

Talking about cooperation: continuity and change in a rural community in Slovakia

Sofie Joosse¹

Department of Urban and Rural Development, Swedish Agricultural University, Uppsala

Department of Human Geography, Uppsala University, Ekonomikum, Uppsala

Talking about Cooperation: Continuity and Change in a Rural Community in Slovakia.

Post-communist studies have interpreted and analysed the political transformation in Central and Eastern European Countries (CEEC's), and its consequences for social life in different ways. In general, two approaches can be distinguished: a continuous and a discontinuous approach. This paper instead advances an ideational approach, which considers ideas to have a central mediating role in processes of transformation. The central question of this paper is if and how ideas, originating in communist times, continue to have relevance for everyday life in CEEC's. Using examples from a study on the interpretation of cooperation in a Slovak rural community, this paper shows that people evaluate and explain past and present-day cooperation as bricoleurs, re-using ideas originating in communist times. The concept of ideational bricolage shows that ideas are used dynamically: people actively reproduce, redefine and reconstruct old ideas in a new context.

Sociológia 2007, Vol. 39 (No. 3: 245-258)

Key words: cooperation; post-communism; change; ideas; ideational bricolage; Slovakia; rural; community.

1. Introduction

The transformation of Central and East European Countries (CEEC's) from communist to liberal democratic societies is fascinating because it offers a unique opportunity to analyse the social dynamics of change, one of the central subjects in social science. It is for this reason that Post-Communist Studies (PCS) are in a promising position to contribute to the development of social theory. (Bunce 1995; Roeder 1999) However, this promise has not yet been fulfilled, as PCS falls short of considerable social theory building. (Kubicek 2000; Pickel 2002) This paper aims to incite the theoretical development of PCS by exploring possibilities for an alternative analysis of social change.

Within PCS, institutions play a central role as an analytical concept. Conventionally they are conceptualised either as initiators or barriers for social change. Within this (neo-) institutional focus two schools can be distinguished. The first emphasises the abruptness and revolutionary replacement of traditional institutions with new ones. The second emphasises instead the continuous and

¹ Address: Ir. Sofie Joosse, Department of Urban and Rural Development, Swedish Agricultural University, Ulls väg 28b, Box 7012, 75007 Uppsala, Sweden. Department of Human Geography, Uppsala University, Ekonomikum, Kyrkogårdsgatan 10, Box 513, 751 20 Uppsala, Sweden. E-mail: sofie.joosse@sol.slu.se, fax: +4618673512

conservative influence that traditional institutions maintain even in a radically changed context.

The objective of this paper is to go beyond this well-rehearsed debate between continuous and discontinuous approaches by focussing on the *ideational* dimension of institutions. This alternative approach is rooted in the recent ideational turn in social science, which underlines the crucial, dialectic role ideas play in social transformation. Several sociological analyses have used an ideational analysis to conceptualise change, i.e. they use ideas to explain how periods of comparatively stability are interrupted by more incremental periods of transformation. This paper aims to further develop an ideational approach by using it to study social change in CEEC's². CEEC's can be considered as extreme cases (Flyvbjerg 2001) in this respect, because of the abrupt political changes in these countries. Prompted by the ideational turn in social science this paper addresses the question if and how ideas, originating in communist times, are still relevant for institutions facilitating cooperation in Slovakia.

Before this question is dealt with, the paper discusses how an institutional focus in PCS reflects sociological schools on the dynamics of change and draws attention to the importance of ideas for social change. The role of ideas for social change in general, and for the transformation in CEEC's in particular, will be illustrated with examples from a community study on cooperation in rural Slovakia. These examples highlight that people in the community interpret and qualify institutions facilitating cooperation as 'bricoleurs' (Clever 2003): often using ideas in an ambiguous and voluntary fashion. This shows that ideas are reproduced, reconstructed, re-interpreted to fit to a changing context. Finally, this paper considers the implications of this ideational bricolage for a sociological understanding of change and the ideational approach.

