

Sociology in Central and Eastern Europe or East European Sociology: Historical and Present¹

Janusz Mucha²

AGH University of Science and Technology, Krakow, Poland

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Sociology as an institution emerged in Western Europe in the mid-19th century, aiming at the analysis of societies in the process of industrialization. With the expansion of capitalism and industrialism, it also expanded into other regions of the world.

Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), Poland being an example, was a region of delayed industrialization. It was an area in which rather ethnology than sociology was initially interested. Intellectual milieus of the region were very well educated and cosmopolitan. Many Western European ideas were studied here and attempts to implement them were strong. At the same time, many CEE intellectuals underlined the specific character of the region.

As a consequence, within the spectrum of attitudes toward the scholarly analysis of CEE societies, we could distinguish two "ideal-type" options. One of them stressed that it was possible to build academic sociology in and of CEE, based on the rules of universal sociology, developed in the West. Other ideas opted for the building of the CEE sociology, which would be based on the specific historical experiences of the region. For the second option, CEE sociology was to be an alternative to the Western sociology or social sciences in general.

The paper concentrates on the Polish case without neglecting other cases. It will discuss both historical and present situation, that emerging since 1989. CEE became much more open as a study area for Western scholars who have done a lot of their own research here in collaboration with their colleagues coming from the region itself. The ways in which this collaboration has been perceived by the "native" scholars is also a topic of analysis.

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Despite the last term of the title, this presentation will concentrate in its factual part on the past, on the times of the emergence of first non-institutional, and then institutional sociology. World was also at that time very unequal, but the global system of domination was not as unilateral as it seems to be now and it was possible, in my opinion, to build various "social sciences," based on

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² Address: Prof. Janusz Mucha, AGH University of Science and Technology, al. Mickiewicza 30, 30-059 Kraków, Poland.
E-mail: jmucha@post.pl

different existential conditions of different regions of the world and on their own different cultural premises. The very idea of “science,” as we know it now, and not only of “sociology,” is Western, though. The “present times” will only be mentioned here, but I will return to them at the end of the paper. By “**sociology in Eastern (or rather Central and Eastern) Europe**” I will understand a “standard,” obviously theoretically diversified, multiparadigmatical sociology, being developed in this region or in its individual countries and focused on its/their specific empirical problems. By “**Eastern European sociology**” (or, rather, Central and Eastern European -- from now on – CEE -- sociology) I will mean a hypothetical sociology based on specific assumptions derived from the particular culture (or cultures) of this region.

The paper partly (at its beginning) draws upon a research project done by the author together with Mike F. Keen between 1990 and 2006. The project dealt with the recent history of sociology in the whole CEE (see Keen and Mucha, eds., 1994, 2003, 2006). This paper, however, will concentrate (but will not limit its scope to) on the Polish case³. A critical analysis of Polish literature in the field of the history of Polish sociology, and in particular on the contributions of such scholars as Jerzy Szacki (see, e.g., Szacki ed. 1995), Włodzimierz Winclawski (see, e.g., Winclawski 2001 – 2007), Piotr Sztompka (see, e.g., Sztompka ed. 1984) and Kazimierz Z. Sowa (see, e.g. 1983) and others will be very helpful. The non-Polish literature on the subject, to the extent I had the access to it, will also be taken into account. I was, in particular, interested in sociological literature produced within the region “on itself.” Even if I devote a lot of attention to the Polish case, I am fully aware of the fact that one must not uncritically generalize from one country belonging to a certain region to the whole region under discussion.

In order to fully understand the history of sociology in CEE, it would be necessary to begin with a brief history of the region itself (for history of Poland, see Davies 1982; in the next several paragraphs, I will partly draw upon Keen – Mucha 1994: 2-5). I obviously have no space for a complete summary here. However, it should be stressed that the region consists of many different national collectivities that belong to a variety of language groups and adhere to several distinct religious traditions. It developed under the influences of a number of political powers that reigned over a myriad of ethnic groups. Therefore, one may say that there has hardly been a single CEE and (as a result of this) the hypothesis of a single CEE sociology seems to be quite weak.

³ The relevant synthetic information on other sociologies of the region can be found in the already mentioned collections edited by Mike F. Keen and Janusz Mucha, but also in the volume edited by Max Kaase, Vera Sparschuh and Agnieszka Wenninger (2002).

However, a number of common features distinguish CEE from its Western counterpart. Recognizing that some countries and some periods must be excepted, the most important of these features, to which I will be constantly returning in this paper, include: political dependency and a resulting delay in the development of indigenous and autonomous political structures; economic underdevelopment and the consequent maintenance until World War II of an agrarian economy along with its peasant class, accompanied by the poverty of the lower classes and a late transition from feudalism to capitalism; a relative absence of indigenous upper and even upper-middle urban classes; a relatively tardy codification of national languages, particularly in the written form; a delayed sense of national identity among the lower classes; a persistent sense of religious identity and the religious tensions that have often accompanied it; and the emergence in the 19th century of a multifunctional group of “intelligentsia”, an educated urban class (being here an heir of the nobility). After 1948, the dominance of the Communist economic, political and ideological system became another feature of distinction (for history of Europe, and in particular CEE, see, e.g., Johnson 1996; Davies 1996).

