffering under communism. In Priscilla Hayner words: "where justice is unlikely in the courts, a commission plays an important role in at least publicly shaming those who orchestrated atrocities". It revitalized the principle of accountability, fundamental for democracy's survival (Hayner 2002, 82–7).⁴ Considering the present

political environment in Romania, I can only reiterate Chilean President Patricio Aylwin dictum upon the creation of the Rettig Commission: justice as far as possible (*justicia en la medida de lo posible*). The moral-symbolic action is after all one of the four types of retributive justice (the others being the criminal, the non-criminal, and the rectifying aspects) (McAdams, 2001).

The reverberations of the past are part of contemporary polemics and define competing visions of the future. It is quite often in relation to the past, especially a traumatic one, that political actors identify themselves and engage in competitions with their opponents. Reviewing Jan T. Gross's book *Fear*, David Engel wrote,

Unless Polishness, whatever its constituent characteristics, is transmitted from generation to generation through mother's milk, as it were, nothing that Gross or anyone else might say about any part of the Polish community in 1946, 1941, or any other year more than six decades in the past *necessarily* reflects upon any part of the community today. It can do so only to the extent that the present community continues to affirm the values implicated in past events. Thus *Fear* or any other work of history can legitimately be neither offered nor read as a vehicle for contemporary self-examination except insofar as it prompts contemporaries to question strongly whether they remain committed to those values (Engel, 2007, 538–9).⁵

The postcommunist debates on the past should be seen as indicators of contemporary ideological cleavages and tensions, confirming Jürgen Habermas's analysis of the public use of history as an antidote to oblivion, denial, and partisan distortions:

It is especially these dead who have a claim to the weak anamnestic power of a solidarity that later generations can continue to practice only in the medium of a remembrance that is repeatedly renewed, often desperate, and continually on one's mind (Habermas, 1989, 233).

The PCACDR's Final Report's approach on the category of *perpetrator* was focused on three types that have been consistently ignored by those who blame the document for a so-called blanket condemnation. According to Cosmina Tănăsioiu, "one can identify those guilty for the thousands of dead and deported" (i.e., top Party officials, cabinet ministers, police commanders, high-level magistrates), those "guilty for the annihilation of diaspora dissent" (i.e., the heads of the external services of the secret police and counter-intelligence), and those "guilty for the indoctrination of the population" (the largest category, ranging from Party members and cabinet ministers to writers and poets) (Tănăsioiu, 2007, 65).

Additionally, the Final Report signaled out those who responsible, after 1989, for the manipulating and forging the truth in order to preserve their power and

continue, by means of an “original democracy”, the fateful structures and the interest groups dominant during the last decade of the party-state rule. I think that this last section of the IIIrd part of the Report, was fully justified by the specific post-1989 history of Romania, one marred with moments of critical “managed anarchy” (the miners’ trips to Bucharest and the pyramidal financial schemes), by the quasi-bankruptcy of the market economy, by infrastructural retardation. Overall however, the individual and his inalienable rights were the main reconstitutive focus of the Final Report. The members of the PCACDR refused the principle of collective guilt and/or punishment.

The PCACDR was a tool for mediation between the construction of a legitimate post-dictatorial state and the finalisation – or at least the setting under way – of the judicial act. The present level of transition may be a compromise, but it *must* be fundamentally conditioned by knowledge of the criminal past and by the moral recognition upon which legitimate society is built. I therefore consider Charles Villa-Vicencio’s conclusion perfectly justified, namely that the truth that a commission makes public and official is not just a working through of the previous regime, but also the criterion for limiting and framing the compromise of the transitional period (Vicencio 2003, 37). The shared historical judgment and memory such a Commission offers can open the path toward a more profound post-transitional political realignment.

In conclusion, I believe that the condemnation of the communist regime in Romania was a moment of civic mobilization. Generally speaking, de-communicization is, in its essence, a moral, political, and intellectual process. These are the dimensions that raise challenges in contemporary Romanian society. The PCACDR’s Final Report answered a fundamental necessity, characteristic of the post-authoritarian world, that of moral clarity. Without it one would multiply the cobweb of lies crushing us, the impenetrable mist that seemed to forever last. This state of moral perplexity inexorably turns into cynicism, anger, resentment and despair. The shock of past unveiled is inevitable. The Final Report identified many features of guilt, in relation to the communist experience, that have never before been under scrutiny. It offers a framework for shedding light upon what Karl Jaspers called “moral and metaphysical guilt” – the individual’s failure to live up to his or her moral duties and the destruction of solidarity of social fabric (Liiceanu, 2007). This, in my opinion, is the angle from which one can see to the connection between condemnation initiative and politics. In the words of Charles King,

The commission’s chief tasks had to do with both morality and power: to push Romanian politicians and Romanian society into drawing a line between past and present, putting an end to nostalgia for an alleged period of greatness and independence, and embracing

the country's de facto cultural pluralism and European future (King, 2007, 722).

Such matters considered, the PCACDR was indeed a political project through which both the acknowledgement and conceptualization of the 1945 to 1989 national traumatic experience were accomplished, whilst those responsible for the existence of communism as a regime in Romania were identified.

The PCACDR created a document where responsibility for the past was claimed and individualized. There are hardly other ways of reconstructing *Gemeinsamkeit*, that is, the social cohesion and communion destroyed by the atomization brought about in the communist regime. As I have already stated, the Final Report was written with analytical rigor, with compassion for the victims, and in full awareness of the trauma both incumbent in the past and in the act of remembrance itself. PCACDR aimed at a synthesis between understanding the traumatic history through an academic praxis that presupposes distance from the surveyed subject, and empathizing with the people who suffered because of the crimes and abuses of the dictatorship. The commission pursued a reconstruction of the past along the dichotomy distance–empathy, focusing upon both general and individual aspects of the past. The Final Report fixed the memory of the totalitarian experience in place and in time, it overcame the burden of the denial of memory, of institutionalized amnesia. It set the ground for the revolutionizing of the normative foundations of the communal history, imposing the necessary moral criteria of a democracy that wishes to militantly defend its values.

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Notes

- ¹ An account of this phenomenon is the chapter "Distortion, Negationism, and Minimalization of the Holocaust in Postwar Romania" of the Final Report of the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania. The English version of this document can be found at <http://www.ushmm.org/research/center/presentations/features/details/2005-03-10/>.
- ² Kenneth Jowitt defined Eastern Europe as a "brittle region" where "suspicion, division, and fragmentation predominate, not coalition and interrogation" because of lasting emotional, ethnic, territorial, demographic, political fragmentation from the (pre-)communist period. See his chapter "The Legacy of Leninism" in 1992, *New World Disorder: the Leninist Extinction* (Berkeley: University of California Press). For a recent discussion of this thesis also see Tismaneanu, Vladimir, Marc Howard, and Rudra Sil (eds) (2006) *World Order After Leninism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press).
- ³ An excellent example is the reaction of the Romanian Orthodox Church (B.O.R) to the Report's chapter about the relationship between the regime and the confessional communities. The irrefutable evidence of widespread cooperation with the R.C.P. and the B.O.R's infiltration by the *Securitate* generated vehement reactions from the institution's representatives and from the journalists and scholars with orthodoxist inclinations. The uproar went as far as the official

declaration by the B.O.R about the creation of a special Commission under its umbrella for the creation of a counter-report. After the death of Teoctist in 2007, the Patriarch of B.O.R., his successor, Daniel, gave up on this initiative.

⁴ Priscilla Hayner makes a very convincing argument about the ways in which the activity of truth commissions can supplant for the fallacies and impotence of the judicial process, about the means by which a commission's activity and results can become the foundation for future legal action against abuses of the past.

⁵ See also Gross, Jan T. (2006) *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz – An Essay in Historical Interpretation* (New York: Random House).

THE AFTERLIFE OF SOLIDARITY: POLITICAL CONTESTATIONS IN POST-1989 POLAND

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Poland's post-communist development is defined by economic and political progress, marred by divisive and unstable politics. An acrimonious political discourse, low levels of public participation, and chaotic politics appear in sharp contrast to a unified, engaged society of pre-1989. The reasons for the path lie in the nature of Poland's challenge to communism, the ethos of the opposition, and the expression of politics in normative value terms. Since 1989, attempts to appropriate the values of Solidarity as political capital have led to deep political divisions, first expressed in a post-communist divide between the former regime and the opposition, then in a post-Solidarity divide among heirs of the movement. The conflict over the legacy of Solidarity through the appropriation of its normative ethos for partisan politics distorts the values of collective will and social solidarity. The latest discourse pits the vision of "liberal Poland" dedicated to pluralist principles, individual rights and tolerance of differences to the vision of a "solidaristic Poland" dedicated to traditional, Christian and nationalist values. In these agendas, the symbolism of Solidarity serves as political capital to advance distinctive political futures.

Keywords: Solidarity, political values, post-communist, liberal Poland, solidaristic Poland

Poland's development over the past two decades is a paradox. On the one hand, the economic transformation and the political progress of the country are seen as a paradigmatic success story of post-communism. A devastated economy has given way to a strong market and consumer sector, and the institutional foundations of pluralism have replaced the communist monopoly of power. On the other hand, the country's accomplishments are marred by a divisive economy and unstable politics. Economic growth has occurred at the costs of deep regional and structural divisions, as between an urban, better off Poland A and a rural, poorer Poland B. An acrimonious discourse, low levels of public participation, and a chaotic political landscape characterize this political development. For many observers, most striking is the contrast between an active, cohesive society of pre-1989 and a passive, divisive society of post-1989.

What explains an apparently successful democratic transition alongside resurgent illiberal and populist tendencies, the shift from an active civil society to a passive public, or the displacement of political solidarity with a fragmented political scene? The answers lie in the nature of the structural transformation experienced by the country over the 1989 divide, vested in the specific nature of Poland's challenge to the communist party-state, the organization of society during the transition, and the expression of politics along two distinct tracks – the politics of values and the politics of interests, located along two axes of political competition: a left-right continuum based on economic expressions, and a cultural space defined by identity claims.

The Nature of Political Cleavages

Specifically, it is the interface between the politics of interest and the politics of values that contribute to the paradoxical aspect of Poland's post-1989 democratic turn. During the initial years of the transition, the attempt to create a new political space defined by neoliberal economic and political policies depended on the emergence of group interests engaged in pluralist politics. This was a formidable undertaking throughout the post-communist space, as the shift from command economies, social suppressions, and political monopolies involved extensive, complex, simultaneous transformations resulting in extensive stress (Ost, 1993, 460–3). In the chaos and uncertainty of the transition, it was difficult for particular economic and social entities to realize what was in their interest. In such circumstances, the practice of pluralist politics was problematic. In Poland, the task was thwarted further by the persistence of strong ethical codes associated with the former division between Solidarity and the regime. It produced a dual political frame, superimposing the legacy of value politics upon the emergent political process concerned with interests (Bielasiak, 1992, 202–9). Since interests were ill defined, it became expedient to revert back to the politics of values as a currency of political discourse and practice.

In addition, the prevalence of political consensus around the Western model of development and accession to Europe reinforced the emphasis on value expressions. Given weak interests, political competition tended to revert to appeals about national and cultural identities. The overall effect was the intrusion into the formative democratic politics of norms derived from the past, translated into values and solidarities about the future (Horolets, 2006, 15–20). The consequence was the attempted appropriation of the Solidarity ethos for partisan politics in the post-1989 transition that distorted the values of collective will, social solidarity, and public trust represented by Solidarity's opposition to communist power. This produced a world infused with normative commitments and the preservation of

identities, first around a post-communist divide based on attitudes towards the former communist regime, then around an emerging post-Solidarity divide representing distinct visions of the new Poland. In both divides, politics is about substantive goals and moral judgments, and less about the procedural tenets of pluralist competition. Such a political language stands in contrast to a world defined by interests rooted in economic and social structures, competing over policy resources and the allocation of social and economic goods. I turn initially to a brief exploration of the causes behind the predominance of value politics in Poland, then to an examination of the expression of contested values in the post-communist and the post-Solidarity divides.

The Struggle of *Solidarność*

The politics of values can be traced to both the nature of the communist regime and the public struggle against its power during the period of late communism, expressed in a particular form in Poland. The structural underpinning of really existing socialism was its systemic politicization, i.e., the fusion of the economy, society and polity so that the expression of all interests was appropriated by the party-state. All decisions were subject to a litmus test by the ruling authorities, so that politics was not the interplay of different preferences but the imposed outcome of regime dictates (Marody, 1990, 259–61; Rychard, 1989, 178–84). Simply, interests were irrelevant to the politics of real existing socialism; instead, communism was depicted as a unitary formation devoid of group conflicts. While reality was far from vision, the system nonetheless deformed the identification and articulation of interests.

Empirical studies at the time describe a society whose political orientations are determined not by positions in the socioeconomic structure but by relationships to the communist state. Rather than class or occupation, what mattered was whether one was a member or not of the official party or trade-union (Adamski and Jasiewicz, 1989, 250–5). The attitudes of citizens were shaped foremost by connections to the regime, and thus defined politics in terms of ideological norms. The paradox of the really existing socialism was politicization without politics, which forced political life into the realm of values and identities around the communist-anticommunist divide (Bielasiak and Hicks, 1990, 497–9).

This had profound consequences for political participation. Citizens viewed engagement in the communist state as ritualistic, devoid of meanings and opportunities for the articulation of social, economic or political preferences (Marody, 1990, 263–6). Accordingly, politics was experienced as a set of reactions to ill-devised programs, taking the form of emotional responses to perceived injustices. True participation was not in the ritualistic confines of the party-state, in the ma-

nipulated meetings, rallies, or elections, but was expressed through acts meant to redress the wrongful decisions through strikes, boycotts, or demonstrations. In turn, this dual participation fuelled a politics of identity characterized by alternative meanings, communities and norms. The official public sphere was reduced to a ritual, and led instead to the emergence of an alternative public space independent of the communist regime (Marody, 1990, 271). Politics took the form of a normative undertaking that had little to do with either the promise of class representation, or the expression of multiple voices in a pluralist process.

The second major factor in the prevalence of value politics was due to the very nature of opposition strategies and activities, especially its growing identification with the Solidarity movement in the 1980s. Solidarity emerged as a trade union to defend the interests of the workers, but it did so in close association with intellectuals that formed an opposition prior to the founding of the union. *Solidarność* came to embody the broad strata of Polish society in its defiance of communist power, and became infused with a strong unity ethos and collective will of the “real Poland” against the usurpation of the country’s true identity (Kowalski, 1988). Expressed through powerful national symbols, the appeal of the movement as a unified force acting in the best interests of the country defined subsequent political currents throughout the decade and beyond (Kubik, 1994, 183–220).

The political world of the 1980s, therefore, was defined by the polarization of distinctive identities around society and regime. Again, many sociological studies reveal a strong impasse between “we” the nation, and “they” the party (Nowak, 1989; Jasiewicz, 1989, 250–5). Public opinion perceived social conflicts in terms of moral categories that took on political expressions, and were reflected in political behavior. State institutions and official acts were alien; those of the opposition, the Church or historical commemorations became the site of genuine, true political statements. In the struggle, the emphasis was on the formation of an alternative social and political space through the creation of an independent, autonomous civil society, brought about by ideals of social solidarity and independence (Bernhard, 1993, 131–50).

These expressions culminated in the development of a consensus ethos in Solidarity throughout the years of opposition that carried forth into the initial phase of the post-communist transition (Szwajcer, 1990). The consensus was built on the ideals of nation, solidarity, collectivity that achieved the status of powerful rhetorical symbols. This ethos tended to mask the many divisions that existed in the movement, whether around personalities, strategies, or political visions. The common struggle required cohesion. Even where differences emerged into the open, they tended to be couched in the language of Solidarity’s values, and commitment to the mission of Poland’s liberation.

The Return to Normal Politics

The path from monopolistic to normal politics was beset with several roadblocks that contributed to the delay in the affirmation of interest politics rooted in a pluralist process and instead reinforced the tendency to express politics in terms of polarized values. A major impediment was the difficult structural adjustments in the Polish economy and society. The absence of well-defined socioeconomic interests paved the way to the fragmentation of Polish politics, since the absence of defined constituencies enabled the articulation of a multitude of political expressions. The splintering of the Solidarity movement enhanced the trend, as the big umbrella of *Solidarność* could not overcome the move from the “negative” task of overcoming communist power to the “positive” task of reconstructing Poland. The consequence was the appearance of a multitude of groupings, alliances, movements and parties in the post-communist political landscape (Kowalczyk and Sielski, 2004, 9–26). The confluence of these factors strengthened the proclivity to view politics as a struggle over values. Especially after the electoral victory of the former communists in 1993, values emerged as a powerful weapon of contestation to redress the political balance. One manifestation was a rhetoric bound with the normative divide between the “we” and the “they” of the pre-1989 period, transplanted into the post-1989 transition.

Thus the embrace of normal politics was problematic due to the very nature of the country’s transformation. There was substantial confusion and uncertainty, for many people could not determine how the processes of marketization and democratization affected their future standing in society (Ost, 1993, 470–4). They faced considerable obstacles not only in the expression of preferences, but also in the very identification of their interests. In Poland, which embarked immediately on a strategy of economic shock therapy, the consequence was a highly fluid sociological picture. In turn, this problem exacerbated the political transition. The formation of a pluralist democracy is dependent of the actualization of social and economic interests that are well known and understood, and are integrated into political life through open expression of political demands (Dahl, 1983, 4–18; Kitschelt et al, 1999, 43–89). It is precisely the development of a pluralist system based on differences and on compromise that was at issue.

There were three primary impediments. One revolved around the aforementioned absence of interactions among interest groups, rooted in the socioeconomic structure, and defined by well-known preferences. Second, this situation was exacerbated by the absence of appropriate institutions to mediate emerging political differences (Bielasiak, 1992, 202; Ost, 1993, 456–9). Weak intermediary associations and institutions of representation were compounded by the necessity to de-mobilize large sectors of the population adversely affected by the neoliberal strategy of shock therapy. Third, the neoliberal consensus and the ensuing drive to

marketization and Westernization undermined the capacity of diverse interests to stake out distinct positions. True, there were differences about the process and pace of accession, but the ideal of the return to Europe was a strong pull, and diffused the saliency of the issue. The dominant paradigm of a united Europe turned integration policies into a valence dimension of politics (Grzymala-Busse and Innes, 2003, 64–7) that reaffirmed the prevalence of values as a currency in the country's politics.

Clearly, then, the legacy of Solidarity as a movement defined by political cohesion and ethical commitment had a purpose for the transformation of the nation. For that reason, competing political sides appropriated the values of *Solidarność* to advance their own specific agendas, each proclaiming itself as the true heir of the Solidarity mantle (Wenzel, 1998, 143–6; Zubrzycki, 2001, 651–2). The past emerged as a battleground for the future, and in so doing facilitated the misinterpretation of Solidarity values for partisan gains.

The post-1989 political discourse was built around appropriating the legacy of *Solidarność* as an instrumental program that shaped the nature of the political course of the country. This first took the form of the well-known post-communist divide that characterized Poland's political scene in the aftermath of the 1989 revolution, and reflected the prior "we" the nation and "they" the regime divide as the primary cleavage of transitional politics. With the collapse of the post-communist left in the initial period of the new millennium, a new political schism assumed greater saliency in the political space of the country, rooted in appeals for public support by heirs of Solidarity who advocated different national platforms. This engineered a new "we" versus "we" Solidarity division in which the different political sides sought to employ the symbolism and legacy of the movement to capture the political landscape. At the time, the post-communist divide was displaced as the primary element of Polish politics in favor a more pronounced post-Solidarity cleavage.

The past once again served as the battleground for the future. The lineage of Solidarity provided considerable political capital in the on-going discourse. The various political tendencies emerging out of the movement had considerable interest in preserving the heritage of the past, precisely because it served as leverage in defining political fortunes. The different organizations, alliances, or parties that came into political life in the 1990s out of Solidarity's large oppositional umbrella claimed their status as the rightful successors to the movement of the 1980s. Their goal was to assume the moral authority of Solidarity in institutional and policy terms that appealed to society as a whole and represented all of Poland. The legacy of Solidarity was salient because it reverberated with the symbolism of defeating communism, freeing society from oppression, and propelling the nation towards independence. For politicians engaged in post-1989 politics, the capture of the

symbol and language of Solidarity was a significant form of political capital providing considerable leverage.

Evolving Political Contestations

The importance of the normative discourse as the primary language in Polish politics was first reinforced by the political development of the 1990s decade, notably the electoral resurgence of the former communist party in the 1993 and 1995 elections, and the defeat of political forces associated with Solidarity, especially those on the right of the political spectrum. The fragmentation of Solidarity into multiple, competing political enclaves was in large part responsible for the turn in political fortunes so soon after the defeat of communism. The result was a significant political disequilibrium, with many forces associated with the former opposition frozen out of the corridors of power.

A concerted effort to remedy the situation led to a renewed restructuring of Polish politics in the late 1990s, through the emergence of political actors previously relegated to the periphery. The earlier defeat at the polls created the need for the resurgence of a Solidarity backed political alternative. To that end, Solidarity became the primary agent in the formation of a broad political movement in June 1996, the Electoral Action Solidarity (AWS) (Wenzel, 1998, 142–6). In its founding declaration, AWS openly proclaimed its aim to unite diverse groups committed to a political agenda centered on truth and solidarity in order to form a truly independent Poland (Graniszewski, 1997, 59–65). At the time, a similar attempt to mobilize support on the basis of national traditions was carried forth by the Roman Catholic Church. Fearful that the post-communist agenda would lead to an erosion of Christian social positions, the Church moved to reassert its political weight by supporting the AWS initiative (Gowin, 1999).

On the other side of the political divide, a similar practice emerged. The former ruling communists moved to create a broad social democratic movement, the *Left Democratic Alliance* (Grzymala-Busse, 2002, 69–76). The 1993 parliamentary victory created the impetus to forge a left ruling coalition representing a diversity of actors united by a common political heritage rather than similar contemporary interests. The political identity of this grouping was bound to the “they” of the previous political epoch, as well as a current fear of an accounting with the past. It is evident that the institutional actors of the 1990s continued to reflect the old division in Polish politics between pro- and anti-communist regime forces. The identity of these movements was vested in their past actions and reflected the divisions of old, so that the political space signified the institutionalization of arrangements along inherited values.

The ensuing political discourse reflected these divisions. In view of the political disequilibrium produced by the national elections in the early 1990s, the best option for the “we” side was to revert to the language of morality so as to question the identity of the emerging Poland. The net effect was to polarize Polish politics around the identities of “we” and “they,” a division that echoed Polish history both distant and proximate. The disfranchised forces of the political right reached for this symbolism to reassert their legitimacy and regain a place at the political table. The task was to rebuild the former Solidarity ethos of freedom, dignity, and unity as a collective message, but now serving partisan needs. The values of national solidarity and of the true Poland were cast as a weapon of the political right against its political rivals, a reformulation that was appealing precisely because it echoed the values and struggles of the Polish people against communism. The infusion of these values as a currency of politics was manifest in a number of ways throughout the 1990s, first strongly tied to the post-communist divide, but culminating in a reformulated discourse that sought to use a similar language of values to establish a clear distinction between “Polska Liberalna” (Liberal Poland) and “Polska Solidarna” (Solidaristic Poland), especially in the electoral campaigns of the early 2000s (Jasiewicz, 2008, 9–12). The issues that came to embody the new political discourse cantered on the questions of national identity, decommunization, cultural and economic sovereignty, and the place of Poland in Europe.

Throughout the transition, then, politics gravitated towards a rhetoric that enhanced the prior emphasis on values and morals (Smolar, 1998). The prevailing concern with national identity took several forms. It surfaced into the open in the debates surrounding the adaptation of a new constitution, as evident in the political acrimony around the text of the 1997 constitution (Osiatynski, 1997, 66–72; Spiewak, 1997, 91–4). At the time, the version passed by the Sejm for approval by the citizenry was tied to the dominating parliamentary side, the political left coalition. For that very reason the extra-parliamentary opposition, supported by the Church, denounced the working version of the constitution. Instead, AWS and the Church favored another version that emphasized the cultural, religious and traditional identity of the Polish nation. The solution was the inclusion of two distinct views in the final draft, reflecting both preferences. Since neither side could give up its particular vision of the Polish state, the preamble incorporated the two visions side by side:

We, the Polish Nation – all citizens of the Republic, Both those who believe in God as the source of truth, justice, good and beauty, As well as those not sharing such faith but respecting those universal values as arising from other sources... Beholden to our ancestors for their labors, their struggle for independence achieved at great sacrifice, for our culture rooted in the Christian heritage of the Nation and in universal human values.

The text reflects the two views, one of the Poland as the nation imbedded in Christian traditions, defining the very existence of the country through past struggles of the Polish people (Zubrzecki, 2001, 630–6). The other view asserts a civic understanding of the country, where citizenship is not a reflection of religious beliefs or nationalist traditions but universal and civic values. The two definitions of Poland found in the basic document are testimony to the saliency of the politics of identity and values.

The controversy over the Constitution proved to be a prelude to the political contestation that emerged in a few years, during the post-Solidarity divide. At that time, the political leadership of PiS guided by the Kaczynski brothers advocated a solidaristic vision that stressed a political community defined by cohesive, organic and exclusivist understandings of the nation. The emphasis was on social solidarity in contrast to liberal individualism, on confessional catholic culture wedded to pro-family values, a populist economic agenda to rectify inequalities, and a turn to Euroscepticism to assure Polish values in the face of European penetration. The alternative perspective, propagated by the Civic Platform program in response to the solidaristic rhetoric, stressed instead a civic vision of the political community based on pluralist political practices and individual rights.

Especially during the electoral campaigns for the parliamentary and presidential elections of 2005, the solidaristic side associated with PiS reinvigorated the language of value politics (Szczerbiak, 2008a, 421–9). The PiS leadership of the Kaczynskis accentuated the deformities associated with the Third Republic established after the collapse of communism in 1989 (Millard, 2008, 66–70). For them, the inequalities, corruption, and domination by powerful cliques with roots in the communist period were evidence of the collusion among nomenklatura and liberal elites that undermined the progress of the true Poland. It was thus essential to engage in a cleansing of the political landscape by dedication to the moral precepts of Christianity and normative traditional commitments that would restore the righteous path, embodied in the values of the Solidarity movement but undermined by the post-1989 political arrangements. In this manner, the political differences between PiS and PO, between solidaristic and liberal Poland, were linked to the legacy of Solidarity, to be used as leverage in the political contestation of 2005. A new political rhetoric emerged that sought to move beyond the post-communist power structures to advocate a new project, the Fourth Republic, appropriated by PiS for its own political gains (Markowski, 2006, 818–21). Above all, the Fourth Republic was to cleanse the sins of the past decade and establish a Poland rededicated to the ideals of nationalism, Christian morality, and popular will.

The position of “liberal” PO under the leadership of Donald Tusk was essentially a cautious response to the claims of its political rivals, rather than an overt attempt to articulate a strong alternative vision of Polish politics. Nonetheless, the strong solidaristic rhetoric of the electoral campaign forced the PO to react by de-

nouncing the dogmatic positions of PiS and advocate instead a more moderate version of the political future (Markowski, 2008, 1056–7). The basic message proclaimed the civic values associated with the past struggles of Solidarity, rather than the traditional and religious emphasis employed by the solidaristic side. Instead, the emphasis was on the fight for freedom and pluralism waged by the Solidarity movement in its opposition to the monolithic power of communism (Millard, 2008, 75). The idea was to link the “liberal” political program to a world defined by trust and cooperation, just as Solidarity was defined by consensus and tolerance. In essence, then, both sides of the post-solidarity divide sought to use the heritage of Solidarity to advance their own political fortunes, but reaching into the distinct values expressed by the opposition movement (Brier, 2009, 71).

The emerging alternative versions of the polity were evident in the resurgence of decommunization as a political issue. The earliest post-1989 attempt sought to remove the matter from the national political agenda. The first post-communist Prime Minister of Poland, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, initiated a policy of the “thick line” – a clear demarcation between past and present, preferring to look to the future rather than settle accounts with the past. But the thick line policy was never fully accepted by the entire political spectrum, and was denounced early on (Killingsworth, 2010, 277–9). The ensuing emphasis national identity in political discourse revived the saliency of the issue, and brought into sharp relief the question of settling accounts with the past. In the new millennium, concerns with the communists’ role in the nation’s history became once more a prominent political dispute, couched in the discourse of value politics. For the right, lustration was part of a moral indignation that targeted the continuing influence of the “reds” in Polish politics and society, and decommunization was equated with the salvation of the Polish nation (Wildstein, 2005, 203–19). Moreover, a new rhetorical stress was placed on a “red and pink” alliance aimed at associating the liberal political wing with the former communists, as exemplified by the Round Table Talks. While the negotiations had facilitated the transition away from communism and were recognized as such, the Round Table was increasingly depicted by the solidaristic establishment as a political collusion between ex-communist and liberal forces that betrayed the true nature of Poland (Wildstein, 2005, 34). For the secular left in particular, the lustration policy was a political witch-hunt designed to remove legitimate political opponents and impose a religious, nationalist cloak on the country.

Different versions of decommunization came to define the emerging post-Solidarity political contestation at the turn of the millennium. The predominance of conservative forces in the post-1997 Sejm, led to the passage of several acts and laws aimed at imposing a screening of the past, both through condemnation of the communist era and the association of individuals with its regime. Decommunization was pursued through a series of legal actions that imposed further ver-

ification on former communist officials, set-up a Screening Court for the lustration process, and created an Institute of National Remembrance to house communist secret police files and conduct investigations into former misdeeds (Horne, 2009, 352–9). Subsequently, in the post-solidarity divide, these steps led to a more systemic attempt to come to terms with the past, a reevaluation of communist period, and especially for assigning responsibility for past abuses associated with the communist period and the everlasting influence of the former *nomenklatura* (Shields, 2007, 169). In particular, Solidaristic Poland argued for the need to remove from positions of political and economic power the “*uklad*” (network), perceived as an organized conspiracy that took hold of the country’s political process and economic development for its own profit, to the detriment of the country. Moreover, the network was depicted as an alliance that included former political adversaries, the elites of the communist establishment and the intellectual, liberal wing of the opposition, bent on a singular project to dominate the new Poland at costs to the values of the Polish people. The instruments to accomplish the essential purification involved a reinvigoration of the role of the IPN, whose investigations and publications of the names of (supposed) collaborators became a visible element in political life (Horne, 2009, 353). The process often led to the denunciation of well known opposition leaders as collaborators of the communist secret police, even tainting Lech Walesa as agent Bolek (Cenckiewicz and Gontarczyk, 2008). The aim of the solidaristic decommunization agenda was to cleanse Polish politics and commerce from the undue influence of the former communist apparatchiki and their liberal allies. To that end, when in power during 2006–07, the PiS Kaczynski government succeeded in passing a new lustration law that significantly expanded the scope of the decommunization process, requiring screening of public officials and professionals such as teachers and journalists, and expanding the meaning of collaboration (Killingsworth, 2010, 278–9). While the Constitutional Court subsequently declared the law unconstitutional, the episode reveals the intent of the solidaristic side to use lustration as a device for political purification and political gain. The agenda was further evident in the rhetoric of the 2007 electoral campaign, when the question of decommunization became a prominent issue with PiS appeals for the cleansing of the Polish political scene (Markowski, 2008, 1056).

Another contentious arena in the definition of what the country stood for concerned social and cultural understandings build around Christian and secular values. The discourse here was as intense, for Poland’s true nature was defined by policies that enhanced or challenged the Christian traditions of the country (Beyer, 2007, 222–4; Brier, 2008, 70–5). In that respect, history and morality were once again played out on the political battlefield. In the solidaristic view, Poland’s foundation rested on values linked to Christian faith and national expressions that were suppressed during the communist interlude, but now able to find

renewed vigor. To the PiS establishment, this meant the need to encode those values in the legal framework and the practices of the new Poland. The social and cultural issues ranged across policies concerning the legal status of abortion, the content of family planning policy, the status of the death penalty, and tolerance of homosexuality. To reaffirm the traditional, Christian values of the country, the PiS leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski proposed in 2003 a new constitutional project to override the Third Republic's leftist-liberal order and replace it by a renewed Fourth Republic Poland guided by religious values and moral commitments (Shields, 2007, 169). The main idea behind the program was to restore the historical ties between Church and nation, to assure that the values embodied in that legacy serve as a guide to the Polish people as they rebuild a new post-communist Poland.

The claim was that the post-1989 liberal processes had led to the erosion of the Church's moral influence over society, and that it was essential to restore confessional values to maintain the moral integrity of society that was at the root of Solidarity's struggle to restore the true Poland. The social conservatism of the liberal center also produced identification with Christian mores, although the values of tolerance and inclusion were also part of its discourse, tied to the earlier Solidarity struggle against communist exclusion. The different emphasis was evident in practical policies, for example in regard to tolerance of a gay pride parade in Warsaw in May 2005. Lech Kaczynski, the mayor of the city at the time, described the proposed march as a moral affront to religious Poles and refused to grant the legal permit. PO's stance, despite its social conservatism, was to view the event within the constitutional rights of Polish citizens (Selinger, 2008, 20–6). The episode thus again reveals the critical distinction in the values emphasized by the political rivals, the religious and patriotic norms of the solidaristic vision contrasting with the civic and pluralist versions of the liberal side.

Similarly, the nature of the Polish nation was extended to the debate about international politics, and Poland's place in Europe. The earlier consensus that Poland belonged to the European tradition and therefore integration was the rightful path gave way to discord as the accession process into the European Union intensified in the new millennium (Machaj, 2006, 245–61). The actual entry of the country into the EU in 2003 brought forth questions about the status of Poland on the continent and the impact of European institutions and values on Polish traditions (Seleny, 2007, 161–3; Vermeersch, 2010, 504–7). The issue was brought to the surface by the “deepening” policies of the European Union, exemplified by the constitutional revisions proposed by the Lisbon Treaty. Certainly, both sides of the political discourse maintained that Poland was very much part of the larger Europe, but once again differences emerged as to the practical side of the relationship between Poland and Europe (Jasiecki, 2008, 372–7).

Differences as to the sovereignty of Poland's values in the face of Europeanization, and the ensuing encroachment upon the traditional, religious commitments of the Polish people versus the secularized culture of the continent. For the political right, the struggle of Solidarity against communist power and Soviet influence was foremost about the restoration of Poland's independence in the world of nations and the affirmation of its true identity. This political struggle deserved recognition and preservation rather than displacement by a new form of political dependency (Vachudova, 2008, 866–8). Now, in the new millennium, the task was once more to safeguard the specific values of the Polish nation against the homogenization exemplified by the European culture that devalued the Christian and nationalist norms of the country. In this vain, the solidaristic political stance attributed to the liberal position an overcommitment to the Western process of modernization to the detriment of a Polish road, which was manifested in the decline of Polish sovereignty. Especially glaring for the solidaristic and populist forces was growing power of Poland's traditional European rivals, Germany and Russia (Reeves, 2010, 520–33). This attitude was clearly evident in the foreign policy of the Kaczynski government in the mid-2000s, which took a more aggressive stance towards the country's neighbors. Overall, the intent of the solidaristic camp was to depict its foreign policy as a continuation of the prior struggle for independence waged by the Solidarity movement against foreign domination, tied to Polish traditions and morality as an alternative path of development to either communism or liberalism.

The liberal voice rejected the critique as a tactical political ploy, especially since the attitude of PO remained committed to European integration, albeit emphasizing a "Europe of nations" as the preferred strategic development for the continent. For PiS, integration with European institutions and policies was a strong commitment. After the October 2007 elections, Prime Minister Tusk embarked on a policy that sought to improve the strained ties between Poland and the EU characteristic of the previous Kaczynski government. The Tusk administration also embarked on a new tactic that sought to remedy relations with its neighbors, to depict Poland as a reliable partner in the larger European enterprise (Szczerbiak, 2009, 2–3). Overall, the distinction between the attitudes of solidaristic and liberal Poland towards Europe can be characterized as different practical, tactical steps to the deepening agenda of integration, labeled respectively as "managed closing" and "managed opening" towards Europe.

