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INTRODUCTION
THE LESSONS OF 1989 FOR SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

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The study of social change has recently become one of the central concerns of sociology (Sztompka 1993). This is the natural response to the dramatic experience of the "century of change", as the twentieth century might perhaps be called. Among profound and rapid transformations that we have witnessed in the twentieth century, the collapse of communism will most likely prove to be of truly world-historical significance. In this article I will suggest some implications of that event for sociological thinking about change.

The Lessons of 1989

Like every major revolution in history, the anti-communist revolution in East-Central Europe must be considered as a long process rather than a singular event. In this sense, in spite of eight years that have passed since that glorious "Autumn of Nations 1989", the revolution is still unfinished. Looking back one can distinguish three phases in the ongoing revolutionary process.

The first, historically located in the seventies and the eighties may be called the *heroic and romantic phase*. This is the period of growing contestation, emerging democratic opposition, new forms of social self-organization and slow decay of economic and political foundations of 'real socialism'. Several theories have proven their explanatory power with respect to these phenomena. Sociological accounts of the period have successfully invoked theories of collective behavior and social movements (Sztompka 1982, Sztompka 1988), of legitimization and deligitimization of power (Rychard and Sulek 1988), of system equilibrium and disequilibrium (Staniszkis 1989), re-emerging civil society (Nowak 1980, Koralewicz and Ziolkowski 1990) etc.

The second phase, dated around 1989-1990 may be called *euphoric, revolutionary period*. The striking fact is that the actual break, the collapse of communism was not predicted by any sociological theory. Of course, most scholars were aware that eventually the system has to falter and disintegrate. But the moment and the speed with which it occurred came by surprise to everybody concerned. It is easier to interpret it ex post, trying to understand how it did occur. Here the theories of relative deprivation, social frustration and anomie, dual sovereignty, charismatic leadership etc., prove quite helpful.

Then, there is the third phase, which has been evolving from 1989 and which produces strongest feeling of helplessness and inadequacy of standard theoretical tools. This may be called *the period of systemic transformations*, begun in 1989 and still far from completion. The 'syndrom of surprise' (Lepenies 1992) is particularly acute in this phase: why the clock of reforms runs so much slower than anybody expected; why the process encounters so many obstacles; why in spite of similar pre-revolutionary mold (the communist system) the paths of former communist societies diverge so markedly; why in most of them we observe strong backlashes, boomerang effects, unintended consequences; why what was believed to be irreversible, shows so many disturbing signs of reversals (e.g. renewed political strength of former communists, emergence of "new nomenklatura", growing imperial ambitions of Russia, still marginal but disturbing xenophobic tendencies of isolationism vis-a-vis European Union, autocratic temptations of local rulers)?

This entire, extremely complex historical experience allows to draw some tentative lessons for the sociology of social change. Those can be found at four levels: of metatheoretical assumptions, theoretical orientations, substantive theory and theoretical agenda. The *meta-theoretical* issue has to do with the logical status of the theories of social change. Does the experience of anti-communist revolution suggest anything about the viable forms of theorizing about change and the functions of theories in this area? The issue of *theoretical orientation* has to do with feasible theoretical models or conceptual schemes which could accommodate the experience of anti-communist revolution. The issue of *substantive theory* addresses the necessary modifications and revisions of some received theoretical accounts. Finally the issue of *theoretical agenda* is heuristic and seeks directives for future theorizing about change. Does the experience of recent revolution tells us anything about the aspects, or problem-emphases which have been insufficiently theorized, and which seem to present crucial challenges for the understanding of ongoing social change?

Meta-Theoretical Assumptions

According to the traditional, positivist image of social theory, to be any good it has to be predictive. And at the same time, the most common complaint to be heard now among sociologists, or raised against sociologists by wider publics, is that they have not predicted the collapse of communism, and that they are helpless in predicting the twists and turns of post-communist transformations.