2. Conceptualising Change in Post-Communist Studies

Institutions have been dominant in the interpretation and analysis of the political transformation in CEEC's and its consequences for social life. (Kubicek 2000) In general, two approaches can be distinguished, although the lines can by no means be neatly drawn³. They both utilise institutions as analytical concepts to explain social transformation, but do so in a very different way.

The first approach is particularly well-established in Economics and Rational-Choice Theory and gained a dominant position shortly after the 1989-revolution.

² Other articles have also emphasised the ideational dimension in processes of transformation in CEEC's. (Burawoy – Verdery 1999; Oushakine 2000; Dawisha 2005; Torsello 2003)

³ An example of an approach which goes beyond this dichotomy is Zijdeveld's understanding of institutionalisation. (Zijdeveld 2000) In his definition institutions are both barriers as well as facilitators of change.

(Schmitter – Karl 1994; idem, 1995; Pickel 2002) It conceptualises the transformation from a communist – into a capitalistic neo-liberal political system as an abrupt change. Proponents of this *discontinuous approach* emphasise the revolutionary and abrupt consequences of the transformation on social and economic institutions. (Burawoy 2001; McDermott 2004) They put forward the idea that the 1989-revolution was followed by the take-off of liberal-capitalist societies with its ideals of democracy, freedom and civic society (Sokol 2001) and the irreversible collapse of communism as idea and institution. (Dawisha 2005) During the 1990s this approach was criticised for ignoring the legacy of the past (Bunce 1995; Böröcz 2001) and displaying an idealistic and voluntaristic optimism regarding the replacement of communist policies and central planning with new liberal-democratic institutional and organisational designs, such as parliamentary systems, constitutional design and legislation. (Kubicek 2000; Eyal et al. 2001) Critics state that this approach addresses institutions merely as instrumental products, i.e. organisations, systems and rules, which people *choose and build* to regulate social life. This conception of social change corresponds poorly with real-life experiences of change in which the influences of ‘old’ institutions are often clearly visible.

The second approach argues that CEEC’s are no social and economic *tabulae rasae*, but that (already existing) social and economic norms, institutions and behaviour form the scene in which change takes place. This *continuous approach* is particularly well-presented in historical and social studies and conceptualises transformation as an incremental and evolutionary process. (Hall 1994) Characteristic for this approach is the strong emphasis on the continuous and conservative influence which communist institutions have on the establishment of liberal-capitalist societies. The continuous approach in turn is criticised for a deterministic view on change. Critics state that the emphasis on the conservative influence of communist and pre-communist institutions on social life in CEEC’s does not leave room for substantial improvements, which gives it a deterministic and pessimistic outlook on social and economic life in CEEC’s. (Bunce 1995) It reduces people to passive subjects, over-socialised in institutions, which consequently minimises room for agency.

3. Taking Ideas Seriously

Briefly summarised: the discontinuous approach is struggling to explain stability and social order, while the continuous approach has difficulty explaining change and social disorder. Recently, both institutional approaches have invoked ‘ideas’,

as a concept, to help explain stability and change. (Blyth 2002)⁴ In discontinuous approaches, ideas are conceptualised as functional constructs designed to help people realise their interests or to maximise their utility. (Blyth 2002) Still, despite the effort in discontinuous approaches to incorporate supra-individual properties to account for stability, such as institutions and ideas, it fails to appreciate them as objects existing a priori to individuals, having certain causal properties. (Blyth 2002) Ideas are not just instruments which people strategically produce to coordinate their actions, to be used or discarded at free will. In continuous approaches, ideas facilitate change. In other words, change is only possible when overarching ideas undergo change. People are socialised in particular ideas and will respond to these ideational changes (Blyth, 1997). They can only act (differently) as far as dominant ideas allow them to. Dominant ideas are frequently labelled as a ‘hegemonic discourse’ (Escobar 1995; Laclau – Mouffe 1985), i.e. it rules out the possibility of alternative ideas, which people could use. In other words, actors can only think, talk and act within one discourse (Foucault 1975; 1995), and discourses are incommensurable. (Kuhn 1970) It should be clear that an acceptance of the hegemony of discourse i.e. ideas, consequently leads to a deterministic and static outlook on social change.

