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How Empirical Social Research Gained Ascendancy in Post-War France*

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Abstract: Sociology changed significantly in Europe after the Second World War. An interest in research with practical applications began to prevail. This article explains how this transformation came about in France and what contributed to the change. Sociologists at the Sorbonne were the first to actively support the use of an empirical approach in the social sciences. In this connection they invited Paul Lazarsfeld, one of the founders of the Columbia school of sociology, to spend a year at the Sorbonne in 1962. Drawing on archive sources, this article reveals the factors that lay behind the creation of an original three-volume anthology of methodological writings that was the outcome of collaboration between Lazarsfeld and Raymond Boudon. They compiled this anthology in French with the aim of promoting this new research paradigm among social scientists in France. The article examines the structure of this French methodology textbook, analyses the thematic orientation of the articles, and notes different works that were jointly authored by French and American scholars. On a second sabbatical at the Sorbonne in 1967, Lazarsfeld followed up on this publishing activity and further pursued his primary interest – the methodology of data analysis.

Keywords: France, Paul Lazarsfeld, Raymond Boudon, Sorbonne, methodology of empirical social research

Introduction

This article focuses on Paul Lazarsfeld's work in France between 1948 and 1970 and the influence of his methodology in France and in Europe after the Second World War. The methodology of empirical social research that was developed by the Columbia school of sociology came to be the most frequently used model of sociology in the post-war United States and Western Europe. Historians ex-

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plained the increasing dominance of empirical social research as due to the interests of government agencies or American foundations, or as due to the competition between members of the emerging post-war generation of scholars and the representatives of a traditional approach to sociology with a philosophical or theoretical focus. Another factor behind the ascendancy of the empirical model, and one that especially played a role in French sociology, was the competition between the Marxist orientation of left-wing sociologists, led by Pierre Bourdieu, and a smaller group of scholars who were more influenced by Paul Lazarsfeld, and in this group we find such figures as Jean Stoetzel, Raymond Boudon, André Davidovitch, and Bernard-Pierre Lécuyer.

In this article I set out to trace the work of Lazarsfeld and his colleagues and doctoral students and identify this work as one of the important factors explaining the post-war transformation of European sociology. I focus on Paul Lazarsfeld's collaborations with representatives of French post-war sociology and examine what influence the Columbia school of sociology had in France, and what role was played in this process by UNESCO and, in particular, the Sorbonne in Paris.

A general attempt to explain how the 'Columbia research model' came to be dominant in American and European sociology up until the late 1960s is provided in Stephen P. Turner and Jonathan H. Turner's monograph *The Impossible Science. An Institutional Analysis of American Sociology* [Turner and Turner 1990]. Turner and Turner cite Paul Lazarsfeld's research projects as an example of the kind of research that foundations were keen on funding [ibid.: 101]. According to this source, foundations changed 'the rules of the academic hierarchy' in a direction away from abstract academic sociology to a sociology that is of practical use [ibid.: 89]. Another important resource for understanding the place of 'methodological positivism' and Paul Lazarsfeld in post-war sociology is a collective monograph edited by Craig Calhoun [2007]. One chapter in this book is by George Steinmetz, who argues emphatically that '… during the 1950s and well into the 1960s (and perhaps beyond), methodological positivism prevailed in the leading sociology journals, in the most widely used textbooks and methodology books, in the top departments, and in the tastes of the relevant funding agencies' [Steinmetz 2007: 339–340]. According to Steinmetz [ibid.: 341]: 'Lazarsfeld's Bureau of Applied Social Research constituted a center of methodological expertise and research in positivist spirit.'

Lazarsfeld's students and successors offered another explanation for the changes that occurred in sociology after the Second World War. James Coleman [1982: 1] wrote: 'Paul Lazarsfeld was one of those rare sociologists who shaped the direction of the discipline for the succeeding generation.' Allen Barton, another of Lazarsfeld's colleagues, praised a positive view of Paul Lazarsfeld's idea for the University Institute for Applied Social Research [Barton 1982], which he argued was the tool that was necessary to transform survey methods for use in the social sciences, adapting them to the analysis of social processes [ibid.: 19].

In Europe Lazarsfeld probably made his biggest mark in France. Although he lived in the United States after emigrating from Europe in 1935, he spent a lengthy period of time in Paris twice before the war: the first time was the year he spent there after completing his university studies (1924/1925) and the second was in 1927, when he spent several months there with his first wife, Marie Jahoda. After the war he frequently travelled to Paris and Europe. He visited France many times on multiple occasions. He became involved in activities organised by UNESCO, headquartered in Paris; he co-founded the International Sociological Association (ISA) in Paris and in Oslo; and he lectured in Norway in the winter semester of 1948. In 1962/1963 and 1967/1968 he twice taught for an entire academic year at the Sorbonne.

French social scientists regarded Lazarsfeld's empirical social research and his positivist approach as an import from the United States. At the same time, most French sociologists, and especially those in the group headed by Pierre Bourdieu, were in principal familiar with the positivist approach. Pierre Bourdieu's team, however, embraced a different conception of positivism, a different approach to quantification. They developed their own school, which followed and built on Émile Durkheim's pre-war positivism.

The majority of sociologists in France were highly critical of the type of sociology practised in post-war America. The primary reasons for this were ideological and political. Most Frenchs sociologists were politically left-wing and rejected this 'American import'. Many of them were strongly influenced by Marxist thought.

Pierre Bourdieu, for example, wrote the preface to the French translation of *Marienthal*, in which he focused on the study's qualitative ethnographic findings and cited examples of the effects of mass unemployment, poverty, and disillusionment as a reaction to the situation, and in which he explained these findings from the perspective of Marxist theory. He wrote: '... what is discovered or uncovered is the sense of abandonment, desperation, and even absurdity that engulfs people who have suddenly been deprived not just of work and a salary but also of any social purpose in life and are thereby confronted with the naked truth of their situation' [Bourdieu 1982: i].[1]

While on the one hand they were impressed by American methodological know-how, on the other hand they rejected it as 'right-wing ideology'. Lazarsfeld was therefore not in an easy position, and his ideas were not going to be automatically accepted. His supporters – Jean Stoetzel and Raymond Boudon – were in the position of a minority in French sociology.

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[1] Here is the original French version: '… ce qui se livre ou se trahit, c'est le sentiment de délaissement, de désespoir, voire d'absurdité, qui s'impose à l'ensemble de ces hommes soudain privés non pas seulement d'une activité et d'un salaire, mais d'une raison d'être sociale et ainsi renvoyés à la vérité nue de leur condition' [Bourdieu 1982: i].

Michael Pollak, in a paper evaluating Paul Lazarsfeld's work, adds a more concrete explanation to these general statements [Pollak 1980]. In response to the question '…which factors contributed to his [Lazarsfeld's] key role in reorienting social science research in Europe after the war?' [ibid.: 158], Pollak wrote: 'In the early 1960s Lazarsfeld's enterprise was thriving. His conception of sociology, increasingly in demand by state bureaucracies and business, dominated the discipline in most European countries' [ibid.: 173]. He described the motivation behind these processes as follows: 'European scholars interested in the institutionalization of empirical research sought legitimacy and prestige for their strategic efforts to reinforce their power in the universities. This converged with the interests of the American scientific community in increasing its international prestige; it also attracted the large foundations, in particular Ford and Rockefeller, with their longstanding interest in foreign affairs.' [ibid.: 171] Michael Pollak, however, characterised French social scientists as people who were afraid of tempting that American foundations and programmes strived to control the European scientific institutions [ibid.: 171–173].

A slightly different assessment of Paul Lazarsfeld's contribution to French sociological thought was offered by Stefanie Averbeck, who compared sociological ideas and communication theories in France and Germany. She described the academic cultures in these two countries and the differences between them: in Germany empirical social research was influenced by 'the "classical" US-American tradition', while France is dominated by the tradition of 'les sciences de l'information et de la communication', which are rooted in semiotics and cultural theories [Averbeck 2008: 1–3].