Since in the second part of the 19th century the region was a traditional and agricultural society (or rather societies), one could argue, following Anthony Giddens’ Introduction to “The Constitution of Society” (and his other works) that it could not be a subject-matter of sociology which is a theory of modernity and industrialization (1984). Obviously, Giddens’ ideas would be in a total contrast with such projects as for instance historical sociology (see, e.g. Skockpol ed. 1984).

Four major powers have dominated the region at one time or another throughout its history. **Germany**, considered as distinct from the medieval Holy Roman Empire and later Austria, arrived on the scene only in the 18th century. A north-eastern German kingdom of Prussia affected mostly Poland (participating in its partitioning at the end of the century) and western parts of Bohemia. Germany was also a factor in the continuous political crises of the Balkan region from the beginning of the 19th century. **Russia** emerged as a significant power in the 18th century. It took over the Estonian and Latvian lands and participated in the partitioning of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth at the end of the century. At the beginning of the 19th century, Russia moved into South-Eastern Europe, liberating many, mostly Slavic and Orthodox, nations from the Turks. **Austria**, formerly a relatively small country, became very strong at the end of the Middle Ages. In the 15th century, it took over Bohemia and Moravia (the Czech Kingdom) as well as the Hungarian Kingdom and its dependents Croatia and Slovakia, and much of Romanian Transylvania. At the end of the 18th century, Austria participated in the

partitioning of Poland, taking over its southern part, otherwise known as Galicia. At the beginning of the 20th century, the Austro-Hungarian Empire annexed Bosnia Herzegovina (which later became a part of Yugoslavia, and now is independent), which had just been liberated from the Turks. The **Turkish** Ottoman Empire originated in Asia Minor in the 14th century. It conquered Bulgaria, Serbia, Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro, and Bosnia Herzegovina. Later it threatened Croatia, Hungary and even Austria. The decline and fall of the Ottoman Empire came after an unsuccessful siege of Vienna in 1683 in which Polish King Jan III Sobieski led the anti-Turkish coalition. In the 19th century, Turkey lost several wars with Russia, resulting in the liberation of many nations of the region. The foreign political domination came to its end after World War I, to return soon, with the Soviet communism after World War II.

Viewed in terms of its religious structure, the region has been and in a sense continues to be a mosaic of five denominations: **Roman Catholicism** (Croats, Slovenes, some Hungarians, Slovaks, Poles, Lithuanians, and some Czechs), **Protestantism** (Estonians, Latvians, some Czechs, and some Hungarians), **Orthodox** (Bulgarians, Macedonians, Serbs, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Russians, and Romanians), **Islam** (Albanians, some Bulgarians, and some Bosnians), and **Judaism** (historically, Jews lived in CEE throughout its medieval and modern history; in the 16th and 17th centuries, the Polish Jews constituted about two-thirds of the world's Jewry; after World War II and the Holocaust they constitute in this country only a very small minority).

CEE sociologists of the end of the 19th century could not analytically concentrate on Western-style modernity and industrialization and were primarily concerned with the region's largest social group, the peasants, and the process of transformations (in particular in this group) from local to national identity. The latter was the most crucial problem and it will be debated throughout this paper. Tradition, language and religion were the shrines of this transforming identity. Indigenous culture, as opposed to the culture of the occupiers, was preserved primarily by 19th century peasants. National society was represented by the various groupings of peasants, and by the intelligentsia which worked hard to preserve tradition, but never by the state. Nation-building processes, which came to CEE late, were in fact of a modernization character, though.

As mentioned above, social sciences in the 19th century CEE were developed by the intelligentsia. This was a group of well-educated natives, in many cases members (or heirs) of the propertied classes. This scholarship served two functions. The first was to provide an analysis of social structures and processes. The second was to actively participate in the transformation of

the existing social and economic realities, as well as in the nation-building processes. The social sciences in this region only partly developed in the universities. By the end of the 19th century many universities already existed, but for a variety of reasons they were not interested in this kind of scholarship. However, some university professors of law, history, languages, contributed to the development of indigenous sociology. Social scientifically oriented intellectuals very often were “private scholars”, taking advantage of family resources. Some were employed in various institutions (for instance secondary schools) and did their research “after hours”, or they established other, private institutions. In many Slavic countries the “Matitsas”, institutions consisting of a combination of folk culture museums, libraries, research centres, educational centres, and publishing houses, emerged. Their role as vehicles for the researching, recording, and dissemination of national cultures, and even for encouraging the nation-building processes, cannot be overestimated. Let me mention some names of pre-World War I sociologists working in the region: Tomas G. Masaryk in Czech lands, Pitirim A. Sorokin in Russia, Anton Štefánek in Slovakia, Constantin Dimitrescu-Iasi and Dimitrie Gusti in Romania, Janez Evangelist Krek in Slovenia (I will return to Poland later). After World War I, in the newly emerging sovereign nation-states, the universities (mostly public) became the most important centres of research and education in the field of social sciences and humanities. There were various models of institutionalization of sociology in the region, though.

