



Dioscuri Research Project
Eastern Enlargement – Western Enlargement
Cultural Encounters in the European Economy and Society
after the Accession

**Citizens and Governance in
Knowledge-based Society**

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Final Comparative Analyses

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From Local to International and Vice Versa – Comparing Five Case Studies of Privatization in Food and Drink Industry

The aim of the paper is to compare five cases which deal with privatization processes in the food and beverages industry, within the research frame of the DIOSCURI project. These cases include brewery privatizations in Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary and Serbia and the foundation and operation of a firm in the food and beverages industry in Romania, which was used as a distant case.¹ Enterprises concerned were different by scope, type of industry, sequence of privatization, strength and business capacities of the companies (“big players”) that privatized the local breweries, economic activities. Still, what is common to all of them is that all went through privatization and reckon their privatization as successful. Therefore we started by questioning what made that success. The preliminary hypothesis was that the success could be explained as a combination of international and local aspects of an organizational and business change. In addition we introduced a distinction between embedded and disembedded notions of locality/internationality, trying to put more light on the ways these two notions are employed in the process of organizational transformation. Conscious, instrumental usage of these notions reveals both their artificiality and the importance of acknowledging the cultural dimension of business change, by illuminating the importance of “playing with culture” in all the cases. At the beginning of the paper, the ideal type of historical sequence of privatization and internationalization as we have derived it from six cases described in five case studies of DioscURI project is introduced. Having outlined the ideal historical sequence type of privatization in several dimensions of the process, we present particular cases relating them to the proposed ideal type scheme. The second part of the analysis is devoted to more speculative analysis using concepts of locality and internationality, and embedded and disembedded, to explain different faces of the enterprises. The preliminary hypothesis about dichotomous (local/international) analytic scheme is at the end supplemented with the importance of medium – regional - level, on which actually most of the localization processes of international business have been happening. We have also pointed to the various articulations between local and international (seen both as social contexts, values and discourses on company and working identity) that have produced different hybrid forms, experiences and identities.

¹ Bulai, Alfred. „The success of Romanian FDI enterprise”; Erdei, Ildiko. „The Success Story of Serbian brewery: or How International Company out Local Brewery”; Mares, Kamil. „Czech Brewery: from Socialism to Internationalism”; Mester, Tibor. „Takeover by privatisation in a Southern Hungarian Brewery 1993-2006”; Topolic, Davor. „The Croatian brewing industry: Case study of two breweries“.

Hybridization in the Making: Cultural Encounters in Multinational Corporations Investing in Central and Eastern Europe

Usually, anthropological, sociological and managerial studies tend to look at how managerial strategies and companies' behavior are transformed by local context, local circumstances. We propose to turn this perspective upside down and focus on how MNCs (multinational companies) transform local cultures not by transfer of technological knowledge and know-how, neither by socializing their employees to new life-styles, associated with consumption, but how they bring social interdependencies creating new kinds of identities inside and outside the realm of work. We also try to observe how local context and locally created interdependencies in subsidiaries of MNCs influence market behavior and development of a corporate "universe" in the CEE Region.

Since the late 1990s more common strategy increasingly included a process of "hybridization" of cultural and organizational patterns and behaviors within transnational companies. Hybridization consists of relatively deep interaction between local culture, patterns of behavior and perceptual schemes and the rather universal norms and tendency towards standardization of MNCs. This process involves not only reference to the local resources such as skilful work force, structure of the market or competitiveness of a given company, but also the way local resources can be used by Western and Eastern managers.