In the introduction to an anthology of Lazarsfeld's writings, Raymond Boudon wrote: 'By the 1960s, Lazarsfeld had become a dominant figure in the social science. Perhaps only Talcott Parsons enjoyed a similar standing … Lazarsfeld's reputation was acknowledged not only in the United States, but in Europe as well, particularly where he had been directly active in the development of social research' [Boudon 1993: 5]. Then he described and evaluated Lazarsfeld's activities and his instrumental role in the collaboration between Columbia University in the United States and the Sorbonne in France [ibid.: 10–12, 22–24]. But this was only one of the many ways in which French scholars responded to Lazarsfeld. Some French scholars even said that the Boudon-Stoetzel cluster was a marginal group in post-war French sociology.

Lazarsfeld had friends and colleagues in Paris and many doctoral students at the Sorbonne. Together with Raymond Boudon he published three anthologies of methodological writings in French. Raymond Boudon also published a collection of Lazarsfeld's studies in 1970 in a book that was only published in French and was never released in English [Lazarsfeld 1970]. Evidence of the important role Paul Lazarsfeld played in the French social sciences is that he was awarded an 'honorary degree of Sorbonne University' and was the first American sociologist to receive such an honour.

Lazarsfeld's first post-war activities in Paris

The first lecture Lazarsfeld gave in Paris (of which there are archive records) was intended for political scientists and took place in October 1948. The lecture presented the results of Lazarsfeld's research on the American Presidential elections and the methods used in the research. The organiser of this event, François Goguel, invited Lazarsfeld on behalf of the Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques (Sciences Po).[2] Lazarsfeld sent a response almost immediately, on 27 July. The subject of the lecture was one that would have certainly interested political scientists and Lazarsfeld definitely had something to say about the subject. His book *The People's Choice* had been published not long before (the first edition in 1944 and the second edition in 1948) and the book was known in Paris. Sciences Po was (and is) a fully-fledged, self-governing research university that specialises in the social-economic sciences and the humanities.[3] Active members of the university, François Goguel and his colleague Henri Mendras, helped to introduce Columbia scholars to French readers [see Chenu 2001] – for example, Mendras translated Merton's *Social Theory and Social Structure* [ibid.: 106].

Before this visit to Paris Lazarsfeld had been actively involved in the work of UNESCO.[4] A meeting of representatives from this international organisation was planned in Paris in October 1948, so Lazarsfeld arranged the date of his lecture to coincide with that event. Lazarsfeld was willing to give the lecture in French, and in doing so he demonstrated his interest in the French public. This also allowed the organisers to invite a larger number of political scientists to attend the lecture. In his response Lazarsfeld wrote that he would come from Oslo and that he would like to arrange his visit to Paris and his lecture around 'the date of the UNESCO meeting which I might want to participate in'.[5] Lazarsfeld arrived in Paris in the middle of October and spent around two weeks in Paris, and he probably stayed in the country until the end of October. In addition to giving a lecture, he took part in the meeting of the social sciences section of UNESCO that was being held and from archival resources we know that he and the sociologist delegates from the United States and various European countries who attended this meeting reached a preliminary agreement on establishing the International Sociological Association (ISA). The first, inaugural congress of the ISA was held on 5–10 September 1949 in Oslo, Norway [Thue 2006: 283, 353].

In the years that immediately followed, Lazarsfeld was busy with various obligations in the United States. In 1950 the BASR research institute at Columbia University ran into financial difficulties [see Barton 1982: 27] and Paul Lazarsfeld

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[2] A letter from F. Goguel to Paul F. Lazarsfeld in Paris dated 22 July 1948.
[3] https://transsol.eu/people/consortium/sciences-po-paris/.
[4] UNESCO, the international organisation for education, science, and culture, was founded under the United Nations in 1946 and its headquarters were established in Paris.
[5] A letter from Paul F. Lazarsfeld to F. Goguel in New York dated 27 July 1948.

and Robert K. Merton worked together to transform BASR into a training centre that would teach graduate students how to conduct empirical social research. The failure of this proposal led Lazarsfeld to draw up and then implement (in the years 1952 to 1954) a project that had as its main aim the preparation of a number of important methodological publications with the support of this money.[6] It was only after this that Lazarsfeld began to take a greater interest in Europe again and both UNESCO and Paris become his 'windows into Europe'.

Jean Stoetzel and Paul Lazarsfeld: the motives for their collaboration

A key figure involved in Lazarsfeld's time in France was Jean Stoetzel (1910–1987), a French social psychologist who was around ten years younger than Lazarsfeld. He had visited the United States in 1938, in all likelihood with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation. He spent time at Columbia University and while he was in the United States he became acquainted with the public opinion poll model of George Gallup. When he returned to France, Stoetzel founded the first French institute for public opinion research, the private Institut français d'opinion publique (IFOP). During the Second World War, in Vichy France, Stoetzel worked in Bordeaux as a philosophy teacher at a secondary school. In 1942 he began working for the French Foundation for the Study of Human Problems, which was founded by the French physiologist and biologist Alexis Carrel. Stoetzel worked there until the end of the war. He obtained his doctorate in philosophy in Paris at the Sorbonne's Faculty of Philosophy (Faculté des lettres) in 1943. His doctoral adviser was the famous French philosopher and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs [Wikipedia 2021].

Lazarsfeld became acquainted with Stoetzel's current ideas from materials that were published by UNESCO, which Stoetzel contributed to. He met him personally at UNESCO events and ISA congresses, in which both of them participated.[7] Paul Lazarsfeld and Jean Stoetzel had similar views on the social sciences. They both regarded empirical research as an integral part of their academic fields. Jean Stoetzel was a social psychologist and was one of the first chairs of the World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR), and he founded an institute for public opinion research (in France). Lazarsfeld was one of the founders of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) and was elected its third chair for the 1949–1950 academic year. He published a paper in the very first issue of *Public Opinion Quarterly*, which was AAPOR's newly launched of-

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[6] For details on Lazarsfeld's and Merton's plans for a training centre and on the contents and the results of the Planning Project for Advanced Training (PPAT project), see Jerabek [2012: 16–20].
[7] For example, at the 4th Congress of ISA in Milan and Stresa in Italy in September 1959 they presented papers on very similar methodological topics.

ficial journal. His model of sociology moreover had much in common with social psychology.

Lazarsfeld knew Jean Stoetzel's body of work, and surprisingly well. In an article titled 'Public Opinion and the Classical Tradition' that he published in *Public Opinion Quarterly* in 1957, for example, he cited Stoetzel's dissertation, writing: 'Stoetzel, incidentally, was the first, in his dissertation in France, to stress the relation of history and political science to attitude research.' [Lazarsfeld 1957: 46] In one part of this article he focused on the subject of researching the 'climate of opinion', which shows us how closely he followed the results of Jean Stoetzel's work. This reference also provided evidence of Lazarsfeld's active participation in the work of UNESCO. In the article Lazarsfeld describes the questions that are posed in public opinion polls relating to the differences between classes and groups of the population within a country studied. He presents the following particularly interesting question as an example: 'Does a worker or a business man feel he has more in common with people of the same class in other countries, or with people of a different class in his own country?' [ibid.] And it is here that he makes a reference to a contemporary article by Jean Stoetzel [1953] and writes: 'The general role of such questionnaire items is discussed and exemplified by Jean Stoetzel in an article on the use of polls in social anthropology.' [Lazarsfeld 1957: 46]

Lazarsfeld's work was known in France. Those scholars who were able to read in English, and Stoetzel was one of them, were familiar with *The People's Choice* and perhaps other work Lazarsfeld had written as well. Lazarsfeld's popularity also benefited from the then recent publication of a new German edition of *Marienthal*, which until then was almost entirely unknown in the academic world. This second edition was published in 1960 by the Verlag für Demoskopie, the official publisher of the Institute for Public Opinion Research in Allensbach.[8] French social scientists took note of the methodological reflections that Lazarsfeld formulated in the new introduction he wrote for this study of an unemployed community. In a lengthy article about Lazarsfeld's influence in post-war France that we will refer to relatively frequently below, Giuliana Gemelli [1998: 480] noted: '... the growing general interest in Lazarsfeld's introduction to the re-edition of Die Arbeitslosen von Marienthal published in 1960 in which Lazarsfeld comments favourably on integrating diverse sociological concepts, on the technical sophistication of American sociology, on German phenomenology, and on analysis on the level of strata and classes "à la française"'.

