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Introduction

Mapping European social transformations

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The scope of European social transformations

The notion of transformation as an evolutionary outcome of the process of social change is ontologically inherent in the social sciences, starting with the initial works of August Comte and Herbert Spencer (for an overview of the theories of social change, see e.g. Sztompka, 1994). Fundamental discussions of the nature and mechanisms of social change have been an essential part of many 'grand theories' in the social sciences, starting from Marx and Weber and continuing through the work of Habermas, Giddens and Archer. Any social science study can be described as paying primary attention either to certain synchronous, timeless or static aspects of social phenomena and societies as a whole, or being interested in diachronic processes, acknowledging the fundamental meaning of time and focusing on the processes of on-going social change. In the context of universal discussions within social sciences – explaining the invariable, universal attributes of societies and finding changing attributes – the study of European social transformations is very valuable.

The end of the twentieth century in European history provided an unprecedented occasion for social scientists to encounter and comparatively analyse the results of the unique historic experiment of institutionally planned simultaneous societal changes in a range of different European societies. Our work in compiling this volume has been especially inspired by the experience of the fundamental changes that have transformed European societies since the fall of the Iron Curtain. As these recent changes seemed to pave the way for more political and economic integrity in the European continent, they also raised a lot of questions, from the conceptual borders of post–Cold-War Europe to the directions and outcomes of European transformations, including the future of the European Union. The other inspiration for this book grew out of the currently prominent social transformation processes in Europe, which have been partly initiated by such global trends as migration, the growth of social inequalities, technological advancements, the threat of terrorism, and the rise of populism and extremism, which raise new questions in transformation research. Looking at the pace and scope of these concurrent changes, it is legitimate to use the term 'great transformation', which was coined by Karl Polany in 1944 (Polanyi, 1944/1965) and has been used to explain the holistic effects of the social changes resulting from the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century.

This book aims to provide insight into different theoretical and empirical perspectives of transformation research in the European social sciences and related fields of studies. In the book, readers can find an overview of the approaches to the post-communist social changes as they are related to the institutional changes of the European Union and global social changes. At the same time, we have tried to keep in mind the intertwined spatio-temporal aspects of the transformation processes going on at the different levels of European societies. As Castles (Castles, 2001: 29) suggests, only a holistic approach to transformations, including processes at all spatial levels, and taking into consideration the embeddedness of specific changes in a much broader context (including regional and global factors) makes it possible to understand fully the phenomena of social transformation.

Other authors (Titarenko, 2012: 233–234) have warned against approaches that can be characterised as 'isolated social science', or 'empirical descriptions' without theoretical ambitions, limiting the study of social transformations to a single locality. Using the plural form – social transformations – in the title of this book is a conscious choice, with the aim of emphasising the diversity and interrelatedness of transformation processes, ranging from post-communist to European Union to global. Therefore, the concrete national cases presented in this book should be seen as pieces in an immense mosaic still in need of a comprehensive explanation. We believe that the discussion of social transformations and their implications requires more reflection on the changing (human) conditions in society. The theoretical concept of social *morphogenesis*, proposed by Margaret Archer (see Archer, 2013a, 2014, 2015) and originating from the idea that processes of change occur in the forms of temporally complex interrelations between agents and social structures, seems to prove its validity here.

More particularly, the aims of the editors in creating this mosaic are twofold: firstly, to provide readers with analytical insight into the various aspects and levels of transitions in the part of Europe that was freed from the grip of the Soviet state-socialist system and that started the process of European integration after the fall of the Iron Curtain: the event which was expected to put an end to the post-war artificial East-West division of Europe. The book attempts to offer a glimpse at the changes happening at the micro, meso, and macro levels of these transforming societies, from the overwhelming changes in economic and political system to the changes in individual behaviour. Secondly, we have sought to demonstrate the diversity of theoretical and methodological approaches in European transformation studies and also point out some new issues and research opportunities offered by this unique period in European history. Accordingly, this volume is divided into four parts with slightly different focuses: in the first part, theoretical and methodological issues of transformation studies are presented (Chapters 1 through 5), in the second part the reader will find some examples of transition studies analysing the issues emerging in the course of post-communist transformation (Chapters 6 through 11), in the third we explore some of the transformational impacts of EU institutional policies (Chapters 12 through 15) and the fourth part covers the impact of global factors on social transformations (Chapters 16 through 19).

The vast bulk of previous research was intended to explore the issues emerging in the course of transformations. In the beginning of this new era of European transformations, often symbolically linked to the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, transformation research was mainly focused on the political and economic reforms going on in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and in the Baltic states. While some of the transformation processes, such as the rapid institutional changes examined in this book, are more specific and rather inherent to post-communist transition societies, other processes are inherent both to Eastern and Western European societies, or are even global in nature, such as migration. Nowadays we can talk about the age of fundamental all-European social transformations, partially triggered by the re-unification

of Europe, but also reflecting global technological, environmental and geopolitical changes. Research on these overwhelming changes going on at the 'time of transitions' (Habermas, 2006) on the 'turbulent and mighty continent' (Giddens, 2014) means that the theoretical frame of reference for transformation research in Europe has to be broadened from its initial 'transitology' approach, which is mostly limited to one particular social context, to the global contemporary notions of the 'great transformation'. The scope of changes has been captured by references to the 'rise of global network society' (Castells, 2010), the emergence of the 'global risk society' (Beck, 1996), the development of 'cosmopolitan vision' (Delanty, 2009), the questioning of 'the future of capitalism' (Wallerstein, 2013) and references to the 'acceleration of social time' (Rosa, 2013). Although keeping in mind the broad global context, in this book we still focus on European transformations, on the mapping of the processes and factors that have caused, and may cause in the foreseeable future, systemic changes in European societies.

The specific features of European transformations in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries refer back to the European rationalistic concept of modernisation pursued since the Enlightenment and French Revolution. From Kant, Rousseau and Marx to Habermas, Schumann and Havel, Europeans have nurtured ideas of the rationally organised, fair and harmonious society, striving to pursue personal integrity and individual freedoms in proper balance with the enhancement of the public good and the fulfilment of the collective aspirations of people. European transformations can therefore be tackled, using a Habermasian notion, as a series of 'uncompleted projects' (Habermas, 2012: 335–348), intending to implement philosophical, economic and political ideas about the good life, fair society and democratic governance, vis-a-vis the various intended or unintended outcomes of self-regulating sociocultural and economic processes. Nevertheless, the cruellest experiences in the history of the twentieth century cast a shadow on the realisation of European rationalist projects. The implementation of a communist utopia via the expansion of totalitarian Soviet power, in combination with the Nazi project of developing an 'Arian superpower' under the dictatorship of fascist Germany over Europe, had a deep and traumatic impact on European minds, which has resulted in a strong common will to resist any re-emergence of both aggressive nationalism and leftist extremism in the course of European transformations. Social theory is only now starting to come to grips with the impact of these awesome totalitarian experiments on people, cultures and societies in Europe (in regard to these experiences, see Snyder, 2010 and Snyder, 2015). Without understanding these lessons of the past, one cannot understand the people and societies who now are trying to build up free and democratic life in their countries in the framework of a re-united Europe.