Managers and employees from Eastern Europe do not face merely new economic rationality; they are confronted with a universe of values and models of behavior which are to be internalized quickly. In the local Eastern-European context they are perceived not by experience of growing complexity of work-relations, but rather through non-occupational meanings such as "personal sacrifice" or partnership. Eastern European employees tend to "import" meanings of official business terms. A high level of devotion towards professional life is accepted as a part of their own(!), individual "share" in the historic transformation. This inherently individualized attitude presupposes strong attachment to the idea of self-responsibility. Therefore, "the spirit of capitalism" appears as "deferred gratification" but on the other hand it does not presume some kinds of collective consciousness on what the overall shape of economy (market) should be, since it is treated as a reality which can not be molded by individual or even collective effort besides the one aimed at individual or corporative profits. In circumstances of ongoing dynamic change, one is limited in long-term thinking and encouraged to the individualized "career-path" activities. If we take into account those situations which result in an individual's distance towards new work-ideologies, we can presume that this distance prevents Eastern-European employees from collective bargaining meanwhile engendering individualizing process (Elias 1992).

Hybridization leads to new "strategies of action" used by local staff to utilize competitive advantages and to cope with uncertainty in the times of change. Employees' and managers' reflexivity stems from on-going redefinition of circumstances. On the other hand – those circumstances induce to accept higher level of risk. Culture encounters could be understood from such a vantage point more as multilayered tensions and co-ordinations between various strategies of action used by actors who are embedded in interdependencies. The cultural encounters do not occur merely on the level of what actors find artificial, but as in the case of Eastern Westerners or Western Easterners, become parts of their "natural" identity.

Comparative Study on Raiffeisen International

The comparative study on Raiffeisen International (RI) pursues an analysis of cultural encounters between foreign and local business actors that appear to be distinctive in the two major phases of the history of the company: the period of massive expansion based on a Western-based mother firm in a territory where it assumes cultural familiarity, and the period of consolidation of acquired assets and markets in an international shareholding company with a relatively decentralized organizational structure. In spite of differences of the local institutional stories, most respondents feel that their respective organizational story is something peculiar, not necessarily following mainstream rules of the game in global banking and Western capitalism. In search of the main results of cultural encounters, case study researchers report on various forms of compromises both on individual and organizational levels. It seems that permanently achieved good results and the negative image of other banking models keep foreigners and locals on a common ground in RI. All case studies in our research articulated the problem that accounts for cultural encounters are shaped by the very position of the informants in the firm observed. In some cases key positions in the enterprise may mean a key role in cultural negotiations: economic power is strongly associated with cultural competence and championship, although not necessarily in a strict causality. Moreover, business success is an important intervening factor in our inquiry. Accordingly, greater success and convincing market results legitimate different autonomy of action for managers and thus different space for negotiating cultural compromise. In sum, it appears that our respondents endorse the self-image that the senior management of RI proposes: “the secrets of Raiffeisen International’s success in Central and Eastern Europe undoubtedly also include two characteristic features of Raiffeisen tradition: the strong local roots of the banking subsidiaries and their high degree of autonomy within the Group.”

Tamas Dombos and Alice Navratilova:

The European Parliament from a Central European perspective: MEPs' narratives

Based on 27 in depth interviews with MEPs and their assistants from the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland the paper aims at reconstructing the cultural encounter resulting from the arrival of politicians from Central Europe to the European Parliament. In these accounts the EP appears as a political institution with a very clear normative self-image, centered around four principles: individual responsibility, professionalism, compromise seeking and the reference to a common European identity. Although these four principles feature in nearly all of the interviewees' narratives, MEPs differ substantially in the way they relate to and interiorize this image. The paper identifies six types of narratives differing along four dimensions: identification with this normative self-image, the evaluation of the institution's operation, the perception of the encounter as a learning process and the form of participation. The six types of narratives are that of 'keen learners', 'ambivalent experts', 'indifferent opportunists', 'embittered observers', 'homeward mediators' and 'noisy resisters'. Rather than following a simple binary logic of East-West opposition, these hybrid strategies incorporate various levels of acceptance, criticism and opposition, making the East-West divide one of the 'liquid cleavages' in operation in the European Parliament.

Petya Kabakchieva and Katalin Kovács

East-West encounters on the field of pre-accession programs: the SAPARD experience

The comparison of the installation of the first EU assistance program called SAPARD did not fully justify the authors' prior hypothesis according to which *the path for establishing hybrids* and softening the unequal position between the provider and the recipients at encounters *was either non-existing or was extremely narrow*.