According to Blyth (1997; 2001; 2002) the introduction of ideas in institutional approaches has not contributed to innovative theory building. Instead both approaches have only reinforced and sustained their established theoretical points of departure. Furthermore, the two approaches are reflecting different theoretical traditions of sociological research and have not tried to incorporate more recent developments in social theory, which aim to dialectically relate institutions and actors by focussing on the mediating role of ideas. The introduction of the mediating role of ideas is a theoretical novelty in the sociological analysis of change. For example, Hay (2002) puts forward an understanding of social change as *punctuated evolution*. Indeed, his ‘evolution’ refers to the continuous role institutions have on social and economic life. But, as Hay makes clear, this evolution can sometimes become abruptly instable during periods of transformation and social change, i.e. it becomes ‘punctuated’. Hay argues that dynamics of punctuated evolution always heavily depend on the crucial mediating role of ideas.

Hay’s theory of change is based on a dialectical understanding of the relation between actor and institution. (Giddens 1984; Bourdieu 1998) Institutions simultaneously limit and enable social action. They are both cause and effect of social action; which means that actors necessarily act within institutional limits.

⁴ This ‘ideational turn’ manifests itself in the frequent use of the concept of *discourse* in social studies. Discourse is defined conventionally as a specific ensemble of ideas. (Hajer 1995; Hilhorst 2000)

This dialectical understanding emphasises that actors always have a choice for action. However, they do not have direct and unmediated knowledge of the contexts in which they find themselves. Instead their knowledge of their context is socially constructed (Berger – Luckman 1966), i.e. it is interpreted through the institutions which not only provide collectively shared modes of acting, but also of thinking and feeling. (Zijderveld 2000) Ideas are thus both the means by which actors are able to ground decisions, as well as socially constructed collectively shared modes for thinking. For this purpose it is necessary to assign a key role for ideas as intermediates between actors and the context in which they find themselves.

If the dual nature of ideas is accepted, contrary arguments supplied by Escobar (1995) and Laclau and Mouffe (1985), an all-encompassing hegemonic idea or discourse does not exist. Acknowledging the duality of ideas means that the number of ideas actors can use is not infinite, but is limited based on historically developed and collectively shared modes for thinking. In the remainder of the paper this ideational approach will be used to assess if and how ideas from communist times continue to have relevance for everyday life in CEEC's.

4. Talking About Cooperation – Examples from Everyday Life

The examples used in this paper are derived from a case study which analysed how people in a rural community interpreted and evaluated institutions facilitating cooperation during and after the transformation of a communist republic to a liberal-democracy. (Joosse, 2002) It is not the purpose of this paper to present the case study, but to highlight specific examples from the case study to illustrate how people re-use and redefine already existing ideas.

The village⁵ used for this case-study is situated in the Northwest of Slovakia, in a mountainous area, relatively ill-suited for agriculture. At the time of study the village had around 500 inhabitants. The village had a small grocery-store, two bars, a community hall, used for social meetings and sports and a small diaper factory. The regional agricultural Cooperative, consisting of the lands of 5 neighbouring villages, used to be an important employer for the inhabitants of the village. Due to rationalisation and downsizing of the Cooperative the number of people employed slowly dropped to zero after 1989. Instead people worked in the local factory or in the factories of nearby towns. It was difficult to find a job and an increasing number of people under 30 years of age migrated in search of work.

⁵ For privacy reasons the name of the village will not be disclosed.

People from all different ages have been included in the study, although more respondents were over 30 years of age⁶.

When talking about cooperation in the village, it is remarkable how often the people referred positively to the period of Communism. They often used particular notions, originating in communist times, to discuss and evaluate past and present ways of cooperation. At first sight these notions seem to be part of a dominant frame of reference. Some characteristic quotes beneath illustrate these remarks in everyday small talk.

