

CULTURES OF DIFFERENCE:

Transformation Processes in the Central European Region – Current Perspectives, Historical Contexts

Initiativkolleg at the University of Vienna (Vienna)

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1. Description of the Research Programme and Coherence of the IK

1.1 Preliminary Remarks

The Initiativkolleg (IK) addresses and examines *Cultures of Difference. Transformation Processes in the Central European Area. Current Perspectives, Historical Contexts*. It is the result of many years of experience and cooperation between scientists from various disciplines at the University of Vienna, the University of Economics and Business Administration and the Austrian Academy of Sciences, who have formed a working group with the goal of defining and developing, with the help of international experts, the objectives and creation of an college for doctoral students. The present proposal is the final stage of the planning process and documents designed to explain the intention and ambition of the scientists involved in the project who combine their research efforts and competences to offer doctoral students a structured study programme on »Central Europe«.

The region and countries of Central Europe have undergone major changes over the past years, which have had a lasting impact on the region. The end of the Cold War in 1989 and the ensuing redrawing of the political map have triggered a fundamental change in the societal, economic, political and cultural fields. These transformation processes have not just influenced the former real socialist countries, which are going through a transition from centrally controlled planned economies to market economies and from single-party systems to democracies, but have also had a great impact on the societies of Europe and, especially, Central Europe. This is most notably shown by the enlargement of the European Union in 1995 and by the recent round of accessions in 2004 as further markers of the transformation processes. These processes are not limited to individual sectors but cover a wide range of areas from the business world to everyday life and popular culture, which are mutually interactive and in which, for one, old traditions are preserved and, for another, new cultural patterns emerge. These transformation processes cannot be interpreted as short-term or finished phenomena, but must be understood as long-term developments in which historical deep dimensions also play a role. The changes in the various societal segments concerned do not take place in a model-like and uniform manner but follow quite diverse patterns. The IK is designed to open up new vistas in regard to these differences and to bring the analysis of cultural factors of social development processes in the humanities and cultural, social and economic sciences into the centre of interest.

The aim of the IK is an analysis of these phenomena from an innovative methodical and theoretical perspective that is being discussed in various scientific disciplines under the concept of »cultural turn«. In this interdisciplinary and cultural-studies-oriented field of research, the intricate relationship between politics, culture and business is of particular significance.

However, the background of the research design does not only mean a reorientation in the disciplines involved from a cultural study perspective. It is also the complexity of these transformation processes and the interaction between the different segments of society that make it necessary to go beyond the limits of individual disciplines and to use an interdisciplinary approach to address the new questions arising in the process of transformation. This will allow for a fundamental and innovative analysis of the transformation processes in the region of Central Europe.

It is one of the aims and objectives of the planned IK to provide students with a comprehensive analytical competence. The idea behind the training programme is to pass on the theoretical, methodological and practical knowledge that is needed to deal with scientific and social questions of topical relevance to a generation of young scientists. It is our ambition to enable young researchers to specialise on Central Europe in their particular discipline while at the same time helping them to achieve a capacity for comprehensive analysis by means of an interdisciplinary training.

This programme also requires a high level of readiness on the part of the students to think in integrational terms and to go beyond the limits of their discipline and join the IK already with a specific interest in the region.

While the structured doctoral programme is meant to be primarily science-oriented, it should also offer students a broad range of vocational qualifications. It is conceived as a three-year programme and links up with the University's general focus on »Europeanisation Processes« as well as with the research priorities of the social science and geoscience faculties, thus perfectly fulfilling the criteria for an IK. Such a training programme will prepare IK students for the challenges posed by the current formation process of a European research area. What a European research area particularly needs and calls for is regional expert knowledge. The concentration on Central Europe is of great topical interest as one of the important development areas in Europe.

1.2 Central Fields of Research

The thematic starting point of the IK is closely related to the radical changes that started in Central Europe after 1989. The aim of the IK is to provide an exemplary analysis of the economic, cultural and political changes both in the post-Communist countries and in other EU Member states in the region (Austria, Germany, Italy, etc). The core elements of research are the concepts of »Central Europe« and »transformation«.

1.2.1 Central Europe

For the purpose of our programme, the concept of Central Europe is not that of a clearly defined geographical space but is rather based on historically traded self descriptions and description by others as well as specific historical traditions. Initially, the area may be described by the presence of four historical empires whose traces can still be found in its territory: the Habsburg monarchy, Prussia, the Osman empire, and Czarist Russia or the Communist Soviet Union. It covers a region that is traditionally described as Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe and is often, for the sake of simplicity, identified in the English-speaking world as CEE (Central and Eastern Europe) or as a part of Eastern Europe.¹ There is both a »real« and a symbolic significance underlying this area. The symbolic meaning of Central Europe as an area of divided cultural traditions and mutual influences has been sufficiently documented and will be addressed by the IK with a view to testing its effectiveness as a framework of interpretation of the ongoing transformation processes. Our research will also focus on some of the political and economical processes in the region, including the *Mittleuropa* debate in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary that preceded the dissolution of the European part of the Eastern bloc in the 1980s. In the context of the geopolitical changes in Europe, discussions will focus on a (re-)emergence of supranational historical regions in the form of communities of political and economic development and of interests based on traditional links of »long duration«. In contrast to questions raised in the context of research on Eastern Europe, the notion of a Central European area is of scientific relevance insofar as it transcends the former bloc boundaries and provides a focus on the scientific interest on cultural patterns and regional differences, thereby questioning the East-West dichotomies that are still in place in scientific analyses.