Jean Stoetzel did not explicitly mention any connection to Lazarsfeld's work, but he shared a conceptual outlook similar to Lazarsfeld's in many respects. Ge-

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[8] Almost no one knew of the first edition of 'Marienthal' because it was published in Leipzig in 1933 during the time of Hitler's rise to power and it consequently never reached readers. Publication of the second edition was organised thirty years later by Erich Peter Neumann and Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann through the publisher of the Institute for Demoscopy in Allensbach, which they founded after the Second World War.

melli said of Stoetzel's textbook on social psychology (*La psychologie sociale*, 1963) that '… for him social psychology is a kind of bridge connecting the sociological approach, with its focus on social classes, cultural models, and collective representation, and the psychological approach, with a focus on the internal motivational processes, perceptions, and memorizing' [ibid.: 481]. Stoetzel was an active sociologist after the war, and in 1960 he founded *Revue française de sociologie*.

Lazarsfeld and Stoetzel had complementary intellectual viewpoints and they also shared similar views on science policy [ibid.]. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Lazarsfeld developed an extensive project that was designed to capture the history of empirical sociology (in France, England, Germany, and Italy). The first results that he produced in this project were published in *Isis* review in 1961. In a postscript to this study Lazarsfeld explained the reasons that led him to take up this subject of research [Lazarsfeld (1961) 1982a: 166–167]. Based on concrete examples of the promising beginnings that empirical social research had demonstrated in Germany and elsewhere in Europe, Lazarsfeld reached a general conclusion that was extremely important for the development of collaboration in the field of the social sciences in Europe in the early 1960s: '… Nothing is stranger than the idea often expressed by European colleagues that quantification is a US export endangering their tradition. It is true that when this country [the United States] took over the European empirical research techniques, it did so on a large scale. But the steps by which this came about are little known. Here is a vast area for further inquiry…' [ibid.: 166]. Lazarsfeld realised how much work needed yet to be done before the European and American perspectives on sociology could be brought closer together.

In researching European sources of empirical social research Lazarsfeld primarily sought to identify a trajectory of continuity in the evolution of methodological ideas in the social sciences. The beginnings of the use of empirical data in the work of social scientists in Europe was followed by a second stage in which these efforts and experiences were further developed in the United States, where some useful scientific instruments of social analysis were developed. In the third stage great importance was attached to efforts to apply these instruments back in Europe again.

The role of UNESCO in Lazarsfeld's collaboration on research in France

Lazarsfeld contributed to the development of UNESCO's activities and played an especially instrumental role in the field of methodology. The expansion of UNESCO's operations into the wider sphere of the social sciences beyond its initial focus on economics occurred within the framework of the 'VIth Section'. The most important long-term project was the 'Mathematics in Social Sciences' programme, which was carried out with the financial support of the Rockefeller Foundation. According to G. Gemelli [1998: 489], '… the scientific prestige of this

initiative was primarily associated with the role that was played in it by Paul Lazarsfeld, James Coleman, Frederick Mosteller ...' and other members of the VIth Section of UNESCO.

In connection with the discussions on this new project within the Social Sciences Section of UNESCO, Lazarsfeld met Fernand Braudel for the first time. Braudel was for Lazarsfeld an important source of support for his ideas and programmes. They shared the view that researchers in the social sciences needed specialised training and they were closely aligned on this issue [ibid.: 488, 490]. It was in the area of training researchers in the applications of mathematics in the social sciences that a group of methodologists managed to succeed at introducing the seminar model throughout the period of the 1960s, starting in 1960. According to the plan that was adopted by UNESCO: 'At the seminars a small group of prominent American social scientists specialised in the field of the applications of mathematics in the social sciences were intended to present the latest developments in this field to a selected group of around 20 young social scientists from universities and research institutes from all over Europe.' [ibid.: 489]

It was in reference to the first of these seminars in 1960 that Lazarsfeld formulated suggestions in a memorandum that he distributed to all the individuals who had been invited to teach the seminars. It is clear from the content of the memorandum that the plan was for the seminar to run for several weeks and that this was de facto a 'summer school'. What is interesting is the kind of questions Lazarsfeld sought to address in his memorandum:

(1) 'Fellowship[9] for Europeans.'
(2) 'Repeated seminars in Europe like the one organized this year. Programs for such a sequence are discussed in a separate memorandum.'[10]
(3) 'The position of … UNESCO officers …They are responsible for equalization of knowledge in all countries. … they should bring mathematics to social scientists in Europe.' [ibid.: 3]

And as a fourth point in the memorandum, Lazarsfeld asked:

(4) '… what do we need today in the application of mathematics to the social sciences?' And answering his own question, he wrote: '… What is needed is a young generation who are mathematical social scientists by profession. Therefore, a seminar like yours which exposes the participants to a fairly large variety of topics and techniques is appropriate' [ibid.].

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[9] Financial support for students from Europe.
[10] This memorandum, which Lazarsfeld wrote at the UNESCO Seminar on the Use of Mathematics in the Social Sciences in Menthon Saint Bernard, on 1–27 July 1960, is located in the Columbia University Archives: 'MEMORANDUM From: P. Lazarsfeld. The Rare Books and Manuscript Library of Columbia University', Collection Lazarsfeld, box 29, folder UNESCO4, 1960 1–27 July, 4 pages.

Lazarsfeld played an important role in devising the seminars organised within the framework of UNESCO's 6th Section. Lazarsfeld sent out the memorandum sometime in the spring months of 1960. The teachers had been selected and it was necessary to agree on the order in which these instructors would take part and decide on the topics that were to be dealt with in individual blocks of lectures. The text of the memorandum clearly indicates that it was Lazarsfeld who, in the second point of the memorandum, proposed establishing a tradition of seminars on the 'applications of mathematics in the social sciences' so that they could take place on a regular basis. All the parties involved in making the decision accepted the idea of organising the seminars at two-year intervals and in a different European country on each occasion. In the 1960s these summer schools were always organised as a two-week course [Neurath 1979: 59–60]. The first of the seminars took place in the summer of 1960 in France in the mountain resort of Menthon-Saint-Bernard (see footnote 12 for the source of this information).

Training in empirical social research was so important in Lazarsfeld's view that he '…suggested curricula for Enseignement Préparatoire à la recherche Approfondie en Sciences Sociales (EPRASS), a postgraduate course taught at the end of the 1960s at the École pratique des Hautes Études in Paris to many young sociologists who made up the first generation to take advantage of a good practical training in empirical research' [Chenu 2001: 106].

Lazarsfeld's first sabbatical at the Sorbonne in Paris (1962/1963)

There are many reliable sources that refer to the sabbatical year Lazarsfeld spent in Paris in 1962/1963 [e.g. Boudon 1993: 5; Pollak 1980: 173].[11] Giuliana Gemelli [1998: 484] said the following about Lazarsfeld's stay in Paris: 'A year after publishing his article in Isis (in June 1961), whereby he initiated a systematic inquiry into the intellectual and historical roots of quantification, Lazarsfeld left for a one-year stay in Paris and thanks to Stoetzel's invitation became a *professeur associé* at the Sorbonne.'

