Governmentality of 'transition': towards a feminist-foucauldian analytic

Abstract:

This paper was inspired by my curiosity about the paradox of the survival of anti-communist rhetoric long after the collapse of the soviet block. To solve the puzzle the paper draws on Foucault’s analytic of power and governmentality studies. The paper opens with an archive sitting examples of pathologizing in popular culture in the United States, international bio-political discourses on women, and on environment in Eastern Europe, in the medical vocabulary of transition utilized in the World Bank and IMF staff papers, the discourse on the return to Europe, and the neoliberal governmental discourse in Poland. The analysis of the cumulative effects and productivity of pathologizing demonstrates the strategic role it played in the dispositif of transition, when the intertwined roadmaps to European Union enlargement and neoliberal restructuring were offered as the cure and the redemption from pathology. Pathologizing, in conjunction with the deployment of the model Christian recovery narrative to social change, helped to construct transition as a rupture, as the passage from the purgatory of the totalitarian state to wealth, freedom, law and justice, to the free market and democratic heaven. Not only states also subjects strived to adjust to neoliberal regulatory ideals. Continuities between socialist and neoliberal economic state, new intensified forms of control, and the differential adjustment of women and men to the new speeded up and intensified forms of extraction of value and accumulation of capital, have been conveniently removed from political discourse. By associating critiques with the pathological past, any discussions on alternative transformation pathways have been effectively disabled from gaining ground. For feminist analytic it is crucial to establish how women are integrated with the new project, and reconfigured either as economic or reproductive resources for market and state or as costs to the budget and economically redundant human waste. The paper concludes with a proposal for a non-essentializing analysis of socialist and neoliberal projects to delink social solidarity and freedom from authoritarian controls.

Key words: neoliberalism, transition, women, pathologizing, Poland, European Union, Foucault

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Draft for comments. Please do not quote without contacting the author.
ewa_charkiewicz@yahoo.com
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In this paper, I would like to contribute to making a feminist sense of global ascendancy of neoliberal forms of government. In this broader field of inquiries, the focus is on the politics of representation, and the problematization of ‘communist’ Eastern Europe (territory, populations, form of government) as a political pathology, and the political utility of this construction for neoliberal governmentality to take hold in Eastern Europe, which in turn accelerated the processes of neoliberalizing the E.U. I am not interested in the argument whether communism was good or bad. I focus on the persistence of pathologizing in the discourses on post-socialist transitions and how it structured political and personal transformations in Eastern Europe, fixed the transition pathway, and prevented alternative transformation strategies. From this point of view, pathologizing Eastern Europe(ans) or communism acted as a political technology for transition from state socialism to neoliberalism.

The inquiry draws on and contributes to governmentality studies and Foucauldian feminism. For readers unfamiliar with Foucault’s method, I provide a brief summary of his alternative analytic of power. In Foucault’s political imagination power is neither good or bad, nor associated with any particular location. Institutions oriented to care about individuals coexist with large destructive mechanisms. This central antinomy of our political reason escapes the scrutiny of liberal or Marxist theorizing on power.

Foucault’s analytic transcends conventional dualisms between freedom and oppression, state and subjects, etc. In his account, power is a dynamic continuum, a complex system of relationships in a given society at a particular moment in time. Power takes multiple forms (discipline, normalization, seduction, crude force) and operates through multiple colliding, competing and colluding discourses (sets of statements about topics), which ‘speak of’ their objects, and in their combined effects give shape to social institutions and to the relations between self and others, self to self, and structure courses of actions that subjects can take. The subject is an end product of interaction with ‘power’ as well as a vehicle of ‘power’. ‘Power’ depends on the active engagement of subjects in their own subjection. Resistance operates within the networks of power, and is indispensable for ‘power’ to establish itself. But as long as there is a will to live, there is a will to resist.

In his earlier work, Foucault was particularly interested in the rules governing the transformations in the systems of knowledge, and mutually constitutive and reciprocal relations between power, knowledge and truth. Power cannot be exercised without knowledge. Knowledge is constituted within power structures itself, but it is the truth status that endows knowledge with power. In a society such as ours, the truth status is assigned to the institution of scientific discourse. The modern state and the discourses of man and society would not have emerge one without the other. Their relationship made man the subject of rights and the object of invisible micro-disciplines.
What we call the market economy, and the economic discourse mutually (re)constitute each other. The truth status of a knowledge magnifies its power effects. At stake therefore is not what is the truth but how the production of truth is organized, and what are its effects. In making sense of how power works through pathologizing I focus on the conditions of possibility and truth effects of discourse, and not whether pathologizing representations of eastern Europe(ans) are valid or not.

In his later work Foucault investigated the relationships between micro-powers operating on the body, forms of knowledge and macro-strategies of power such as expressed in the organization of state and market. Foucault developed several analytical devices for this purpose. One of them is biopolitics, a form of regulatory controls exercised by way of disciplining individual bodies, and by cultivating populations as resources for market and state (1976, 1977). Another take on micro-macro linkages in power relations is governmentality, which Foucault alternatively called the art of government, or government of self and others. With this conceptual device Foucault rendered visible the continuity between the constitution of subjects and the formation of the governmental state. This conceptual tool was developed specifically for the purpose of analyzing the ascendency of neoliberal form of government. Following the lectures of the late 1970s, in particular in the anglo-saxon sociology, political sciences and cultural studies a growing body of scholarship analyzed transition from liberal to neoliberal governmentality, its contingent emergence, political rationality of marketization, and political technologies deployed on the subjects and by the subjects to govern themselves (Foucault, 1981, 1991, 2001, 2004; Burchell & Miller 1991; Cruikshank, 1999; Dean, 1999; Escobar, 1995; Rankin, 2000; Rose and Miller, 1992). I will refer to this analysis in the subsequent part of the paper.

Foucault’s analytic of power rests on the assumption that relations of power can be studied through their effects. (More on Foucault’s toolkit in the annex to this paper). Following Foucault, I begin my inquiry with an archive, which sites the current instantiations of pathologizing of Eastern Europe(ans) in the popular culture in the United States, discourses on women and on the environment in Eastern Europe, the discourse on the return to Europe, in the World Bank and the IMF staff papers, and the political discourse in Poland. In the second part of the paper I sketch the genealogy of pathologizing the Eastern European states and populations, and how it informed the reinvention of the soviet block into Eastern Europe. In the subsequent part of the paper I provide an overview of Foucauldian critiques of neoliberal governmentality, and explain the strategic role the problematization of Eastern Europe(ans) as an ensemble of political pathologies played when the intertwined roadmaps to the European Union integration and neoliberal restructuring were offered as the cure and the redemption from the pathology. The paper concludes with a plea for a non-essentializing analysis of socialist and neoliberal projects to delink social solidarity and freedom from authoritarian controls. At stake is to imagine what kind of society would be good for women and men in providing both security and freedom.

Recent sittings

(1) The sitting that actually made me think of writing this paper is related to an American best-seller “The First Billion” written by Christopher Reich in 2002. The narrative is situated in the USA and Russia. The main protagonist of the book is a Gulf War I pilot and an investment banker from California who is about to launch a Russian internet company on the New York Stock Exchange. The Russian company turns to be a Potiomkin village, a scam controlled by mafia and the new KGB. The old cold war tropes mix with the new tropes of high-tech financial capitalism.
A female protagonist in the story and the lover of the American banker, first assumes an American identity, and then turns out to be a Russian, and the daughter of the owner of the company. She betrays her father to the financial market investigator, to the American FBI, and to the Russian mafia, (who will presumably torture the father to death), so that in the last chapter she can become the proper American wife and mother. In the vein of James Bond movies, Ronald Reagan’s presidential speeches, or academic publications, such as the book ‘The Slave Soul of Russia’, (Rancour-Laferriere, 1995), in this popular novel, too, Russia and its inhabitants are depicted at the pathological, the aberration of the norm.

The profits of the company are to be shared with the new KGB, at the head of which is the current Russian president in a thin disguise. The Russian owner of the company does not hesitate to kill for profits. Nothing works in this country. Everything is about brute strength, corruption or servility. People live their miserable lives in grey, dilapidated, dirty landscapes. “He was in the heart of Mother Russia, and to his eye, it still looked every bit the evil empire”, writes the author in 2002. Given this representation of Russia, it is therefore reasonable that the American banker and his new Russian wife take over the ownership of the company to make it into a value generating machine, a stock exchange product worth a billion of dollars, and more.

The book depicts the new Russian woman as smart and beautiful (but on condition of fitting in with Californian yuppie way of life and beauty standards). In the discourses of the cold war, soviet women, if they were not beautiful spies, they were represented as fat, harsh, unfeminine, doing the work of men. The Russian heroine is the variation on the representation of a beautiful spy.