The six country reports highlighted that the mandatory procedural elements were inserted into divergent political structures and cultures. The exercise of building EU-conform institutions was successful in the sense that – at the end (!) – the new institutions had become operating channels of spending the allocated funds and fulfilled their mandatory tasks (tendering, processing, monitoring, paying). The concrete organizational solutions brought about during the bilateral pre-accession negotiations varied remarkably, *from the fully centralized model* Bulgaria and Slovenia embarked on *to a fairly decentralized model* applied in Poland. The ways of institution building in the remaining three countries - the Czech Republic, Hungary and Romania - represented intermediate solutions between the two extremes. The lack of a uniform model proves that *the path for finding country-tailored solutions existed, therefore the process* of inserting entirely new institutions into divergent administration systems *was managed in a more-or-less adaptive manner*.

However, *the path leading to new institutions was narrow*, in the sense that the procedures, the functions and the mandatory elements of the new institutions were strictly determined by the relevant EU legislation. It was narrow also in the sense that even the legitimate hybrids were (strongly) advised by the EC partners during the negotiations; innovations were not always and everywhere accepted. The inevitably unequal position between the donors and the recipients could show itself as an almost unconditional acceptance of the suggestions of the EC partners (Bulgaria, Romania), in other cases open conflicts, collisions hardened the procedures (Hungary, Poland), whilst in the most westernized countries, in the Czech Republic and Slovenia, the recipients' pragmatic approach eased to find common points.

In four of the six cases, either for the lack of abilities and the relevant skills (Bulgaria and Romania), or because of the covered resistance during the negotiation phase (Hungary and Poland), the new structures were largely imposed by the donor on the recipient, much more than in the case of Czech Republic or Slovenia, even if the recipients gave in voluntarily. However, good working relations and a mutual appreciation eventually developed, without the cultural encounters between Western and Eastern administrative cultures resulting in a mutual adaptation of the administrative cultures concerned. *It was a one-way process within which Western norms and values were transmitted* to Eastern countries having divergent administrative cultures themselves. SAPARD experiences could lead to improved negotiating strategies and skills in a later phase, but during the pre-accession phase, mutual cultural exchange could not work out. Nevertheless, smaller-scope innovations could be developed by local players if the corner stones, the most important, legally stipulated functions and principles were not questioned. *A specific cohabitation of the elements of the two governance cultures* was brought about by encounters for the short period of pre-accession years. This applies both to the *organizational peculiarities of SAPARD units*, and the *duality of the administrative cultures* of the then new member states: the new born, more westernized “minority” governance culture represented by the staff members of the SAPARD agencies co-habited as islands with the less westernized “majority” cultures represented by the ministry staff members; a situation prevailing yet in the post-accession period.

Rural Development Programs

This comparative study is based on four national case studies that address similar issues and share a common conceptual framework and methodological approach. Three of the case studies (Serbia, Croatia and Bulgaria) explore rural development projects, while the Romanian case is focused on a university exchange programme. What the four national case studies have in common is that the cultural encounters they address are taking place in the comparatively structured context of projects for rural development and exchange of institutional practices. The encounters are therefore bounded and partly influenced by the rules and regulations, governing the respective project. These rules are designed to ensure manageability and predictability of the project activities by providing a frame for the working interactions of the participants. Thus they become an important factor predetermining to certain extent the nature of the encounters. The four cases demonstrate that it is quite difficult to evaluate univocally the success or the failure of the developmental initiatives. Even the key actors, who were most involved with the respective projects, are ambivalent when reflecting on its performance.

One issue that this comparative study puts forward, and which is worth some theoretical reflection, is the distinction between the two related concepts of ‘mutual adaptation’ and ‘hybridization’. Adaptive changes are shallow and result in altered or enriched behavioral repertoires of individual actors, which enable them to function successfully in the new cultural environment. As the data from the Serbian and Bulgarian cases suggests, adaptive changes take place mostly at the individual level, as a personal socialization strategy, but hardly affect deeper levels of values, beliefs and worldviews. Hybridization on its part presupposes more comprehensive and lasting change, which affects deeper and enduring structures, such as organizational and societal patterns of behavior, group identities and explanatory models of the social world (shared attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, etc.)