It was Jean Stoetzel, as head of the department of sociology at the Sorbonne, who invited Lazarsfeld to come and give a series of lectures at the Sorbonne in the early 1960s. Gemelli claimed that this situation initially caused something of 'a minor revolution' because this arrangement looked as though the hiring of Lazarsfeld, a foreign professor, had to be 'paid for' by not hiring a French professor. The post of guest professor had not yet been introduced at the Sorbonne [ibid.]. By 23 January 1961 the Sorbonne was already discussing the possibility of arranging Lazarsfeld to be a guest lecturer. Records from the Sorbonne in-

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[11] On Lazarsfeld's teaching commitments in Paris Michael Pollak wrote: 'In 1962/63 while teaching at Sorbonne, he took an active part in disputes within the French sociological community, supporting those who opted for a more empirical and applied orientation.' [Pollak 1980: 173]

dicate that: ' … from February 1962 … the Assembly wanted to enter into co-operation with Professor Paul Lazarsfeld, a professor of sociology at Columbia University. The objective of this cooperation is to advance teaching in social psychology, which is drawing interest from an increasing number of students'.[12] The Sorbonne had thus expressed its interest, but it was with the help of the American Fulbright programme that Lazarsfeld's visit was actually able to take place, as it provided the funding for Lazarsfeld's stay in Paris to teach at the Sorbonne in the 1962/1963 academic year [Gemelli 1998: 484]. Drawing on archive sources, Gemelli found that the Fulbright Foundation provided the Sorbonne with the financial resources to pay for Lazarsfeld's teaching engagement [ibid.]. According to Gemelli, Lazarsfeld's teaching engagement at the Sorbonne moreover also contributed to Professor Otto Klineberg being appointed a guest professor the year after Lazarsfeld [ibid.].

The classes Lazarsfeld taught at the Sorbonne in 1962/1963 largely dealt with the history of social research. He taught a seminar once a week on the early history of empirical research in the social sciences, especially in Europe. According to Bertrand-Pierre Lécuyer, regular participants in this seminar included Raymond Boudon, André Davidovitch, Francois-André Isambert, Bernard-Pierre Lécuyer, Catherine Boddard, Michel Dion, Jean-Claude Passeron, among others [Lécuyer 2002: 65]. Lazarsfeld was around this time supervising several doctoral students, all of whom were focusing their work on the history of empirical research in Europe. He supervised the work of Anthony Oberschall at Columbia University and at the Sorbonne. Later in the 1960s he was the supervisor for Bernard-Pierre Lécuyer, Terry N. Clark, and Susanne P. Schad at Columbia University.[13]

An extremely important factor behind the development of Lazarsfeld's long-term cooperation with the Sorbonne was that the academic exchange between France and the United States was a reciprocal arrangement. Raymond Boudon spent a year (1960/1961) at Columbia University, as did other French postgraduate students [Gemelli 1998: 485]. After Lazarsfeld returned to New York, Bernard-Pierre Lécuyer went to Columbia University and spent the next two years there (1964–1966) in the Department of Sociology and at BASR, and while he was there he was involved in organising the joint seminar that Lazarsfeld and Merton taught on the history of empirical social research [ibid.].

Lazarsfeld personally helped Raymond Boudon and Joffre Dumazedier to find financial support for their stay, which was then funded by American foun-

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[12] Information drawn from the minutes of a meeting of the Assemblée des professeurs de la Faculté des Letters, on 23 January 1961, signed by A. Aymard. Cited in Gemelli [1998: 484, 500].

[13] I have devoted a separate paper elsewhere to Lazarsfeld's contributions to the history of empirical social research [Jeřábek 2021]. Although this partly relates to cooperation between Lazarsfeld and the Sorbonne, uniting these two subjects would be beyond the scope of a single article.

dations. He also provided important assistance in arranging translations of their works from French into English and getting them published. Lazarsfeld was able to organise this through his ties to American publishers [cf. Gemelli 1998: 485].

This cooperation between highly productive and creative French and American sociologists and methodologists that began in the early 1960s and that benefited both sides continued to yield fruit for many decades. Gemelli has drawn attention to the correspondence that was exchanged between Lazarsfeld and Boudon primarily between 1963 and 1970: '… at a time when Boudon's books translated into English began to be published' [ibid.].

Publication of the three-volume anthology *Méthodes de la Sociologie* in Paris

Lazarsfeld's lectures at the Sorbonne won over the first significant supporters and promoters of empirical social research and its methodology in France and increased the amount of interest in this model of sociology. Lazarsfeld's work and strengthening partnership with Raymond Boudon continued to develop successfully in this atmosphere of international transatlantic cooperation. They put together an important new publication: a three-volume anthology of methodological writings in French. This work, which was of fundamental importance for the spread of advanced methods in social research in France, was similar in nature to *LSR*,[14] but it was not a translation and instead contained original writings in French that Lazarsfeld and Boudon compiled specifically for this publication. Lazarsfeld, along with Boudon, devoted great effort between 1963 and 1965 to preparing the first and, a year later, the second volume of this methodological compendium for publication in French [Boudon and Lazarsfeld 1965, 1966].

We need to understand how important it was to offer new ideas to French scholars and students of sociology in their native language. The majority of sociologists who were in top positions in France in the 1960s did not share Lazarsfeld's model of empirical sociology and for ideological reasons opposed the import of new methods from the United States. But when Lazarsfeld with Raymond Boudon, with the support of the French Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, produced a three-volume methodological anthology in French with examples of useful instruments for social research, these writings found their readers. This anthology continues to be used for teaching social-research methodology at universities in France.

Only a small portion of the contents of the French anthology was made up of the original English-language texts from the *LSR* translated into French. As editors of the work that was being prepared in French, Lazarsfeld and Boudon

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[14] *The Language of Social Research* (*LSR*) had been published a decade earlier in the United States [Lazarsfeld and Rosenberg 1955].

showed enormous motivation and went to great effort to find suitable texts by French authors – methodologists. They had to find the right texts for each volume in French or had to request French scholars to write the texts that were required for this anthology devoted to methodology. Additional texts were found in new methodological publications, usually of American origin, which had been published in the preceding decade, and these chapters and papers were then translated into French. The compendium was planned as a three-volume work collectively titled *Méthodes de la Sociologie*. Each volume, however, also had its own title that specified what the methodological writings it contained were about.

In the first volume Boudon and Lazarsfeld focused on the initial and very important stage of every empirical social research. They titled the first volume *Le vocabulaire des sciences sociales* and subtitled it '*Concepts et indices*'. This volume was naturally about more than just concepts and indicators. It focused on concepts, indicators, indices, and variables, and on developing variables, and typologies. We know from Lazarsfeld's and Merton's general methodological comments that they, and likely also their students and followers, believed that an important starting point for any research was its 'conceptualisation' and therefore also the consideration given to the concepts deemed to be of significance for a given subject and the connections between them.[15] This was reflected in the contents of this first volume. The book was published with the support of the French Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme. The foreword to this anthology was written by the person who initiated this French-American collaboration – Jean Stoetzel.

A comparison of the contents, scope, and structure of this first volume in the anthology of methodological writings in French and the *LSR*, its American counterpart, subtitled *A Reader in the Methodology of Social Research* and published ten years earlier in the United States in 1955, reveals some similarities between them, but also some surprisingly significant differences:

(1) The French anthology had its own unique contents that was not based on the structure of the *LSR*. There were plans to publish subsequent volumes and thus there was no need to cover every topic in the first volume. The overall structure of the first book was adapted to fit its subtitle: 'Concepts and Indices'. The introductory section of the first volume was titled 'Géneralités sur la construction des variables' ('The general rules for creating variables'), and it was followed by sections on enumeration indexes, typologies, and parametric indexes. The final section of the volume was devoted to the conceptual interpretation of texts, that is, of qualitative material.

(2) The book was published in French for French social scientists and for sociologists in particular. It was not a 'translation' of the American textbook, *LSR*, and importantly, it contained original texts written by French scholars.

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[15] For a detailed analysis of this subject including references to writings by Lazarsfeld and Merton, see Jerabek [2012: 20–24].

(3) The French anthology contained 25 texts, 10 of which were new originals by French scholars, and only 5 were translated texts from the *LSR*. Several more texts were translated from English, but most were from new literature.

(4) The texts that dealt with typologies, in particular, which were written both by American and French scholars, usefully tied in with each other and represented a good example of French-American collaboration.