One interpretation of the predictive failure may refer to *epistemological* limitations: the complexity of historical events of that scale, the lack of sufficient initial informations, the lack of rigorous, mathematical models, etc. All that of course can potentially be improved. But I would submit more radical,

ontological arguments. Maybe in this area prediction is not just hard, but principally impossible. First, because revolutionary events depend on actions taken by multitudes of individuals, they occur as aggregated effects of myriads of individual decisions. Each of these decisions are taken by persons placed in unique biographical and social situations, and each human individual happens to be at least marginally erratic, capricious, emotional, under-determined in what he/she decides to do. Thus in the aggregated, macro-scale, the condition described in the natural sciences as indeterminacy or "chaos" seems to prevail, preventing any specific prediction. Second, prediction is hard because the mobilization and coordination of revolutionary actions demand strong leaders, and the appearance of such leaders of the sufficient talents, stature and charisma - is to a large extent the accident of genetics. Third, because a phenomenon of revolution incorporates multiple processes - growth of discontents and grievances, mobilization of the masses, reactions of the entrenched elites, pressures of external powers - to name but a few. Each of these may itself be regular, theoretically accountable and to some extent even predictable. But in their concrete, unique combination, cross-cutting at certain historical moment, those processes produce irreducible novelty, emergent phenomena not explainable nor predictable by any partial theories. Fourth, because in case of revolutionary social changes the circular logic of reflexivity and self-destroying prophecy (Merton 1996:183-204) is particularly vicious. Namely, assuming that the theory were predictive, the prediction of revolution would certainly be acted upon by the defenders of the old regime, who at that moment would still have enough force to paralyze the revolution and prevent its victory, thus falsifying the prediction by their actions. Hence the paradox: the theory of revolution is impossible because either it is false, or it is not a theory at all.

I think we have to reconcile ourselves with the fact that in the area of large scale macro-sociological or historical changes we must use the term *theory* in much more loose sense than in the natural sciences, or perhaps in some more deterministic branches of social sciences (e.g dealing with micro-scale, small experimental groups etc.). We certainly have to part with positivist notion of a theory, with its claim of symmetry between explanation and prediction. Speaking of the theories of social change we should have in mind at most *generalized, abstract discourse aimed at providing intellectual orientation in the chaos of occurrences and ex post interpretation of historical events*, rather than any rigorous explanation and prediction. It does not allow us to tell what will happen, but if it is any good, it gives some idea of what is happening, and which future scenarios are possible and which are not, which options are feasible and which are excluded. It circumscribes the field of possibilities, but never leaves only one, single option. It narrows down the area of uncertainty, but it never provides certainty. There is no reason to be ashamed of that; this in itself is a great intellectual feat of immense practical importance. But there

is also no reason to pretend that we have truly predictive, rigorous theory, when this is in principle unattainable.

Theoretical Orientation

In almost two centuries of its intellectual history, sociology has produced a number of theoretical models dealing with social change. But if we look underneath their actual variety and seek for underlying commonalities, the dominant approach - best illustrated by evolutionism or Marxism - assumes gradual unfolding of social processes in the specific direction, toward some final state, moved by immanent (endogenous) potentialities. The process is seen as pre-determined, irreversible, and most often progressive, leading to the betterment of society, somehow above the heads of concrete, acting individuals. Such approaches share the assumptions of determinism, finalism and fatalism. Common labels for them have been devised by their critics: Karl Popper's "historicism" (Popper 1957), or Robert Nisbet's "developmentalism" (Nisbet 1970).

Radical break with determinism, fatalism and finalism comes only in the recent decades with two influential orientations: *theories of agency, and historical sociology* (see the relevant literature in Sztompka 1993: ch. 13 and 14). The new image founded on the belief in human creative and constructive potential (human agency), and in the temporally cumulative nature of human achievements (historism, as opposed to "historicism"), may be called the model of *social becoming* (Sztompka 1991a). It assumes that social processes are contingent, open-ended and driven by human decisions and choices, within the context of received tradition. History is made, constructed of available historical resources, and does not follow any predetermined path.