The data of the four cases suggest that change is not evenly spread across different dimensions of culture. It occurs first at individual level, later at organizational level and only then eventually at institutional and communal level. Those individuals, who have genuinely embraced the values of participation and empowerment underlying the development projects, tend to experience this time lag as a painful and alienating discrepancy since they have to live and work in societies where the changes are lagging behind their personal evolution. From such a perspective the surface adaptation – the imitative and pretended adoption of western ways – can be interpreted as a legitimate, although largely unconscious defensive strategy for avoiding the loneliness and frustration inherent to profound personal transformation conservative social environments.

Think Tanks in the World of Applied Economics: a Comparative View across Eastern Europe

The study compares 11 institutions devoted to applied economic research and located across 8 countries. The impact of specific institutional and national features on the conceptual exchange in the field of applied economics between East and West is assessed. Path dependence is found to play an important role for the style, the smoothness and the efficiency of the transfer of ideas in different organizations. At the same time, a neat convergence is displayed in their messages. Mainstream stance (rooted in the neoclassical tradition; pro-market solutions) largely dominates the scene, due to common sources of funding, to a similar professional tongue and to comparable institutional models. Knowledge produced by the sample's units is characterized by theoretical parochialism, and a stress on inductive and circumstantial approaches. Eastern economists consider themselves as simple theory-takers from the West, while acquaintance with domestic peculiarities is seen as their main asset. Cultural encounters set in motion a plethora of counterparts with their own manners, messages, tools and impact factor. With time, the room for cultural shocks in those encounters has been patently narrowing, with fewer and fewer surprises awaiting participants. The case studies reveal a great variety of interferences that influence the path of ideas across different institutional settings. A clear trend towards commercialization is also noticeable: going East, in particular, becomes an appealing strategy for many organizations that re-export Western messages and models.

The evidence gathered demonstrates that "national" historical patterns matter for the swiftness and the quality with which applied economic knowledge is transferred. Of prime importance for the process is, however, sociology of knowledge – institutional profile seems more pertinent than intellectual archeology for the understanding of the transmission mechanism. In a more practical vein, encounters materialize in a panoply of reform projects and/or in numerous applied studies. Neither of them are hybrids in the sense of crossbreeds between distant cultural milieus and intellectual traditions: they are rather eclectic mixes between competing imported conceptual models. True hybridity is produced by a different kind of forces at work. From one side are "technicalities" such as conflicting requirements by applied studies' customers; organizational promiscuity that corrupts or distorts the messages; the semantic material lost/added in the interplay between outsiders and insiders; the compromises imposed by the handling of imperfect data sources... At a more fundamental level, hybridity is nurtured by the dichotomy of the Western economic culture itself. "Old Europe" is a profoundly hybrid cultural topos which combines, in an often traumatic way, two conflicting principles – the statist, dirigiste and interventionist philosophy (embedded in EC bureaucracy); distinctly liberal and free-market values (embedded in the single market and the Eurozone). With its double face Europe delivers ambiguous messages and is a confusing source of inspiration for Eastern mediators.