Conclusion

In many ways, then, during the transition period, Polish political discourse evolved around the core issues of value and identity, whether in the context of

constitutional, lustration, social or European policies. The political debate was shaped, and reshaped, by the extensive and often chaotic nature of the transformation that touched upon all aspects of the country's development – cultural, social, economic and political. The multiple, intense burden of transition contributed to a climate that sought to make sense of the profound changes through appeals to a political discourse based on a past ethos, immersed with morality and ideology (Smolar, 1998, 129–30). However, the infusion of a normative language of politics was not simply an escape from the politics of interests and the transformative socioeconomic reality. The language of values was no less real, and represented an attempt to reclaim a legacy of solidarity and commitment. For many, the struggle reflected echoes of the past around the former divide between “they” the state and “we” the people. For advocates of Solidaristic Poland, this meant foremost reclaiming Christian traditions, rejecting alien communist or liberal ideologies, and behaving according to moral strictures based on faith. For others, the revival of historical memory, of Christian faith, and an idealized political struggle as definitions of the new political identity signified too narrow an understanding of democratic politics, to be rectified through an expansion of civic, secular, and pluralist understandings.

Poland has experienced significant changes in the past two decades, the result of deep social and economic transformations, the accession to the European Union, and party system realignment. Together, these transformations altered significantly the political landscape of the country (Grabowska, 2004; Szczerbiak, 2008a). The new conditions produced the means to embrace a different form of political discourse built around clear group interests and devoid of the political confrontations rooted in the politics of values. Yet although the 2005 and 2007 elections produced major political realignments and the emergence of new dominant parties, the political rhetoric did not move away from the confrontation over the country's identity. Despite profound changes produced by the socioeconomic transformation, the integration into European structures, and party system consolidation, the contemporary political scene remains infused with a politics of values that invokes a past defined by the heritage of communism, the struggle of the opposition, and the post-communist and post-Solidarity divides forged in the 1989 event.

Indeed, what is most striking in the politics of the new millennium is the continuing dichotomy, the persistence of maximalist discourse, the contrasting visions of the country, as captured by the depiction of a contrasting *Polska Liberalna* (and *Polska Solidarna*). Liberal Poland is about the preservation of the Third Republic as the embodiment of democratic progress and the empowerment of citizens. Solidaristic Poland is about change from a Third Republic that has defiled the nation through compromise, individualism and universalism, to a Fourth Republic defined by tradition, community, and solidarity.

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THE CHALLENGES OF RENEWED INDEPENDENCE: THE BALTIC STATES SINCE 1991

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This article offers a comparative assessment of how successfully Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have coped with the challenges of renewed independence since 1991, focusing on various aspects of political, economic, and social development. In the post-communist context the Baltic states have clearly outpaced other former Soviet republics and also performed reasonably well in comparison to the countries of Eastern Europe. The convergence of the Baltic experience, which began already in the early 20th century, has continued in the recent past as well, as the three states have adopted a number of similar approaches in domestic politics, the search for security, and economic policy. They also face a number of similar unsolved problems, including considerable political alienation, tensions in relations with Russia, socio-economic disparity, and demographic challenges. The most important difference in the issues confronting the Baltic states today continues to be the large non-Baltic, mainly Russian presence in Estonia and Latvia, a result of Soviet-era policies. How to effect the meaningful integration of a multiethnic society remains a continuing challenge in these two countries. In contrast, population shifts under Soviet rule never became massive in Lithuania, and ethnic relations are a minor issue there today.

Keywords: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, ethnic relations, integration, Russians, independence, populism, neoliberal consensus, populations shifts

As they begin their third decade of renewed independence, the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania continue to occupy a liminal position as a borderland of the former Soviet Union, on the one hand, and the northernmost extremity of a broader, post-Cold War Eastern Europe, on the other. At the same time they are clearly also part of a new Baltic Sea region, including strong ties to the neighboring Scandinavian states, as well as members of the European Union since 2004, affirming that a growing range of identities and orientations is available to the Baltic peoples in the post-1991 world. The level of accomplishment attributed to the Baltic states in their political, economic, and social development in the past two decades depends to a large extent on the standard of measurement that is used. In comparison to the other former Soviet republics their successes clearly stand

out in a number of areas. However, when their efforts are evaluated alongside those of the most developed countries of Eastern Europe, the picture is considerably more mixed. Beginning already with the Revolution of 1905 and then followed by the common experience of independence in the interwar years as well as the impact of nearly five decades of Soviet rule, the history of the Baltic states converged during the 20th century to the point where they were increasingly treated as a unit, especially by the outside world. This trend has continued since 1991, as seen, for example, in their simultaneous departure from the Soviet Union as well as their admission to both NATO and the European Union at the same time. Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind that intra-Baltic diversity continues to exist, and as this article seeks to identify the commonalities in the Baltic experience in the past two decades, it will also pay attention to differences.

In contrast to the authoritarian regimes that emerged among their neighbors to the east, since 1991 the Baltic states have established smoothly functioning democratic systems in which the parliament reigns supreme alongside a figurehead president (Estonia and Latvia) or power is shared between the legislature and a directly elected president (Lithuania). During the period of renewed independence, six regularly scheduled parliamentary elections have been held in both Estonia and Latvia along with five in Lithuania. All have been declared fair and free by neutral observers and have proceeded without incident. In Estonia and Latvia there has been a welcome trend toward less volatility in elections for parliament, resulting in fewer and stronger parties obtaining representation. In both countries a breakthrough on the road to political stability recently occurred (2006 in Latvia, 2007 in Estonia), as incumbent prime ministers were returned to power for the first time following elections (Plakans, 2009, 521). On the eve of Andrus Ansip's unprecedented second straight electoral victory in March 2011, which would allow him to begin his seventh consecutive year as head of the Estonian government, pundits spoke of the country becoming more and more like "boring Scandinavia" (Masso, 2011).

Despite these apparent signs of political progress, however, critics suggest that in many ways they only represent the trappings of democracy, and a political culture in which citizens are strongly committed to democratic values still remains in the process of formation. The most persistent issue is a pervasive sense of political alienation among a considerable element of the Baltic populations. It is perhaps understandable that expectations would outpace results following the collapse of the Soviet system, but frustration with the performance of the political elites in each country has grown with the passage of time. Turnout for parliamentary elections declined already in the second half of the 1990s and fell to as low as 46 percent in Lithuania in 2004 before rising to 49 percent in 2008. In Estonia (2007, 2011) and Latvia (2006, 2010) the average turnout in the last two parliamentary elections was higher – 62 percent in each case, but still lower than in the early

years of independence. Opinion polls indicate that public trust in the parliaments and political parties in all three states has declined sharply since the beginning of independence in contrast to rather stable support for the presidents, who typically stand above the political fray; the courts; the police; and the military (Ehin, 2007, 14). There is also a growing reaction against the perceived elitism of politicians, who seem to make major decisions behind closed doors, and an electoral system that favors candidates chosen by each political party's inner circle (Saarts, 2010, 5; Veidemann, 2011). With regard to corruption there is a notable difference among the Baltic states. According to Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index for 2010, Estonia ranked 26th, Lithuania 46th, and Latvia 59th in the world (Transparency International, 2011). Following the establishment of the Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau in Latvia in 2003, some progress was made despite resistance from various established politicians (Pridham, 2009, 474–5). Nevertheless, the issue of corruption has remained a central feature of Latvian politics, as seen most recently in President Valters Zatlers's confrontation with the country's parliament in summer 2011 over how far to proceed in investigating the activities of certain powerful political figures.

In Estonia and Latvia a continuing major challenge is how to integrate individuals who are not members of the titular nationality, i. e., ethnic Russians and others, into political life in a meaningful way. Largely because of Russian and other East Slavic out-migration, the Estonian (68.8 percent in 2010, up from 61.5 percent in 1989) and Latvian (59.4 percent in 2010, up from 52.0 percent in 1989) majorities have increased considerably in the past two decades, but ethnic Russians still comprise over a quarter of the population in each case (Statistikaamet, 2011; LR Centrālā statistikas pārvalde, 2011). The great majority of the rest of the population are also Russian speakers. By means of naturalization since the early years of independence a little more than half of the ethnic minorities in each country have acquired Estonian or Latvian citizenship. Nevertheless, because of troubled historical memories from Soviet times and a lack of trust among the major nationalities, the participation of ethnic Russians and Russian speakers in political life has remained limited. In Estonia no Russian-based political party has had any notable electoral success, and less than 10 percent of any parliament has consisted of non-Estonians. In Latvia, with its larger non-Latvian population, Russian-dominated parties have fared better, e. g., 29 percent of the seats in parliament for the Harmony Center in 2010, but no such party has ever participated in a national governing coalition (Centrālā vēlēšanu komisija, 2011).

In Lithuania, on the other hand, because of the strong ethnic Lithuanian majority (83.1 percent in 2010, 79.6 percent in 1989), the nationalities question has continued to be of minor concern (Lietuvos Statistikos Departamentas, 2011). Here the main political problem in the past decade has been the electorate's vulnerability to demagogic populism. The most striking example involved Rolandas Paksas,

who in the December 2002–January 2003 presidential elections managed to defeat the much older incumbent, Valdas Adamkus, with outlandish promises to those groups in society who had been left behind in the transition from communism. After a little more than a year Paksas was impeached for violating his oath of office and endangering national security through alleged connections to the Russian mafia. He was removed from office by the Lithuanian Constitutional Court in April 2004, and Adamkus won a special election for president in June with a small majority (53 percent) in the second round over the veteran Soviet-era politician Kazimiera Prunskienė, who had opposed the impeachment of Paksas (Clark and Verseckaitė, 2005, 16–18, 20–1; Balockaite, 2009, 19). In an important sense the existing political system had worked and was able to right itself, but the Lithuanian body politic, highly fragmented along socioeconomic and urban-rural lines, remained susceptible to manipulation because of the incomplete integration of society. The lower socioeconomic groups, who have fared poorly in the transition to capitalism, continued to provide a base for populist appeals, e. g., Viktor Uspaskikh whose newly formed Labor Party became the largest group in the Lithuanian Seimas following parliamentary elections in October 2004 (Fritz, 2007, 253–4; Clark and Verseckaitė, 22).

The search for security by the Baltic states in the past two decades provides a striking contrast to the situation during their first independence period in the 1920s and 1930s. In the interwar era Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were only able to cobble together a weak and toothless alliance among themselves as a last resort, the Baltic Entente of 1934. When confronted with crisis in 1939–40, they each chose to stand alone. Since 1991, on the other hand, the Baltic states have become fully integrated into the international state system, most importantly gaining admission to both NATO and the European Union in Spring 2004 as support for both hard and soft security. To be sure, skeptics in the Baltic states harbor some doubts about NATO's level of commitment to Baltic independence, but membership in the Euro-Atlantic alliance clearly serves as a deterrent to potential military action from the main successor to the Soviet Union. The key remaining puzzle for the foreign policies of the Baltic states is how to build a workable and constructive relationship with their large eastern neighbor, which has yet to fully accept Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania as equal partners instead of occupants of "post-Soviet space" in which Russia should maintain a privileged sphere of influence (Raun, 2009, 532). Since 2004, Baltic–Russian relations have gradually improved, although periodic flare-ups have occurred, most notably the Bronze Solder affair in Estonia in April 2007 in which the Estonian government's decision to move a World War II monument led to a riot by Russian youth in Tallinn. The Russian Federation condemned the Estonian authorities, even calling for a change of government as a result of the event, and an extensive cyber attack from ostensibly unknown, but predictable sources was directed against official Estonian web sites.

Nevertheless, there are clear indications that Russia increasingly recognizes Baltic integration with the West as a fact of life and that in a rapidly changing world the entire Baltic question has become less and less of a priority in Russian foreign policy (Asjatundja, 2010).

Despite the recent recession the economy has been a major Baltic success story, although the level of achievement certainly varied among the three countries. With Estonia leading the way all three states quickly adopted a policy of free-market liberalism – a Baltic form of “shock therapy” – along with a separate currency in order to escape from the post-Soviet economic orbit and the rampant inflation of the ruble zone as soon as possible. In view of the enormous contrast to Soviet policies, this approach was ideologically attractive to many Baltic reformers, and it also fit well with the views of the main international institutions providing advice on the economic transition, e. g., the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (Lauristin and Vihalemm, 2009, 8–10; Steen, 2007, 90). Because of its early success and continuing edge over its Baltic neighbors, Estonia has often served as a model for the other two, including, for example, the adoption of a flat income tax, and the past two decades have witnessed a convergence in Baltic economic policies (Fritz, 2007, 277). Why Estonia in particular has played this leading role remains a subject of debate. The northernmost Baltic republic had the widest opening to the outside world via Finland during the Soviet era – including access to Finnish television, radio, and large numbers of foreign visitors – helping to keep Estonia in better touch with developments in the international economy. Cultural arguments based on the long-term impact of the strong Pietist tradition in Estonia, especially the influence of the Moravian Brethren, have also been offered (Norkus, 2007, 25).

All three Baltic states achieved excellent GDP growth rates from the late 1990s through 2007 (sometimes reaching double digits) with the average annual rate reaching 8.6 percent in Latvia, 8.2 percent in Estonia, and 7.5 percent in Lithuania in the years 2000–07 (Hübner, 2011, 82). Nevertheless, in seeking to catch up to Western levels of economic development, Estonia led the way with the biggest jump in GDP per capita among post-communist members of the European Union from 1995 to 2007 – from 36 to 69 percent of the EU average, although Lithuania (36 to 59 percent) and Latvia (31 to 56 percent) were not far behind (GDP per capita in PPS, 2011). Well before achieving EU membership, the three countries also made membership in the euro zone a top priority. To date, only Estonia, which adopted the euro in January 2011, has met the stringent Maastricht criteria, as the recent recession finally brought inflation under control. The crisis of the last few years, which hit the overheated Baltic economies especially hard and led to drastic, if temporary, declines in GDP and soaring unemployment, was a sobering experience. Nevertheless, it is striking that the commitment to free-market and consumerist values among Baltic political leaders and much of the population ap-

pears to be unshaken. For the future, the economic challenge will be to find new and effective ways to achieve success in the increasingly globalized and competitive marketplace (Saarts, 2010, 5; Lauristin and Vihalemm, 2009, 16).

As already noted, in Estonia and Latvia the most difficult and intractable legacy of the Soviet era is the presence of a large non-Baltic – overwhelmingly Russian and other East Slavic – population, the result of both forced and voluntary migration under Stalin and his successors. Beyond the issue of political participation treated above, there remains the more general concern about how the still disparate majority and minority communities can move toward a more fully integrated society. Importantly, in view of the numerous instances of violent conflict among nationalities in post-communist societies, ethnic relations in the Baltic states have remained almost entirely non-violent, both in the turbulent waning days of Soviet power and since 1991. In the Estonian case peaceful relations are often attributed to a tendency to segregate by nationality with Russians concentrated in the nearly non-Estonian northeast and the large urban complex of Tallinn (Heidmets, 1998, 264–73). In Latvia Russians and other non-Latvians are strongly present in all the major cities and in the region of Latgale in the southeast. In contrast to Estonia where the number of ethnically mixed marriages remains low, intermarriage rates in Latvia have historically been high and continue to be so, including among ethnic Latvians and Russians. In the years 2000–08, for example, about 20 percent of Latvians married outside their ethnicity and 40–45 percent of Russians did so (Plakans, 2009, 523; *Latvijas statistikas gadagrāmata*, 2010, 139, 143). Thus, social integration at the personal level is more in evidence in Latvia and may play an increasingly important role in the future.

Following an initial period when it was hoped that large-scale emigration would resolve the minority issue, the governments of Estonia and Latvia began to accept responsibility for ethnic integration in the second half of the 1990s. They were strongly encouraged along these lines by international organizations such as the European Union, which the Baltic states sought to join at this time, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The stated goal in both countries became a multicultural society in which all ethnic groups would retain their native languages and cultures, but the language of the titular nationality would serve as the basis for uniting all residents around a common civic identity. Citizenship requirements were liberalized in the late 1990s, and the proportion of stateless persons and non-citizens has gradually, but continually declined since then. Nevertheless, it is clear that any process of meaningful integration remains incomplete. A continuing legacy of the Soviet era, when the Russian language held a privileged position in the non-Russian republics, is asymmetrical bilingualism; i.e., knowledge of Russian is still more widespread than that of Latvian or Estonian. In 1989, only 22 percent of ethnic Russians living in Latvia could speak Latvian while fully 68 percent of Latvians had a command of Russian. By 2000,

the proportion of Russians able to speak Latvian had risen to 53 percent, but the overall disparity in favor of Russian has continued to the present day (Raun, 1994, 166; Muižnieks, 2006, 20). In Estonia a comparable situation prevails. A distinctly positive sign in both countries is the much stronger command of the titular languages by younger generations of Russians and other non-Balts, and this trend augurs well for the future. On the other hand, it should also be noted that ability to speak a language does not necessarily equate with any substantial integration. Despite the improving command of the Estonian language among non-Estonians in Estonia, the Bronze Soldier affair demonstrated the fragility of integration among a large proportion of local Russians who felt they were treated as second-class citizens according to surveys taken after the riots (Vihalemm and Kalmus, 2009, 95).

As a long-term solution to the challenge of integration, the educational system was often viewed as holding great promise for promoting closer ties among nationalities. However, both Latvia and Estonia inherited the prevailing Soviet system of schools that were segregated by language of instruction. In the Soviet period Latvian, Estonian, and Russian parents generally welcomed this approach as a means to assure full command of the native language. Because of the privileged and prestigious status of the Russian language in the Soviet Union, in practice ethnic Baltic pupils learned Russian very well, but Russian pupils typically acquired little or even no command of Estonian or Latvian. In the past two decades reformers in the two countries have upgraded instruction in the majority language and successfully introduced various forms of bilingual education in Russian-language elementary schools. The major bone of contention has been how and to what extent bilingual education should be implemented in state-supported secondary schools. After much heated debate Latvia established a program in September 2004 whereby 60 percent of the instruction would be conducted in Latvian and 40 percent in Russian. Satisfaction with the reform tends to be divided along ethnic lines with Latvians generally in favor and Russians opposed (Schmid, 2008, 11, 14). In Estonia a similar reform has been postponed several times and is now due to be implemented in September 2011, although nearly half the Russian secondary schools in Tallinn claim neither their teachers nor students are ready for the change (Ligi pool Tallinna vene gümnaasiumitest, 2011). Beyond the language issue there remains the matter of standardizing the content of what is taught. A recent study of minority education in Estonia and Latvia finds that teachers in minority schools often follow a “hidden curriculum” in order to “correct” the state-mandated approach (Golubeva, 2010, 327).

In stark contrast, ethnic relations in Lithuania appear to be increasingly benign, in large part because of the small size of the minority population and its continual decline. It is noteworthy that already in 1989 Lithuanian–Russian bilingualism was equal; that is, 38 percent of each nationality could speak the other’s language. In the past two decades the ethnic Russian presence has been reduced to only 4.8

percent in 2010 compared to 9.4 percent in 1989, and the Polish minority has also fallen to 6.0 percent (versus 7.0 percent in 1989) (Raun, 1994, 166; Lietuvos Statistikos Departamentas, 2011). In this situation it is perhaps not surprising that the ethnic Russians and Russian speakers who have remained in Lithuania identify strongly with that country and much less with Russia. In a survey taken in 2004, fully 75 percent of the Russian speakers polled indicated a primary or secondary identification with Lithuania, but only 14 percent chose such an association with Russia. In the same survey, which included residents in all three Baltic states, Russian speakers in Estonia and Latvia overwhelmingly identified with the Russian Federation and only to a small degree with their country of residence. In Estonia, 72 percent of the Russian speakers noted a primary or secondary identification connected to Russia, but only 3 percent said the same with regard to Estonia. In Latvia, the corresponding figures for Russian speakers were 61 percent identifying with Russia and 13 percent identifying with Latvia (Ehin, 2007, 9).

As we have seen, the dominant ideology articulated by Baltic governments in the post-communist era has rejected the Soviet past and emphasized individual economic achievement and materialist values. This was the case even in Lithuania where the ex-communists were able to transform themselves into a strong social democratic party. Those social groups who successfully negotiated the transition to free-market capitalism have accepted a 'neoliberal consensus' (Fritz, 2007, 255; Saarts, 2010, 5). Outside observers and international organizations typically give the Baltic states high marks for their performance on a global scale. The United Nations Human Development Index for 2010 rated Estonia 34th, Lithuania 44th, and Latvia 48th out of a total of 169 countries in the world (United Nations Human Development Index, 2011). Nevertheless, not everyone in the Baltic societies has benefitted or is satisfied with the results. During the past decade all three Baltic states have had some of the highest levels of income disparity among EU member states, as measured by the Gini index. Compared to several other post-communist states, including Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary, the Baltic countries do poorly, and poverty levels are high. Expenditure on health care in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania has lagged behind that in other East European EU member states (Gini Coefficient, 2011; Adam, Kristan, and Tomšič, 2009, 76). Already in 2001, Estonian social scientists warned of the division of society into 'two Estonias', separated by an increasing gap in wealth. To date, because of the strength of the neoliberal consensus, no Baltic government has felt the need to attack this problem head on, and the recent recession has reduced state funding for services even further. Instead they have opted for calculated strategic moves such as the Estonian Reform Party's modest increase in support to pensioners and mothers, a step that has paid off in recent elections and helped to broaden its political base (Saarts, 2010, 5).

As has been the case in the rest of post-communist Eastern Europe, the Baltic states have witnessed significant population losses in the past two decades. The extent of the decline is such that the situation can be termed critical, especially in view of the bleak prospects for substantially reversing recent demographic trends. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, birth rates plummeted and death rates rose markedly, and as noted above, massive non-Baltic emigration took place in the first half of the 1990s, continuing at a slower pace after that. In contrast to the situation in the Soviet period, Lithuania now followed the same demographic pattern as Estonia and Latvia. Estonia's total fertility rate bottomed out at 1.28 in 1998, but Lithuania's fell even lower to 1.23 in 2002 (*Eesti statistika aastaraamat*, 2007, 47; *Lietuvos statistikos metraštis*, 2009, 49). Out-migration in search of employment by Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians also increased, especially after EU membership in 2004, and many Baltic university students took advantage of new opportunities to obtain degrees abroad. How permanent this economic and academic migration would continue remains to be seen. Hopes for the future were raised by the slowing down of the negative natural increase in all three Baltic states in recent years, and in Estonia, where birth and death rates are currently more or less in balance, various politicians claimed credit for a demographic 'miracle' based on increased parental support by the government. However, analysts point out that the more important factors are the current, but temporary presence of a relatively large generation of potential mothers (born before 1990 and the precipitous decline in birth rates) and improvements in the quality of life during the last decade (Uudelepp, 2011, 3; Teadlane, 2011). Within ten years or so much smaller cohorts of child-bearing women will be available, and the long-term prospects for demographic stability or growth remain distinctly unfavorable. Other than some welcome provisions for parental leave from employment, Baltic political leaders have come up short in offering solutions to this challenging problem.

Overall, in seeking to meet the challenges of renewed independence the Baltic states have achieved a number of successes that compare favorably with the performance of other post-communist countries, most notably those that were formerly part of the Soviet Union, but also those located in the Eastern Europe of the Cold War era. With certain variations Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have adopted a number of common approaches in domestic politics, the search for security as independent states, and economic policy. The unsolved problems facing them are also highly similar, including overcoming political alienation, establishing stable and functional relations with Russia, combating increasing socioeconomic disparity, and coping with population issues that border on a demographic crisis. In comparison, the divergences in their experience, such as Estonia's greater macroeconomic success, are relatively minor. The one major disparity, the issue of eth-

nic integration in Latvia and Estonia, is the most significant legacy of the distortions created during the Soviet era, and even here the two countries involved have increasingly offered similar solutions to this challenge. In short, there are numerous indications that the gradual convergence of modern Baltic history, which began in earnest over a century ago, has continued to develop in the past two decades and is likely to do so in the foreseeable future as well. Nevertheless, an irreducible level of diversity, based on such factors as language, religious tradition, customs, and the legacy of historical experience in the *longue durée*, will endure as well.

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CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE IN THE WORLD ECONOMY: PAST AND PROSPECTS

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This article offers an overview of some of the most important economic trends in Central and Eastern Europe from a comparative perspective. It also ventures tentative predictions concerning the economic future of the region.

Keywords: Central Europe, Eastern Europe, economy, economic history, comparative economics

What is Central and Eastern Europe?

Central and Eastern Europe has various historical-geographical definitions. In my interpretation it is a historical unit east from the 19th meridian, or along the River Elbe, that divides Europe in half. During the second half of the 20th century it was the “Soviet Bloc”; and currently, it is the region of the “transforming” countries. The concept of two Europes – West and East – is as old as modern historiography. Leopold von Ranke already in the early 19th century differentiated between the peoples and histories of the two halves of the continent (Ranke, [1824] 1909). Jenő Szűcs noted that the River Elbe separated these two parts of Europe in 815, when that was the eastern border of the Christian-feudal Carolingian Empire, markedly different from the pagan, nomadic east. Accidentally, in 1945, the American and Russian armies met at the River Elbe and, soon created two opposing world systems on either side of it (Szűcs, 1983).

Indeed, Central and Eastern Europe shares important characteristics. Compared to the West, history ‘began’ here half a millennium later, only in the 9th–10th centuries when the first permanent states were established, Christianity, feudal institutions, noble privileges, serfdom, private ownership, and land cultivation were introduced. Even in the 13th to the 15th centuries, this entire region remained a kind of ‘frontier’ (N. Berend, 2001), open to Asian invasions and Mongol and Ottoman occupations. Between the 15th and 19th centuries, the region could not follow the rise of the modern, merchant, industrializing Western capital-

ism. Instead it became the raw material and food-supplying periphery, re-feudalized in the capitalist world system (Wallerstein, 1974).

The social fabric, in contrast to the Western bourgeois society with its “disappearing” peasantry, majority working class, and modern entrepreneurial elite, preserved the traditional elements, old social layers and structures characterized a “Dual Society” while modern, mostly non-indigenous, German and Jewish middle class, and a small working class began emerging. In the Balkans, an almost entirely peasant, “incomplete”, or elite-less society existed where bureaucratic-military elite filled the gap.

Oscar Jászi (1964) called this area the “unfinished part of Europe” where nation building did not follow the Western pattern and actually was finishing in the present. At the beginning of the 19th century, three multi national empires dominated the area, in the early 20th century eight states existed in the region, while in the early 21st century, already twenty-eight.

The Development Level of the Region at the End of the Long-19th Century

Until the early-20th century, this region remained the agricultural half of Europe where the infrastructure and income level – GDP per capita – hardly reached more than one-third to one-half of the West European core’s. If we add the level of human capital, the health and educational standard of the region compared to the Western core, we get the full picture of Central and eastern European backwardness: life expectancy at birth before World War I was between 35–40 years, 10–15 years less than in the West. Educational level is well characterized that illiteracy, virtually disappeared in the West still represented 1/3 to 2/3 of the population.

The generalization of the Central and Eastern Europe characteristics, however, requires some further qualification. As *Tables 1–3* reflect, all the comparisons show economic and social backwardness. However, in a broader European relationship the picture is much less dark. Before World War I, we can differentiate among four European regions regarding the level of economic development. 1) The advanced, industrialized, modernized Western Europe, including the western provinces of Austria-Hungary and North Italy. 2) At the other end of the spectrum the region of failed modernization in the Balkans and the borderlands of Austria-Hungary. 3) Another highly pre-industrial region, but with advanced industrial pockets in Russia, Spain, Portugal and South Italy. 4) At last, our region under investigation was a semi-successful modernizer. Central Europe, i.e. Poland, Hungary, together with the Baltic area, Finland and Ireland, emerged on the road of modernization and developed an agricultural-industrial structure. The area of investigation thus occupied a medium level of development. Interesting to note: the semi-successful modernizer countries were not independent nation states, but

Table 1. Development level of the railroads in 1911
(Berend and Ránki, 1982, 100)

Region	Land area /1 km railroad (in sq km)	Length of railroad/100,000 inhabitants	Weight of transported goods/100,000 inhabitants (in 100,000 tons)	No. of railway journeys/ inhabitants
European Core	10.14	90.2	8.18	21.9
C&E E	20.49	50.4	1.59	1.7

Table 2. Employment of the active population by sectors in 1913
(Based on Broadberry and O'Rourke, 2010, 61, 70; Berend and Ránki, 1982, 159)

Region	Agriculture	Industry	Services	Industrialization/capita*
North West Europe	20.9	39.5	39.6	55
C&E E	69.8	18.3	11.9	18

*Great Britain in 1900 = 100

Table 3. GDP per capita in 1913
(Maddison, 1995, 228)

Region	GDP/capita (in 1990 dollar)	%
Western Europe	3,704	100
Central and Eastern Europe	1,690	45.6

parts of the multinational British, Russian, or Habsburg empires. All of Finland, the Baltic region, Ireland, Poland and Hungary profited from the huge imperial markets, including their financial markets (Berend, 2011, forthcoming). As recent research documented, independent developing countries received much less capital, and had to pay much higher interest rates for it (Fergusson and Schularik, 2006, 297; Flandreau and Flores, 2009, 679).¹

The Development Level of the Region at the End of the Short-20th Century

In the “short-20th century” between 1913 and 1989, Central and Eastern Europe made desperate attempts to industrialize and modernize. That was the age of bitter revolts on the European peripheries. Learning the lessons from the successful German war economic regime during the Great War, all of the peripheries introduced newly invented alternative, state dictated economic regimes to replace liberal, free trade, export-led policies. Fascist-authoritarian economic dirigisme became dominant in Mediterranean Europe, including Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Greece; while the world first non-market, centrally planned economy wanted elevating Russia from lagging behind the West by 50–100 years to reach its eco-

conomic level in 10 years as Stalin declared in 1931. The countries of the region that regained independence after World War I turned to economic nationalism, high protective tariffs and strong state interventionism in their effort to catch-up with the West that failed before the war when they followed free trade and export-led industrialization policy.

The newly independent but radically “redesigned” (Poland, Hungary, and Romania) and partly newly created countries (Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia) needed two decades between the wars to somewhat adjust to the new situation among their new borders. Moreover, those decades were pretty depressed years with long period of economic chaos in the immediate postwar years with high inflation, than a devastating Great Depression that hit hard the agricultural and indebted countries. Economic growth characterized the short years of the second half of the 1920s and then the later 1930s, thus economic growth slowed down significantly. None of the countries of the region succeeded in industrialization. They preserved, in the best case, their agricultural-industrial structure.

Table 4. GDP per capita, 1913–50
(Maddison, 1995, 228)

Year	Western Europe (23 countries)	Central and Eastern Europe (9 countries)	C-E-E in % of W-E
1913	3,704	1,690	45.6
1950	5,126	2,631	51.3

Central and Eastern Europe definitely became more self-sufficient, especially in industrial consumer good production such as textile, leather, paper, etc. Their progress in developing certain industrial sectors explains the slow advance and reaching of somewhat more than half of the Western economic level.

This progress nevertheless was rather ambivalent since the advance happened in internationally obsolete and already declining branches. The region, in other words, went against the main stream of modern structural changes. Hungary, for example, increased its textile and paper output by four-times in the interwar decades, and instead of importing 70 percent of its consumed textile goods (in 1913), entirely covered domestic consumption by the 1930s. Bulgaria became 80 percent self-sufficient in covering its industrial consumer good consumption. Modern engineering, car, and chemical industries, on the other hand – except a few modern factories in some of the countries – had remained behind, or non-existent. Most of the modern sectors were financed by foreign investments before World War I, and capital inflow to the region except a few years in the second half of the 1920s, stopped. Modern technology import also dramatically declined. In spite of the striking grain crisis in the period, agricultural output was not diversi-

fied and one-sided grain cultivation remained virtually unchanged. Traditional agricultural and raw material export decreased only from 60 percent to 59 percent in Hungary, remained unchanged, 76 percent in Poland, while in Yugoslavia and Romania, their share were 96 percent and 83 percent, respectively, before World War II.

Rigid social hierarchy and class society, obsolete social characteristics, exclusion of the peasantry from the society blocking social mobility, and preserving the noble-gentry value system remained almost untouched. Education, in spite of spreading literacy, remained a stage behind the West because secondary education was elitist and extremely limited, in the best case between 5 percent and 10 percent of the generation, while higher education enrolled only 1 percent–1.5 percent of the age group.

The second half of the short 20th century was the period of communist economic experiment throughout Central and Eastern Europe. The policy of forced capital accumulation and industrialization, the brutal method that uprooted the peasantry from their land, and the authoritarian political regimes definitely had certain success in transforming the region. Most notably, the often cast like social hierarchy was eliminated and – in the first few decades – an unprecedented social mobility and a real educational revolution modernized the society. Secondary education became virtually general, and higher education enrolled about 15 percent of the given age group. However, the content and structure of education, its' over specialization, practical, and vocational orientation did not follow modern educational trends.

Increased capital accumulation from the interwar average 6 percent of the GDP jumped to 20–25 percent of it and with massive investments, the countries of the region, after the slow interwar decades, generated the highest economic growth of 3.9 percent per annum, i.e., the fastest growth to date, and became industrialized during the 1960–70s. The isolated Soviet Bloc, however, created severe obstacles for real modernization. The area, as all of the peripheral regions, has never pioneered technological inventions and needed technology import. The Cold War era, however, made technology transfer impossible because the Western ban of technology and know how export, the strict CoCom list did not allow following the new communication revolution that revolutionized the entire communication, services, and industry. With tremendous sacrifices of the population, Central and Eastern Europe, thus, at the end, was unable to adjust to the structural requirement of the age and reproduced backwardness in a different form. The computer revolution stopped at the borders of the region and the new high- and medium-high tech industries did not develop. Meanwhile, postwar Western Europe also experienced its unique prosperity and extremely rapid economic growth. This became characteristic both in the par excellence West and also for the former Mediterra-

nean peripheries that had the highest growth rate in the continent and started joining the core.

From the mid-1970s, after the Oil Crisis and the emerging new structural crisis, rapid growth stopped in the region. Moreover, a serious indebtedness crisis emerged, because all of the communist countries tried to assure political stability by overbridging the crisis ridden years with foreign credits to keep full employment and living standard intact. The regions indebtedness increased from \$6 billion to \$100 billion in a few years, and about 80 percent of the credits were consumed. Repayment consequently became more and more difficult, and some of the countries became insolvent and asked for rescheduling repayments. Rapid growth was replaced by near stagnation, and during the last years of the 1980s, even decline in some of the countries. Altogether, in spite of the undoubtedly important social and educational modernization, the most lasting achievement of the communist experiment, in spite of successful and rapid industrialization, Central and Eastern Europe remained on the periphery of the continent, unable to catch-up with the West, moreover, even sliding further behind (Berend, 2009).

Table 5. Comparative economic growth, 1950–92*
(Maddison, 2001, 186; 1995, 201)

Region	GDP/capita,		GDP/capita,		Growth rate, 1950–73	Growth rate, 1973–92
	1950	%	1992	%		
Western Europe	5,126	100	17,387	100	4.8	2.0
Central and East Europe	2,631	51.3	4,665	37.3	3.79	–0.7

* Because a great part, although not the entire decline after the collapse of communism was a consequence of the previous “misdevelopment”, the closing year in this table is not 1989, but 1992.

Prospects: Central and Eastern Europe’s Development in the 21st Century

Post-communist transformation, at the immediate post-1989 period, as Joseph Stiglitz called it, was “mismanaged” (Stiglitz, 2003) and a neo-liberal, “one-size-fit-all” strait jacket was virtually forced to the entire region. The West applauded the ill-advised “shock therapy” and the sudden opening, market and price liberalization of the countries and a fast privatization attempt led to a tragic decline of 20–25 percent of the GDP, about 50 percent decrease of agricultural and 20 percent to 30 percent decline of industrial output.

The region, however, immediately received assistance from the West. The European Union soon accepted the application of several of the former communist countries, including former Soviet republics, and eight Central and Eastern European countries became member of the European Union in 2004, and then two more in 2007. All of these countries became members of the NATO, and the new political arrangement stabilized the political and international situation of the region. Moreover, from the years of European Union candidacy, financial assistance started inflow to the region that reached one-third of the budget of the European Union. This went hand in hand with a huge inflow of foreign direct investments and credits. The entire banking sector was newly created by more than 80 percent foreign participation, and the leading multinational companies established subsidiaries in the modern high- and medium-high tech sectors, initiated research and development and brought the best modern technology into the region. Between 1989 and 2004, \$161,255 million capital flowed in to Central Europe and the Baltic area, and another \$41,903 million to the Balkans (EBRD, 2005, 19). Labor productivity and economic growth gained a new impulse and went hand in hand with a radical structural modernization.