The experience of post-communist transition deals the last fatal blow to all varieties of "historicism", developmentalism or deterministic models of social change, and provides strong empirical corroboration for the image of social becoming. Contrary to some rash commentators (Fukuyama 1992), the year 1989 was not the end of history, but paradoxically *the end of thinking in terms of the ends of history*, in terms of social utopias. First of all, no version of the Laws of History, as opposed to contingent regularities of specific historical events, or Laws Concerning History (Mandelbaum 1966), seems plausible any more. The present situation in the former USSR or Eastern and Central European societies cannot be squeezed into either evolutionary, nor dialectical, nor cyclical mold. It is far from any structural-functional differentiation or adaptive upgrading, which would be expected by the evolutionists (Parsons 1975); it is certainly not unfolding toward communist formation, to the dismay of the Marxists; and it seems without historical precedent, breaking rather than continuing the vicious cycles of reforms and backlashes, thaws and freezes, accompanying the whole history of "real

socialism". Leszek Kolakowski draws the ultimate conclusion: "Historical processes are like that. 'Laws of history' and 'historical inevitability' are Hegelian-Marxist fakes" (Kolakowski 1992, p.43).

Second, it is hard to support the idea of Historical Necessity any more. The role of contingent events, randomness, chance, individual decisions and choices - has been reaffirmed time and again (Elster 1989). And likewise the obvious fact that at any historical moment, the number of open historical possibilities is much larger than one, they constitute a field of options. Would the "Solidarity" movement consolidate itself so quickly in August 1980, if Walesa - with his charismatic qualities - did not join the striking workers to assume leadership? Would the movement win in Poland in 1989, if Jaruzelski did not introduce martial law eight years earlier, arguably preventing Soviet military intervention? Would Prague street crowds keep to the limits of the "velvet revolution" if Havel did not decide to go "na Hrad" (to the president's castle)? Would the USSR finally disintegrate so rapidly if Yeltsin did not climb that tank in front of Moscow parliament and challenged the putsch (or if anonymous crew of the tank shot him instead of letting him speak to the crowds)? Would the "autumn of nations 1989" be possible at all, if Gorbachev did not scrap the Brezhnev Doctrine, and publicly announced that the Red Army will not intervene in the defense of external empire? All those are - luckily - *counterfactual* questions. But any mental experiments will show that those actors and those acts were centrally important to the course and ultimate fate of revolutionary processes. And there was *no necessity* in their conduct. It could easily have happened that they were absent from the scene, and even if present they certainly *could have acted otherwise*. We are mentioning famous leaders, because they are more salient and of course more consequential in their decisions, but the same applies to millions of common people and their choices, individually less consequential, but in the aggregate - fully decisive. Each of them could also have acted otherwise. There is nothing that is pre-determined in history, because history is only what people make of it, by means of their actions. To quote Kolakowski's version of the old wisdom: "The only thing we know for certain is that nothing is certain, nothing is impossible" (Kolakowski 1992, p.43).

Third, we are led to part with the idea of the immanent Goal of History, some inescapable final point toward which history supposedly is moving. Social processes are not *pulled* by some ultimate, single end, rather they are *pushed* by innumerable actions and decisions of human individuals, acting on their visions, moved by variable and often conflicting images of desired goals. In the revolutions of 1989 they were moved by the simple, primordial desire of better life, epitomized in the more or less idealized pictures of Western developed democracies. The Goal of History claimed by the Marxists to reside in communism hasn't come about because finally almost nobody wanted it to come. Does it mean that the liberal-democratic polity and market-capitalist economy provide the only alternative? The spreading disenchantment with

modernity, liberalism and consumerism, becoming a fad in the Western world at the close of this century, and expressed in the career of various post-modern, post-industrial, post-historical creeds and projects -proves otherwise. People are always in restless search for the better world and, alas, never find what they were dreaming about. For the time being, *the fetishes of the free market and parliamentary democracy* seem to rule the imagination of post-communist societies, but it is hardly the end of their history. What forms of social life will emerge from the present turbulence is an entirely open issue.

