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SOCRATES Invades Central Europe

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Abstract

The objective of this article is to explore the current reality faced by higher education students in Central and Eastern Europe and to draw out the implications of this current reality for policy makers in the future. In the article, I explore the influence of transnational corporations' training programs on education as it currently pertains to Central and Eastern European higher education and employment. In addition, multinational corporate entities exercise influence on European Union policy through the role of lobby organizations and activities. I explore the influence of these practices on education with an emphasis on the emerging importance of Western language skills. In addition, I focus on the European Union and its efforts to expand into Central and Eastern Europe in order to provide a focal point for analysis.

Introduction

"If there ever was an all-European house, it had an upstairs and a downstairs.... There was the industrialized West, and then there was another, underdeveloped Europe to provide meals and servants--raw materials, food and cheap migrant labour. ...Europe in 2018 will consist of a Western superstate whose floors are scrubbed by Romanians or Poles, and a periphery of beggarly Bantustans (Ascherson, 1988:12)

The nineties are also witnessing the continuation of important social, cultural, economic and political developments that affect higher education. Prominent among them are the globalization of the economy, the decline of the welfare state, and the commodification of knowledge. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, there has been a deepening of the shift from Keynesianism to neoliberalism, and with it a wave of privatization and an increasing presence of

market dynamics in social exchanges."(Schugurensky, 1997, p. 1)

At no other time in our history has the global proliferation of consumer markets been so pervasive. Global corporations produce and disseminate products throughout the world with ever increasing speed and scale. Since the fall of communism, these international corporations have expanded their markets into the post-communist nations. With this expansion of economic markets ensues a simultaneous global influence in economic, cultural and political arenas. In regard to education, particularly higher education, transnational corporations influence curriculum choices through training practices as well as language utilization. As we approach the twenty-first century, more and more global corporations are utilizing centralized training practices at corporate universities while opting for English as the language of instruction. This usage serves to promote English as a global lingua franca.

At the regional level, Central and Eastern European nations have been actively seeking admission to the European Union. Bound by the 1993 Copenhagen European Council agreement, CEE nations who have applied for EU membership must be actively engaged in developing a functioning market economy. Consequently, these CEE nations must demonstrate the introduction of active measures to reduce state owned enterprise and create a free market system([Note 1](#)). Due to these measures, the CEE region has been a fertile ground for international investment. Consequently, on a regional level, transnational corporations have been granted access to CEE markets due to the necessary adoption of neo-liberal economic practices facilitated by the World Bank and the European Union ([Note 2](#)). Consequently, these powerful corporate entities influence language policy due to employment opportunities in Western as well as Central and Eastern Europe ([Note 3](#)). Due to their centralized training practices, access to employment is dependent upon western language skills and knowledge. This serves to privilege those in the region who have English language skills; those who have acquired English language skills maintain an advantage in the economic and labor markets. Consequently, transnational corporations have begun to play a major role in the field of higher education due to employment access based on western linguistic skill.

Furthermore, the European Union (EU) exerts influence in the region due to the involvement in education and developmental assistance ([Note 4](#)). Recently, Romania and Hungary became eligible for participation in European Union Community programs in the field of education, training and youth: SOCRATES, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth for Europe programs. This will serve to expand EU support of education carried out through TEMPUS from 1990 - 1996 ([Note 5](#)). Since 1990, the European Union has instituted the TEMPUS program which has provided educational travel opportunities for faculty and students. An examination of TEMPUS program data indicates that an unequal flow, from east to west, of faculty and students has occurred; many more university faculty and students from the east are traveling to the west than vice versa. I contend that these unequal mobility flows demonstrate an advantage for those with western language skills; CEE university students and faculty endowed with western language skills are afforded the opportunity to travel to Western Europe. This advantage along with the promotion of English language for training among transnational corporations will serve to devalue Central and Eastern European intellectual work. Through the introduction of SOCRATES, mobility flows will further exacerbate an unequal East-West flow of students and faculty. Through this unequal flow, those with Western European language skills will gain economic privilege through increased job opportunities. Furthermore, these mobility flows will lead to a diminished output of scholarly work published in Eastern and Central European languages.

In this article I will explore the influence of transnational corporations and the

European Union on Central and Eastern Europe. I contend that global trends facilitated by transnational corporate training is facilitating a de facto linguistic advantage for those who have acquired English language skills. Furthermore, since most transnational corporations maintain a strong lobbyist structure in Brussels, transnational corporations act more in the role of policy development in the European Union. Simultaneously, participation in TEMPUS has operated to privilege university students with western language skills. Further participation in ERASMUS will further this trend; those university students with French, German or English language skills will maintain a privileged position due to access to university mobility programs. EU involvement in the region paired with the international influence of transnational corporations will lead to an increased level of economic stratification in Central and Eastern Europe. Those who have western language skills, especially English, will be granted access to study and employment opportunities not afforded those without these linguistic skills.

Globalization: English as Corporate Lingua Franca

With the collapse of Soviet communism and subsequent opening to international capitalism, global corporations were given the opportunity to expand operations and markets into Central and Eastern Europe. During the initial phases of transition, those CEE nations which were oriented towards a market economy were rewarded with large amounts of foreign investment (Note 6). Consequently, the World Bank and other multilaterals provided funding for those nations which were actively engaged in attempts of free-market liberalization and privatization (Note 7). Due to a need for capital and required by multilateral conditionality, CEE nations have opened its doors to global commerce. Yet, global commerce is simultaneously English speaking; five hundred and sixty-six of the top one thousand corporations in the world are located in English speaking nations (Note 8). Due to the economic power of global commerce centered in English speaking nations, English has become a global lingua franca. With markets expanding into CEE nations, those with English language skills will be given a privileged opportunity in the labor market. Consequently, English will increase in value as expansion of transnational corporation continues into the east.

With this economic expansion comes a de facto influence on University curricula. Since University students in CEE nations will be granted employment opportunities with English language skills, a demand for English language instruction at the university as well as at other levels of the educational system has been realized (Note 9). Due to the economic influence of global commerce, the connection between transnational corporations and institutions of higher education continues to merge. For example, Mallampally (1997) provides the example of two internationally renown business universities (i.e., Institut pour l'enseignement des méthodes de direction de l'entreprise (IMEDE) and the International Management Institute (IMI) which were originally founded as corporate training centers for Nestlé and Alcan. Levels of university and corporate connections will be discussed in more detail later. Yet, the connections current exist and will continue to flourish as global commerce grows. Consequently, a hierarchal system of influence exists; labor market requirements (facilitated by TNCs) influence universities which provide the credentialing and cultural knowledge needed to advance in a global society. The power of economic capital works to define the system of higher educational institutions; due to economic influence, the practices of these corporations facilitates public demands which operate to change university practices and knowledge distribution (Bourdieu, 1973).