Table 6. Structural changes after the regime change, 2005
(*Economist*, 2006)

Region	Agriculture		Industry		Services	
	% of GDP	% of employment	% of GDP	% of employment	% of GDP	% of employment
West Europe*	2.0	4.4	27.0	31.2	70.0	66
Eastern** Europe	4.9	12.7	32.8	36.7	62.3	56
East in % of West	2.45	2.89	1.28	1.18	0.91	0.85

* European Union 15 or Eurozone; ** 9 countries: all of the Central European and Baltic countries plus Romania.

Although the role of agriculture and industry in the GDP and employment are still 2.5–3 times and 1.2 times, retrospectively, bigger than in the West, while the service sector is still somewhat smaller than in the West, in spite of these legacy of the past, the sectoral structure of the economy, first time in the history of the region, became quite similar to the Western structure.

Labor productivity the best mirror of technological and managerial development, as well as work ethic, was \$5–7 per hour in Central and Eastern Europe, thus only one-quarter to one-third of the Western level of \$25–28 in 1990. During the transformation years when the European Union reached an average 1.4 percent annual increase of productivity, the transforming countries had 3–4 percent increase, i.e., their productivity level in the various countries of the region increased

at least by 50 percent, or doubled and even tripled, thus reached about half of the Western productivity level.

After the severe decline in the first transformation years, the region's economy gradually recuperated: from 1993 economic growth returned and between 1993 and 2003, reached 4–5 percent per year in Central Europe and the Baltic area. While the region's per capita GDP reached only 37 percent of the West European level in 1992, by 2005, reached its 46 percent (virtually the same level as in 1973, and exactly the same as in 1913). Central Europe reached the 1989 per capita GDP level by 2000, and surpassed that by 50 percent by 2010. The entire Soviet Bloc, however, recovered the 1989 level only by 2010. Meanwhile income differences significantly increased:

Table 7. Income inequality (Gini index*)
(Based on Broadberry and O'Rourke, 2010, 398)

Region	1985	2000
Germany, France, Sweden and the Netherlands	25.5	29.3
Central and Eastern Europe (8 countries)	22.1	31.2
Russia	23.8	45.6
Britain and Italy	29.5	36.0

* The Gini Index = 0, if everybody has the same income, 100 if one person gets all of the income of a country.

Looking back to the last two centuries, the picture is rather depressing. In relative terms, comparing to Western Europe, Central and Eastern Europe is far behind its 1820 relative level, and could not reach the 1870 relative level either. Varying calculations reflect less than half or even hardly more than one-third of the Western level in Central and Eastern European by 2005:

Table 8. GDP/capita in Central and Eastern Europe (9 countries)
in % of West Europe (23 countries)
(Teodorovich et al., 2005, 326; Maddison, 1995, 228;
Broadberry and O'Rourke, 2010, 299, 302)

East in % of West Europe	
Teodorovich and Maddison	Broadberry and O'Rourke
59	57
51	48
46	49
51	46
47	44
40	—
39	—
46	35

Forecasts for the Coming Decades

A promising one-, one-and-half decades of gradual catching-up period with the West, faster growth rates and productivity increase, stopped in 2007–09. The financial crisis hit the world, Europe, including the transforming countries. Economic growth, however is returning to the world. What would the future bring to Central and Eastern Europe? According to one of the most authentic quantifiers, Angus Maddison, Central Europe may reach an annual 1.79 percent annual growth between 2003 and 2030, while Western Europe will have 1.75 percent. If this is the case, the existing gap would hardly change and Central and Eastern Europe remains on the European periphery. Europe as a whole, and Central and Eastern Europe is losing its share from the world economy because of the much faster rising new Asian and overseas economies. Maddison's calculation shows a continuous sharp European decline:

Table 9. Shares from the world's GDP
(Maddison, 2007, 340)

Regions	1820	1870	1950	1973	2003	2030
West Europe	23.0	33.1	26.2	25.6	19.2	13.0
East Europe	3.6	4.5	3.5	3.4	1.9	1.3

A more realistic forecast by Nicholas Crafts, however, calculates 4 percent long-term economic growth per year in Central and Eastern Europe, while – according to the same calculations – the West also continues with more or less the same growth rate as before 2008, i.e., about 2 percent. In this case the catching-up process may continue but requires at least the greatest part of the 21st century (Crafts, 2006, 40).

In full agreement with Grzegorz Kołodko, one has to add: there is not one single future for Central and Eastern Europe. Kołodko differentiates among four possible paths: 1) vanguard group of a very few countries: 7.5 percent annual growth; 2) Bulk of Central Europe 3–4 percent; 3) a group of 2–3 percent annual growth; and at last, 4) some Balkan countries with less than 2 percent growth (Kołodko, 2001). In this case, a small part of the region will catch-up with the West relatively fast, while some parts of the region will be unable to get closer to the West, moreover, some countries may decline further back.

The 2008–10 economic crisis calls the attention for cautious forecasts. The depressing experience and fragility of Greece, Ireland, Portugal, and Spain, countries that started emerging from the peripheries from the 1970s–80s and exhibited modern history's most impressive catching-up success, all of a sudden sharply de-

clined because the dualistic character of the transforming countries unveiled the weakness of the genuinely domestic sectors. A third of a century is not a long period in historical measures.

Historical forecasts, however, are always the extrapolation of existing trends, while history is a complex process of continuity and change. Historians, in the end, are not futurologists.

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Note

- ¹ Independent developing countries had 180 basis point higher interest rates than British colonies in India and Africa. Even backward, autocratic empires such as the Russian and Ottoman were preferred borrowers “precisely because they were strong... [and] credible underwriters came to monopolize the market for good sovereign debt”.

SELF-DETERMINATION AND STABILITY IN EUROPE: AN UNEASY BALANCE

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This paper traces the international history of Eastern Europe in the 20th century within the analytical framework of the national self-determination/independence paradigm. It argues that in 1918 the allied powers dissolved the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in the hope that the newly established nation states would strengthen European stability and would balance Russian and German power. The Munich agreement was not a mistake but a conscious effort to reorganize the continent on a more stable basis after it turned out that the international system created for middle Europe in Paris was not working. Thereafter Great Britain strove to achieve continental balance by surrendering the region to German, later to Soviet hegemony. This would also be the policy of the United States until 1948 when the Truman administration decided that the restoration of national independence in Eastern Europe would create a safer Europe. After the failure of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution the U.S. returned to the position that continental stability took precedence over the independence of the Soviet satellites, a view shared by the major NATO allies. This remained the Western position through 1989. The restoration of national independence and continental reunification originated in Eastern Europe, which for the first time since 1918 was a policy maker in the international arena.

Keywords: national self-determination, continental stability, security, World War I, Paris treaties, the Munich Conference, World War II, 1956 Hungarian Revolution, the Prague Spring, regime change, continental reunification

National Self Determination vs. Continental Security and Stability

The Habsburg Monarchy, which had dominated the Central European scene for half a millennium went to war in 1914 to preserve its territorial integrity. Edward Grey noted ominously: “The lamps are out all over Europe. We shall not see them lit again in our time.” The quest for more security ended in self-destruction. When Austria-Hungary’s effort to sign a separate peace failed, it seemed to outlive its usefulness as a balance between Russia and Germany. When the Entente powers decided to dissolve the Monarchy into independent national entities, they were primarily motivated by strategic calculations. Some in the British Foreign Office

were unconvinced that anything better would come from dissolving the Monarchy but such views were brushed aside. In fact it looked as though that, the new states would constitute an effective buffer zone between Germany and Soviet Russia. National independence and stability were seen as mutually reinforcing principles. Containing Bolshevism in Russia was a key factor in redrawing the boundaries of Central Europe. Strategically important railroads, which would facilitate mobilization against Russia, were given to “friendly” successor states even at the price of violating ethnic self-determination. Territory was granted in accordance with the security services each state was expected to provide for Britain and France, the chief beneficiaries being Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia. Territorial awards were thus meant to increase stability in Eastern Europe. As it turned out, the unintended, although not quite unforeseen consequence was the opposite: revisionist sentiment in Germany, Soviet Russia, Hungary and even Bulgaria led to the disruption of Middle Europe. Instead of more security the allies ended up with less.

The high hopes attached to national independence as a stabilizing factor in Central Europe quickly faded as the former entente powers were unable to stabilize the economies and politics of the newly created states. Only a few years after dismembering the Monarchy the Foreign Office and even the Quai D’Orsay thought of resuscitating the old. In fact the restoration of the economic unity and thereby the political integrity of Austria-Hungary was an elusive goal both London and Paris would seek. But Humpty Dumpty could not be put together again: Central Europe’s “pauper states” as the British called them were hopelessly divided between revisionist and status quo powers. Neither the British nor the French were willing to provide workable security guarantees for their clients. A case in point was Romania which sought, but never received French guarantee against the Soviets for Bessarabia. Neither was France willing to guarantee the Little Entente against the Hungarians. Economic recovery was obstructed by nationalist isolation, some of the new states, including Hungary and Austria seemed unviable. At the same time the victors competed for influence in what they saw as a zero sum game. Paris and Rome constructed their respective blocs while London was wary of the undue influence France enjoyed in the center of Europe, prompting it to give up its anti-Hungarian stance and support Budapest against the bloc sponsored by the French.

But as recent scholarship has shown, Britain wrote off Central Europe by the end of the 1920s. Even though Paris offered paper guarantees to its allies in the mid 1930s they were not intended to be kept. London was unable to find a pillar on which to base its influence in Eastern Europe. Even Czechoslovakia was a disappointment, because it obstructed regional reconciliation. “All these states”, wrote permanent undersecretary of foreign affairs Robert Vansittart, “like France are obsessed by anxiety to keep what they got out of the war and to preserve the status

quo against those neighbors whom the war despoiled... their peppery weakness and local brawls have been a disappointment (they are) unreliable allies in the pursuit of this haunting and evasive 'security'". The newly created states in Central Europe rapidly outlived their usefulness for Western security. Both London and Paris hoped that Germany could be satisfied in middle Europe. Appeasement cannot be explained with unsatisfactory military preparedness or the desire to avoid war at all costs only. Recent scholarship indicates that disenchantment with the international system created in Paris played a role; it was hoped that new boundaries in Central Europe and German mastery there will bring about a more just peace and hence a more stable continent. German hegemony over the smaller states was not seen as threat but rather as an enhancement of Western security. In 1938 Austria was annexed by the Reich. Thereafter the western powers bullied Czechoslovakia into accepting Hitler's demands and arbitrated its partition. Chamberlain returned from Munich genuinely convinced that it was possible to remodel Europe in a peaceful and just manner. French officials stated that the British and the French almost went to war to boost up a state that was not viable. In 1939 Czechoslovakia was dismembered, neither Britain nor France honored their commitment to guarantee Czechoslovakia's borders on the grounds that the state had ceased to exist before Germany invaded it. British objectives would not be impeded by German control of Central Europe. When Hitler destroyed Czechoslovakia precisely two decades after it was helped to life by British liberals Chamberlain explained British inaction: "The object that we have in mind is of too great a significance to the happiness of mankind for us to lightly give it up."

In August and September 1939 Berlin and Moscow divided the north eastern tier, Poland was destroyed as an independent state. It seemed that Europe's fate would be arbitrated by Hitler and Stalin. There began a German-Soviet scramble for the Balkans. Stalin seized Bessarabia, which was assigned to him by Hitler and annexed the strategically placed Northern Bukovina, which was not. While Hitler attacked the Low Lands and France, Stalin first went for Finland and then, simultaneously with Hitler's campaign in the west, annexed the Baltic States. France and Great Britain planned intervention against the Soviets but nothing came of it. Scores were settled with Romania, and Europe seemed to be ready for a new peace conference orchestrated by Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini. The new concert was brought to naught when Molotov's talks in Berlin failed in November 1940 over Bulgaria. Germany emerged as the dominant power, attracting the still independent states of the Balkans and middle Europe like a magnet. Stalin hoped to join the Tripartite Pact, but by then Hitler decided to crush his main ideological opponent.

Even as the Wehrmacht was closing in on Moscow, Stalin told Anthony Eden that the USSR would extend its sphere of influence into Eastern Europe. Stalin would get from the British what Hitler did not deliver: control of the Balkans. Hitler's satellites, Romania, Hungary and Bulgaria hoped that they would be saved

by a British–American occupation. Instead, in November 1943 the Allies decided to provoke their German occupation without regards to the consequences. The motive was to spread the Germans thin in Normandy and the eastern theater of war. As Allen Dulles put it: “we are up to our elbow in blood, a few hundred thousand lives will not matter.” Previously satellite attempts to defect from the Axis had been brushed aside. After the decision was made to open the second front in Normandy, satellite defection was encouraged to force Hitler to invade them, thereby tying down German troops. As the State Department cynically put it: “Adolf [Hitler] aware of decision and informing his boys”, German domination would be followed by another occupation, this time Soviet.

Only five years after the north-eastern tier was partitioned between Germany and Russia, in October 1944 Churchill and Stalin divided the Balkans. Churchill later claimed that the percentage agreement was meant to be a temporary arrangement. In reality the Foreign Office had been thinking along these lines since 1942. Romania, the Foreign Office confided to the State Department in early 1943, would be given “to the wolves” and Soviet influence would prevail in the other adjacent countries as well. A formal offer of Romania for Greece had been made to Stalin in early 1944. Roosevelt, who planned a British-Soviet condominium in Europe, applauded the “meeting of minds” between the British and Soviets. American inaction behind the iron curtain until 1948 was not caused by the lack of leverage on the Soviets alone. Rather, Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe was not so bad for the Americans, who would not take part in the stabilization of Central Europe. The joint chiefs ruled out American participation in military operations in the Balkans citing Soviet superiority; Roosevelt and his military advisors opposed even a subsidiary operation advocated by Churchill. Roosevelt was known for his disinterest in Eastern Europe and under his first presidency Truman did not evidence much either. The Soviet Union’s borders as established by the Hitler-Stalin Pact were left standing and the Churchill-Stalin arrangement for Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Greece were not seriously challenged either. The U.S. and Britain were virtually shut out of the Soviet-occupied areas; Voroshilov expressed the Soviet mentality succinctly: “this is our territory and we will say who can enter”. Hungarian party leader Rákosi proclaimed May 1946: as soon as the peace treaties are signed the “proletariat will be liberated”.

Paris saw no security challenge in the westward expansion of the Soviet Union, and neither did the U.S. until 1948. Then an abrupt shift occurred in Washington’s position towards Eastern Europe. Rather than regarding Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe as a stabilizing or at least acceptable condition, the second Truman administration hoped to roll back Soviet power and restore national independence. The Soviet military occupation of Central Europe was now considered as a threat since Eastern Europe “extended Soviet power into the heart of Europe”. The United States came to see national independence in Eastern Europe and European

security as mutually reinforcing conditions. Vigorous policies were implemented to realize the ambitious goal until by 1953, Soviet nuclear capabilities made subversion and covert operations too dangerous to pursue. The Eisenhower–Dulles platform announced roll back and liberation arguing that the Soviet domination of Eastern Europe was immoral and a threat to U.S. security. Scholarship has emphasized Soviet nuclear deterrence in explaining why the Republican administration backed down from its commitment to liberate Eastern Europe. Yet this explanation fails to explain why Eisenhower did not explore the possibilities of putting any pressure on Khrushchev in 1956 when the Hungarian war of liberation (and the simultaneous turmoil in Poland) brought Moscow in a critical situation. Ultimately the Eisenhower administration may not have found Soviet hegemony less desirable than a retraction of Soviet power. This would bring the United States on the same page as its European allies, none of which saw any advantage in pushing the Soviets out of Eastern Europe.

By the time of the Prague Spring in 1968 the U.S. had completely reappraised its East European policy. Soviet presence there no longer seemed as threatening as in the 1950s, democratic change was occurring in at least some of the satellites that made them less likely to act as proxies of the Soviet Union. Government documents reflect a slow and gradual change in the American position on the future status of Eastern Europe. Continental reunification was no longer on the agenda and neither was the full restoration of independence. Satellites were not to be encouraged to break with the USSR. America would aim at the “development of Western unity in close association with the U.S. a further loosening (but not severing) of abnormally tight bonds between the USSR and Eastern Europe, *reduction* in divisions between East and West”. In fact the removal of Soviet control could lead to a more dangerous world. “Unbridled nationalism in Eastern Europe might lead to possible renewal of the patterns of conflict that made the area such a cockpit prior to pax communista. This potential is evident in complex of latent and potentially dangerous territorial and minority issues in the area.”

In 1971 a U.S. diplomat told his audience that the only hope Hungary had for liberation is if change occurs within the Soviet Union itself. A few years later NSC aide Helmut Sonnenfeldt recommended organic relations within the Soviet bloc. There emerged a reform bloc within the Soviet sphere, a situation far from perfect but “not so bad” for the United States. President Carter even noted in his diary that there was no Soviet influence in Hungary.

When the communist regimes in Eastern Europe, first in Poland then in Hungary began to disintegrate the Western powers welcomed and supported change up to the point they threatened to upset the status quo in Europe. The accelerated pace of transformation in 1989 filled capitals from Vienna to Washington with apprehension.

By 1989 Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe was seen as a stabilizing factor, the Warsaw Pact a pillar of European stability. Yet, the communist regimes in Eastern Europe were in a state of economic and political decline; without reforms their collapse seemed unavoidable with a potential to destabilize the region. Thus reforms had to be far reaching enough to keep the East European systems afloat, yet stop short of regime change. The reason for caution was not mainly the fear of provoking Soviet intervention, although this may also have been a factor. The West did not just fail to encourage the movement toward regime change, but actually tried to impede regime change and Soviet withdrawal. The EEC declared that it would not allow Comecon states to enter in the foreseeable future many of the products of which were excluded from the common market. A high official of the EEC even asserted that it was Hungary's "duty" to stay in the Warsaw Pact. The French socialists admonished the Hungarian party not to lose ground to the opposition. German chancellor Kohl warned the HSWP not to lose control of the levers of power; Thatcher pleaded with Gorbachev to stay in Eastern Europe; Bush wanted Jaruzelski to stay and supported communist reformers in Budapest against the opposition declaring that US-Hungarian relations should not impair Hungary's relationship with the USSR, he "did not want to cause problems for Hungary or Gorbachev". Mitterrand's vision, as he explained in Budapest in January 1990 was a divided continent on a cooperative basis. Once more, national self-determination was seen as contradictory to the principle of stability. Austria, Switzerland and Italy were also much concerned. Austria was worried about refugees and a potential spillover of crises. For Italy and France the prospect of German domination in *Mittleuropa* was not more appealing than continued Soviet control – the extent of which was never entirely clear in the Western world.

The main fear was for Gorbachev and his political future which would be in jeopardy if the Soviets lost Eastern Europe. Gorbachev was not planning on losing the empire and hoped to contain changes within the confines of "socialism" and the existing international structure in Europe. He was the first unambiguously pro-Western Soviet leader, who signed important arms reduction agreements, therefore his political survival enjoyed priority self-determination. Thus when in Budapest Bush signaled that although not disinterested in the events, the United States respected the Soviet Union's sphere of influence.

In addition, as Lawrence Eagleburger pointed out, a liberated Eastern Europe may not be a more stable place. Old national rivalries and hostilities may come to the surface, bringing instability to the region and potentially the continent. Last but not least, there were French worries that the developments in Eastern Europe could delay the Maastricht process.

All these concerns led NATO powers to seek the preservation of the international system that was based on a divided Europe, albeit on a more cooperative,

non-competitive basis. The initiative to break with Yalta came from Eastern Europe, which for the first time since 1918, was able to control its destiny.

The destruction of Austria-Hungary created a highly unstable and vulnerable space in the middle of Europe. Munich in 1938, the Western non-response to the Hitler-Stalin pact, the percentage agreement, Truman's inaction in the years of Soviet penetration in Eastern Europe were *not* mistakes in policies dealing with dictatorial, expansionist powers and the search for a new and lasting European balance. The history of international relations in the areas between Germany and Russia needs reinterpretation. The stability/national self-determination paradigm offers an analytical framework in which it is possible to analyze the policies of Western powers towards the region between 1918 and 1990. The national independence of the weak states in the area is guaranteed by Western powers in case this condition is seen to be consistent with the principle of stability and security. If history is a good guide to the future membership in the European Union may guarantee that the two conditions will be mutually reinforcing.

AND THE FIRST SHALL BE THE LAST

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This study analyzes the puzzle of Hungarian economic drifting in a long run perspective. The underlying puzzle for the investigation is why bad policies are invariably popular and good policies unpopular, thus why political and economic rationality never overlap. The first part of the article summarizes in eight points the basic features of the postwar period. Then six lessons are offered, which might be useful for other countries in transition or for students of comparative economics and politics, lessons that can be generalized on the basis of the individual country experience.

Keywords: Hungary, economic policy, transition, postcommunism, reform, privatization

The Puzzle of Hungarian Drifting

The saying from Scripture reminds us of a feature that triggered the separation of economics as a special discipline, distinct from public administration, political science and mere accounting for the wealth of the sovereign. It has been the observation of the rise and decline of nations that turned economics into a separate field of inquiry. Over the past 300 years or so analysts have rightly been puzzled by the following fact: arrangements – policies and institutions – that functioned fairly well and productively served the rise of a nation in a given period of time, have turned into an obstacle of adjustment and change. Thereby the very same arrangements that had once been brought about glory, later turned out to be at the root of nemesis of the same country or regime. While examples in history abound – from the Roman Empire to the Soviet Empire – it is relatively rare for contemporaries to observe something similar in a smaller scale, but unfolding in front of the eyes of a single generation.

More than two decades following the fall of the Wall the economic and social miracle expected by many of the agents of change has yet to materialize. The sober estimates that are being produced by national and international agencies, from

ministries of finance and central banks to the IMF, the OECD and the European Commission, invariably talk about a slowdown of the long run trajectory of growth. While the decade in the 1998–2008 period saw unprecedented convergence to the core of Europe, this dynamics of growth is unlikely to return, not even to the Baltics, where the catch-up potential seem to have been the greatest.

Even more striking is the case of Hungary, where the catching up potential started to ebb up well before the eruption of the global financial crisis in 2008–09. Moreover Hungary, having been accustomed to a leader position in terms of systemic reforms ever since the late 1960s, has lost momentum by 2002–03, i.e., just at the time when entry into the EU would have called for – and allowed for – radicalizing structural reforms and anchor expectations by joining the stability club, provided by the single currency of the EU. Instead tinkering with change, the exclusive role of low politics and a polarized political elite has missed the opportunity of introducing major changes in good time. As a consequence the drift and the ensuing laggard status has become a fact of life already by about 2006. Ever since the slowdown of growth, the increase in unemployment, the stagnant international competitiveness, explosion of public and private debt and sustained high inflation indicate the cumulative costs of doing nothing.

Therefore it might be of broader interest to investigate how Hungary has lost its traditional pioneering position and why is the return to normalcy, i.e., a leader status in terms of change, is among the less likely options for the future. In the first part we summarize major features of postwar changes, and in the second part we draw some general conclusions of broader relevance from a comparative perspective. Needless to say that we do not aim to be exhaustive either in terms of analysis or in terms of referencing and documenting our claims.

A Short Narrative of the Hungarian Model

1. Hungary has never been a typical fully-fledged Soviet type economy as modeled in comparative economic systems' textbooks, with vertical dependencies and exclusive state control and full seclusion from global markets. As was documented at the time (Bauer, 1983; Berend, 1988; Csaba, 1990) only the short period between 1949 and 1953 was like real socialism (Stalinism). In the preceding period, in 1945–48 pluralist elections, noncommunist government, predominantly private property were the dominant features. In the post-1953 period several versions of market socialism were introduced, tried and tested, and the outcome of the experimentation was a relatively smooth and organic transition to a market economy without adjective in 1988–93, with a fairly large degree of continuity in both policies and institution building before and after the democratic transformation of polity.

This period can be assessed in two ways. In the first we stress – as contemporaries tended to do – the advantages goulash Communism tended to enjoy over other socialist models inside and outside the Soviet bloc. In the second, we may highlight the path dependencies a failed modernization attempt created for the following decades, both in terms of structures and in terms of institutions, social norms and behavioral standards (Kádár, 1994; Kornai, 2001; Muraközy, 2010). The two explanations are in fact rather complementary than mutually exclusive, stressing the different aspects of the same ambiguous development. For instance, delegating de facto property rights to socialist enterprise managers in 1984–87 did weaken central Party control over the economy and induced truly entrepreneurial spirit in many of those firms. Meanwhile the same arrangement precluded any conscious, planned, controlled and thus socially acceptable forms of large scale privatization in the period following systemic change, since the ‘initial owners’ were already self-selected by the nomenclature. In other words, competing privatization projects following the political turn, have largely been rendered inoperative by the pre-emptive moves of the preceding period. True initial and final owners rarely overlapped – like in any other real world market economy, in 10 or 20 years after the process started.¹ Seen historically, the process was, as a whole, forward-looking, still the macro performance of the country remained notoriously weak, leading to the brink of bankruptcy by March 1990, when the democratic government was formed.

2. As richly documented in the sources cited above, Hungary did enjoy the advantage of being an ‘early bird’ in terms of systemic reforms. Particularly in the 1987–89 period a series of institutional reforms were launched, which actually have laid the foundations for a market economy. Without intending to be exclusive we mention just a few. Property reform, besides quasi-privatization included liberalization of the small business sector. In 1987 a two-tier banking system based on commercial banks were created. Foreign entry, both to banking and industry, was made possible and even supported by the government. Prices were gradually liberalized and so was foreign trade. The straightjacket of state trading, based on obligatory interstate quotas in Comecon, was replaced by trade in convertible currencies. The local currency, the Forint was gradually made convertible and most restrictions on trade abolished. Further legislation on financial institutions, foreign investment, restitution, etc. were elaborated.

In sum, with the benefit of hindsight, we may note, that the last two outgoing Socialist governments of Károly Grósz and Miklós Németh actually delivered much of the stabilization–liberalization–institution building – privatization or SLIP agenda commonly seen as the backbone of successful transition. However, as seen above, macroperformance remained weak, inflation reached 30 percent. External imbalances developed into unsustainable dimensions, as big firms continued to export to insolvent Eastern markets, and the financing gap was bridged

by western credits. Since exports to the west stagnated, this was a suicidal game. Rescheduling in 1990 could only be avoided through concerted action of the IMF and major European governments, such as the British and the German.

3. The economic platform of the opposition parties (Laki, 1991) tended to be built on the negation of the market tendencies of the late Communist period. Thus these were in part utopian, in part statist, anti-market in nature. It goes without saying that exigencies of governance pushed the new center-right government into much more market friendly policies than their language would have suggested. Most of the institutional reforms, including the law on banking, the tough law on bankruptcy and most big privatizations to strategic western investors were completed on time. By adopting the Kupa program of 1991 the conservatives committed themselves to what was by and large a continuation of systemic changes of the preceding period.

In this cycle of 1990–94 macroeconomic performance remained weak. While restructuring did go on, thereby laying the groundwork for future improvements, unemployment skyrocketed to 13 percent by 1992, against decades of full employment and even over-employment under Communism. This was a real shock, to economy and society alike. It also stood in sharp contrast to the “Czech economic miracle” of the period, when putting off structural changes allowed the Czech economy to grow and keep unemployment low.

4. Recovery in the mid-1990s is being attributed, by most analysts, to the Bokros adjustment package of March 1995 (Kornai, 1997; Antal, 1998). With the benefit of hindsight this set of measures, though having provoked broad segments of the Hungarian society, has actually contributed only marginally to the recovery of the following decade, i.e., from 1997 to 2006. While macrofinancial rebalancing was, to some degree, a technical minimum, the structural measures of Bokros hardly survived the 13 months he spent in the Ministry of Finance. Symbolic measures, such as tuition fees and co-payment were revoked, most structural measures, except for a part of pension privatization, not even launched.

On this ground we may claim that the return of growth from early 1997, to a rate of over 4 percent over a decade, can and should not be attributed to measures that were either not taken or quickly revoked. Instead we may observe that the harvest from a decade of institutional reforms, enacted by and large in a synergic fashion, could be collected at long last. Broad measures like privatization, or setting up new rules of the game, via bankruptcy legislation, are bound to act with considerable delay. Societal learning is always slow, and the first reaction to any change is mostly resistance, later accommodation, and only later playing by the new rules. The third phase matured by 1997–98 and the subsequent years. In fact, little if any new, domestically owned and initiated reforms took place until 2002 save for the – quite significant – measures of adopting EU standards in the 31 areas of life stipulated by Community legislation. Once again, macro indicators

– from exports to employment – improved precisely at times when policies were rather bad, or not very forward looking, to say the least.

5. It would be false to claim that in the 1997–2004 no reforms took place. What we claim is more nuanced: in this period the EU acted as an anchor for the entire political class, at least for those parts who could come any close to governing positions. The common national aim of not to be left out of Europeanization prevailed over a variety of divisions, long and short term strains. This has streamlined major policy decisions irrespective of the composition of the government and legislation.

The external anchor allowed the EU to push through a number of measures which otherwise might not have come through, from abolition of death penalty to empowering the competition agency with real powers of trust busting and monopoly control, further streamlining the foreign trade regime and introduce capital account convertibility. However most of these and other measures were not domestically owned, but were introduced to please Brussels.

In turn, when the accession agreement was signed in December 2002 in Copenhagen, the stimulus for change has weakened, often simply disappeared. Lacking domestic ownership reforms were bound to fall prey to domestic politics, myopic maneuvering and fishing for votes in the simplest possible manner. Neither professional nor political will seem to have prevailed and the loss of perspectives was imminent. In a way, the lack of trust and the ensuing populist short termism in politics in general is to be found behind the drift into fiscal alcoholism in the very moment EU monitoring was easing up and membership in EMU was seen as a done deal (Darvas and Szapáry, 2009; Antal, 2009) – even if it has proven to be otherwise.

6. This leads us to one of the most paradoxical periods of Hungarian history, the years between 2002 and 2008. Expectations were high, both domestically and abroad. In terms of growth, convergence to EU standards and institutional improvement alike. In reality, a period best described by *carpe diem* followed. We are unaware of any major policy or structural change, that would have even aimed at, let alone delivered, improvements to be harvested in the next period of governance, despite the hectic and often improvised reform zeal and intensive preaching of the left-liberal coalition in 2006–08. Policy adjustments and corrections, as dictated by the consideration of the day were numerous. But none of them were broad, forward looking and sufficiently deep going. Meanwhile macroeconomic performance was still relatively good, growth rates increased from 3.7 percent in 1996–2000 to 3.9 percent by 2001–06. The structure of exports improved, with machinery and equipment accounting for over 62 percent in sales, or the double of the value of Italy and Spain. FDI continued to flow and Hungarian firms also started to expand, primarily southward and eastward (more on these in Csaba, 2011). But the writing on the wall was not to be missed.

How can we explain the paradox of bad policies – good outcomes for this period? At least four factors must have been in place. First: the generally upbeat mood, in economic terms, positive expectations, tended to prevail and create an atmosphere of everlasting boom. Knowing the “animal spirits” of the markets, noted already in the 1930s by Ludwig von Mises and Lord Keynes separately, this time the tendency to overlook weaknesses and underrate risks, while hoping always for the best outcome triggered a series investments, and far not only in the residential sector. Second, as the entry to the Eurozone was seen as a given, nobody cared about exchange rate and interest rate risks. Hundreds of thousands of households and thousands of firms accumulated sizable debt in foreign currency. This made the country vulnerable to external shocks. Third, FDI continued to flow, thus the expectations of further structural improvements seem to have been born out by the facts. Finally money was cheap and in great supply on international financial markets, interest rates stagnated at historic lows. This created the impression of sunny days’ lasting forever, when only a fool would forego yet another lucrative investment to be financed from debt. The story – so familiar from the Great Depression – replicated itself.

7. Unsurprisingly, as all parties, this party also ended. And it ended sour, not least because of the lack of the precautionary measures conventional rules of good fiscal housekeeping would have required.

Hungarian growth stopped in the middle of 2006, 2007 registered a mere 0.8 and 2008 0.7 percent, with 2009 closing with a truly bad –6 percent contraction, quite rare during peacetime. Let us note, that stagnation started way before the global financial crisis could have hit. But the collapse of Lehman Brothers in September 2008 and the ensuing credit crunch struck Hungary particularly heavily. This was caused not only by the vulnerability noted above, but also by the ill-fated communication of the leftist government, proclaiming dynamic growth for 2009 in their fiscal plan, thereby uncovering their ignorance of the change of tide on global financial markets. The situation was saved by signing a last minute jumbo stand-by loan of 20 bn euros – 25 bn dollars – in an unprecedented concerted rescue action by the EU, the IMF and the World Bank in October, 2008. The Socialist government collapsed and gave way to the caretaking Bajnai Government, which, from March 2009 managed to consolidate the situation by the new elections of April, 2010.

In the 13 months of its tenure the technocratic administration, backed openly or tacitly, but exclusively by the former ruling parties only, actually started to clean up the mess with a degree of resoluteness. Politically corrupted personalities were removed from office, criminal investigations started. In the economy increasing the retirement age was made. Previous excesses, as 13-month pensions and 13-month wages in the public sector were abolished, subsidies cut, administered prices increased. Public sector employment was cut and conditions for unemploy-

ment benefit severed. Meanwhile current economic indicators remained weak and the opposition had an easy run to blame the government for each and every ill, irrespective of its nature, origin and length of existence. While the success of consolidation was evident by the fact that over 60 percent of the jumbo credit line was never drawn, no banks had to be bailed out, and Hungarian debt/GDP ratio never exceeded the EU average, the drop in living standards and employment paved the way to the unprecedented landslide victory of one single movement, the FIDESZ–KDNP alliance in 2010. The logic – sound policies, bad perceptions – survived.

8. Finally the period since the formation of the government with two thirds majority is an open ended story at the time of writing. The first year has seen a combination of two contrarian policies. On the one hand, visionary projects to re-tailor basically everything, from the Constitution to the system of regional control, could be heard. True, very few of these have ever been delivered in full, not even after the promulgation of the convergence program as of April, 2011. On the other hand, the government was obviously taken by surprise by the evolving Greek, Irish and Portuguese crises. EU policies were focused on the problem countries, and near-problem ones had to endure more rigidity, especially in terms of potential for fiscal flexibility. For this reason the second Orbán government was induced into a series of austerity measures, which were mostly improvised and lacked sustainability, let alone domestic ownership. While this was the way to forestall yet another rescue package, which was a success, the broader projects fell victim to the need to balance the fiscal accounts.

As most observers would agree that the “non-conventional” policies of the government lacks sustainability in the medium run, macroeconomic indicators undoubtedly improved. 2010 already saw a year of growth of 1.2 percent, 2011 in the range of 2.5–3.0 percent, riding on the robust German locomotive. Hungarian treasury bonds were sold at advantageous prices and new inward FDI deals as of Mercedes and Audi concluded. Exports grew by 17 percent in 2010 and also double digit in 2011, thereby showing signs of growing out of debt. Returning the largely unused buffer funds will diminish external debt substantially, and the debt/GDP rate target of 65 percent by 2014 – instead of 80 percent in 2010 – is seen as realistic by most market players. In sum, while policies are controversial, most economic indicators improve steadily, even if not so exorbitantly as previous governmental statements would have implied.

Broader Political Economy Implications from the Case Study

In the second part of our paper we join the ever growing international literature on the political economy of policy reform. This approach, in contrast to rational

choice paradigm, which takes inability to change for granted, bits and pieces of how to orchestrate successful change for the better is being analyzed. Under this angle the axiom is that change is though conceivable, but by no means inevitable. At the level of policy analysis therefore it is both of historic and analytical interest to identify what can be learned by others from the mistakes committed by some under given political, historic and economic circumstances. In other words, if there is anything to be generalized.

In our case this might be a quite relevant issue. For one, we still have countries under Communist rule. Some of them, including Vietnam and Cuba, are just on the road of marketization. Here the earlier Hungarian experience of introducing markets under single party rule. In other instances experiences transcending the usual stabilization and structural adjustment packages of the IMF (Arpac et al., 2008; Eke and Kutan, 2009) might be of interest. In other words, some of the postcommunist experience may well be generalized for being relevant for transitions in other parts of the globe. Being aware of the limitation of any such broad enterprise we formulate some tentative conclusions, which should be read with a grain of salt.

1. As we have documented repeatedly in telling the Hungarian story, *lag is an important explanatory factor*. Lag in economics denotes the timely distance between action and outcome. This might be days, in case of exchange rate or interest rate liberalization, and decades in case of pension or schooling reforms.