1.2.2 Transformation

The Central European area has undergone a profound and historic change since 1989/90. What this means in detail, what consequences it entails and how the societal transformation processes should be managed, is the central question linking the research works of the doctoral students selected as participants in the IK. At this point, the second key concept of »transformation« will be introduced and briefly discussed, although it should be noted that the definition of this term varies between disciplines. One essential difference is that between transformation and transition, with the former meaning a final state and the latter referring to the chronological perspective of change. By transition the IK means a development process from one phase of the institutional system to another. Transition research is concentrated on the various institutions and actors.² Transition requires a clearly defined, if only temporary, final state while the chronological perspective of reaching this state is usually quite foreseeable. The complete adoption of the *acquis communautaire* is an example for such a transition process, considering that the process of transition is over once the legal norms of the EU have been implemented at the national level. The members of the IK have agreed to understand transformation as a fundamental process of change that is actively supported by society and triggered by political actors and whose final state can

1 Garton Ash, Timothy: Zeit der Freiheit. Aus den Zentren des neuen Europa. München: Hanser 1999; Le Rider, Jacques: La Mitteleuropa. Paris: PUF 1996; Marjanović, Vladislav: Die Mitteleuropa-Idee und Mitteleuropa-Politik Österreichs 1945-1995. Frankfurt/M., Wien: Peter Lang 1995; Csáky, Moritz: Mitteleuropa/Zentraleuropa – ein komplexes kulturelles System. In: Österreichische Musikzeitschrift. Musik in Mitteleuropa 1/2 (2005), pp. 9-16.

2 Cf. O'Donnell, Guillermo/Schmitter, Philippe C./Whitehead, Laurence (Eds.): Transitions from Authoritarian Rule. Comparative Perspectives. Baltimore et al.: Johns Hopkins UP 1986; Merkel, W.: Systemtransformation: Eine Einführung in die Theorie und Empirie der Transformationsforschung. Opladen: Leske & Budrich 1999.

be described to a certain extent, albeit not precisely. One such process is the transformation from a planned to a market economy: The change is fundamental and must be actively brought about, and its final destination, a market-controlled system, can only vaguely be defined at the onset of the process. Moreover, it does not follow a uniform course and some of its results are markedly different from each other. The IK curriculum will therefore include analyses of both the transformation and transition processes and their consequences.

1.3 Topics Addressed by the Scientific Disciplines Involved

The IK understands the political system change of 1989/90 as a phenomenon of unique historic significance, considering the fact that never in modern history has there been such a radical and comprehensive transformation process. Within a few years, the countries of the former Eastern bloc were forced to change their entire political, economic and social systems: planned economies were replaced by market economies, one-party dictatorships were turned into pluralistic democracies, and instead of the old ideal of a class-less society, new social distinctions began to emerge. That is why the IK plans to concentrate on the interdependency of these processes and their consequences – and not on an isolated perspective oriented towards individual disciplines – as the focus of its research activities.

What this system change signifies is not just a repair of the system or a »return to Europe«, but the launch of a fundamental and long-term process of transformation as described above, which also, on the one hand, influences the countries of the former West, especially those in the Central European region, and on the other, triggers changes against a background of historical cultural patterns in these countries.

Corresponding with the interdisciplinary, cultural analysis orientation of the research design are the different discipline-based approaches in which the above-mentioned common central topics are embedded. As regards the disciplines represented, the following fields of research will be at the centre of work in the IK:

- Geographic transformation research;
- Political transformation research;
- Economic transformation processes;
- Cultural transformations;
- Historical deep structures.

1.3.1 Geographic Transformation Research

In the years after 1989/90, a new branch of research has taken shape within the discipline of geography that may be referred to as geographic transformation research. The topics addressed by this research have been, and still are, quite varied but nevertheless all have a bearing on the central question of the spatial consequences that result from a transition from a planned to a market economy. How do spatial disparities change, what social and architectural or structural changes can be observed and explained in major urban centres, or which paths of development may be detected in the rural regions?

The questions raised by geographical transformation research are not narrowly defined. Rather, the change from a planned to a market economy has a social, political and economic dimension, and ultimately also has an effect on such aspects as the cultural landscape, the settlement structures and the ecological balance.

As an illustration of the wide variety of topics, a few examples are given below without any claim to completeness: the development of city centres, the reform of the housing markets, the utilisation, repair and social redesign of residential buildings constructed of prefabricated concrete, the social inequality in cities, the emergence of ghettos of the rich, the architectural decay of poor sections of towns, new migration into metropolitan areas as well as the overall transformation of the urban system have attracted the interest of many of our colleagues.³ In the large cities and metropolitan areas of Eastern Europe, the economic, social and constructional or physical change occurring as consequences of transformation are most markedly visible. The city as a burning glass of social changes is a popular metaphor which may be also true, or particularly so, for geographic transformation research.