The European Union (EU) proves the viability of a rationally managed but humanistic alternative of social transformation by implementing the 'European dream', offering a fair, free and peaceful society based on the effective cooperation of sovereign nations. The basis for this cooperation is found in the democratic organisation of political life and the protection of universal human rights and the freedoms of citizens. The realisation of these principles through the policies of the EU can be considered the major driving force behind contemporary European transformations. However, Brexit, the migration crisis, growing social inequalities overshadowing technological advancements, the threat of terrorism, and the rise in populism and extremism are challenging the European project, presenting examples of the non-linear dynamics of European transformations and posing new questions for transformation research. In this context, one of the major issues of transformation studies is the interplay between rational goals aimed at common well-being and cooperation among European democratic societies, and the unplanned and undesired persistence of inequalities and the re-emergence of authoritarian tendencies and national conflicts inside EU member states.

Multiple trajectories of transformations

In the context of European social changes, initially when empirically studying and theoretically conceptualising the post-communist rapid social changes, the two most prominent terms, *transition* and *transformation*, have been used in parallel. The term *transition* in these initial studies clearly has a teleological meaning designating a progressive, one-way movement towards a carefully planned target, the road 'from plan to market', 'from the totalitarian regime to the consolidated democracy'. This movement was labelled by Claus Offe as creating 'capitalism by design' (Offe, 1991; Offe, 1996) and has been characterised by different authors as 'catching up' and 'restoration of normalcy', as suggested by Åslund within this book (Chapter 6), moving 'out of the red' (Orenstein, 2001), or 'return to the West' (Lauristin & Vihalemm, 1997), or 'return to Europe', as labelled by Vogt in this book (Chapter 13). However, Vogt questions such a progressive or targeted movement, showing that in several cases the idea of return was useless since the idea of 'Europe' was for many individuals already self-evidently part of the nation's identity.

Unlike in the initial studies of *transition*, understood as an institutionally framed and planned process of social, economic and political changes targeted at a rationally chosen positive outcome or collectively imagined (even utopian) end state, later research has clearly focused on social *transformations* that happen on a longer time scale, that have no particular start or end, and that have no uniquely identifiable and measurable aims. According to the critical reflection of Andreas Pickel:

> one of the remarkable characteristics of the early transformation debate was that an almost universal consensus quickly emerged that the central problem was the practical problem of transition from the Communist system to the liberal capitalist system. The political definition of post-communist change as a particular type of practical problem thus has strongly shaped the role social science has played in transformation
>
> *(Pickel, 2002: 111–112)*

Later in the 1990s, when the change processes in post-communist countries started to slow down somewhat, an alternative critical cultural view emerged in the studies of social transformations. For example, Sztompka (2004) has introduced the term *cultural trauma*, suggesting that sudden, comprehensive, fundamental and unexpected social changes may be defined by individuals as traumatic, therefore suggesting the study of how individuals have perceived these fundamental changes in institutions or regimes, or the changes in individuals' cultural values. Similarly, Kennedy (2002) has formulated a theoretical approach to transition culture, arguing that culture has the power to articulate, contain and repress social change.

We understand the term *social transformation* as being intertwined with self-regulatory societal development, launched by deep changes in some field of society, for example by political reforms, or by revolutionary technological innovations, which simultaneously or in a certain sequence lead to overwhelming changes in the whole system of social, political, economic and cultural relations, as well as to changes in social interactions and in individual lives. In some of the initial studies, the focus has been on deep structural, systemic changes when explaining social transformation processes. According to Claus Offe (1996), post-communist development can be seen as a multi-layered process that is full of internal contradictions, in which unpredictable transformations should be studied using universal social scientific categories: modernisation, post-modernisation, the analysis of social systems, social self-regulation, cultural and civilisational shifts, the activity of social subjects, social division of work, etc. Comparative approaches to path

dependency and theories of the multi-level nature of transformation processes (Linz & Stepan, 1996) are some of the particular examples of such holistic approaches to social transformations.

In addition, social-philosophical and cultural approaches, putting the post-communist developments in the context of the broader context of civilisational history, modernisation and post-modernisation (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005), can be included in this group of theoretical approaches. Departing from the initial interpretation of the spatial dimension of transition as the movement from the East to the West (Wolff, 1994), European transformation studies have also elaborated on the more general understanding of socio-spatial changes (Harvey, 1990; Lefebvre, 1992), above all seeing the change in the spatial order of the economic organisation in societies as one of the main outcomes of social transformations. Such spatial divisions as 'west' and 'east', 'centre' and 'periphery' are some of the examples of the perceptions and resulting practices and realities of the spatial transformation processes, e.g. changes in state borders. In addition, bordering and de-bordering processes within such institutional affiliations as the European Union, as illustrated by Moisio and Luukkonen in their chapter (Chapter 14), serve as examples of studying the social transformation processes through the prism of social space and territory. Besides space and socio-spatial relations, time has also become a contested field, characterising the transformation from pre-modern to modern and from modern to late capitalist modernity in which the 'progressive acceleration of social change' is assumed to be a constant (Rosa, 2013: 110) in the ways in which we establish a connection to and 'resonate' with the surrounding world (Rosa, 2016).

These multilayered and multidimensional transformation processes cannot be comprehensively explained from the perspective of any single social science (Castles, 2001) but are designed to promote an interdisciplinary approach in rendering the interpretations of societal transformation processes (Reis, 2012: 109). The disciplinary backgrounds of the authors of this book are very diverse, including economics, political sciences, educational sciences, geography, media and communication studies, public management and administration, social psychology and sociology.