What we are concerned with here is the following. Most of the measures related to systemic change, such as privatization and institution building, are typically ones that exert their influence with considerable delay. Millions of agents need to internalize the new rules. For instance bankruptcy legislation needs to bite first, so as to be taken seriously. The problem of non-payments and barter, once figuring among the sexiest topics of transition economics, is simply abolished once nonpayment leads to suspension of the management rights, trigger painful restructuring and layoffs, and in case of recurring, even to the liquidation of the firm.

It has been a recurring feature of Hungarian experience that the myopia, typical also of other mass democracies, does not allow for sitting out the time needed for the final decision over the merits or de-merits of individual measures. Even if actual policies do not suffer major reversals, the fruits of major measures tend to be harvested by the successors, or the successors of the successors, as in the case of the Antall government. Therefore the perceptions, on which democracy and media-based political engineering is built, tends to be ignorant and misleading. Public perception of outcomes often is the opposite of what causal reasoning would imply. Therefore sound policies tend to counter mounting resistance even under the best of circumstances. The opposition of the time is no slow in capitalizing on the pains associated with reform and restructuring.

2. Long run economic performance can and thus should not be explained by factor endowments and the combination of factors. While the role of innovation and entrepreneurship is undisputed ever since von Mises and Schumpeter, the consensus ends at this point. Precise mechanisms of growth, let alone of policies and institutions conducive to sustaining development, are yet to be identified in theory and practice.

Hungarian experience warns against overgeneralizations and reliance on policy cookbooks built on international experience only. While the basics of the SLIP agenda, discussed above, are not contested, the precise way of sequencing, timing and most importantly, of creating social acceptance is certainly a subject of debate among analysts.

Being participant observer of the change over the past quarter of a century, we tend to agree with the more agnostic – and also more traditional – views on what optimal policy mix may consist of, in the past, currently or in the future. One should not underestimate the role of external factors, especially for a small open economy like Hungary. The collapse of Soviet planning and fuel exports, the severing of international financial markets were instrumental in bringing about change. By contrast, lavish external funding in 2001–08 allowed for, or even positively lured in, policy-makers to a drift, as the sunny days seem to have become normalcy.

Second, intellectual fashions play an important role too. Fashions and perceptions based on them are formative in taking crucial economic decisions. For instance the blind faith in efficient markets definitely contributed to the adventurous lending of many banks as well as to the indiscriminate acceptance of dubious financial innovations. Likewise the euphoria surrounding EU enlargement, the conviction that entry in the Eurozone is a done deal, created expectations and decisions that led to overlooking the harsh realities on the ground by otherwise stern and materialistic financial investors. The latter included external imbalances and internal procrastination of the new EU member-states including Hungary.

Third, no matter how trite it may sound for analytical social science, pedestrian factors such as luck may become formative for the outcome of policies. This idea is an old one among central European economists (Dornbusch, 1993; Wagener, 2011), but is rarely invoked in explaining the outcomes. For instance the ability to secure major external funding at times of deep crises, as in 1981, in 1990, in 1995 and in 2008 was clearly beyond the factors under the control of the Hungarian government of the day. The timing and robustness of German recovery, astounding many observers, benefitted the second Orbán government in its first year.

3. No long term overview is complete without asking the obligatory question, if *real convergence*, in terms of per capita income and in terms of quality of life materialized or not. Such convergence is forecast by the now dominant neoclassical view on economic growth. Furthermore public opinion in the region in general

and in Hungary in particular, expects, as a sort of an axiom, the process of catching up with more advanced economies.

Answering this question would lead to a different paper, most probably to a book. More recent contributions to this traditionally emotional field of statistical analysis I rely on two recent contributions, based on meticulous analysis of data, and conducted by two of my colleagues (Muraközy, 2011; Tomka, 2011). Recalculation of earlier evidence, supported by releases of upgraded and updated international data, shows the following. *Hungary rarely if ever experienced any kind of real convergence.* In the golden age of the post-1867 period Hungary has not been converging, “just” keeping pace with Germany. But Germany at the time was the center of global industrial and cultural development (even if in terms of finance it lagged behind). Inflated statistics of the Socialist period have long been discarded, and all recalculated figures in the past two decades show a below average rate of economic advancement. In the 1989–93 period transformational recession took place, with a loss of 20 percent of GDP. Thus recovery of the pre-crisis levels lasted until 1999.

Interestingly, if corrected with components of quality of life, some convergence can be shown for the 1994–2007 period. These calculations, transcending the usual GDP and industry based first glance rehash assessments of official statistics, indicate *a structural and qualitative upgrading, but no quantitative catching up in the period mentioned.* This is supported by the improvement of the export pattern and the continuous inflow of FDI to competitive sectors including R+D. Actually, nearly the whole of business expenditure on R+D comes from the transnationals.

In sum, while convergence is not demonstrable, upgrading and relative gains against other transition economies are observable. But those *very relative* gains are gradually but demonstrably *being eroded* in the period following EU accession. One may wonder, if talking about complacency, both of local intellectuals and EU policy-makers and analysts, is justified, when recalling the very low voice in which any doubts were sounded in the 2001–08 period.

4. The role of broader external environment needs to be stressed separately. If Hungary enjoyed a modernization and growth push in the post-1867 period, owing the dynamism of Germany of the day, this time is different. The formative environment for Hungary in the two decades was the European Union. The latter, especially in 2000–10, tended to show signs of sclerosis in more than one area. Internal reforms, initiated back in 1997, to prepare for enlargement, were largely diluted. Attempts to create a political Europe ended up in the watered down Lisbon Treaty of December, 2009, cementing the status quo rather than opening up new areas. The economic renewal envisaged by the 2005 edition of the Lisbon Strategy fell victim to the global financial crisis.

Without wishing to enter in a different field, let us just observe, that the ambiguity in EU matters continues. While the visionary *Europe 2020 strategy is a cookbook for renewal, actual policy making is entirely immersed in day-to-day crisis management and the ensuing short-termism*. The debate about the European Fiscal Stabilization facility and later the permanent European Stability Mechanism, alone exceeding the size of the seven year financial guideline, leave little room for major structural innovations and restructuring. Thus the EU remains a sluggish environment for the country, obviously lagging behind the US and China. No good news for real convergence in the future.

5. It is hard to overlook the nearly permanent and sustaining clash between pure economic and pure political rationalities. This is a platitude per se, but observing it for decades reminds the student of comparative politics and comparative economics of cases like Argentina, Greece, Portugal and other lagging nations. All in all we can see precious few cases in which lessons from other countries or periods were creatively adopted for solving this fundamental issue. Among the rare but important examples we may recall the elite consensus in 1989–92 over the need to change rather than merely improve the socialist system, to go through the “valley of tears” of the SLIP agenda, and the unwillingness to adopt non-market and non-democratic options, such as the storming of the Supreme Soviet in December, 1993 by the troops of Boris Yeltsin. Later such consensus emerged over the need to join NATO and the European Union.

But by the time accession was by and large accomplished, *around 2001 a new type of elite consensus emerged*. The latter revolved around populist, myopic policies, trying to maximize immediate benefits from staying in power and serving immediate – often perceived – needs of the electorate. The agreement over the possibility and even desirability of doing nothing, the wide acceptance of disregard for even medium term ramifications of measures taken in the current situation, has created a new culture of decision-making. The more politics in general and political movements in particular are hollowed, becoming “professionalized” and care about the marginal and swing voters rather than any kind of principles, values or lifestyles, the higher is the probability of the rule of myopic considerations, offering immediate material benefits, or delivering symbolic act that lead to “punishment of the guilty”.

The longer these features, which are by no means peculiar to postcommunist or even European societies, prevail, *the lower is the probability of adopting, let alone implementing pre-emptive policy measures* or being engaged in institution building or investing into areas where recoupment is uncertain and if ever, will materialize in the long run only. “Reform fatigue”, a term frequently used in the literature on policy reform in the continental European context, is therefore clearly a misnomer. It is not societal resistance, manifested in mass demonstra-

tions, in violent actions or wildcat strikes which have slowed down the reforms in Hungary (and much of continental Europe). It was the change in the self-interpretation of policy actors, in their perceptions, value judgments and manipulation technologies applied, which translated into inaction, or action in the wrong direction.

At one level of abstraction we may attribute the outcome to inherent features of media-led democracies. On the other hand, international experience with policy reform (Kopits, 2011) is indicative of the possibility, and indeed the growing occurrence of successful and sustaining policy improvement in countries where path dependency theory would not have allowed for that, be that in Brazil or Slovakia. Thus intellectual complacency is by no means justified.

6. If we venture into a degree of normative analysis it may well be asked if there is anything favorable to be deduced from Hungarian experiences, successes and failures over the decades since World War II. Our story is supportive of insights from the broader literature which stresses the importance of the quality of leadership (Kádár, 2007; Gyórfy, 2010) against the “usual suspects” of factor endowments, institution building, policy variables and external constraints/incentives. At the time of writing in Hungary fiscal retrenchment and fire-fighting improvisation prevails over broader considerations, thus investment into the future and especially in reverting the decay of public institutions is less than likely.

Epilogue

Quality, like many other among the softer variables, as non-corruptible managers, socially responsible firms or technocratic, impartial, disembedded public administration are hard to quantify. On occasion attempts to their “operationalization” in numbers leads to more confusion than clarity (Török, 2010), or simply to meaningless composite indicators not really indicating any real world phenomena to any degree. Economics over the world is on the way to rediscovering historic, institutional and qualitative aspects of societal phenomena. Our case study might serve as a minor contribution on this bumpy and long road. We tried to show why axiomatic and simple assumptions are unable to explain outcomes in the medium and long run, which is, after all the subject and main task of any analytical social science discipline.

Adopting the broader perspective helps us to understand why bad policies are popular and therefore became a recurring feature of Hungarian economic development. It does not allow for a naive, optimistic forecast. *It does not allow for the naive political view*, believing that changing of elites, or governments, or political institutions, as rewriting the Constitution or re-drawing the electoral districts,

would do miracles. Also it does not allow for appreciating the widespread calls for “serving justice” and “finally catching the thieves”. As legitimate as those aims may be, addressing them will not turn the tide.

But our story also cautions against the customarily naive economist’s view on diagnosis and therapy. Copying good policies, be those from EU or elsewhere, transplanting “best practices” and formal institutions reflecting those, as constitutional debt ceilings or inflation targeting, will also in the future be of little avail on their own. And, last but not least, good quality leadership, like honesty, is not a factor to be quantified, now or any time in the future. It needs to be nurtured, practiced and the results will emerge – perhaps in the long run. But success is not a must for any country in the globe.

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Note

- ¹ A uniquely detailed and internationally unprecedented detailed account of the process of property changes is provided in the two volume set by Péter Mihályi (2010).

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED? THE QUESTIONS OF HUNGARY'S INTEGRATION INTO THE EURO-ATLANTIC COMMUNITY

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Almost each of the political forces and the great majority of the public saw no alternative to Euro-Atlantic integration, that is, accession to NATO and the EC (after 1992 the EU) when Hungary regained its independence in 1990. Membership in both organizations had a number of internal and external implications too. Budapest had to introduce sweeping reforms in practically all walks of life. Thus, for instance, NATO-membership required the establishment of a parliamentary democracy, a functioning market economy, and the observance of civil and human rights. At the same time, Hungary had to sign so-called basic treaties with three of its neighbors in which it again committed itself to peaceful relations and the renunciation of any attempt to regain territories it had lost to the countries affected after the First and the Second World Wars. EU-membership needed even more extensive restructuring of the various Hungarian institutions from law enforcement through finances to social services. In addition, Budapest expected that one of the major dilemmas of reconciling the so-called “Hungarian–Hungarian” question with the “good neighbor” policy would be settled within the framework of European integration. The expectations on behalf of the two sides have only been partially realized yet. Thus, Hungary consistently spends much less on defense than the required level within the Atlantic Alliance; Budapest has been trying to compensate with a relative prominent presence in foreign missions. As for the EU, the threat of a “second class membership” has not disappeared; in fact, after the beginning of the economic recession in 2008 it has even become a more realistic perspective; in reality, Hungary has had to accept a relative loss of power even in Central and Eastern Europe. However, Hungary has a vested interest in a “Strong Europe” (this was the official slogan of Hungary’s EU-Presidency during the first six months of 2011) in which “more Europe” should not exclude the country’s closer relations with other regions in the world.

Keywords: foreign policy, security policy, NATO accession, EU accession, Hungarian relations, good neighbor policy

The Rationale for the Euro-Atlantic Integration after the Transition

If there was any consensus among the major political forces in Hungary after becoming free and independent again in 1989-90, it was about the – falsely la-

belled – three “priorities” of Hungarian foreign policy: integration into the Euro-Atlantic community, pursuing a “good neighbor” policy, and establishing close “Hungarian to Hungarian” relationship, that is, intimate links between the Hungarians within Hungary and the Hungarian minorities in the neighboring states. In fact, the widely shared expectation was that the Euro-Atlantic integration would solve the other two outstanding issues as well, especially by “spiritualizing” the borders and by imposing such universal norms on the countries in Central Europe as the observance of human and civil rights, including minority (group) rights. However, this illusion of “pay one and get three” has not materialized yet for reasons which are partly internal and partly external.

Each government’s primary obligation is to provide for the security of the territory of the state and the people who live on it. Hungary’s security environment is rather curious. On the one hand, geopolitically Hungary is an “indispensable” nation in Central Europe to the extent that it is a link between the West and the East, and the North and the South. However, on the other one, it has a relatively large number of neighbors which have fallen into different categories from a security, economic, political, social, religious, and cultural point of view. Some have become members, just like Hungary, of both NATO and the EU; others have a good chance of becoming members in the short term, and still others can hope to join these organizations in the medium term. There is one, Ukraine, which is not likely to get access to either of these institutions in the foreseeable future. Hungary can also be said to be in the (semi)-periphery of Europe culturally, economically, and historically alike, though geographically it occupies a central position. When the Warsaw Pact ceased to exist, to a large extent because of the bold initiative taken by then PM József Antall,¹ Hungary found itself in a security “grey area”. The multiethnic states around the country started to break up and there was no guarantee whatsoever that the process would be peaceful. Though the separation of the Czechs and the Slovaks was a “velvet divorce”, the breakup of Yugoslavia was quite a different story. Besides the obvious military threats – in fact, both the Serb and the Croat militaries repeatedly violated Hungarian airspace and territory during their conflict –, Budapest had to be extremely cautious because of the sizable Hungarian minorities in these two neighboring countries. The situation was made even more sensitive by the fact that Hungary was among the first countries to recognize the independence of Croatia (and by assisting it with small firearms) at a time when hundreds of thousands of ethnic Hungarians were living in Voivodina, and Belgrade might have retaliated any time by moving against them. Moreover, the first freely elected government of Hungary worried about the revival of the Little Entente, that is, a close cooperation of neighbors with relatively substantial Hungarian minorities at the expense of Hungary proper. The security situation in Central Europe further threatened with a potential backlash in the dissolving Soviet Union. In reality, the orthodox Communists’ coup in August 1991 sent a

shiver down the spines of practically everyone in Central Europe. In addition, the violence used by Soviet military forces in some Baltic states evoked painful memories of the role the Red Army had played in the region. In short, the geopolitical situation demanded that Hungary should look for a solution that would resolve these security dilemmas; and the logical and obvious choice was integration into the Euro-Atlantic community.

While taking stock of the different theoretical and practical options, it became increasingly clear that there was no alternative to joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. A modified alliance with the Soviet Union/Russia was out of question for obvious reasons, and so was the restructuring of the Warsaw Pact. A Central European regional security framework would have been a paper tiger. A European collective security organization (a sort of OSCE) was likewise deemed to be too weak. In reality, the Cold War tacit agreement between the US and the European allies – that the Europeans were encouraged to build their welfare states under an American security “umbrella” – resulted in a Europe which was not able to handle the hard security challenges on its own – witness the Balkan crises in the 1990s. Relatively speaking, the arguments for neutrality were the strongest of the alternatives to NATO membership; nevertheless, neutrality was not just a matter of unilateral declaration but it was (and is) a matter of security guarantees extended by the great powers. Second, neutrality is much more expensive than membership in a defense alliance, and the Hungarian governments had to take the financial considerations into account as well. The Antall-government also resisted the siren sounds of the Russians: the so-called Kvitsinsky-formula would have stipulated that neither country should join alliances which the other one might find hostile.

Towards NATO-membership

The US grand strategy vis-à-vis Western Europe after World War II was to de-territorialize, de-nationalize, and de-militarize the area. This mission was given a new lease of life after 1989 in Central and Eastern Europe: all three missions were equally valid here. Moreover, the Clinton Administration developed a new grand strategy towards the Old Continent: to make it “whole and free”. The eventual integration of the post-Communist countries into the Atlantic community also appealed to the liberal internationalist impulses in the Americans. The “Perry Principles” incorporated such value criteria as well for membership as democracy and the civilian control of the military, besides a demand for a functioning market economy, settling border disputes, and NATO-compatibility of the militaries. For the Central and Eastern Europeans the primary motif was, of course, to enjoy the benefits of Article V of the Washington Treaty (basically

American security guarantees) for two reasons. One, as Lech Walesa and Václav Havel explained it to President Clinton, the Poles and the Czechs had been “betrayed and/or abandoned” repeatedly by the European great powers in the past and, therefore, they did not trust them. Two, as the then Polish president metaphorically put it: “A bear is a bear.” The underlying message was clear: Russia might be an impotent power for the time being but anything might happen in the future.

Hungary seems to have taken a middle-of-the-road position with regard to a potential revival of Russian expansionism. Poland and the Baltic states were voicing fears from a resurgent Russia most loudly partly on account of their geopolitical position. Paradoxically, a weak central power in Moscow might also have meant an increased level of danger as forces not controlled by the government might have provoked conflicts which potentially could have turned into existential threats given the so-called loose nukes. At the opposite end of the spectrum, there were countries such as the Czech Republic or Slovakia, which did not feel threatened by Moscow in any way. Hungary was – and is — a moderate Atlanticist country; it did not – and does not – blow a potential threat coming from the East out of proportion, but it also calculated, and is calculating, with security threats posed by Russia. The fact is that it is not any more the potential appearance of the Red Army that justifies these feelings but the undeniable attempts by Moscow to regain at least some of its former, predominantly economic, political, and intelligence influence in the region.² Nevertheless, American military presence, if not for anything else but for a Cold War-type “tripwire” effect is preferred by the Central and East Europeans in general and, by the majority of the Hungarians in particular.

It is stating the obvious that NATO is primarily a defense organization. However, one should not discount its political and social dimensions either. The Perry Principles incorporated the requirement of democracy and a functioning market economy as well. In other words: the candidate countries had to “put their houses into order” first. Democracy did not only mean regular parliamentary elections but it also demands the observance of human and civil rights, the proper separation and control of the different branches of government, as well as a strong civil society. In sum: the North Atlantic Organization is based on values and not only interests – this fact explains to a large degree its successes so far. The candidate countries, and even political forces within them which had not been previously famous for observing these rights, accelerated the political and economic transition process in order to qualify for membership as soon as possible. Sometimes, they had to push through painful economic reforms – the Hungarian Bokros-package (named after the then Finance Minister) was one of the best examples. Two State Department officials, Richard Holbrooke and Daniel Fried, and David Lipton (from the Treasury Department) visited Hungary in early 1995 and during the dis-

cussions with PM Gyula Horn they demanded that Hungary should take certain steps if it wanted to get the support of the US for membership. The Socialist-Free Democrat government, among others, introduced tough financial and economic measures, banned arms sales to “rogue states”, and Gyula Horn indicated that they would also like to settle the border and minority issues with Romania and Slovakia.³ This latter question was especially important for the Clinton Administration: what they valued was regional stability above everything else. Ultimately, Hungary concluded a series of so-called basic treaties with Ukraine, Romania and Slovakia in the first half of the 1990s despite the fact that Budapest had renounced any territorial claims against its neighbors in the Paris Peace Treaty of 1947. Washington insisted on having this reaffirmation of the treaty obligations for fear of “importing” a border dispute in Central Europe.

Nevertheless, different norms were demanded in the strictly military area too: foremost among them is the civilian control of the military. The idea basically goes back to Samuel P. Huntington's suggestion of the dual control over the military forces of the US – specifically by the legislative (Congress) and the executive (the President).⁴ The introduction of the civilian control over the military was a rather slow process in Hungary as it required changing a number of laws and regulations both within the military hierarchy and in the relationship between the President and the National Assembly on one hand, and the military on the other one. Besides, civilian control means transparency to the extent it does not threaten to hurt national security, and the role of civil organizations had also to be found in this complex relationship. In addition to these legal aspects, the real challenge was the modernization and the downsizing of the military at the same time. Modernization did not only incorporate making the equipment used by the Hungarian military compatible with NATO standards, but it also required the changing of the way of thinking of the officers as almost to a man they had been trained in Soviet military facilities and, therefore, by default they had adopted a very different mindframe from that of the officers serving in the various NATO countries. Downsizing had two major aspects: first, some 160,000 people were serving in the military at the end of the 1980s; the number was gradually cut to some 25,000 by now – and the military has become a professional one as well. Second, the military was “top heavy”, that is, there were proportionately too many officers and too few NCOs and “rank-and-file”, plus too many people were sitting in offices instead of being deployed elsewhere.

The Road to EU-membership

While NATO was regarded – justly – as primarily a defense organization, the European Union (after the Maastricht Treaty in 1992) was seen a desirable model for

the Central and East European countries from other points of view. The EU was seen as an entity in which the inter-state relations were resting on cooperation, interdependence, mutual understanding, and civic statehood. The core founding idea of the EU (and its predecessors, the EEC and the EC) was reconciliation, the transformation of neighbors into partners in a collective project. As the initial economic integration was transformed into one with normative powers in almost all walks of life, the expectation was that these norms would prevail in the states in Central and Eastern Europe which had had historically a number of ethnic, religious, political, social, cultural, etc. tensions. In sum: (little) power politics would be replaced with the same reconciliation that had characterized the history of the West Europeans in the decades after 1945.

Hungary, so to speak, wished to kill not two but three birds with one stone with an eventual EU-membership. One of them was further integration into the Euro-Atlantic community; the second was the idea that within the EU the borders would be “spiritualized”, therefore it would be easier to establish and maintain strong links with the Hungarians living in the neighboring states – and even re-uniting the *nation* culturally, even if political re-unification was absolutely out of question. A widely shared expectation was that membership in the EU would impose norms and standards in all East and Central European countries which would help the prevailing of a range of human and civil rights, including group rights for minorities. With respect to the latter question the consistent Hungarian position is that strong and satisfied minorities are necessary for stable societies and, in turn, enhance the cohesiveness of the European community too. In fact, this Hungarian view does not enjoy support everywhere in Europe: the individual rights in the name of a liberal ideology are preferred to group rights by the majority of the people on the continent. At that time Hungary wanted to have the protection of minorities incorporated into the “European Constitution” in 2005 but it failed because of the strong opposition by, among others, the French.⁵ The underlying theoretical consideration was a modified version of Rogers Brubaker’s so-called triadic nexus, in which the matrix defining the position of a minority group incorporates the following elements: the minority group, the “host” country, and the mother country. The new factor added to these ones is the European Union as a normative political entity, which is both an outside and an “inside” force in this context.⁶ (In fact, former Foreign Minister Kinga Göncz reduced the affected actors in this context to only the local Hungarian leaders and the majority society.) And third, the popular belief was that membership in the EU would bring about a dramatic rise of living standards overnight. In fact, none of these expectations has been realized fully, and this may be the primary cause of a discernible disappointment with a number of people with the EU and, in general, the Euro-Atlantic integration and the increasing popularity of alternative ideas.

If we take a closer look at this set of expectations, a historical dimension should be introduced. There is no denying that the so-called trauma of Trianon is still shaping the thinking of a large segment of the population in East and Central Europe. It must be emphasized that though, of course, it is primarily connected with the Magyars (Hungarians), the post-World War I peace treaties, especially those which contributed to the creation of formerly non-existent states such as Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia or enhanced the territories of others even beyond the dreams of most of the people concerned (in Romania), still play a central role in the respective national histories and myths. Therefore, practically no one in Central Europe looks at the various political, economic or social questions as a detached observer and, therefore, they acquire an emotional aspect as well. The Hungarian leaderships wished to move beyond Trianon with the Euro-Atlantic integration but they sometimes bumped into a wall in their endeavors. The “Hungarian card” is still a potent political tool in the hands of radical nationalists in some of the neighboring countries and EU-membership has not put an end to the bitter debates between them and the moderate forces both within and without their countries.

The Hungarian vision of the future of the EU – partly based on the realization that old hostilities die hard – was a “Europe of regions”, in which cross-border cooperation in all walks of life prevails over a nationalist approach to international relations. This idea rests on the concept of an enhanced form of cooperation among countries which are located in the same region. Despite the fact that such regional cooperations have been existing within the community (the oldest one being that of the Benelux countries), those who would like to see a more federalized Europe do not watch attempts towards this direction with approval and, sometimes, especially the French leaders (Presidents Chirac and Sarkozy) have even gone public with their reservations about such initiatives. Besides the “Europe of regions”, Hungary also had a vested interest in offering membership (or, at least, the perspective of membership) to the neighboring countries. Budapest wished to be “embedded” into the European community and to stop playing the role of a frontier country – which it had been forced to do for centuries. Hungary was afraid of the emergence of new fault lines within Europe; Budapest before the accession and after that consistently supported (and supports) the idea that if a European state wishes to join the Union and if it has met all the preconditions then it should not be excluded from the community.

There was another grand strategic consideration behind Hungary's aspiration to become a member of the EU. Budapest considered a strong and united Europe a vital partner in the transatlantic relationship and, by extension, in all matters global as well. The underlying logic is that the liberal world order, which seems to be the most beneficial to Hungary in spite of its numerous weaknesses, rests on a strong bond between the two sides of the Atlantic Ocean. The strategic interests of

the US and Europe coincide to a large extent. However, neither of them alone is able to maintain the liberal world order and its institutions; in fact, even the two together are not likely to have the required capabilities to do that, and they badly need partners and/or allies in other regions of the world. However, the US and the EU are the linchpins in this international order. To jump to conclusion: it is in the interest of each European countries to make sure that the EU should be able to play its role on the international stage. Such an EU should be strong and united; despite the fact that Hungary is not one of the large countries, it belongs in the group of medium-sized members, it should do its best to contribute to the emergence of a strong and united Europe.

Hungary in NATO

Membership in NATO and the EU was considered to be complementary: as former Foreign Minister László Kovács put it, “More Europe does not mean less America”. However, the dual membership has not resulted in a “win-win” situation for Hungary all the times; there happened cases when the country’s leaders had to face tough decisions. Some of the root causes of this situation are simply beyond the reach of the politicians in Budapest. If we should sum up the situation, we may conclude that Hungary, in fact, wanted to join a different NATO than today’s Atlantic Community and, to a lesser extent, a different EU than today’s Union. Likewise, the leading members of NATO, especially the US, expected different things that Hungary has been able/willing to deliver so far, and so did some of the most powerful forces in the EU. In other words: some of the expectations on both sides have proved to be misplaced. In a few cases, they have derived from the changed outside conditions and circumstances, and in some other ones one of the sides has failed to live up to the expectations of the other side.

A defense organization such as NATO necessarily measures the performance of its members within the framework of its contribution to the common defense. During the accession talks with Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland, a large number of experts and officials predominantly in the *Realpolitik* school repeatedly questioned the candidate countries’ capabilities to contribute to the common defense efforts. The Hungarian military was relatively poorly equipped, led by officers who had been trained in the Soviet Union, and the infrastructure (military and civilian alike) was not in the best shape either. The only asset Hungary was bringing to the table was its geopolitical position; more specifically, its vicinity to the Balkans. Hungary’s territory was ideal for NATO support activities (a staging area), but besides it there was not too much else Budapest was able to bring to the table. It was more than likely that Hungary would be a consumer of security to a larger degree than a provider of security.

The size and the equipment of the military were both practically negligible at the time of joining NATO in March 1999. Since then it has turned out that this situation is not likely to change any time in the foreseeable future. As a general European tendency, Hungary has also cut back its defense expenditure; though about two percent of the GDP should be spent on defense-related issues, the current (2011) defense spending is barely one percent of the GDP. The Hungarian government indeed promised to raise defense spending at the time of the accession to this level; then the same promise was made at the Prague Summit in 2002. Next year, then Defense Minister Ferenc Juhász again committed Hungary to achieve the two percent level by 2006 – the series of empty promises somewhat exasperated the political-military-security establishment in the US. (It must be mentioned that Washington has been demanding more resources from practically all the European allies in the name of burden sharing since the Lisbon Summit in 1951.) It is not only the amount of money that has disappointed people in NATO. The organization requires its members to develop homeland defense capabilities; Budapest, especially in the past few years, have not done too much in this field. (This trend may have started to change slowly since May 2011: more attention has been paid to, for instance, the training of reserve forces than previously.) The single most important step towards modernization proved to be rather controversial: the leasing of 14 Gripen fighter aircraft in 2001 has been eating up a substantial portion of the Hungarian defense budget and the value added of a few fighter aircraft to the thousands operated by the other NATO members is questionable. The expeditionary capabilities have also been repeatedly criticized; the Hungarian governments have tried to balance the negative views by deploying the constitutionally allowed maximum number of troops, especially in the Balkans and Afghanistan.

The major problem seems to be the changing mission of NATO. Hungary was doing its best to get admitted into the organization in order to leave a security gray zone and to acquire hard security guarantees against any potential outside threat. Nevertheless, such threats seem to have disappeared and, instead, NATO was evolving into an organization engaged in the creation and defense of zones of stability – and not exclusively military one. This emphasis on “out-of-area” operations do not sit well with the Hungarian political elite and the people at large alike; it is very telling that the East and Central European states, including of course Hungary, were among the most vocal supporters of keeping Article 5 of the Washington Treaty as the core mission of NATO's new strategy accepted in Lisbon in 2010. In general, most of the people in Hungary seem to think of security in the conventional sense and do not accept the extended interpretation of security – which is one of the by-products of globalization, which, in turn, is not a popular term among large segments of the population either.

Hungary's position within NATO has been downgraded for outside reasons as well; one may conclude that all of them have been beneficial for the security of the

country. First and foremost, it seems that the armed conflicts, the ethnic cleansings and wars in the Balkans belong to the past. Hungary was fulfilling an important role in the NATO operations both at the Bosnian and the Kosovo crises. The Taszár air base was instrumental in controlling the airspace over the Western Balkans and it also served as a staging area for troops to be deployed in Southeast Europe. In reality, the Hungarian governments took relatively great risk with this support activity because of the presence of a sizable Hungarian minority in Voivodina. However, after the conclusion of the hostilities and the beginning of the peacekeeping missions, in which Hungarian military units from military police to engineering ones have been taking place, the Taszár air base was shut down. With the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to NATO, the Atlantic Alliance got access to military facilities (air bases, ports) which are closer to the potential trouble spots. The gradual integration of the countries in Southeast Europe into NATO and the EU means that one of the major potential security threats to Hungary has been eliminated. Moreover, the widely criticized division of labor within NATO has also weakened the American interest in the region. While the US forces bore the brunt of the military operations (for instance, the USAF flew some 70 percent of the approximately 36,000 sorties in Spring 1999), the Europeans gradually took over the peacekeeping tasks.⁷ The end result is that Hungary has become more and more “embedded” into the EU and NATO and, therefore, does not need a special attention in the NATO Headquarters. Hungary has been left on the sidelines during the recent debates over the deployment of elements of the missile defense (MD) system. The Bush Administration was trying to deploy a radar station in the Czech Republic and a number of anti-ballistic missile batteries in Poland. The Obama Administration scrapped these ideas and instead is pushing for a layered defense system with some Patriots in Poland but other elements of the MD are to be constructed in Romania – these two countries seem to be occupying the top spots for the American strategists in East and Central Europe.

The Hungarian contribution to the common defense against the various security challenges is rather modest. Hungary is playing host to a transport wing of a few C-17s at Pápa. The country is supposed to have three 3D radar stations which are integrated into NATO’s early warning system; the site of the third one has been in the center of controversies between the environment protectionists and the Ministry of Defense (MoD). At long last it seems that a suitable site has been found and the construction of the third radar station may begin soon. The governments of Hungary have been trying to balance the lower than promised defense budgets and other deficiencies in the modernization of the military and the force structure, as well as the poor homeland defense capabilities by sending the constitutionally allowed maximum number of troops (1,000) abroad to the various NATO missions. The NATO leaders publicly express their appreciation of the Hungarian efforts, but privately they repeatedly give voice to their frustration and

disappointment with the gap between the promises and what actually Budapest has delivered.⁸ In short: Hungary does not seem to have made the passage from a consumer of security to a provider of security yet.

A Second-class Membership in the EU?

The core strategic goal of EU-membership for Hungary is to get from the “(semi)periphery” of Europe into the core. One may come to conclusion without any exaggeration that this expectation has not been fulfilled yet. For a start, Hungary, together with the other new members in May 2004, did not enjoy all the four freedoms which constitute the pillars of the EU. Though the free movement of the capital and the people was granted, it was only three countries (Ireland, Sweden, and the UK) that opened their labor market (free movement of labor), and the scare of the “Polish plumber” in France and other old members of the EU (free movement of services) is also well-known. Besides, Hungarian agricultural products received only a quarter of the subsidies farmers got for their products in the old member states (although the government was allowed to add an additional 30 percent subsidy out of the state budget). In truth, there were so-called derogations as well: Hungary was allowed to introduce certain measures only after the expiration of a period of time. One of the most sensitive such issues was the free sale of lands; the Hungarian government succeeded in securing a relatively long period in which it was allowed to prevent them from being bought up by foreign nationals. (In fact, there are loopholes in the laws and large portions of lands have been acquired through, for instance, “pocket deals”, especially by Austrians in the west of Hungary.)

The first Orbán-government believed that Hungary would join the eurozone in four or five years, by the middle of the 2000s. However, the incoming Socialist-Free Democrat coalition started to put it off; in fact, it had to as Hungary was getting farther and farther away from meeting the Copenhagen criteria. They, among others, require that the national debt should not exceed 60 percent of the GDP; it stood at 53 percent when the first Orbán-government stepped down, and when the second one took office eight years later in the spring of 2010, the debt was above 80 percent. The inflation rate was consistently higher than allowed in the first decade of the 21st century. At the moment, the official target date is 2020, but given the troubling consequences of the economic crisis and the subsequent grave financial situation in Ireland, Greece, and Portugal (and similar possible outcomes in other countries, especially Spain and Italy), the future of the euro itself has become less certain than it was a few years ago. Nevertheless, with the so-called economic governance and the European semester, both of which are aimed at imposing tighter control on the economies and finances of the member

states, one potential consequence may be the emergence of a truly two-speed Europe – “truly” in the sense that the EU is not composed of absolutely equal members even at the moment.

Hungary experienced what dilemmas membership in the EU and NATO might convey. The question was exposed relatively early during the NATO accession talks when François Leotard, the then French Defense Minister made the comment that if one country knocked at the door of NATO, then it practically meant that it knocked at the door of the US. He added that what they really wanted was that the Central European countries would ask for security guarantees from the Western European states.⁹ On the eve of the war on Iraq in early 2003, a number of European leaders expressed their public support of the American position in the question. The rather rude and undiplomatic rebuke arrived immediately: then President Jacques Chirac declared that the participating East and Central European politicians had missed an opportunity to “shut up” and he complained about the defective “upbringing” of these people as well. This patronizing mentality was inherited by Nicholas Sarkozy, who lectured the Visegrad countries on the unity of the EU when the four Central Europeans discussed the possibility of reconciling their positions before certain EU-summits.¹⁰ (This is a practice regularly exercised by France and Germany, or the Benelux countries.) The message was clear: there are “more equals” in the EU than the rest. This inequality can also be seen on other levels: for example, the currently forming European External Action Service staff is heavily biased in favor of the old members. On a more general level, especially with regard to the Europeans’ attitude towards the US and Russia, one can see not so invisible dividing lines: while the Central and East Europeans, on the whole, are more Atlanticist and more skeptical towards Moscow, the Western half of continental Europe, again on the whole, entertains reverse sentiments.

