

**The Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada / L'Institut polonais des arts et des sciences au Canada  
and / et  
The Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences / L'Académie polonaise des sciences et des lettres**

**FROM TOTALITARIANISM TO DEMOCRACY: TWISTED AND UNFINISHED ROAD.  
On the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Fall of Communism in Eastern Europe.**

**DU TOTALITARISME À LA DEMOCRATIE; UN PARCOURS TORTUEUX ET INACHEVÉ.  
À l'occasion du vingtième anniversaire de la chute du communisme en Europe de l'Est.**

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## **ABSTRACTS**

**Prof. Karol Modzelewski**

Institute of History

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***La Pologne entre la loi martiale et l'effondrement du communisme: un compromis entre les ennemis naufrages***

Solidarnosc 80-81 etait un phenomene inedit: mouvement des foules actives et convaincues de maitriser le propre destin et celui du pays. La loi martiale du decembre 81 a, contrairement a ce qu'on raconte, ecrase ce mouvement de masses. Ce qui a survécu en clandestinite n'etait qu'une organisation numeriquement restreinte des cadres anticommunistes - et le mythe fonde sur la memoire de l'inoubliable. Mais la loi martiale qui devait sauver le regime communiste a aussi porte le coup de grace au parti communiste lui-meme. Prive de l'influence dans les usines et dans tous les organismes de l'Etat par l'armee et la police, le PC n'etait plus qu'un phantome. Dans le nouveau contexte intgernational cree par la perestroika et face aux nouvelles tensions sociales l'equipe du gen. Jaruzelski s'est appercu que les leaders historiques de Solidarnosc groupes autour de Lech Walesa, apparemment "generaux sans armee", restent depositaires legitimes du mythe de Soldarnosc qui maitrise toujours les esprits, et donc restent interlocuteurs indispensables pour le maintien de la paix au pays. La negotiation entre deux elites naufragees et les elections consecutives de 4 juin '89 ont inaugure le processus de la decomposition de l'empire. Ce debut etait aussi l'epilogue posthume de la revolution ecrasee des 1980-81.

**. Dr. Anika Keinz**

Chair, Comparative Central European Studies

Europa-Universität Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder), Germany

***The Morality of the State: Currents and Countercurrents in the Making of Poland's future***

The transformation processes in Central and Eastern Europe following the collapse of communism demanded not only the reconstitution of democracy and the nationstate, but the reformulation and re-imagination of citizenship identities, as ideologies of governance are intimately tied to notions of rights and responsibilities of both the state and its citizens. In Poland, the transformation process from socialism to democracy and free market economy was largely perceived as return to "normalcy". In political and public debates "normalcy" respectively democracy has been codified in moral discourses that imply specific visions of Poland's future as well as images of the proper Polish citizen. While in the 1990s, debates over reproduction and family politics served as coded arguments for the political legitimation and the morality of the new state as well as the dissociation from the "immoral communist

system”, in the 2000s the visibility of homosexuals in the public sphere has caused heated debates about what freedom of speech and tolerance means, values that lay at the heart of contemporary definitions of democracy. These different debates are both indicative for the broader transformation processes and closely connected to the making of Poland’s future, either by rediscovering or reconstructing the traditional or by referring to discourses of “Europeanness” and human rights. By drawing on data from multiple sources, such as parliamentary debates, newspaper articles, participant observation of demonstrations and interviews with women involved in women’s rights issues, I intend to capture diverse political ideologies and alternative visions, both of political parties and social movements. By juxtaposing contrasting stances, I provide an analytical and critical picture of how gender and sexuality have become crucial in political and moral debates in the course of the transformation process. By providing ethnographic insights into the currents and countercurrents that are shaped and reshaped by cultural, national and supranational discourses, I attempt to shed light on the plasticity and instability of moral arguments in the process of making Poland’s future.