Despite internal differences, the common features of the CEE region could have been a hypothetical foundation of a common scholarly, intellectual approach, but this potentiality does not seem to me to have been realized. During the second half of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century, there seems to be no particular and intentional communication between intellectuals of the region, no meaningful exchange of ideas and findings. There were no translations of works of scholars from other CEE countries. It seems to me that already at that time the communication between them was mediated by the West – by French, German and English literature. Moreover, with the exception of Ludwig Gumplowicz (raised and educated in Cracow, he became a famous sociologist at the University of Graz, Austria), there was nearly no influence of social scientists raised and educated in CEE on the “world sociology” before World War I. Strong impact of Sorokin, already an American scholar, came much later, and eminent, analyzed for instance by Nicholas S. Timasheff and George A. Theodorson (1976: 93-98) early Russian sociologists, Nicholas Danilevsky, Peter Lavrov, Nicholas Mikhailovsky, Sergei Yuzhakov and Nicholas Kareyev, seldom appear in other histories of sociology. However, Russian influence was significant in Bulgaria. Many

Bulgarians studied in Russia, Western ideas were coming to Bulgaria thanks to Russian translations.

After World War II the “Soviet Marxism” could have intellectually unified the region but firstly it was largely imposed by force and secondly it did not stress the specificity of economic, structural and cultural situation in CEE. I will return to Marxism soon⁴.

Alvin Gouldner, one of the most quoted authors writing on the social context of the emergence of sociology, was of the opinion that although seeded “in Western Europe in the first half of the nineteenth century, sociology lay in a territory that did not know what to do with the new discipline. [...] Its most fertile ground was in time found elsewhere in the East and West. [...] One part of sociology, ‘Marxism,’ moved eastward and became at length, after World War I, the official social science in the then new Soviet Union. The other part, which I will call ‘Academic Sociology,’ moved westward and came to a different fruition within American culture. Both are different sides of Western sociology” (Gouldner 1977: 20). Some observations must be made immediately. Obviously, Gouldner was fully aware of the success of classic Western European sociology (or – sociologies) at the turn of the century. Marxism, which migrated to underdeveloped and unindustrialized part of Europe, soon became a specific variation of Western theory of modernization known as “Soviet Marxism.” We will not be particularly interested in Marxism in this paper. However, we should bear in mind the fact, that many varieties of Marxism were present in sociological and other intellectual discussions in several CEE countries well before the political communist system became implemented in them.

Gouldner believed that sociology was a very specific reflection of the situation of the nineteenth-century middle class. It waged the struggle on two fronts. On the one hand, it confronted the forces of the old feudal regime and was interested in “progress,” on the other hand, the change had to be tempered with a concern for social order, political continuity and stability. “The new sociology resonated the sentiments of a middle class precariously caught between past and future, between still powerful old elites and emerging new masses” (Gouldner 1977: 106). According to the author, the middle class failed initially to support sociology. He says that our discipline’s ground-work was at first laid by the dispossessed aristocracy, people not with money but with superior education, by some marginal social strata, stigmatized groups, like the

⁴ Interestingly, between the late 1960s and the outbreak of Solidarity in 1980, Polish sociology could have become a “centre” of social sciences in Central and Eastern Europe. Many students from the region were coming to this country to learn sociology. The reason was not a specific, original and attractive way of practicing the discipline, but much closer contacts with the West. The “danger” of potential Solidarity influences changed the situation. Later, since 1989, the “Polish connection” to the West was no longer necessary and was no longer welcomed.

Jews⁵. “Only where and when the institutional requirements of commercial industrialism were fully established; only when the middle class was secure from the restoration of old elites; only when it therefore did not look upon the past as a threat and did not believe the future required anything radically different: only then could the middle class relinquish a cultural lag theory that explained away present social tensions as due to old institutions grown archaic. These were among the *necessary* conditions for the acceptance and *institutionalization* of sociology in middle-class society” (Gouldner 1977: 107). In my opinion, this diagnosis would be as adequate to the analysis of the first stage of the development of sociology in CEE. The second stage has never appeared here, even in a delayed fashion. When industrialization could come in a “natural way” to the region, World War II broke instead and later the Soviet Marxism was established.