'Co-operation used to be better. Communism is better than Capitalism. First everybody helped everybody with everything. Now only friends sometimes help each other.'

'Under communism the relation between neighbours was better. With the gas everybody worked for himself⁷. The people did not help each other. People used to be more co-operative. There was more comradeship. People were more human.'

'First the village was one big family. There used to be much more co-operation. People helped each other much more.'

'There used to be more cooperation, because people were more friendly and had more time. People are now more individualistic. It used to be really different.'

'Co-operation is worse than before. If you want help, you always have to pay for it. After the revolution [the 1989-revolution] the premium goal of people is to get rich very fast. They used to be poorer, but life was better.'

The quotes above highlight how people draw a clear line between cooperation during and after Communism. The division between the political systems is used to describe and give meaning to present-day cooperation. It is a widely shared idea in the village that nowadays the motive to help other people is self-interest, which is contrasted with cooperation during communist times when people's motive to help each other was the common good or well-being. As a consequence, people in the village perceive a process of individualisation. Furthermore, it seemed that people still used ideas related to communist times to describe and explain co-operation. A telling example of such an idea is the word 'comradeship', which

⁶ Hraba (2001) has pointed out that in the Czech Republic, age influences the perception of consequences of change, i.e. elderly are more inclined to perceive these changes negatively. He has also argued that Czech citizens living in rural areas experience a greater anxiety towards economic changes. (Hraba 1999)

⁷ During the field work the village got connected to the gas network. Though a company constructed the central pipeline going through the two streets of which the village consists, every household had to construct the connection from their house to the pipeline themselves.

was a central concept in communist ideology, and which is used not only to interpret past-, but also present-day cooperation.

However, semi-structured interviews on specific cooperative practices, showed that although people did use ideas originating in the communist epoch, they used these in multiple, ambiguous ways and often gave them different meanings. In these interviews the generally-used dichotomy between altruistic cooperation during communism and self-interested cooperation during capitalism became blurred. The next section illustrates this redefinition of communist ideas, and how these are re-used and adapted to new practices of social co-operation.

4.1. Akcia Z

The example of Akcia Z illustrates the ambivalent way in which people use communist ideas when talking about cooperation during communist times. Akcia Z was a campaign for the enhancement of towns and villages through self-help. It started in the 1950s and continued till the end of the communist government. (Haukanes 1999: 89) Akcia Z consisted of construction work for village 'modernization'. The villagers explained the name stands for 'free action'. (Akcia Zadarmo) The programme started with the village council making a four-year plan to develop the village. The village council needed to send their proposal to the regional government for approval and to receive the necessary building material. Part of the programme was that the village would supply the labour. In practice, this meant that the villagers were expected to cooperate in the programme.

The next story-teller comments on Akcia Z. He is an 80-year old man, who used to be mayor of the village, worked in a factory and the agricultural cooperative, and lived his whole life in the village. The next quotes illustrate his ambivalent interpretation of Akcia Z.

'In Akcia Z we constructed the waterworks of the village. The local factory helped; all people helped. They wanted to make their village more beautiful. They went together in working teams and worked together.'

In the above quote the former mayor draws a positive picture of Akcia Z. The people together with the local factory willingly cooperated for the common good of the village. However, when the mayor starts to comment on his experiences with Akcia Z, he paints a different picture.

'Every Sunday on the village radio I asked the people to come and help. But actually only few people showed up. The people that came were always the same people. They were the ones that started the project, it was their personal project.'

[...] *People, who participated, were paid for it. Also the local factory was paid for lending its workers to the Akcia.*

This last quote suggests that people and the local factory in this village got paid for working within Akcia Z, which stands in contrast to the image of altruistic cooperation during communism. The ambivalence concerning the true underlying motives of people participating in Akcia Z was also displayed in other conversations and interviews. This ambivalence was both expressed at an individual, as well as on a social level, and manifested itself in both positive and negative interpretations of Akcia Z. as an institution facilitating cooperation between people. Discussing this specific institution Akcia Z, indicated that people have a much more ambivalent interpretation of cooperation. The next two examples illustrate the dynamic re-interpretation and re-use of ideas from communist times for new practices of cooperation.