(5) There were two texts in this volume of the anthology, each of which was written by a pair of authors, one French and one American. One of these texts was by Jean Stoetzel and Paul Lazarsfeld: 'A Definition of the Intention and the Space of Attributes' (Définition d'intention et espace d'attributs) [Boudon and Lazarsfeld 1965: 189–193], which was written for this publication. The other one was by Raymond Boudon and Paul Lazarsfeld: 'Notes on the Formal Meaning of Ten Indicators' (Remarques sur la signification formelle de deux indices) [ibid.: 224–228]. Boudon and Lazarsfeld built on the observations that were made by two French authors in the chapter that preceded theirs [ibid.: 214–223] and proposed a formal mathematical model to resolve the problem set out by the previous chapters' authors.

The second volume of the French anthology of methodology was published the very next year and was titled *L'analyse empirique de la causalité* [Boudon and Lazarsfeld 1966]. This volume was devoted to the applications of multidimensional analysis, analyses of deviant cases, and contextual analysis. One of the last chapters published in the volume was by Raymond Boudon and was devoted to the role of individual and collective attributes in this ecological type of analysis ('Propriétés individuelles et propriétés collectives: un problème d'analyse écologique') [ibid.: 191–219]. An interesting feature of this volume was the inclusion of three texts by Émile Durkheim ('Fait individuel et fait social', 'État civil et suicide', 'Suicide et divorce') [ibid.: 37–40, 81–97, 141–151], one by Maurice Halbwachs, and one by Robert K. Merton [ibid.: 57–61; 121–123].

An introductory section titled 'La logique générale de l'analyse' (The general idea of analysis) opens with a text that introduces readers to the principles of multidimensional statistical analysis, and Paul Lazarsfeld selected his own text for this purpose: 'L'Interprétation des relations statistiques comme procédure de recherche' (An interpretation of statistical relations as a research operation) [Boudon and Lazarsfeld 1966: 15–27]. This text can, given his and others' experience in teaching data analysis, be considered the best possible introduction to this subject. Using seven tables of real data over three printed pages he illustrates the strength and robustness of the elaboration model. It shows how the researcher is able to uncover apparent but false relationships and/or discover deeper and truer connections in the data under analysis. This text by Lazarsfeld serves as the opening to this second volume of the anthology.

What was the third volume of the French anthology of methodological writings like? [Chazel, Boudon and Lazarsfeld 1970] We can get some idea just from

its title: 'L'Analyse des processus sociaux' (An analysis of social processes). This subject area was one of key interest to Paul Lazarsfeld and his co-editors, François Chazel and Raymond Boudon.[16] This volume mainly contained new texts written in French. It was also the biggest of the three volumes, with the most pages and the largest number of texts. Of the 27 texts it contained, only 4 were from the *LSR*. The third volume contained 8 texts by French scholars, and 2 of these were written by Raymond Boudon for this anthology. Among these were texts from recent publications by French social anthropologists, historians, and sociologists from the 1960s. Another 15 texts, usually from recent publications by authors writing in English, were written by scholars from the fields of sociology, history, political science, and psychology. The entire thematic spectrum of the social sciences devoted to the study of social processes were representatively covered in this volume. There was also a text by Norwegian sociologist Natalie Rogoff on professional job mobility, the inclusion of which attests to the growing internationalisation of empirical social analyses at that time. The third volume of the anthology also contained a French translation of an important theoretical-methodological article written jointly by Merton and Lazarsfeld, 'L'amitié comme processus social' [ibid.: 249–266], which was first published in English in 1954 with the title 'Friendship as a Social Process' and was not published again until 1982 [Lazarsfeld and Merton (1954) 1982].[17]

Among the scholars who contributed to the three volumes of the anthology published in French were Lazarsfeld's colleagues, students, and devoted successors in the United States: Edward Suchman, Hans Zeisel, Samuel A. Stouffer, Carl Hovland, Bernard Berelson, Hazel Gaudet, Seymour M. Lipset, Morris Rosenberg, Patricia L. Kendall, Robert, K. Merton, Wagner Thielens, Charles Glock, Elihu Katz, James Coleman, Allen Barton, and Herbert Menzel. We need to remember how few translations there were of American sociological literature into French in the decades after the war. The absence of translations into French is mentioned in a report that looked back on the decades from the 1960s to the 1990s. Alain Chenu [2001: 106] wrote: 'The main Classics of US survey research, by Lazarsfeld, Katz, Stouffer, Blau and Duncan, and Hauser, remain inaccessible to the French reader …'.

Methodological texts written by French scholars Émile Durkheim, Maurice Halbwachs, Jean Stoetzel, Raymond Boudon, and Claude Goguel were also included in the anthologies. Contributions by younger collaborators of Boudon and Lazarsfeld like André Davidovitch, Viviane Isambert-Jamati, and Francois Simiand were also published. In a sense the three-volume French methodological publication surpassed the *LSR* on which it was based and that had been pub-

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[16] Social processes were only the starting point for Raymond Boudon's publications [see *Raymond Boudon* 2014].
[17] For a discussion of how Merton and Lazarsfeld collaborated on this paper see [Jerabek 2012: 13–16].

lished earlier and served as a source of inspiration and example for this anthology. It is therefore no surprise that two years later Lazarsfeld and two co-authors, Morris Rosenberg and Ann K. Passanella, published a new English-language anthology titled *Continuities in the Language of Social Research* [Lazarsfeld, Passanella and Rosenberg 1972], in which they explored some subjects more deeply, most notably the application of multi-dimensional data analysis and examples of the applications of panel analysis.

Lazarsfeld's second sabbatical at the Sorbonne in 1967/1968

Lazarsfeld's second sabbatical at the Sorbonne in Paris was in the 1967/1968 academic year. This is confirmed, for example, by Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann [2001] and Raymond Boudon [1993: 5]. Around that time he was working on methodological issues and was completing his monograph on latent structure analysis, along with a shorter text – his entry on 'Survey Analysis: The Analysis of Attribute Data' in an encyclopaedia prepared at that time. He was thus primarily focusing on the subject of the multidimensional analysis of classificatory data. He gave lectures in seminars 'for PhD students' on this advanced method of data analysis. The second subject that he was devoting himself to at this time was work on an entry for the same international encyclopaedia. In the winter of 1967/1968 he completed a study together with David Landau on Adolph Quételet, whom Lazarsfeld considered to be the founder of the branch of sociology that Lazarsfeld and his methodological school were developing. This subject became a link connecting him to the Sorbonne, where he supervised doctoral students working on similar topics for many years.

In the spring of 1968 the situation at the university changed. It was significantly influenced by the student revolts. From around the middle of April classes at the Sorbonne were at first interrupted and then suspended following student protests, strikes, and even clashes in the streets with the police. Lazarsfeld reacted calmly to the situation. He continued to write articles and studies on methodology and, understandably, he also maintained contact in writing with his home workplace at Columbia University in New York, where Allen Barton was standing in for him as a reliable substitute in the role of director of BASR and Robert K. Merton was serving as his deputy in many other ways.

Reports from the United States were no more encouraging than the view of the student demonstrations in Paris from up close. BASR organised a representative survey in which Allen Barton and others, such as Stephen Cole and Hannelore Adamsons, surveyed the attitudes of students and teachers at Columbia University in May 1968 during the strikes by American students in New York [Barton 1968]. Allen Barton wrote an article on this titled 'The Columbia Crisis: Campus, Vietnam, and the Ghetto', in which he described the full story of student unrest in detail. The students were protesting university bureaucracy, the planned construction of a sports venue on the territory of a park that was a part of

Harlem, and the war in Vietnam. His article offered a comparison of the attitudes of students and teachers at Columbia University and a comparison of their attitudes at the start of the conflict with the greater or lesser support of the general student strike that took place after police intervention on the Columbia campus. The situation in New York was comparable to that in Paris and it also had an influence on Lazarsfeld's sabbatical in Paris. Let's try to sum up at least some basic data from the article by Allen Barton. On Tuesday, 23 April 1968, a group of radical students at Columbia University who were part of an organisation called Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) occupied important areas of the university's administrative building. They '… occupied President Kirk's office, searched his files, and began copying correspondence that interested them' [ibid.: 334]. During the rest of this week: '…intensive negotiations and discussions followed … The administration called on all concerned to clear the campus buildings …' [ibid.]. Then came crucial moments: 'By the following Monday … the administration requested the New York City police to clear the buildings. About midnight a force of over 1,000 police moved into the occupied buildings. … After several hours all the buildings had been cleared and the students, a number with minor wounds, were taken to the police stations and booked.' [ibid.] And as a consequence or follow-up to these public affairs: 'A general student strike was called, which was respected by most faculty and students …' [ibid.]. The strike lasted until the end of the spring semester of 1968.