A Bumpy Road to the West: Reforming Economic Education in Eastern Europe

This report synthesizes and summarizes the findings of eight case studies of reform or creation of new departments of economics and business studies in Eastern Europe after the fall of state socialism. The material comes from Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Serbia. The reasons to undertake reforms, which are an on-going process, were the needs to teach students knowledge and skills relevant to market economies, as well as a willingness to bridge the intellectual gap in economics and business studies between Eastern Europe and the West. In all cases under analysis, there was no ideological resistance to change, and the Western ideas (in particular, the mainstream economics) have been broadly welcomed. Comparisons of the cases suggests that the universities in the Visegrad countries are more advanced in the reform process than the relative latecomers, the schools from Southern-Eastern Europe. Also, the reforms were more successful when introduced in the newly established institutions or units than in the case of those already existing, mostly because of the resistance of the entrenched interests of the faculty. Despite the pronounced acceptance of the need for reform, in most of the cases, the change seem to be relatively shallow. Everywhere, there has been a far-reaching overhaul of the curricula, making them comparable to what is being taught in the West. But, while the content of teaching changed, and methods of instruction changed to a degree as well, the way the departments operate still differs much from the best practices of the West. In particular, there is not enough stress upon (and often capabilities for) quality research and publishing. Also, in the process of faculty recruitment and promotion there is not enough stress on research record, and hiring is often done in a way not competitive enough. Thus, a fast importation of the Western knowledge has been accompanied by the persistence of behavioral patterns specific for the region—the institutions of higher learning are less meritocratic than in the West, and more prone to clientelism and inbreeding. Reasons are economic, institutional, and cultural. Resources for research and education are inadequate. Countervailing powers against the entrenched interest of the faculty are weak. Practices of arranging things informally persist. A possible way to remedy the undesired trends is a policy of upgrading selected universities—giving them more resources, but also putting much tougher requirements as to the faculty appointment and research (publication) record.

Janos Matyas Kovacs

Beyond the Basic Instinct? : On the Reception of New Institutional Economics in Eastern Europe

In planning our subproject on East-West cultural encounters in economic sciences, we wanted to check what happened to the institutionalist instincts of the economistst in the region in the wake of an unprecedented upsurge in global exchange of ideas after 1989. Did they remain encapsulated in a research program what was called at the time „quasi-/speculative institutionalism” or have they grown into a more sophisticated theory, among other things, by means of borrowing from the West.

We assumed to explore a large-scale venture of importation accompanied by a rivalry of two Western paradigms (ORDO liberalism and new institutional economics (NIE)) for the hearts and the minds of Eastern European economists. We were convinced that textbook Marxism would disappear while market socialism (“reform economics”) would merge with old and new institutionalist theories prevailing in the West. The communist reformers would become capitalist “transformers” who would badly need reliable (non-speculative) know-how for initiating institutional change. It seemed reasonable to assume that generational differences would matter. The younger you are, the greater your chances for receiving proper education in neoclassical economics – a sine qua non of absorbing new institutionalist ideas. And conversely, if you insist on making verbal-historical research, you will find refuge in older versions of institutional thought.

We disregarded three other options: a.) ORDO would smoothly withdraw from the competition but NIE would not become a winner; b.) neoclassical theory would not produce its “Eastern dissidents” for quite some time, moreover it would distance itself from NIE in certain respects; c.) under post-communism, the economic profession would face an “anything goes” situation.

What was disregarded at the outset has proven to be the reality we had to cope with as the field work unfolded. The paper guides the reader through a chain of surprises with the help of the case studies made in the eight countries under scrutiny. We did not discover a massive breakthrough of any kind of institutionalism; saw new institutionalism compete (not with the old one but) with the neoclassical paradigm; and were astonished to conclude that currently in Eastern European economic sciences virtually any paradigm can combine with any other. These observations were condensed in a tentative typology of hybrid cases of institutionalist thought in the region. The types include the „refuge seekers”, the “intransigent verbalists”, the “ORDO rearguard”, the “indifferent mainstreamers”, the “pragmatists (practical institutionalists)”, the “neophytes”, the “transdisciplinary supporters/challengers”, the potential synthesizers and the “Western free riders”.

The images of the EU in Eastern Europe during the pre-accession period

In the comparative paper six countries' (Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia) EU press images and representations were analyzed by relying on the concept of "self-colonization" invented by Alexander Kiossev². The initial representation that prevailed in all the analyzed countries' press was the image of the EU as the Promised Land. The most seductive aspect of Europe for the new countries was the wealth and the prosperity that the old member states enjoyed. This strong presence of the image was interpreted by drawing attention to the fact that forty years of communism, among many other things, induced craving for consumption. Hence the adoration of consumerism and the identification of the EU with the old image of the rich "West" could be explained.