Scientific interest also focuses on the industrial centres and border towns. The latter are interesting as they exemplify the persistence of historical structures. For example, there are parts of towns with a market economic past and others with a planned-economic past, a situation which enables scientists to examine the long-term effects of this development.⁴

3 Faßmann, Heinz/Lichtenberger, Elisabeth (Eds.): Märkte in Bewegung. Metropolen und Regionen in Ostmitteleuropa. Wien, Köln, Weimar: Böhlau 1995; Müller, Evelin (Ed.): Großwohnsiedlungen in europäischen Städten. Leipzig: Inst. für Länderkunde 1997 (Beitr. zur Regionalen Geographie 45); Brade, Isolde/Grimm, Frank-Dieter (Eds.): Städtesysteme und Regionalentwicklungen in Mittel- und Osteuropa: Rußland, Ukraine, Polen. Leipzig: Inst. für Länderkunde 1998 (Beitr. zur Regionalen Geographie 46).

4 Waack, Christoph: Stadträume und Staatsgrenzen. Geteilte Grenzstädte des mittleren und östlichen Europa im Kontext lokaler Alltagswelten, nationaler Politik und supranationaler Anforderungen Leipzig: Inst. für Länderkunde 2000 (Beitr. zur Regionalen Geographie 51).

5 Kopacka, Ludvik: De-industrialization and Restructuring in a Transition Country. Czech Industry after Ten Years of Transformation. In: Acta Facultatis Rerum Naturalium Universitatis Comenianae/Geographica. Suppl. 2/2 (1999), pp. 121-135; Müller Bernhard/Finka Maroš/Lintz Gerd (Eds.): Rise and Decline of Industry in Central and Eastern Europe. A Comparative Study of Cities and Regions in Eleven Countries. Berlin et al.: Springer 2005.

6 Kühne, Olaf: Transformation, Umwelt, Raum: der Einfluß der gesellschaftlichen Transformation auf den Zustand der Umwelt – dargestellt am Beispiel der Luftbelastung in Polen. Mainz: Habil.[masch.] 2002; Thelen, Tatjana: Privatisierung und soziale Ungleichheit in der ost-europäischen Landwirtschaft : zwei Fallstudien aus Ungarn und Rumänien. Frankfurt/M. et al.: Campus 2003.

7 Beyme, Klaus v.: Systemwechsel in Osteuropa. Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp 1994; Bönker, Frank/Beichelt, Timm/Wielgohs, Jan: Kulturelle Determinanten postsozialistischer Gesellschaftsentwicklung. Ein Diskussionsüberblick. In: Berliner Debatte Initial 15 (1994), pp. 4-12.

8 Geertz, Clifford: Dichte Beschreibung. Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp 1983.

The old industrial towns and districts are proof of the difficulties of getting rid of a region's industrial past and of what consequences are associated with this process.⁵

One should finally mention the studies and analyses dealing with the rural areas in Eastern Europe, considering that the development faults and the consequences of transformation are just as marked there, if somewhat less manifest than in the towns or industrial districts. While poverty, homelessness and social exclusion are also spreading in these regions, they are more easily offset by an often meagre agricultural output. The pertinent analyses, at any rate, show that the decay of structures in the rural surroundings of the towns has already gained a strong momentum.⁶

The existing and partly growing differences in living conditions between cities and rural regions, between border areas and the new peripheries, and between the countries of the »old Europe« of the EU 15 and the new member states, have led to a migration of capital and labour. It is a particularly obvious phenomenon that the transformation processes in the countries of the former Eastern bloc and the elimination of boundaries such as those imposed by the »Iron Curtain« also have serious consequences for the »West«, esp. in the countries of Central Europe. Capital tends to move to where it finds better conditions for accumulation while the workforce moves to those towns and regions where labour is in demand and where incomes are likely to be higher. These migration movements – which not only lead to a redistribution of capital and labour supply, but also constitute one of the most important social challenges in the field of social integration today – are at the centre of geographic transformation research and are therefore one of the research priorities of the IK.

1.3.2 Political Transformation Research

On the basis of the interdisciplinary approach of the planned IK, the consequences of the system change such as the European migration movements – seen in conjunction with their political ramifications, e.g. the rise of populist activism to the right of the political spectrum – will be analysed. In the scientific discussion of the political system change after 1989 – esp. with a view to analysing the complex phenomena and taking into account the historic quality of the total transformation of the former Socialist one-party states of Central and Eastern Europe. The position very soon prevailed that an exclusive focus on the reformation of the political institutions and their actors (transition research) would be too narrowly chosen. In order to answer the question of the sustainability of the political system change, it is above all necessary to examine the links with the development of political culture.⁷ In this way, the political transformation processes of »long duration« come within the view of scientific analysis.