What was Lazarsfeld working on in Paris when the student protests were taking place at Columbia University in New York? By chance we happen to have information about this from an eyewitness, as Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann met Paul Lazarsfeld in Paris at the Sorbonne at the very time that students were revolting in Paris and New York [Noelle-Neumann 2001]. She wrote that Lazarsfeld felt good in Paris, he was relaxed and at ease. Even though Paris was full of revolting students, he moved around confidently and seemed quite at home. He tended to be greeted by most students. '"Don't be frightened," Lazarsfeld told me "I'll show you the way." He pulled me into the Sorbonne, where he was greeted with "hellos" by the students in the hallways. … We strolled through the lecture halls. Lazarsfeld was at home.' [ibid.: 315] Noelle-Neumann described the results of her first-hand observations and the course of a conversation she had one day in Paris as follows: 'In reality, he had to use his time wisely. So, after two hours, we returned to the American House, where he was staying. … He was working on a major essay that he later entitled, "An Episode in the History of Social Research: A Memoir." … He told me he intended to do two things in the essay. First, he wanted to describe the spread of social research institutes at American universities and, secondly, the evolution of a new research approach that was becoming increasingly prevalent at U.S. universities.' [Noelle-Neumann 2001: 315] We know that during the second part of this stay in Paris Lazarsfeld wrote his memoirs.

At the end of the article quoted above, Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann revisited a memory from Paris and described how there was sudden shift in the situation: 'Returning to the American House in 1968: right while Lazarsfeld was dictat-

ing, urgent messages arrived from New York, telegrams requesting that he return at once – the students demanded his immediate return. The only way to avoid serious disturbances on the campus was for him to come back immediately. He stopped working on his manuscript and departed for the United States.' [ibid.: 319–320] Noelle-Neumann did not indicate the exact date on which she met Lazarsfeld at the Sorbonne and she was unable to verify whether he did leave at that time for the United States. Nevertheless, the events in both Paris and New York significantly impacted his work in the spring of 1968 and his teaching at the Sorbonne in the spring semester of 1968.

Lazarsfeld's French honours

At the close of this paper devoted to Lazarsfeld's cooperative ties with France and French sociologists, it is also important to mention that he received official recognition for his life's work from the Sorbonne, which awarded him an honorary doctorate in 1972. When he died four years later, his closest colleagues in France did not wait for the next issue of some sociological journal to come out and on the day immediately after his death began paying their respects in the media to Lazarsfeld, who was a known public figure in France. His biographer David Sills [1987: 272] wrote on this: 'He received honorary degrees from Chicago and Yeshiva universities in 1966, from Columbia in 1970, from Vienna in 1971, and from the Sorbonne in 1972, the first American sociologist ever so honored.' And this same biographer provides what is perhaps even more important evidence of how much Lazarsfeld was valued by his colleagues in France: 'He visited Paris frequently, and Reid Hall at the Sorbonne became almost his second home. He invited a number of Europeans to spend a year at Columbia, and in this way enriched sociology on both sides of the Atlantic. When he died, Raymond Boudon and Jean Stoetzel wrote memorial articles for the Paris press, and almost every sociological journal in Western Europe published an obituary.'[18] [Sills 1979: 418–419]

Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to add to and go beyond the texts that have been published to date highlighting the important influence that the Columbia School of Sociology had in post-war Europe. We focused here on France and described Lazarsfeld's coordinating activities and collaborative work and the actions of specific researchers working to promote at the Sorbonne the model of social research that had been developed over many years at Columbia University in New York.

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[18] We can read the reprint of Boudon's memorial article from *Le Monde* as a document in a representative French sociological journal [Boudon 1992].

Franco-American cooperation had support from prominent foundations and national scientific associations on both sides of the Atlantic as well as from the social sciences section of UNESCO.

The article primarily tracked the scientific, teaching, and organisational activities that Paul Lazarsfeld, Jean Stoetzel, and Raymond Boudon engaged in to promote the methodology of empirical social research in France. Their colleagues and doctoral students at the Sorbonne in Paris and Columbia University in New York also performed a great deal of work in this area. Everything was done with the support of the French Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, the financial support of the Rockefeller Foundation and the Fulbright Exchange Programme in the United States, and the backing of UNESCO. However, the most important factor was the actions of specific individuals, scholars, organisers, students, publishers, and other figures who were involved in these processes. Alain Chenu wrote [2001: 106]: 'French and US contributions to a meeting in Lazarsfeld's memory were published in Paris [Lautman and Lécuyer 1998] testifying to his long-term influence' in France.

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FROM THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIOLOGY CAS IN PRAGUE

Contemporary Czech Society

Pat Lyons and Rita Kindlerová

Do Czechs want equality? What do Czechs think about migrants and do Czechs fear foreigners? Are Czechs a nation of grumblers? Are Czechs prejudiced? How do Czechs spend their time? Czexit? Answers to these and dozens of other questions are used in this unique book to paint a broad interdisciplinary portrait of Czech society for an international audience.

Why Women Leave Earlier: What Is Behind the Earlier Labour Market Exit of Women in the Czech Republic*

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Abstract: The article examines the factors that intervene in decisions to leave the labour market in the Czech Republic from a gender perspective. It uses binary logistic regression to identify the variables that predict the economic inactivity of men and women at the age of 60 plus and the interactions of variables to examine whether the factors that determine when people exit the labour market are the same for men and women. The analysis uses data from the Labour Force Study (LFS) collected in the fourth quarter of 2017 and focuses on people between the ages of 60 and 69 and five independent variables: gender, education, pension eligibility, marital status, and type of job. It studies how gender intersects with other characteristics in the decision to retire from the labour market. Although pension eligibility is the central predictor of economic inactivity after the age of 60, when eligibility is controlled for here, it is evident that gender, education, job type, and marital status all influence the timing of labour market exits. Women leave work earlier than men, and this is found to be true even when we control for their education or pension eligibility. They are also more likely than men to leave work even if they are not yet eligible to collect a pension. The effect of education is not as straightforward for women as for men: women with the lowest and with the highest levels of education are more likely to continue to work than men with the same educational attainment. Policies to prolong people's working lives may thus have a different impact on each gender.

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The Czech Republic, together with all the countries of Europe and North America, is experiencing rapid demographic ageing. Declining fertility, which leads to a shrinking working-age population, and rising life expectancy are resulting in a growing imbalance between the proportion of the population who are collecting a pension and the proportion who are paying into the pension system. Older people are being repositioned in the public discourse as a 'dependent group' [Biggs and Powell 2001], and individuals are expected to manage their own risks by managing their pensions themselves [see Powel and Paul Taylor 2016].

In recent decades, population ageing has caused the most developed nations to recognise the need to promote longer working lives. Most countries have shifted their policies towards the concept of 'active ageing' [Axelrad and Mcnamara 2018; Moore 2001]. Although 'active ageing' is a multidimensional concept, it is often reduced to 'working longer' [Walker 2006]. On the macro level, the labour market participation rates of older workers have risen in many countries, including the Czech Republic. In many cases, however, these changes have led to an increase in the risks people are facing. There may be negative financial implications for those who, for various reasons, cannot work longer [Powell and Taylor 2016]. As a consequence, old age poverty will probably increase because of persistent or even growing labour market inequalities at the time of transition to retirement [Schilling 2016]. In the Czech Republic, the proportion of seniors at risk of poverty is rising: whereas 8.1% of persons aged 65 and over were at risk of poverty compared to 9.7% of the total population in 2016, this was 16.6% of seniors and 10.1% of the overall population in 2019 [CZSO 2020]. Some categories of older people are more at risk than others – especially older women and persons living alone [Rašticová, Bédiová and Žiaran 2018].