Much hope was pinned on the Schengen-regime in Hungary. Besides being able to enjoy the benefits of the free movement of people, it was also seen as a useful tool in the re-unification of the Hungarian nation culturally and partly economically too. Nevertheless, certain steps taken by the first and second Orbán-governments have raised – basically unfounded – suspicions in some of the neighboring countries. The first such issue was the so-called status law, which would have given a number of rights (including health care, education, etc.) to ethnic Hungarians who lived outside of Hungary. The question was coupled with an inherent suspicion nurtured by a few political forces in the neighboring countries against the center-right political forces in Hungary. Strong protests were triggered in, for instance, Romania when PM József Antall declared that he wished to be the Prime Minister of 15 million Hungarians in *spirit*. Any mention of the unity of Hungarians within the Carpathian Basin is a red rag to nationalist forces in Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania and Serbia in the first place. Moreover, the center-right political parties in Hungary have always stressed that they supported the cultural, and,

possibly, political autonomy of the ethnic Hungarians in these countries – if and when the rightful representatives of the Hungarian minorities also shared this strategic goal. In reality, this issue has driven another wedge between the center-right and the left-of-center political forces in Hungary and, unfortunately, this division is mirrored within the Hungarian minorities in the affected countries. On a higher political level, the EU does not support or does not condemn autonomies; it simply refers to these issues to the appropriate countries' competencies. On another level, the great powers out of *Realpolitik* considerations are not very enthusiastic about the Hungarian efforts at gaining autonomy because they see it as a potential source of instability inside NATO and EU member states.

Another issue which gave rise to criticism from various quarters was the repeated attempts by the first and second Orbán-governments to find, at least, symbolic redress for the grievances of ethnic Hungarians who found themselves outside of Hungary proper after World War I. PM Orbán believes that there is no successful Euro-Atlantic policy without regional stability; while a successful EU integration does not only strengthen regional security and cooperation, but it also creates an opportunity to settle the question of the Hungarians beyond the borders. The first attempt was the introduction of the so-called status law which wished to give preferential treatment to ethnic Magyars who lived outside of the mother country. Though Hungary was not a member of the EU yet at the introduction of the law, the major argument against it was that within the EU – at least nominally – there can be no discrimination between citizens of the community; that is, everyone should enjoy equal rights in all walks of life. Upon assuming power again in 2010, the Orbán-government did not waste time in introducing a bill into the Hungarian National Assembly about National Cohesion. The law itself condemns any attempt directed at assimilation of national minorities; moreover, it reinforces Hungary's commitment to support the efforts of the members and communities of the *nation* to maintain links with each other and to their *natural rights* to gain various forms of group autonomies in accordance of the practices accepted in Europe. Next, the National Assembly passed a law on the extension of dual citizenship. As it happened a few days before the parliamentary elections in Slovakia, the law gave another excuse for the nationalists (such as the SNS) to play out the “Magyar card”. The law was accepted in the other neighbors without any comments (in fact, it was partly modeled on a similar measure taken by the Romanian legislative). The bone of contention between Budapest and Bratislava is whether the extended dual citizenship law has extraterritorial validity or not. On one hand, the EU renders all questions related to citizenship under the authority of the members states and, on the other one, quite a few EU-states (Italy, Portugal, Romania, etc.) do have dual citizenship. The real problem seems to be political and historical: certain countries in Central Europe are especially sensitive about citizenship as well as autonomy because they fear that these would be only the first steps to-

wards secession. (That is the prime reason why Romania and Slovakia do not recognize Kosovo as an independent state; they are afraid of “sanctioning” a precedent.) On a higher level, the opponents to the Hungarian status law and the extended dual citizenship law claim that they are unnecessary because the EU has “spiritualized” the borders (de-territorialized the continent). In addition, they fear that the disputes generated by these measures between EU-members would weaken the cohesion of the community and threaten the realization of the dream of a “Europe whole and free”. The measures, especially the latter one, have contributed to the opening of another division line between the ethnic Magyar political parties in Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine alike. Moreover, a new alternative appeared in Slovakia in the form of the *Híd-Most (Bridge)* party, which is a Hungarian-Slovak party and lured away quite a number of votes from the ethnically “pure” *Magyar Koalíció Pártja (Party of Hungarian Coalition)* at the recent parliamentary elections in Slovakia. There is a possibility that similar ethnically mixed parties will be formed in, for instance, Romania and Serbia and the local Magyar communities will not only be divided along lines mirroring the political spectrum in the mother country, but they will also be split along the lines of promoting “pure” Hungarian parties versus ethnically mixed ones in their “host” countries.

Conclusions

Hungary has become a member of both NATO and the EU – on paper the single most important goal identified after the fall of communism by the overwhelming majority of the political elite and the people at large alike has been achieved. The integration into the EU and the trans-Atlantic cooperation are two sides on the same coin; neither can be imagined without the other one. Moreover, with the similar integration of most of neighbors and the stabilization of the situation in Southeast Europe the regional circumstances have also improved to a large extent; Hungary has practically been “embedded” in the Euro-Atlantic community. The country does not face any serious or, let alone, existential threat. Budapest has met the bulk of the political, economic, and value standards and norms which were preconditions of accession.

Hungary has benefited enormously from membership in the two organizations. NATO provides the vital security guarantee without which Hungary’s domestic and international positions would be unquestionably worse than they are today. At the same time, the normative power of the Alliance should not be discounted either; it urged on Hungary to adopt far-reaching domestic reforms and to conclude important international agreements, especially with some of the neighboring states. However, the successive governments’ promise that Hungary would be-

come a provider of security instead of a consumer of security has not been realized yet despite occasional serious efforts by the troops on the field. The force structure should be further modernized, and so should the capabilities of the military. Hungary has been spending far less on the country's defense capabilities than is expected from her.¹¹ Though Budapest is doing relatively well as regards foreign missions, it still has not lived up to the expectations and promises. In a deeper sense, the real problem seems to be a divergence between the visions of the future of the Alliance and the threat perception in Washington and most of the European capitals, including Budapest. It does seem that the NATO Hungary wanted to join and the NATO it actually joined are two different organizations. The former was closer to the NATO of the Cold War, that is, a basically territorial defense organization with clear-cut circumstances under which it would take action. The latter one is an organization which is, to some extent, in search of a mission; the "out-of-area" operations and the new, extended concept of security do not mesh so well with the Hungarian ideas of security than the "old" NATO's strategy. The political elite has found it politically too sensitive to initiate a serious public debate on security in a globalized world, and now it would amount to almost a political suicide to divert some of the already scarce resources to defense related issues. Hungary is not alone in this question: most of the European members of NATO have to face a similar situation. Hungary's contribution alone does not make or break the Alliance; nevertheless, Budapest can contribute positively and negatively alike to the emergence of a critical mass and, thus, may influence the future of NATO in the final analysis.

Hungary has completed an important phase of integration into the EU with its Presidency in the first six months of 2011. The professionalism of the different branches of the government which were managing the EU-affairs in cooperation with the appropriate officials in the various EU-institutions from the European Commission to the European Parliament earned high grades from the observers. This recognition of the achievements of Hungary was all the more timely as Hungary had become one of the first "sick men" of Europe in 2008 when the country had to be bailed out by the IMF, the EU and the EBRD. Nevertheless, there are areas in which Hungary cannot claim to be belonging in the core of the EU. One such question is membership in the euro-zone. Though the hasty introduction of the euro is definitely not in the interest of Budapest, the majority expert opinion is that in the medium and long term it would be safer to adopt the euro as a currency for not only financial, but also political reasons. Though the elbow room of the governments to stimulate either demand or supply, or to inflate or deflate the national currency in harmony with the changing economic environment would be more limited than at the moment, the stability of the currency might offset these consequences. Another step towards further integration into the EU is the membership perspective of Hungary's neighbors in the Western Balkans, while Roma-

nia and Bulgaria are likely to join the Schengen regime in the foreseeable future. At the same time, the Eastern Neighborhood project seems to be suffering setbacks, partly as a consequence of the “Arab Spring” and, thus, the “upgrading” of the Southern Neighborhood policy. The territory between Russia and the EU continues to be a “gray area” – which is not in Hungary’s interest. On the other hand, the integration of energy policies within the EU by 2014 as well as the common efforts in Central Europe to diversify energy resources and transit systems are very promising and advance Hungary’s strategic goals. Hungary cannot only contribute to the creation of a “Strong Europe” (which was the Presidency’s key message) by furthering *European* projects, though; a more important contribution is the creation of a strong and stable economic, political and social environment at home.

Notes

- ¹ See, for instance, Für, Lajos (2003) *A Varsói Szerződés végnapjai – magyar szemmel* (Budapest: Kairosz Kiadó), 137.
- ² On Russia’s ambitions see, among others, Bugajski, Janusz (2004) *Cold Peace. Russia’s New Imperialism* (Westport, CT–London: Praeger); and Lucas, Edward (2009) *The New Cold War. Putin’s Russia and the Threat to the West* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).
- ³ Asmus, Ronald D. (2003) *A NATO kapunyitása* (Budapest: Zrínyi), 220.
- ⁴ Huntington, Samuel P. (1985; first ed. 1957) *The Soldier and the State. The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA–London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press), especially Chapter 7.
- ⁵ The EU Stabilization Conference (1995) provided for the observation of minority rights *within* the context of human rights (Point 5).
- ⁶ See Balogh, András (1998) *Integráció és nemzeti érdek* (Budapest: Kossuth), 26.
- ⁷ Lord Robertson in the capacity of the Secretary General of NATO suggested that the European allies should concentrate on three things: capabilities, capabilities, capabilities. The US has been outspending the European allies in defense-related expenditures for decades and, as a result, a capability gap has opened between the US and the Europeans. This gap even grew wider after the conclusion of the Cold War when the Europeans were busy accumulating the so-called peace dividends, which meant deep cuts in defense budgets. Now the common military operations may be at risk because of the capabilities gap – and we have not even discussed the other gap between the threat perceptions in Washington and in most of the European capitals.
- ⁸ Perhaps the article that evoked the strongest reactions was Celeste A. Wallander (November/December 2002) ‘NATO’s Price. Shape Up or Ship Out’ *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 81, No. 6, 2–8.
- ⁹ Asmus, *op. cit.*, 89.
- ¹⁰ The question of cooperation among Czechoslovakia (after January 1, 1993 the Czech Republic and Slovakia), Hungary and Poland has always been disputed. Though at the birth of the Visegrad Three in early 1991 the idea was that the participating countries would be working together and assisting each other in their aspirations to join the Euro-Atlantic institutions, during the actual accession talks to the EU they were sometimes behaving as rivals and not as part-

ners in some questions. In fact, the only institution established by the Visegrad Four is the Visegrad Fund, which promotes cultural exchange and the like; no formal institutionalized cooperation has been established in other fields. The Visegrad Summits are only informal meetings; the centrifugal forces such as the Hungarian–Slovak relations, the Polish ambitions to become one of the members of the Big 6 of the EU, the Czech skepticism, etc. have proved to be strong enough to prevent the creation of a powerful regional bloc. The real problem is that basic strategic questions concerning the rationale, the goals, and the vision of a common future have never been properly answered.

¹¹ It does not mean that the “input” is more important than the “output”; that is, the amount of money spent on the military itself is not a guarantee that it is spent well. In a broader context, that is one of the most pressing problems with the European allies: there are a lot of duplications, waterheads, bloated bureaucracies, etc. which contribute to the capabilities gap between the US and the European members of NATO.

POLGÁRI LAKÁSKULTÚRA
(BOURGEOIS FURNISHINGS) AND A POSTSOCIALIST
MIDDLE CLASS IN HUNGARY

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This article looks at the fate of the kind of home furnishing in Hungary known as “bourgeois” (*polgári lakáskultúra*) as a way to investigate the middle classes that have emerged since the fall of state socialism. In the 1990s, political discourse was full of speculation about the revitalization of a historic bourgeoisie, and the media regularly featured the material culture of such a historic class. Such furnishings were indeed highly valued among an urban intelligentsia, and seemed to represent evidence of a long history of Hungarian bourgeois taste, civilized values and refinement starkly at odds with socialist material culture, tastes and manners. However, I argue that for many of the emerging middle classes in the 1990s and 2000s, this form of furnishing was no longer a suitable expression of the kind of class position to which they aspired, nor for how it was being newly legitimized. As I show through my anthropological fieldwork among the aspiring middle classes in the former “socialist” town of Dunaújváros, even families who owned such furnishings sold them or demoted them to less prominent places in their homes. Although the socialist state had attempted to devalue inherited, antique furnishings in its promotion of modern lifestyles in the 1960s and 70s, it was not until the end of socialism that such furnishings began to fail to represent middle class respectability. New ideals for such a class were based on entrepreneurial achievements in the present rather than on inherited status, and new home décor was an important way in which this new middle class subjectivity was being constituted.

Keywords: bourgeois furnishings [*polgári lakáskultúra*], postsocialist middle class, material culture, homes, Dunaújváros

The photograph on the next page is of a pediatrician’s sitting room in the mid-1990s, a bourgeois interior set within the concrete panel walls of an apartment building in Dunaújváros, Hungary’s first socialist, planned “new town”. When I took it, I was beginning research on the relationship between interior décor and the emergence of new forms of class distinction in Hungary after the collapse of socialism. I had spent a fair amount of time in this room on various visits during the 1970s and 1980s, celebrating reunions or someone’s Name Day sipping champagne out of tiny crystal glasses. A Persian rug covered the parquet



Figure 1. Interior of a Panel Construction Apartment in Dunaújváros, 1994.
Photo by Author

floor and was topped by two armchairs and a sofa upholstered in deep-red velvet, a bit worn, that were placed around an inlaid, sitting room table. Nearby was a matching bureau decorated with porcelain figures on lace doilies, and a display cabinet or *vitrin* filled the corner. A full-length lace curtain let in filtered light through the large plate-glass window, and plants were arrayed on pedestals in front of it. This “room” had not changed much in those decades, even though it had been moved out of a *téglaház*, the name of the higher quality brick buildings built during the Stalinist 1950s, and into this newer building of concrete panel construction (hereafter “*panel*”). It was in photographing the room that I first noticed that the largest painting was a distant echo of the room itself. Enclosed by an ornate frame, it rendered the shadowy interior of a 19th century sitting room, similarly furnished with dark burgundy velvet chairs, an inlaid table and a Persian carpet. The painter had included a shawl draped casually over a footstool, giving the room an inviting and lived-in feel, despite its old-world formality. But instead of

the cramped, low-ceilinged panel room, these furnishings were in an idealized *polgár* or gentry interior, with dark wood floors and high ceilings and lit by the natural light of an open French door.

By the mid-1990s, I had become aware of the potent symbolism of this kind of furniture for evoking an historic “*polgár*” class in Hungary, or bourgeois-citizenry. The term *polgár* is often translated as the “bourgeoisie”, but it is in fact closer to the German word burgher (*bürger*) as it combines the economic and material associations of a bourgeoisie with the political values of the citizen. Such a class is not synonymous with a “middle class”. As John Lukács has insisted: “The existence of a middle class is a universal, a sociological phenomenon. The existence of the bourgeois, on the other hand, has been a particular phenomenon, a historical reality” that is peculiar to the continent of Europe (Lukács, 1970, 616–17). This article traces the shifting forms of social stratification in Hungary from the 1950s to the present by focusing on the contradictory fortunes of *polgári* furnishing – a furnishing style largely associated with such a pre-socialist bourgeois-citizenry and its values, but defined as well by its ostensible difference from the materialities of state socialism and the working classes. “Show me your home, and I’ll tell you who you are!” is a common refrain in contemporary commercial media featuring home decorating and renovations, but it was also widely used in the media during the socialist period. Social theorists like Pierre Bourdieu have built elaborate mechanisms showing how, indeed, one’s home shapes one’s sense of one’s place in a domestic division of labor as well as in a wider social hierarchy. Everyday activities and interpolations in the home “produce” persons (Bourdieu, 1977), just as a person’s “tastes” serve to classify them within a larger social order (Bourdieu, 1984 [1979]). Moreover, as others have shown, home decorating practices also reflect and constitute political orientations (Auslander, 1996; 2001). And yet, what if a social order is itself undergoing rapid transformation just as the material worlds people live in are being transformed? In this case, how did Hungarians produce themselves and contribute to the transformation of a social order through their domestic material practices in the postsocialist 1990s?

The paper will cover three main topics. First, a bit of history on the socialist state’s promotion of a broad “middle strata” based on modern lifestyles rather than inherited status, then the odd trajectory of *polgár* furnishings (*polgári lakáskultúra*) from the 1960s to the 1990s; and finally, how all this has been playing out in the socialist new town of Dunáújváros since the end of state socialism. I will argue that despite the widespread interest in a historic *polgár* class in the 1990s, and a revival of interest in *polgári* furnishings among an urban elite, the turn away from such furnishings even by people who claim *polgári* heritage signals the emergence of a new, middle class focused on self-made, economic success rather than inherited class status.

This new market was fueled in part by interest from abroad, but also by the renewed political and cultural salience of such a “*polgár*” class for the future of the country as an independent, democratic nation-state. While living in Újlipótváros in Budapest for several months in 1996, the sector built at the turn of the century and in the interwar era for a primarily Jewish bourgeoisie, mailboxes were regularly stuffed with fliers offering “good money” for people’s household antiques.

Wither the Middle Class after Socialism?

After the fall of state socialism in 1989–90, politicians and intellectuals across the political spectrum assumed that Hungary’s future as a nation-state depended upon the emergence of a healthy middle class (*középosztály*) or bourgeois-citizenry (*polgár*). Such a class was seen as the defining symbol for a western-style prosperity associated with a free market economy, private property and democratic civil society. Anthropologist Michal Buchowski observed that throughout eastern Europe in the 1990s, a “middle class” was “a concept influenced by teleological ideas of ‘transformation’”, one that played a powerful “ideological role in the building of the new liberal political and ideological order” (2008, 49). The process of “finding” such an emerging middle class during the social upheaval of the 1990s became part of the production of such a middle class as well as its legitimization. Social scientists researched consumption habits, income distribution, civic consciousness and activities. Advertisers appealed to the new middle-class consumers they envisioned with formal and informal modes of address. And business-oriented newspaper articles and seminars anxiously attempted to identify the new “heroes of enterprise” – entrepreneurs, bankers, financiers – who might provide “role models for the restructuring of the economy” (Marosán, 1994, 72). While there was little agreement as to what type of person constituted a new Hungarian middle class in the 1990s, the material trappings for such a class were widely publicized in the commercial media and displayed in showrooms, warehouses and DIY stores. Meanwhile, people who considered themselves to have belonged to a respectable middle stratum (*középréteg*) during the socialist decades, struggled to reposition themselves as such in the new order.

These three terms – *középréteg*, *polgár*, *középosztály* – were often used interchangeably, but there were considerable differences between them. The very use of the term “middle class” or *középosztály* was a new phenomenon, especially in political discourse. Openly advocating the interests of such a class acknowledged the legitimacy of economic inequalities in a capitalist system, but it left open the kind of class structure that was to be developed. Some politicians, however, also drew on various strains of dissident, socialist-era discourses idealizing em-bourgeoisment or *polgárosodás*, and in so doing presented competing definitions

of the ideal citizens they claimed to represent. As we will see, this strategy of referring to a historic middle class was complicated in a number of ways, from how intellectuals had resurrected such a bourgeois category in the last decade of the socialist period to the uncertain status and divided composition of such a class itself in Hungary from the 1870s to the interwar era. In the following, I briefly sketch out the parameters of these categories as they were understood and deployed as meaningful icons in the 1990s. I show how much these categories depended upon how they were “materialized” in particular material environments and furnishing aesthetics, and how these materialities were in turn seen to *constitute* the kinds of people being imagined.

Middle Stratum and Bourgeois-citizen during Socialism

Middle Stratum or *középréteg*

A broad-based “middle stratum” (*középréteg*) began to emerge in the 1960s in Hungary that had much in common with the postwar consumer middle classes in the United States. Sociologists used the term “middle stratum” to distinguish this emerging population from the capitalist middle classes, further subdividing this stratum by a family’s position, income and modern consumer lifestyles. In some respects, this distinction can be justified – given that the means of production was largely controlled by the state, no segment of the population owned much capital, and the population enjoying this modern lifestyle included as much of the skilled working class as it did white-collar professionals and Party elites. However, the distinguishing factors of such a population were not so different from the middle classes that emerged in the Euro-American west in the postwar 1950s and 1960s, many of whom were employees of the state or of businesses, and thus owned little “capital” or “means of production”. Similarly, many of this postwar middle class were members of the skilled working classes who were able to “consume” their way into the middle classes.

Moreover, this middle stratum was an explicit goal of the state’s modernizing projects. Even in the Stalinist 1950s, when the regime was targeting the “*polgári*” or bourgeois classes as class enemies, industrialization campaigns included programs designed to civilize “backward” populations into a modern, urban working class – through modern apartments but also through literacy campaigns and decidedly “bourgeois” cultural programs (theater, classical music, ballet). By the 1960s of the Kádár era, the socialist state actively promoted the consumption of modern furnishings, labor-saving appliances, consumer goods, and new standards for hygiene. In Hungary as elsewhere in the Soviet bloc, the material forms of these new environments and consumer goods were to “transform” Hungarians into

modern, future-oriented citizens, and in the process turn them away from the norms of an old-fashioned bourgeoisie. New, urban apartments and modern furnishings were privileged as the paradigmatic living environment of the “contemporary man”. In political rhetoric, newspaper editorials, women’s journals and film clips, taste makers admonished the growing population moving into these small spaces to get rid of their beloved traditional furniture sets. These were now derided as heavy and dark, burdened with the past, and inappropriate for the modern apartment. “Modern” citizens were to replace them with modern, mass-produced multifunctional designs (or home-made versions of the same if they were unavailable in state shops). A particularly strident version of this new furnishing style was offered in the *Dunaújvárosi Hírlap* in an article entitled “What should, and should NOT be in the new apartment” (Bars, 1963). If new modern furnishings were too expensive or unavailable, the home decorating magazine *Lakáskultúra* provided tips on how to make alterations to one’s old furniture to modernize them, like removing the carved legs of wardrobes and replacing them with geometric pegs, or to exchange ornate carved, gilt picture frames and replace them with stark, simple frames.

Campaigns to modernize the population also tried to inculcate expectations for new, more demanding standards of living and a discerning consumerism. “*Legyen igényes!*” or “Be more demanding!” was a common theme throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s. The term *igényes* has no adequate translation in English, but is a positive term that is roughly equivalent to having demanding standards or requirements for one’s material environment, dress and cleanliness. The normative importance of being materially demanding, of having high standards for the care given to one’s surroundings and appearance had long been a way of constructing respectability among the well-to-do peasantry. Being “*rendes*” or proper and orderly, was a defining characteristic of the villagers Edít Fél and Tamás Hofer describe as “proper peasants” (*rendes parasztok*) in their ethnography of village life in the 1950s (Fél and Hofer, 1969).

Sociologist Zsuzsa Ferge (after Halbwachs) traced the importance of raising the needs or demands of the population to early socialist concerns that the working class and poor peasantry lacked aspirations and were habituated to living with a bare minimum (Ferge, 1979, 309–19). In Bourdieu’s terms, they “knew their place”. The goal was to elevate the lower classes to the level of an ideal socialist citizenry by expanding their sense of entitlement. Instilling the “down-trodden” with higher levels of “need” was seen as important both to disrupt class hierarchies and as part of a broader modernization and enculturation project. Indeed, this was the objective of the home furnishing magazine *Lakáskultúra* (literally, “dwelling culture”), according to Mária Pataki, the writer who was its founding editor in the mid-1960s (Interview, September 1997). The material environment,

especially of the home, was understood to be critical to such social transformations.

In the 1960s, professional elites were expanding the notion of being *igényes* to include the modernity of one's material environment. Being *igényes* now required educated appraisal and appropriation of the ever-changing modern world of commodities as an essential part of one's material order and well-being. For example, in an article on new pots and pans in *Lakáskultúra* in 1967, readers were told that: "Our living conditions and lifestyle often cannot keep pace with our changing demands, but the reverse is also common: Our demands do not change as fast as the lifestyles new technological innovations make possible." The author suggests that the population needed to learn to appreciate and in turn be transformed by the state's advanced technological capacity, such as pressure cookers that would save time and light-weight aluminum pans that would reduce burning accidents. To be a modern, cultured person, citizens were to keep abreast of technologies, design innovations and even fashions, striving to incorporate them into his or her own life:

Every day, contemporary objects produced with up-to-date technology and design come into circulation. [...] Cultured dining, table setting, and serving is not a secondary question for home culture. Let us be more demanding and instruct our family members to be so. Let us follow novel things with attention (D., 1967).

For many urban Hungarians, especially of younger generations, these "modern" goods became desirable indexes of modern identities, but not necessarily of identities as citizens of a Soviet satellite. They were aware of the popularity of modern architecture and furnishings in western Europe and even in the United States, as governments put up thousands of blocks of concrete apartments to house growing urban populations and companies like IKEA rose to furnish them. The new ideal of the "Contemporary Man" linked Hungarian tastes to a Swedish modern style rather than to a Soviet one.

By the 1970s, a widening middle stratum in Hungary had expectations for the lifestyle made possible by an urban apartment, a television, and modern appliances like a refrigerator and washing machine; for occasional cultural outings and vacations; and for a weekend cottage in the countryside. And indeed, the state-run media explicitly encouraged comparison of this lifestyle, presented as a benefit of living in a socialist state, with that of average citizens in the west. However, even as the state heavily promoted modern living spaces and the kinds of modern, civilized socialist citizens they were to produce, the realities of state financing and production capacities meant that this modern lifestyle could not be extended to everyone. Modern furniture was often hard to come by, expensive and of shoddy quality. Because of chronic housing shortages, the socialist state from 1960 on

followed a policy that encouraged private house building in rural areas, usually by a reciprocal exchange of labor (*kaláka*). While these houses were progressively “modernized” by the people building them, they continued to be associated with the provincialism of the countryside and of manual labor. With the exception of particular areas of new, detached housing in larger cities in the 1980s, such houses never gained the status of urban respectability. This middle stratum culture, as a result, followed the pattern of middle-class culture more generally in positioning itself as the moral middle “between high and low” (Frykman and Löfgren, 1987; Liechty, 2003). A modern, middle stratum was discursively positioned between an uncouth proletariat, backward peasants and poor Roma (gypsies) on the one hand, and the remnants of an old-fashioned bourgeoisie or *déclassé* gentry on the other. The market reforms of the Kádár regime also had consequences for social stratification. Material benefits for skilled-labor, management and white-collar workers, and the profits generated by second-economy activities, resulted in economic inequalities and the emergence of new systems of distinction (S. Nagy 1987).

The Contradictory Fate of the *Polgár* during Socialism

During the early years of the Stalinist era, members of a *polgár* class and particularly those that had been involved in businesses large or small were targeted as enemies of the people and persecuted. Traces of *polgári* lifestyle, vocation, manner of speaking, dress and furnishings were politicized and could be used as evidence that a person was predisposed to be against a redistributive type of economy (Rév, 1991). An architectural draftsman in Dunaujváros who had come from a rural working class family remembered how during this time, wearing creased pants to work could be read as a sign of political unreliability. Though the regime fairly successfully disrupted the *material* basis for traditional class hierarchies, terms like *polgár* or *kispolgár* (petty bourgeois) lived on as cultural categories with complicated meanings. Once the Kádár era reforms were underway in the early 1960s, the orientations of state media, factory production and professional “taste makers” towards what were considered *polgári* furnishings and objects were full of contradictions.

Despite the promotion of a modern, “contemporary style” and a communist intelligentsia’s derision of “bourgeois kitsch”, the state production and retail sector nonetheless actively sold and promoted *régi* or “old/antique” furnishings, often in the same publications that advocated the superiority of the modern. Many Party bureaucrats and cultural producers had tastes which varied significantly from the monochromatic functionalism that dominated design discourse throughout the Soviet bloc in the 1960s (Crowley and Reid, 2000; S. Nagy, 1997; Veenis, 1999).

Others were aware of the tastes of the general public and wanted to provide them with goods they actually desired. Factories also produced furniture and decorative objects entirely out of keeping with the “contemporary style”. Porcelain factories, for example, manufactured vases with simple, modern shapes and lines, but also figurines such as the popular reproduction of a 19th century stage actress in a ball-gown. In Budapest and elsewhere, workshops were advertised in the late 1960s that not only made reproductions of antique furniture (particularly styles made before 1850), but advertised services to restore or reupholster antique pieces (*Lakáskultúra* 1967/3, 18–19, 31). And the state consignment warehouses, BÁV (*Bizományi Áruház Vállalat*) regularly advertised old-fashioned and antique furnishings, many of which they had acquired as the cast-offs of people moving into panel construction apartments who wanted modern furnishings. *Lakáskultúra* and other publications featured articles on the appropriate combination of “old and new” furniture. In a contest sponsored by *Lakáskultúra* in 1969, for example, readers were encouraged to cut out examples of antique furnishings and paste them into a line drawing of a “modern” room in a “tasteful” way. A decade earlier, a book on “the home” had provided an explanation for why such antiques were not to be feared:

Today’s outlook is experienced and wise enough to combine the most up-to-date interior designs and forms with antiques. The basis for this courage is the acknowledgement that not just the age, form, decoration or technology of an object can be “old”, but that arrangements can also be archaic or new and timely. In the furnishings of our day, the point is that there is a new *relationship* between our useful objects. A contemporary interior design is not dominated by a uniform style at all costs, with furniture of smooth lines and objects that are alike. On the contrary. One does not have to part with objects made, bought or inherited from an older time, even an antique from a century ago, if they are good for our plans and well executed. If we arrange our homes with competence, modern furnishings does not preclude the possibility that a Biedermeier commode or empire secretary might elevate a room’s beauty and atmosphere (Bánkuti, 1958, 170–1).

More orthodox members of the cultural intelligentsia, however, regularly complained about such production. A journalist in Dunaújváros, for example, railed against the decorative porcelain figurines and lead crystal displayed in a local shop window, asking “Should we be advertising kitsch?” The local head of distribution defended these goods as having been vetted by the highest levels of the Hungarian design establishment. The journalist retorted by accusing state manufacturing entities of defaulting on their “responsibility” to produce material goods that would lead to a socialist future by capitulating to public demand for such ob-

jects. “The problem of kitsch”, he insists, “is not a commercial but a political question... The media is not the tool of commercial advertising... it cannot shirk its duty” [to help society move forward] (Reklámozzuk-e a giccset? *Dunaiújvárosi Hírlap* 7/16/1963).

By the late 1960s, *Lakáskultúra* also began to feature the apartments of people who lived in “older” settings alongside its usual staple of average Hungarians in modern apartments. These homes belonged to members of a cultural intelligentsia, and the term “*régi*” or “old” was used instead of *polgári*. Cultural celebrities like artists, writers, and theater directors were inevitably shown in their high-ceilinged urban interiors furnished with antiques, books, Persian rugs, and original works of art – explained as gifts from friends and fans, rather than as inherited objects. Such professions were understood to have a deep appreciation for the arts but were unencumbered by the material and pragmatic problems of ordinary folk. Possessed by such anti-materialist persons, antiques became objects imbued with history and memories of personal rather than material value – inalienable possessions rather than alienated commodities, as the anthropologist Annette Weiner understood such objects (Weiner, 1985). A variation of these furnishings were also acceptable in the apartments of scholars, categorized as “teacher homes” (S. Nagy, 1987). These pieces featured a journalist, writer or professor’s desk, piled high with papers against a backdrop of floor-to-ceiling bookshelves crammed with hardbound volumes. Antique furnishings were never shown in the “inappropriate” settings of *panel* apartments, but only in older interiors with high ceilings and parquet floors where they were understood to be at home. Like the couple whose story begins this article, however, many families hung on proudly to their *polgári* interiors even within the confines of modern, *panel* buildings. Others followed decorating and furnishing advice on how to combine modern furnishings with porcelain decorative statues and other items for the display cabinet (*vitrin*) – creating a hybrid kind of style Katalin S. Nagy called “quasi-modern” (S. Nagy, 1987).

In the mid-to late 1970s, an urban, dissident intelligentsia turned its attention to the “burgher” values and culture of the pre-socialist period, revaluing it as a form of opposition to the socialist state. While the nationalist-populists agitated for a return of a patriarchal family structure and women’s confinement to the domestic sphere (as in West Germany), the liberal opposition, greatly attracted to the theories of Habermas and other writers on civil society, attempted to find in the private public of the second economy the basic form of an autonomous second society. Writers such as György Konrád (1984) proposed that this sphere of autonomy from the state constituted a kind of anti-political civil society. The resulting philosophy of anti-politics was based on the value of “home and free time [...] the spatial and temporal dimension of civic independence”, where one’s artificial state persona is “not identical” with one’s true self and “respect for money and

property have not undermined other values in the moral consciousness” (Konrád, 1984, 197–202). Nevertheless, an important component of this idealization was based in the aesthetics of the home. Where a modernist avant-garde had once set itself up in opposition to the decadence, pretensions and artifice of a bourgeoisie, now the remains of bourgeois materialities seemed to embody a realm of “beauty” and civilized values set against the ugly genericism of socialist modern architecture and the ostensible duplicity of life under communism. As Iván Szelényi remembers it, “burgher” values and their materialities were rediscovered:

[T]he beautiful homes of “*bourgeois intellectuals*”, where people sipped afternoon tea from fine china in living rooms full of antique furniture, conversing about Proust and Mahler. ... In contrast to the collectivist values promoted by Communism, the autonomy of presocialist burgher intellectuals was emphasized, their sense of irony and humor (so badly lacking among party intellectuals), their loyalty to friends (in contrast to the party loyalty of Communists, who, in principle, should always have been ready to betray personal friends for “the cause”), their unshakable good aesthetic sense (in contrast to the horrors of socialist realism) and so on... (Szelényi et al., 1988, 52–3).

Among a cultured intelligentsia, identifying oneself as part of the “bourgeoisie” strangely became a form of resistance. Unsurprisingly, the ascendance of this bourgeois category came with an open devaluation of socialist values and of the working class, a class increasingly associated with an unnatural form of government as well as with characteristics of dependency and lack of initiative. The socialist state itself participated in this shift in class values in the 1980s, through privatizing economic reforms but also by officially recognizing that a small-scale entrepreneurial stratum would “continue to contribute for some time to the life of socialist society”. The state attempted to “discipline” the working classes by threatening unemployment while the official media began to depict the proletariat as lazy and shiftless rather than the heroes of socialism.

Polgárosodás in the 1990s

It was only after 1989 that references to a historic middle class or *polgár* were openly used in politics. Scholarship on the historic *polgár* and its possible traces in Hungarian culture had been underway in the late 1970s and 1980s as part of the revival of interest in a historic *polgár* (e. g. Losonczi, 1977; Szelényi et al., 1988), but in the early 1990s the topic was a focus of intellectual activity (see for example Gerő, 1993; Hanák, 1992; Somogyi, 1991). The journal *Századvég* published a special issue on the topic in 1991, and in 1993 the journal *Replika* devoted a spe-

cial section to the question of whether the term ‘polgárosodás’ was useful for social science research (Sasfi, 1993). It was also a favored topic in politics and in the popular media. Newspapers on either side of the political spectrum regularly published photographs and news articles about a civilized, turn-of-the-century and interwar Hungarian bourgeois-citizenry. These included features with photographs of the historic Hungarian bourgeoisie in their horseless carriages, spacious apartments or semi-urban villas, airy sitting rooms, and Sunday afternoon meals in the garden. The heightened significance of this *polgár* category stemmed in part from how it had been developed as part of an oppositional discourse during the socialist era. As Judit Bodnár has noted, “the ideological attack on the bourgeoisie effectively made anything ‘bourgeois’ an element of a desirable past” (Bodnár, 2007, 142). While some of the intelligentsia focused on the Jewish/German industrial classes and their intermarriage with the gentry, in more conservative publications the role of these “foreign” elements was often downplayed or omitted altogether, focusing on the predominantly Magyar population of civil servants. In general though, this “class” was understood to embody an ideal combination of civic consciousness, loyalty to the nation-state, and yet entrepreneurial energy.