The last observation done by Alvin Gouldner, to which I would like to refer in this paper, concerns the religion. He recognizes the fact that in the first period of its emergence, sociology was closely connected with spirituality. “Both Saint-Simon and Comte had capped their intellectual careers by proposing and providing detailed plans as legitimate enterprises for students of society such as themselves, and as necessary to give practical implementation to their sociological studies. The ‘religion of humanity’ was the *applied* sociology of Positivism” (Gouldner 1977: 134). Gouldner notes that after several decades, in the “Classic period of sociology,” the “religion of humanity,” and as a matter of fact any religion, disappeared as a distinct structure within the sociological scholarship and became replaced by sociology of religion. Secularization was an important characteristic of this Classical period of sociology. This observation is important in our context, because religion and/or spirituality was a very significant aspect of early sociology in CEE.

Our main example, Poland, since the spring of 2004 a member of the European Union and already since 1997 a member of the NATO, is a Central European country, east of the economic, political and cultural heart of Europe. This traditionally agricultural country which was for 123 years (until 1918) partitioned by Prussia, Austria and Russia, later, during the World War II was occupied by the Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, and after this war belonged to the Soviet political sphere. She is, however, strongly connected with Western Europe, by her Latin Christianity, the Latin script of her Slavonic language and her cultural aspirations, but, on the other hand, her internal social structure, economy and political arrangements had linked her for centuries with

⁵ The same seems to be true about the supporters of Polish sociology at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. See Winclawski 2008.

Eastern Europe. Classic scholars of Polish sociology (institutional and non-institutional) spoke Western languages very well, many of them spent years or even decades in Western Europe and/or in the United States, and they were very well acquainted with new trends in Western social thought (like positivism, Marxism, or the anti-positivistic currents in the philosophy of culture). For example, Stefan Czarnowski was one of eminent members of the Durkheimian school, and Zygmunt Balicki, Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz, Erazm Majewski and others successfully collaborated with the International Institute of Sociology, founded by Rene Worms In 1893. The topics of their research were, out of necessity, to a large extent of the Eastern European character. The best example of these topics is the strong stress on the ethnic and national question as well as on the peasant question. Let us concentrate for a moment on CEE, for which these themes were very important.

Jan Szczepanski, a former student of Florian Znaniecki, was one of the leading Polish sociologists of the post-World War II period. He was also the President of the ISA during the 1966 – 1970 term. During the Evian World Congress of Sociology in 1966, he gave a speech (published in Polish in 1968) on the universal aims of sociological theory and the Polish national school. In my opinion the extent of his remarks is much broader than Poland and therefore I would like to refer to them in this place.

Szczepanski (and not only this scholar) strongly believed that “general” or universal sociological theory always grows out of the national traditions or “national schools” in this discipline (Szczepanski 1995; see also Zdrawomyslow 2006; and in Poland -- Sowa 1983a; Szacki 2003; Pienkosz 2007). He says that sociology as a scholarly discipline is a creation of concrete individual people who belong to specific cultural (mostly national) traditions, who participate in historic processes of their nations, who are embedded in intellectual culture, philosophy of their country of origin. A sociologist studies first of all the social reality of this nation; concepts which are used by him/her are taken from the cultural tradition and language (terms, expressions, ways of thinking) of this nation; he/she focuses on issues significant for this nation. Therefore, the style of sociology in a given country is a consequence of the cultural heritage as well as social, economic and political problems of this nation (Szczepanski 1995; see also, e.g. Genov 1989: 1). Szczepanski (and numerous historians of social sciences in many countries) points to the differences between the ways of practicing sociology in the United States and Great Britain, between Germany and France, in particular in the classic period of the growth of our discipline (see: Szczepanski 1995: 902). On the other hand, writes Jerzy Szacki, another highly respected Polish student of history of sociology, it is difficult to explain why, for instance, we regard as “the French

school” of the former turn of the century the “Durkheimian school” and not the “Gabriel Tarde’s school” (Szacki 2003).

The “world sociology,” according to Szczepanski, is a synthesis of national sociologies. However, sometimes, says this scholar, a particular national tradition in sociology becomes so powerful and influential that this unique tradition determines the ways sociology develops in many other countries and it becomes, for a period of time, “the” sociology, “the world sociology.” This is what happened with French sociology before World War I or with American sociology after World War II. Nowadays, though, we experience, according to Szczepanski, the increasing of the diversification of national schools in sociology (Szczepanski 1995: 902). The open question is, in my opinion, whether this diversification means more equality in the mutual communication and understanding. I will return to the transformation of “the national” (“empirical”) into “universal” in a moment, when briefly discussing the issue of colonization and self-colonization.