As some early studies of post-communist transition emphasised, various transformation processes may have different durations, so that some waves of changes may occur through generation change, as indicated by Nugin and Kalmus in this book (Chapter 19), or even over the course of centuries, being deeply historical in nature, as Warf has showed in this book (Chapter 16) through the example of time-space compression, whereas others are completed in significantly shorter time periods, such as the political and economic reform processes presented in the chapters by Åslund and Pettai (Chapter 6 and Chapter 7). Understanding social transformation as a long wave of social changes, one also has to pay attention to the several shorter waves of social transitions, including the micro-waves of individual habits taking place under the surface of 'big changes' (see Figure 0.1). The micro-waves, for example, include individual reflexivity and habitual changes, such as reactions to the transitional changes in social structures. Everyday consumption habits, analysed by Vihalemm and Keller (Chapter 11), and the extensive usage of digital technologies, critically tackled by Krotz (Chapter 17) in this volume, are some of the examples of the micro-waves of changes that are transforming the practices of individual lives.

These three waves of change are not necessarily causally related but can proceed in parallel or with certain time lags. Therefore, not all transition processes necessarily lead to social transformations and, similarly, not all social transformations affect individual lives. In a particular spatio-temporal context, political and economic changes may be expressed only as superficial ripples in these changes without any deep waves of social transformations following. For example, in certain countries of Eastern and Central Europe, the social transitions that started at the end of the 80s have not yet led, or perhaps won't lead at all, to significant social transformations. In addition, the ability of particular countries, institutions or individuals to go along with these
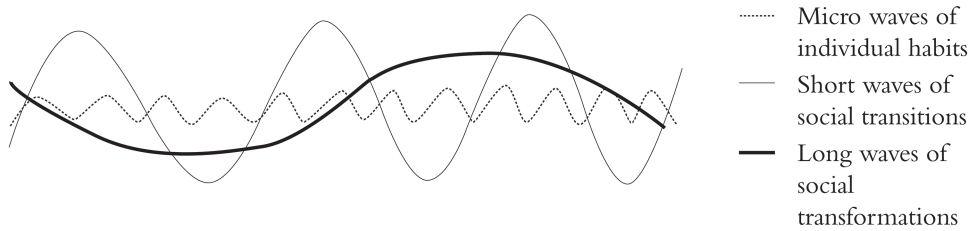
Figure 0.1   Intertwined waves of social transformations, social transitions and micro-waves of individual habits

Source: Figure drawn by authors.

change processes may vary significantly, as shown by Norkus in his chapter (Chapter 4), and therefore such phenomena as 'falling behind' and 'anticipating' social changes may result. Or as Krotz indicated in his chapter (Chapter 17), using the example of mediatisation, different paths of social transformations are possible although, depending on the negotiations of structural, individual and cultural features and various fields of power, only one will be realised. The speed of these transformations has varied greatly, as indicated in various chapters in this book, such as in Pettai's focus on political transformations (Chapter 7), in Åslund's explanation of economic transformations (Chapter 6), and in Vogt's study of European integration in the context of EU enlargement (Chapter 12).

Theoretical and methodological challenges in transformation studies

Studying variations in social transformations and the interplay of universal global and particular local generative mechanisms of social transformations, the book provides an opportunity to reflect on theoretical and methodological challenges, as well as offering some possible solutions for social transformation studies.

Kollmorgen (Chapter 1), in his overview of the main issues of theory building in the field of social transformations, presents a clear picture of the main paradigms in transformation research, and has also emphasised the difficulties in integrating the very diverse contexts of post-communist transformation, showing the diversity of changes in a holistic approach. Historicisation, i.e. the appearance of history as an essential player in theories of transformation, is shown in his chapter to be an important new coordinate in theoretical discussions. Stressing the need to integrate social theories and historical knowledge in transformation studies corresponds well with Sewell's understanding of the mutual challenges posed by historians to social scientists and vice versa (Sewell, 2005). The ideas of post- and co-transformation, the former emphasising the intensifying interdependencies of both post-communist transformations and developments in Western Europe, the latter suggesting that the radical social changes are coming to an end, are proposed as two of the most important challenges for theoretical debates in the field of social transformation studies. However, these new distinctive features of new discursive constellations do not mark the end of the theory-building processes within social transformation studies, but call for new theoretical work.

Besides the historical time line presented in Kollmorgen's chapter, socio-cultural time as an essential conceptual framework for studying social transformations is examined in various

chapters of this book. Time as a universal category of social change processes has also been emphasised in numerous previous studies (e.g. Sztompka, 1994). However, there is currently a rising interest in the study of the temporal dimensions of social being, including an increased interest in the study of social generations. Especially in the context of current theoretical elaborations focusing on social acceleration processes in modern societies (Rosa, 2013), the interest in issues of social time and social generations is increasing even more. According to Rosa (Rosa, 2005), through studying the (dis)connections between generations we can better understand a society's capacity for social change or cultural reproduction.

As Nugin and Kalmus show in their chapter (Chapter 19), combining the concepts of social time and social generations indeed offers a valuable theoretical framework for studying social transformations, in general, or for analysing the dialectics between change and stability, and particularly between agency and structure. Nugin and Kalmus also show empirically that not only generational structures, but also generations as discursive constructs and related symbolic powers function as generational capital. The empirical findings presented by the authors within their chapter suggest that after the 2000s, the formation of generations has become more similar between Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and Western countries, mainly due to the homogenising power of global processes and institutional frameworks. As indicated in the chapter written by Saar and Trumm (Chapter 9), the category of social generation has also been fruitful for the temporal analysis of structural changes in transforming societies, making it possible to explain the social inertia in situations where younger generations tend to take over patterns of inequalities from older generations.

In studies of great social transformations, routine methods and canonical explanations may often fail (Reis, 2012). Therefore there is a great need for new methodological solutions leading to cross-country and cross-disciplinary comparisons. Some of the interesting methodological solutions in qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods of studying social changes are presented by the authors in this book. For example, an innovative qualitative narrative approach is offered in the chapter by Mikser and Goodson (Chapter 5). The proposed method suggests an analysis combining systemic narratives to investigate changes at the macro level and everyday life narratives to investigate personal conceptualisations of individual actors. According to the authors, their approach not only makes it possible to study linear social change processes but also more complex modifications. These modifications (*refractions*, as the authors term them) of global reform initiatives are mainly visible in individual narratives, which analyses should focus on. According to Mikser and Goodson, the concept of refraction makes it theoretically and empirically possible to combine the macro and micro levels of analysis to study change processes: transformation processes on the level of systems and on the level of individuals. As suggested by the authors, the interplay between these analytical levels is necessary, for example, to better understand why and how neoliberal reforms produce different restructuring practices in different countries. Although the concept of refraction is explained using the example of educational changes, the term is also useful in studying social change processes in other social spheres, since it is ontologically inherent in any social change process. The proposed conceptualisation of refraction offers not only a valuable theoretical framework but also a methodology for studying the success or failure of various reform initiatives and for explaining and understanding the multi-layered restructuring process as a characteristic feature of changes initiated on the EU level.