Some of the urban intelligentsia hoped that the descendants of a historic *polgár* or at least their cultural traces would revive latent political and cultural dispositions as much as economic practices. As sociologist Zsuzsa Ferge remarked in a 1997 interview, “the *polgár* always meant more than money and property ownership... It also embodied culture and life-management (*életvitel*). The doctor and educator who were not entrepreneurs could also be *polgár* with a secure existence. This offered them sovereignty and autonomy” (Ferge, 1997, 19). For others, the search for a Hungarian bourgeoisie was motivated by a desire to reveal traces of an autonomous capitalist spirit in contemporary peasant-workers or second-economy entrepreneurs. Like the interwar sociologist Ferenc Erdei, Iván Szelényi followed the lead of Pál Juhász in focusing attention on a small fraction of the peasantry displaying signs of an entrepreneurship that had coexisted with the socialist system, instead of on an urban bourgeoisie. Here, the notion of *polgárosodás* (embourgeoisement) is used to mean eradicating mentalities of entitlement and dependence on the state, reforming slack work habits, and fostering risk-taking, economic autonomy, entrepreneurial activities, as well as civic responsibility (Szelényi et al., 1988, 22).

At the same time, supporters of a neoliberal left dismissively equated the more conservative parties’ obsessions with the *polgár* as PETTY bourgeois, or *kispolgári*. For example, in 1998, a public intellectual wrote that public support for the Hungarian Polgár Party was merely an updated version of the political apathy of the state-socialist era, “characterized by the values of the Kádár petty bourgeoisie: quiet material growth, refrigerator, car, Greek vacation, the longing for a

relatively undisturbed private life, in exchange for relative disinterest in politics” (Dessewffy, 1998). As such, the term became pivotal in endorsing or rejecting varying political and economic positions that might allow such a class to flourish. Indeed, after the mid-1990s victory of the reform Socialist party and its neoliberal coalition partner, the Free Democrats, the dominant opposition party appended its name to include the word for “bourgeois-citizen” or *Polgár*. In this way, the formerly liberal Young Democrats (FIDESZ) were transformed into a socially-conservative and nationalist but fiscally protectionist Hungarian Polgár Party (*Magyar Polgári Szövetség*). These two political factions have defined Hungarian politics since.

As we have seen, the domestic social relations and material trappings of this bourgeois domestic private sphere were a fundamental part of its idealization. The adjective “bourgeois” (*polgári*), as Bodnár sees it,

does not have much to do with the propertied bourgeoisie; rather, it is used as the incarnation of objects, lifestyles, manners, and arrangements that have been proven solid, efficient, and good. Its natural home is the bourgeois household with its interior dominated by traditional taste and propriety (Bodnár 2007, 142).

The popularity of such patinaed artifacts was bolstered by an international market for the relatively inexpensive heirloom antique furnishings to be found in Hungary. Particularly in Budapest and larger cities, a self-ascribed cultural intelligentsia clamored for such décor, often buying it from second-hand shops or BÁV warehouses if they could not get it from relatives. At a writer’s party in Budapest, I saw a young intellectual caress a Biedermeier wardrobe with only half-joking eroticism. Later that year, back in Chicago, I went to see the work of a Hungarian avant-garde video artist, clad from head-to-toe in black. He announced to his perplexed American audience that he was “proud to be bourgeois!” but his documentaries were dreamy compilations of amateur home movies made by Hungarian *polgár* families, most of them Jewish, from interwar Hungary. As in this artist’s documentaries, the reclaimable objects and interiors of this lost class seemed to have the power to conjure its spirit, to produce the kind of social order and person that were being elevated in political discourse and the popular media.

While some politicians and historians were attempting to re-establish the link between *polgári* furnishings and the surviving embers of such a class, the decorating industry was doing the opposite. It was *detaching* such objects and interiors from inherited cultural capital and attributing it instead to aesthetic sensibilities that could be acquired. Popular house-design magazines regularly featured apartments with *polgári* furnishings, and attributed to these interiors not just a way of life but a kind of person. For example, an article published in *Lakáskultúra* in 1993 featured a turn of the century bourgeois-intelligentsia flat, with antique fur-

niture, wood floors, bookcases – no televisions or other signs of high tech equipment. Entitled “Polgári apartment – today”, it pictures dimly-lit rooms with heavy and dark furnishings that are described as elegant, “puritan” and serious, but also providing a place of security and peace, filled with old family (*inherited*) objects (Baló, 1993). Another features the more brightly-lit apartment of an intellectual couple with lighter furniture and an eclectic array of objects described as “cosmopolitan”, such as a Japanese Buddha but also an antique, carved peasant wardrobe and Hungarian embroidered pillows. The owner is quoted at length about “the history and spirit in old things” and how “they are potentially the source of great joy, particularly if we want to immerse ourselves in their mode of production and the era in which they were born” (Lukovits, 1995, 38).

Central to the narratives was the aesthetic good taste and cultivation of the owner, who was able to recognize objects of value that had been cast aside by others – a Biedermeier bureau covered in grime in a warehouse or a Persian rug being used as a foot rag – and through loving labor had restored these objects to their former luster. Such good taste was not necessarily inherited. The woman who rescued the Persian rug was described as coming from an “uncultured” working class background, but that even as a child she had been drawn to museums and fine art. An autodidact, she had learned about rugs through books. While not inherited, such “taste” nonetheless aligned the qualities of the owner with those of the object. An interior decorator explained the appeal of antiques in a weekly economics magazine in 1996, saying that a particular piece

carries with it its own aura. Somehow it is good to be near it [...] Such objects elevate the prestige of its owner: first, it provides witness that [the owner] does not struggle with financial difficulties, secondly, the object’s soul/mentality (*szellemisége*) inevitably carries over onto its owner – at least at first glance (*Magyarországi Gazdasági Magazin*, 1996, 100).

Polgárosodás in Dunaújváros

In the 1990s, Hungarian citizens who had achieved some semblance of this socialist “middle-class culture”, whether through modern furnishings and lifestyles or whether by holding onto furnishings signaling a *polgári* past, fully expected to constitute the new Hungarian middle class. Instead, most found themselves struggling to “keep up” their social status in the face of economic and institutional upheaval (Fehérváry, 2002; see also Berdahl, 1999, Patino, 2008). My inquiries into *polgárosodás* in Dunaújváros were met with a shrug of the shoulders or sighs of exaggerated despair. My respondents – many of whom considered themselves to be *polgár* – claimed there had never been a *polgár* stratum of any consequence in

the “city of the proletariat”, and the few that chose to stay were technical professionals, not a cultured intelligentsia (*humán értelmiség*). A woman in her fifties who had been an elementary school teacher in town for decades, remarked on how she truly understood this when she moved back to her home town of Kecskemét, a historic city in the middle of the country. In Dunaújváros, she claimed, people were rude on the street, and children addressed her with the familiar “you” form (*te*). In Kecskemét, people were more “civilized”: a man offered to carry her suitcase, people greeted one another in the street, and children addressed their elders with respect. Without a model *polgár* in Dunaújváros, consensus among a “respectable” stratum was that there was little hope there would ever be a process of embourgeoisment. This problem was exacerbated by the lack of a pre-socialist “history” in town, except for the old village district that was being extensively renovated. And yet, people who considered themselves as *polgár* or aspired to *polgár* manners and values had always existed in the city, and were fairly recognizable by their material culture, dress and general habitus. As we have seen, many families claiming this status had never abandoned inherited *polgári* furnishings for modern furnishings.

For many of an aspiring middle class in Dunaújváros, however, the celebration of a Hungarian bourgeoisie in the 1990s implied the privileging of those who could claim some form of *polgár* ancestry, and thus the restoration of a form of social stratification that had been discredited for forty years. Likewise, the resurgence of popularity for *polgári* furnishings did not find a market in the former socialist city. Instead, contemporary models of a “middle-class” (*középosztály*) life and ostensibly merit-based social structures to be found in the Euro-American west were far more appealing, and had more continuities with the criteria for membership of the “middle strata”. Most Hungarians were familiar with the (mythical) American model of middle classes based on television, from travel abroad and from books, many of which focused on the late 19th to mid-20th century. A young convert to Mormonism was only one of several people who recommended that I read a paperback bestseller by E. A. Jameson that catalogued the indigent beginnings and exploits of early industrial millionaires (1993 [1920]). When I tried to find this author “Jameson”, I discovered the book had first been published in Hungary in 1920 and had recently been reprinted. Another popular book was Daniel J. Boorstin’s *The Americans*, translated into Hungarian in 1991 (Boorstin, 1991 [1974]). A divorced woman in her 40s working at the city museum sought me out as an American to discuss the subject of American values and culture. Her interest had been sparked in part by her conversion to 7th Day Adventism and its practice of an unmediated, self-reliant reading of the Bible. Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* had explained much to her, she said, about a western attitude and its role in what Americans and Europeans had been able to achieve, particularly the quality of “hope” and a belief in

God's help (a Hungarian translation had been published in 1982). But Boorstin had also convinced her that

Americans are beyond concern with material appearances because they went to America in 1620 with the conviction of their Puritan ethic, and built up that land and fought for their freedom, unencumbered by an aristocratic code.

She had found this ethic so compelling, that she'd taken up quilting as a distinctly American, productive practice. Another couple, with no *polgár* in their backgrounds, also mentioned Boorstin's book, but only told me about the top three of the nine layers of American society presented: first, old-name inherited wealth like the Rockefellers; second, those who had some inherited wealth as start-up capital but were otherwise "self-made" through a combination of wits and good fortune, like Bill Gates; and finally, the CEO types who made millions without risking their own capital. In this model of American social life, class-status or family background seemed less relevant than ambition and hard-work (and perhaps unscrupulous behavior) to reach the status of comfortable middle class, or, as in the book on millionaires, to get rich.

I have written elsewhere about how many people of a middle stratum in Dunaújváros resisted the idea of the new, suburban family house because they associated this kind of house with worker peasants and backwards village life (Fehérváry, 2011). For many of this middle strata, the ideal remained to live in the stimulating city environment during the work week, and relax in the fresh air and quiet of a rural cottage and garden on the weekend (Bren, 2002; Caldwell, 2011). By the end of the decade, however, enough new, modern "middle class" houses had been built to form "suburbanizing" neighborhoods in nearby villages. Despite enduring prejudices against such a house form and the difficult economic climate for house building in the 1990s, it became clear that such houses had become a defining sign of new, middle class belonging. They constructed the new middle classes as "autonomous" and "private" but at the same time modern and Hungarian through their materialities. The fate of a *polgár* ideal can also tell us something about the character of these new middle classes.

In the following cases, two are of couples who had "inherited" *polgár* status and furnishings and had displayed these in their urban apartments. A third had not had either, but their families had prospered during the socialist era. The parents of this last couple, Edit and Gábor, had risen in status from rural farmer to directorships in the socialist bureaucracy, and lived in a renovated, fully modern apartment in the center of town. Edit's mother had been thrilled when Edit and Gábor had managed to acquire the loft space in the same building she lived in to construct a large apartment with wonderful views. Edit had purchased *polgári* furni-

ture to decorate the loft, combining it with a state-of-the-art modern kitchen. But her mother was horrified when they decided to sell the apartment a few years later in order to build a modernized peasant house, or, as the *Lakáskultúra* feature they showed me called it: “Peasant House in Bourgeois Manner” (*parasztház polgári módon*). Having herself escaped the backwardness of village life and “made it” in the modern town, she could not fathom why anyone would move back. She could not see that Edit and Gábor were attracted by a new trend: renovating old, peasant houses with state-of-the-art conveniences. Having grown up in the polluted, socialist urban environment, they could romanticize Hungarian village life and at the same time bask in the prestige of “cultural preservation”. They got rid of their *polgári* furniture, and replaced it with “authentic” folk pieces alongside of more modern and comfortable leather furniture.

Two other families who moved to suburbanizing neighborhoods in nearby villages, however, did have inherited *polgári* furnishings, including carpets and art. Eszter and Károly were entrepreneurs in their mid-30s, both on their second marriages, who cashed in all their savings and sold their panel apartments to finance the building of a new family house on the outskirts of a nearby village. Eszter, as the daughter of a medical doctor, had always considered herself entitled to signs of prestigious distinction. Her new husband was a budding entrepreneur, first running a village disco-bar and then opening a “western” used goods store. They both attributed the failures of their previous marriages to differences in social class made manifest in “expectations” for material standards of living (*igény*) and the drive to achieve such lifestyles. A family house was integral to their understanding of the social position they would occupy in the new Hungary. Like most Dunaújváros residents, Eszter and Károly had lived their entire lives in small, urban apartments. When they married, they had lived in a one-bedroom apartment, furnished with a Biedermeier furniture set inherited from Eszter’s grandmother. But when their two-story, four bedroom house was built, Károly insisted that Eszter’s valuable Biedermeier furniture be stored upstairs and out of sight. Their house and interior revealed much about their postsocialist class identity. They identified fully with an entrepreneurial, ambitious, risk-taking but hard-working middle-class who they thought would occupy a place of privilege in the new capitalist order. Both had begun their entrepreneurial pursuits in the late 1980s, before the official fall of state-socialism, and believed its demise would remove the biggest obstacles to their ambitions for private enterprise. The new middle class with which Károly identified was about action rather than intellectualism or culture. Eszter’s antique furniture communicated the wrong kind of status: an old-fashioned, out-of-date and inherited status, that said nothing of their success in the present. Their new, modern living room furniture was far less valuable, but it was a much clearer sign of their “self made” prosperity. Moreover, in contrast to the

formality of older sitting room furniture that required people to sit upright, their soft, modern furnishings allowed for the relaxed and comfortable informality they felt they deserved as hard-working people (Wilk, 1999).

Anna, the daughter of the couple whose apartment we saw at the beginning of this paper was a lawyer in her 40s in the mid-1990s. Considering herself a member of a cultural intelligentsia, Anna was at first vigorously opposed to moving to a family house, understanding the burdens of a house in the village – its isolation, lack of services and spotty public transportation – to fall on the woman’s shoulders. More importantly, she could not assimilate the “family house” into her identity as a member of an urban, *polgár* intelligentsia. Nonetheless, they eventually moved to a house that her husband Tibor, an engineer at a division of the privatizing steel factory, had designed himself and had the construction done under his supervision. The house was equipped with the latest technologies, painted a dark watermelon pink, and had a bricked in patio area and expansive lawn with a high, protective gate around it. The exterior was a modest one-story, but the interior was spacious and well-appointed. Anna’s inherited *polgári* furnishings and art objects, which had been accorded prominent places in her urban apartment, were now relegated to a room with the door closed. They were replaced in the open living area by German leather sofas and a modern coffee table made of granite. In her glass cabinet, artifacts from her world travels were gradually displacing the porcelain figurines, though they were still anchored in place by lace doilies. In the early 2000s, Anna showed me around the growing neighborhood where their neighbors included the star of the city’s professional women’s handball team, a former Party secretary of the town, and a truck driver. She commented that this was where Dunaújváros’s middle class was moving, pointedly using the term “middle class” (*középosztály*) rather than *polgár*.

In the 2000s, all three of these families were firmly ensconced in their family houses, but had also acquired apartments for their grown children – not in Dunaújváros, but in the capital city of Budapest. Eszter and Károly, faced with an “empty nest” just a few years into living in their large house, decided to have another child and are raising him in what they imagine to be the standards of a European middle-class citizen. Anna, having retired from her official position, acts as a consultant to her husband’s privatizing business and “escapes” the suburban life as often as she can. She continues to travel extensively and collect objects to bring back and display at home. She also now has an apartment in Budapest so she can follow her *polgári* cultural pursuits, of attending the theater and going to museums. She furnished the bedroom of this apartment with exotic hardwoods and décor from Bali, and the living area in a “retro” design. While her sense of self as a member of a *polgári* intelligentsia has remained intact, it is no longer materialized in inherited artifacts from the past.

While *polgári* furnishings came to embody an idealized *polgár* sensibility during the socialist decades, it has lost this aura in the 2000s. Indeed, a home furnishing magazine launched in 2001 by the name of *Polgári Otthon* (“polgári home”), is focused on modern design and stately elegance and rarely features interiors with antique furnishing. For example, in an issue from 2008, the only interior so furnished is that of the celebrity guest, a pop star who recently moved to a *nagy-polgári* (haute bourgeois) villa apartment with a private garden that “measures up to her demands” (Szendi Horváth, 2008, 71). Instead of connecting one’s sense of self to the quality craftsmanship and values of an imagined Hungarian *polgári* past, the criteria for membership in such a class has become far more diffuse, and in a sense, far more challenging. Now one is to craft one’s home environment to express individual eclecticism, imagination and at the same time “elegant” good taste through the myriad and ever changing possibilities of modern lifestyle consumption.

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DANCING ON THE EDGE OF A VOLCANO: EAST EUROPEAN ROMA PERFORMERS RESPOND TO SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

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The advent of a more open society in Eastern and Central Europe has created space for political and cultural freedoms unthinkable under state socialism, particularly for the Roma (Gypsy) minority. The years since the change of regime have revealed apparently insatiable appetites for “Gypsiness” among consumers, impresarios, and recording companies, and artists from the East Bloc, many of them from extremely modest backgrounds, have filled niches in the business of sating those appetites. Yet for many Roma in the region, the political changes of twenty years ago have been disastrous: the end not only of full employment and a robust social safety net but also of the limitations on free speech and rigidly enforced state monopoly on violence that hid racial tensions under a veil of oppression. This paper addresses the contrast between the conditions of the Roma population at large with the successes of a handful of successful musicians. It also considers the ways some musicians in Hungary are working to improve both the conditions for Roma and the perception of Roma by non-Roma in and out of the region.

Keywords: Roma (Gypsies) – Eastern Europe, popular music, marginality

The advent of a more open society in Eastern and Central Europe has created space for political and cultural freedoms unthinkable under state socialism, particularly for the Roma (Gypsy) minority. Roma musicians in particular have benefited from this greater openness, as the twenty years since the change of regime have revealed voracious appetites for “Gypsiness” among consumers, impresarios, and recording companies, and artists from the East Bloc, many of them from extremely modest backgrounds, have filled niches in the business of sating those appetites. They have also taken this new atmosphere as an opportunity to innovate stylistically and to collaborate with musicians from many backgrounds.

This essay is “advertised”, if you will, under a stolen title: the phrase “Dancing on the Edge of a Volcano” is taken from Peter Gay’s book *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* (1968), a book that addresses a very different period in European history. Despite the very different time period and topic, the passage in

which this phrase originally appears offers provocative parallels to the present-day situation. I quote:

The excitement that characterized Weimar culture stemmed in part from exuberant creativity and experimentation; but much of it was anxiety, fear, a rising sense of doom. [...] it was a precarious glory, a dance on the edge of a volcano. [...] the creation of outsiders, propelled by history into the inside, for a short, dizzying, fragile moment (Gay 2001 [1968], xiv).

To observe the emergence of a mass of Roma performers, particularly popular musicians, in recent decades is not only to note the “outsiders propelled by history into the inside” but also to wonder, given the conditions affecting the Roma population at large, whether this can last, or whether it is only a “short dizzying fragile moment”. For many East European Roma, the transformations of the post-1989 era have brought only the end of stability (in the form of full employment and a robust social safety net) and of state protection from openly racist language and acts. The extremes of anti-Roma sentiment are highlighted by the trials pending in the European Court of Human Rights over the forced sterilization of several Slovak Roma women (Puppink, 2011); by the murders of six Roma in Eastern Hungary in 2008 and 2009, for which defendants went on trial in March 2011 (Cigányvadászat-per, 2011); and the conflict between the Roma citizens of the village of Gyöngyöspata and the right-wing “Civil Guard Association for a Better Future” (Szebb Jövőért Polgárőr Egyesület) who are “patrolling” in their neighborhood (European Roma Rights Center 2011, Hungarian Ambiance, 2011). What I offer here is a preliminary consideration of this juxtaposition between the dire conditions of the Roma population at large and the successes of a handful of successful musicians.

Gypsiness

Roma musicians have long been intertwined with the entertainment music through Europe, especially Central and Eastern Europe; they have played professionally for non-Roma as well as Roma in cafés, restaurants, and theaters, and at life-cycle and calendrical celebrations (weddings and baptisms are examples of the former, New Year’s and Easter of the latter). This role, “primarily male and instrumental [though sometimes also vocal], requires Roma to know expertly the regional repertoire and interact with it in a creative manner” (Silverman, 2007, 338). The music played by professional Romani musicians varies widely by region; public recognition of the Romani role in its performance also varies. Hungary’s “Gypsy music”, labeled according to the ethnicity of its performers, is the extreme

case. This genre arose in the mid-nineteenth century and remained popular well into the twentieth, and even now it maintains a presence in the Hungarian soundscape (see Sárosi, 1978 among others). As a worldwide popular phenomenon, “Gypsy music” dates from the early 1990s for two reasons. First, the fall of the Iron Curtain meant that many musicians who had been prohibited from traveling were now allowed to leave their home countries. Second, the documentary *Latcho drom* (Good road) (released in 1993), directed by French (half-Romani) filmmaker Tony Gatlif, in combination with the fiction films of Yugoslav filmmaker Emir Kusturica, “initiated a veritable ‘craze’ for Gypsy music in the [...] world music scene” (Silverman, 2007, 339), which itself grew exponentially during the 1990s. As an associated phenomenon, the Spanish-French music group the Gipsy Kings were on top of *Billboard* magazine’s World Music charts for six out of the first seven years that the magazine tracked World Music as a separate category, beginning in 1990 (Taylor, 1997, 7).

We can track the international “Gypsy music craze” through the ensuing years via festivals, both of “world music” and specifically “Gypsy music”, and through recordings. The Lotus Festival of World Music and Arts in Bloomington, Indiana, offers a convenient lens through which to view the use of “Gypsiness” on the Western festival stage. “Gypsy music” has been a popular draw at Lotus for years, represented by artists coming from India, Spain, and many points in between. Some of those artists are clearly Roma, for example the Szászcsávás Band (from a Hungarian-speaking region of Romania) and Kal (from Serbia). Others are clearly not: for example members of Balkan Beat Box, a local favorite, are Israelis living in New York, but they play repertoire associated with Roma artists, especially from the Balkans. In a few cases, like Hungary’s *Kis tehén* (Little Cow), most of the repertoire is not clearly sonically marked as “Gypsy” but a subset of the personnel are Roma, and whoever is writing the publicity for the group chooses to stress its “Gypsy-tinged” sound (Yonas Media, 2011).

Festivals featuring “Gypsy music” exclusively have also taken a prominent role in popularizing these artists. These began to take off in the West in the early 1990s, around the time of the film *Latcho drom*, in Germany, France, Italy, Switzerland, and the UK, among others. The first North American “Gypsy festival” was the Gypsy Caravan tour in spring 1999; “due to its resounding success, a second [Caravan] tour followed in fall 2001” (Silverman, 2007, 340). New York established an annual “Gypsy festival” in 2005. Eastern European impresarios have also jumped on this bandwagon; there are notable recurring events in Prague, Budapest, Skopje, and Stara Zagora, Bulgaria (Silverman, 2007, 339).

Finally, we can see the growth of a “Gypsy music” sector in the recording industry, a real or virtual bin in a record store (see also Malvinni, 2004, 207–14). An incomplete listing of compilation albums featuring diverse Romani artists includes *Road of the Gypsies* (1996), *Zingari: Route of the Gypsies* (1997), *The*

Rough Guide to the Music of the Gypsies (1999), *Gypsy Caravan* (2001), and *Children of the Wind* (2001); their covers show a wide array of Romanticized imagery. Compilations of localized genres of “Gypsy music” or by individual groups push this process even further, as in the titles and covers of compilation *Gypsy Magic: Nouveau Flamenco* (2001), *Band of Gypsies* by Les Yeux Noirs of France and Taraf de Haïdouks of Romania (1992 and 2001, respectively), and Taraf’s *Honourable Brigands*, *Magic Horses* and *Evil Eye* (1994). The extent to which musicians and the music industry recognize “Gypsiness” as an effective “hook” (whether for marketing or aesthetics or both) shows itself *in extremis* in Ensemble Caprice’s series of recordings titled *The Baroque Gypsies*, featuring compositions by Vivaldi and Telemann interspersed with arrangements of melodies from the Uhrovska Collection, an eighteenth-century manuscript “featuring single-line violin melodies in several hands that represent a compendium of contemporary practices” – whether or not there is any clear evidence that these composers knew them (Beckerman, 2009). Musicologist Michael Beckerman states that while

There is no doubt that the [Roma] are implicated in the Uhrovska collection in some way [...] [but] nothing is certain [...] The marketing of something as Gypsy music usually implies an erotic blend of expressivity and virtuosity that one doesn’t always associate with, say, the German Baroque. It is why [...] music as disparate as punk, flamenco and hip-hop are marketed as ‘Gypsy’: Gypsy music sells (Beckerman, 2009).

What does it sell? In Bulgaria and Romania, orientalism is central to two popular genres, Bulgarian *chalga* and Romanian *manele*, also known as *muzica orientala*; Roma performers are among the biggest stars in both genres, and along with these “exotic” performers, the vocal style and belly-dance inspired movements also rely on “Oriental” allure. The usual gendered provocations of orientalism are bent further and to great effect by cross-dressing Bulgarian Roma superstar Azis (Markoff, 2006).

In Hungary, too, Roma performers have an outsized presence in popular music. Radio, music video, and reality TV have overtaken the restaurant as the most important site for contemporary “Gypsy music”. In the first season of *Megasztár*, the unlicensed Hungarian version of *American Idol* and *Pop Idol*, ending in spring 2004, the runner-up, Ibolya Oláh, and third-place finisher, Laci Gáspár, were Roma; the winner of the second (2005) season, Ferenc Molnár, was also, as indicated by his stage name, “Caramel” (Munk, 2007). These performers’ “play between Hungarian and Roma identities is often understated, or as Anikó Imre puts it ‘whitewashed and nationalized, with the singer[s]’ voluntary participation” (Imre, 2009, 124). An even bigger and more problematic media personality is

Győző Gáspár, front man for the group Romantic turned star of the RTL Klub's *Győzike*, which began in 2005. *Győzike* is a "reality comedy" that follows Gáspár's family life, much in the vein of *The Osbournes* on America's MTV network. Non-standard speech from the patriarch is a source of humor in both, but where Ozzy Osbourne's speech is muddled by the aftermath of years of substance abuse, Gáspár's "speech impediment" is a thick Palóc accent. Anikó Imre's assessment captures the show's problems succinctly:

While the fact that a Romany man and his family occupy a precious prime-time television slot and attract a large non-Roma audience is a significant development [...] The décor is in bad taste, family members constantly shout at one another in the stereotypical Roma dialect familiar from cabaret scenes, and most of Gáspár's efforts to assert himself backfire in one ridiculous way or another. The program seems to confirm nothing but Gypsies' inability to function as hard-working citizens (Imre, 2009, 126).

Post-Socialist Roma in Crisis: Employment, Poverty, and Education

The other dominant image of Roma in the media twenty years after the change of regime could hardly be more different from such flashy images of pop stars: an image of extreme poverty, with its association with an "inability to function" and concomitant social exclusion. That image reflects an unfortunate reality: that everyday life for many of Eastern Europe's Roma population has deteriorated over the course of this period, which has seen not only massive unemployment and entrenched residential and educational segregation but also flare-ups of violence.

According to several metrics – literacy and infant mortality, to name two important ones – the lives of Roma improved substantially under state socialism; state socialist policies had almost eliminated the disparity between non-Roma and Roma employment rates by the late 1980s (Barany, 2002, 139, 173), and employment brought with it some economic and social inclusion. The price of these improvements was assimilation, and in some countries assimilation pressures were very severe. In Czechoslovakia, use of the Romani language was banned in schools, Roma were dispersed from concentrated settlements and scattered among urban housing estates, and most controversially, women were offered financial incentives to be sterilized; many were sterilized without full informed consent, a practice that allegedly continues (Puppink, 2011). In Bulgaria, not only the Romani language but also Romani-style dancing and musical instruments associated with Roma were banned, and officially Bulgaria had no more Roma or other non-ethnic Bulgarian citizens after the mid-1970s (Barany, 2002, 115, 117–18).

Hungary and Yugoslavia, meanwhile, put into place much more positive policies, particularly from the 1970s on. In certain contexts, at least, ethnic discrimination was sanctionable: a clarinetist in a Budapest restaurant band related that musicians could report employers who called them “dirty Gypsies” to Party authorities. Hungary supported Gypsy intellectuals, allowing the use of Romani as the language of instruction in some schools, and also allowed cultural groups and music ensembles (Barany, 2002, 121–3). Most prominent were the “Roma folklore ensembles” who made the case for their repertoire being “authentic” rural folklore in the same vein as the repertoire of the *táncház*. The acceptance of these groups was hard-won: founding members of some of these ensembles tell of the difficulty they had getting invited to perform, and when eventually these ensembles were accepted enough to stage their own festival, police patrolled both the audience and the stage heavily (Lange, 1997, 16). Eventually, though, these folklore groups became a vector for legitimizing Roma aesthetic expression, and the public acceptance of such expression

[...] helped introduce the idea, which was later codified in Hungary’s 1993 law on minorities, that Roma have claims and status equal to that of other ethnic minorities. [...] Many of the Roma who became active in drafting legislation, negotiating with political parties, speaking to the press on Roma issues, and serving as elected representatives were indeed the leaders of *folklór* groups (Lange, 1997, 23, 14).

Thus cultural legitimacy gained during the socialist era combined with the integration of Roma into the socialist-era economy brought with it a hopeful degree of political inclusion at the time of the change of regime.

But the period of transition also saw devastating economic changes among the Roma in the region, who were concentrated in the socialist era in jobs in heavy industry, mining, steel, and construction, the sectors of the economy where post-socialist de-industrialization resulted in the most severe job losses. Where jobs and housing were linked, many also lost their apartments. The economic collapse of many Roma communities without the jobs provided by the “distorted modernization of socialism” revealed “the assumed integration of Roma into Hungarian society [...] to be a mere illusion” (Vajda and Dupcsik, 2008, 7). While Roma incomes and literacy improved in absolute terms in the socialist era, they were still relatively poor and ill-educated; the end of socialist assimilation policies meant the end of policies that had led to these improvements. Rates of poverty, whether measured based in substantive terms like hunger or in relative terms – whether Roma are more poor than their non-Roma compatriots – have gone up significantly. This is particularly true among the very poor (Ladányi and Szelényi, 2006, 158). Moreover, compared to poverty under state-socialist full employment,

post-socialist poverty is “deeper and lasts longer”; residential segregation, exclusion from the labor market, and inadequate education reinforce each other and may be passed on to succeeding generations (Ladányi and Szelényi, 2005, 130; Ladányi and Szelényi, 2006, 173, 176). A small stratum of Roma – mostly urban (and there are significantly more urban Roma now in the East Bloc than there were at the middle of the twentieth century) – have been able to move up into a middle-class existence, but very poor Roma are often excluded geographically, educationally, socially, and politically as well as economically. They may be barred from public accommodations and infrastructure ranging from shops and restaurants to mainstream schools to running water (Harper, Steger and Filčák, 2009). In Csenyété, a village in northeast Hungary that János Ladányi and Iván Szelényi examined over time, the population went through waves of integration and assimilation – in both the middle of the nineteenth century and the state socialist era – followed by retrenched segregation, in the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries and since the 1980s. The latter wave of segregation has been largely voluntary; not only non-Roma but also more ambitious Roma have left the village in search of better opportunities, resulting in a completely Roma, completely impoverished settlement:

Class forces differentiate Romany society, with the better-to-do, upwardly mobile, more ambitious Roma leaving the ghetto and leaving behind only those who cannot escape. [...] the Romany ghetto poor [...] are not only separated from [non-Roma] society and from the better-to-do Roma, but are now excluded from the economic system. They are not at the bottom of the system, they are outside it (Ladányi and Szelényi, 2003, 49).

The authors argue that rather than being simply “poor”, then, this growing group of very poor Roma constitute an “underclass”, a group that becomes increasingly trapped in a cycle of poverty. They lack social as well as economic capital; the culture of such communities generally lacks the tools for getting out of poverty. The concept of an underclass, proposed in the late 1970s by William Julius Wilson and elaborated by him and others in the ensuing years, began as a way to understand the development of “truly disadvantaged” urban African-American communities that developed when, after the end of legal segregation of housing, areas like Harlem in New York or the South Side of Chicago were abandoned by anyone who could leave (Wilson, 1987; Small, Harding and Lamont, 2010). Ladányi and Szelényi argue persuasively for the parallels between the socio-political shifts that allowed many African-Americans to leave the ghettos behind and the even more dramatic shifts that put so many people in motion in Eastern Europe after 1989.

Comparative studies from EDUMIGROM, the project led by Júlia Szalai of Central European University on the educational experiences of Roma and migrant students in nine member states of the European Union, include both isolated rural Roma settlements, the types of Roma communities that have dominated media discourses on the “Gypsy problem” in Hungary in recent years, as well as “mixed Roma and non-Roma neighbourhoods in deteriorated and economically collapsed Central European cities, where the common denominator of inhabitants is deep poverty and social exclusion” (Szalai et al., 2010, 158). While these very poor communities do not constitute the majority of Roma by any means, they are growing due to high birth rates, and they also play a disproportionate role in the image many have of the Roma.

Education is obviously central to any attempts at improving conditions, but ongoing studies show how ethnic segregation in education frequently perpetuates social exclusion. In destitute areas like Csenyété, schools are

usually of a poor quality, which, together with the lack of any realistic perspectives held by the students, predetermine low school performance and provide strongly limited opportunities for further education (Szalai et al., 2010, 151).

When Roma children live near a variety of school options, however, they are still disproportionately steered to “special education” schools or to tracks within mixed schools that provide

a limited curriculum and a rather poor quality of teaching and do not render transferable knowledge for applying to other types of secondary education – consequently, these programmes often develop into segregated and self-contained forms of schooling that neither provide graduation, nor facilitate later attempts at catching up (Szalai, 2008, 6).

Moreover, in communities with substantial numbers of Roma students, “recurrent processes of ‘white flight’” may turn schools that are open to those students

[...] into designated “minority” institutions. As such, these schools hardly can escape the usual concomitants of declining quality in teaching, high turnover of the teaching staff, a sinking reputation, and a self-sustaining flight of all those – both from the majority and the ethnic minorities – who have the energy and the contacts to search for other, better schools for their children (Szalai, 2011, 37).

Despite the fact that students and parents both know that schooling is the only chance for students to leave behind their marginalized conditions and “aspir[e] for meaningful integration into society-at-large”, then, schools often end up deepening

ing the distinctions between majority youth and their “othered” peers and perpetuating the social exclusion of the latter – unless local educational and municipal leadership and innovative teachers dedicate themselves to fighting this process. Such exceptional efforts can only begin to fight against the prevailing current of ethnic and social marginalization (Szalai et al., 2010, 174).

In the difficult conditions of East European Roma ghettos, it is no wonder that an illegal shantytown in France or Italy might look good by comparison – and many of the remaining go-getters have traveled to seek out work. The French government’s effort to dismantle these shantytowns and deport their residents in the summer of 2010 highlighted the visceral rejection by many in the West of the freedom of movement promised by the Western ideals embodied in the European Union. Incidentally, France attempted to deport employed as well as unemployed Roma migrants in France – among them musicians playing with the *Cirque Romanès*, a Parisian “Gypsy circus” that represented France at the World Expo in Shanghai in June 2010 (Davies, 2010). Such facts highlight the colonial structures using Roma performers: what is expected is that the Roma will “wait at the margins of Europe (or in western European ghettos) to be discovered by white promoters; they are then escorted to the West, briefly put on stage, and escorted home” (Silverman, 2007, 342).

Political Mobilization of Roma in Eastern Europe, Its Successes and Failures, and the Role of Performers

Some see the development of a “Gypsy music-industrial complex” as “dancing on the edge of a volcano” in the worst sense: this complex “cleanse[s], tame[s], appropriate[s] and colonize[s] the exotic” while absorbing money and attention that, in their view, could be better spent on “real issues” and “real activism” (Silverman, 2007, 342, quoting Ian Hancock). In fact Roma activists in recent decades have mobilized to engage governments and the majority public in an effort to improve both perception of and conditions for Roma at large. Such activism has succeeded in attracting the attention of national and international organizations and in changing the terms of the debate, most obviously by gaining legitimacy for the term “Roma” as preferred politically correct ethnonym. Still, notwithstanding the progress Roma activists have achieved, they “have manifestly failed to mobilize the Roma into a political mass movement”, even into a more accurate count of Roma population in national censuses (Vermeersch, 2006, 2). Moreover, mass discourse has arguably seen a backlash against Roma with promotion by Roma activists and non-Roma elites of minority-rights discourses.