The time has come to turn to some specifics of early Polish sociology, or sociology in Poland⁶. I will again start with Szczepanski and then move to other authors. As much as most of the CEE nations (with the sole exception of Russia), during the period when sociology emerged and when the modern Western European nations were strengthening themselves and when the nation-states became a standard organization of large ethnic groups in Europe, Poland was a nation without its own state (as mentioned above, she was partitioned between Russia, Prussia and Austria between 1795 and 1918; Poles lost not only their state as a political organization, but also a territorially and politically unified “society”). Therefore, the most important “social task” was, for Polish politicians, social leaders, novelists and other artists, but also for social scientists, to contribute to the regaining the national and political sovereignty. Sovereignty and freedom (not liberal individual freedom but national, collective freedom; the independence from other, external, political bodies) were the most cherished social or even moral values. The “social” problems, like “class struggle,” social emancipation of lower classes or strata, social revolution against the bourgeois system, were of the secondary importance. However, the “backwardness” of economy on the Polish territories was obvious and the socio-economic development was an important issue. It was believed to be solved soon after the political emancipation of Poland, but the positivist mentality helped to debate on the “organic work,” meaning here the systematic, consequent, even if slow, evolutionary and not revolutionary, economic melioration. This “organic” melioration depended on the suspension of thinking in the class terms and instead thinking in terms of all-national

⁶ A balanced and detailed account of early Polish sociology can be found in Szacki 1995 and Krasko 1996.

solidarity. Unlike in post-Comtean Western European sociology, religious thinking was very strong in Polish (as well as other CEE) humanities and social sciences. On the one hand we should include into our picture the social teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, which has always been connected with sociological analysis (for the analysis of “Roman Catholic sociology in Poland,” see: Winclawski 1999). On the other hand, a lot of mysticism was present here in intellectual, even academic circles, and the “Messianic ideas” was very vivid. According to these ideas, Polish nation was the “Messiah of nations” whose former defeats were a “collective and historic sacrifice” which will be turned into a collective, European redemption (Szczepanski 1995: 902-905). Positivism, however, made these “Messianic ideas” less and less popular.

In the opinion of Wladyslaw Kwasniewicz, the first works of influential Western sociologists (first of all Auguste Comte, later Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Herbert Spencer, Henry T. Buckle, Albert Schaeffle, Charles Darwin, Henry Morgan, Edward Tylor, Gabriel Tarde, Gustave LeBon) reached Poland in the middle of the 19th century. A small group of intellectuals studied them independently from each other, discussed them and tried to interpret and apply to Polish social situation (Kwasniewicz 1994: 25).

Another Polish scholar, Kazimierz Z. Sowa (see: Sowa 1983), stressed the distinction between Polish (we can risk to generalize his point and say – CEE) academic and non-academic sociologies of the earliest period of the development of the discipline (as we can remember, Alvin Gouldner also underlines the specificity of academic variety of sociology, but he opposes it to Marxism).

Sowa (who was, later, referred to many times by Polish historians of Polish sociology) is of the opinion that Polish academic sociology had been, from the beginning, dependent on the Western social philosophy and sociology, by which he means positivism and Marxism. In his opinion, even if the subject matter of social sciences was completely different (I have discussed this issue above a few times) in the West and in Poland, it was still analyzed from the point of view of Western concepts and theories⁷. Polish liberal academic sociology of the late 19th and early 20th centuries was in Sowa’s (and in some other authors, quoted by him) opinion “more European than Polish” it “was isolated from the real Polish life” (no names are given, though)⁸.

⁷ Włodzimierz Winclawski, a Polish scholar specializing in the history of sociology in the Czech lands and in Slovakia, makes a similar observation regarding early sociology in these two countries Winclawski 1991: 8-12).

⁸ Kazimierz Sowa refers here to Jozef Chalasinski’s (one of the most prominent in Poland students of Znaniecki) opinion. In this context of “being more European than local” it would be interesting to present here the interpretation of Bulgarian culture (and, as a matter of fact – other Eastern European cultures) done by a Bulgarian literary scholar, Aleksandyr Kiosew. Let me quote a part of his article published in Poland: “So, in the genealogical knot of Bulgarian national culture, there exists a painful awareness of a total, structural absence. The others (neighbours, Europe, civilized world, etc.) have what we do not have; they are what we are not. The culture emerges as a painful presence of the absent, and its history could be described briefly as a century of efforts to fill and delete the traumatic shortages. Can’t we call these cultures the self-

This “real Polish life,” “abandoned” in this interpretation by institutional and cosmopolitan sociology, meant 1. the problem of the nation, 2. the problem of cultural identity of the Polish society, and 3. the problem of society’s integrity and sovereignty. These crucial issues were raised, during this period of time, by non-academic, non-institutionalized social sciences (sociology). This kind of early sociology was done by some academics who worked professionally in other fields, like philosophy, economics or history, by political journalists and writers. Sowa gives us some names: economists Henryk Kamiński, Stanisław Grabski, Władysław Grabski, Feliks Młynarski; historians Stanisław Kutrzeba, Jan Karol Kochanowski-Korwin, Adam Szelągowski, Feliks Koneczny, Marian Zdziechowski; journalists Jan Ludwik Popławski, Zygmunt Wasilewski, Antoni Choloniewski; philosophers Bolesław Trentowski, August Cieszkowski, Karol Libelt. All of them were very well educated, read and wrote in several European languages, but were “independent” from the foreign intellectual traditions and took advantage of originally Polish conceptual categories and confronted originally Polish (or, rather, non-Western European) issues.