(2) With my second siting, I would like to interrogate the persistence of the cold war representations of Soviet and Eastern European women in Western European and Northern American discourse. In one of the most insightful books on human condition that I read, “Survival in Auschwitz”, Primo Levi writes:

....Then there are the women. How long is it since I have seen a woman? In Buna we quite often met the Polish and Ukrainian women workers, in trousers and leather jackets, huge and violent like their men. They were sweaty and dishevelled in the summer, padded out with thick clothes in the winter and worked with spades and pickaxes. We did not feel ourselves next to women. It is different here. Faced with the (German) girls in the laboratory, we three feel ourselves sink into the ground from shame and embarrassment (1993:42).

In the testimonies of the Auschwitz survivors, there were no leather jackets and thick winter clothes, neither for women nor men prisoners. Primo Levi did see women in desolation in Auschwitz. But as he was writing the book in the 1950s, his memories were processed through the lens of cold war aesthetics.

The cold war representation of women is well and alive in the contemporary discourses on women in Eastern Europe. One of the first feminist publications in the 1990s about women in Russia was adorned by a strong bulky woman on the cover. The images, which associated women with poverty, tradition and backwardness, were picked up for the cover of the report of the first World Bank conference on women in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The report cover (and the report itself) conveys the image of women in Eastern Europe as victims in need of rescue. The background of this representation is the “Western” high tech modern self.

Not to be misunderstood: both the book and the World Bank report raise important and relevant
issues of subordination, violence against women, exclusion of women from labour market and politics, and disproportionate burden of reproductive work. The problem is the alignment between the representations of women as victims, pathologizing, and the denial of difference and agency. The alignment is productive, as it justifies and operationalizes international political interventions to restructure Eastern European subjects and states while asserting ‘the West’ as the norm.

Given the absence of local feminist critique of transition, and a parallel absence of representations of women who “made it”, all that finds way to global political imaginary is the Eastern European woman represented as an exploited female worker, a victim of domestic violence, or a victim of trafficking. These representations sustain the problematization of Eastern Europe as the landscape of political pathologies.

**Representations of Eastern European femininities in global discourse on women**

A drab communist woman,
photo on the book cover by Donovan Wylie, Magnum, “I love Moscow” (1996)
World Bank, 2000, and the UNDP brochure associate women with tradition and poverty, and represent them in maternal roles and as victims in need of rescue. The problem is there are no images conveying agency and strength. The notable exception is the paper on women in business in the World Bank report, which provides the only role model associating women with agency.
“in Bulgaria, too, one of the thirteen countries nominated for entry into the European Union, many young people appear to already want to experience a down-payment on the new status of their land. They purchase all sorts of luxury brand name articles, causing the face of this former Eastern bloc nation to undergo a metamorphosis”, from www.norderlicht.com

“The fastest browser”, the advertisement of internet provider in Polish weekly, Wprost, 26 November, 2004, no 48 p 23 represents a new empowered, young, fit, woman, a skilled and dedicated labour resource for business, a high tech consumer, and a slender body beauty icon.
3) My next sitting is located in the environmental discourse. This biopolitical discourse attempts to re-govern interactions between people and nature. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, with the rise of interest in environment, the media, public opinion and politicians were mobilized with environmental doomsday scenarios. At the same time, ‘perestroika’ and the end of the cold war generated interest in Eastern Europe. Numerous policy reports, media articles and books depicted environmental horrors, nuclear and industrial pollution, poverty, and disease in the region. Poland, GDR, Czech Republic and the Soviet Union became the world’s worst polluters. In particular, the American policy makers were concerned about the safety of nuclear weapons and sites. Hence, former test sites were a priority target in the allocation of funds for environmental research, which in due time generated the first publications about the regions. At the same time, local alerts about environmental problems, such as the reports about environmental health hazard zones in Poland, were received by distant recipients as the complete knowledge on the state of environment. Subsequently, international discourse on clean production framed environmental degradation in Eastern Europe as a business opportunity for the environmental industry. This contributed to fix the picture of polluted Eastern Europe in the popular imagination. This image justified the interventions in the management and administration of populations and environments, and offered the implementation of “Western” development model as the solution to “the dirty legacy of communism”.

“In 1989 it was easy though misleading to paint a completely black picture of Eastern Europe. The region contained several large heavily polluted districts and a fair number of polluted cities and town, rivers and streams…. However, between these areas, as well as within them, there were stretches of unspoilt forests, secondary growth and clean water” (Manser:1993:18). Also the environmental legislation in Poland and the USSR included some stricter emission standards than in the Western European countries. The problem was the lack of compliance, and not the lack of regulations.

The discourse on environment in Eastern Europe did not take into account the specificity of pollution, and did not value frugal and conserving life styles or acknowledge greater levels of biodiversity than in western Europe. The environmental benefits of Polish agriculture, small holder farms, which are a more sustainable form of interaction with nature than high external input industrial agriculture, were not taken into account in this discourse. Given that subjugated status of local knowledges and lacking means for their articulation, the discourse on environmental disasters in Eastern Europe sustained and magnified pathologizing representations of the region and populations.

(4) Since the problematization of the Soviet system as a political pathology, an aberration outside of modernity persisted in political and popular discourses, a way out of this perversity had to be offered to societies. The diagnosis of a disease mobilizes therapeutical desires (Canguilhem, 1966). The cure has been offered through the discourse on “the return to Europe”. This discourse, too, is founded on the pathologizing representation of the Soviet system as the Other.

In contrast to many other simplifying accounts of the soviet block, in a 1984 article for the New York Review of Books, Milan Kundera questioned the Manichean (essentializing) construction of the communist block and emphasized diversity and agency in the region. In the article Kundera describes Central Europe as excluded from Europe through the vagaries of history. His ideal new Central Europe, however, is constructed by juxtaposing it to communism conceived as a pathological temporality.
In the early 90s, the discourse on the return to Europe, (a shortcut for return to ‘the West”), became one of the master frames of Polish political transition. The liberal political parties and media, such as the influential “Gazeta Wyborcza” invested in the production and dissemination of this frame, which began as the expression of political aspirations, and ended up as the political rationality of transition. As captured in the title of the 1998 New York Times article on Poland, written on the anniversary of “the fall of the Berlin Wall”, the accomplishments of transition in Poland are perceived as the return to normality, as they signify the overcoming of the pathologies of the communist and post-communist period. In such statements, “the West” is constructed as the bundle of normative political ideals. As Foucault argued, “(t)he norm is not a principle of intelligibility; it is an element on the basis of which a certain exercise of power is founded and legitimized” (1999:50).

(5) For my next sining I would like to take the reader on a glocalizing trip, to the Polish weekly magazine, ‘Wprost’. The paper is a node in an academic-media-business-policy makers network with international linkages, which advocates neoliberal policy reforms. The paper provides economic and moral arguments for minimal and privatized state, macro-economic disciplines, tax reductions for business, and reductions in social spending. These arguments are constructed in such a manner as to promote the virtues of neoliberal project by juxtaposing them against the vices of the socialist state. Workers strike is an incurable disease of the past, writes Piotr Gabriel, in Wprost 4. The paper is vigilant in tracing the residues of socialist mentalities and practices, and puts the blame for the failures of transition on the persistent legacy of state socialism. Thus neoliberal reforms require that vigilance has to be continuously exercised. Hence the anti-communist rhetoric is stronger today than it was at the onset of transition.

“Wprost” invests in pathologizing conceptualizations of the socialist subjects to activate new models of subjectivity. By way of offering products such as rankings of the richest people in Poland, public events, such as a 1998 conference on American Dream in Poland, peppered with warning against German nationalism ‘Wprost’ constructs Polish patriotic entrepreneurial man, capable of calculating and maximizing his individual interests in pursuit of business opportunities and returns on investments - as the desired model of self.

Such models, according to Foucault (1995) and Butler (1999) operate as “regulatory ideals”, which compel subjects to enact the behaviour they project. The representation of ‘wealthy (wo)man’, and association of wealth with power and desire, is a political technology, which generates the restructuring of subjectivities and aligns them with market reforms. Women and men strive to adjust. The neoliberal entrepreneurial man is resurrected from the ashes of the socialist man. In an advertisement, published in the ‘Wprost’ weekly (see above), the bank associated with automobile dealers offers a credit line to purchase a car. The advertisement shows an unkempt guy with dishevelled hair, grey skin, poorly cut and wrinkled trousers about to metamorphose into a successful and attractive businessman. The advertisement instructs its object – a former socialist party man - how to exercise agency, and become a new consumer citizen.
A communist looser offered a credit line to purchase a car.
"We implement Your demands". The phone company advertisement in “Wprost”, 26 November 2000, no 48 p. 47 represents the new masculinity in Poland: a successful, rational, wealthy man, capable of calculating his self interest, and focused on his goals.
Personal transformation is associated with a larger political project of creating a market economy governed on neoliberal terms. The decision to purchase a car takes the looser both literally and figuratively, to financial success, personal recognition and political power. Desires are mobilized with a series of juxtapositions between masculinity according to communist aesthetics, and western consumer aesthetics, between a looser and a winner, between crude and hapless homo sovieticus and the handsome, smart, wealthy ‘Western Man” in charge of his life. The advertisement offers the condemnation as well as the road to redemption, and regulates the course of action in personal transformation from the socialist past constructed as pathological, to the construction of the present as the romance made in heaven.