Considering the possibilities of the analytical combining of changes on the systemic and individual levels, Vihalemm and Keller (Chapter 11) suggest using social practice theory to focus on the dynamic relationships between human agency and social structure. They present an example of how the social practice thinking of Schatzki (e.g. Schatzki, 2008), used within the framework of lifestyle studies by Sulkunen (2009), could be applied to study post-communist social changes.

According to Vihalemm and Keller, the social practice approach makes it possible to switch the analytical focus from the individual to 'habituated and collective patterns of action'. The study of social transformations, interpreted by social practice theory as intertwined practices in various interrelated fields (including health, leisure and family activities), should also focus on the impacts produced by the conflicting and contradictory practices of various intervention programmes, and the potentials for resolving these conflicts.

Some interesting attempts to overcome the methodological difficulties of comparative research in transition studies are cited in this book, such as the comparative retrospective qualitative analysis presented by Norkus (Chapter 4), and the fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis presented by Rončević, Makarovič, Tomšič and Cepoi (Chapter 3). These authors offer solutions to overcome the complexities of post-communist transformation by analytically combining various mechanisms and processes. Norkus admits in his chapter that the universal theory of social transformations is difficult to realise without empirical applications. The main problems related to cross-country comparisons are that data are not always directly comparable across cultures and findings reported to sponsors are often biased and misleading (Hantrais, 2007). Qualitative comparative analysis (QCA), suggested by Norkus and based on the logics of the Boolean formula, can provide a disciplined and systematic exploration of 'past futures', and therefore offer solutions to one of the main critiques of the comparative approach: providing techniques for comparing data across cultures. Norkus proposes QCA as a relevant methodological framework for analysing the varieties of initial post-communist transition empirical scenarios during the 1990s. The techniques of scenario planning, previously used mainly in the field of future studies, are suggested by Norkus as a useful technique for retrospectively researching the patterns of past transformations.

Similarly to Norkus, Rončević, Makarovič, Tomšič and Cepoi present an example of the qualitative comparative approach to study social change processes. Previous studies have claimed that there is a need to develop appropriate methods to assess and calibrate response scales across countries and languages (Sasaki, 2008). The anchoring and calibration techniques proposed within the chapter written by Rončević and his colleagues are useful for combining qualitative and quantitative data, as well as making it possible to estimate the differences between cases under consideration and to define the character of causal relationships and their combinations. The authors propose an adjusted fuzzy-set qualitative comparative method that allows for a high level of flexibility, operationalisation and measurement of different concepts, but it also combines rich data of individual cases with systematic procedures. The proposed methodological approach permits broader generalisations, therefore allowing for better dialogue between theory and empirical observations.

Another author in this book who proved the fruitfulness of the comparative approach and offers theoretical-methodological innovations is Iankova. Her chapter (Chapter 2) focuses on the varieties of capitalist developments in the new member states after the enlargement of the European Union. Rather than analysing single countries in their isolated socio-economical contexts, she proposes a framework that makes it possible to explain the complexities of key changes, which is useful for a theoretical understanding of the emerging new varieties of capitalism. According to her, there are at least four fields in which the conceptual framework for analysing CEE capitalism can be refined: (a) CEE countries as emerging-market economies, (b) the impact of regional integration and the EU as a determinant in business-government relationships, (c) the rising complexities of business-state interactions and coordination, and (d) the changing social contract between business and society. Saar and Trumm stress in their chapter (Chapter 9) the need, when elaborating the comparative theory of capitalism or looking for 'post-capitalist' solutions, to take into account the experiences in post-communist societies in

different regions and during longer time periods. However, the choice of specific methodologies depends on the aims and focus of particular research. As Rončević, Makarovič, Tomšič, and Cepoi emphasise in Chapter 3, the best methodological approach to use when studying the diversities of social transformations is impossible to determine. Therefore the methodological innovations proposed by the authors in this book are meant to encourage researchers to engage in further explorations in order to enrich empirical studies of the complexities and variations of social transformations between and within societies.

Awareness of the varied trajectories of changes shows the need for a theoretical model which is capable of embracing and explaining divergence, allowing for a coherent holistic view of ongoing societal transformation, while avoiding narrow teleological simplifications or getting lost in all-consuming abstract generalisations. Several chapters in this book focus on efforts to find a holistic approach which makes it possible to combine various dimensions and contexts of societal change – structures, institutions and cultures; levels and fields of social practices; formal and informal social relations; etc. – when conducting empirical studies on changes in transforming societies. In our view, an inspiring new effort to elaborate such a coherent and overwhelming model of transformation processes is offered by Margaret Archer's theory of morphogenesis. This theory has several features that seem useful as a kind of meta-theory for the theories of transition and transformations presented in this book.

Morphogenetic explanation of social transformations

As indicated previously, one way of looking at the whole concept of transformations in its broadest sense is to address the topic from the morphogenetic approach, which combines critical realist ontology and complex causality. The main idea of social morphogenesis as offered by Margaret Archer (1995) lies in the interplay of the three main constituents of our societies – structure, culture and agency – and focuses on constitutive and transformative mechanisms based on the interplay between these aspects (SAC model). Giddens (1979, 1984) has emphasised the importance of interplay between social structure and social agencies in the reproduction or changing of a social system, being both its medium and outcome. However, according to Archer, the structuration approach of Giddens ignores the existing efforts to re-unite structure and action in the general systems theory (Archer, 2010: 227), and therefore is incomplete, since it provides an insufficient account of the mechanisms of stable replication versus the genesis of new social forms (2010: 249). William Sewell (Sewell, 1992) has a similar point, suggesting to focus equally on the structural patterns at the individual level as well as on the macro level structures of system for understanding social transformations. The alternative morphogenetic approach as proposed by Archer not only identifies and elaborates social structures but also specifies the mechanisms involved, including such negative features as stabilising and rigidifying, and such positive features as structure-elaborating, and it leads to increasing disorganisation (Archer, 2010: 249).