Following the Sowa’s way of interpretation, we can present now these “selected” by him concepts and issues raised by the “national” current in early Polish sociological thinking. In the author’s opinion, when in Western sociology, following Auguste Comte, the concept of “society” was the most important one, it meant the “nation-state.” In Poland (and in most of CEE) the nation-states (and, in many cases, Polish among them, even unified societies) did not exist. What existed were the multinational empires which, moreover, divided individual cultural nations (even those having long institutional traditions) between themselves (Poles are the best example). Therefore, not “society” but “nation,” understood as the “cultural unity” is the basic macro-sociological concept. In Sowa’s opinion, the concept of “progress,” if it was to be an analytical tool of sociology, was very difficult to accept. There was no “progress” but political and economic backwardness, degradation. “Progress” could be used only as a normative concept. Early (as in Emile Durkheim or Herbert Spencer) concepts of “functionality” and of “system” could not be analytically used in Poland due to the country’s partitions and inclusion her three parts into foreign powers (the same could be true about many CEE countries). When the Western sociology and socio-cultural anthropology stressed the cultural diffusion, Polish “national” current in social sciences underlined the separateness, conflictual character of neighbouring cultures.

colonizing cultures? [...] The self-colonizing cultures look as if they, themselves, transferred some foreign value model, civilization model, and lovingly colonized with it what is theirs ... [...]. This West loses its empirical features and becomes identified with the Fundamental and Universal, gaining, with all secularized ideology of the modern epoch, some hidden transcendental features” (Kiosew 2000: 14).

In Sowa's opinion (actually, Jan Szczepanski made the same point in the quoted above article) Polish non-institutional sociology also had some methodological particularity. The scholars were not interested so much in universal sociological generalizations and laws. This sociological thinking was intentionally not nomothetical but idiographical, to use the Wilhelm Windelband's terms. Difference, particularities, peculiarities, and not similarity or homogeneity was important here. Therefore, if to think about generalizations at all, they were to be of an empirical and typological and not of universal character. The last important issue raised by Sowa is the problem of the tensions between the analytical and the normative concepts and propositions. Polish scholars were not afraid of the normative concepts. They did not differ from their Western colleagues in their ideological and reformist attitude, but understood reformism differently. When Western social sciences worked on the development of scientific foundations of institutional social policy and social work, the normative Polish sociology intended to address the moral attitudes of Poles, to shape the "spirit of the nation" (see: Sowa 1983: 147-157).

It seems to many scholars interested in the history of Polish sociology that this "national" current was very important for the self-knowledge, self-understanding of society, in particular of the intelligentsia group.

After World War I the political (and even cultural) situation changed dramatically and so the social conditions to theorize became much different than before. It seems to me that after this war, the "national" and non-institutional current in Polish sociology did not withered away, but became much weaker than before. With the advent of national sovereignty in 1919 and the appointment of Leon Petrażycki as Professor of Sociology at Warsaw University and the appointment of Florian Znaniecki as Professor of Sociology at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Polish sociology "returned" to the institutional and Western-oriented shape. It was not necessarily positivist sociology. Znaniecki introduced new interests in social sciences which followed the anti-positivist current within the German philosophy of culture and, due to his collaboration with William I. Thomas, in what was to be called later "symbolic interactionism." Marxism was practiced until the end of World War II in its original Western variety. Polish sociologists were following the Western ideas, were fascinated by them (see, e.g. Sowa 1983a: 39).

The research topics were still different than the research topics studied by Western scholars, but from now on, we could rather speak of "sociology in Poland" than of a specific "Polish sociology".

Based on the research project on sociology in CEE, mentioned at the beginning of this paper, I strongly believe that the situation in other countries of the region differed from the Polish situation in one significant respect: there

were not even attempts in those countries to construct original and general sociological theory, which would be independent from the Western social sciences.

Let us briefly look at some other “dependent” sociologies of the broadly understood Eastern European region. I will start with Russia, though, due to its specific status.