The admission of the new democracies into supranational political institutions – in particular the EU – has led to a practical review of the compatibility of political and economic actions initiated in different cultural contexts: questions of integration and distinction have become central issues in these adaptation processes which are reflected in such areas as company mergers or policy-making processes or in connection with the question of political finality – e.g. in the debate on the constitution or enlargement of the EU. This means that the analysis of economic and political developments must increasingly also include an understanding of cultural frameworks of action.

The political culture also plays a special role in this context given that state socialism was an ideologically legitimized order system and that its crisis – which preceded the transformation process – was first and foremost a profound crisis of values. In the legitimization crisis of the *ancien regime*, both the competing Western system and the pre-socialist systems defeated in 1945 gained in importance. The confrontations with the historical images of the era of state socialism characterised the first decade after 1989 and are still strong in some societies (cf., *inter alia*, the rhetoric concerning a »Fourth Republic« used by the victorious PiS party in the last Polish elections). Collective political identities had to be re-established, including the national identity in the midst of the dissolution of multinational states and of what was to be right or left.

Associated with the political and economic system change since 1989 was also a loss of (political) ideologies, e.g. in the sense of a well-established system of coordinates to facilitate orientation in everyday life.⁸ This cultural dimension of the political system change became clearly visible in the context of a series of developments and problems which, at least in the field of democratisation research, have resulted in a »cultural turn«: It comprises the above-mentioned problems of a new or re-emerging nationalism as well as the (cultural) framework of action of the political actors and a range of questions from the participation in

9 Kornai János/Rose-Ackerman, S. (Eds.): *Building a Trustworthy State in Post-Socialist Transition*. New York et al.: Palgrave Macmillan 2004; Magaš, Branka: *The Destruction of Yugoslavia. Tracking the Break-Up 1980-92*. London, New York: Verso 1993; Jacobs, Jörg: *Tücken der Demokratie*. Wiesbaden: Verl. für Sozialwiss. 2004; Pollack, Detlef et al. (Eds.): *Political Culture in Post-Communist Europe. Attitudes in New Democracies*. Aldershot: Ashgate 2004.

10 Holden, Nigel/Fink, Gerhard: *The Global Transfer of Management Knowledge: Introduction*. Special Issue of *Academy of Management Executive on Global Transfer of Management Knowledge* (2006) [forthcoming].

political decision-making processes to the formation of stable party systems to the regional disparity of political transformation processes (e.g. the different dynamics of the elite change at the local and national levels).⁹

1.3.3 Economic Transformation Processes

In the context of transformation of the former planned economies into a market economic system, two separate levels need to be distinguished from an economic perspective. There has been a relatively rapid and successful change of economic, spatial and entrepreneurial parameters. Likewise, the quality of goods produced, the integration in foreign trade and the competitiveness of enterprises have significantly improved, not least because of new business start-ups fuelled by foreign capital and know-how. The reorientation of the former CMEA countries, which were firmly embedded in a system of regional division of labour, towards open and competitive national economies aiming for membership in the European Union must be counted among the successful chapters of economic transformation. However, this reorientation was achieved at a cost, which again demonstrates the intricacy of the processes involved. Enterprises that could not be integrated into the Western European economic area had to be dissolved and wound up. Regions which were home to many of these dissolved firms experienced a process of degradation. Large numbers of industrial workers who used to belong to the social elite lost their jobs and had only few prospects of finding new employment in the newly created service companies. The specific problems of the everyday culture of these »losers« of the transformation process are only briefly mentioned in this context.

As regards the economic transformation at the company level, the change could be seen at all levels of organisations, including headquarters and affiliates or in the relations between headquarters and affiliates or between affiliates. In the process of transformation, institutions and organisations are being reshaped, and it should be noted, though, that cultural change in organisations and enterprises cannot be enforced by new owners within a short time either.¹⁰

It thus becomes clear that the economic transformation processes must also be understood as part of an ongoing overall development and can only be understood in their interconnectedness with spatial and political changes or in their embeddedness in cultural structures.

1.3.4 Cultural Transformation

The cultural change in which the economic and political transformation processes seem to be embedded differs from the latter in that it does not have an explicit subject of action which would, so to speak, bring about that change. Cultural changes, i.e. the modifications of forms of habit, of symbolic programmes or mentalities and identity constructions, are also taking place in a non-synchronous relationship with the transformation of political and economic systems, which has repercussions on the latter – e.g. in the form of political rejection of changes. One of the central tasks to be undertaken by the IK is therefore to examine the specific differences in terms of changes in various fields in their context as »symbolic fields«¹¹ – spatial development, politics and economics – including their historic and cultural background. The cultural change after 1989 can be detected in those »symbolic fields« that concern such areas as literature, high and popular culture or media and films. In them we find programmatic and symbolic new life-styles and forms of life such as have taken shape in the new European democracies since 1989 and in which new values and new aesthetic patterns emerge. The societal changes after 1989 have opened up new vistas for development in nearly all creative and media-related sectors in the post-communist countries. One area of particular interest is the cultural exchange with the Western European and North American cultures and the emergence of neo-avantgardes in visual arts and film (e.g. in the former Yugoslavia), which has also left its traces in this country. The new function of the intellectual who used to play a crucial role for the upheavals in Central and Eastern Europe, the issues addressing the past, the change in gender roles and the new rules governing a market-like cultural economy in the art and media sector (film industry, private television, art market, free book market) are some of the key examples of the cultural change that has particularly affected these areas. That is why the IK will adopt an approach based on a mutual conditionality between transformation and politics, economics and cultural change in Europe since 1989, especially in the post-socialist societies. This is true for