As illustrated in Figure 0.2, the consistent explanation of social order needs to include three constituents – structure, agency and culture – in the model of social process. According to social morphogenetic approach, none of these components have priority over the others (Archer, 2013a: 4), although a certain 'temporal succession of events', or more accurately, an 'internally connected series' of events is inherent here (Maccarini, 2013: 55). Social interactions (phase T2-T3), such as the individual's adjusting or resisting behaviour in relation to certain societal conditions or discussing the meaning of these changes, always come after various structural conditioning processes (e.g. changes in previously communist state institutions, phase T1) have taken place, but they always precede and mediate the structural elaborations leading to the emerging

new societal order or cultural rules, in phase T4 (Archer, 2010, 2013b). In addition, as shown in Figure 0.2, there are also constant morphogenetic cycles happening *within* the domains of structure and culture, as well as constant interactions *between* them.

Such temporal lags between the initial changes and emerging new structures, as well as structural and cultural domains, are illustrated in this book in several chapters. For example, Mikser and Goodson (Chapter 5) point out the phenomenon of refraction, which modifies the impact of neoliberal educational reforms in different local contexts. Similarly, Karo and Kattel (Chapter 15) explain the mechanisms of failed socio-economic transformation due to the difficulties of adjusting to EU innovation policies in local national contexts. Saar and Trumm (Chapter 9) have shown the importance of meanings given in different ideological and value contexts to the structural changes in income distribution. Vihalemm and Keller (Chapter 11) focus on the mediating role played by certain legacies from the socialist era which have shaped current everyday practices and such bottom–up strategies as resistance and emancipatory feelings, in response to top–down lifestyle governance, e.g. excessive control over alcohol consumption habits.

According to Archer, there are constant morphogenetic cycles happening *within* the domains of structure and culture, but also constant interactions *between* them. Social transitions and transformations are formulated by Archer as different phases of morphogenetic changes. When a transition involves the interactional stage, still based on the existing conditions (stage T_2-T_3 in Figure 0.2), then transformation can emerge only in the case of structural elaborations (stage T_4) (Archer, 2013a: 19). Although such logic is presumed to be a universal feature of any social change process, the synergy of these two domains has been most visible in the last twenty-five years (2013: 13). That is the period of transformative changes in Europe, and is the main temporal focus of this book.

According to the social morphogenetic approach, both morphostasis and morphogenesis are equally possible outcomes within social processes (Archer, 2013a: 10). Therefore as seen by Archer (2013a), not all social transitions lead to social transformations. The successful transformation of previous socialist economies and totalitarian societies has been possible only in the case of morphogenesis, when the positive feedback created by social interactions, supported by favourable cultural and structural preconditions, was followed by cultural or structural elaborations of certain morphogenetic changes (see Figure 0.2). In the case of morphostasis, the structural and cultural conditioning of social interactions blocks the structural changes and only the reproduction of past structures is favoured, without elaborating any new cultural or structural
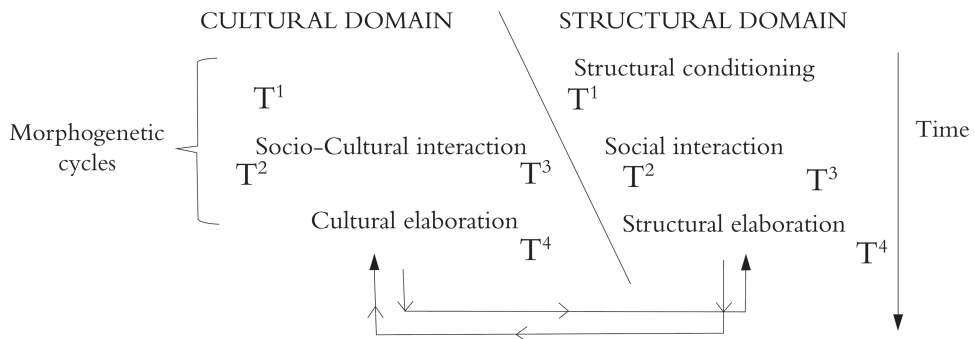

Figure 0.2   Societal morphogenesis

Source: Archer, 2013a: 7 (reproduced with permission).

conditions. The exemplary cases of morphostasis are certainly those countries of the previous Soviet Union where reforms have been manipulated by oligarchs, e.g. in Russia, Ukraine and several Central Asian republics. As the historical experience has proved, the initial process of morphogenesis can also at some point be returned to morphostasis. Examples of morphostasis can be found in Skąpska's contribution (Chapter 8), which explains how in Poland and Hungary certain conservative agencies have blocked democratic changes; in Åslund's analysis of the rent-seeking phenomenon in several reform countries (Chapter 6); and in the study of Tammaru, Marcińczak and Kukk (Chapter 10), which shows the growing levels of segregation in Central and Eastern European countries.

The chapter written by Karo and Kattel (Chapter 15) clearly illustrates a similar case, where the EU-led spread of highly technocratic innovation policy does not take into consideration the varieties and capabilities of innovation across particular Central and Eastern European economies, therefore leading to innovation policies having limited effects on socio-economic transformations.

Mechanisms of social transformations

We agree with Archer's critical realist statement that 'causation is not the establishment of correlations between the variables' (2015: 24). According to Archer's explanation, the mechanism provides the real basis of causal laws, above, beyond and regardless of the presence or absence of statistical associations with outcomes at the level of events (ibid.). Moreover, the mechanisms seldom appear as the only unique determinants; rather, they appear as multiple 'generative complexes', which can thwart or nullify each other (ibid.). Such a notion of causality as proposed within the critical realism approach is widely discussed in theoretical literature as a novel and useful methodological solution for studying complex social transformation processes (Archer, 2010, 2013a). However, the critical realist understanding of generative causal mechanisms is mainly used within one single research paradigm, such as qualitative studies (Iosifides, 2011, e.g. life history interviews in Sealey, 2010; the historical narrative method in Carter, 2000; combining discourse analysis and semi-structured interviews in Heur, 2010), and less in quantitative or mixed method approaches (Iosifides, 2011; Yeung, 1997; Hedberg et al., 2004). There have been a few studies using the critical realist approach (Fox & Do, 2013) to study, through (theoretical) meta-analysis, the causal mechanisms and contexts related to various social transformations.