Table 1 illustrates the training strategies of the largest transnational corporations.

From Table 1, large transnational corporations provide more technical training as well as on-the-job training than small to medium TNCs. Since large transnational corporations rely more on their own training systems, access to this training is critical for employment with these firms. Due the location of corporate headquarters, access to training is dependent upon western language skills. For example, since 566 of the top 1000 corporations are located in English speaking nations, English will more likely be the language of training. Consequently, what appears to be more important criteria in hiring is the language skills through which TNCs provide training for employees. Therefore, western language skills become more critical for employment in large TNCs.

Table 1. Training of employees by TNCs

Type of Training & Region	Small to Medium TNCs	Large TNCs
On-the-Job Training	% Providing Training	% Providing Training
South, East & South-East Asia	61%	75%
Latin America	60%	69%
All Developing Nations	61%	73%
Technical Training	% Providing Training	% Providing Training
South, East & South-East Asia	46%	71%
Latin America	35%	74%
All Developing Nations	44%	73%

Source. Mallampally (1997).

From table 1, it can be ascertained that large transnational corporations tend to train employees at centralized locations. For example, in 1993, Nestlé trained 1200 workers from over 60 various nations at its Rive-Reine training center (Mallampally, 1997). As ERT (1989:35) explains about Nestlé training, due to global expansion:

a special group is prepared for an international career. An initial on-the-job training mixed with classroom seminars is offered during a 1½ - 2½ years. For this group it is especially essential to look after the company's interests as though they were one's own, through (1) mobility or the willingness and ability to move about both physically (i.e., from one geographical area to another) and socially, (2) adaptability both in geographical and intellectual terms, and (3) linguistic skill. The minimum requirement is for two languages, the preference being English, French and Spanish.

Similarly, large TNCs such as McDonald's as well as Anderson Consulting maintain their own universities which operate as training centers. Yet, in order to conduct training in these central locations, employees must utilize a lingua franca. Consequently, workers who are hired are required to have gained linguistic capital in French, English or German. At Airbus Industries, a collaboration between Spanish, English, German and French companies, workers communicate in English (World Press Review, 1997).

Global commerce is influencing training practices throughout the world while TNC's training policies are influencing language acquisition as well as access to employment opportunities. Consequently, those who possess Western European linguistic capital remain in a privileged position. Transnational corporations located in Western Europe or moving into Eastern and Central Europe are continually influencing language policy. Since the EU is expanding into CEE nations, CEE university students are driven to acquire Western European linguistic capital.

European Union: Conflation of the Regional and Global

Bound by the 1993 Copenhagen European Council agreement, CEE nations who have applied for EU membership must be actively engaged in developing a functioning market economy. In accordance with this EU mandate, the EU clearly views CEE nations as potential consumers of Western European products ([Note 10](#)). EU policy makers desire to increase the economic competitiveness of Western European corporations. "Further integration and enlargement will help rapidly growing income in Central and East European countries translate into a continuous rapid growth of the West-European export market" (European Commission, 1997a). With the European Commission keen on expanding economic markets into Eastern and Central Europe, EU policies are created in an effort to perpetuate free market liberalization and privatization in CEE nations which further contributes to the influence of global corporations.

Like all large political institutions, the European Union has an ancillary collection of lobbyist organizations working for private corporate interests. One of the largest is the European Round Table of Industrialists (ERT). ERT is comprised of some of the largest multinational companies in the world. Of the forty-six companies ERT represents, twelve are listed in the top one hundred corporations in the world. European business continues to a major play on the world's stage. In 1998, 139 of the top 500 and 290 of the top 1000 corporations were located in Western Europe. In 1990, 168 of the world's top 500 corporations were based in Western Europe (Ikeda, 1996). Table 2 demonstrates the international economic power of many of the ERT corporations.

Table 2. ERT Corporations' Economic Power

Corporation	International Corporate Ranking (Rank of 1000)
General Electric	1
Royal Dutch Shell	3
British Petroleum	21
Unilever	33
Nestle	38
British Telecom	45
Daimler Benz	58
Ericsson	71
Siemens	77
Bayer	91

Veba	94
B.A.T. Industries	96

Source. Business Week (1997).

With such economic influence, it would be prudent to explore the relationship between ERT and the EU. For example, "[t]he aim of the ERT is to strengthen Europe's economy and improve its global competitiveness" (ERT, 1998). In order to accomplish this objective, ERT makes contact biannually (i.e., every six months) with members of the government which currently holds the EU presidency. This is due to the change in the EU presidency each six months. During these meetings, ERT presents working papers, reports or position papers outlining their policy in regard to critical issues influencing their corporate markets. In addition, ERT operates at the national level with its members facilitating contact with country level governmental and parliament members.

Like all lobby organizations, the European Round Table of Industrialists is a policy dissemination body which attempts to steer EU policy decisions. For example, ERT released "Education for Europeans-- Towards the Learning Society" in March 1995. Interestingly, a July 14, 1997 report on the European Council's decision to admit Hungary, Romania and the Czech Republic for participation in Community programs for education, training and youth makes reference to a White Paper entitled, "Teaching and Learning - Towards the Learning Society." According to the European Council, this paper "defines the priorities of an education which is capable of carrying out its traditional tasks while integrating the new economics, technological and, above all, human aspects" (European Parliament, 1997: 20).

In addition, in 1997, ERT published a report "Investing in Knowledge: The Integration of Technology in European Education." Later the same year, the European Commission released "Towards a Europe of Knowledge." ERT's report emphasizes an information society which learns through cooperation with corporations. This sentiment was echoed by the European Commission. In section three of the European Commission report, "The Parties Involved," economic partners are emphasized. "There must be a commitment to securing greater involvement of the business sector" (European Commission, 1997d, p. 7). Topics raised by ERT through their policy papers seems to have an influential effect on European Commission policy. This influence extends directly to institutions of higher education through collaborate efforts with universities.