4.2. Brigada

Brigada means 'small job'. This institution finds its origins in the period of communist rule and refers to 'work done for the community'. (See also Haukanes 1999) Brigady could be constructing buildings, paving roads or doing cleaning work in the village. Furthermore, this institution was also a social event, valued by the villagers. (See also Haukanes 1999) The Brigady were also used within larger government programmes such as Akcia Z. Although Akcia Z no longer exists, Brigady are still an institution facilitating cooperation. However, the brigady changed: the adults in the village no longer participate as much; it is mainly for the village youth.

It is often the mayor of the village who initiates a Brigada. A typical Brigada nowadays is dependent on the youngsters, with the older persons in the group (25 years or older) in charge of the organisation. During the time of study, the mayor asked the youth to help tidy a small park in the village. Practically all youngsters worked for the Brigada half a day. The mayor supplied food and drinks. During the cleaning work the participants often referred to Brigady in communist times, and how they were now again working for the common good. Thus, for the youth in the village the concept of Brigada gave meaning to their contemporary cooperation, even though some of them had been very young in the communist time.

4.3. Zahumienok

Another communist institution which again gained increasing importance especially after 1989 is the Zahumienok. It often featured in stories when people

discussed current cooperation. The Zahumienok is a plot of land used for small-scale private agricultural production. Since its establishment under communism, the agricultural co-operative in the village gave its members the opportunity to obtain a plot for private use. The land could not be owned; the co-operative owned and also prepared the land. This meant that members could use a plot for cropping from spring until autumn. Members, who were able to manage a plot in this way, were allowed to keep the yield. They were obliged to pay a rent for the use of the plot. Every year the Zahumienky were divided among the members of the co-operative. After 1980 the Zahumienok suffered from a decline in interest, less people were prepared to manage and pay for a Zahumienok. According to respondents this happened because people earned sufficient money with their jobs, and preferred to buy vegetables instead of growing them self.

However, after 1989 the institution of the Zahumienok gained increasing importance again. Due to price inflation and unemployment accompanying the transformation from a communist – to a liberal democratic republic, people looked for opportunities to supplement their declining income. (See also Haukanes 1999: 184) Out of economic necessity the Zahumienok once again became an important provision of food for many families in the village. The produce was mainly to complement the wage of people with jobs, or to complement people's pensions. (Swain 1999) It was often mentioned in discussions because the Zahumienok is considered as an important and successful institution for cooperation. People cooperate in preparing, managing and harvesting the crops, and sometimes share small machinery for the same purpose. These new ways of cooperation are most often restricted to relatives and close friends.

5. Ideational bricolage

The above results show that ideas originating from communist times continue to have relevance for everyday life in this rural community⁸. They are being used to evaluate past and present institutions for cooperation. At first sight, they seem important because they are used in everyday small talk to draw a sharp distinction between cooperation during and after communism. However, the dichotomy between altruistic cooperation during communism and self-interested cooperation during capitalism lost much of its unanimity and univocality, when people discussed particular practices of cooperation. The example of Akcia Z illustrates how individuals reflect differently upon the motives underlying participation in

⁸ This study has not investigated the pre-communist cooperation rooted in kinship, peasant and rural way of life. Other studies have illustrated that pre-communist institutions have survived the communist era (Begg – Meurs in Theesfeld 2005), while others suggest that most institutions have not survived. (Theesfeld 2005)

government-initiated programmes such as Akcia Z. On the one hand, it is appreciated as an institution organised for the common good and facilitating altruistic cooperation between people. On the other hand, it is also soberly analysed as an institution in which cooperation was only motivated by a mixture of coercion and self-interest. The examples of the Brigada and Zahumienok highlight how communist institutions have transformed during the recent transition, and obtained a new meaning and function. It shows how people re-use old concepts to evaluate past and present ways of cooperation. These communist ideas are thus reproduced and redefined within a changed context. Based on present experiences, people reconstruct their ideas about past and present. Other community research has found the same differentiation in interpretations. (Torsello 2003; Pine in Haukanes 1999)