11 Bourdieu, Pierre: *La distinction*. Paris: Éd. de Minuit 1979.

12 Judson, Pieter M./Rozenblit, Marsha L. (Eds.): *Constructing Nationalities in East Central Europe*. Oxford et al.: Berghahn 2005.

the arts and media as well as for changes in everyday culture. One should also mention the transformation of modern mass media, the important role of the new media in the creation of a civil society, the print media, or the cultural opening towards the ›old‹ Europe and North America, or the build-up of an uncontrolled and uncensored film industry or a privately owned publishing sector. Another aspect that belongs into the field of cultural transformation is the belated ›discovery‹ of the concept of nation, and it should be noted in this context that the processes of nation building will also play an outstanding role with regard to the thematic priorities of the IK,¹² namely the advent of Western-style mass culture and the changes of gender relations and life-styles in general.

1.3.5 Historical Deep Structures: Transformations of Societal Memory

13 Flacke, Monika (Ed.): *Mythen der Nationen. 1945 – Arena der Erinnerungen*. Mainz: von Zabern 2004 (Katalog zur gleichnamigen Ausstellung des Deutschen Historischen Museums Berlin).

14 Brix, Emil (Ed.) (1997): *Der Kampf um das Gedächtnis*. Wien et al.: Böhlau 1997.

15 Jilge, Wilfried/Troebst, Stefan (Eds.): *Staatsymbolik und Gesellschaftskultur im ›neuen‹ Osteuropa*. In: *Osteuropa. Zsr. für Gegenwartsfragen des Ostens* 53/7 [2003], pp. 907-1014; Ruchniewicz, K./Troebst, Stefan (Eds.): *Diktaturbewältigung und nationale Selbstvergewisserung – Geschichtskulturen in Polen und Spanien im Vergleich*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego 2004 (Monografie Centrum Studiów Niemieckich i Europejskich im. Willy Brandta 12; Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis, 2637).

16 Bucur, Maria/Wingfield, N.M. (Eds.): *Staging the Past. The Politics of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to Present*. West Lafayette/Ind.: Purdue UP 2001.

17 Todorova, Maria: *Imagining the Balkans*. New York et al.: Oxford UP 1997.

18 Corbea-Hoisie, Andrei/Jaworski, Rudolf/Sommer, Monika (Eds.): *Umbruch im östlichen Europa. Die nationale Wende und das kollektive Gedächtnis*. Innsbruck et al.: Studienverlag 2004.

19 Judt, T.: *Die Vergangenheit ist ein anderes Land. Politische Mythen im Nachkriegseuropa*. In: *Transit* 6 (1993), pp. 87-120.

20 Barkan, Elazar: *The Guilt of Nations. Restitution and Negotiating Historical Injustices*. New York: Norton 2000.

The paradigmatic compression of transformation processes over a short period constitutes the common thematic basis of the IK – i.e. the question as to what historic deep dimensions come into play and what the role of the societal forms of remembrance is in this context – and focuses on those research interests which are comprised under the methodical and theoretical heading of memory, given that the fundamental transformation processes in Central Europe are characterised by a similarly radical rewriting of history. The system change also had to find its expression, above all, in representations of official memory, considering the need to delegitimize the interpretation patterns of the communist era in the field of historical policy and culture, and to remove the insignia of their power from public spaces¹³ and, finally, to install new historic points of reference and memorial sites. This rewriting affected all layers of the societal making of history, not only at the national, but also at the regional and local level (e.g. municipal history): statues and street names, museums and memorial sites, national memorial days,¹⁴ school books, official representations of history (including a new code of visual memory) and, last but not least, historical science itself.¹⁵ Above all, ›1989‹ stands for a rupture in the memory culture, a change of perspective toward the past as the new constitution of the state also required a new historical legitimization, which is in many cases characterised by a renaissance of the national element and a reactivation of the myths of the 19th century.¹⁶ In this regard, history serves as an argument for the crumbling of supranational states¹⁷ and for the construction of a national, ethnic, religious, etc., ›We‹-communities,¹⁸ and it must be noted in this context that national and religious animosities, xenophobia and antisemitism have proven to be surprisingly persistent.

The memorial culture of the post-communist countries is thus, for one, determined by a – delayed – construction of national identity, and for another, by competing or ›conflicting memories‹ in view of the experiences of tyranny and dictatorship in the 20th century.¹⁹ In the Western European societies since the 1980s, the holocaust has become widely accepted as a transnational point of reference for a European memory,²⁰ whereas in the post-communist countries, memories of the communist dictatorship still play a more prominent role.

Memory must however not be examined at the national level alone as it is a truly paradigmatic field for transnational European communication structures, as regards both ›common‹ memorial sites and different or conflicting views about the same historical points of reference (such as the Habsburg monarchy, the events of 1918, or the flight and expulsion of the German-speaking population).