**Prof. Tania Gosselin**

Sciences politiques

Université du Québec à Montréal, QC, Canada

***Support for the European Union in Post-Communist Member States***

Twenty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and five years following the accession of a first group of post-communist countries to the European Union (EU), research on public opinion in Europe offers different interpretations of attitudes towards the EU in “old” and “new” member states. One group of studies on post-communist public opinion highlights differences between the attitudes of “winners” and “losers” of the transition. This view emphasizes the role of costs and benefits of membership, both individual and collective. As accession drew closer, the strength and exclusivity of national identity, as well as the perception of threat to national culture emerged as significant factors behind euroscepticism, especially in Eastern Europe where a particular sensitivity to sovereignty issues and the challenges associated with multiethnic contexts are thought to generate more suspicion towards the EU. Other researchers examine the dynamics of domestic political competition, underlining the gap between largely pro-European elites and generally less enthusiastic citizens, and warning against the potential instrumentalization of euroscepticism by populist leaders. These research avenues offer different perspectives on the degree and speed of integration of European public opinion. If material interests are the main factor shaping public opinion, or if citizens of new member states simply lack familiarity with EU institutions and membership effects, it is only a matter of time and information before post-communist opinion toward the EU resembles that in the West. However, if identity issues mainly drive perceptions, or rising populism leads to the instrumentalization of euroscepticism on domestic political scenes, convergence may not happen anytime soon.

**Prof. Juliet Johnson**

Political Science

McGill University, Montréal, QC, Canada

and

**Prof. Rachel A. Epstein**

International Studies

University of Denver, Denver, CO, USA

and

***Uneven Integration: Economic and Monetary Union in Central and Eastern Europe***

This paper investigates the diffusion of Western European financial practices and institutions to Central and Eastern Europe since 1989, focusing on central bank independence in the 1990s and, more recently, the Euro. It asks why

CEE states widely adopted central bank independence, but later diverged with respect to Euro adoption. Under what conditions did CEE states choose to emulate Western practice? We focus our analysis on two key variables: regime and institutional discontinuity at the domestic level and the credibility of international institutions' policies. Our central argument is that domestic regime and institutional discontinuity produces governments, parliaments and bureaucracies that are relatively more open to foreign advising. When that openness is paired with highly credible international policy prescriptions, international institutions have the power to privilege their preferred policies. By contrast, with domestic regime and institutional continuity, domestic actors are far less susceptible to foreign counsel about how to structure reform. Moreover, the ability of international institutions to push their policy prescriptions is hampered when such prescriptions lack widespread credibility.

**Prof. Magdalena Dembinska**

Sciences politiques

Université de Montréal, Montréal, QC, Canada

***Etats post-communistes nationalisants et leurs minorités: structures d'opportunité, ajustements et processus d'essais et d'erreurs***

La fin du communisme s'accompagne d'une multiplication de revendications ethniques au sein des États jusqu'ici « -nations ». Les nations majoritaires sont à la recherche de soi et d'un chez soi, les États cherchent à redéfinir ses relations avec la société, dont celles avec les diverses collectivités. C'est une fenêtre d'opportunité pour faire valoir la voix des minorités. Mais l'intégration européenne devait résorber les incohérences entre États-nations, les nations sans États et les groupes minoritaires. La « question nationale » devait s'estomper, d'une part, grâce aux institutions et politiques chapeautant l'ensemble des groupes nationaux et ethniques et grâce à la convergence de cultures (Hobsbawm 1990, Held 1995); d'autre part, grâce au calcul des intérêts socio-économiques des individus qui s'assimileraient à la majorité de l'État (Laitin 1995). Or, les questions nationales et les revendications des groupes ethniques sont toujours au cœur des débats au sein des États et alimentent les questionnements liés à la structure et à l'identité de l'Europe intégrée. Comment expliquer la persistance des particularismes identitaires tout en constatant l'intégration continue? Suite à une étude comparative des stratégies de quatre minorités – Silésiens (Pologne), Ruthènes (Pologne, Slovaquie, Ukraine), Polonais (Lituanie), Russes (Lettonie) – nous argumentons qu'elles agissent instrumentalement. Elles s'ajustent aux contraintes institutionnelles étatiques et européennes et, se faisant, elles ré-imaginent leurs communautés respectives. Paradoxalement, ces institutions incitent le renforcement des particularismes identitaires, mais puisque l'identité est composée d'identifications multiples en transformation constante, l'intégration inter-communautés ne s'en trouve pas affectée.