Fourth, the idea of persistent Historical Progress seems to be more doubtful than ever before. Not only because the closed, but prolonged historical episode of "real socialism" has shown how under the banner of progress, the actual regress, misery and suffering can be procured for huge segments of human society. After all, this was not the first case of this sort in history, and this could still be countered by some claims of *long-range* progress, supposedly proved by the very collapse of communism (and similar earlier projects). But the real trouble is the determination of what counts for progress in present society. Look at the surprising percentages of those who declare that their life conditions in fact deteriorated with the fall of communism. But even if we discount such data as subjective, and look for objective indicators, *the ambivalence* of any criteria becomes obvious. Is it progressive to have full shops but lower wages, stop inflation but raise unemployment, open free market but limit local production, give power to democratic parliament but make the country ungovernable, liberalize the law enforcement but suffer upsurge of crime, abolish censorship and witness the flood of pornography and third rate literature. There is no absolute progress, but only relative and variable admixtures of progress and regress, of betterment and deterioration of human condition - and our judgment always has to depend on two questions: progress *of what*, and progress *for whom*? History moves back and forth, no Law of Progress holds, and no ultimate, universal blueprint for progress can be found.

The reverse, positive side of the same negative message is the factual support we discover in the events of 1989 and all that happens after, for the new paradigm of the theory of change. Within that new paradigm of "social becoming" the emphasis falls on the contingency of historical processes, creativeness and constructive capacities of human agents, both Great Heroes and Common People, the role of collective action and social movements, the importance of resources for action inherited with tradition, the autonomous significance of beliefs, creeds, stereotypes, prejudices in mobilizing to action.

Substantive Theory

Leaving the most abstract level of theoretical orientation, we shall encounter numerous empirical theories, making direct, testable claims about social

changes. How do they fare in view of anti-communist revolution and its aftermath? I wish to focus on just one which has recently been brought back into the mainstream of sociological debates: the theory of modernization. It seems to demand rethinking and revision, but with that proviso may prove to be much helpful in understanding current historical changes.

The classical *modernization theory* of the 1960's (as put forward by T. Parsons, N. Smelser, A. Inkeles, W. Moore, B. Hoselitz, S. Eisenstadt - among others; see relevant literature in Sztompka 1993; ch. 9) was primarily concerned with the Third World, and the ways to pull it up to the level of advanced model countries ("reference societies", "pace setters") by purposeful transplantation of Western institutional patterns. The policy of conscious emulation, undertaken in planned ways by local governments, was advocated as the road to modernity. There were strong evolutionary overtones to the theory: it believed the process had to be gradual, directional, unilinear and finalistic (catching up with tangible, existing examples of developed industrial societies) and its main mechanism was thought to resemble organic growth: proceeding via structural and functional differentiation and adaptive upgrading.

Strongly criticized on factual, theoretical and ethical grounds, the theory of modernization was abandoned in the seventies. But already in the eighties we observe some revival of modernization theory (Tiryakian 1985), and after 1989 it clearly finds a new focus in the effort of post-communist societies to "enter, or re-enter Europe", as the phrase goes. The projects of "neo-modernization theory" (Tiryakian 1991) or "post-modernization theory" (Alexander 1995) are put forward. The revived and revised modernization theory takes into account the experience of post-communist world, and in effect modifies its central assumptions.

The crucial difference between modernizing processes in the Third World and in the post-communist Second World is due to the legacy of "real socialism". Whereas in the post-colonial countries, the starting point was usually the traditional, pre-modern society, preserved in more or less unchanged shape, in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, both the ruling ideology and the highly politicized, centralized and planned economic system, were for many decades involved in the promotion of modernization. But as a result, what has been achieved is far away from genuine modernity. It may be called "fake modernity". What I mean by *fake modernity* is the incoherent, disharmonious, internally contradictory combination of three components: (a) imposed modernity in some domains of social life, coupled with (b) the vestiges of traditional, pre-modern society in many others, and all that dressed up with (c) the symbolic ornamentations pretending to imitate Western modernity.

Forced modernization brought about extensive industrialization, with obsessive emphasis on heavy industry, the shift from agricultural to industrial sector, proletarianization of population, chaotic urbanization, the growth of bureaucratic apparatus of administration, police and army, strong autocratic

state. There also appeared, sometimes in extreme degrees all unintended side-effects of modernity, including environmental destruction, pollution, depletion of resources, anomie and apathy of the mass society.