1.4 Methodology

The topics and fields of research of the IK and, hence, of the scientists managing it, are united by a common interdisciplinary methodical-theoretical approach whose starting point is the cultural turn that occurred in the humanities and social sciences, and in the framework of which new lead concepts, questions and research interests have taken shape. The methodical approach is concentrated on the cultural turn and the concepts building upon it. However, the cultural turn does not only have to do with discipline-based discussions on theories and methods, but also with an understanding that the societal changes and the activities of the actors involved can no longer be adequately understood from the perspective of a single discipline or by using its existing theoretical and methodical repertoire

This new awareness of cultural phenomena leads to a modification of scientific issues, esp. in the ›hard‹ areas, insofar as the function of vaguely defined cultural phenomena for the economic, social and political processes is systematically shifted into view. This also means an extension of the traditional concept of culture: In line with T. S. Eliot and Raymond

21 Eagleton, Terry: Was ist Kultur? München: Beck 2001; Müller-Funk, Wolfgang: Die Narrative der Kultur. Eine Einführung. Wien et al.: Springer 2002.

22 Hall, Stuart (Ed.): Representation. Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices (Culture, Media, and Identities 2). London et al.: Sage 2002; Horak, Roman: Die Praxis der Cultural Studies. Wien: Löcker 2002.

23 Said, Edward: Orientalism. Western Conceptions of the Orient. London: Harmondsworth 1995; Bhabha, Homi K.: Die Verortung der Kultur. Tübingen: Stauffenberg 2000; Müller-Funk, Wolfgang/Plener, Peter/Ruthner, Clemens (Eds.): Kaka-nien revisited. Das Fremde und das Eigene in der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie 1867-1918. Tübingen et al.: Francke 2002 (Kultur – Herrschaft – Differenz 1); Brooks Platt, J. (Ed.): Empire, Union, Center, Satellite. The Place of Post-Colonial Theory in Slavic/Central and Eastern European/(Post-) Soviet Studies. The Slavic Review of Columbia University, New York 7 (2003); Feichtinger, Johannes/Prutsch, Ursula/Csáky, Moritz (Eds.): Habsburg postcolonial. Gedächtnis – Erinnerung – Identität. Innsbruck et al.: Studienverlag 2003.

24 Alvesson, Mats/Billing, Due Yvonne: Understanding Gender and Organizations. London, New Delhi: Sage 1997; Bendl, Regine/Hannappi-Egger, E./Hofmann, R. (Eds.): Interdisziplinäres Gender- und Diversitätsmanagement. Einführung in Theorie und Praxis. Wien: Linde internat. 2004; Connell, Robert W.: Gender. Cambridge: Polity Pr. 2004.

Williams, culture is understood as a unity of symbolic systems and corresponding practices («whole way of life»). Beyond the narrow limits of art as a symbolic field, culture is seen as process-oriented and dynamically constructed, as a complex of phenomena which describes the self-perception and the symbolic formatting of a population (segment).²¹

Insofar the concept of culture underlying the cultural turn does not imply a specific thematic field but a certain perspective of the social world which is primarily directed at the societal construction of meaning and its representation in the media.²² The focus of this new scientific interest is thus on the construction of individual and collective identities and on the differences in regard to national, ethnic, social or gender labels, or on the creation of collective images such as that of an »imagined community« of a nation and its memory, or on postcolonial and cultural hierarchies²³ or social and geographic spaces.

In connection with the topics chosen and the research interests pursued by the IK, the following key concepts of the cultural turn are assumed to be relevant: Identity/difference, gender, post-colonialism, memory, spatial constructions. In particular with respect to transformation gender and diversity play a crucial role: from the descriptive perspective gender and diversity refer to the construction of individuality, from the moral-ethical perspective they refer to the political, equal opportunity level and from the functional perspective their focus is on management of gender and diversity.²⁴

These key concepts give access to an interdisciplinary set of theoretical and methodical tools which allow us to link to the discipline-based topics in an inter-disciplinary fashion and to integrate them with internationally discussed, innovative research concepts.

1.5 Curriculum

1.5.1 Expected Qualifications

The aim of the IK *Cultures of Difference* is to promote scientific excellence in Austria within a Central European context and to contribute to the selective advancement of young academics. At the same time, the successful completion of the IK programme should also lead to a significant improvement of the non-university job opportunities available to IK graduates. The interdisciplinary orientation, along with practice-oriented teaching skills like project management, use of new media, presentation techniques and languages, will give the IK graduates access to a wide range of professions including jobs in cultural, political and business management, in public relations and in the context of the European Union, or in the media sector. To ensure an educational programme for a highly qualified student community as well as a beneficial exchange and mutual intellectual inspiration among students, the selection process will be such that it encourages and financially assists students with a high level of motivation and a specific interest in, and a readiness for, interdisciplinary, integrational thinking.