**Prof. Michal Buchowski**

Social Anthropology, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan, Poland and Comparative Central European Studies, Europa-Universität Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder), Germany

***Post-socialist Change as an Attempted Transformation of People: An Alternative Anthropological View***

A part of the processes in Eastern Europe involve a restructuring of the perception of social relations by the hegemonic neo-liberal order. The degree to which various countries and social groups have embraced the free market and democracy has become a yardstick for classifying them as fitting more or less the category of the 'properly transformed' societies / countries / economies. In the Cold War period a political and mental border between the advanced West and the backward East was simply drawn on a geographic map (Iron Curtain). Systemic change after 1989 in Central and Eastern Europe has changed the situation and its perception both by the public and experts. In the process of transition a new discrimination has emerged of people into the categories of: adapted

(westernized) and not adapted (colonized by the communist habits) to the new liberal order has developed. The first group represents a 'progressive' model, while the second a 'regressive' one. As a result, the former geographic, map-bound archetypes of Eastern and Western people, i.e. homo occidentalis vs. homo sovieticus, have been re-inscribed into social space. In a sense, the former spatially defined Others has been resurrected today as the socially stigmatized brother. Now these essentialized categories of the 'West' and the 'East' cut across social structure. In this process a strategy of blaming the so-called losers of the post-socialist reforms has been visible. This blame game has notable shortcomings, but ultimately, it reveals an anti-sociological intent and, at its roots, is also culture-deterministic. Resistance by social groups (considered by elites to be responsible for failures of the neo-liberal project) strengthens their assumed alterity. Many intellectuals participate in the dominant discourses and assume that they help in transforming "homo sovieticus" into "civilized citizens" through a process which defines resistant groups simply as reluctant capitalists.

**Prof. Christina Stojanova**

Fine Arts

University of Regina, Regina, SAS, Canada

***Post-Communist Cinema: Negotiating Social Change***

The paper will reflect on some of the major issues, affecting the constantly changing rapport between Central and Eastern European post-Communist reality and its reflection on screen since the fall of the ancient regimes some twenty years ago. The first part of the paper will offer a broad review of the basic strategies of survival, practiced by post-Communist cinemas since 1989. Through the mid- to late 1990s most cultural critics were concerned with the traditionally uneasy relationship between art and entertainment in Central and Eastern Europe as the requirements of the market, and the iron laws of supply and demand, dominated not only the harsh social reality but also the cultural discourse. Towards the end of the millennium and the beginning of the new one, however, it became increasingly clear that entertainment films, made in post-Communist countries, especially by the small ones, stand no chance whatsoever vis-à-vis the ubiquitous Hollywood domination either abroad or at home. Television series, inspired by local literary classics, but most often just epigone imitations of popular American shows like Big Brother and Who Wants To Be a Millionaire, dominated the national television networks, but not the national and international cultural agenda (no matter how modest). The expansion of the international festival circuit in the late 1990s and throughout the first decade of the new millennium, however, gradually became a significant parallel distribution network and a growing incentive for artistic creativity of post-Communist cinemas, proving what most professionals and connoisseurs have suspected all along. Namely, that films by internationally renowned filmmakers on historical, but preferably well-known topics (like WWII atrocities, the Holocaust and the Katyn massacre) have always enjoyed international recognition, and the continued success of the octogenarian Polish classic Andrzej Wajda and the septuagenarian Hungarian Istvan Szabo are the best proof of this contention. Then there are individual films, making a huge international splash, like the Bulgarian *Dzift/ Asphalt* by pouring national content into the well-known form of a successful American genre (in this case Film Noir). Yet more often than not these isolated films remain abstract stylistic exercises and sink back into obscurity. Post-Communist countries have however most consistently sustained their hard-won post WWII leadership – already severely contested – amongst the multitude of small and medium size national cinemas worldwide, by producing small (meaning inexpensive, sometimes on shoe-string budgets), highly original art-house films, preferably part of a new national film wave or tendency. The most successful post-Communist films therefore reflect on their indigenous societies by ingenuously combining the particular with the universal. Or more specifically, by revealing intriguingly (and almost anecdotically) how post-Communist societies negotiate imported Western values like feminism and multiculturalism. So far, this venue has been taken most successfully by the post-Communist Czech and Romanian, and to a certain extent – by the Hungarian cinema, as well as by individual directors from Poland, Slovenia, Serbia, etc. Discussion of some of these successful practices – artistic as well as industrial; collective as well as individual – would be the focus of the second part of my paper. The lecture will be illustrated with film clips, still photos, etc.