In this context there is a need not only for interventions to address the concerns of specific marginalized individuals, schools, or communities but also for a redou-

bling of efforts to change public discourse. Sociologist Júlia Szalai concludes her team's study of migrant and Roma students, schools, and communities by stating that

It is the coordinated policies toward (re)establishing the foundations of multiculturalism as much on the level of political representation as in the day-to-day relations within the communities that might provide the framework and the conditions for schools to attain the still widely-held goals of equal opportunity, equity, and colour-blind inclusion in education (Szalai et al., 2010, 174).

In the context of a less-than-stellar record by “real activists”, performers must continue to play an important role. Music is an area in which the particular and distinctive characteristics of Roma have sometimes worked in their favor, though only in the context of heavy controls, both on their presentation and on their physical movements, as described earlier, so as to proscribe any real or imagined negative impact that they may exert. On and off stage, performers can play on their image as “an immutable, archaic, traditional, arcane, secluded and ‘unconstructed’ ethnic group [...] marked by a set of particular, distinctive [...] characteristics” (Vermeersch, 2006, 3) while at the same time arguing for improved conditions, improved ethnic pride, and the development of multiculturalism on every level of society. A number of current projects and institutions use “Gypsiness” implicitly or explicitly to address the role of Roma in schools and society. The remainder of this essay discusses three of those projects in Hungary.

The first project is the development of bilingual (Hungarian and Romani) music-curriculum materials, recording songs and producing accompanying songbooks in both languages. This project, *Roma művészek a gyerekekért: Népdalok, megzenésített versek óvodásoknak és kisiskolásoknak* (Roma artists for the children: Folksongs and poems with music for young children) was co-curated by István Szilvási, activist and leader of the Szilvási Gypsy Folk Band, and (non-Roma) ethnomusicologist Katalin Kovalcsik of the Institute for Musicology (Budapest, 2005). There have been several projects to develop curricular materials featuring Roma songs in recent years; this one stands out because of the participation of top-flight Hungarian Roma recording artists recruited by Szilvási.

The next project in terms of the age of its target audience is the network of schools developed by Kalyi Jag (Black Fire), the pioneering “Roma folklore” ensemble founded in the late 1970s. The Kalyi Jag schools in Budapest, Miskolc, and Kalocsa require Roma students to master “useful modern” subjects alongside a grounding in Roma language and culture (Kalyi Jag, 2008), following a model for minority education championed by some in the West (see e. g., Ogbu Family, 2003). Advocates of multicultural education see the inclusion of knowledge about the histories, cultures, and contributions of diverse groups – in this case, Roma

topics in particular – in the curriculum as critical in keeping students engaged in and empowered through the educational enterprise. Schools for Roma students only like the Kalyi Jag Schools do not and cannot aim to serve the entire Roma school-age population, and in Hungary, as elsewhere, there is a debate over whether segregating disadvantaged minority students from the majority is the best solution, especially long-term. Leaders of such institutions argue, though, that such schools provide a superior learning environment for Roma students “since they can freely adapt their methodologies to [...] children’s culture, background, and social skills” (Barany, 2002, 319). The Kalyi Jag schools understand this goal as at once educational, cultural, and political: their “Institutional Quality Assurance Program” (Intézményi Minőségbiztosítási Program) states as their goal not only the preparation of students for a trade or the *érettségi* (*Matura*, the exam required for students who seek university education), but also their nurturing as moral individuals, citizens, and representatives of their race: “We must show them that at all times they have worthy examples who present preeminent achievement in Roma culture, public life, and politics” (Kalyi Jag, 2008).

The above two examples show Roma musicians’ investment in education of youth and the use of music and performance in furthering that education. From the point of view of public discourse, Roma performance can be and is an important tool both in developing Roma leadership and in educating the public, both Roma and non-Roma. Probably the highest profile events are festivals of “Gypsy music”, and Budapest’s *Athe Sam!/Itt vagyunk!* (We are here!) Roma Arts Festival is a particularly potent case. This annual festival was first staged in 2007, organized by a committee of Roma and non-Roma, older and younger; two Roma musicians, István Szilvási and Antal Kovács, led the programming. The week-long event includes musical acts in a wide variety of genres, “authentic” and “modern”, and of non-musical events – film screenings, art exhibitions, theatrical performances, artisan demonstrations, and panel discussions on current issues, from definitions of Roma ethnicity and traditional culture to education and the role of Roma in the political arena. Significantly, the site of the festival, the *Gödör Klub*, is at the center of Pest. The audience is multi-ethnic and international by design: the intent from the beginning has been to draw backpacking tourists as well as locals, and in subsequent years, programming decisions have been guided in part by the desire to increase international attendance.

The multi-ethnic and international shape of the event also appeals to the respect for minority rights mandated in Eastern Europe by international governmental organizations like the United Nations and the European Union. These ideals and their international public are implicit in the online note “About the Festival”:

The purpose of the Festival is to provide a framework for inter-cultural dialogue through art; to contribute to the mitigation of misun-

derstanding and to promote human dignity. What is at the heart of all this is knowledge and information. [...] Highlighted features of the Festival will be the joint productions of Roma and non Roma artists, as well as providing a forum for new talents; we will provide the opportunity for civil organisations and individuals to present their model initiatives; and through organising roundtable discussions, we seek to contribute to empowering the Roma community to effectively carry out interest representation. Last year represented an important stage in the history of Athe Sam: in 2010 we started cooperating with a great number of festivals both in Hungary and abroad with the aim of promoting the values of social inclusion both domestically and in other countries (Athe Sam, 2011).

This statement conveys these values in a largely positive sense, barely suggesting who their opponents might be. The *Gödör Klub* also acted as one of the major venues for *Zene a Rasszizmus Ellen* (Music Against Racism), an organization formed in cooperation with the British Embassy and the British NGO group Love Music Hate Racism in August 2009, around the same time that the “Gypsy hunters” killed their sixth victim (*Zene a Rasszizmus Ellen*, 2009; *Népszabadság Online*, 2011). Such events brought together Roma and non-Roma performers, and with them Roma and non-Roma audiences, rallying for a multi-cultural vision of Hungarian society.

The organizers of the Athe Sam festival, *Gödör Klub*, and the *Kalyi Jag* schools have worked to reconfigure “Gypsy music” in its many manifestations as more than something to entertain the majority through expressivity, virtuosity and exoticism. In their hands it is also a forum through which to engage the public in a dialogue about the place of Roma, and the relationships between Roma and non-Roma, in contemporary Europe. The multi-layered approach of the Athe Sam festival especially sets it apart from many “Gypsy” events through its deliberate positioning of Roma, emphatically including Roma performers, as actors in a rational public sphere, that “theater in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk”, which according to Jürgen Habermas, his followers, and his critics, “is indispensable to critical social theory and to democratic political practice” (Fraser, 1990, 57).

The public for “Gypsy music” in Hungary has historically been understood to be non-Roma; Hungarians hired Roma to perform their entertainment music, the story goes, because being a professional musician was historically viewed as an unreliable, unrespectable, or immoral way to make a living, but the publics that these musical genres defined for the majority – restaurants, clubs, theaters, village weddings, and dance halls rural and urban – were and are nonetheless understood as ethnically Hungarian. The contemporary popular music in Hungary also gener-

ally assumes a Hungarian public. Although the racial/ethnic identity of the “Gypsy musician” has been essential to its success in “exteriorizing the state of the soul” of the Hungarian audience member, “Gypsiness” has been assumed to be primarily an instrument of non-Roma discourse (van de Port, 1999, 291, citing Block, 1936; see also Sárosi, 1978).

By contrast, the Roma public culture created by contemporary performers constitutes an open dialogue between Roma and non-Roma, locally and globally. Roma public culture creates a “zone of cultural debate [...] an arena where other types, forms, and domains of culture are encountering, interrogating and contesting each other in new and unexpected ways” (Appadurai and Breckenridge, 1988, 6). In this context, any music Roma musicians perform, from the most “Hungarian” (*magyar nóta* and Transylvanian Hungarian folkdance music) to the most “authentically Roma” (“folklore” singing in the Romani language) to music in international genres (pop, rap, jazz, punk), is political. A forum like the Athe Sam festival makes the political nature of performance explicit.

The potential impact of such performance is difficult to gauge. A skeptic might conclude that “mere” performance will only change no minds; those who most need to “hear” the message of understanding and tolerance are those least likely to hear it. We might look for hope to the contrary in Michael Warner’s idea that

A public is constituted through mere attention [...] you might have wandered into hearing range of the speaker’s podium in a convention hall only because it was on your way to the bathroom. [...] The direction of our glance can constitute our social world (Warner, 2002, 60–2).

Here Athe Sam’s choice of venue and mix of activities might further its cause. Held steps away from the hub of the city’s transportation network, not only inside the Gödör Klub but also on its outdoor plaza, with free admission, the festival is ideally situated to draw in the casual passer-by. In this context “Gypsy music” acts not only as an abstract exotic concept to entice potential attendees but also as a sonic lure to the ear.

It requires a substantial leap from being a haphazard or oppositional member of this public to undergoing a lasting change through the experience of such communicative acts. Nonetheless, lasting changes in public discourse on Roma in Eastern Europe are even more unimaginable without activities like Athe Sam. The leadership of musicians and performance promoters in using the power of “Gypsiness” to shift the public dialogue on the “Roma question” will be essential to furthering the social inclusion of Roma in the region.

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HUNGARICA IN CAMBRIDGE LIBRARIES

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In the following article I offer a survey of early Hungarica source materials in the Cambridge libraries, as well as a brief history of some of the major acquisitions.

Keywords: Hungarica, Cambridge, Hungarian studies, Hungarian history, source materials, acquisition history

In 2004 I organised a little exhibition in the University Library based on the pre-1850 Hungarian holdings of the library. While it did not have wide publicity, I managed to assemble and put on display about twenty-five interesting items, some of them never shown to the public. I am mentioning this fact for the simple reason that now I would like to survey only *early* Hungarica in Cambridge libraries, that is rare codices and books whether in Hungarian or Latin, with the odd book in English and some MSS thrown in for good measure.

The two best Hungarian collections are, as one would expect, in the library of Trinity College and in the University Library. Trinity, of course has great holdings in almost all fields and it is not a surprise that they have some rare Hungarica, copies of which can be found only in the Bodleian or in the British Library. The Wren Library holds a Corvina, one of the eight Corvinas now in England; it is Titus Livius, *Historiae Romanae decas I* (Cod.1235.0.4.4), copied some time between 1450 and 1470 which has inscriptions by various hands from 1496 and 1552. While it was part of King Matthias Corvinus's world-famous library, reputed to contain 2000 codexes, experts claim that it originates not from the territory of historical Hungary but from Northern Italy and was probably commissioned by the King (Pongrácz, 1912, 1–7). No other incunabula is extant in the library, but there are a number of 16th century Hungarica, beginning with a 1543 edition of Bonfini, several works by Johannes Honterus from Transylvania (e.g., *Rudimenta cosmographiae*, 1546), two books by the eccentric Bishop turned Imperial diplomat Andreas Dudith who left the Catholic Church for the sake of a Polish lady and finished his life in Breslau/Wrocław. While one of Dudith's books,

Vita Reginaldi Poli (Venice, 1563) was a translation from Ludovico Beccadelli's Italian biography, it was also based on Dudith's earlier visit to England (ÚMIL I.: 470). There are also books of Hungarian Protestant theologians, much read and sometimes published in England. Very popular amongst these was István Szegedi Kis, known either as "Kis" or "Szegedinus", a great compiler of biblical and other theological texts; a copy of his *Loci Communes* (Basle, 1585) bears on its cover the coat-of-arms of Lord Burghley. (Szegedi Kis's works, by the way, can be found in many Oxford or Cambridge college libraries.) Another Hungarian, Izsák Fegyverneki, better known as "Feguernekinus", became known in England also thanks to the Basle connection – it was there that his *Enchiridion* was first published in 1595. The Wren Library of Trinity owns two more books by Fegyverneki, but these were published later, in 1604 and 1613, respectively – I am mentioning them for the sole reason that one of these (probably the 1604 edition) belonged to a distinguished scholar of Trinity, the young Isaac Newton.

Two dictionaries which contain a Hungarian vocabulary are the five-language *Dictionarium quinque Nobilissimarum Europae linguarum* (Venice, 1595) of Faustus Verantius which in its Appendix also prints prayers such as "Our Father" and "Hail Mary" in Hungarian, and the eleven-language dictionary of Calepinus. The latter's first edition (Lyon, 1585) are extant in two Cambridge libraries, in the University Library and in Sidney Sussex; as for the Wren Library it has the two volumes of the 1605 edition. But Trinity holds some Hungarian dictionaries and grammars which came from the same source and were part of an exceptional gift to the library: I am speaking about the 17th century medical doctor and scholar John Mapletoft's gift. It consists of three books by Albert Molnár Szenci: his Latin/Hungarian-Hungarian/Latin dictionary of 1604 published in Hanau, the Hungarian Bible of Oppenheim (1612) and the trilingual Latin-Greek-Hungarian dictionary of Heidelberg (1621). Molnár's place in the history of Hungarian literature is assured mainly by his translations of the *Psalms of David*, but he also translated the *Institutions...* Jean Calvin's main work into Hungarian (I found some years ago a copy inscribed for George Abbot, Abp of Canterbury, in the Lambeth Library) and was an industrious and efficient linguist. It was not Mapletoft himself who acquired all these books but his uncle Nicholas Ferrar of Little Gidding, or/and his cousin Nicholas Ferrar junior. (In the trilingual dictionary the latter inscribed his name with the date "1638", Gömöri, 1978, 298.) The Hungarian dictionaries and Bible were purchased by the Ferrars because their grand plan was to edit Bible concordances in all European languages. After the death of the older Nicholas Ferrar in 1637 it was his nephew Nicholas Ferrar the younger, who continued his work until his untimely death in 1640. This included, to prove his exceptional linguistic abilities, a New Testament concordance in 24 languages (Peckard, 1790, 263), samples of which have survived in Clare College Archives. The fourteen-line Hungarian text, interlined with English, is chosen

from St. John's Testament, and it was most likely copied out of the Hungarian Bible by the above mentioned younger Nicholas Ferrar (Gömöri, 1993, 249).

Speaking of Hungarian Bibles, we should digress here, because there are more original Hungarian Bibles extant in Cambridge than in Amsterdam. This is partly due to the twentieth-century transfer of the British and Foreign Bible Society's library to the Cambridge University Library. In that collection there is a copy of the first complete, so-called Károli Bible published in 1591, also several 17th century editions of the Bible, with or without inscriptions. One of these bears the signature of John Huniades, who must be the son of Johannes Huniades (Bánfihunyadi), a goldsmith turned alchemist and experimental chemist whom Lilly called "one of the most learned people" he had ever met. The older Huniades was at one point Sir Kenelm Digby's assistant and later taught chemistry in Gresham College but was not a rich man; his son, on the other hand, who also dabbled in alchemy, was a shrewd money-lender who died in 1696, had become very wealthy indeed. Amongst the Bible Society possessions there is a Hungarian bible from the 18th century (published in Utrecht in 1747), which is of particular interest. The owner, one Johannes Mező, came to England in the middle of the century as a Hussar to the Duke of Cumberland and having settled down in this country married an English girl, called Diana. The wedding took place, as an inscription in his copy of the Bible shows, on November 5, 1754. Mező, who may have changed his name later to "Field", lived thereafter in Kensington where his wife lost three newborn babies – this transpires from the last empty pages of the Bible where the bereaved father noted down the date of the birth and the death of his children – a heartrending story encapsulated in a few handwritten notes. A letter extant in the Lambeth Library shows that John Mező was still alive in 1763, and it must have been a decade or two later that Granville Sharp bought his Hungarian Bible for the British and Foreign Bible Society, of which he became the first President (Gömöri, 2004, 3).

Hungarian poetry was first written in Latin – Trinity owns a book of verse by Janus Pannonius, the first outstanding poet born on Hungarian soil. In the 17th century some of the best Latin poets were anthologized and both in Trinity and the University Library we can locate the popular anthology *Delitiae Poetarum Hungaricarum* (Frankfurt, 1619) edited by David Pareus's son, J. P. Pareus. That century also yields books on Hungarian history such as Martin Fumée's great compendium *The History of the Troubles of Hungariae*, translated from the French in 1600, János Bethlen's *Rerum Transylvanicarum libri quattor* (Amsterdam, 1664), also John Shirley's book with the evocative title *The History of the Wars of Hungary* (London, 1685), the latter owned by Henry Newton, no relation of Isaac. Trinity also has a copy of John Stoughton's millenerian *Felicitas ultimi saeculi*, 1640) dedicated to György Rákóczi I. – it bears the name of a "Joh. Tholnai", but it is by no means certain that the owner was identical with the Puritan Church reformer János Dáli Tolnai (1606–60).

Amongst the numerous Hungarians who visited England in the 17th century, there was one György Csipkés Komáromi-Comarinus who visited Oxford in 1651/52, and after obtaining a doctorate in Utrecht returned to Debrecen. His numerous publications include the first English grammar for Hungarians (*Anglicum specilegium*, 1664) of which no copy survives in the British Isles. Ten years earlier, however, Komáromi wrote a Hebrew grammar, *Schola Hebraica* (Utrecht, 1654) of which Trinity has a copy (F.7.12). There is no inscription in this book but Newton's college was visited in 1655 by another Hungarian Calvinist theologian, Sámuel Köleséri The Elder. We know of his visit from an inscription in a small disputation, *De Christi potestate* presided by the influential Protestant theologian Coccejus (Leyden, 1655). Köleséri must have been a good Hebraist, most likely enjoying the support of John Arrowsmith, Professor of Theology and (at the time) Master of Trinity, for in the inscription mentioned above (Tracts.I.4.4-12) he claims to have used the College library with much profit: "Nobilissimum ac Excelentissimum Collegium (in cujus Bibliotheca dulcissimos librorum exsuxit fructa)" (Gömöri, 1989, 80). As no exact date is given, we can only surmise that Köleséri visited the College before or during Michaelmas Term 1655, for there is another booklet purchased in Cambridge which the Hungarian scholar sent to a friend then studying in Utrecht: *Irenodia-gratulatoria... Oliveri Cromwelli*, published in 1652, where he did give the date: September 20, 1655. This rather rare booklet shows Sámuel Köleséri's sympathies which clearly lie with the Commonwealth rather than with the Royalists.

In connection with this Hungarian scholar one should also mention his son, a colourful character and real polymath. Sámuel Köleséri the Younger studied in the Netherlands, first in Leyden, then at the Calvinist University of Franeker, where he obtained a doctorate in Theology. He visited England in 1683, in the very year when his father passed away in Hungary. Apart from London he might have visited Cambridge as well, but we have no evidence of such a visit. When the already consecrated younger Köleséri returned to his homeland, at his very first sermon disaster struck: he could not remember the words of the Lord's Prayer. This gaffe distressed him so much that he went abroad once again, studied medicine at one of the German universities, returning to Hungary with a medical degree. In 1688 he became imperial Inspector of all the mines of Transylvania. He wrote a book on the gold mines which arose much interest abroad (*Auraria Romano-Dacia*, 1717) and corresponded with a number of foreign scholars, including Sir Hans Sloane. As a result of his letters now in the British Library, and also, it has to be said, on the strength of Köleséri's gift to Sloane, a Transylvanian gold nugget sent to London from Vienna in 1729, the generous benefactor was duly elected Member of the Royal Society in October of that year (Gömöri, 1991, 104). Köleséri, by the way, thought very highly of Newton – in his library there

was a copy of the 1714 Amsterdam edition of *Principia Mathematica* (Bertók, 1955, 162).

Apart from the bibles mentioned earlier – and these were only some of the bibles in the University Library – it has a number of interesting Hungarica, some of which were already exhibited by Timothy Penton in November 1997 in the Reading Room Corridor of the library. In 2004 during the Year of Hungarian Culture in England I also organised an exhibition in the same space. As mentioned before, this was confined to early Hungarica (the 1996 exhibition had only 13 items published before 1800). Whereas the University Library has only modern collections of Janus Pannonius, it boasts a 1488 edition of *Chronica Hungarorum* by János Thuróczy, the sermons of the Franciscan Pelbárt of Temesvár, also István Werbőczy's *Tripartitum* (Vienna, 1561). The latter is in fact part of a codex (Add.8686), Werbőczy's codification of Hungarian laws being interleaved with extensive MS material in Latin and Hungarian. The library acquired it some time in the late 1980s and I was asked to catalogue it which led to a lucky find – to the discovery of a copy of a hitherto unknown letter in Hungarian by Archbishop Péter Pázmány to György Rákóczi I. of Transylvania. This letter was published in the Hungarian *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* of 1990, 5/6 – I hasten to add, this was not the only print or manuscript which I found in the rich holdings of the University Library. A fairly rare 16th century print also in the library is *Historia obsidionis et oppugnationis Arcis Zigetv in Ungaria* by Captain Horváth Márk, published in 1567 in Wittenberg (Nr. 11 in Acton.b.54.42) – it relates the dramatic events of the preceding year, that is 1566, when the castle of Szigetvár with the famous captain Miklós Zrínyi, the grandfather of the poet Miklós Zrínyi fell to the army of Solyman the Magnificent who died in the last days of the siege.

Hungarian visitors began to arrive in substantial numbers to Cambridge some time in the mid 1620s. Their presence can be traced from the account books of various colleges – this I discovered many years ago and, consequently, worked my way through all the existing Account Books or Bursar's Books of Cambridge colleges. Here, usually, under the heading "Elemosynae" or "Minutae expensae" one finds the names of nearly all Hungarian and Transylvanian Hungarian visitors who were interested both in the writings of English Protestant theologians and in English (and occasionally Scottish) Church government. These visitors almost never matriculated (in Cambridge merely one, in Oxford four persons did it in the 16th to 18th century), for two reasons: matriculation was expensive, and a good Calvinist could not lay an oath on the thirty-nine articles of the Church of England. But come they did in fairly large numbers: for example, according to the testimony of the account-books, there were more than a dozen Hungarians in Cambridge in 1663, a bumper year for foreign visitors.

Some of them also donated books to the University Library. There was one Márton Z. Tállyai, an otherwise undistinguished Hungarian minister, who having

published an anti-Arian tract in Leiden in 1634, during his visit to England gave the UL a signed copy of that book on July 2, 1634. Copies of Stephanus J. Tétsi's *Virga Mosis* (Leiden, 1646) and of the very popular *The Conduct and Character... of Count Serini* published in London, 1664, the biography and deeds of military commander and accomplished poet Count Miklós Zrínyi are both unsigned, unnotated but interesting Hungarica. Trinity also has a copy of the latter, and though we do not know the compiler's name (he hides his identity behind the letters O.C. which in my view could correspond to the abbreviation "Ortelius Continuatus"), it can be established that most of his information must have come from German and Dutch sources. Incidentally, in the 17th century it was fashionable to circulate portraits of outstanding commanders or kings from foreign parts – since Gábor Bethlen, ally of the deposed King of Bohemia, Zrínyi was the first one whose "likeness" could be purchased in London bookshops. (He also figures "iconographically" large in Henry Marsh's *A History of the Turkish Wars...* which ran into several editions from 1663 to late 1664 – Gömöri, 1999, 215–16).

"Molnariana" works of Albert Molnár of Szenc in the University Library include a 1646 New Testament in Hungarian as well as a collection of the Psalms of David (*Szent David kiralynak es prophetanak 150 soltari*) from 1650, both printed in Amsterdam. The library also owns a unique copy of a 1651 thesis written in Latin in the Netherlands. It is the doctoral dissertation of the great Transylvanian educationalist János Csere Apáczai from the new university of Harderwijk. *De Primi Hominis Apostasia* (Apostasy of the First Humans) is included in a collection of theological tracts (Nr. 11 in Syn.7.58.109) which also contains Utrecht disputations by two other Hungarians, Sámuel Enyedi and Istvan Némethi. Apáczai, author of the first encyclopedia in Hungarian (Utrecht, 1655), married a Dutch woman, but returned to Transylvania to teach there at the Academy of Alba Julia/Gyulafehérvár until he fell out with the reigning Prince who suspected him of having "independentist" views. As for the Harderwijk thesis, of which only a copy was extant in Hungary, it was discovered in 1975 when a Hungarian scholar, Imre Bán, learned from a Dutch colleague about its existence.

After a pause of about twenty years Hungarian history began to interest Englishmen once again at the time of the Turkish Wars of 1663–64; there are several entries relating to these in Samuel Pepys's diaries (mostly in the critical edition). After Nicholas Zrínyi's death and the shameful treaty of Vasvár of 1664 which left the Turks in possession of most of their conquests in spite the fact that they had lost the war, Hungarian noblemen started plotting with the Turk against their Habsburg King and Emperor. They were soon betrayed and the main culprits apprehended, tried and executed. All this is described in a book in the UL (Rel.e.67.2), a translation from the Latin or from German, probably financed by the Imperial Ambassador, for listen to the sumptuous title: *The Hungarian Rebellion, or, An historical relation of the late wicked practices of the three counts,*

Nadasdi, Serini and Frangepani; tending to subvert the Government of his present Imperial majesty in Hungary, and introduce the Mahometan; with their arraignment, condemnation and manner of being executed for the same. Translated P. A. (London, 1672).

In the 18th century the University Library was visited and now holds three books by the eccentric Hungarian, György Kalmár. This man was an erudite Hebrew scholar from Debrecen who in the early 1750s published several tracts in Latin in Oxford and London, discussing minute problems of Hebrew philology. Later he published books in Geneva, and in Hungary such as *Prodromus idiomatis* (Pozsony, 1770) of which a copy signed for Regius Professor Thomas Rutherford is now extant – Rutherford was a Fellow of St. John’s but his books were apparently bequeathed to the University Library. Kalmár, as many of his contemporaries and predecessors (John Wilkins, Francis Lodwick), was interested in a “universal language” which could have solved all the problems of mankind, and in 1753 circulated a leaflet entitled “Proposals for Printing by Subscription. An Universal Language: and that in a very extraordinary short-hand by George Kalmar” (BL, Add.4312.ff.1) – from this *Proposal* it looks that some serious English scholars were involved supporting this project which in the end came to nothing. (Kalmár already lists Hungarian as “a lesser used language... used in the greatest part of that Kingdom [of Hungary]” next to the Finnish!). It is worth noting that in the 17th century Hungarian was still a mystery to most linguists and one Ferenc Főris Otrokócsi in *Origines Hungaricae* (Franecker, 1693) argued that it was related to Hebrew!

Apart from Trinity and the University Library, the next most interesting collection of Hungarica is probably in Emmanuel College. This was the college of William Sancroft, a great patron of foreign Protestants and, from the 1640s onwards, Hungarians. There is a long Latin letter in the Bodleian written by a Hungarian theologian, Péter N. Szerentsi (MS Tanner 66, fol.18), which shows the Sancroft indeed extended hospitality and possibly sent English theological literature to this particular Transylvanian visitor then based in London. Emmanuel owns about two dozen old Hungarica, starting with Sambucus’s *Emblemata* (the 1584 edition), books by Szegedinus and Fegyvernekinus, the 1571 Wittenberg edition of the anti-Arian tract by Petrus Carolinus, Pannonius (*Brevis Explicatio Orthodoxae and Fidei...*) and, of course, John Stoughton’s *Felicitas*, mentioned earlier. Sancroft drew some of his information on Hungary from Giorgio Tomasi’s *Delle guerre et rivolgimenti de Regno d’Ungaria, e della Transylvania*, published in 1621 (335.5.5) and also from a 1601 edition of Botero (*The Worlde or an historicall description*), but his interest was clearly rekindled at the time of the Turkish Wars of 1663/64, for Emmanuel has more than one books on the subject (*A brief account of the Turks late expedition... and Samuel Clarke’s A prospect of Hungary and Transylvania*). Members of the small London colony of Hungarians

after the Restoration also donated books to Sancroft – these included the phenomenally successful Hungarian philologist Georgius Sylvanus/Szilágyi whose Latin translation of Isocrates (1676) is in Emmanuel Library, which also holds the “English variant” of Johannes Mezólaki’s *De idolatria pontificia* (Utrecht, 1670), as the name indicates, a sharp polemic against Roman Catholics (S.14.3.1(9)). Knowing the orientation of the college it is no surprise that Emmanuel has an account of the sufferings of those Hungarian Protestant ministers whom the Habsburg authorities first forcibly tried to convert to Catholicism and when that failed sold as galley-slaves to the Neapolitans. (They were eventually freed by the threat of a battleship commanded by the Dutch Admiral Ruyter.) The case for the persecuted ministers was put forward in *A short memorial of the most grievous sufferings... etc.* which, in 1676, surely did not contribute to the popularity of the Duke of York, soon afterwards a convert to Catholicism. Finally, Emmanuel has a copy signed by Pál Gyöngyösi *aka* “Christophorus Dialithus Ungarus”. Gyöngyösi, who hid his identity under an easily decipherable pseudonym, published his ostensibly anti-Arian but also strongly anti-Catholic work *Kreszmodia Parabolico Prophetica de Infausto Fausti Socini* in Oxford, where for a year he enjoyed the hospitality of Gloucester Hall. After the book’s publication Gyöngyösi proceeded to Cambridge where he donated his book inscribed to local scholars, including a Mr Balderston, Master of Emmanuel (327.6.63). On his return to Hungary Gyöngyösi got into trouble with the authorities who confiscated a large number of his books. This measure was quite understandable, if we know what sort of literature the Hungarian minister attempted to smuggle back into Hungary – numerous copies of a theologico-political pamphlet written by Benjamin Woodroffe of Oxford against the Protestant apostate Otrokocsi.

Most Cambridge colleges have copies of the Unitarian György Enyedi’s *Expliciationes Locorum Veteris*, first published in 1598 and republished in Groningen in 1670. Apart from Emmanuel, Clare, Corpus Christi, Gonville and Caius, Peterhouse and St. Catharine’s have copies, the latter where after the Restoration interest in anti-Trinitarianism was particularly strong, actually holding two copies. (All these are of the second edition, only Manchester College, Oxford and the British Library have copies of the rare first edition.) Speaking about anti-Trinitarianism, King’s Library holds the copy of a book written by Ferenc Dávid, one of the founding fathers of Unitarianism: *De falsa et vera unius Dei patris...* published in 1569 at Alba Iulia (RMNy I: 254); the same book is extant at Clare’s Library, too. Because Unitarianism partly originates from Transylvania, Hungarian and especially Hungarian Transylvanian students were considered “experts” on this particular “heresy” – an anti-Socinian seminar run by Vedelius at Franeker in the early 1640s consists almost exclusively of Hungarians. (Sancroft’s Calvinist friend Szerentsi was also a student of Vedelius.) Hungarian

Unitarians began to visit England after the restoration of the monarchy, but apart from the Groningen edition of Enyedi they did not bring “subversive” books into this country. My latest research found amazing proof of contacts in the 1660s between the Royal Society of London and some Transylvanian Unitarians, contacts which eventually led to the publication of Edward Brown’s famous travelogue and description of the Hungarian mines (*A brief Account of Travels in Hungaria, etc.* London, 1673).

Two more 17th century Hungarian bibles exist in Cambridge, one of which, Szenci Molnár’s so-called “Hanau” Bible (1608) was the gift of Lancelot Andrewes, later on Bishop of Winchester to Pembroke College. The other one which is extant in Queens, bound in vellum as “Biblia Hungarica” is more interesting, for it contains an inscription: Johannes Madarasi, a Hungarian student sent this bible (printed in 1612), to the college from Amsterdam in 1630 with the following commendation: “Ad Bibliothecam illustrissimi Collegii Reginalis (ex qua suavissimos studiorum suorum flores excerpit) in perpetuam memoriam gratitudinisque debitae symbolum, Praefecto R. ac Clariss. Joanne Mansel durante, lubens meritoque mittit...”. Madarasi could not have spent more than one or two terms in Cambridge, but – as we see it from his note of gratitude – enjoyed warm hospitality in the town of Whitaker and Sancroft. At the same time when he used Queens’ library, a compatriot of his, Pál Medgyesi was also in Cambridge, reading Lewis Bayley’s *Praxis pietatis* which in his translation became a veritable best-seller in 17th-century Hungary.

Speaking of William Whitaker, the otherwise modest Hungarian collection of Gonville and Caius has a copy of Johannes Sambucus/Zsámboki’s *Emblemata* (Antwerp, 1566) with the possessor’s inscription: “Gulielmus Whitaker possidet hanc libram” (F.22.21). Apart from this and another 16th century publication, *Theoremata* by Petrus Lascovius (Laskai Csókás Péter), Caius has but one 14th-century Hungaricum, that is the *Sermones* of Michael of Hungaria (Cologne, 1498). Sambucus also figures in the Hungarica of Peterhouse with an edition of Lucianus (Basle, 1563) and in St. John’s with two editions of *Emblemata* (the 1587 and 1599 editions).

Two more colleges have interesting old Hungarica in Cambridge: Pembroke and St. John’s. Pembroke, apart from the Hungarian Bible already mentioned and Nádasdy’s *Mausoleum*, a collection on Hungarian history published in 1664, also owns an Elzevir edition of *Respublica Hungariae* (published in the 1630s), as well as a copy of Otrokocsi Fóris’s *Originæ Hungaricæ* with an inscription by Johannes Tolnai for Pál Gyöngyösi. It is signed in Kensington, where Tolnai was Schoolmaster until his death in 1703 and where Gyöngyösi must have been staying before his return to Hungary. It shows that Tolnai – who props up more than once in Mihály Bethlen’s *Diaries* as a very hospitable person – kept an eye on

publications on Hungary during his long stay in England (he lived there for over three decades). We could surmise that he had in his possession János Nadányi's *Florus Hungaricus* published in English translation in 1664 and also the pamphlets on the tribulations of Hungarian Protestants in the sixteen-seventies. Pembroke also has two fairly rare tracts published in Leyden in 1648, both written by a Stephanus A. Szokolaesus, alias Szokolyai, a Hungarian from Debrecen and Szatmár (today Satu Mare in Romania) *De Politia et Magistratu* and *De Potestate Ecclesiae* (8.25.5). There is no trace of Szokolyai visiting England and it would be hard to explain why were his disputations included in this collection mainly devoted to students doing work under the guidance of Professor Constantine Caesar – maybe the donor, a certain Marcus Frank, knew him personally.

Amongst Pembroke's MS holdings, however, there is an interesting album amicorum which includes an entry of Hungarian interest. I have in mind the album of Abraham Ortelius (1527–98), a facsimile edition of which came out in Antwerp in 1967 edited by Jean Puraye. Ortelius was a Flemish geographer and map-maker whose *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* is still referred to as “the first great atlas”. He travelled to Frankfurt and Breslau (now Wrocław) and London, and was also visited by a number of eminent European Humanists. Daniel Rogers wrote an ode to him, John Dee, William Camden and Pieter Breughel The Elder signed his album. As for Hungarian connections: Andreas Dudith, at that time already ex-Bishop but still Imperial Councillor, inscribed a note in red ink in Latin with a short quote from Ovid (Pembroke MS 2/11351/v) in Breslau, October 29, 1584. Other inscribers include the Frenchman Jacques Bongars and Flemish botanist Carol Clusius both of whom visited Hungary, as well as Hubert Languet, Philip Sidney's mentor in Vienna, one of the best informed diplomats of the day (120/v) who chided his young friend in a letter for not telling him about his intention to spend several weeks in Northern Hungary in 1573. Sidney's visit to Hungary is documented only by a sentence or two about Hungarian customs in the *Defence of Poesie* but his correspondence with Languet (which I have studied and analysed from a Hungarian point of view in my book *Nyugatról nézve*, Budapest 1990) shows that he had, indeed, a number of acquaintances amongst the Hungarian aristocracy. These included János Balassi, father of Hungary's greatest 16th century poet, Bálint Balassi.

St. John's Library has several books by Szegedi Kis and two editions of Janus Pannonius; it also has the younger Pareus's Hungarian poetic anthology in Latin. In this college the most friendly scholar with continental visitors, including Hungarians, was John Gunning – and it does not come as a surprise that one of the copies of the Nicholas Zrínyi biography of 1664 was owned by Gunning himself (Hh.1.12). Edward Browne's travelogue of Hungary published in 1673 exists in three copies in the library, one of the first and two of a later, extended edition. The

two most active Hungarian scholars of Restoration England, Mezőlaki and Sylvanus/Szilágyi both knew Gunning and presented him with books, consequently St. John's has signed copies of the first's *De idolatria pontificia* and the second's translation of Theocrit's eclogues into Latin. In fact, there are two copies in the library of *Theocriti Syracusii... EIDYLLIA*, for apart from the copy presented to Gunning (who by that time was elevated to the Bishopric of Ely) Georgius Sylvanus (perhaps while visiting the college) also signed a copy to a Fellow, Francis Roper (Gömöri, 1985, 115). One should perhaps mention the fact that although Sylvanus was a serious Classical scholar, and a shrewd businessman, his use of the title "Medicus" is probably unfounded – although he had studied before his arrival to England in Heidelberg and Basle, the line of his studies was theology, not medicine.