These findings underline the multiple, ambiguous and conflicting ideas, which people use to interpret past- and present-day cooperation. It suggests a view of people as *ideational bricoleurs*, who re-cycle old concepts to interpret new realities, which consequently also re-constructs the meaning and definition of these ideas. The concept of bricolage was introduced in social science by Levi-Strauss to describe the way mythical thought changes and becomes re-interpreted. At present it has been used by Cleaver to critique the understanding of institutions as static entities and to emphasise people's agency. (Cleaver 2003) Ideational bricolage is used in this study to understand how change and continuity follow from people's active re-defining and re-interpreting of already existing ideas. (See also Torsello 2003)

These findings have some important consequences for analyses of social change. Often the influence of already existing ideas on social change has been identified as mere nostalgia. Feelings of nostalgia are important motives for the reproduction and adaptation of the 'old discourse'. Another concept used to describe the reconstruction of ideas is cognitive lock. (Blyth 2001) A cognitive lock refers to ideas that continue to exert influence even though they are not affirmed anymore through 'formal' ideas and institutions. The difference between communism as formal and informal system is useful here. (Dawisha 1995) Although the formal institutions of the communist ideology have largely collapsed, its informal ideas have been much more persistent. Ideas have the tendency to stick and cause intellectual path dependency⁹. (Pierson 2000; Blyth 2001; Stark – Bruszt 2001)

Notwithstanding the importance of such concepts as nostalgia and cognitive lock, their influence on current social action needs to be nuanced. A shared

⁹ Intellectual path dependency as opposed to the institutional path dependency in which the continued influence of ideas is often not considered.

drawback of concepts such as nostalgia and cognitive lock is that they easily pay one-sided attention to the limiting influence of ideas on social action. This paper underlines instead a dualistic understanding of ideas. Depending on the socio-political context, only a limited number of ideas for interpretation of social reality is available, but at the same time these ideas are de-constructed and re-constructed in a process of ideational bricolage.

This means that people do not reproduce ideas originating in communist times but reconstruct it in a 'post-communist' context, which irreversibly changes it into novel interpretations. (Burawoy – Verdery 1999)

6. Conclusion

The political and social transformation in CEEC's has been analysed in different ways. Two different approaches feature prominently within PCS, which share a (neo-)institutional focus. The discontinuous, approach focuses on the abrupt and revolutionary change associated with the replacement of traditional institutions with new ones. The continuous approach emphasises instead the continuous and conservative influence that traditional institutions maintain even in a radically changed context.

It is argued in this paper that both approaches ignore an essential element of social change: ideas. Although both approaches recently tried to account for ideas, they mainly reinforced their established ontological and epistemological assumptions, and did not incorporate more recent developments in social theory. For this purpose, this paper takes ideas serious by focussing on their mediating role between institutions and actors. Ideas are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organise; they are neither hegemonic nor infinite. The duality of ideas means that they are limited institutionally. This dialectical understanding of ideas and institutions blurs the difference between them, because in this understanding ideas and institutions are interrelated via social action of which they are both dependent and constitutive. The ideational approach is based on a dialectical understanding of actor and structure which allows for a nuanced understanding of the dynamics of change.

This approach is further illustrated with examples from a case study research, which investigated the impact of political change on institutions facilitating cooperation at community level in rural Slovakia. The examples show how ideas and notions, originating in the communist era, are still relevant for institutions facilitating cooperation in everyday life. Novel interpretations (Akcia Z) and use (Brigada and the Zahumienok) of communist institutions for cooperation feature prominently in the examples presented. On a general level, people draw a sharp distinction between cooperation during and after communism. In conversations on

more specific examples of institutions for cooperation the dichotomy between altruistic cooperation during communism and self-interested cooperation during capitalism loses much of its univocity. On the contrary, specific institutions are considered with a certain degree of ambivalence. This becomes understandable, when considering the ways in which these institutions have transformed during the recent transition, and obtained a new meaning and function.