European University--Corporate Connection

ERT maintains an Educational Policy unit through which policy papers and collaboration with European Higher Education is facilitated. For example, the ERT joined together with the Standing Conference of Rectors, Presidents and Vice-Chancellors of the European Universities (CRE) to conduct research, publish policy papers and facilitate policy which would benefit corporate interest. CRE represents 500 universities in thirty nations. Two examples of collaborative publications include the following: European Approaches to Lifelong Learning (1992); and Lifelong Learning: Developing Europe's Future Capability: The Role of Industry - University Cooperation (1991). Through these publications, ERT promotes an increased partnership with institutions of higher education. Table 3 provides an example of suggested university - corporate collaborations currently being utilized by ERT member corporations.

Table 3. University--Corporate Collaboration

Training Type	Description
Inhouse Training	Individual University faculty utilized at corporate headquarters
Tailor-made programs	Universities construct program for corporation
Joint Collaboration	Combine accredited company training with external university courses
Pick and Mix	Select courses at a variety of institutions
Publicly funded adult education	Open University
Self-study	Distance Education Supported with Technology

Source. European Round Table of Industrialists (1991).

ERT desires universities to serve its interest through a concerted effort to promote life long learning; training costs will be reduced if universities aid corporations in training. For example, the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) reported that \$25 billion was spent annual in order to train poorly educated graduates (Vaughn, 1997). In addition to global economic influence, the European Round Table of Industrialist is attempting to drive educational policy making throughout Europe through its partnership with CRE and policy papers disseminated to the European Union at its biannual meeting with the EU presidency. Yet, the corporations represented by ERT influence university students as well as language policy in CEE nations through its global economic strength.

Corporate Influence in Central and Eastern Europe

A recent survey conducted by Universum (1997) illustrates how Polish, Hungarian and Czech University students view language skills and their relationship to economic opportunity. Fifty-seven percent of the respondents indicated that "the ability to speak foreign languages" was a critical skill perceived as necessary to realize success in career plans. A large percentage realize that access to increased levels of employment in the European market is dependent upon the possession of language skills. Economic incentives, realized through language ability, remain the impetus for travel to Western Europe for education and employment opportunities. On the other hand, the large number of Romanians and Hungarians without knowledge of Western languages face an uncertain and perceived unfair future. World Press Review (1997:8) provides insight into their feelings:

Hardest to take for many non-English speakers is the way the global language has divided the world into haves and have-nots: opportunities for knowledge, jobs, and advancement may be open to English speakers and closed to others. Career ads in French newspapers published in Belgium are often used in English, because multinationals increasingly regard mastery of the language as a job requisite.

With such an emphasis on foreign language acquisition as a requisite for employment, transnational corporations are endowed with a de facto influence over CEE university students. Due to the economic prowess of TNCs, CEE students look to these multinationals as a mechanism for upward mobility. Of those surveyed about companies that

they would ideally like to work for, only four domestic companies (i.e., two banks, one telecommunications company and one brewery) made the top 25 "wish list" in total of the three countries represented in the survey. Interestingly, in two nations these companies were the number one choice. Generally, university students in the region are looking toward the West for economic prosperity; thirty-six percent of the respondents want to work for a multinational. This desire for employment at multinational corporations leads to a de facto influence on language programming at Central and Eastern European universities. For example, students seeking upward mobility realize the need to acquire Western European language skills which in-turn creates a demand for these languages at CEE universities. Fifty-seven percent of the university students indicated that acquiring a command of foreign languages is important to current career success. In other words, these university students recognize that acquiring linguistic capital (i.e., modern languages of Western Europe such as German, French and English) is critical to upward mobility in the emerging new Europe. In addition, the influence of western linguistic capital can also be seen in the number of students from post-communist nations studying in the United States; 4780 students came to the U.S.A. during the 1991-92 year to study at American universities as compared with 18,032 during 1995-96 year (Moffet, 1996). The influence of global commerce on language acquisition can be seen through this recognition. Consequently, transnational corporations (TNC) create linguistic value through their global economic power. Students are clearly aware of this fact and equate economic success with working for this influential transnational corporations. Table 4 illustrates the university respondents top ten selections for ideal employment.

Table 4. CEE University Students Dream Jobs.

Poland	Czech Republic	Hungary
IBM	Komenci Banka	MOL
BMW	IBM	IBM
OPEL	Microsoft	Unilever
Microsoft	SPT Telecom	Coca Cola
General Motors	Citibank	BMW
Philips	Coppers & Lybrand	Andersen Consulting
Siemens	Hewlett Packard	Nestle
Bank Handlowy	Arthur Andersen	Mercedes-Benz
Arthur Andersen	Siemens	Audi
Sony	BMW	Danone

Source: Universum International (1997)

Surely, the majority of these companies are familiar to the reader. Students chose large TNCs; TNCs that represent some of the most successful and wealthiest corporations in the world. With this recognition comes a simultaneous realization of the language of their corporate headquarters (i.e., English, French, German). Obtaining linguistic capital for these university students represents an economic incentive for upward mobility. In addition, these languages operate as a transnational corporate lingua franca allowing communication between native speakers of various vernacular languages. The influence of English and other Western languages facilitates university policy and curriculum change as well as a

simultaneous demand by university students to acquire these linguistic skills.

EU Involvement in Central and Eastern Europe Higher Education

Beginning September 1, 1997, Romania and Hungary became eligible for participation in European Union Community programs in the field of education, training and youth: SOCRATES, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth for Europe programs ([Note 11](#)). In addition, the Czech Republic has recently become eligible to participate and it is anticipated that other CEE countries (i.e., Slovakia, Poland) will become eligible in the near future.