But it is not only that communist societies acquired fake modernity, in some respects they were also preserving *pre-modernity*, lingering all those decades under the facade of unified socialist bloc. Internally - autocratic regimes, and externally - the imperial domination, have suppressed all primordial divisions, producing fake homogeneity and consensus (the atrophy of the "civil society"). Ethnic, regional, religious diversity disappeared for the time being. With the fall of the external empire and ongoing internal liberalization, well suppressed but never outgrown pre-modern loyalties, solidarities and attachments had to reappear. The block as a whole, and each country separately emerged more divided, and internally split that anybody could have predicted, as if frozen in pre-modern era - in all national, ethnic, regional conflicts and resentments. The unifying effects of capitalism, the market and democracy did not operate, and once the artificial blockades were lifted, the pre-modern, ugly face of Soviet and Eastern European societies appeared in full clarity.

Finally, there was this strange set of symbolic embellishments, which baffled, but sometimes also misled Western observers: the constitutions, the parliaments, the elections, referendums, the local self-government, etc. Insiders know perfectly well to what extent it was all sham and what purely instrumental role it played. "Both the constitutions and the elections attested to the fact that these totalitarian regimes, in their mode of legitimation, in their relations between the center and the periphery, but also in their overall cultural and political program, were modern regimes" (Eisenstadt 1992, p.32). But even in this distorted form of ideological facade, the ideas of constitutionalism, democracy, representation, etc. entered social consciousness. And could turn into battle cries of the opposition, in new historical situation. "This specific political socialization could easily, under appropriate conditions, intensify their awareness of the contradictions between the premises of the regimes and their performances" (Eisenstadt 1992, p.34). Is it an accident that one of the strongest themes of the "Solidarity" movement was the demand for authenticity and truth?

All those historically unique conditions of former communist societies requires serious rethinking of the theories of modernization, once they are applied to this new domain. Such effort is already under way. First, the agency, the driving force of modernization is no longer seen as restricted to governments, or political elites acting *"from above"*. Rather, the mass mobilization *"from below"* for the sake of modernization, most often contesting the inert or conservative governments, falls into the focus of attention. Spontaneous social movements and emerging charismatic leaders, are considered as the main modernizing agencies.

Second, modernization is no longer seen as a solution devised and accepted by enlightened elites and imposed upon resistant, traditionally-

oriented populations, as was most often the case in the Third World countries. Rather it reflects commonly held, *spontaneous aspirations* of the population, inflamed by the demonstration effect of Western affluence, liberty and modern life-styles, as perceived through the widely available mass-media or personal contacts.

Third, instead of the emphasis on endogenous, immanent forces of modernization, the role of *exogenous factors* is recognized, including the world geo-political balance, the availability of external economic and financial support, the openness of the international markets, and last but not least - the availability of convincing ideological resources: political or social doctrines or theories encouraging modernizing efforts by affirming the values of modernity (e.g. individualism, discipline, work-ethic, self-reliance, responsibility, reason, science, progress, freedom).

Fourth, in place of the single, unique model of modernity to be emulated by backward societies (in classical theory, most often the model of the US), the idea of "moving epicenters of modernity" is introduced, and its corollary - the notion of alternative "reference societies" (Tiryakian 1985). It is claimed that American model may not necessarily be relevant for post-communist societies, and that in general the Western pattern of modernization is not necessarily superior, exportable and applicable everywhere. The suggestions for serious consideration of Japan or "Asian Tigers" (NIC's) as more relevant examples, appear more often.

Fifth, in place of a uniform process of modernization, more diversified image is proposed. It is indicated that in various areas of social life modernization has different tempo, rhythm and sequences - and in effect desynchronisation of modernizing efforts is apt to recur. Ralf Dahrendorf warns against the "dilemma of three clocks", facing post-communist societies, and argues that in the area of legal, constitutional reform - six month may be enough. But in economic domain, six years may be too little. And at the level of deep-lying life-ways, attitudes, values making up the modern "civil society", its renewal may take generations (Dahrendorf 1990).