The pathologizing description of life under communism and communist subjects, which permeate the media have further utility in constantly reminding those who made it – how much they would have lost had alternative transformation polices been adopted. In this manner an indignation towards any oppositional views is activated because such views are seen as a threat to private property and personal well-being.

6. My next sitting is located in the policy and research work of the IMF and the World Bank. The research carried out by the World Bank and IMF economists, such as public expenditures reviews, and social and economic “diagnostic” work on Eastern Europe, and country assistance strategies, provide means of surveillance of populations, as well as the normative yardstick for judgement on governments’ policies, which compel governments to adjust. At the onset of transition, IMF and the World Bank advocated socialist market economy in Eastern Europe. By now, the neoliberal economic discourse gained ground, which corresponds with global governmentality change to which the World Bank and IMF contributed as some of its conduits. Although the views within these organizations are far from unitary, and the World Bank and IMF economists differ on transition strategies, both organizations deploy medical metaphors, such as diagnostic, shock therapy, treatment, medicine (to cure populations from communism as disease). The judgement is drawn from taking the neoliberal model as the norm, and socialist economies as an aberration. The technical economic papers, public expenditure performance reviews, or country assistance strategies, are not neutral; they are governmental technologies through which a specific project of transition is realized.

For instance, the World Bank research papers which preceded the disability law reforms in Poland, or the IMF research paper on national accounts system in transition countries, deploy neoclassical economic concepts such as distortions, or biases in conjunction with medical vocabulary of health and pathology, disease and cure, with the effect that denies rationality to the socialist economy by superimposing neoliberal political rationality to the organization of economy in the conditions of state socialism, and to the post-socialist transitions. These policy research reports presuppose inefficiency, corruption, and the abuse of the existing social welfare systems. Given the lack of references to local research (available in exotic Eastern European languages only) and the superimposition of neoliberal frameworks, the findings and policy recommendations produce solutions that are disembedded from local contexts. Economic decision makers in the region mobilize the same medical vocabulary of cure and disease. Talking of countries making progress in market reforms, Vaclav Klaus, Czech minister of finance said these countries came “out of the operating theatre into the recovery room”.

In the Birth of the Clinic, Foucault writes of the emergence of the sovereign medical gaze and language as indispensable in medical practice, as a means to penetrate, to diagnose the true condition of the patient in order to treat her/him. The diagnostic work requires a form of visibility, and the epistemological organization of the disease. The site of the disease, and the site of medical
intervention is the body of a patient. The diagnostician intervenes and acts upon the body of the subject, names the disease, and offers a solution. Deployment of the medical vocabulary of disease and treatment, shows how the World Bank, IMF and other international players slipped into the diagnostician’s role to intervene and govern Eastern European transitions. The adoption of the pathologizing medical metaphors and neoclassical economic jargon legitimize neoliberal macro-economic and bio-political interventions justifying them as the cure from disease.

Analogically to the credit line advertisement mentioned in the previous example, which conditioned and enticed subjects to reorganize their lives from pathology to romance, the IMF and World Bank documents discipline and seduce at the same time. Policy documents, such as public expenditures reviews and country assistance strategies, discipline and praise Poland for fiscal prudence, progress in privatization, and in restructuring of social sectors of government. IMF staff as well international business media were enticing Polish economic decision makers to further pursue the neoliberal reforms by calling Poland, and subsequently Hungary and Romania, the Tiger of Eastern Europe.

... (T)he old world order is dead and buried. Even where former communist parties return to power, a return to communism is the last thing they seek and I can assure you that their cooperation with our institutions is no more problematic than in other countries in transition”. Despite “the death of the old world order” and the bill of health given by Michel Camdessus, (the IMF managing director and Catholic social activist) to former communist party functionaries, there was a political utility in maintaining anti-communist rhetoric. Pathologizing articulated condemnation, while neoliberal reforms were offered as the road to redemption from the sin and pathology of communism.

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In the above section of the paper I provided a review of cases where Eastern Europe and populations in the region were problematized as pathology and deviance from the modern norm. The wide range of instantiations of pathologizing in a variety of local and internationally circulating discourses, and the mutually reinforcing micro applications on the bodies of subjects, and at the macro level of the state demonstrate its pervasiveness and productivity, and suggest cumulative effects. The representations of ugly communist women, polluted region, grey and dilapidated landscapes, ineffective economy constituted a repertoire of pathological aesthetics of Eastern Europe. Pathologizing is not a floating signifier to describe and analyse what Eastern Europe was under communism, it is continuously performed with productive effects.

**Genealogy of pathologizing and the invention of Eastern Europe**

Pathologizing the Other is exercised by inventing a blanket identity of the Other with a string of negative and derogatory attributes. Pathologizing draws on attributing uniform properties derived from natural law to all members of the group. The double purpose is to establish a virtuous identity of the Self, and to enable regulatory controls over life and property of the Other. Pathologizing is economically and politically productive as it enables the exclusion and punishment of politically errant subjects, as well as the obtainment of economic gains.

Pathologizing the Other, a personal adversary or political and religious opponent, is nothing
new in the politics of discourse. In the Nazi Germany, Jews had been pathologized, denied citizenship by stripping them of civil and political rights and property with the Nuremberg laws - to be murdered with impunity in the camps. The contemporary bio-political strategic discourse on security and terror is founded on the pathologizing representation of a dangerous immigrant, a Moslem man. As my sitings attempted to show, the discourse on transition from “plan to market” is founded on the representation of the communist state as a political pathology.

Pathologizing is enacted through the establishment of gendered race and class hierarchies, exclusion, spatial partitioning, and the regulation of mobility. Its founding moments rest on the binary, hierarchically constructed opposition between Self and Other. European racism, and its political articulation in the concepts of nation as the community of blood was first directed against Southern Europeans, Slavs, and Jews. In the early 20th century the Russian western territories predominantly inhabited by the Slavs and the Jews were politically reorganized from the administrative monarchy to the communist state. The assumption of the racial inferiority of the inhabitants of Eastern Europe, the Slavs and the Jews, interacted with the problematization of communism, a new regional form of governance, as political pathology. The two pathologizing forms of representation were superimposed on each other. The political response to the emergence of the communist state was the establishment of “cordonne sanitaire” in the 1920s to contain the pathological forms of political organization.

After World War Two, the territory and populations in the geographical Eastern Europe were bundled into one entity, the Soviet block. In the 1950s, during the cold war, French population scientist developed an analytical grid for studying the dynamics in the growth of world population. The demographic grid established three principal regional entities, the first, the second, and the third world. What is most interesting is how fast the spatial partitioning of the three worlds moved from population studies to political discourse and international relations. The Western cold war discourse conflated the second world, the territory, and the system of political organization with the soviet block.

Within the region people, would rather define their identities as Russians, Bulgarians, or Poles. One had to go to New York or London to become an Eastern European or a soviet block citizen. In Western European discourses on Europe, Europe was geographical Western Europe, to which Eastern Europe did not belong, or it was hidden in the manner of a dark secret, a skeleton in the closet. The conception operated with an exceptional force, as not only the mainstream but also oppositional discourses maintained this construction of Europe. “The West would make little discursive sense without juxtapositional ‘east’ written as the command economy, authoritarian other” (Dauphinee, 2003:192).

In the 1980s and 1990s, economic globalization and discourses of environmental and economic governance reconstituted the world as one planet, one global market, and the new object of government. The spatial partitioning of the world into three worlds gave way to the North and the South. Eastern Europe was to be reintegrated with the free world, the North. Towards the end of the 1980s, with the progress in scientific and cultural dialogue across the cold war boundaries, and with the progress in the socialist market reforms, the soviet block was gradually renamed into Eastern Europe.

The decomposing Soviet empire posed a new kind of a security threat to the West, of rampant migration, criminality, wars on the borders, nuclear and biological weapons out of control. The easiest and the safest way to manage the decomposition of the soviet block was to organize it on the terms of EU enlargement. According to the USAID maps of the early 1990s, Eastern Europe...
included all former Soviet Union countries, Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, countries in Former Yugoslavia, Albania, Bulgaria and Romania. While many other political and economic factors were at play, the problematization of Eastern Europe(Ans) as political pathology justified making the populations and territory into a grand object of bio-political restructuring required in the light of the EU enlargement, as well as helped to flexibilize it, to delink it from the communist past, made it fluid, conducive to restructuring. The EU laws, standards, administrative practices, etc., provided the norm to which states and populations had to adjust. An inevitable part of this arrangement was that the ‘old’ institutions had to be destroyed so that the new project can be put in place. The process relied on the adjustment of subjects to the new regime of truth.

In his lectures on social medicine, Foucault (1999) analyzed the exclusion of lepers, and regulation of space and mobility in plague infested cities in early modern Europe as generic models for the organization of power. The anti-communist rhetoric and the cordon sanitaire of the 1920s and later the containment vocabularies of the 1950s were constructed per analogy with the politico-medical discourses on the containment of leprosy, when the sick person, the leper was cast out to purify the community. As Foucault argued in the above lectures, the model of the exclusion of lepers was superseded with the model of the inclusion, which entailed spatial partitioning and pyramids of control established in the plague infested cities. “The registration of the pathological must be constantly centralized... This enclosed, segmented space, observed at every point... constitutes a compact model of the disciplinary mechanism. The plague is met by order. Against the plague, which is the mixture, discipline brings into play its power, which is one of analysis” (Foucault, 1995:196-7). A similar evolution of the metaphors of control, from exclusion in cordon sanitaire and the containment doctrine until the 1980s to inclusion and the politico-spatial reorganization of Eastern, Central, Southern Europe and the management of the EU accession according to progress in neoliberal reforms, appears to govern the transition from the communist block to post-socialist Eastern Europe in the 1990s.

**governing transition**

The discovery and subsequent remaking of Eastern Europe was instituted with the methods to organize and circulate knowledge of the territory and populations. The region had to be made knowable in order to be governable. But in order to be governable, the subjects have had to accept the veracity of the new forms of knowledge, and to actively engage in the reorganization of local institutions and their own subjectivities. Governing of transition entailed setting up organizations, programs, procedures, and funding streams dedicated to the surveillance and reorganization of Eastern Europe that in their combined effects contributed to produce a dispositif of transition. Foucault (1995) refers to dispositif as a heterogeneous ensemble of material and discursive elements, which consists of “discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical and moral propositions” (1980:194). Dispositif is not only a heterogeneous collection of the above elements but also a system of relationships with an identifiable project (in this case, the government of personal and political transitions) and strategic (while not always predictable) effects.

The dispositif of transition includes a range of contributing elements with international histories. Among them are: academic textbooks on Eastern European history or economic geography, which produce and normalize Eastern Europe as an entity associated with populations and territory; the UN, World Bank, IMF, OECD and alike institutions policy research reports and development programs devoted to studying, surveying, and governing populations and resources in Eastern
Europe; exchange programs; consumer and market research publications; new consumer aesthetics; the EU and WTO juridical models as well as management models and know-how in business and public administration – all augmented by associated funding flows. The IMF’s Washington office and its mission in Poland, as well as a French hypermarket chain, are the internationally bound elements of the transition dispositif. All these components of dispositif have cumulative effects in establishing Eastern Europe as an object of knowledge and surveillance, and an administered object of neoliberal governmentalization. Pathologizing, which associates Eastern Europe(an) populations, institutions, and territory with the lack of freedom and disorder, usefully interacts with all the strategic elements of transition dispositif as it provides the multiplicity of these elements with one and the same justification: action on the backwardness and disorder of Eastern Europe(ans).

**The Sovereign Eye of Power**

and

**the time line of biopolitical interventions in the management of transition**

1989  East and Central European Program (ECEP) of the World Bank is established, which in 1990 becomes the Socialist Economies Unit. In the mid 1990s, the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) Department and related vice-presidency will be established.

1989  PHARE program of the EU, originally started as the program for Poland and Hungary to assist the restructuring of their economies (hence the acronym), and gradually expanded; from 1994 Phare evolved into a program “to assist applicant countries” in joining the EU; co-funding partners in PHARE projects are The European Investment Bank, The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The Phare funds focus entirely on the pre-accession priorities highlighted in the Road Maps and the Accession Partnerships and National Programmes for the Adoption of Acquis, which establish the overall priorities the country must address to prepare for accession and the resources available to help them do so. In 2000 – 2006 PHARE allocations are Euro 1.6 bn per year. 18

1991  The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development is formed. IMF is establishing a temporary lending facility to facilitate the integration of former Centrally planned economies into the world market system TACIS (Technical Assistance Program for Commonwealth of Independent States) is established by European Commission.

1992  Working under a mandate issued by the UN Secretary-General, RBEC (then the Regional Directorate for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States RDEC) began the process of establishing offices and programmes in the CIS states. RBEC promotes sustainable human development. By 2002 it operated programs in 30 countries in the region, with the total budget of $ 200 million.

1993  The biannual conference of the ministers “Environment for Europe” initiates the elaboration of National Environmental Action Plans (NEAPs) by Eastern European governments with the support of the World Bank. (The plans don’t get implemented. At stake is their pedagogical effect.

Systemic Transformation Facility (STF) of the IMF is introduced to assist countries in transition to shift to multilateral, market-based trade.

1994  World Bank begins to develop gender action plans for some of the countries in the region. Under Environmental Health Action Plan for Europe adopted by
European Ministerial Conference on Health and Environment in Helsinki, National Environmental Health Action Plans (NEHAPS) are prepared.

1998 UNIFEM establishes its Eastern European regional office in Bratislava, Slovakia.

1999 The Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, and the UN Interim Administration of Kosova UNMIK is signed in Cologne. UNDP Programme Office was established in Kosovo to facilitate UNDP’s reconstruction and rehabilitation activities in that UN-administered territory. Special Accession Program for Agricultural and Rural Development SAPARD, (Euro 0.5 bn per year allocated in 2000 - 2006), and Instruments for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession ISPA, (Euro 1 b per year in 2000 - 2006) program to provide investment for the environment and transport infrastructure.

2001 Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stability in the Balkans, CARDS program

As the above table shows, the PHARE and TACIS programs of the EU managed the disorder by dividing former soviet block into Central Europe, Eastern Europe, South Eastern Europe. The partitioning was defined and managed according to the progress in market reforms and the harmonization with the EU. In his 1994 speech on Eastern Europe, Michael Camdessus, the IMF managing director, offered a school-like grid, in which he organized countries according to their progress in market reforms. The transition grid, as summarized by Michael Camdessus, is composed of three pillars: (i) liberalize trade and investment, (ii) stabilize and maintain macro-economic disciplines, and (iii) restructure (privatize) as fast as possible. This “reorientation” said Camdessus, “offered the only way to achieve economic progress”. Countries such as Poland or Czech Republic graduated to the first group, Ukraine was in the third. The grid articulated economic norm and deviance.

Five years later, opening the 1999 conference on transition economies, Camdessus talked of lagging countries, and established which countries lag more than others (in chasing the neoliberal norm). The IMF rankings operated in interaction with other political technologies, such as the economic freedom indices, rankings of competitiveness or corruption, juridical harmonization required with the EU enlargement, funding programs, which processed countries in the region through the neoliberalizing grids. Their co-joint productive effect was the reorganization of Eastern Europe into Central Europe, Baltics, and Eastern Europe of New Independent States (NIS). In the late 1990s, a new policy object was carved out with instruments such as the Balkan Stability Pact: South East Europe. Countries that lagged behind the neoliberal norm where not-yet ready for accession but were mobilized to join in the future. The construction of South East Europe involved the resurrection of the notion of the Balkans as distinct from Europe, and associated with backwardness and barbarity. In particular the war on Yugoslavia necessitated the demonization of the Serbs (Jackson, 2004).

In these discursive reconstructions, all the international map makers adopt a bird’s eye, or God’s view. One cannot escape noticing the panoptical organisation of power in these juridico-administrative developments dedicated to the bio-political management of Eastern Europe. Pathathologizing productively interacted with other elements of transition dispositif and hence contributed to produce and sustain the hierarchical organization and asymmetrical distribution of power as reflected in the West-East transfers of regulatory ideals. What we can see here is that transition dispositif has led to the reorganization of the region in the manner which Foucault analysed with the model of spatial partitioning and pyramids of control developed in the plague infested cities.
These transfers were not pushed by forces from the outside only, they were supported, as well as contested locally. In countries such as Poland, pathologizing from the outside co-acted with and reinforced corresponding local framings of political discourse. International neoliberal legislators (in the sense of Bauman’s definition of intellectuals) have had their local counterparts in the Ministries of Finance, new knowledge centers, political parties and the media.

In Poland, pathologizing played a strategic role in the political conflict between the socialist party state and the Solidarity trade union in the 1980s. Foucault, who actively opposed martial law of 1981, and visited Poland in 1982 to assist the banned trade unions, saw this conflict as an explosion of hatred (1882). In the discourses of political opposition, the party state apparatus and its functionaries were constructed as an illegitimate government, which came to power in result of the betrayal of Poland in the Yalta agreement and subsequent control of Poland in 1944-45 by the soviet army. The conflicts over truth and legitimacy of government mobilized Polish national patriotic discourse and collective memories of resistances to the occupation of Poland in the 18th and 19th century. The political critique was conducted by a blanket description of the party/state system with the string of negative attributes. Crucial to the organization of the relationship between truth and power in this political conflict was the discursive separation between Us (the Solidarność and Them (the party state). In the hierarchically constructed binary opposition, virtue was attributed to Us and pathology to Them. Analogically, the party state propaganda pathologized opposition in order to undermine the credibility of activists and to delegitimize political critique. Similar to anti-communist discourse in the U.S., in Poland too, pathologizing was anchored in powerful patriotic and patriarchal-matriarchal discourses on national identity and belonging.

In the 1990s, the discourse pathologizing socialist state past, albeit not without political and popular resistances, gained ground in Poland. Interestingly, it grew stronger as the communist state dimmed into the past. The party state system collapsed in the end of the 1980s. The project of communism was abandoned much earlier, in the late 1960s, when the reforms towards socialist market economy began, for instance in Poland or Hungary. What we see in the 1990s and early 2000s is the anti-communist rhetoric, which resurrects “communism” long after it dissolved, as a phantom enemy. The continuous resurrection of the phantom enemy enabled and sustained the progress in neoliberal reforms. In the subsequent part of the paper, I would like to explore how pathologizing was mobilized as a neoliberal technology for the restructuring of the state and subjectivities in Poland. Before I explain the political utility of this strategy I invite my readers to a brief discussion of neoliberal project, as theorized by Foucault.

**Neoliberal governmentality**

In the lectures of 1979 Foucault (2004) analyzed the genealogy of the liberal art of government and discussed its transition to two forms of neoliberalism, the German social market economy, and a more radical form of neoliberalism as propagated by a group of American economists at the University in Chicago in the 1960s and 1970s, which later gained global dominance.

Of key concern for German neoliberals (ordo-liberals from the Freiburg school) was the state support in creating market based order. The social was supported in order to create favourable conditions for the market to develop (hence the idea of the social market economy). For the Chicago school economists market form serves as the generic model for the organization of state, society, and self. Taking market as the universal regulatory ideal, neoliberals reconceptualize the market. While in the neoclassical economics market is a system of exchange between firms and
households, neoliberal discourse redefines the market with a bundle of attributes such as competitiveness, self-regulation, privatization. Realizing these norms requires constant vigilance. Market, as Foucault said in his lectures, operates as a permanent economic tribunal. Pathologizing communism or liberal welfare state legitimizes constant vigilance in the implementation of neoliberal reforms.

Foucault (2004) was in particular concerned about the propensity of the Chicago school economists to systematically expand the object of economy and deploy economic rationality to all domains of human activity, including those which have been previously seen as distinct from the market. For instance, crime, marriage, household, education, health care, social security, environmental protection are treated as any other market, where costs-benefits calculations should be deployed in order to achieve efficient allocation of resources and optimal outcomes. A child provides mother with a psychological gratification as a return on investment in childbearing. The criminal is a rational individual who calculates his/her costs and profits in meeting certain needs. Penalty on rape is established in the market framework, by calculating the costs at the level that would exceed the benefits to a rapist. While earlier at stake was justice and the rehabilitation of the criminal, with the neoliberal marketization of the law, the law makers become the regulators of the demand for criminality. The rapidly swelling prison population is the side effect of the collusion and resonance between neoliberal and conservative restructuring of law.

Another example is creating local and global markets for pollutions where emission quotas are traded. A company or a country, which reduced emissions can trade its permit to another, so that it can keep polluting.

The realization of neoliberal reforms requires and is enacted through the restructuring of subjectivities. "Neoliberalism", Foucault said, "promotes competitive economic behaviour and the creation of entrepreneurial prudent subjects, whose moral quality is linked to the rational assessment of costs and benefits of certain action as compared to others" (Lemke, 2001). The marketization of subjectivities is achieved by governing human subjects with a combination of disciplinary and fiscal technologies (such as lowering minimum wages or financial penalties for political discontent) with the technologies of agency and empowerment, which encourage the subjects to be responsible and entrepreneurial, to permanently improve themselves, to invest in their bodies as a form of human capital. In this model, the wage labourers are no longer the employees dependent on the company, but are autonomous entrepreneurs with full responsibility for their own investment decisions and endeavouring to produce surplus value; they are the entrepreneurs of themselves" (Lemke, 2001). Nicholas Rose called it government through freedom (1999). The combination of disciplines, seductions and enticements enhances the capacities of subjects to mobilize for the accelerating reproduction of capital and intensified work. Paradoxically, the actions on freedom and empowerment forcefully pressure the subjects to conform and to adjust. The penalty is the exclusion from the system. Given its planetary scale, exclusion implies loss of means of livelihoods. New social distinctions are produced by recategorizing bodies either as useful or redundant, and therefore not entitled to rights and citizenship. Not only human subjects, but also states, municipalities, hospitals, schools are required to be entrepreneurial, to operate on the model of the firm. The neoliberal economic state, which functions as a firm, recategorizes citizens on the terms of budgetary expenditures or sources of revenue.

Neoliberalism is producing women as neoliberal economic men (Young, 2000, Rankin, 2001). On the one hand women are empowered to join the labour market, on the other hand social reproduction (time and money in bringing up children, health and old age care, education, as well as all labours of affect that social reproduction requires) are investments for which the individuals
are responsible themselves. In the name of providing citizens with freedom, the state withdraws from the responsibility for sharing the costs of social reproduction.

The folding back of the state responsibility for the social and for the environment is accompanied by a shift to corporate and moral register. At the strategic core of the neoliberal government lies the merger of profits and morals. In Gary Becker’s neoliberal theory of human nature, the rich are the source of social norms and morals, because they are rich and therefore endowed with moral superiority (Becker, 1996). As Max Weber argued in Protestant Ethic, individual wealth is the sign of divine selection. The poor or single mothers on welfare are blamed for poverty and therefore have to be responsibilized. Countries are disciplined because they lack fiscal prudence and/or because of ethnic strife, unruliness, and other aberrations from the humanitarian norm. These kinds of powers are at play internally in Poland for instance, as well as globally. Crucial to their efficacy is pathologizing the other, such as the welfare state, socialist market economy or ‘socialism with a human face’ that was pursued in the 1980s by the Solidarity opposition movement in Poland. With its cumulative effects, pathologizing turns into a disciplinary technology to govern the subjects, and for the subjects to govern themselves.

As already mentioned in the previous sections, one of the anchors of neoliberal discourse in Poland is a weekly magazine ‘Wprost’. The magazine is an agent in what Anna Pluta aptly called proselytizing EU accession (2004). I borrow this concept to discuss proselytizing neoliberal reforms. Here, I would like to use the examples of statements by Marek Król, the editor in chief, and professor Leszek Balcerowicz, one of the key architects of neoliberal economic reforms, and until recently, a regular contributor to Wprost magazine. These two men with vast discursive and financial resources at their disposal are influential advocates of neoliberal reforms. Both offer themselves as examples for others. The ‘Wprost’ editor-in-chief, Marek Król develops a discourse, in which the recurring argument is about the legitimation of the claims to truth and political power with wealth. The pursuit of wealth is the main organizing principle of “transition” at the level of political rationality of the state, as well as an individual life project. However, the way markets are currently organized, this goal is unattainable for the majority of populations.

Although the goals of Leszek Balcerowicz appear to be different: the stewardship and the maintenance of governmentality of the state, his position on wealth/poverty nexus is the same. The rich are healthier than the poor because they are responsible, and therefore they are rich. Privatization contributed not only to the healthier economy, but also improved the health of citizens. In a private firm, Balcerowicz argues, workers productively engage in work instead of pursuing health damaging habit of drinking alcohol at work, as they did under communism. For Król, who blames poverty on the poor and associates it with criminality, the poor have to be disciplined and prodded to work, for instance by way of eliminating public housing schemes or lowering minimum wages. The unemployed workers or single mothers opposing the withdrawal of state support are criminals, because “they put their hands into the pockets of those whose work generates wealth, who pay taxes”. The condemnation of the poor operates as a vicious wealth defence strategy.

The restructuring of subjectivities juxtaposes the poor socialist looser with the new rational wealthy (wo)man. The role models provided in the popular media and political discourse construct wealth, or access to wealth generating resources, as the marker of social status and a desirable personal attribute.

Such statements are congruent with Gary Becker’s neoliberal theory of human nature. Becker, the winner of the Nobel prize in economics, applied market rationality to the household, marriage,
family, education, altruism, and reinterpreted interpersonal relations and decisions in the household in terms of transactions. By claiming founding role of wealth and arguing a mutually constitutive relationship between wealth, morality and truth, Becker (1966) justified moral superiority and political power claims of the wealthy.

Following Gary Becker's weekly commentaries in the Business Week, Leszek Balcerowicz, too, regularly publishes his views in ‘Wprost’ to promote fiscal disciplines, reductions of minimal wages, liberalization of the labour law, and other neoliberal reforms. These reforms are not promoted in the manner of a new ideological top down project, but as a series of diffused moves necessitated by combination of moral arguments, fiscal constrictions and budgetary possibilities. At the same time, the increase of expenditure on the army and police is not an issue. To argue the case for neoliberal reforms, Balcerowicz (alike many others in political class) constructs a hierarchically organized and mutually exclusive binary opposition between the socialist system, and the new project of the democratic state and free market, where poverty is associated with the former, and affluence with the new project. Neither the surveys of the National Statistical Office in Poland nor the World Bank reports on poverty in Eastern Europe of 1995 and 2000, which show substantial income differentiation and growth of poverty have been able to debunk the continuously restated conviction that neoliberal reforms generate economic growth that leads to the welfare for all.

Crucial to the implementation of the neoliberal project is a discursive strategy that establishes socialist economy as an aberration so that the neoliberal governmentality can be put in place. The critique of ‘the old’ system articulated through blanket pathologizing is useful in legitimating new policy propositions and assuring permanent mobilisation for neoliberal reforms. Blanket pathologizing of 'the communist' past operates as a powerful political technology that steers people in a certain direction, while blocking other courses of action. In effect, the discourse on alternative transition pathways is prevented from gaining ground.

The conception of transition as a rupture disguises continuities in the regimes of truth. In the socialist as well as in the neoliberal project, the claims to truth and political power come from the dominant role of economics as the science of the state. In the socialist Eastern Europe, the state controlled markets were commanded by economists. Socialist economics was the science of the state, which provided instructions on how to govern the national economy, state enterprises, and populations. Neoliberal economists play analogous role today. The continuity of the privileged relationship between government (in a foucaudian sense) and the institution and functioning of an organized scientific economic discourse accounts for the reproduction of centralizing powers and authoritarian controls. Whether then or now, the economic scientific discourse is not for negotiation, it is a privileged site of power and truth.

Speaking of Balcerowicz, Becker, and international neoliberal networks of persuasion, it is interesting to mention the work of Johanna Bockman and Gil Eyal (2002) who trace how, beginning with the socialist calculation debate of the 1920s and 1930s, and then during the cold war, a West-East network of economists operated to connect the results from eastern European economies as laboratory of economic knowledge with the debates and struggles in the Western economies. The holy grail they sought to find was an economic theory that would enable the governmentability of the economy. This required the economists to maintain central role in government. Bockman and Eyal argue neoliberal theories and transition blueprints have been produced in the continuation of this network.
Delinking solidarity and freedom from authoritarian controls

Foucault questioned the explanatory potential of the concept of totalitarianism, which assumed the socialist countries functioned on the basis of fear, terror, repression. “There are countries that run on schemes, favours, and rewards”. He hoped for a “moral labour” that would make people engaged with Solidarność “much stronger in resisting all these petty mechanisms by which they were made.” (1982) These hopes turned to be unfounded and the experiences with “schemes, favours and rewards” turned into resources utilized for the construction of the new entrepreneurial self.

The problematization of Eastern Europe as a bio-political pathology (the totalitarianism frame) excluded the approach to the socialist state project as another modernity, another governmentality of industrial economy. The essentializing approach to the socialist state effectively disabled the analysis of what the socialist system was (as a practice of everyday life, as a complex and heterogeneous system of power relations, as a mode of adjustment of subjects with the state).

Taking it on its own terms, the political rationality of the socialist state was connected to the notions of human security and social justice. Alike the Western European states of the 19th century, Eastern European socialist party-state, too, engaged in managing the lives of populations. Hygiene, health, criminality, education, economic management entailed the production of scientific knowledge as well as the operations of state apparatuses. Foucault argued the effect of this mutually amplifying relations of power and knowledge are regulatory controls over life or biopolitics, a diffused and productive form of power, which steers the lives of citizens, and integrates them with the state. In Foucault’s view, bio-politics operates in conjunction with sovereignty (power to kill or to let live, which is preserved in the institutions of the law and the state). While biopolitics deployed in the socialist state provided security of livelihoods and regulated responsibilities for social reproduction in the manner of solidarity between households and state, it also entailed authoritarian controls, which ensured subjects are constantly mobilized as resources for the state, as mothers, workers or soldiers. The state safeguarded the reproduction of subjects precisely because time and labour extracted from bodies, and useful organizations of subjects as economic and military resources are the source of sovereign power of the state. To usefully organize subjects and to align them with its goals, the Eastern European socialist state deployed its own combinations of bio-politics (regulatory controls over life) and sovereign power. The socialist party state conflated social security of citizens with the security of the state.

The pastoral socialist party state moved subjects through rigid grids, from kindergartens, to schools, and to work. A life course was prescribed for every gender, age, and professional group. The grids operated like highways, one could not stop, take a turn, or go back, unless the option was authorized by the highway system architects. The grid provided security, offered rewards, and restricted freedom. In the 1990s the baby of social solidarity was thrown away with the bath water of authoritarian controls. While the socialist state shared the costs of social reproduction and promoted families, the new project offered individual empowerment and consumer citizenship, privatized the reproduction of care over people by transferring it to the market or sustained the invisibility of women’s reproductive work in the household.

In her analysis of employment and equal opportunities policies in the E. U. Brigitte Young (2000) concludes that women gained in terms of equality and visibility in the policy rhetoric, but at the cost of being ‘reduced’ to an individual in the global economy, equally exploited with men. Equality translated into abstract notion of individualism. From economic point of view, reproductive activities have been privatized or kept invisible. Young does not blame the single
market, or the EU integration/enlargement, but a specific form of government, neoliberal disciplinary governance, dedicated to enabling unrestricted movement of capital rather than protecting citizens. Similar critiques of the effects of transition policies on women came from scholars and activists in Eastern Europe, although there is more optimism about the EU and its Equal Opportunity Directive, which can deliver positive outcomes, if only governments better apply themselves to carry out the Directive (Choluj & Neusuess, 2004).

Of key interest for feminist analytics is how curative discourses on freedom and empowerment operated as masking devices for the rise of inequalities among women, and produced new sets of enhanced controls over women’s time and bodies to customize women for the roles of consumers and entrepreneurial workers in the speeded up finance driven economy – and resources for the competitive global markets and the new forms of the multiplication of capital. In the name of freedom and by responsibilizing subjects, societies have been steered and steered themselves away from solidarity and sharing the costs of social reproduction towards ways of organizing society, which enable resources to be redirected for accelerated circulation and reproduction of financial capital. These processes produce women as neoliberal economic men (Rankin, 2000, Young, 2000). In the neoliberal project discourses on freedom are utilized as technologies of control (Rose, 1999). Freedom is however contained within the boundaries that fit the market form.

While so far I have subjected neoliberal project to criticism, I would not like to throw the baby away with the bathwater. In Poland liberal and neoliberal projects are conflated into one, which goes under the name of liberalism. What liberal project brings to Poland are the notions of individual sovereignty, rights and responsibilities, which provide resources in anti-authoritarian struggles. At the same time neoliberal disciplines and the reconfiguration of subjects from citizens with rights into revenue generating resources for the market and the state are disguised behind the seductive veil of liberties. Foucault argued, ‘power’ is at its strongest when it is invisible and therefore remains unaddressed. The transition from liberalism to neoliberalism and different organization of subjectivities, state and market in liberal and neoliberal project is invisible Poland, when the neoliberal project goes under the guise of liberalism, and incorporates the latter’s projected appeal of human rights, impartiality of the law, and the association of the liberal welfare state with security and prosperity. The baby of human rights and women’s rights is thrown away with the bathwater of social resentment against ‘neoliberal liberalism’. This allows the new conservatives to offer themselves as the solution to the problem of pathological communist past and to the problem of social costs of neoliberal reforms. The new conservative project of the strong state and catholic nation identifies women with their reproductive roles and the church, and implements neoliberal policies with a strong hand in a Catholic and patriotic glove.

Feminist movement has been shaped by the discourses of transition, as well as took part in inacting them. It is not by coincidene, that Polish feminism has not developed its own critique of transition. Resistances to pathologizing are also problematic. Given the democratic deficit of transition, the only resource to resist pathologizing available in the political mainstream is a fall back on historical tradition and national-Catholic discourse, which legitimises alternative, locally specific models of subjectivity that are congruent with people’s memories. Since pathologizing is a strategy of the war model of discourse (the pathologizer as the conqueror and the pathologized as the victim), resistance structured within the framework of attack and defence leads to the revival of chauvinism or nationalism that create a never-ending line of pathologized others. As the recent experience in Poland shows, the neo-conservative project of the strong state and the catholic nation is superimposed on neoliberal economic state. The authoritarian moral controls and the fiscal disciplines generate mutual appeal and make the two cozy bedfellows.
To know how to get from where we are now to somewhat safer spaces to live, love, and bring up children, and to have authentic choice, it is crucial to decipher how we are defined and integrated with the neoliberal roller coaster or relegated to the reproductive roles. Making a new feminist common sense requires going beyond normative statements or tracking the position of women relative to that of men in the depoliticised genre of gender equality discourse, to the feminist analysis on women and the organisation of society, that is grounded in social realities of every day life, diverse women's experiences, and how they are affected by politico-economic frameworks of transition. This kind of analysis can pave way for imagining a new political discourse on social projects embracing both security and freedom.

Summary and conclusions

As I argued in the paper, neoliberal restructuring of Eastern Europe was, among other factors achieved through the problematization of Eastern Europe(ans) as a bio-political pathology. The origins of this problematization go back to the cordon sanitaire of the 1920s. By the 1950s pathologizing descriptions of the soviet block permeated popular imaginary in ‘the West’. Pathologizing the soviet system as the Other was so pervasive and effective because it mobilized discourses of patriotism, national identity, belonging, and affected an American’s relationship with the self. The cold war icon of a fat and drab communist woman underscored the sexually appealing slender body of western femininity represented with the Barbie doll icon. Analogically, the representations of the Soviet man emphasized serfdom and brute strength in contrast to intelligence, valor and resourcefulness of the James Bond masculinity of the 1950s. In effect pathologizing denied rationality and agency to the subjects of the socialist states, and provided the EU enlargement as the orderly solution to the collapse of the soviet block.

In the 1990s, the strategic discursive device of pathologizing Eastern Europe(ans) was deployed in several seemingly oppositional discourses: anti-communist, (neo)liberal, ecological and feminist, which interacted in constructing the body of knowledge on governing transition from command economy and one party state to free market and democracy. A normative grid of intelligibility was established whereby (1) the concept of totalitarianism dominated and marginalized any other interpretations of the socialist state system (2) the territory and populations were associated with totalitarianism, economic inefficiencies, poverty, corruption, backwardness, dirt, disease, servitude, brute strength (3) transition was offered as the road to freedom, wealth, beauty and prosperity. This juxtaposition organized transition as a rupture, as the road from sin and purgatory to heavenly bliss, as a resurrection or a new take on life. The pervasive association of socialist state and its subjects with deviance enabled neoliberalism, with its preference for government through freedom, disciplinary tactics, and alliances of domestic and international centers of persuasion, to offer itself in post-socialist Eastern Europe, as the cure and redemption from the totalitarian deviance. The discursive construction of the socialist system as pathology, and labelling of all kinds of critiques as communism, invisibilized social costs of transition, effectively disabled the pursuit of alternative roadmaps, and made oppositional politico-epistemic communities work for the neoliberal strategy and global marketization.

‘Transition’ was enacted not only through the juridico-economic restructuring but also through disciplines, enticements, and mobilisation of desires, which instructed ‘communist’ subjects and populations how to reinvent themselves as the neoliberal entrepreneurial (wo)men and new democratic, free market societies. The restructuring of Eastern Europe(ans) entailed radical aesthetic transformation. This is visible through the investments in new architectural and interior designs, and new bodies. The end result was not a Christian or communist docile body but a
flexible body, a body set in motion to permanently please and adjust her/himself to the requirements related to the reorganization in the forms of accumulation of capital, to the emergence of global competitive markets, including new markets for flexible labour. The mobilization of desires for wealth was constructed as the flight away from drab, poor and totalitarian Soviet past. Poverty-wealth, totalitarianism-freedom, and ugliness-beauty nexuses constructed transition as a rupture and a project of no return. The pursuit of wealth became the legitimizing goal and the organizing principle of personal and political ‘transition’.

As subjects strived to adjust, pathologizing came to act as a political technology of the self. (Foucault, 1981, 1988). As a reverse deployment of a beauty icon, the productive role of pathologizing was that it made subjects adjust, and offered gratifications. Pathologizing as political technology demonstrated efficacy in disciplining and enticing individual subjects and organizations to restructure themselves towards responsible and coherent entities organized on the generic model of the firm.

In Eastern Europe, neoliberalism, through its association with freedom, appealed to the longing for agency, provided a relief from the fixed social grids of the patriarchal socialist state. To implement the new regulatory ideal, the invisible micro-techniques of power disciplined and responsibilized subjects. Nicholas Rose identified this form of power as a form of government through freedom (Rose, 1999). Freedom, however, can only be exercised in the manner that suits the new neoliberal market form, while at the same time it is under assault by the new conservative project of the strong state and Catholic nation.

Within countries such as Poland, pathologizing representations of the socialist state would not be politically effective if they were not coupled with the romantic and essentializing representations of “the West”. The two co-acted in the establishment of the “West” as the norm, on which the new order was founded and legitimized. Because ‘the West’ was not problematized in ‘the East’, the neoliberal networks of persuasion managed to give to ‘the West’ a neoliberal form.

Whether in the ‘West’ or in the ‘East’ the state exercises sovereignty by claiming the right to kill, or to let live, while positioning itself in a permanent state of exception. (Agamben, 1998, Foucault, 1976, 2003, Schmidt, 1922). The problem is how to create limits to this form of power. The socialist contract offered security to citizens but did not set limit to the state power. The liberal contract promised sovereignty to citizens, while the market and liberal political theory acted as a buffer to the expansion of the power of the state. When the neoliberal reorganization of the states on the generic model of a firm dissolved the boundary between the state and the market, the limits to sovereign power of the state have disappeared. With the neoliberal economic state reorganized on the model of the firm, human subjects are recategorized from citizens to entries in the budget, as costs or revenue generating resources. Meanwhile, the preservation of the binary structures of political discourse confines us to questions such as who do you love better, a socialist mommy or the neoliberal daddy?

At stake is to rethink socialist project to disconnect the linkages between providing human security and sharing the costs of social reproduction from authoritarian controls. At stake is also to develop a critique of neoliberal project that would allow to delink freedom from authoritarian controls and to reorganize the state and the market on the principle of mutual benefits and social solidarity. This requires giving up on essentializing and pathologizing approaches in favour of the analysis of socialist or neoliberal state projects as types of governmentality or specific configurations of power relations. The groundwork for this kind of analysis was paved by Foucault.


2 For instance the conference on environmental business opportunities in Poland in the 1992, Newark, New Jersey, 16 April 1991.

3 Such as prof. Cezary Jozefiak, the president of the Adam Smith Center in Poland, or prof. Marek Dąbrowski, the deputy chair of the Board of the Foundation Centre for Socio-Economic Research (CASE), and professor Leszek Balcerowicz, former minister of finance, and now the head of the National Bank in Poland, who founded the above mentioned CASE think tank.

4 Editorial, Wprost no 2. 1999. p.3

5 The material productivity of these discursive manoeuvres is stark visible in the huge investments made in renovating old governmental building in Poland to shed all traces of communist aesthetics.

6 With the exception of Public Expenditures Reviews, which are not available to the public, all the documents are available at the country websites of the World Bank and The IMF and the Ministries of Finance.


8 The metaphor couples predatory power and successful competitivenesses. Mark De Broeck & Vincent Koen. The Soaring Eagle: Anatomy of the Polish Take-Off in the 1990s. IMF Working Paper WP/00/06, (2000); Mark Olbrich, Olbrich Retailing Europe, Poland: the European Tiger Economy. European Retail Digest, issue 19, September 1998; the metaphor was also used in the acronym of TIGER - Transformation, Integration and Globalization Economic Research - at the Leon Kozminski Academy of Entrepreneurship and Management (WSPiZ) in Warsaw, in several business projects in Eastern Europe, as well as in alternative reports, such as Kraszewska Iza, Poland - The Green Tiger of Europe? Clean Production: The Only Way Forward, Greenpeace, October 1994

9 Camdessus, 1994, ibidem

10 See Joseph Artur, comte de Gobineau, who formulated Nordic racial supremacy in his influential essays on The Inequality of Human Races , 1883, in English in 1915. The first institute of race-biology was founded in Sweden in 1921 by Herman Lundborg, who provided science based arguments on the racial inferiority of the Slavs. His research informed the development of race and blood national ideology in Germany. On state racism and nation as the community of blood see Foucault, Society Must be Defended. 1999.


13 I use the notion of government in a broader Foucauldian sense as a mentality and a set of techniques for governing subjects, as well as those through which subjects govern themselves.

14 The World Bank newsletter Transitions. The Newsletter about Reforming Economies, first issue April 1990, talks of transforming socialist economies into market based systems, and provides resources on socialist market economy.
Subsequently, this conceptual toolkit of mixed market economy was replaced with neoliberal policy tools and frameworks. In the mid 1990s the reorganisation of the World Bank included setting up new Europe and Central Asia (ECA) department. The vocabulary of socialist market economies fell into disuse.


16 Following World War One, five leading world powers, France, England, the United States, Italy and Japan, engaged militarily in Russia and created a cordon sanitaire to contain bolshevism. Soon after World War Two, American ambassador to the Soviet Union George Kennan proposed a shift in the policy towards the Soviet Union from alliance and economic support provided during the war against Germany towards the new policy of the containment of the soviet block. The concept was put forward in the article “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” written by George F. Kennan under the pseudonym “X,” published in “Foreign Affairs” in July 1947. Post 2nd world war Moscow sought security by dominating Eastern European states in a reverse cordon sanitaire.


18 http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/pas/phare/

19 Camdessus, ibidem


21 adopted in Cologne in June 1999, on the initiative of the EU governments

22 These, for instance in Poland, include reclaiming the women’s day, popular music disco polo, aesthetic nostalgia for the 1960s, such as reflected in the jazz café Decada interior designed on the socialist state aesthetics in the manner that makes it into a socialist Disneyland; or a German movie “Good Bye Lenin”. The protest actions of nurses, or other professional groups also draw on economic justice as resource in collective memory

23 For instance, in a 2005 commentary on the EU program “Health for All”, Rafal Niżankowski, the under-secretary of health, rejected the framework of the program on the ground that it resurrects communist slogans. Health, he further argued, cannot be provided for all because some people, do not want to be healthy, and others have defective genes. In result of this statement the under-secretary was asked to resign. PAP, 2004-12-04. A popular tool to delegitimize critique was to claim that opponents of neoliberal reforms wish Poland to become Belarussian, the country associated with poverty, violence, disease, and totalitarian rule. The Socialist Democratic Left party (SLD, which evolved from the former Polish United Workers Party) will make Poland into a Belarussian kibutz, warned Marek Król, Editorial, Wprost, 11 July 1999, no 19, p. 3


25 In 2004 American citizens who went to Iraq as human shields prior to the 2nd gulf war, anti-war protesters in the United States, and a missionary who went to Cuba were ordered by the Treasury Department (a new regulator of the political behaviour) to pay charges for deviating from American foreign policy regulation.

26 In Foucault’s hypothesis this has always been the effect of biopower: “The adjustment of the accumulation of men to that of capital, the joining of the growth of human groups to the expansion of productive forces and differential allocation of profits, were possible in part by the exercise of bio-power and its many forms and modes of application. (Foucault, 1978:141)

27 This argument has been elaborated by Giorgio Agamben, (1999) who analysed concentration camp as a paradigmatic form of the organization of power in contemporary societies. The Jews had to be stripped of civil and
political rights and rights to property before they were sent to concentration camps to exist in a limbo between living and dying, in the zone of indistinction between the denial of rights but still in the hold of power, they were murdered with impunity by the state. Today’s immigrant’s, unemployed, and other “unproductive” people are governed by denial of rights and exclusion but still remain the objects of state power.

28 While with the Structural Adjustment Programs of the 1980s and later the blame for indebtedness was put on developing countries who were accused of living above their means, it is now France and Germany which are projected as examples of bloated budgets.

29 In this respect it is interesting to recall the discourse of Tony Blair prior to the war on Yugoslavia or war in Iraq.

30 As I edit this paper in June 2006, the Wprost was supersede by OZON, which took over as the new leading proselytiser of neo-liberal reform, this time in a new conservative glove.

31 After 15 years of transition in Poland, and after 11 years of continuous GDP growth the poor are more numerous, and poorer than they have been before. In 2004 12% households (4 million people, most of them children lived at or below the level of biological survival (78 Euro per month), and another 59% (12 million people) lived at or below social minimum of 208 Euro per month.) Of all taxpayers, 94,7% are in the lowest income group, and declare an annual income of 3185 Euro before taxation. Only 5,23% of taxpayers declare an annual income above 3704 Euro annually. GDP growth was accompanied by net employment loss of 2,5 million, with women prevailing among the long term unemployed. Of university graduates 38,9% of women and men could not find employment. Women were in particular underrepresented among the winners of transition. The 2005 list of the 100 wealthiest men in Poland, included 5 women only, all of them as wives and business partners. None of them made money on her own, while the unprecedented opportunity for fast enrichment was taken up by men.

32 Leszek Balcerowicz developed these arguments in Ekonomia Zdrowia (Economy of Health), Wprost nr 51, 1998, and in Worek Bez Dna (Hole without a Bottom), Wprost nr 5, 1999. A polemic with Balcerowicz by Grzegorz Woznicki, Niewolnicy Mitow (The Slaves of the Myth), was published in Wprost nr 24, 1999

33 Wprost 22/1999, p. 3, editorial

34 It is interesting that despite the war model of political discourse, all the individual representatives of oppositional parties, national-catholic, neoliberal and socialist parties are aligned with each other in the pursuit of personal wealth as marker of personal and political status. Pursuit of wealth as organizing principle of “transition” and as political rationality, and as an individual life project, made transition into a state of exception, where, as argued by Carl Schmidt (1927) and Giorgio Agamben (1998) law is suspended. Wealth generation is put above the law, while at the same time law is the principal agent of restructuring. Corrupt privatization, and other violations of law are almost daily presented in the media, each as a singular scandal; even when the scandals are unearthed that show the complicity of all political parties in collusion with foreign business and the Opus Dei in the corrupt privatization of the biggest Polish insurer, ZUS, for media this an “accident”, and not a systemic logic of transition.


36 In the interview published in the book MY (US) Warszawa, Most, 1994 Toranska asks Balcerowicz about his previous engagement with the movement for socialist market economy, the so called in Poland ‘socialism with a human face’, which among other reforms postulated the restructuring of enterprise by way of employee ownership schemes. Balcerowicz answers: I promoted it only because at that time it was within the conditions of possibility, now the scope for action has changed.... Toranska: but you are doing it now against the society, which did not want capitalism. Balcerowicz: what is the society? Society is only a collection of different groups with different interests, levels of education, understanding of what happens in Poland, and what course of action to adopt... even if the majority did not want capitalism, associating it with unemployment and reduction in social security entitlements, so what? Toranska: .... Leszek, who are you? Balcerowicz: I am rational .... One first has to understand the situation, what are the alternatives, and these alternatives have to be compared on the basis of risks, costs and benefits " Here Balcerowicz, as the minister of finance, and the head of National Bank represents sovereign power of the neoliberal economic state and offers himself as an example of prudent neoliberal subject.
To substantiate her argument Young (2000) provides data on the loss of jobs, the rise of poverty in the EU (57 million), and the rise in unemployment to 18 million in official statistics, and de facto 30 million because so many people without jobs, in particular women, are not registered as unemployed. See footnote 31 on analogous effects of neoliberal governance in Poland.


References


Barbara Cruikshank. The Will to Empower. Democratic Citizens and Other Modern Subjects, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999;


Annex. Michel Foucault’s Analytic of Power – a summary

In Foucault’s view something that we call power that does not exists.

…”power is not an institution, and not a structure, neither is it a certain strength that we are endowed with, it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategic situation in a particular society” (1990:93).

Foucault questioned the explanatory potential of the model to study power as law, interdiction, institution, and revised the military or strategic model (power as war). In his view, normative, juridical and location oriented models are devices through which power is exercised and legitimized.

To diffuse the reproduction of normative assumptions about power while analyzing it. Foucault’s analytic of power is based on the proposition to study the organization of power relations from their effects. Foucault experimented with analytical strategies, conceptual devices, and methodological tools to study relations of power, beginning “at the points where power installs itself to produce real effects”. His main research strategy was to “give privilege to the question of how power is exercised over what and why” (1994:336);

Foucault’s analytic of power relations is not a methodological blueprint, it’s a toolbox which contains conceptual devices and methodological injunctions developed over the years for specific
research purposes, and revised. His conceptual devices such as biopolitics or governmentality open up new ways of understanding power relations. Foucault provides us with an advice on how to research this complex strategic situation that we call power:

● to substitute the conception of power as domination, repression, and subjugation - with an inquiry into the relationship between sovereignty and obedience to make visible how subjects, discourses and social institutions are constituted;

● instead of studying regulated and legitimate forms of power (ideology, law, state, market), to study practices of power at capillary locations, where it “… invests in institutions, and becomes embodied in techniques, and equips itself with instruments and eventually even violent means of material intervention’ (1980:96), for instance to study sovereignty on the site of punishment, torture, imprisonment, or treatment of the refugees.

● although power is multidimensional and comes from the bottom as well as from the top, to carry out an ascending analysis of power from its effects (1980:99);

● to study power in direct relations with what can be provisionally called the object, where it is invested in real and effective practices, ‘with the aim of grasping conditions which make these acceptable at a given time (1991:75);

● to investigate mechanisms of power historically and retroactively, from the lowest level, to deduce how they have been able to function;

● to analyze how “mechanisms of power, at a given moment in precise conjuncture and by means of certain number of transformations, have begun to become economically advantageous and politically useful” (1980:101), and how power and economic interests are able to engage with these mechanisms;

● to analyse power relations through the antagonism of strategies, e.g. to find out about sanity, investigate insanity, to find out about the norm investigate pathology, to find out about power investigate resistances to power in a series of oppositions to power of men over women, parents over children, etc. 1994:329;

● to analyse specific practices and specific rationalities rather then the process of rationalization.

This kind of a back-casting method allows to avoid pitfalls of normative judgments and ensures specificity in the research method. However, to ensure specificity requires more attention than Foucault paid to gendered differences in the manner subjects constitute themselves, how gender is inscribed on the body as well as in the macro level or global operations of power. Foucault’s aspirations for a new economy of power would not be realized without engendering his analytic. On the other hand, feminist critique can benefit from Foucault’s insights into power, and in particular from his conceptual devices of biopolitics and governmentality which capture interconnections between micro-powers operating on the multiplicity of individual bodies simultaneously, and the organization of society, market and state. Thus, engendering Foucault’s analytic, attention to the constitution of gender relations and their effects, should be added on to his methodological injunctions.

Ewa_charkiewicz@yahoo.com