The pluralist and complex approach to causality suggested by critical realism (see e.g. Iosifides, 2011) enables us to analyse *how* particular transformation experiences in particular contexts are expressed in social processes, structures and systems, and to explain through conceptual schemes, theories and propositions *why* the newly emerging transformatory processes are expressed in particular ways. Therefore, in transformation studies it is inevitable that attempts are made to answer the questions 'why?' and 'how?' referring to presumed determinants of changes. In the theoretical elaborations and empirical studies in the field of post-communist European transformations, various mechanisms have been proposed to explain the causes of social transformation processes. Different events, circumstances and initiatives, such as economic, political and administrative reforms, sociocultural and ideological movements and technological innovations, can be shown to have led to changes across domains and levels of society and to social transformations.

The collapse of the Soviet Union is one of the central events we focus on in this book, as it was a result of failed economic, political, spatial and socio-cultural transition processes within the Soviet Union (for 'failed transformation' see Masso, 2008; Lefebvre, 1992). This event is considered to be the common starting point for following post-communist transitions in the various Eastern and Central European countries. As was pointed out earlier, the mechanisms of initial

transition have often been understood as a rather uniform pattern of institutional reforms following some common design. In the field of economic reforms, international financial institutions in their prescriptions followed the neoliberal scheme, known as the 'Washington consensus', and later a very similar approach was implemented by the European Commission during the EU pre-accession process via the 'Maastricht criteria'. In the area of political reforms, the classical models of liberal constitutionalism and representative democracy were prepared for implementation through national legislative processes.

Nevertheless, the realities of transition have revealed significant disparities in the implementation of these unified prescriptions in different national contexts. Considerable dissimilarities in the pace and effects of reforms between different countries emerged during economic and social development, as described by Åslund in explaining economic reforms (Chapter 6), as well by Saar and Trumm in focusing on social stratification (Chapter 9), and by Tammaru, Marcińczak and Kukk in exploring housing and socio-economic segregation (Chapter 10). Similarly, as Warf illustrates in his contribution (Chapter 16), regarding technological transformations the access to technologies and information has increased considerably, although certain digital inequalities still remain and they lead to exclusion from the globalised world. Åslund (Chapter 6) indicates the unequal spread of social transformations, so that successful transformation in one field, e.g. market economic transformation, does not automatically mean success in another field, e.g. democratic transformations in the former Soviet bloc.

In some countries the reform processes were completely manipulated or even stopped. For example, Skąpska's study (Chapter 8) shows that long political transformations may have led to the current constitutional crisis in Poland. Also Pettai demonstrates in his analysis (Chapter 7) how certain disruptions, such as the economic crisis, have affected social change processes, e.g. challenging democratic governments and therefore causing a loss of trust in democratic structures and principles. Other examples of morphogenetic effects can be seen in the emergence of certain grass-roots initiatives, such as food distribution cooperatives, in response to the economic crisis, as described by Faist, Aksakal and Schmidt (Chapter 18), or even in the creation of new self-defined generations in response to social disruptions, e.g. the 'economic crisis generation', examined by Nugin and Kalmus (Chapter 19). As Rončević, Makarovič, Tomšič and Cepoi (Chapter 3) have clearly shown, several institutional drivers, for example help from the European Union and national motivation, may have played supporting roles in overcoming crises and in dealing successfully with *external shocks* in 2008. Other studies, e.g. of innovation policy as covered by Karo and Kattel (Chapter 15), have shown quite opposite effects, where the innovation policies and financing were shifted from local governments to the EU after the financial crisis, making it difficult to adjust innovation policies to local contexts so that they would work for socio-economic transformations.

Understanding the interplay between economic and political reforms and sociocultural mechanisms brings our understanding of post-communist social transformations close to the SAC model of social morphogenesis proposed by Archer et al as a universal model of the social transformation process (Archer, 2013a: 4–8; see also Archer, 2014, 2015). The necessity of the cultural component for transformation analysis is confirmed by the authors throughout our book. Following the interaction between social and cultural domains in producing transformational changes, Rončević, Makarovič, Tomšič and Cepoi (Chapter 3) stress the significant role played by social and cultural capital. Similarly Vogt (Chapter 12) emphasises the essential role of cultural factors in European integration, e.g. shared political discourses, values and identities across regions, and Pettai (Chapter 7) demonstrates the essential role of attitudes and beliefs in the creation of democratic rules and institutions. As was mentioned earlier,

Sztompka and Kennedy in their seminal works have also stressed the importance of cultural competencies and trust as the most important mechanisms needed for the success of reforms (Kennedy, 2002; Sztompka, 2004).

Considering the broad understanding of cultural factors in transformation, the role of ideology in the process of meaning formation is essential. Looking through the chapters written by the authors of different theoretical backgrounds, we could discover references to the same ideological mechanism playing a significant role in the formation of reform policies in various transition countries and in the European Union as a whole. This mechanism is found in the hegemony of neoliberal ideology in Europe in the first decades of the post-communist transition. The translation of neoliberalism's credo into transitional programmes as a universal global mechanism is emphasised in the theoretical overview by Kollmorgen (Chapter 1), and is exemplified in several specific empirical examples. Faist, Aksakal and Schmidt (Chapter 18) emphasise neoliberal globalisation as enhancing the introduction of foreign capital, one of the generative mechanisms that shaped ensuing migratory conditions. Similarly, Preisendörfer (Chapter 13) shows how a neoliberal growth-oriented economy leads to the exploitation of natural resources. Mikser and Goodson (Chapter 5) emphasise the transformations of national education systems through the influences of global neoliberal tendencies. Saar and Trumm (Chapter 9), Vihalemm and Keller (Chapter 11), and Iankova (Chapter 2) similarly explain how neoliberalism produces governments that exercise minimal interference in the free operation of market forces, and therefore increase individual choices, leading to individualisation of risks and consumption, and corporate social responsibility.

The majority of transition and transformation studies focus on the meso-level institutional mechanisms and outcomes of transition. These are most explicitly related to political and constitutional reforms in particular whole societies or in several sectors (as illustrated in the chapters by Norkus [Chapter 4], Skąpska [Chapter 8] and Pettai[Chapter 7]). In this book, several institutional drivers of change processes have been analysed, e.g. the need to deal with housing-related socio-economic segregation, as examined by Tammaru, Marcińczak and Kukk (Chapter 10), as well as the need to diminish the effects of structural stratification and overcome economic inequalities that emerged as the result of radical economic reforms, as shown in the chapter by Saar and Trumm (Chapter 9). The European Union itself became a powerful source of institutional drivers in fostering certain social transformations, e.g. solving environmental problems, as illustrated by Preisendörfer (Chapter 13), promoting digital mediatisation, as explained by Krotz (Chapter 17), and prioritising certain areas of innovations, as analysed by Karo and Kattel (Chapter 15). Specific types of supranational institutional drivers of changes across the European Union are discussed in more detail in this book by Vogt (Chapter 12), who analyses the emergence of the new European identity in this context, and by Moisio and Luukkonen (Chapter 14), who emphasise the essential process of spatial restructuring as a consequence of the European Union's policies.