Sixth, less optimistic picture of modernization is drawn, avoiding naive voluntarism of some early theories. The experience of post-communist societies clearly shows that not all is possible and attainable, and not all depends on sheer political will. Much more emphasis is put on blockades, barriers, "friction" (Etzioni 1992, Sztompka 1992), and also inevitable reversals, backlashes and breakdowns of modernization.

Seventh, instead of almost exclusive concern with economic growth, much more attention is directed toward human values, attitudes, symbolic meanings, and cultural codes, briefly - "intangibles and imponderables" (Sztompka 1991b), as prerequisites of successful modernization. The classical notion of "modern personality" is revived, but given a different role; it is no longer treated as the desired outcome of modernizing processes, but rather as a necessary precondition for economic take-off.

Eighth, the anti-traditionalist bias of early theory is corrected by pointing out that indigenous traditions may hide important pro-modernization themes. Instead of rejecting tradition, which may be counterproductive by provoking strong resistence, it is rather suggested to exploit tradition, by discovering *"traditions of modernization"*, and treating them as the legitimation for current modernizing efforts. This may be particularly relevant in the case of former socialist societies, which before the long episode of "fake modernity", actually freezing them in the pre-modern state, usually had experienced some periods of capitalist growth, or democratic evolution (e.g. Czechoslovakia or Poland between World Wars).

Ninth, the internally split character of post-communist societies, with some enclaves of modernity resulting from imposed industrialization and urbanization, and extensive lacunae of pre-modernity (in widespread attitudes, life-ways, political institutions, class composition, etc.), opens up a central issue of strategy: what to do with those tangible vestiges of real socialism, e.g. huge state-owned, and most often technologically out-dated industrial enterprises? The main debate evolves between the proponents of "Big Bang" approach, advocating complete deconstruction of economic, political and cultural remnants of socialism, and starting modernization from scratch; and "gradualists" who would like to salvage existing heritage, even at the cost of slower advancement toward modernity. As the arguments of both sides are convincing, the resolution of this issue remains open.

Tenth and the last factor which makes the present modernizing efforts of post-communist societies certainly different, and perhaps more difficult than the modernization of Third World countries after World War II, is the ideological climate prevailing in the "model societies" of the developed West. At the end of the 20th century the era of "triumphant modernity", with its prosperity, optimism, expansionist drive, seems to be over. The *crisis* rather than progress becomes the leitmotif of social consciousness (Holton 1990). Acute awareness of the side-effects and unintended "boomerang effects" of modernity produces disenchantment, disillusionment and outright rejection. At the theoretical level, "Post-Modernism" becomes the fashion of the day. It seems as if the Western societies were ready to jump off the train of modernity, bored with the journey, just at the moment when the post-communist East frantically tries to get on board. In this situation, it is harder to find unambiguous ideological support for modernizing efforts, running under the aegis of liberal-democracy and market-economy - the only conceivable direction, if we discount the fascist alternative, and some misty and mysterious "Third Way". The generalized account of this peculiar predicament has to find its place within revised modernization theory.

The neo-modernization theory is thus purged of all evolutionist or developmentalist overtones; it does not assume any necessity, unique goal, nor irreversible course of historical change. Instead modernization is seen as historically contingent process of constructing, spreading and legitimating

institutions and values of modernity: democracy, market, education, rational administration, self-discipline, work ethos, etc. Becoming modern (or escaping "fake modernity") is still a vital challenge for post-communist societies. And hence, revised modernization theory defends its continuing viability.

Theoretical Agenda

Let us address now the heuristic question: what major substantive emphases, problematic areas, focal issues may be suggested for future theorizing about social change, if we take into account recent historical experiences of post-communist societies? This will provide a tentative agenda for a new, more adequate theory.

There is one particular focus, one specific approach which has been relatively neglected in dealing with post-communist transition, and which, to my mind, seems remarkably promising. Let me call it *cultural-civilizational approach*. Its father-figure is Alexis de Tocqueville. The lesson he teaches us is not to underestimate the soft, intangible factors like "habits of the heart", "mores", "character of mind", "moral and intellectual condition of the people" (Tocqueville 1945, vol.I, p.12), or in more modern terminology - cultural rules, values, norms, dominant mentalities, pervasive symbols, forms of discourse, frameworks, rituals, widespread routines, etc.