This paper introduces the concept of ideational bricolage to make sense of the co-existence of multiple, ambiguous and conflicting ideas, which people use to interpret past- and present-day cooperation. People are understood as ideational bricoleurs, who re-cycle old concepts to interpret new realities, which reconstructs the meaning and definition of ideas. This concept acknowledges the actor's (institutional) room for manoeuvre to use and adapt ideas in novel ways depending on a changing context. The concept of ideational bricolage complements the ideational approach and offers an comprehensive understanding of the central role actors play in change. With the ideational approach it became possible to highlight continuous and discontinuous aspects of cooperation after the transformation, in a rural community in Slovakia.

Based on these findings, this paper argues that the conventional understanding and use of institutions in PCS is not able to account for a) the ideational dimension of social change and b) the dialectical relation between ideas, institutions and social action. Therefore, PCS could contribute to the development of social theory by further exploring the dialectical relation between institutions, ideas and social action. First of all, this would require a definition acknowledging that institutions as part of a historical process and imperative for social action. Furthermore, a broadened definition and use of institutions and institutionalisation needs to accord ideas a causal role in explaining social change. These changes are necessary to avoid either the determinism and pessimism of continuous approaches or the voluntarism and optimism involved in discontinuous approaches.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the editor, the two reviewers of *Sociologia*, and Wijnand Boonstra for their valuable comments on earlier versions of this paper. Furthermore she would like to express her sincere gratitude to the respondents involved in this study, Professor Bandlerova, Silvia Uskrtova, Mr. Van Eldijk, and Janneke Smeulders.

Sofie Joosse graduated as a rural sociologist at Wageningen University, the Netherlands. Since 2005, she has been lecturing in environmental communication at the Department for Urban and Rural Development, at the Swedish University for Agricultural Sciences. Currently she is also working on her Ph.D. dissertation at the Department for Human Geography at Uppsala University, Sweden. Her

research includes the study of: processes of change; agricultural, environmental and rural development; gender; interest representation and rural governance. She studies these subjects in a European context, with a special interest for both Central and Eastern Europe.

REFERENCES

- BERGER, P. L. – LUCKMANN, T., 1966: The social construction of reality: a treatise in the sociology of knowledge. New York, Anchor Books.
- BLYTH, M. M., 1997: Any more bright ideas? The ideational turn of comparative political economy. *Comparative Politics* 29, pp. 229-50.
- BLYTH, M., 2001: The transformation of the Swedish Model: economic ideas, distributional conflict and institutional change. *World Politics* 54 (1), pp. 1-26.
- BLYTH, M., 2002: Institutions and ideas. In: Marsh, D. – Stoker, G., (eds.), *Theory and methods in political science: second edition*. Basingstoke, Palgrave MacMillan, pp. 292-310.
- BÖRÖCZ, J., 2001: Change rules, *American Journal of Sociology* 106 (4), pp. 1152-1168.
- BOURDIEU, P., 1998: *Practical Reason: on the theory of action*. Chicago, Stanford University Press.
- BUNCE, V., 1995: Should transitologists be grounded? *Slavic Review* 54 (1), pp. 111-127.
- BURAWOY, M. – VERDERY, K., 1999: Introduction. In: Burawoy, M. – Verdery, K. (eds.), *Uncertain transition: ethnographies of change in the postsocialist world*. Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, pp. 1-17.
- BURAWOY, M., 2001: Neoclassical sociology: from the end of communism to the end of classes. *American Journal of Sociology* 106 (4), pp. 1099-1120.
- CLEAVER, F., 2003: Reinventing institutions: bricolage and the social embeddedness of natural resource management. In: Benjaminsen, T. A. – Lund, C. (eds.), *Securing land rights in Africa*. Frank Cass, London, pp. 11-30.
- DAWISHA, K., 2005: Communism as a lived system of ideas in contemporary Russia. *East European Politics and Societies* 19 (3), pp. 463-493.
- ESCOBAR, A., 1995: *Encountering development: the making and unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton University Press, Princeton.
- EYAL, G. – SZELÉNYI, I. – TOWNSLEY, E., 2001: The utopia of postsocialist theory and the ironic view of history in neoclassical sociology. *American Journal of Sociology* 106 (4), pp. 1121-1128.
- FOUCAULT, M., 1975, 1995: *Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison*. Random House, New York.
- GIDDENS, A., 1984: *The constitution of society: outline of the theory of structuration*. Polity Press, Cambridge.
- HAJER, M. A., 1995: *The politics of environmental discourse: ecological modernization and the policy process*. Clarendon, Oxford.
- HALL, J. A., 1994: After the fall: an analysis of post-communism. *The British Journal of Sociology* 45 (4), pp. 525-542.