Emphasising the importance of the interactions between the three levels of societal processes, we point out the micro-level subject-centred understanding of transformations, stressing the importance of the micro-waves of individual habits in inducing social change processes. The active role of individuals can be seen in various chapters of this book. The role of individual activity in adjusting to rapid social changes is illustrated in the chapter by Mikser and Goodson (Chapter 5), who show that in cases of compulsory transition, where individuals do not accept changes, artificial or even comic situations may follow. Vihalemm and Keller (Chapter 11) focus on the mechanisms which can lead to alteration in individual habits in post-communist societies, showing that institutional interventions and people's civic self-expression and mobilisation are the key elements in changing tobacco and alcohol consumption habits. Vogt (Chapter 12) emphasises in his chapter the essential role of micro-level cultural mechanisms, such as identity

building, in social transformations, indicating that local national identities may offer the main source of existential certainty at times, and may lead to multiple and flexible cultural affiliations and global unpredictability. As indicated by Moisio and Luukkonen (Chapter 14), the European context is especially interesting, since the political and cultural content and limits of the EU are constantly redefined and reconstructed. Krotz (Chapter 17) emphasises that digital transformations challenge the awareness of individuals of digital developments as changes and opportunities, on the one hand, and as risks and dangers, on the other hand; therefore, the development of an active civil society is necessary to cope with the increasingly computer-controlled world and to make sense of the opportunities and risks related to digital transformations.

Among the most essential issues which deserve more attention in the studies of social transformations is the nature of interactions between different levels when dealing with phenomena related to systems and institutions and the reactions of individual agents. The usefulness of determining the linkages between various analytical levels in order to understand the generative mechanisms operating in complex transformation processes is demonstrated in several chapters, e.g. Faist, Aksakal, and Schmidt (Chapter 18) look at the effects of migration on social transformation, Mikser and Goodson (Chapter 5) examine the global ideological context of educational changes, and Vihalemm and Keller (Chapter 11) consider the example of lifestyle governance. Besides linkages between levels, structural features are increasingly part of the process of social transformations, e.g. the growing overlap between social and ethnic inequalities, as shown by Tammaru, Marcińczak and Kukk (Chapter 10). In addition, the specific features of economic, political, cultural, spatial and social structural changes have become more tightly intertwined and are even losing their specific theoretical significance in terms of the holistic nature of the social transformation going on in contemporary Europe. Opening up to global issues and trends, such as fighting climate change, as indicated by Preisendörfer (Chapter 13), and taking advantage of the potential of the digital revolution, as shown by Warf (Chapter 16), will certainly become more important drivers of European transformation in the coming decades.

Regarding changes at the global level, Preisendörfer's study (Chapter 13) clearly shows that such *catastrophes* as environmental disasters may be the driving forces for economic and social transformations. For example, the Chernobyl disaster in 1986 is presented in his chapter as a relevant example of a situation where new types of risks emerged and led to several social transformations. Unpredictable catastrophic events can deeply influence all levels of society and change the course of European transformations in rather unpredictable ways. Such environmental issues may function as global, universal driving forces for social transformations although, as Preisendörfer clearly illustrates, there can be large spatio-temporal shifts in awareness, acceptance and the occurrence of certain environmental risks. Therefore, the similar patterns of interplay of micro-level individual practices, environmental and economic transformations and cultural readiness are here revealed, as is seen in the case of other global transformation processes. However, as emphasised by Preisendörfer, a certain political inertia is inherently inscribed in the process of planning and implementing of changes, as in the case of other universal global processes, such as immigration policy, as examined by Faist, Aksakal and Schmidt (Chapter 18), and lifestyle governance, as covered by Vihalemm and Keller (Chapter 11).

Another driving mechanism of social transformations, which is an inherent rather than a global and universal generative mechanism of social changes, as indicated in this book, is the meta-process of mediatisation. Mediatisation is the embedding of media in the fabric of daily life, analogous to other broad developments, such as globalisation (Krotz, 2009). It embraces a wide array of empirical phenomena and has been involved in several transformations in history, as Krotz discusses in this book (Chapter 17). As indicated by Nick Couldry and Andreas Hepp (Couldry & Hepp, 2017, based on the theory by Berger & Luckmann, 1966), technologically

based communicative transformations involve long-term evolution, from the mechanisation of communication media, which can be traced back to the invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century, to today's developments of the internet, digitalisation and an extremely complex media environment organised in very many dimensions. Another important aspect of this technologically initiated socio-cultural transformation, closely related to mediatisation, is time–space compression, as theoretically dealt with in detail and explained by using a wide array of empirical examples in the chapter by Warf (Chapter 16). The full scale of such socio-technological transformations, which unfold as a chain of economic, social, cultural and political changes launched by the European project of the Digital Single Market, is comparable to Polany's great transformation. However, as indicated theoretically by Massey (Massey, 2005), and exemplified in the chapter by Moisio and Luukkonen (Chapter 14), individuals and regions of Europe, as well as in the world as a whole, do not necessarily benefit equally from this time–space compression, nor from digitalisation, taking into consideration the constantly changing levels of power and interactions.

One of the most disputed global challenges for European transformation is related to the impact of migration pressures on European societies. Migration as a mechanism of broader social transformation in Europe has been theoretically undermined, as the issue of migration is interpreted mainly as a practical problem of the integration of migrants, creating political and administrative challenges for European and national institutions. In this book, whose writing started long before Brexit, the chapter on migration written by Faist, Aksakal and Schmidt (Chapter 18) is a rather particular approach focusing on the social adjustment of migrants and pointing out the possible transformational role of the growing migrant population, considering the social, political and cultural restructuring going on in a range of European societies. Besides the focus on individual agents and mutual socio-cultural adjustment, the growth of migration in EU has also led to the problems of European borders as immensely heated geopolitical areas, as illustrated by Moisio and Luukkonen (Chapter 14). The further rise in cultural fragmentation and socioeconomic inequalities, as shown in the chapters by Saar and Trumm (Chapter 9), and Tammaru, Marcińczak and Kukk (Chapter 10), coupled with the weakening of traditional institutional mechanisms of social integration on the level of nation-states, have produced new challenges to European social transformation.