The real meaning of the revolutions of 1989 cannot be grasped if we do not take the cultural-civilizational dimension into serious account. Without turning our focus to the level of culture, to the realm of intangibles and imponderables (Sztompka 1991b), "soft" variables, we shall neither be able to comprehend nor to overcome the obstacles and blockades that inhibit the processes running at the more tangible, "hard" institutional, or organizational level.

The opposition of institutional and cultural-civilizational levels of change may be thrown into sharper relief by means of a metaphor borrowed from a politologist Zbigniew Brzezinski (Brzezinski 1989): *building a house* is not the same as *establishing a home*. The earlier is only the shell, the empty framework ready for habitation, but not inhabited yet; it is the concern for architects; the latter is the living arena of social actions, interactions, loyalties and commitments, intimacy and identity, friendships and loves unfolding within that shell, it is the concern for sociology. The more or less explicit recognition of that distinction - of institutional and cultural-civilizational spheres - is also indicated by less metaphorical terms used in contemporary sociology: public sphere versus civil society, system versus life-world, structure versus human agency. The shades of meaning may differ, but all of those oppositions point in the same direction, sensitize us to the same fundamental opposition.

Let us apply it to the events in East-Central Europe. What happens at the miraculous year 1989? The revolution occurs primarily at the institutional level. The winning of power by the democratic opposition able to mobilize massive

popular movement in its support, opens the opportunity for major institutional changes. At that time "*the copying of institutions*" becomes a dominant approach (Offe 1993, p.46). The political and economic system is rapidly reconstructed by means of legislative decisions implementing Western institutions (or better, Western institutions *as imagined by the legislators*, usually in their pure, pristine forms, no longer to be found in the institutional practices of contemporary West). The clock of the lawyer - to use Ralf Dahrendorf's metaphor (Dahrendorf 1990) runs quickest. New institutions emerge: the legal skeleton for democracy and market is put in place.

Then, the civilizational surface of the life-world is touched relatively quickly. The "queuing society" (with the producer's monopoly and endemic shortages of goods and services) changes into consumer society. The drabness and greyness of life gives way to color, vitality and pluralism of options. The security and certainty of mediocre life-standards safeguarded by the state, turn into risks and insecurities of self-reliance, competition and unlimited aspirations. The personal dependence and pervasive state control is released, considerably enlarging the experience of liberty. Uniformity of the media evolves into enormous pluralism and variety of messages.

But to follow the new ways of life, to operate successfully within the new institutions the people require new cultural resources: codes, frames, rules, new "habits of the heart". This demand is not easily met. And therefore the viability of institutions is put at a peril. "Copied and transplanted institutions that lack the moral and cultural infrastructure on which the 'original' can rely, are likely to yield very different and often counter-intentional results" (Offe 1993, p.46). This happens for two reasons. First, because at the cultural level, what Ralf Dahrendorf calls "the clock of the citizen" (Dahrendorf 1990) runs much slower, and lags behind institutional developments. The cultural "habits of the heart" show surprising inertia and resilience. Even if no longer adequate to new institutions, they persist and present the most important barrier to smooth and rapid transition. "The one consequence of social trauma absolutely precluded by culturalist assumptions is rapid reorientation" (Eckstein 1988, p.796). And second, due to that cultural lag, the earlier dominant cultural syndrome, the communist culture, leaves the lasting heritage of "trained incapacity", the inability to make proper use of new institutional and personal opportunities. I have referred to that legacy as the syndrome of "civilizational incompetence" (Sztompka 1993b).