1.5.2 Curriculum

As a means of promoting the students' personal responsibility and organisational talent and in order to give them sufficient time and space for the realisation of their research priorities and interests, we keep the curriculum as flexible as possible, without ignoring the need for a common basic training and an in-depth discussion of all relevant research findings in all the participating disciplines. The IK programme will be divided into three years, with each year counting as a study cycle. This should allow for a curriculum which provides for a range of both disciplinary and interdisciplinary courses and lectures concentrating on basic topics and methods. The focus in the compulsory subjects is thus on common basic studies while the elective compulsory courses will mostly concentrate on the various interests and research priorities chosen by the students. This specific interest will be supported by a mandatory sojourn abroad in the fourth semester leading to a freely designed third study cycle, which will be largely dedicated to the consolidation of doctoral theses.

All cycles also offer special courses teaching a number of explicitly practice-oriented skills. It is recommended to conduct these special courses in cooperation with other IK programmes operated by the University of Vienna, as they represent a new and innovative educational scheme that will be of general relevance to the future professional orientation of young science graduates. As for the elective and compulsory subjects, we have made sure that existing study courses offered by the University of Vienna will be bundled and used by the IK while certain new and specialised courses will also be available.

The curriculum was also designed in such a way that it contains mechanisms permitting a constant self assessment of the quality of their work by the students. A requirement for all students to participate in conferences and to publish papers or the recognition of prior teaching experience are also essential elements of the curriculum.

1.6 Co-operation between Scientists Managing the IK

In addition to the input of scientists from the University of Vienna, the IK relies significantly on the work of renowned experts from outside the University of Vienna, which will help to strengthen its networking culture and to ensure a profound expertise of the IK. In the context of the IK, the responsible researchers will further intensify their cooperation by means of joint lecturing and tutoring sessions, shared management functions and, above all, common research activities, and will thus make an important contribution to the strengthening of Vienna's position as a science location.

1.7 Co-operations with Scientists outside the IK

A major advisory role in the development of the IK, along with experienced Austrian experts, was also assumed by researchers or long-term cooperation partners in other countries including Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Hungary. This cooperation has given rise to a network which not only has a consistent methodological and thematic framework at its disposal, but also benefits from a wealth of experiences in dealing with issues of interdisciplinarity, and which can provide tutoring services for doctoral students in the course of their foreign study sojourns.

The IK is supported by the following external experts:

Ambassador Dr. Emil Brix, Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Head of Cultural Department; Univ. Prof. Dr. Moritz Csáky, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna; Univ. Prof. Dr. Zoltán Cséfalvay, Andrásy-University, Budapest; Univ. Prof. Dr. István Fried, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, University of Szeged; Univ. Prof. Dr. Oto Luthar, Institute for the Study of Ideas and Cultures, Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Ljubljana; Univ. Prof. Dr. Zdzislaw Mach, Jagiellónsky University, Kraków; Univ. Prof. Dr. Silvia Mihálikova, Komenského University, Bratislava

2. Information on Scientists Managing the IK

Associate Professor Dr. Pál Deréky is specialised on the theory and history of the 19th and 20th century literature, especially of the modern, the avantgarde and the neoavantgarde literature. In the field of Central-European Cultural Studies he has worked on areas such as Cultural Heritage of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in Art and Literature of the Modern, Austrian and Hungarian Émigrés, as well as Subversive/Underground Art and Literary Movements at the End of the of 20th century in Hungary and in Austria.

His core competency and his areas of supervision are therefore, Hungarian Studies, in particular literature and cultural studies concerning both Hungary and Austria as well with a view to Hungarian Studies in Central Europe (Hungarian Studies in the Czech, Slovak and Serb Republics, Romania, Ukraine, Slovenia, Croatia).

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Heinz Fassmann: The disciplines represented by H. Fassmann within the IK are spatial or regional research, demography and geography. He has extensive experience with the spatial effects of the transformation process in Central Europe and is the author (or co-author) of more than 200 scientific papers and around 40 books, editions and research reports. His focus of interest is on the effects of transformation on migration processes and *vice versa*: How do migration processes influence transformation? Given that migration movements also depend on the demographic and regional structures in the regions of origin and destination, questions addressing such issues as the demographic and regional development in the Central European neighbour states are also of prime interest.

Topics of dissertations which may be supervised by Prof. Fassmann within the IK include the following: new forms of East-West migration, spatial disparities – convergence and divergence or transformation processes in the urban area.

Univ. Prof. Dr. Gerhard Fink is specialised in international cross-cultural management and business strategies in the European market(s). Professor Fink contributed to about 160 publications in learned journals and authored or (co-)edited about 15 books.

The priorities of research projects to be supervised by Dr. Fink should include the following: international transfer of management expertise, e.g. in major concerns, between companies in networks, between nations in the context of training programmes (cf. Fink and Holden 2005); methods of work and work cultures of multinational teams in multinational companies; international organisations and their subsidiary organisations, including UNO, IMF, EU Commission, EU Parliament; international Not-for-Profit organisations and NGOs. (cf. Shapiro 2005); expatriation and repatriation – issues relating to the dispatch of managers on foreign missions and to their return from abroad.