Because of the way social security systems in European countries like the Czech Republic are set up, (extended) employment is one of the most important factors protecting people from significant loss of income and poverty. It protects them both directly – delivering (extra) income and allowing for savings – and indirectly – as the number of years of contributions plays a role in the amount of benefits received in most pension systems. However, certain groups are less able or less willing to continue to work at an older age. In many countries, there are significant gender differences in retirement timing and economic activity in later age. According to some authors, the policies of extending working lives may be detrimental to women [König 2017; Léime and Street 2017; Radl 2012].

In the Czech Republic in 2018, the average age of people exiting the labour market was 63.2 years for men and 61.3 years for women [OECD 2019]. Reaching the statutory retirement age is the most common reason for leaving the labour market. The difference between the retirement age of men and women can be explained by the lower age at which women are entitled to draw a state pension; the gap has been gradually closing with every cohort as the statutory retirement age of women has been rising faster than that of men. Although other individual characteristics, such as education, health, or job satisfaction, mediate the effect

of pension eligibility, it is eligibility that continues to be the main predictor of labour market exit [Pertold and Federičová 2019]. In this article, we ask whether the factors that intervene in the decisions to leave the labour market are identical for women and men, and whether the earlier labour market exit of women is driven solely by their earlier eligibility for retirement benefits or whether there are other factors at play. We use binary logistic regression to identify the variables that predict economic inactivity at the age of 60 plus and their interactions. This allows us to study how gender intersects with other characteristics in the decision to retire from the labour market. It is crucial to see whether the predictors of retirement are the same for men and women, because if the 'pull' and 'push' factors [see Vidovićová 2016] work differently for each gender, this may lead to the further disadvantaging of women in later age.

Theory and context

According to existing studies, the decision to continue working or to retire depends on several factors.[1] Pension eligibility affects participation in the labour force since many older workers tend to retire at the age at which they become eligible for retirement benefits [Axelrad and Mcnamara 2018]. Pertold and Federičová [2019] showed that the vast majority of older workers in the Czech Republic retire when they become entitled to a pension, whether that means early or standard retirement. Only a very small percentage of workers leave later after reaching the statutory retirement age. The Czech Republic is one of the European countries in which the difference between the actual and the statutory retirement age is small (the latter being around 63 years for men and 62 years for women; OECD [2019]). This may indicate that people, as rational actors, will decide to retire once they receive a sufficient income in the form of a pension and, at the same time, there are no significant motivations for them to go on working longer [see Šatava 2015]. Employers may more easily lay off people who have reached the official age of pension eligibility. Employees and/or employers may see reaching a pensionable age as a signal that a person should leave work.

In 2004 Ladislav Rabušic addressed the paradox of middle-aged Czechs indicating in surveys their preference for early retirement while being aware that their level of income would decrease substantially. He explained this paradox as the result of a mentality about retirement that was formed by the specific characteristics of the state-socialist labour market. Lucie Vidovićová [2016] argued that in the Czech Republic, the perception of retirement as a 'natural' right keeps the pre-

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[1] The term 'decision' does not imply that people choose freely to remain in or to leave the labour market. Choices are always dependant on social structures, institutions, and norms, and thus are constrained by the context in which they are made [see Hašková and Dudová 2017].

ferred retirement age low. Repeated parametrical changes to the pension system, strongly felt age discrimination, and unemployment in the 50+ age group produce feelings of uncertainty and 'push' older workers out of the labour market.

Pension rules and labour market and welfare policies present mechanisms that push people out of employment and/or pull them into retirement and thereby guide their decisions on when to leave work [Kohli and Rein 1991]. Their effects, however, are mediated by and depend on individual characteristics that represent sources of inequality with respect to one's position in the labour market. Among these characteristics are: gender [Ní Léime 2017], class [Radl 2012], education [Potočnik, Tordera and Peiró 2009], health [Heponiemi et al. 2008; Krejčová and Žiaran 2018; Mein et al. 2000], job satisfaction [Axelrad and Mcnamara 2018], and family situation and care obligations [Ciccarelli and Van Soest 2018; Ogg and Renaut 2007]. We assume that these characteristics intersect and that their effects are never isolated from one another, as they form a matrix of social positions and inequalities. It is therefore necessary to study the process of the labour market exit from an intersectional perspective [see Choo and Ferree 2010]. This approach uncovers how sources of inequalities become significant in relation to one another and how they jointly (re)produce various multidimensional hierarchies [Choo and Ferree 2010; Collins and Bilge 2016].

In most EU countries, women usually retire earlier than men [OECD 2019]. We can partly explain this by the lower statutory retirement age of women that existed until recently in five European countries. Older women are also less likely to be registered as unemployed, which probably means that unemployed women are more likely than unemployed men to leave the labour force or retire [Axelrad and McNamara 2018]. Women are particularly more likely to retire early under adverse economic conditions; this, however, depends substantially on their education level, economic status, family background, and country context [Ní Léime 2017; Radl 2012]. Conversely, in some countries, such as the UK and Switzerland, women are more likely than men to extend paid work beyond the state pension age. Finch [2014] explains this by the fact that women are less able to build pension income because of their caregiving role within the family. They remain in paid employment for financial reasons, to make up for the 'opportunity costs' of their family roles, namely career breaks to care for children or parents, or the increased expense of being divorced and raising children as a single parent [Finch 2014]. Analysing Western European SHARE datasets, Radl [2013] found that when other characteristics are controlled for, women do not retire significantly later or earlier than men. He assumed that there may be two opposing mechanisms that cancel each other out: while gender stratification and gendered preferences push women towards an early exit, pension constraints and mid-career selection effects pull them towards later retirement.

Gender structures more than just the economic resources that are available to individuals. Different gender roles and identities also influence individuals' social capital, non-labour market activities, care commitments, and even their

attachment to paid work. For women who are less likely to have strong occupational identities it can be easier to move out of work, while men with traditional gender identities are rather ill-suited to adapting to retirement [Barnes and Parry 2012]. Women also more often experience job discrimination, are subject to ageism [Itzin and Phillipson 1995; Duncan and Loretto 2004], and earn less than men, even when they occupy the same positions [Křížková, Penner and Petersen 2009]. This may play a role in the decision of some women to leave the labour market.

A low education level was found to be positively associated with the odds of being retired for both men and women. This may be because higher levels of education often translate into more attractive and higher-income occupations and possibly into better working conditions [Potočnik et al. 2009]. McNamara and Williamson [2004], using the 1998 US Health and Retirement Study, showed that female gender moderated the effect of low education – the effect was stronger for women than for men. Women with low education may have had more difficulty finding employment than men with equivalent levels of education. Moreover, education intersects with health: higher education is usually reflected in better health. Ross and Wu [1996] found that the gaps in self-reported health, in physical functioning, and in physical well-being among US residents with high and low educational attainment increased with age: the health advantage of the well-educated was larger in older age groups than in younger ones. Social class was also found to impact strongly on retirement behaviour – the push and pull factors affect workers in different class positions in different ways. According to Radl's analysis of Western European countries in the SHARE database [2012], those who retired the latest were at the upper and lower ends of the occupational ladder. The way in which social class influenced retirement timing was largely the same for men and women. The fact that women are pushed out of the labour market at a younger age than men thus seemed largely due to their disadvantaged class position [Radl 2012].