The European Union (EU) has been actively involved in Central Europe since 1988 ([Note 12](#)). As CEE nations realized more freedom, the level of EU involvement and cooperation from the EU increased. On December 18, 1989, the EU created PHARE in an effort to provide financial assistance and advice to post-communist nations ([Note 13](#)). As part of the creation of PHARE was the development of TEMPUS ([Note 14](#)). TEMPUS has been the EU's primary developmental assistance program in the field of education for Central and Eastern Europe. TEMPUS was initially implemented in order to meet the education and training needs of Hungary and Poland in an effort to support the initiatives of Phare. Yet, the EU soon realized Member Countries could benefit from expanding aid to other nations in the CEE region. In 1990, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of G24 nations extended financial assistance to Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, the German Democratic Republic and Yugoslavia

On May 7, 1990, the European Council created the TEMPUS program; Article 4 of the European Council decision outlines the objectives of the TEMPUS program (European Commission, 1997; European Commission, 1991). With the admission of associate countries into community programs, the EU will further its educational efforts first facilitated through TEMPUS (Trans European Cooperation Scheme for Higher Education). The objectives of TEMPUS are:

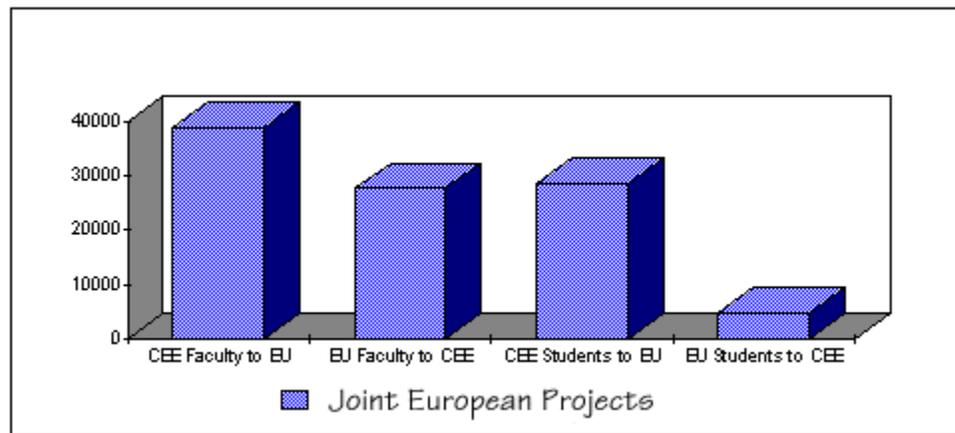
- to facilitate the coordination of the provision of assistance to the eligible countries in the field of exchange and mobility, particularly for university students and teachers, whether this assistance is provided by the Community, by its Member States or by third countries of the G24 group;
- to contribute to the improvement of training in the eligible countries, particularly in subject areas to which they give priority, and to encourage their cooperation, including joint cooperation, with partners in the Community, taking into account the need to ensure the widest possible participation of all regions of the Community in such actions;
- to increase opportunities for the teaching and learning in the eligible countries of those languages used in the Community and covered by the Lingua program and vice-versa;
- to enable students from the eligible countries to spend a specific period of study at university or to undertake industry placements within the Member States, while ensuring equality of opportunity for male and female students as regard participation in such mobility;
- to enable students from the Community to spend a similar period of study or placement in an eligible country;
- to promote increased exchanges and mobility of teaching staff and trainers as part of the cooperation process.

Of particular interest are the final two objectives: (1) to enable students to study or work in CEE nations; (2) to promote exchanges between EU and CEE faculty and students.

Ideally, TEMPUS objectives promote cooperation as well as the exchange of ideas and cultures between citizens of EU and CEE nations. Yet, this is only true if a two-way flow of exchange occurs. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate faculty and student flows from 1990 to 1996.

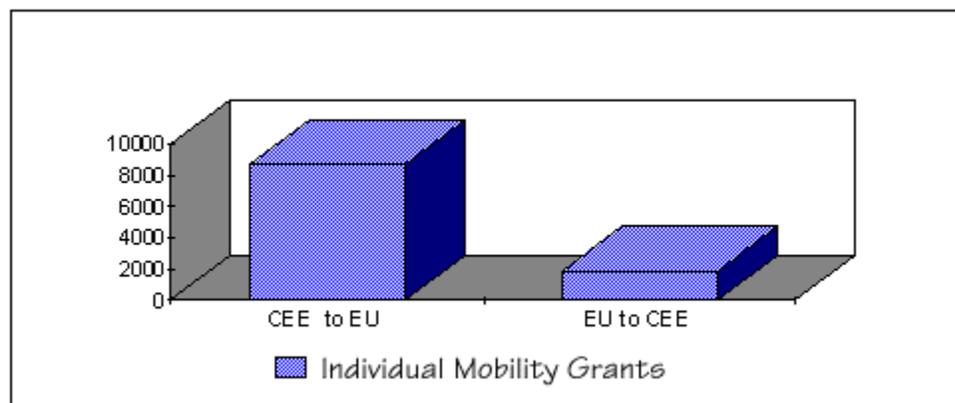
Consequently, an examination of the flow patterns of faculty and students to and from CEE nations should reveal if TEMPUS objectives have been met through exchanges and mobility flows. According to the European Training Foundation (1997a), large numbers of East-West and West-East exchanges have occurred. For example, 100,649 faculty and students have benefitted from TEMPUS funded Joint European Project exchanges as well as 10,624 individuals through Individual Mobility Grants (European Training Foundation, 1997b).

Figure 1. Faculty & Student Flows between EU and CEE countries (1990-1996)



Source. 1996 Tempus Yearbook.

Figure 2. Faculty & Student Individual Mobility Flows (1990-1996)



Source. 1996 Tempus Yearbook.

From this data, it becomes clear that an unequal flow of faculty and staff is occurring; faculty and students from CEE countries are traveling to the EU Member States in much greater numbers. What is particularly worrisome is the low number of students from EU member countries traveling to CEE nations.

Since these students represent the future scholars from the region, the capability for

access to knowledge from CEE nations is dependent upon translations from CEE nation students obtaining Western European language skills. Consequently, the potential for the loss or lack of distribution of academic work produced in CEE nations remains great due to the emphasis on Western European languages as well as these unequal academic mobility flows. Due to the emphasis on western languages, scholars will not have access to academic production written in CEE languages; those who will translate are more likely to translate from western to eastern languages. As English continues its global dominance, fewer scholarly journals will utilize CEE languages; the majority of the global intellectual products, journals and magazines, are published in a few languages: English, French, German, Spanish (Altbach, 1982)

Some may argue that this unidirectional flow is justifiable. After years under Soviet domination with strict regulations governing travel, faculty and staff from CEE nations desire travel opportunities to visit and explore Western Europe. In addition, universities in the region may not have the infrastructure capacity to support large numbers of west-east exchanges. Certainly, conversations with many students and colleagues from the CEE region indicate a desire to see Western Europe after oppressive communist policies. Yet, these mobility patterns are likely to result in a high degree of social-epistemological stratification based upon linguistic and other capital. For example, those who have acquired Western European language skills are able to participate in East-West exchanges. Current realities in Western European Academic exchange will only be exacerbated with the further entry of Eastern and Central scholars. For example, current participation of EU Member countries in staff mobility demonstrates the dependence on the dominant languages of Europe.