Univ. Prof. Dr. Hanappi-Egger is the author (or co-author) of more than 120 scientific articles on economic, technological and gender issues. Her contribution to the IK will primarily be in the form of gender expertise in connection with economic questions. She has for several years been involved in research on gender and diversity management in organisations and on the possible ways of overcoming discriminatory structures that will be consistent with the changing demographic conditions in management.

As these topics are of particular relevance to transformation processes, the possible dissertation topics supervised by Prof. Hanappi-Egger could be any of the following: business-oriented cost-benefit models in a societal context: a cultural comparison; diversity management: global entrepreneurial strategies and their local adaptations (case studies); gender relations in situations of social change as exemplified by selected Central European countries; comparative analyses of implementation strategies in regard to gender mainstreaming.

Univ. Doz. Prof. Dr. Müller-Funk: The work of W. Müller-Funk within the IK is concentrated on the following areas: cultural analysis, literature and media science. He has comprehensive experience in the field of cultural research on Central Europe. (FWF-funded Projects since 2000). He has authored numerous books on cultural analysis, media research and issues of Austrian and Central European culture. He has a rich experience in the advancement of university graduates and is a co-founder of the *International Graduate Conferences for Cultural Studies* at the University of Vienna (together with Birgit Wagner, Karl Brunner, Andrea Griesebner a.o.). When studying cultural transfer, it is above all important to analyse the power processes inscribed into inter- and intracultural processes in respect of their political, societal and cultural consequences.

Possible topics of dissertations are: self and outside perceptions in the Central European area after 1989; literary interrelationships; translation and publication policies in Central Europe; migration as mirrored by Central European literatures; postcolonial research topics; media transfers; exhibitions, Balkan and Oriental studies.

Dr. Andreas Pribersky's focus within the IK is on the cultural patterns of political transformation in East Central Europe. He has led and currently is leading several research projects in this field, a.o. the Austrian team in a interdisciplinary analysis of the *Cultural Patterns of European Enlargement* (5th framework program of the EC) and a project on the *Construction of European Public Space* (bm:bwk research program NODE). Dr. Pribersky – who has numerous publications on the changes of political cultures in the ECE region – has, due to his work at the Austrian Institute for East and South East European studies, established a network of well established cooperation in research and university teaching, that he provides as well for the IK.

Dr. Pribersky is especially interested in the symbolic – i.e. cultural – dimension of political changes, with a focus on methodological tools that allow for the analysis of visual political communication as well. Dr. Pribersky will therefore assist the supervision of dissertations which put an accent on these fields, including possible topics as: transformation of the representation of states and parties after 1989, the use of history and symbolic politics in the construction of the actual national identities and politics in ECE since 1989; due to his professional experience in and numerous publications about Hungarian political culture, he will furthermore supervise all studies related to Hungarian politics.

Univ. Prof. Dr. Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler is a main expert in Austrian literature of the 19th and 20th century, which is especially crucial for the understanding of the Central European region, its literature and cultural context. He published 6 books and more than 200 essays

and editions with a focus on the literature of the Austrian empire and its successor states. He could therefore supervise a wide range of dissertations topics on literature such as representations of Central European literature after 1989 in Austrian media and publishing houses; images of Central European countries in Austrian literature after 1989, and literary transfer and comparative studies.

Moreover it has to be mentioned that Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler is the supervisor of the international program of the Werfel scholarships by the Austrian ministry of science, promoting the exchange of scholars of German language and literature from former socialist countries with Austria. He therefore has quite a lot of experience with students from Central Europe.

Univ. Prof. Dr. Dieter Segert's scientific focus within the IK is on the field of political transformation research. He is a representative of Comparative Political Science with a regional focus on East-Central and South-East Europe and has conducted a wide range of research on various phenomena of political transformation in the region. He has authored or co-authored ten books and numerous articles on the changes of the East European party system, on East European state socialism and its heritage (post-socialism) and on transformation theory. He is especially interested in the connection between political-institutional, social and cultural changes in post-socialist societies.

Possible dissertation topics include: challenges for the democratic order as posed by the social and cultural conflicts in post-socialism, comparative studies on the formation and change of party elites in Eastern Europe between late socialism and post-socialism, transformation processes in East Germany as a post-socialist exception.

Univ.-Doz. Dr. Heidemarie Uhl covers historical and cultural studies within the IK and her research and teaching focus is on the construction of collective (national, regional) identities or collective forms of remembrance, more recently also on collective images of EU Europe (publication entitled *Europabilder [European images]*). Her main research interest is oriented towards the public-medial and social space, i.e. the social power structures in which collective images are generated and implemented or else marginalised. Identity and memory are thus conceived – in explicit contrast to essentialistic perceptions – as contingent and changeable, and as the results of societal negotiations which are subject to a permanent transformation process.

The dissertation topics which could be supervised by Dr. Uhl are thematically related to the field of transformation of societal memory cultures since 1989 or the representations of the rewriting of history in the public (communication) space (media debates, monuments and monument collapses, history books, visual memory etc.), as well as »private«, communicative forms of tradition (»social memory«, family stories). In all of these topics, an emphasis is placed on the localisation of the various national memory cultures in a (Central) European comparison.