The further analysis of the images revealed that the perception of the EU changed and the successive discourses on the EU were based on the generally shared view that accepting the generous offer of the EU and being obedient could neither eliminate the resentment at seeing the efforts to adopt not being fully appreciated nor the fear that stemmed from entering the unknown. Thus obedience, resentment and fear were identified as the main attitudes and emotions that underpinned the discussions on the EU and generated different types of discourses.

The first type was thus the *obedience discourse*. The initial self-perception of the candidate countries was that of being in a subordinated position. In all national press it was strongly stressed how the countries craved for being civilized by the EU. It was combined with a cruel self-criticism. The *resentful discourse* arose when realizing that the EU was not necessarily as welcoming as the candidate countries imagined. The all-positive image of the EU was deconstructed and presented as an unreliable stingy and petty-minded entity. Once accession became a certainty, resentment was replaced by *fear*. The EU was depicted as an aggressive agent, a foreign oppressor, a colonizer. This type of representation was linked to the fear of losing the nation identity. One more type of discourse was revealed: the *expert* one, when the EU was not discussed in relational terms but as an independent entity. These images included the ones that criticized or even ridiculed the complicated European structure and raised doubts about its efficiency.

It was concluded that the effective, influential and persuasive images were self-referential and emotive rather than objective and cognitive. The old-new cleavages between Westernizers and traditionalists were recreated and the process was very much seen and constituted as a colonization process either inflicted on the candidate countries voluntarily or imposed by an external power.

² Alexander Kiossev (1999). Notes on Self-colonising Cultures. In B. Pejic, D. Elliott (ed.) Art and Culture in post-Communist Europe. Stockholm: Moderna Museet. pp. 114-118.

The Press Representation of Multinational Companies: a Comparative Study

The objective of the comparative study of the media reviews on MNC (multinational companies) representations was to provide an additional aspect to and a deeper insight into the findings of the fieldwork case studies of the Dioscuri project. The selection criteria of the MNCs were primarily to include one company that was “unusually important” for the country. *L.G. Philips Displays* was chosen for analysis in the *Czech Republic*, another *Philips* branch in *Poland*, *Vodafone* and *Suzuki* in *Hungary*, *Interbrew* (beer) in *Slovenia* and *Knjaz Miloš* (mineral water) in *Serbia*. In the samples the biggest national dailies – different either in political orientation, or style (tabloid, for example) – and one or two of the most important economic weeklies (or magazines) were included. The timeframe was different in each case depending on how long the company had been in the given country. Therefore, the number of articles selected varied as well, but in all the reviews at least 100 articles were analyzed.

The prevailing ‘order of discourse’ of the Czech, Polish and Hungarian press was characterized by the dominance of a pro-MNC position. Critical voices were constantly marginalized and those with little or no power were pictured very negatively. In Slovenia, the media discursive field was fragmented generating the “national interest” as well as other positions critical of various agents (the government, the EU and both the foreign and the domestic company. In the Serbian press a negative image of multinational companies prevailed. A significant difference in comparison to the Slovenian case was that in the Serbian media discourse the “national interest” position was remarkably stronger as well as the opposite position was more blatantly criticizing and ridiculing its discursive enemy, the “economic patriots”. It was concluded that the press representations of the actual encounters did not contribute to the resolution of the conflicts between actors but rather accentuated them, by enhancing differences between actors and not representing stages of adjustment. We could always see conflicting sides deeply divided by real or imagined differences. The second important conclusion of the study was that apparently the prevailing ‘order of discourse’ – whether it was more inclined to favor MNCs or not – did not influence the outcome of the conflicts. The portrayal of potential cultural hybrids seemed to be in immanent contradiction with the rules of press representation. The dividing line between good guys and bad guys, friends and foes prevailed without letting nuanced pictures to be sketched.