Enders' (1998) study of academic staff mobility in the European Union through ERASMUS demonstrates that a hierarchal value of languages exists in the European Union. Of all staff mobilities in 1990 - 91, English was utilized in 61 percent of course offerings where visiting faculty were lecturing at host institutions. French was the language of instruction in 27 percent of the courses, German 13 percent, Spanish 10 percent, Italian 9 percent and all other languages 2 percent. English is presently the academic lingua franca of choice.

In addition to the potential for decreased production of scholarly works in CEE languages, these opportunities created through university exchange could lead to future employment prospects with Western European universities and/or corporations leading to further economic stratification between university students in the CEE region who possess Western European language skills and those who don't. Consequently, economic stratification based on educational attainment will be further exacerbated by access given to those with western language skills. Access which provides upward mobility opportunities for those with these linguistic skills.

European Higher Education: Potential Impact on CEE Faculty and Students

In 1979, Jean-François Lyotard published *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. His work acted as a catalyst for the postmodern movement but more importantly discussed his perceptions of the future of education and knowledge. Lyotard (1993, p. 4-5) writes:

The relationship of the suppliers and users of knowledge to the knowledge they supply and use is now tending, and will increasingly tend, to assume the form

already taken by the relationship of commodity producers and consumers to the commodities they produce and consume - that is, the form of value. Knowledge is and will be produced in order to be sold, it is and will be consumed in order to be valorized in a new production: in both cases, the goal is exchange. Knowledge ceases to be an end in itself, it loses its "use-value."

Due to this shift from knowledge as an end in itself to knowledge as symbolic capital, educational institutions must sell the acquisition of knowledge and skills to the consumer-student. Universities throughout the world are experiencing a shift from knowledge as an end in itself to knowledge as added value to the individual's symbolic capital. Consequently, universities are forging relationships with corporate entities as I have discussed previously in the paper.

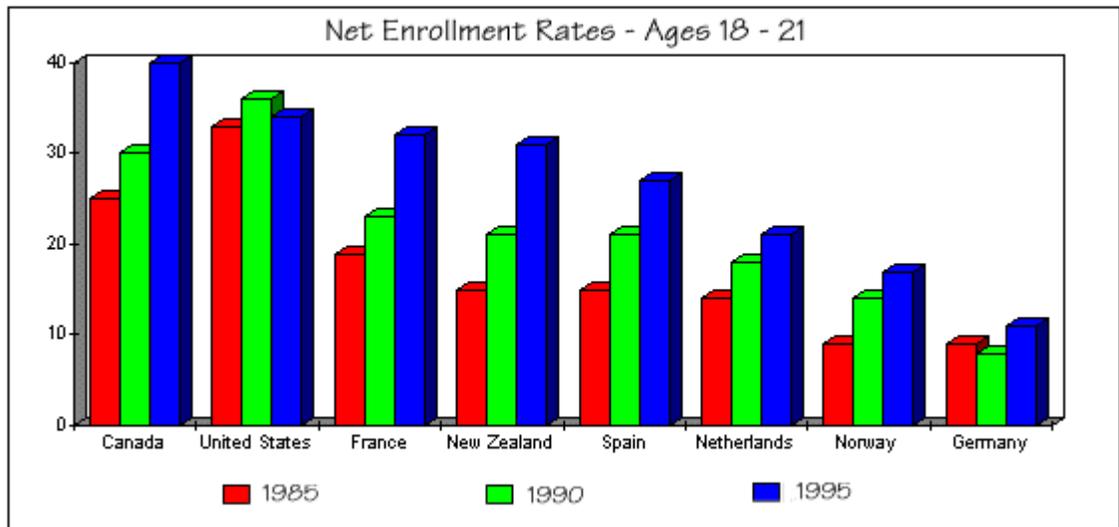
Transformation in the nature of knowledge, then, could well have repercussions on the existing public powers, forcing them to reconsider relations (both de jure and de facto) with the large corporations, and more generally with civil service. (Lyotard, 1993, p. 6)

Lyotard's keen prognostication of the current reality we are witnessing in higher education is valuable for reflection on the impact of Central and Eastern Europe in regard to higher education. In CEE nations, the commodification of higher education is realized in two major forms: privatization of education and the shifting profession of higher education.

With the elimination of communist state controlled education at the beginning of the 1990's came privatization efforts. International donor agencies including the European Union mandated privatization as a prerequisite to EU membership as well as receipt of donor aid. Consequently, the education sector was opened to private institutions offering all types of educational services. Through these privatization efforts, Central and Eastern Europe has witnessed the influx of hundreds (or perhaps thousands) of private institutions of higher education as well as universities headquartered in Europe or the United States with branch campuses in the region. Higher education has become a commodity. Since many of the programs strive to offer international models of business or authentic language instructors, local instructors are replaced with scholars who have knowledge of Western European business, law, economics models as well as the command of English or German. Could this lead to unemployment for those regional scholars without these languages or skills?

In addition to privatization efforts, higher education institutions in Europe as well as throughout the world are facing similar circumstances. Throughout the world in the past fifteen years, the percentage of students entering institutions of higher education as well as the percentage graduating has continued to rise substantially. Figure 3 demonstrates these trends in several OECD nations.

Figure 3. University Enrollment Rates (1985-1995)



Source. Peter (1997)

With large numbers of students entering higher education, universities are beginning to struggle financially. In addition, at the same time as large numbers of students are entering higher education, European governments are reducing per pupil funding. Consequently, a potential education crisis is being realized in Europe. To counter the economic reality of universal access to higher education, many nations have introduced increased levels of tuition and fees as well as stricter admissions policies (Schugurensky, 1998). Yet, with the opening of Central and Eastern Europe, western institutions may utilize the contacts brought about through TEMPUS and SOCRATES to fill needed lecture positions with CEE academicians.

Considering the influx of western scholars to Central and Eastern Europe as well as the access to university connections through mobility programs, Western European institutions of higher education potentially view Eastern European scholars as inexpensive labor to fill the needed positions to teach the masses entering higher education in Western Europe. Although these trends favor Western European institutions, Eastern scholars are eager for an income to support themselves and their families. Intellectual labor will, as Lyotard suggests, begin to resemble commodification. Advertisements may soon appear in *LeMonde* or *Nepszabadsag* written in English searching for lecturers to teach in Western Europe. But again we must be reminded of the linguistic capital involved. English is a symbolic passport providing access to those who possess it.