**Prof. Andrzej Zybertowicz**

Institute of Sociology

Nicolaus Copernicus University, Torun, Poland

***A Structural Conflict of Interests as the Foundation of the Post-Communist Poland***

Complex social systems rely on various underpinnings which condition the ways the systems work. The main claim of the presentation is that one trying to capture the dynamics of the post-communist Poland (since 1989 until now) should take into consideration the phenomenon of structural conflict of interests (hereafter – SCI) as one of foundations on which the emerging societal system lies. The notion of conflict of interest is understood classically as situation where a conflict arises between public duty and private interest which could influence the performance of official duties; it's a condition when a public official is involved in a situation of dual loyalty. By the SCI understood is a situation when institutions of strategic import for operation of the state are areas exceptionally conflict of interest ridden. Strategic institutions are defined as those agencies of the state which play role of its meta-institutions, i.e. which regulate the running of other social important institutions. Examples of strategic institutions are: the parliament, the judiciary, the state police, intelligence agencies, the prosecutors office, the most influential media. Presence of the SCI engenders structural consequences. Among the consequences identified are: - important public institutions don't operate according to their officially declared, formally prescribed rules - instead they are "re-programmed" and often fulfill tasks essentially different from their declared public mission; - informal institutions and soft approach to legal regulations spread among public officials as well as rank-and-file citizens; - resources of communist and post-communist are employed to keep important conflicts of interests hidden; - the state lacks resources to identify and debate the issues of national interest. Since the main source of the SCI is involvement of the old/new state's elites in unlawful or morally compromising practices of the old regime it seems that standard measures (like transparency of income of holders of high public offices) aiming at keeping at bay situations of conflict of interest are not sufficient when the conflict is of structural nature. Real conquering the SCI demands deep institutional reforms which would undermine interest of powerful organized groups, and therefore are unlikely to be pursued without political mobilization. The role of the SCI in construction of the post-communist society is not properly recognized by the Polish social sciences, partly due to the fact the many influential academics are involved in conflicts of interests themselves. Examples of conflict of interest of many public figures holding highest positions will be discussed. Negative impact of the SCI on the quality of democracy and performance of economy will be explored.

**Bronisław Wildstein**

Journalist

*Rzeczypospolita*, Warsaw, Poland

***Demokracja limitowana czyli "elity" i "lud" w postkomunistycznym systemie***

(Limited democracy or 'the elite' and 'the common people' in the post-communist system)

**Prof. Michel Librowicz**

Stratégie, responsabilité sociale et environnementale

Université du Québec à Montréal, Montréal, QC, Canada

Program Director, Canadian Executive MBA,

Warsaw School of Economics, Warsaw, Poland

***L'economie: les vrais tiges sont-ils ailleurs...en Pologne?***

Un court vidéo avec la participation de Leszek Balcerowicz, l'architecte de la réforme économique en Pologne qui occupait le poste du Vice-Premier Ministre et Ministre des Finances après les élections de juin 1989 et du professeur Jeffrey Sachs de l'Université Harvard, le principal conseiller économique du Gouvernement polonais,

sert d'introduction à la présentation qui analysera les objectifs économiques et les résultats obtenus de plusieurs gouvernements successifs et les défis auxquels ils étaient confrontés durant les 20 dernières années