I would like to round up my essay with an anecdote illustrating the extent of my research for Cambridge Hungarica. When visiting the Folger Library of Washington, D.C. I noticed the erroneous dating of a 17th century book – Johannes Adami's bilingual *Londinum Perlustratum*, a long poem praising London reborn after the Great Fire. Folger's cataloguer obviously used the British Library dating which was also wrong. When I brought this to the attention of the Librarian – she asked me in a somewhat surprised tone: where do I know from the right date of publication? Well, I said, King's College Library in Cambridge actually has a copy where the date on the title-page (1670) is not blurred or obliterated. She thanked me for the advice and the Transylvanian Adami's eulogy of London-Troynovant was immediately properly re-dated.

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THE HUNGARIAN RECEPTION OF GEORGE ELIOT IN HUNGARY

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The reception of the works of George Eliot in Hungary offers an interesting perspective from which to rethink some of the fundamental questions of reception theory and the interrelationships between political and social contexts and attitudes towards works of literature. Furthermore, shifting responses to Eliot illustrate the significance of divergences in approach to translation in the canonization of a work of literature in another literary tradition.

Keywords: George Eliot, reception theory, translation, literature, appropriation, canonization, Hungary

It is a curious fact that sometimes the authors of reception studies have a tendency to imply that the popularity of literary works is relatively independent of political changes. They seldom spare a word for historical circumstances. Here, however, I shall take the liberty of defying that convention.

Sometimes the reception of works written in English precedes the translation of these works in countries in which English is not the most common or national language. Following the lead of Count István Széchenyi (1791–1860), who fought as a soldier in the war against Napoleon, visited Britain on a regular basis from 1815 on, and collected books in English, numerous Hungarian aristocrats and prominent members of the upper middle class regarded England as a model for the civilized world. When Bernhard Tauchnitz (1816–95), the owner of a printing and publishing firm, started his *Collection of British and American Authors* in Leipzig in 1841, this reprint series made English novels available to Hungarian readers in inexpensive editions. British (and to a lesser extent North American) literature became fashionable in upper middle class urban families that put particular emphasis on reading not only in German but also in English and French. The relatively high number of copies of Tauchnitz publications that survive in public collections (for example in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences) and private libraries would suggest that the bourgeoisie of the rapidly de-

veloping capital was eager to read contemporary British fiction. The example of Géza Barkassy (1849–1922), the son of a Hungarian lawyer of noble origin and the daughter of a wealthy German entrepreneur, may indicate that reading George Eliot in the original was not limited to men of letters. Having studied law at the University of Vienna (leveltar.elte.hu/databases.php?ekod=1), he became a civil servant who by the end of the century was raised to the high rank of a ministerial adviser and one of the organizers of the world exhibition held in Budapest in 1896. As a bachelor with a high salary, he could afford to assemble an extensive library. He systematically ordered the volumes of the Tauchnitz collection. His nephews and nieces constantly used his library; this meant five to ten potential readers in the case of most of his books.

The list of the works sent from Leipzig to Hungarian libraries and individuals is as follows: *Scenes of Clerical Life* (vols. 462–463, 1859), *Adam Bede* (vols. 482–483, 1859), *The Mill on the Floss* (vols. 509–510, 1860), *Silas Marner* (vol. 550, 1861), *Romola* (vols. 682–683), *Daniel Deronda* (vols. 1617–1620, 1876), *The Lifted Veil and Brother Jacob* (vol. 1732, 1878), *Impressions of Theophrastus Such* (vol. 1828, 1879), *Essays and Leaves from a Note-Book* (vol. 2229, 1884), and *George Eliot's Life as Related in the Letters and Journals* (vols. 2318–2321, 1885). Copies of these volumes still exist with notes made by contemporary readers. In view of the fact that much of Géza Barkassy's library was destroyed after World War II (when some members of his family were deported to labour camps as "class aliens"), it cannot be taken for granted that he read them all. Still, since all the books of his that have survived (among them several multi-volume works) contain his notes, it can be assumed that he may have read most of them. The internet records his support of Hungarian publishers (www.friweb.hu/iratok/tudomány/PART1895.htm) and the surviving part of his library reveals that he was eager to read the translations of works known to him in the original. Copies of the first Hungarian versions of *Adam Bede*, *Silas Marner*, and *Middlemarch* still exist.

After the Compromise of 1867 between the Habsburg dynasty and the Hungarian political leaders, Liberalism stamped Hungarian culture, and Darwinism made its influence felt, especially among the prominent members of the Protestant intelligentsia. Both paved the way for the early reception of the works of George Eliot. The first translation of *Adam Bede* was done by a friend of Géza Barkassy, the Transylvanian Ferenc Salamon (1825–92), and published in 1861–62. It was due to the high prestige of George Eliot that the Hungarian version of her first major novel was done by a distinguished historian and literary critic, who by 1859 was elected to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences as a corresponding (and in 1871 as a full) member, and in 1870 was given a chair at the University of Budapest. His translation proved to be of lasting value; in 1888 it was republished in a highly popular series edited by Pál Gyulai (1826–1909), poet, short-story writer, and

critic, another member of the Academy and one of the most influential Hungarian authors of the period.

In the 1860s the rules of domestication or naturalization were different from the principles of appropriation followed in the later 20th century. Numerous proper names were translated by Salamon. Molly has become Máli, Hetty was rendered as Eszti. It would be unjust to dismiss this practice as a whole. George Eliot's first Hungarian translator seemed to be fully aware that the distinction between proper and class nouns was open to question. In the chapter entitled "The Games" the nickname of Wiry Ben became "Dorót Bence" (Eliot, 1888, 1: 415). In the translation done more than a century later the character is called Ben (Eliot 1978, 321). Without exaggeration it could be argued that the heterogeneity of the language of the novel is more perceptible in the first translation than in the version published more than a century later.

In many cases Salamon proved to be a creative interpreter. In chapter 53, entitled "The Harvest Supper", Kester Bale is mentioned as one of the labourers of Martin Poyser. In the Hungarian text this old man is called Bordás Péter (Eliot, 1888, 2: 370). His surname refers to "the network of wrinkles on his sun-browned face". In chapter 24, after the twenty-one-year-old Captain Arthur Donnithorne has proposed his grandfather's health, Mrs. Poyser makes the following remark: "he'd better not ha' stirred a kettle o' sour broth". Salamon has succeeded in finding a proverbial expression in the target language: "jobb lett volna föl nem keverni azt a romlott tejes bögrét" (Eliot, 1888, 1: 396).

Appropriation may involve not only replacement but also addition. Occasionally small changes were necessary for the sake of clarification. At some stage in "The Harvest Supper" the conversation takes a political turn. Mr. Poyser calls the French wicked and Mr. Craig insists that he is "in no fear o' Bony, for all they talk so much o' his cliverness". In the Hungarian version Bonaparte is mentioned (Eliot, 1888, 2: 375). The lower-class characters of Adam Bede do not speak standard English. The incorrect usage is missing in Salamon's text. He reduced the dialectal components of the English novel, but introduced some adjectives with the aim of distinguishing the language of the lower classes from the discourse of the landowners. "Why, Hetty, lass, are ye turned Methodist?" says Mr. Poyser to Miss Sorrel. Salamon adds an almost proverbial expression: "Lánchordta leánya, bizonny methodista lett" (Eliot, 1888, 1: 336). In some respects his translation is almost more nuanced than the source text. Repetitions are fewer. At the end of the above-mentioned chapter 24, in the description of the health drinking at the celebration of Arthur Donnithorne's twenty-first birthday, the hero merely bows to Hetty. "The foolish child felt her heart swelling with discontent". In the Hungarian version she is called "együgyű" (Eliot, 1888, 1: 404), a word with multiple meanings, ranging from "focused on a single issue" and "self-centred" to "simple-minded", and "naive". The immediate context confirms that Salamon's inter-

pretation is based on a careful reading of the novel. His adjective suggests that the seventeen-year-old girl lives in a world of illusions.

Omissions may shed even more light on the difference between the source and the target cultures. Some of these concern details of no great significance. In chapter 19 (“Adam on a Working Day”), no distinction is made between “ale” and “beer”, since the Hungarian language has but one word (“sör”). Far more important is that the first Hungarian translation of Adam Bede does not contain chapter 17. The title of this section is “In Which the Story Pauses a Little”. Ferenc Salamon was one of the first interpreters of the fiction of Zsigmond Kemény (1814–75), another Transylvanian Protestant. At the time he was translating *Adam Bede*, in 1861–62, he published a significant essay on the last novel of this author in the periodical *Szépirodalmi Figyelő*, edited by János Arany, the most important Hungarian poet of the second half of the 19th century. In addition to being an outstanding novelist, Kemény was also a highly original theoretician. In *Eszmék a regény és dráma körül* (Ideas on Drama and the Novel, 1852), originally published in installments, he predicted an increasing objectivity in narrative fiction. Salamon, himself a fine essayist, valued Kemény’s attempt to create an autonomous fictional world. It can be assumed that he decided to translate *Adam Bede* because he saw some parallel between this English novel and Kemény’s fictional world. He might have seen fundamental similarities between the British author’s first full-length novel and *A rajongók* (The Fanatics), a work Kemény published in 1858–59. Both novels quote the preaching of a religious visionary at the outset, deal with predestination, and highlight the interior world of the characters. The most conspicuous difference between the two works is the narrator’s frequent addressing the reader in the English text. In *The Fanatics* the characters seem to be independent of the story-teller’s discourse. Following his master, Salamon regarded this relative autonomy as a distinguishing feature of narrative as a sophisticated form of art, liberated from the legacy of popular fiction. While he could not suppress the constant intrusion of the story-teller’s voice in *Adam Bede*, he eliminated the chapter that seemed purely essayistic. Whether he was justified in doing so, he undoubtedly identified a characteristic component of George Eliot’s fiction. The use of the first person singular and plural gave considerable opportunity to make general statements and tended to blur the distinction between the world of the novel and that of the narrator and the narratee. The narrator’s strong involvement in the fate of the characters was at odds with Salamon’s ideal of the novel based on his reading of Kemény’s narrative fiction. The reason for the omission of an entire chapter was his dislike of overinterpretation.

A far less substantial omission can be found at the end of chapter 52 (“Adam and Dinah”). The narrator is addressing a personified abstraction (Leisure). The final words state that “he never went to Exeter Hall, or heard a popular preacher, or read Tracts for the Times or Sartor Resartus”. The Hungarian version excludes

the specific reference to the two texts. Since Carlyle's work was well-known to some Hungarians, it is likely that the reason for this omission was that the translator believed that intertextual allusions were out of place in a tale about provincial life. In chapter 38 ("The Quest") Seth Bede recites two stanzas of one of his favourite hymns. They are omitted by Salamon. In a similar way, when Dinah sings one of Charles Wesley's hymns in chapter 50 ("In the Cottage"), or a drinking song is cited in "The Harvest Supper", the verses cannot be found in the Hungarian text. Yet it would be incorrect to conclude that Salamon left out all the verses. In the opening chapter the text of the song sung by the title hero is quoted twice, in accordance with the source text. The most probable explanation is that in this case verse is used as a mode of characterization. In the other cases the translator may have regarded the citations as less functional. All in all, he tried to eliminate the markers of the narrator's presence. That is why he left out the adjective when the Poysters' housemaid is called "poor Molly", and skipped a whole chapter in a translation that must be called very successful.

The high quality of Salamon's work becomes quite obvious in comparison with the rather careless translation of *Felix Holt*, by Mária Dominkovics, whose only other work known to me is a collection of short stories published in two volumes in 1867. More important is the first Hungarian version of *Middlemarch*, published in four volumes in 1874–75. Its translator was an assimilated Jew who changed his original surname Hechtl to Csukássi. Having studied law in Vienna and Pest, József Csukássi (1841–91) was active as journalist, published verse, short stories, and articles, and translated works by Burns, Hugo, George Sand, Tennyson, Mrs. Gaskell, Wilkie Collins, and others.

Since the first translations of *Adam Bede* and *Middlemarch* were published by the Kisfaludy Society, founded in 1837, its members got them free of charge. That meant about four hundred potential readers (Pallas, 1895, 593). Unlike *Adam Bede*, *Middlemarch* was published for an educated public. Accordingly, the inscriptions in Italian and French were not translated. Géza Barkassy, for instance, whose copy (in 1892 given to her niece Cécile Tormay, who later became a successful novelist and short-story writer) has survived, read not only Chaucer, Ben Jonson, Locke, and Gibbon, but also Dante, Goethe, and Musset in the original.

Some of the norms of translation had changed between the early 1860s and the mid-70s. English Christian names were no longer replaced by Hungarian ones. Most of the characters of *Middlemarch* belong to the middle class. Mr. Dagley is an exception. His son Jacob has been caught killing a leveret. At the end of chapter 39 Mr. Brooke, Dorothea's uncle, tells Dagley that the young boy has been locked up in an empty stable. The father answers him using harsh words. Dagney's English is substandard. Such class distinctions can be rarely perceived in the language of the Hungarian version. Still, there are a few exceptions. In chapter 24, for instance, Mrs. Garth is teaching correct pronunciation. One of her students mocks

those who say “A ship’s in the garden”. In the Hungarian text people who use “kő” instead of ”kell” are ridiculed (Eliot, 1874–75, 2: 32).

In the 19th century Hungarian translators paid scarce attention to the signifier. In chapter 86 there is a pun. “It will be a sad while before you can be married, Mary”, says Mr. Garth to his daughter. The girl’s witty response is as follows: “Not a sad while, father – I mean to be merry”. The link between the three words: the adjective “merry”, the verb “marry”, and the Christian name ”Mary” has no equivalent in the translation.

Csukássi’s translation has a short introduction by Ágost Greguss (1825–82), a celebrated essayist who aside from translating works ranging from *Measure for Measure*, *Timon of Athens*, and *Cid* to works by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Schiller, and Georges Sand, wrote theoretical works on aesthetics and a monograph on the ballad that is still considered a standard work by specialists of both literature and folklore. In his two-page-long text Greguss states that the translation has been corrected by Arthur Patterson and Ágost Pulszky (1846–1901), a sociologist and philosopher who studied in England. One cannot help but conclude that the first translation of George Eliot’s most important work had been carefully prepared. In addition, it may have drawn attention to some authors unknown in Hungary. It was thanks to the chapter headings of this novel that the first Hungarian translations of poems by “Dr. Donne”, Samuel Daniel, and Sir Henry Wotton appeared.

The fact that *Middlemarch* was published separately and not as part of the inexpensive series mentioned above may suggest that unlike *Adam Bede*, it was thought to be for a more limited readership. If we turn to the first Hungarian version of *Silas Marner*, we find our surmise confirmed. Published in the popular series edited by Pál Gyulai in 1885, it had a second impression in 1898. The translator Géza Kacziány (1856–1939) was a prolific journalist specializing in music and the visual arts, as well as the author of short stories, plays, and poems. Like Salamon, he was attracted to the works of George Eliot because of his Protestantism. First he taught in the main secondary school of the Reformed Church in Budapest, in 1903–04 he traveled in Britain and the United States, and in 1909–12 he served as the Presbyterian clergyman of the Americans of Hungarian origin. His translation of *The Corsair* and his German versions of 130 poems of Petőfi attest to his interest in verse, and his translation of *Silas Marner* suggests that he regarded this work as a poem in prose.

No less prestigious was the first translator of *The Mill on the Floss*, published in the same inexpensive series in 1897. Unfortunately, this has to be called a somewhat pedestrian version. János Váczy (1859–1918) was the author of literary biographies and the scholarly editor of important literary works. He saw George Eliot through the eyes of a Positivist. In sharp contrast to Salamon, he looked for the impact of contemporary science and the ideas of George Henry Lewes in her works. *The Mill on the Floss* was the only novel he ever translated. His version is

no more than a historical document, together with Béla Pataki's version of *Romola*, published with the support of the Kisfaludy Society, one year later.

One of the signs of George Eliot's high reputation in Hungary in the late 19th century was that her works were cited even in reviews of narrative fiction written by Hungarian authors. A prime example is the discussion of short stories by the minor author Sándor Baksay, in an article published in 1887 by Jenő Péterfy (1850–99), by far the most original Hungarian critic of the period. The inferior quality of the short stories is analyzed in comparison with the British author's approach to her world. While Baksay's narrator is part of the provincial life he presents, George Eliot's "horizon is wider than that of her characters" ("láthatára messzebb terjed, mint alakjaié") (Péterfy, 1903, 424). The critic does not deny the melodramatic element in George Eliot's narratives, but he suggests that it is the mark of a more refined art that in her works "harm is not done by evil but by narrow-mindedness, dullness, provincialism when confronted with more sophisticated things and human beings" ("nem a fekete gonosz okozza a legfőbb bajt az életben, hanem a korlátoltság, butaság, köznapiság, mikor olyan dolgokkal s emberekkel kerül össze, kik fölötte állanak") (Péterfy, 1903, 426).

A well-trained critic not only of literary but also of musical works, Péterfy advocated a theory of the tragic (not the genre but the aesthetic quality) based on a theory of value. In his view the tragic was an immanent quality of human existence incompatible with moral justice. Because of this, he regarded the art of Kemény and Flaubert as superior to that of George Eliot, whom he viewed as a novelist who overemphasized moral values. Salamon's work as translator and Péterfy's criticism represented a position similar to that of Henry James, expressed in his review of *The Life of George Eliot*, written by her husband J. W. Cross. Both Hungarians appreciated the fiction of the British woman writer, but preferred novels with a more objective narrative perspective, in a manner similar to James, who in 1885 argued as follows:

the 'artistic mind' [...] existed in her with limitations remarkable in a writer whose imagination was so rich. We feel in her, always, that she proceeds from the abstract to the concrete; that her figures and situations are evolved, as the phrase is, from her moral consciousness, and are only indirectly the products of observation (James 1984, 1003).

Despite the reservations of Salamon and Péterfy, George Eliot was one of the most celebrated British authors in Hungary at the end of the 19th century. This is clear from the 64-line article in the most important encyclopaedia, published in eighteen volumes between 1893 and 1900 (Pallas, 1894, 40). Its author, Gyula Theisz (1855–1939), a literary historian and translator of German origin born in the northern region known as Zips, focused on *Adam Bede*, *The Mill on the Floss*, *Silas Marner*, *Romola*, *Felix Holt*, and *Middlemarch*, but in the spirit of Positiv-

ism, he also mentioned the translation of *Das Leben Jesu*, *Scenes of Clerical Life*, and *Daniel Deronda*, and even the most memorable poems. The objectivity of the approach is further strengthened by reliable biographical and bibliographical data. An article in an encyclopaedia is not expected to aspire to originality. All the major works are mentioned. Although a bit too much emphasis is placed on *Romola*, the cautious value judgments are justifiable, especially in view of the quality of the translations: *Adam Bede* is called a masterpiece and the significance of *Middlemarch* is duly recognized.

After 1900 the lustre of George Eliot seemed diminished. For more than half a century no new translations were completed. First the crude social determinism of the Naturalists, and somewhat later the aesthetic movement made her fiction unfashionable. The influence of the latter can be detected in *Az európai irodalom története* (A History of European Literature) by Mihály Babits (1883–1941), poet, novelist, short-story writer, essayist, and translator, one of the most respected figures in the literature of the period. The passage on George Eliot in what was originally published as volume 2 of his highly personal outline history in 1935 is clearly based on the early translations: “I read some of her works when I was a student and was surprised to learn that their author was a woman. [...] Eliot’s world is dark and almost mechanically tragic. Individual lives are destroyed by petty weaknesses. Regrettably, this sense of life led to the education of the world [...]. Far from being an apostle, she was a school teacher. Since she was eager to instruct, she also published historical novels.” (“Én diákkoromban olvastam néhány könyvét, s meglepetés volt, hogy ezeket nő írta. [...] De nem apostol volt ő, inkább csak tanító néni. Leckéi érdekében történeti regényeket is írt”) (Babits, n. d., 603–4). *Adam Bede* is the only novel mentioned, probably because Babits respected Salamon. When he drafted a plan of an anthology of European literature, he included a section of *Adam Bede* in the translation first published in 1861–62 (Babits, 1978, 221). The error in the last sentence quoted suggests that he relied on his vague memories; in his later years he did not read anything by George Eliot.

International projects are easy targets for those who look for oversights. The series entitled *The Reception of British and Irish Authors in Europe* has an excellent volume on Virginia Woolf that includes no chapter on the reception of her works in Hungary. Because of this, I have to make a digression. One of the reasons for the decline in George Eliot’s reputation was the (mistaken) belief that the activity of the so-called Georgian women writers made the Victorian George Eliot fade into oblivion. Antal Szerb (1901–45), who in many respects accepted the approach to literature represented by Babits, died in a labour camp. When assessing his activity, it is virtually impossible not to remember his tragic end. In 1935 he published a book entitled *Hétköznapiak és csodák* (Weekdays and Wonders). The title may have been inspired by a reading of *Lady into Fox* and *Orlando*.

The main thesis of this book is based on a comparison of Victorian values and the outlook of such writers as Virginia Woolf, Rose Macaulay, Rebecca West, Sylvia Townshend Warner, and others. Much emphasis is placed on the fact that George Sand and George Eliot used masculine pen names. "Their novels are similar to those written by men; they had masculine features. Their intention was to look at the world in the way men saw it" ("A regényeik is olyanok, mintha férfiak írták volna őket, aminthogy egyéniségükben is sok volt a férfias vonás. Írásaikban arra törekedtek, hogy úgy lássák a világot, mint a férfiak látják") (Szerb, 1971, 559). With his usual disregard for details, Szerb ignored the fact that Virginia Woolf highly estimated George Eliot. His somewhat one-sided approach was probably inspired by Virginia Woolf's attack on Bennett, Wells, and Galsworthy and by Rose Macaulay's *Told by an Idiot* (1923), which has four sections entitled "Victorian", "Fin-de-siècle", "Edwardian", and "Georgian".

Szerb persisted in his partially negative attitude towards George Eliot when writing his *A világirodalom története* (A History of World Literature), first published in 1941. The single paragraph on this author is based on three comparisons. "The reputation of the Brontës never declined since their deaths; their works went into numerous editions, even Emily's poems became widely appreciated. Travelers often visit Haworth, where they lived as hermits. By contrast, the once immense popularity of George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans, 1819–80) seems to have evaporated." ("A Brontë nővérek írói hírneve nem csökkent haláluk után; műveik egyre újabb kiadásokban jelentek meg, gyönyörűséggel olvassuk Emily költeményeit is, és Haworthot, remetességük színhelyét sűrűn látogatják az áhítatos kirándulók; fiatalabb kortársnőjük, George Eliot (May Ann Evans, 1819–80) egykor óriási népszerűsége enyészőben van.") (Szerb, 1980, 558). The second comparison is with Dickens and Thackeray. Szerb admits that in contrast to these two novelists, George Eliot was an intellectual with a warehouse of knowledge and someone who took a serious interest in Darwinism, the rise of science, and the crisis of religious faith. The last parallel is drawn with Zola, revealing the decisive influence Babits exerted on Szerb. Positivism is mentioned as George Eliot's main source of inspiration and her works are interpreted as representing a realism that verges on naturalism. *The Mill on the Floss* and *Middlemarch* are characterized as her most significant achievements. The former is appreciated for its treatment of the status of woman in Victorian society, the latter for its portrayal of the life of the bourgeoisie. "Her meditations are rather strenuous" ("Elmélkedései eléggé fárasztóak") (Szerb, 1980, 559). This conclusion indicates that by the middle of the 20th century didacticism became regarded as a burden incompatible with the art of the novel.

As is well-known, a radical change occurred in the approach to literature in the European countries occupied by the troops of the Soviet Union in 1945. During the subsequent decades György Lukács was regarded as the greatest authority in

literary studies. In view of his interest in *Realism and the Novel*, it is somewhat strange that he never seems to have read works by George Eliot. Her name appears neither in the non-Marxist works written before 1919, nor in his late aesthetics *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen* (1963). Since Lukács and his immediate disciples, working in Budapest, focused on German philosophy and literature, the university of Debrecen became the centre of English studies. The only full-length study of the works of George Eliot was written by Anna Katona (1920–2005), who joined the English Department of that university in 1956. Born in Debrecen, she was interned in 1944, during the German occupation of Hungary. Like many Holocaust survivors, she joined the Communist movement and published essays that represented dogmatic Marxism. Favoured by the political establishment, she was able to visit Britain and the United States with various scholarships. In 1975 she decided not to return to Hungary. Claiming that she had been persecuted in Hungary, she got US citizenship and a visiting position in Charleston (South Carolina).

The title of her book, *A valóságábrázolás problémái George Eliot regényeiben* (The Issues of the Representation of Reality in the Novels of George Eliot, 1969) reflects the spirit of an age duly forgotten today. The British author is praised as “the faithful chronicler of the reality of the 1850s, 60s, and 70s” (“az 1850-60-70-es évek valóságának hű krónikása”) (Katona, 1969, 198). The homogeneity of the novels is overemphasized: “The novels formulate the same conclusion in different ways” (“Az egymást követő regények ugyanazon tanulság más-más megfogalmazásai”) (Katona, 1969, 157). The charge of pessimism is dismissed and didacticism is treated as inseparable from great art: “In her novels tragedy is not the reflection of a tragic outlook; it serves a didactic purpose. [...] Her characters fall to let others learn from their weaknesses.” (“A tragédia nem tragikus világgép tükröződése műveiben, hanem nevelési eszköz. [...] Hősei azért buknak el, hogy mások okuljanak hibáikból.”) (Katona, 1969, 167).

The reason for the great significance of George Eliot’s works is that they “tackle almost all the political issues of her age” (“kora szinte valamennyi politikai kérdését érinti”) (Katona, 1969, 49). In this interpretation novels are social documents, verdicts “against a parasitic way of life and its consequences” (“a parazita életmód és következményei ellen”), attacks on “exploitation” (“kizsákmányolás”) and representations of “class conflicts” (“osztályellentétek”) (Katona, 1969, 119, 38, 14). “No working man is evil in her fiction” (“Nincs egyetlen dolgozó ember gonosztevője sem”), Katona affirms, and she ascribes the value of *The Spanish Gypsy* to “a humane treatment of Gypsies” (“az emberséges bánásmódot a cigányokra terjeszti ki”), and insists that with her vision of Zionism in her last novel “she anticipated the future” (“előtte járt korának”) (148, 174, 35).

Reiterating the clichés of the so-called Marxist criticism of her age, Anna Katona also expressed her impatience with the class limitations of George Eliot.

While admitting her belief in “progress”, she regretted that she “failed to become a materialist” (“nem jutott el a materializmusig”), was “unable to recognize the historical mission of the working class” (“nem jutott el a munkásosztály történelmi hivatásának felismeréséig”), and “could not arrive at the conclusion that society has to be transformed by revolution” (“nem jutott el a társadalom forradalom útján való megváltoztatásának gondolatáig” (46, 73, 107, 60).

The shortcomings of the book hardly need explanation. *Das Kapital, Condition of the Working Class in England*, the works of Ernst Fischer, Raymond Williams, and Arnold Kettle, together with a collective work entitled *Istorija Anglijskoj Literaturi*, published in Moscow in 1956, are used as keys to the understanding of George Eliot’s works, and her fiction is treated as an illustration of ideas formulated in her letters and the articles she published in the *Westminster Review* in the 1850s. The “split between Maryan Evans and her brother is reflected in the fates of Maggie and Tom” (“a Marian Evans és fivére között történt szakadás tükröződik Maggie és Tom sorsában”). “Klesmer is probably Ferenc Liszt, whom she met in Weimar” (“Klesmer valószínűleg Liszt Ferenc, akivel Weimarban találkozott”); “Will Ladislaw may be Lewes and Dorothea the author herself” (“Will Ladislaw valószínűleg Lewes, Dorothea pedig maga az író”) (Katona, 1969, 133–4, 159). Such details suggest that no distinction is made between autobiography and fiction. The structure of the plot, narrative perspective, temporality, and style are virtually ignored. The overemphasis on ideology leads to the neglect of generic qualities. A distorted vision of *The Waste Land* as “a representation of the world of the bourgeoisie, in which injustice reigns, giving rise to evil” (“ábrázolta a polgári világot, melyben igazságtalanság uralkodik, ez pedig gonoszságot szül”) (Katona, 1969, 140) makes George Eliot the forerunner of the American-born poet. The focus is on the characters evaluated according to the stages in the evolution of human society as suggested by Marxists. Dinah Morris, the Methodist preacher in *Adam Bede*, for instance, “represents progressive industrial society” (“a progresszívabb ipari közösség képviselője”) (Katona, 1969, 82).

All comparisons seem to be questionable. Not realizing that the tradition of starting “in medias res” goes back to Homer, Anna Katona believes that George Eliot is a modern novelist on account of “her departure from chronological narrative” (“egyre kevésbé ragaszkodik a kronológia bevett sorrendjéhez”) (Katona, 1969, 190). Echoing the essays written by György Lukács on Realism in the inter-war period, she regards such “omniscient authors as Balzac, Dickens, or Tolstoy” (“A mindentudó író, legyen az Balzac, Dickens vagy Tolsztoj”) as the greatest novelists, because they “present the extreme complexity of the world as a whole in an epic panorama” (“a világ egészének bonyolult és mérhetetlen sokoldalúságát ábrázolja széles epikai tablóban”), and the assumption is that George Eliot is also one such novelist (Katona, 1969, 9). In her view *The Portrait of a Lady* is weaker

than George Eliot's last novel because "it lacks the character of *Daniel Deronda*" ("Deronda alakjával szegényebb") (Katona, 1969, 121).

In the introduction of her book Anna Katona defined the position of George Eliot between her contemporaries who focused on the surroundings of their characters and the "subjectivist" ("szubjektivista") authors of the 20th century (Katona, 1969, 8). In the sixth and final section she dismissed the "bourgeois" interpretations of George Eliot's works made from the perspective of "the technique of experimental novels", drew a sharp distinction between the vision of the author of *Middlemarch* and "the chaotic worldview" ("kaotikus világgép") of such "decadent" writers as Joyce and Virginia Woolf, and expressed her hope that the fiction of such authors as Doris Lessing, Angus Wilson, Pamela Hansford Johnson, and others would revive George Eliot's legacy (Katona, 1969, 201, 205).

Whenever citing from the novels discussed in her book, Anna Katona used her own translations, arguing that new Hungarian versions were needed, since the old ones were outmoded. In 1969 only one new version existed, the work of Tivadar Szinnai (1894–1972), a minor novelist, who translated about one-hundred works and made his fortune with adaptations of works by Karl May. In 1976 a new version of *Middlemarch* appeared. Tibor Bartos (1933–2010) was arguably one of the best translators from English of the later 20th century; his Hungarian versions of works by such authors as Poe, Thackeray, Mark Twain, Jack London, Dos Passos, Henry Miller, William Styron, Tom Wolfe, Ralph Ellison, and Jack Kerouac have won praise from both the critics and the general public. He was a sophisticated interpreter of stylistic nuances who collected synonyms in the course of his working with English texts and summarized the results of this work in two volumes, published in 2002. Despite its considerable merits, his version of *Middlemarch* is one of the very few Hungarian prose translations that have met with serious criticism. An eminent Hungarian scholar, well-versed in both literary theory and linguistics, pointed out that Bartos "places the narrator in the wrong social context", "creates misleading intertextual connections and connotations", turns "the theoretical aspects of the original into something more concrete", and "demolishes the metaphorical structure" of George Eliot's novel (Bezeczky, 2001, 115, 117, 118). Even less satisfactory is the translation of *Adam Bede* by Tibor Szobotka (1913–82), novelist, short-story writer, and essayist, since it fails to do justice to the different sociolects used in this novel: uneducated farmers and upper-class characters speak in the same elevated, slightly artificial style.

The new translations were not accompanied by any longer study on George Eliot's works. The seven pages devoted to her in the short book I was commissioned to write on 19th-century British literature for a popular series reflect a shift in values. Having written my Ph. D. dissertation on Virginia Woolf and published my first essay on Henry James, my reading of George Eliot was marked by a bias

opposed to that of Anna Katona. Although I praised *Middlemarch*, I saw a serious flaw in Daniel Deronda, and regarded didacticism and the relative absence of poetic language as shortcomings that make her art “inferior to that of Emily Brontë” (“művészete elmarad Emily Brontë teljesítménye mögött” (Szegedy-Maszák, 1982, 276).

After the collapse of totalitarianism in 1989–90, Hungarian translators, critics, and readers turned to works neglected or banned in the so-called Communist decades. The (re)discovery of works unknown to the general public went together with a falling-off in the interpretation of most 19th-century Western novelists. Although feminist criticism made its influence felt in recent decades, relatively little attention was paid to the works of George Eliot. It might be taken as symptomatic that the two-page discussion of her activity in the most recent history of world literature, a collective work of close to 1,000 pages, published in 2005, is a rather low-key appreciation. Written by Ágnes Péter (b. 1941), a professor at Eötvös Loránd University (Budapest) and a specialist of English Romanticism, this summary emphasizes that George Eliot was “the co-editor of the progressive theological and philosophical *Westminster Review*” (“társszerkesztője a haladó teológiai és filozófiai folyóiratnak, a *Westminster Review*-nak”), and her works “anticipate the modernist turn” (“a modernista fordulat előzményeinek tekinthetők”) (Pál, 2005, 652). While no oversight occurs in the brief characterization of *The Mill on the Floss*, *Romola*, *Felix Holt*, the *Radical*, *Middlemarch*, and *Daniel Deronda*, the evaluation of George Eliot’s activity still echoes the Marxist ideas on Realism.

Market-oriented economy has changed the attitude to literature of the Hungarian public. Recently the George Eliot Collection of the BBC gave an impetus to a Hungarian publishing house to bring out earlier translations of her works and commission new versions. Paradoxically, there seems to be a kind of return to greater freedom in adaptation. The 1966 version of *The Mill on the Floss* has been rebaptized as *Büszkeség és ártatlanság* (Pride and Innocence), indicating that in the early 21st century the more popular Jane Austen can help the promotion of a novel by George Eliot. The title of the new version of *Silas Marner* is *Kései boldogság* (Late Happiness), an interpretive decision that may have been inspired by the film industry, suggesting that today publishers believe that the visual media may help them to find potential readers.

It would be difficult, perhaps even impossible to draw any conclusion from the Hungarian reception of George Eliot’s works. They won an early recognition in the 19th century. One cannot help but think that the decline in her reputation was at least partly caused by the monograph on her written in a spirit that seems outdated today. It remains to be seen if the impact of visual media can lead to a reappraisal of her work.

Hungarian Translations

AB

- (1861–62) *Bede Ádám*, trans. Ferencz Salamon (Pest: Emich Gusztáv).
 (1888) *Bede Ádám*, trans. Ferencz Salamon. 2nd ed. 2 volumes (Budapest: Franklin-Társulat).
 (1978) *Adam Bede*, trans. Tibor Szobotka (Budapest: Európa).

FH

- (1874) *Felix Holt a Radicalis*, trans. Mária Dominkovics (Budapest: Légrády).

M

- (1874–75) *Middlemarch: Tanulmány a vidéki életből*, trans. József Csukási (Budapest: Athenaeum).
 (1976) *Middlemarch*, trans. Tibor Bartos (Budapest: Európa).
 (1998) *Middlemarch*, trans. Tibor Bartos (Budapest: Esély).

MOF

- (1897) *A vízi malom*, trans. János Váczy (Budapest: Franklin-Társulat).
 (1966) *A vízimalom*, trans. Tivadar Szinnai (Budapest: Európa).
 (2010) *Büszkeség és ártatlanság*, trans. Tivadar Szinnai (Szeged: Lazi).

R

- (1898) *Romola*, trans. Béla Pataki (Budapest: Franklin-Társulat).

SM

- (1885) *A raveloei takács* (Silas Marner), trans. Géza Kacziány (Budapest: Franklin-Társulat).
 (1898) *A raveloei takács* (Silas Marner), trans. Géza Kacziány (Budapest: Franklin-Társulat).
 (2010) *Kései boldogság: Silas Marner története*, trans. Judit Gebula (Szeged: Lazi).

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