Furthermore, this financial crisis may lead to less opportunities for Central and Eastern European students seeking placement in the universities with the best domestic reputation. Due to the financial crisis of higher education in the region, institutions of higher education are attempting to lure Western students who are willing to spend large sums of money on tuition to study there. With large numbers of foreign students coming to the region, university spaces at prestigious universities may begin to be filled with those who can afford to pay for tuition in hard currencies such as dollars, marks and pounds. Language continues to play a major role at the university level in the region.

Language as Neo-Colonial Agent or Catalyst for Upward Mobility?

Historically, the language of instruction at the university level or the acquisition of

foreign languages has provided the recipient of educational services with prestige which could be exchanged as symbolic capital. For example, Latin as a dead language was the language of instruction at the higher education level and Hebrew, French and Greek were learned in order to train mental faculties. Acquisition of these languages offered potential wealth and prestige: similarly, those who acquire English today have access not afforded others who are educated to the same level. Perhaps we can draw parallels between what is occurring today with the past in regard that elite education has been instituted in an effort to restrict access. For example, elites (e.g., economically dominant individuals and families) attempted to restrict access through language of instruction. For example, Those today who don't have command of a western language are in a similar position; language skills can provide access or restrict it. Yet, there are fundamental differences as well.

In the past, Latin was used as symbolic capital when education was perceived as an end in itself. Elites differentiated themselves from others through knowledge acquisition and mental training rather than career aspiration. Since most students came from financial secure families, knowledge and mental training was the differentiating factor. They believed that a cultivated mind made an individual superior. Enlightenment was driven by the pursuit of the rational and this would be achieved through education and mental training in part through the acquisition of foreign languages. Yet, today there has been a fundamental shift in the belief of the value of higher education. Today, a university education is seen more and more as a value added enterprise which provides the individual with symbolic capital to exchange in the labor market.

For example, Education adds value to human capital; higher education provides individuals with upward mobility opportunities. I would argue that those who obtained an education in Latin were also exercising an initiative to realize a superior economic position in exchange for their knowledge but this education was also sought more as an end in itself. Today's university student, particularly in Eastern and Central Europe, is driven much more by market forces. Since Central and Eastern Europe is realizing an economic crisis, these forces exercise great power on issues of university curricula and language of instruction.

University studies historically have operated as a mechanism to preserve elite status. Bourdieu (1973, 1990) illustrates this in French universities; most university students in French universities were children of the professional class. This process of elite preservation was experienced and continues today in African nations. After independence, elites maintained the colonial language due to the perception that this language afforded more opportunities for upward mobility. Yet, this was a condition of neo-colonialism where European language and cultural was perceived as superior. The people called for the language of instruction to remain the Western European language because they perceived these languages as leading to positions of economic superiority and prestige. Indeed, the French Cultural Ministry and the British Council are involved in maintaining the utilization of French and English in African nations and have established lucrative business operations similar to the establishment of western schools in Central and Eastern Europe. But, in Eastern and Central Europe, masses of people have rejected the colonial language of Russian and replaced it with English and German.

Indeed, as with Latin and the Colonial languages of French and English, language acquisition in CEE is driven by a desire for upward mobility. Language skills are viewed as a value added enterprise. I do not see this as a nation-state neo-colonial situation. But, multinational corporations are facilitating a neo-colonial condition where English is perceived as superior to the national languages of Central and Eastern European countries.

Today, English is a desired product to be obtained due to the economic superiority of English speaking corporations. As I have demonstrated, the largest companies in the world are located in English speaking countries and utilize English as a working lingua franca. Language skills today are driven by economics. Transnational corporations are continuing to replace the nation-state as a global and regional force as people perceive employment opportunities with Western European companies or in Western European nations through labor mobility offered with admittance into the European Union. Those with language skills in Central and Eastern European nations are at a distinct advantage. Yet, how prolific is the possession of English or other Western European languages?

National Advantage: Western European Languages as Cultural Capital

Von Kopp (1996) suggests that in order to succeed in CEE nations during the transition phase, it is more important for citizens to acquire cultural capital than economic capital. For example, CEE students with foreign language skills are at a distinct advantage over students who have yet to acquire these skills. Yet, Hungary and Romania illustrate problematic realities in regard to linguistic capital. The Sixth Central and Eastern Eurobarometer revealed that 79% of Hungarians and 78% of Romanians couldn't speak a second language well enough to converse in it (Note 15). In Hungary, similar results were obtained in earlier surveys; in 1979, 7% could speak a foreign language while in 1982, 13.9% surveyed could speak a foreign language (Radnai, 1994). Interestingly, the Czech Republic doesn't have such a language problem (Note 16). With such large numbers of citizens unable to converse in a second language, residents of Romania and Hungary are at a distinct disadvantage as the European Union expands. Yet, educational attainment in these nations plays a major role in access and privilege. As illustrated in Table 5, university educated Hungarians were twice as likely to have acquired language skills than secondary students. Educational attainment simultaneously brought about access to TEMPUS programs due to possession of western linguistic skill.

Table 5. Foreign Language Knowledge in Hungary

	< 8 Years of Primary School	8 Years of Primary School	Secondary School	College & University	Total Population
Knowledge of Foreign Languages	8.1	8.3	27.4	53.9	14.8
No Knowledge of Foreign Languages	91.1	91.7	72.6	46.1	85.2
# Sampled	3024	4359	1671	696	9750
Percent of Total	31.2%	44.7%	17.1%	7%	100%

Source. Radnai (1994).

With EU expansion comes mobility opportunities (Note 17). Yet, access to these mobility opportunities are dependent upon language skills. Those with English, German and

French language skills have access to university studies in France, Germany and the United Kingdom as well as future employment opportunities with multinational corporations. Consequently, those university students with language skills can be considered to possess a form of symbolic capital: linguistic capital. Language skills are not capital in an economic sense but allow for symbolic exchanges which enable an individual to extend the boundaries of her/his existence (Bernstein, 1973). A shift toward Western Europe has allowed those who possess Western linguistic and cultural capital to emerge as privileged. As we approach the twenty-first century, language skills conducive to communicating with American, Japanese and European Union member countries equate to job opportunities and economic advantage. This reality will further exacerbate the economic stratification brought about since transition due to an increased emphasis on credentialism; university graduates have a distinct economic advantage since the fall of Soviet communism ([Note 18](#)).

CEEPUS: Viable Solution or Contributor to Western European Linguistic Capital?