Closing remarks

Previous studies have shown that social science theories that do not take into consideration the social change process have often been criticised. Various theoretical and methodological limitations, such as cultural assumptions and developmental models deriving from the Western experience of capitalism and industrialisation, have been ascribed to such approaches not taking into consideration dramatic societal changes (Castles, 2001). In this book we have emphasised that studying social transformation processes is a necessary component in the field of social sciences.

Based on the classic social scientific approaches to social changes, as well as the more recent theory of social morphogenesis, some of the main cornerstones in the research of social change have been taken into consideration in this book. Covering a wide area of theoretical, methodological and empirical studies, this book will hopefully contribute to explanations of social transformations in the European context, and to the holistic understanding of societal changes in general.

The cornerstone of the holistic approach to transformation used in this book is the interplay between culture, structure and agency, all necessary components of societal changes. We believe that the studies presented in this book show that the theoretical approach proposed by Archer (2013b), emphasising the significance of the structure-agency-culture model, is indeed an appropriate

framework for fruitful theoretical or empirical research in the field of social transformations. Several chapters of this book show that through a holistic approach embracing all three of these aspects, the variations in social transformations and related generative mechanisms, as well as possible outcomes, such as resistances, ruptures, adaptations and collapses, can be explained in detail.

A variety of disciplines are represented in this book, including political science, public administration, economics, educational sciences, geography, media and communication studies, and sociology. This has made it possible, moving from case to case, to highlight the rather universal generative mechanisms of social transformations and to reveal the main characteristics of European social transformation processes. This overview also emphasises that the sociological approach can create added value in transformation research, providing a valuable explanatory framework in which institutional, project-based logic tends to dominate. Intertwined with the numerous disciplines represented in this book, the interdisciplinary sociological approach has turned out to be significant for examining the complexity of the transformation processes on the intertwined micro, meso, and macro levels.

Time has been emphasised as an essential element in explaining the social transformations. The transformations in Eastern and Central Europe demonstrate the reality of the acceleration and tightening of time, as opposed to the position of Archer (2014), who sees time as only expressed in the form of subjective perceptions. However, besides the previous suggestion of extending the temporal horizon of the transformation study through using historical analysis to gain a better understanding of the constituents of contemporary institutions, societies and culture (Castles, 2001: 29), the studies in this book indicate that several additional temporal dimensions can open up significant additional opportunities to analyse societal changes. Most importantly, the study of social generations may offer excellent opportunities to explain the variations in social transformations in different contexts.

The range of issues in this book includes the processes and generative mechanisms of transformations on two socio-spatial scales: on the national scale, with its rather unique generative change mechanisms, and on the global scale, with related generative mechanisms being rather universal. We believe that the holistic approach, taking into consideration both scales and using them in any particular case under consideration, leads to a better understanding of the social transformation processes, including the role of economic, political, structural, cultural and other factors involved in these processes. This is particularly true of refractions of global phenomena on the local level, taking into consideration the related institutional drivers and generative mechanisms of these refractions, which makes it possible to explain the particular *vs* universal features of social transformations, and therefore leads to a better understanding of global social change processes, even while restricting a particular empirical study to the social transformations in a single spatial area, i.e. Europe in our case.

The studies presented in the chapters of this book support the previous research in this field, which has suggested using a comparative approach to analyse global factors through the mapping of local dimensions via participatory methods. They also show the necessity of methodological innovations to explain social transformations, taking into consideration their complexity and multilevel nature. The methodological innovations presented in this book, including the qualitative narrative approach, fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis and qualitative comparative retrospective scenario analysis, provide an excellent framework and tools for collecting comparative data of high quality and for examining the mechanisms and variations of social transformations.

Despite the large number of different conceptual approaches to transformation brought to the attention of readers in several chapters of this book, we found it useful to add here the morphogenetic model as an attempt to apply a valid meta-theory for the interpretation of the variety

of European transformations. Archer's approach to transformations indicates the (re)turn to the ontological interpretation of social reality and social processes. This theory attempts to offer an explanation of real changes in societies by looking at the interaction between social and cultural conditions, and interactions between agents and emerging structures in different layers of society. For this reason it is well-suited to transformation studies that require synthesis between historical narratives and the language of social sciences, as advocated by Sewell (Sewell, 2005). The studies of transformations in post-Cold-War Europe have provided a rich collection of evidence-based narratives dealing with relationships between the objective processes of change in the different layers and spheres of specific societies and disclosing the causal relationships between these processes and real events, particularly certain legal, economic and political reforms and international initiatives. In addition, according to the theory of morphogenesis/morphostasis, the divergent trajectories and different speeds of transformations can be explained by looking at the emergence of specific new agencies and structures in societies as a result of concrete loops of positive feedback when 'progressive' changes of morphogenesis take place, and the negative feedback loops which hinder changes, leading to the stagnation or 'freezing' effects characteristic of morphostasis (Archer, 2014: 95–96).

Critical realism in general and the social morphogenetic approach in particular offer a valuable framework for explaining the generative mechanisms of any social changes, through integrating micro-level processes with contextual macro-level information, and implementing realist principles of social causality, such as linking the empirical analysis of relationships with theoretical conceptualisations. Here we use the principles of critical realism as a framework to explain the generative mechanisms of European social transformation, where particular local and rather universal global mechanisms on various analytical levels are tightly intertwined. In the context of post-communist social transformations, the morphogenetic approach calls for attention to be paid to the specific causal relationships between events and trends in the different domains of society, particularly between rules, values, trends and emerging new intellectual resources in the cultural field (including education and science) and emerging institutional structures and choices made by economic agents (including financial and investment decisions). Looking at the specific post-communist conditions in Central and Eastern Europe, we can also point out the importance of changes in constitutional order and legislative rules for shaping new social relations and opening up new choices for people to act in all spheres of society, from labour relations and voting behaviour to travel and consumption.

We admit that our study of European social transformations does not deal with all of the underlying dimensions of social transformations, nor does it offer a complete list of the conceptual features or explain all of underlying generative mechanisms of these transformations processes. As a result, it cannot meet all of the expectations, or explain all of the transformation processes in Europe. Therefore we invite researchers to use the social transformation perspective as an inherently inclusive, thorough approach for any studies in the field of social sciences, and to test and complement the list of principles of social transformation research presented here. We also encourage future research to improve the theoretical and methodological frameworks to further explain European social transformations in the context of rapid and complex global social changes.

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