For example: some minimum level of trust in democratic regime and the rule of law, some minimum awareness of citizen's rights but also of duties and obligations, some minimum commitment and mobilization to participate - are the virtues indispensable for the operation of democratic polity. Likewise, some understanding of the idea of contract and mutual responsibilities, some acceptance of risk, readiness to compete and entrepreneurial drive are indispensable for participation in market economy. Finally, some tolerance for differences, recognition of pluralism, orientation in the multiplicity of options,

critical, discerning skills - seem necessary to find one's way in the open, diversified intellectual and artistic life. The sad fact is that the inherited culture of the past is incongruent with the culture adequate for the present, i.e. those "habits of the heart" which would be supportive for new, emerging institutions. This, in my view, is the main secret of our constant surprises: the disappointments and frustrations with the processes of post-communist transformation.

We may conceive this situation as a *"cultural lag"* or intra-societal *"culture clash"*: between the new, pro-democratic, pro-market and open culture - cosmopolitan, secular and pro-Western, bound with new emerging institutions - and the anti-democratic, anti- market, and dogmatic culture, linking in a strange alliance the conservative, nationalist, provincial, isolationist, xenophobic sentiments of the erstwhile European peripheries, with the anti-Western, anti-capitalist, egalitarian and populist orientations of the imposed "bloc culture" of the communist period. Seven years into the odyssey of post-communist transformations the societies of the area are still internally split, torn between those two cultural options. The informed observers of the process confirm this diagnosis. "The newly founded institutions are in place, but they fail to perform in anticipated ways and thus become subject to ever more hectic cycles of renewed institutional engineering and concomitant efforts to 're-educate' people so as to make them fit for their roles in the new institutions" (Offe 1993, p.34). "The common problem facing Easter European transformations is determined by the fact of 'modernization requirements' - simultaneously concerning the political, social and cultural spheres - mutually blocking instead of mutually stimulating one another" (Muller 1992, p. 146). The discrepancy of institutional and cultural sphere makes for the crucial "*duality of transformation*".

Why the domain of culture shows such persistence, why strong habits, accustomed codes, mental frames are so hard to unlearn, to eradicate, to dismantle? The plausible answer refers to the mechanism of socialization and *generational effect*. The bridge between the influences of the past, and the future is provided by generations; congeries of people who - in their formative years - have happened to be exposed to similar, significant social forces, to have lived through similar, significant social events. There is a "generation effect, when a particular age cohort responds to a set of stimuli (...) and then carries the impact of that response through the life cycle" (Almond and Verba 1980, p.400). The earliest lessons are best remembered. The strongest socializing impact is effected during the period of youth. As long as the majority of the population consists of the people whose young, formative years, and therefore crucial socializing experiences fall under the rule of communist regime, and the period of peripheral status - one can expect the continuing vitality of the bloc culture and traditionalist themes. This explains how the influences of some former, and already replaced, structures may still be felt in the present, how communism haunts these societies from the grave. And this

is why Dahrendorf estimates that the rewinding the "clock of the citizen", the reshaping of this deep cultural level will demand several generations (Dahrendorf 1990).

Such facts provide fascinating challenges for the sociology of social change, which has to shift its focus toward the domain of culture and enrich its standard agenda. The revolutions in East-Central Europe and their aftermath provide the "strategic research site" (Merton 1973, p.373) for the study of cultural traditions, the mechanisms of their transmission and diffusion, the secret of their revival after prolonged suppression, as well as their resilience to novelty, the baffling cultural lags and cultural clashes, as well as the ambivalent impacts of globalized culture. Unraveling of those mysteries will be important not only for the fate of societies in the region, but for better understanding of social changes occurring in the wider world, at the close of our "century of change".

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Note: This article draws several ideas from my earlier published work, and particularly: "Lessons of Post-Communist Transition for Sociological Theories of Change", in: J. Coenen-Huther and B. Synak (eds.), *Post-Communist Poland: From Totalitarianism to Democracy*, New York 1993: Nova Publishers, pp.131-150; "Cultural and Civilizational Change: The Core of Post-Communist Transition", in: B. Grancelli (ed.), *Social Change and Modernization: Lessons from Eastern Europe*, Berlin 1995: pp.235-248; "Looking Back: The Year 1989 as a Cultural and Civilizational Break", in: *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, No.2/1996, pp.115-129.

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PART I
THEORIZING POST-COMMUNISM