The Central European Exchange Program for University Students (CEEPUS) was initiated in January 1995. Realizing that "there had been substantial increases in 'East-West' exchanges, academic exchange among the new democracies had come almost to a complete halt" the Austrian Government facilitated a meeting of CEE ministers of higher education to discuss the creation of CEEPUS (Austrian Ministry of Education, 1995). Unlike TEMPUS, CEEPUS primarily operates as an East-East university exchange program. University exchanges occur between Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, Slovakia, Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic and Slovenia institutions of higher education or departments.

Each nation pledges a number of scholarship months (see table 6); these months are considered CEEPUS currency. For example, this "currency" represents how many months institutions in each country will sponsor a student (i.e., host nations waive tuition costs for visiting students). Due to the age limit of the program (i.e., a maximum of 35 years of age), CEEPUS primarily promotes cultural and academic exchange between CEE students although university professors and graduate students are also encouraged to participate.

In regard to language, CEEPUS participation mandates the inclusion of courses in English, German and French. Consequently, these three languages operate as the official lingua francas of the CEEPUS program. In support of CEE languages is a type of course referred to as a "dual course." Dual courses consist of groups of participants from two countries where each group learns the language of the other group. Consequently, CEEPUS supports regional linguistic acquisition.

Although CEEPUS doesn't serve the quantity of TEMPUS mobility, as illustrated through the scholarship hours in table 6, the East-East nature of CEEPUS provides opportunities for CEE regional intellectual exchange and language learning. Consequently, institutions undergoing similar problems facilitated during post-communist transition can exchange ideas without the intervention of a western perspective. In addition, the East-East nature provides for a mechanism to preserve scholarly perspectives which can be endangered by global domination of academic journals written in Western languages.

Table 6. Scholarship Hours Pledged by Country

Nation	1995 - 1996	1996 - 1997
Austria	400	350

Bulgaria	100	100
Croatia	100	175
Czech Republic	-	100
Hungary	300	350
Poland	150	197
Slovakia	300	300
Slovenia	100	150

Source. Croatian CEEPUS Office (1997).

Is CEEPUS the only potential model for securing the language, culture and ideas of the region? Although I do believe that this is a best case scenario it is extremely limited. As can be ascertained through the number of available CEEPUS hours, this program is serving few students and faculty. Of course, there will be scholars from Central and Eastern Europe who will participate in academic mobility programs and return home to the region. These individuals are needed to be the disseminators of knowledge produced both in the West and the East. Without individuals who can provide access through translation in domestic academic scholarly journals to those without the linguistic capital to participate on the world academic stage, Central and Eastern European scholars may not be able to provide access to information in their own nations with the knowledge they generate. This has been common in developing nations where scholars supported by the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations publish in Western European language journals and do not publish in their own vernacular tongue.

Furthermore, the introduction of bilingual programs in Central and Eastern Europe may prove to provide access for those not able to take advantage of TEMPUS or SOCRATES mobility opportunities. These programs offer classes in the national language as well as through a western European language. Since 1990, there has an increase in the number of programs at the elementary, secondary and tertiary levels. Further research needs to be conducted to gauge the success of these domestic programs. These programs are built upon sanguine aspirations of those who believe that institutions of higher education can produce bi or trilingual students who can compete globally yet remain at home to serve the needs of the nation-state. Optimism is needed in a region where the entire educational system has been transformed in a short period of time.

Conclusion

I have attempted to raise some critical issues which have emerged in Eastern and Central Europe during post-communist transition. Globalization efforts by transnational corporations continue to promote the acquisition of English as an international lingua franca. Consequently, those who have acquired the English language maintain a de facto linguistic advantage. As I have demonstrated, the largest companies in the world are located in English speaking countries and utilize English as a working lingua franca. Language skills today are driven by economics. Transnational corporations are continuing to replace the nation-state as a global and regional force.

At the regional level, transnational corporations have emerged as policy makers; through influential lobbyist organizations, TNCs promote corporate self interest. Consequently, EU policies serve the interests of these powerful international entities.

An illustration of this influence can be seen through European Union expansion efforts into Central and Eastern Europe. EU expansion is driven by profit motivation and the expansion of commercialism to an additional 130 million CEE consumers. With this goal maintaining center stage, EU policy makers, encouraged by multinational lobbyists such as the ERT, will continue to develop educational policies which play a critical role in developing attitudinal, knowledge and skills conducive to consumer expansion.

At the national level, CEE students are flocking to Western European institutions through the TEMPUS program. Consequently, European Involvement in TEMPUS has facilitated a huge disparity between east and west faculty and student flows. I have argued that unequal flows from East to West, created through TEMPUS programming, have led to a privileged position for those who have acquired Western European language skills. Through TEMPUS mobility, these individuals gain access to employment and intellectual knowledge produced in Western Europe.

Furthermore, students from CEE nations continue to view Western Europe as the land of opportunity where those with the appropriate linguistic capital can reap economic gain and upward mobility. This dual process of CEE students desiring upward mobility and EU enculturation leads to a continual devaluation of CEE linguistic, cultural and academic arenas. If the current levels of economic stratification remain, students will continue to be driven toward English, French and German language programs. These policies will favor transnational corporations who will acquire the services of the brightest CEE university graduates with language skills leading to a CEE "brain drain".

Consequently, many CEE students are cashing in on obtaining Western cultural capital while rejecting their own legitimate culture. Unfortunately, those who don't obtain the necessary linguistic and social capital might become members of a working class periphery who wash the floors of those who exchanged their linguistic capital to the highest corporate bidder.

Notes

(1) The World Bank utilizes an Economic Liberalization index to indicate how economically liberal a nation in the CEE region has become. In addition to the economic liberalization measure, the Heritage Foundation and the Wall Street Journal have created an Economic Freedom Index (Holmes et al, 1996). The liberalization index measures internal, external and entrance of new firms in the country (de Melo, 1997). Internal liberalization is weighted at .3 and is concerned with measuring domestic transactions such as abolition of state monopolies and price standardization. External liberalization is weighted at .3 and analyzes export controls such as tariffs and taxation. In essence, as is indicated by variables measured by the index, liberalization is a measure of free market practices. In order to receive funding from multilateral organizations such as the World Bank, CEE nations must strive for and maintain a high economic liberalization index since this index is referenced when determining developmental assistance.

(2) To receive developmental assistance money, CEE nations must be moving toward free market practices as well as reducing state owned properties and enterprise.