**Dr. Doïna Lecca**

Simone de Beauvoir Institute

Education

Concordia University, Montréal, QC, Canada

and

**Dr. Georgiana Galateanu**

Slavic Languages and Literature

University of California, Los Angeles, CA, USA

***Re-traditionalization of Gender Roles in Post-Communist East-Central Europe***

The presentation analyzes the factors responsible for the re-traditionalization of gender roles during the transition to post-communism in East-Central countries –pre-communist traditions, reactions to communist propaganda, nationalist policies, religion, contraction to the economy – as well as the women's activism – rise in awareness and education, feminism and feminist studies, support and self-help organizations.

**Prof. Adam Czarnota,**

Co-director, Center for Interdisciplinary Studies of Law

University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

***Post-communism, Transitional Justice and Rule of Law***

In the paper I will analyse the issue of 'dealing with the past' in post-communist Central-Eastern European countries from the point of view of the growing global transitional justice discourses. Central-Eastern European countries except former DDR and Czechoslovakia and later Czech republic adopted laws dealing with the communist past rather late in the second half of 90's. The result of de-communisation, lustration, restitution of property is rather weak. In the paper I will presents the legal and moral strategies adopted in the region to deal with the past and also try to give answers to the question why so late approach to de0-communisation and asses the impact of the legislation on the quality of rule of law in the region. The next problem to discuss in the paper is the puzzling question of discrepancies between growing global discourses on transitional justice and silencing of such discourses in post-communist countries.

**Maître Julius Grey**

Human Rights Jurist

Senior Partner, Grey-Casgrain, Montréal, QC, Canada

Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada (PIASC)

***Les Droits de l'homme après 1989***

**Prof. Peter G. Brown**

Geography

McGill University, Montréal, QC, Canada

***Did Marxism Fail?—Is Capitalism Next?***

The apparent triumph of capitalism is both temporary and an illusion. The financial crisis of 2008-9 is a minor signal about a system that is inherently unstable financially, socially and ecologically. It strives for illegitimate world dominance and expansion into realms ill-suited for ownership such a complex ecological systems, knowledge, incarceration, and health care. Concepts like rights, property, and the corporation are found to be in need of

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rethinking and re-grounding, along with the ideas of political liberalism with which they are closely associated. A covenantal model of the human-earth relationship is advanced as a more promising foundation for thinking about the economic and political order of the future than either Marxism or capitalism - though it borrows elements from both.

**Prof. Lorenz Lüthi**

History

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*The Global Meaning of 1989*

For Europeans, nineteen eighty nine is one of the key years of the last century, of similar importance to 1918-19 and 1945. It marked the collapse of Communist rule in East Europe, with Poland and Hungary leading the way, and the starting point of a united Europe with a united Germany at its center. In the systemic Cold War—the superpower conflict—it symbolized the end of Soviet-American antagonism. But what is the global meaning of 1989? In my paper I suggest to explore the meaning of 1989 in various ways. First, I propose to split the year from the claim that it symbolized the end of the Cold War. The Cold War existed in many world regions and on different levels. In some world regions, it had ended long before, as for example in East Asia and the Middle East. Second, the global meaning of nineteen eighty nine is tied to the geography and the meaning of the year itself. I suggest exploring 1989 in concentric geographical units: 1. Poland, Hungary, and Germany, 2. Europe, 3. Soviet-American relations, and 4. the non-European world. Particularly with regard to point 4, I intend propose to explore how the end of the superpower conflict in the late 1980s had a positive influence on international cooperation and exchange of ideas. As a result, a wide variety of seemingly unrelated events occurred, such as democracy demonstrations in China, the First Iraq War, the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, and the fall of apartheid in South Africa. Yet, this does not mean that all vestiges of the Cold War have been overcome in the world, as the situation on the Korean peninsula and Cuba reveals.