The nineteenth century Russia was not oppressed by any other world power but internally it shared many of the problems of the countries it occupied. It was a backward and despotic, autocratic system, with great cultural achievements, with many contacts with the West. Despite its backwardness and sometimes defeats (like in the war with Japan in 1905), Russia was a very active world player and not the passive object on the world’s arena. The Western ideas were studied, sometimes followed, but not necessarily liked. According to Gennady S. Batygin and Inna F. Deviatko, in the 1860s the “positivist ideas and the scientific trends were actively diffused in Russian public thought. Thematically, Russian sociology was mainly clustered around the concepts of public progress and happiness (Nikolai Mikhailovskiy), socialism (Pyotr Lavrov), and organic interaction (Eugeniy V. De Roberty). The discovery of the world’s organic unity and the postulate of development in society conforming to natural law had a great effect on the democratically oriented Russian intelligentsia. From its inception, Russian sociology committed itself to a critique of an imperfect social order and the search for a social ideal. The peculiar appeal of Marxist ideas can be fully accounted for in this context [...]. In 1869, Nikolas Danilevsky’s famous book entitled *Russia and the West* appeared, offering the idea of ‘cultural and historical types’ localized in space and time [...]. Russian thought as expressed in religion and philosophy (e.g. Fiodor Golubinsky, Vladimir Kudriavtsev-Platonov, and Vladimir Soloviev) presented a viable alternative to the positivist ideal of sociology. [...] Nevertheless, the subject matter of sociology was interpreted in positivist terms. In fact, for the most part only positivists were entitled to be called ‘sociologists’” (Batygin – Deviatko 1994: 11-12).

A slightly different analysis is presented by Elena Kukushkina. She stresses a little more strongly the “spiritual and moral basis” of early Russian sociology and the (already discussed in this paper) fact that “sociological theory reflects national spirit and national demands of that country in which it is formed” (Kukushkina 2006: 35). Like Batygin and Deviatko, she is of the opinion that Russian sociologists were very well informed about the state of sociology in other countries. Their own achievements, however, were hardly known in the West. And these achievements, in Kukushkina’s opinion, were great. “Development of Comte’s ideas by the Russian sociologists resulted in appearance of

theories reflecting Russian spiritual traditions. Criticism of biologism and social Darwinism in Western theories by Russian sociologists is unique” (Kukushkina 2006: 37). Later, though, only Pitirim Sorokin has not deviated from Russian tradition of high spirituality (Kukushkina 2006: 39). Sorokin, however, became an icon of American (and not European) sociology, and one of the rare real impacts of Russian tradition on the world social sciences. Kukushkina observes that after 1989, in Russia, “sociological and theoretical thought turned to the West” (Kukushkina 2006: 38).

To sum up the fragment on Russia: it seems that even if a “Russian sociology” was possible, due to several factors, including the 1917 communist revolution and consequent emergence of “Soviet Marxism” as well as the emigration of Sorokin and others, we have to do rather with “sociology in Russia.”

Let us look at other “non-Western” examples, coming mostly from more recent years. The first could be Greece, a South-Eastern European country, but also oppressed politically, economically and culturally. According to Jane Lambiri-Dimaki, “it is more realistic to talk about sociology in Greece rather than about Greek sociology as is the case with English, French, German or American sociology. In the sense of development of distinctive schools of thought with international influence by Greek sociologists, Greek sociology has not yet been established in Greece” (Lambiri-Dimaki 2001: 91).

Outside of Europe, our single example will be Japan. Ken’ichi Tominaga makes it clear that there have not been even attempts to found strong social sciences on traditional philosophy or other achievements of traditional Japanese culture. What was sociology in Japan was a copy of first European and then American scholarship. Actually, no wonder that it was not interesting to those who had the original at home. Tominaga equates sociology with “the modernization” and says that the impetus for it has always come from the West. Now, with the successes of Japanese economy and culture, it would seem that a two-way road would appear. The author does not seem to be very optimistic, though. “It might be argued that the intense interest expressed by Japanese sociologists in Western intellectual movements was at the expense of the development of native sociological theory. There is undoubtedly some truth in such a view. It should, however, be pointed out that Japanese intellectuals saw it as their prime responsibility to help their country towards societal and cultural modernization” (Tominaga 1993: 209).

At the end of this paper I would like to return to the problem of recent “colonization” and potential chances to construct the East European sociology. To refer to Raewyn Connell’s analysis of “Southern sociology,” we could say that “it is futile to challenge metropolitan predominance by discovering

alternative ‘founding fathers’ of the same social science [... The problem is rather to show that] peripheral societies produce social thought *about the modern world* which has as much intellectual power as metropolitan social thought, and more political relevance” (Connell 2007: xii)⁹. On the one hand, the economic, political and cultural (in particular, in the sphere of the popular culture) situation in the region has changed enormously since 1989. These countries are slowly going in the direction of (obviously very much diversified) Western democratic capitalism. The ambitions of many groups within them are to “catch up” and not to differ much from the “generalized West.” Therefore, perhaps it does not make any sense to think of any specific Eastern European sociological theories.