(3) International companies such as Ford or General Electric have either located operations or bought previously owned operations located in Central and Eastern Europe.

(4) Total aid funneled from the EU to the 12 CEEC nations between 1990 - 94 was 33.8 billion ECU; this represented 45 percent of all donor funding received in the region. In fact, the EU has become the fifth largest aid donor to the region . In 1995, the EU provided \$7.1 billion which represented 10.5 percent of all donor aid to the region by OECD countries.

(5) Trans-European Cooperation Scheme for Higher Education

(6) Since the collapse of Soviet style communism in 1989, countries of Eastern and Central Europe have been inundated with donor assistance activities from the West. Foreign direct investment surpassed \$46 billion in 1996 up 60% from the year before (HVG, 1997). Of this \$46 billion, Hungary leads transition nations of Eastern and Central Europe with a cumulative \$13.9 billion with Poland second at \$9.1 billion; Hungary's foreign direct investment represents 30% of the region's total while Poland's 17%. Russia is third with a 13% while the Czech Republic maintains 12%. Hungary, the Czech Republic, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia together received approximately 70% of all foreign direct investment in the region.

(7) In an effort to examine the influence of a nation's neo-liberal economic status on EU donor funding, I ranked Phare countries by their 1990 World Bank economic liberalization index value and compared this with each nation's corresponding level of average annual Phare support from the EU(1990-1996). Since the level of Phare funding varied in regard to the number of years each nation has been funded, I calculated average annual levels of funding and utilized this value for comparison. Results of Spearman-Rho rank order correlational analysis revealed a significant positive correlation of $r = .86, p < .005 (.735)$. From this result, it would indicate that multilateral funding offered by the European Union is contingent upon each nation's level of economic liberalization.

(8) Eight of the top 10, 67 of the top 100 and 566 of the top 1000 corporations in the world are headquartered in English speaking nations.

(9) The elimination of Russian language courses provided opportunities for English and German as well as other western languages: Spanish, French, etc. For instance, during the 1990 - 91 school year, three French, one Spanish and three German schools were opened in Czechoslovakia (Van Kopp, 1992). In Hungary, German is the most widely studied and used language (Radnai, 1994). In the 1989 - 90 school year, due to these transitional language policies, Poland experiencing a chronic need for more than 25000 English teachers but supply was limited to approximately 1500 teachers who were available to teach English (Vulliamy & Webb, 1996). Hungary, in order to meet the need of German and English language instructors, facilitated an extensive language retraining program. Russian teachers were trained in English, German or another foreign language (e.g., French or Spanish) to fill the demand for foreign language instruction generated from reform efforts.

(10) The European Commission believes that "[t]he economic effects of enlargement will undoubtedly be beneficial for the Union on the longer run. Enlargement will mean the creation of a larger economic area, with up to 500 million consumers, compared to the current 370 million..... Further integration and enlargement will help rapidly growing income in Central and East European countries translate into a continuous rapid growth of the West-European export market (Agenda 2000, 1997).

(11) Education in the European Union is governed by Article 126 and Article 127 of the Maastricht Treaty. SOCRATES is the European Community action program for cooperation

in the field of education. SOCRATES was first adopted for EU member states on 14 March 1995 by Decision 819/95/CE. For an overview of the program visit <http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg22/socrates.html>. For information regarding SOCRATES expansion into Eastern and Central Europe visit <http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg22/socrates/new-co.html>

(12) European Union involvement in Eastern and Central Europe was facilitated by the signing of mutual agreements for cooperation on June 25, 1988 between COMECON (Council on Mutual Economic Assistance) and the European Community. This common declaration acted as the catalyst for developing cooperation between the EU and communist nations of Eastern and Central Europe. For example, Hungary signed agreements with the EC in September, 1988 as well as Poland who signed agreements in September 1989. These agreements were followed by the creation of PHARE (Phare (Pologne Hongrie Aide a la Reconstruction Economique) is the French word for lighthouse. Economic aid and advice from the European Union was intended to shine the light on the path back to Europe) on December 18, 1989.

(13) PHARE (Pologne Hongrie Aide a la Reconstruction Economique) is the French word for lighthouse. PHARE was created in order to shine a light (through financial aid and advice), for CEE nations, on the path back to Europe. During the 1990's, the European Union (EU) has contributed substantially to Central and Eastern Europe. From 1991-95, more than 60 percent of European Union donor aid for education went directly to the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEEC) and the Newly Independent States (NIS). From 1990 to 1995, the EU provided ECU 5.3 billion to Albania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

(14) Since 1990, according to the European Training Foundation, which now operates TEMPUS, more than 90,000 staff and students from 7000 higher education institutions have benefitted from East-West and West-East exchanges. In addition, 3000 sets of lecture notes have been written as well as 15,000 courses have been created or updated. About 500 institutions have been founded or restructured, and roughly 2000 new books have been published.

(15) In November, 1995, the European Commission interviewed 20,278 residents of 19 Central and Eastern European nations. Countries surveyed include: Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, FYROM, Georgia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Ukraine. This survey included all possible languages spoken (e.g., knowledge of Russian).

(16) The Central and Eastern Eurobarometer found that 36% of Czech citizens can speak Russian, 33% can speak German and 16% can speak English.

(17) As a citizen of the European Union an individual is supposedly free to live, work and set up business anywhere in a EU member country. See the abc of European Union - Citizenship at: <http://europa.eu.int/abc-en.htm>

(18) Prior to transition, due to centralized planning, school graduates in Central and Eastern European nations had many opportunities for employment regardless of educational attainment. Education was encouraged but was not as critical to social mobility as it is today. Those who have received a university degree have a substantial economic advantage today. Those with a minimal elementary education have witnessed the largest economic decline. For

instance, 10% of the unemployed in the Czech Republic have only an elementary education (OECD, 1996a). In Poland, 20% of those with a vocational education are unemployed as well as 17.4% of those possessing only a basic education (OECD, 1996b). In fact, in Poland, only 4% of those with a higher education are unemployed. In the Czech Republic only 0.5% of those with a university degree are unemployed. Educational attainment has also influenced the quality of life. Furthermore, in Czechoslovakia in 1988, female University graduates earned 1.4 times that of a female with vocational training while the difference was 1.28 for men (UNDP, 1996). In 1992, these values were 1.43 and 1.34 respectively. Possession of a university degree has become more and more lucrative in Central and Eastern Europe since the collapse of communism and centralized planning.

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