- HAUKANES, H., 1999: Grand dramas – ordinary lives. State, locality and person in post-communist Czech society. University of Bergen.
- HAY, C., 2002: Political analysis: a critical introduction. Palgrave, Basingstoke.
- HILHORST, D., 2000: Records and reputations; everyday politics of a Philippine Development NGO. Wageningen University, Wageningen.
- HRABA, J., 1999: Rural and urban differences in economic experiences, anxiety and support for the post-reforms in the Czech and Slovak Republics. *Rural Sociology* 64 (3): pp. 439-463 Sep.
- HRABA, J., 2001: Age and Czech's attitudes about the post-communist reforms. *Sociologicky Casopis* 37(3): pp. 343-358.
- JOOSSE, S. M., 2002: Of comrades and profiteers: A study on discourses of cooperation in Slovakia. Wageningen University, Wageningen.
- KARL, T. L. – SCHMITTER, P. C., 1995: From an iron curtain to a paper curtain: grounding transitologists or students of postcommunism? *Slavic Review* 54 (4), pp. 965-978.
- KUBICEK, P., 2000: Post-communist political studies: ten years later, twenty years behind? *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 33, pp. 295-309.
- KUHN, T. S., 1970: The structure of scientific revolutions. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- LACLAU, E. – MOUFFE, C., 1985: Hegemony and socialistic strategy: towards a radical democratic politics. Verso, London.
- McDERMOTT, G. A., 2004: Institutional change and firm creation in East-Central Europe, an embedded politics approach. *Comparative Politics* 37 (2), pp. 188-217.
- OUSHAKINE, S., 2000: In the state of post-Soviet aphasia: symbolic development in contemporary Russia. *Europe-Asia Studies* 52 (6), pp. 991-1016.
- PICKEL, A., 2002: Transformation theory: scientific or political? *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 35, pp. 105-114.
- PIERSON, P., 2000: Increasing returns, path dependence and the study of politics. *American Political Science Review* 94 (2), pp. 251-267.
- ROEDER, P. G., 1999: The revolution of 1989: postcommunism and the social sciences. *Slavic Review* 58 (4), pp. 743-755.
- SCHMITTER, P. C. – KARL, T. L., 1994: The conceptual travels of transitologists and consolidologists: how far to the east should they attempt to go? *Slavic Review* 53 (1), pp. 173-185.
- SOKOL, M., 2001: Central and Eastern Europe a decade after the fall of State-socialism: regional dimensions of transition processes. *Regional Studies* 35 (7), pp. 645-655.
- STARK, D. – BRUSZT, L., 2001: One way or multiple paths: for a comparative sociology of East European capitalism. *American Journal of Sociology* 106 (4), pp. 1129-1137.
- SWAIN, N., 1999: Small-scale farming in the post-socialist rural transition. *Eastern European Countryside*, (5) pp. 27-42.
- TORSELLO, D., 2003: Time, values and social roles in a South Slovakian Village. *Eastern European Countryside*, (9), pp. 169-184.
- ZIJDERVELD, A. C., 2000: The institutional imperative: the interface of institutions and networks. Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam.