Sociology in Romania is one of the disciplines that were facing the difficult task of 'putting the pieces together' after 1989. The profession has been literally in a seriously ill shape till that time: firstly, the result of the disruptions caused by the hardest repression in Eastern countries was that teaching sociology practically became the monopoly of the Communist Party Academy, secondly, the mismanagement of the transition by the unreformed Romanian Academy of Sciences (RAS) led to a disaster. When a short time ago RAS decided to reorganize the institutes of sociology which – with little regard to human resources at hand – had been set up during the feverish days of the 1989 transition, its main (foreign) consultant suggested to shut them down instead of unifying them, following the example of the bankrupt state industry. That radical advice was not irrational altogether, although it will evidently not be heeded. It sounds alien in the context of our times since, if there is something that has been entirely lacking from the spirit of academic reforms after 1990 in Romania, it has been this kind of a revolutionary approach.

Although over a hundred researchers are employed by RAS in various institutes of sociology, ranging from the Romanian Institute of Sociology to the Institute for the Study of Totalitarianism, new Romanian sociology has produced – despite fellowships at Western universities and local grants from generous donors such as the Soros Foundation – little to nothing in ten years. The only Romanian sociologist published abroad continues to be senior Pavel Campeanu, an old-time Communist believer and a later dissident in the Ceauşescu regime, who, despite his international success, was not recruited in the permanent faculty body at the University of Bucharest after 1990. Instead, the newly created Faculty of Sociology of the Bucharest University was filled up either with sociologists who had edited books in praise of Ceauşescu's village-demolition (known as the 'rural systematization' at the time), such as Rector Ioan Mihaı-

* In an earlier issue of our journal, we already published a review on this book (See: Ionel Nicu Sava, 'Eastern Europe: Not One, But Several Transitions,' *ECE/ECE* Vol. 27, part 1 [2000]). Because of the apparent intra-Romanian importance of Sandu's book and also because of the markedly different perspectives taken by the two reviewers, the editors decided to make an exception to ECE/ECE's 'one book-one review' rule, and give the forum to different approaches on the subject matter.
lescu, or with new far-right characters, such as Ilie Badescu, the spiritual father of the new Iron-Guard type political party called 'Movement for Romania.'

In this murky Bucharest environment, both morally and professionally, Dumitru Sandu is one notable exception. He is a middle-aged academic who trained the latest generations of Romanian sociologists and was involved in building the best Romanian opinion poll institute, the CURS (the Romanian Center for Urban Sociology). As a consultant to the World Bank in matters of rural development, he had both the opportunity and the resources to explore the Romanian transition deeper than anyone else. His latest book, *The Social Space of Transition*, a collection of research reports assembled together under the banner of 'transition' reveals some unique data on the phenomenon, without being completely exempt from some of the general illnesses of Romanian sociology.

The book is based on survey data from two sources: the research findings of SOCIOBIT, Sandu's own research center associated with the University of Bucharest, and the data collections of the Romanian Barometer of Opinion (BOP), a Soros Foundation venture that he also worked for for a while.

After an ambitious introduction meant to put forward Sandu's own theory of the transition and social change, the subsequent chapters unfold more detailed, previously painfully neglected but highly interesting corners of contemporary Romanian reality, like the rural entrepreneurial elite, human and social capital in rural Romania, and migration within Romania after 1990. A separate chapter, dedicated to the explanation of people's optimism and pessimism and their satisfaction with daily life concludes into a typology of transition ideologies. The book is heterogeneous in scope (although less in methodology), which makes the reviewer's task rather difficult. Therefore, only some of Sandu's findings will be discussed here, leaving some others regretfully aside.

The first observation relates to Sandu's research design. He was the first and he has remained until now almost the only Romanian sociologist to make extensive use of regression models for the explanation of certain social processes and phenomena. His use of inferential analysis is combined, however, with a common practice among Romanian social scientists, that is, exploratory research designs. Therefore, most of his causal models seem to be tested without clear preliminary hypotheses on the actual working of the causes leading to effects, and the stress is always on social status variables. Thus, his path models explaining people's satisfaction, optimism and trust is deceptively socially deterministic. He builds very sophisticated and highly useful indices of the stages of rural development out of usually disregarded social indicators (such as the distance between one's residence and the closest town, the quality of roads connecting a certain village to the outside world, and so on), to reach the final conclusion that lasting satisfaction with one's livelihood is determined by relative affluence, rather low education, young age, rich social contacts (social capital) and the comparatively developed standard of the area where one lives. Despite the obvious truth that the young, healthier, and richer are more satisfied with their life than the old, poor and isolated, causal analysis would start with the question of what makes individuals under similar conditions of wealth and health be more