On the other hand, I strongly believe in what Jan Szczepanski said in the article quoted above (and what others said too) -- that at least until now, sociology starts “at home.” Like it or not, most sociologists follow in fact the “methodological nationalism” (see, e.g. on this idea, Wimmer – Schiller 2002; Beck 2004) and they not only face the domestic issues first, but also approach them with specific concepts and categories that belong to their domestic cultures. They will always collect particular data on their own societies and present some empirical generalizations based on them. The problem of the international sociology is, to put it again in Raewyn Connell’s way, not only to learn *about* them (peripheries – JM), but also to learn *from* them (Connell 2007: viii). In both situations, a more efficient dissemination of the “local knowledge” would be necessary.

Do the CEE sociologists have a chance and strong will to construct specific theories which would influence sociological thinking within this part of the globe? In other parts of the world? This potential influence is, in my opinion, particularly important. I believe that the problem is not to oppose the “northern hegemony” but to equalize impacts and intellectual influences. Like, perhaps, “Arab sociology,” “Latin American sociology,” “Scandinavian sociology,” also sociology in CEE has always had a set of common problems to face and to analyze. Now, after 1989, there has been a common and already relatively long experience of painful “great transformation” from communism and centralized planned and command economy to various kinds of procedural democracy and market economy. Do we, CEE sociologists, develop the internal (within the region) networks of collaborating scholars, do we try to generalize our national experiences, empirical findings, concepts and theories? Do we mutually translate our books? Do we attempt to compare our great transformation with the transitions to post-authoritarianism, which had occurred earlier in other

⁹ As Robert K. Merton noted many decades earlier, there have been many discoveries, rediscoveries, prediscovers, anticipations and adumbrations in social sciences. He gives a lot of interesting examples Merton 1968: 8-27).

regions? Do we follow the “state-led transformations” of other countries, for instance in Asia? Are we willing to and are we in a practical position to go beyond these experiences, data, concepts and theories, and influence sociology in other regions?

The international (in our case, mostly European) research grant systems, international scientific division of labour, domination of English language as a universal code of the global academic community, the institutional stress on the publication in the so-called “Philadelphia list” periodicals, the still widespread and deeply socialized belief in the unilinear modernization process, all contribute to the continuing “colonization” of sociology in CEE, as in other parts of the world, by very diversified, but still Western, “northern” sociologies. As Denes Nemedi and Peter Robert observed in our region (others observed the same in other regions), within the international scholarly division of labour, the scholars from this part of the world play mostly auxiliary roles of data suppliers for Western colleagues who transform these data into sociological theories (Nemedi – Robert 2003: 98).

I do know very well that the above-mentioned “colonization” and “self-colonization” is not something particular to the region where I live and work. Most Dutch (“northern”) sociologists do not care very much about publishing in their language if they wish to participate in the global academic division of labour. Sociology in Scandinavian countries (therefore “northern sociology”) is collectively very successful due to the “Acta Sociologica,” a great periodical published in English. Niklas Luhmann, Ulrich Beck, Alain Touraine, Pierre Bourdieu (to give some examples of representatives of “northern sociology”) belong to the old and traditional intellectual (including sociological) cultures but they became world-known only when their publications started to appear in English. Perhaps one of the lessons for the International Sociological Association, having been learnt at least from the 1980s, would be to watch even more carefully the sociological publications in “native” languages of the non-English-speaking world, including CEE and to help include them into the global exchange of ideas.

I do not believe that the academic “colonization” is totally useless from the point of view of the development of the discipline, since there should be a common ground, a common language, on which and in which the experiences, empirical findings and theoretical interpretations would be exchanged. Like it or not, that common ground would always mean privileges for some. The efforts to make the world more equal should be, in my opinion, mutual. Scholars working in the (always shifting) academic centres should pay much more attention to the experiences, concepts, theories of their colleagues working in the less privileged parts of the world. I can clearly see these efforts,

having been made by some for decades. Scholars coming from outside of the present intellectual cores should pay much more attention to the possible generalizations and transgressing of their own experiences, empirical findings, concepts and interpretations, should try harder to “think bigger.” I can see these efforts as well.

Unfortunately, Clintonian slogan “Economy, stupid,” has an application in this case too. Successful equalization of the world, successful challenging of the “northern hegemony” is very expensive. Until we reach a much more equal distribution of wealth, academic hegemony will continue. This does not mean that nothing could be done now.

Janusz Mucha has taught sociology, cultural anthropology and ethnic studies in Austria, US and Poland. Now, he is Professor of Sociology and Social Anthropology at AGH University of Science and Technology in Krakow, Poland. Among his books published abroad, there are three volumes on sociology in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), co-edited with Mike F. Keen. His close collaboration with sociologists working in and on CEE started about twenty years ago and continues to this day.

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