Poor physical health is a strong predictor of early retirement [Heponiemi et al. 2008; Mein et al. 2000]. However, the many studies examining the relationship between health and retirement have failed to agree on the relative importance of health compared with financial variables [see, e.g., Leinonen et al. 2016]. The difficulty of correctly measuring health status hampers such efforts. Much of the concern centres on the suspicion that subjective reports of health are biased by individuals using poor health as a justification for early retirement. Another concern is that the direction of causality in the relationship between health and retirement is unclear and difficult to assess [Jones, Rice and Roberts 2010]. The analyses of the Czech sample of Wave 6 of SHARE (2016) by Krejčová and Žiaran [2018] and Bédiová, Šácha, and Žiaran [2018] identified two health factors to be significant for seeking early retirement: the fear of health limits and the number of chronic diseases. At the same time, Martina Rašticová et al., in their analysis of EU-SILC waves 2010 and 2015 discovered that the health status of Czech economically active seniors in the age groups of 50–59 and 60+ was worse than

among economically inactive seniors, and it was worse in the 2015 wave than in 2010 [Rašticová et al. 2018]. Mazzonna and Peracchi [2017], analysing the first two waves of SHARE, discovered that, on one hand, retirement enhanced the age-related decline of health and cognitive abilities for most workers, and that, on the other hand, there was a positive immediate effect of retirement from jobs characterised by a high level of physical burden.

The likelihood of people working in older age is greater if they are satisfied with their job. Axelrad and McNamara [2018] in their analysis of SHARE Waves 4 and 5 found that a lack of job satisfaction had a stronger negative effect on labour force participation among women compared to men [Axelrad and McNamara 2018]. A lack of job satisfaction was also one of the most significant factors driving people to 'look for early retirement' in the analysis of the Czech sample of Wave 6 of SHARE by Krejčová and Žiaran [2018]: the more unsatisfied people were with their job the more likely they were to be looking for early retirement. In this sample, high job satisfaction strongly moderated the tendency to seek early retirement. It was accompanied by a strong tendency to remain in the labour market despite workplace adversity – stemming from the stress and/or physical demands of the job [Bédiová et al. 2018].

Family situation and care obligations also affect decisions about retiring from the labour force, and their impact is different for men and women. Based on data from the first wave of SHARE (2004), Ogg and Renaud found that women who were living with a partner had substantially lower employment rates in later age than men living with a partner; these rates, however, differed significantly across countries [Ogg and Renaut 2007]. Ciccarelli and Van Soest found a significant and negative effect of daily and almost-daily caregiving on employment status and working hours in the 50+ population in 15 European countries. This effect was particularly strong among women and did not differ across European regions. They concluded that the negative effects of informal caregiving on women hamper policies aiming at increasing the labour force participation of women in the 50+ age group [Ciccarelli and Van Soest 2018]. We may also expect that being a grandparent would impact the decision to retire, especially among women, as gendered role differences mean that there is a greater tendency for grandmothers to care for grandchildren compared to grandfathers [e.g. Albertini et al. 2007]. The analysis of SHARE data by Hochman and Lewin-Epstein [2013] confirmed that being a grandparent increases an individual's chances of looking forward to retiring early. However, their findings provided no confirmation of the expected tendency of women to be more subject to the effect of grandparenting than men because of their stronger familial commitments, irrespective of the family policy regime.

Aine Ní Léime and Debra Street [2017] argue that most of the policies to extend working life rest on a number of assumptions in the ungendered adult worker model. First, they assume that work is readily available to older workers; second, that older workers are and have been free to work; third, that they

are healthy enough to work; and fourth, that they earn enough to contribute to a pension. These assumptions, however, do not hold for everybody, and especially not for many women. Most countries (including the Czech Republic) have significant gender wage gaps, as women are segregated horizontally into low-paid occupations and vertically into low-paid positions. Moreover, women typically experience gaps in employment and pension-building because they must usually fit employment around unpaid family care. The result is the gender pension gap and higher risk of poverty and social exclusion for older women [Léime and Street 2017]. Reliance on private pension funds or savings again disadvantages those whose life-long incomes were too low to generate reserves.

While there are intentions to eliminate pension policies that (re)produce inequalities, the pension reforms introduced during the last several decades led to the individualisation of the risks of ageing [Wainwright and Kibler 2014] and to the extension of working lives, with different impacts on different groups of people. We therefore need an intersectional perspective to capture the specific situations of people at the intersections of various dimensions or axes of (dis)advantage, such as gender, class (job position), education, and age. Research also indicates that the combination of these axes of disadvantage with various other situations and conditions (health status, care obligations, relationship status, and household composition) significantly impacts employment and economic inequality in later life.

The transition from work to retirement represents a critical life event with long-term consequences for economic well-being in old age. While early retirement is a privilege for some, for others it means involuntary exclusion from gainful employment [Vickerstaff 2010]. Not all workers are equally able or likely to continue working. Making (early) retirement less affordable puts these vulnerable groups at a disproportionate risk of poverty or financial dependence in old age. In other words, if women leave the labour market earlier (solely) because they became eligible for the retirement pension earlier, the postponement of statutory retirement age may in theory equalise the situation of women and men, and thereby also help narrow the gender pension gap. If they leave earlier for other reasons, i.e. their labour market exit is mediated by other factors, such as caring for dependent family members, fewer work opportunities, or worse health, then the postponement of statutory retirement age may lead to their further disadvantaging.

In this paper, we are interested in how gender moderates the role of other predictors of labour force participation in later age, especially eligibility for retirement benefits (an exceptionally strong factor in the Czech Republic; see Pertold [2019: 10]), but also education, job position or job characteristics, family status, and age. We aim to discover whether the role these factors play in decisions about retirement are the same for men and women in the Czech Republic.

Question and methods

In the following sections, we will analyse the relations between characteristics linked to the timing of the labour market exit among Czech employees aged 60 plus, such as gender, education, eligibility for retirement benefits, family status, and their type of job. First, we will present a descriptive analysis of the factors that may influence the timing of the labour market exit and the reasons for retirement. Then, using binary logistic regression analysis, we answer the first research question:

(1) Which personal and employment characteristics are linked to an earlier labour market exit when other characteristics (such as gender, education, and the eligibility to retirement benefits) are controlled for?

This will give us insight into the relative weight of the pension eligibility factor (which is presumably the strongest predictor of labour market exit in the Czech Republic) and other factors, such as gender, education, and the type of job a person has, that mediate its effect. We will thereby look at whether the fact that women leave work earlier than men is just a consequence of their earlier eligibility for a pension, their lower education, or the greater share of them working in low-qualified, blue-collar, and physically demanding jobs, or whether there are any other factors at play. We will examine whether women are just as likely to remain in the labour market (or leave it) when they become eligible for a pension if they have the same education and job type.

Using an analysis of interactions in the binary logistic regression model, we will then answer the second research question:

(2) Do the characteristics of earlier labour market exits (such as pension eligibility, education, job type, etc.) interact in the same way for men and women? That is to say, do the predictors of an earlier labour market exit have the same weight?

This will reveal whether other characteristics mediate the influence of pension eligibility on labour market exit (as the main 'pull' factor) similarly or differently for women and men. More generally, we are interested in whether the decision to retire from work is determined by the same factors for men and for women, or by different factors, or by the same factors but with different weight.

Data

We use Labour Force Study (LFS) data collected in the fourth quarter of 2017 for the analysis. The advantage of this dataset is that it contains detailed information on job position and labour market status (including history), retirement status,

and the type of pension drawn. This allows us to discern individuals both in active employment and eligible for a pension, something most other datasets do not allow. Absence of information on individual or household income and health status is an important disadvantage of the data. Furthermore, it would be highly beneficial for our topic to know why someone who is not yet eligible for an old-age pension is no longer working, or why someone who is eligible for a pension is still working. Such extensive and complex data allowing a much more precise and in-depth investigation of the subject matter is, unfortunately, not yet available for the Czech population. The SHARE database, usually used for research on the 50+ population in Europe, does contain answers to more detailed questions, but it has a much smaller number of observations. This makes it impossible to examine who is working despite being eligible for a pension or who is not working despite not being eligible (for more information about SHARE data, see Börsch-Supan [2020]). Even so, SHARE allows us to answer some specific questions to guide our subsequent interpretation of the results of the analysis. For this reason, we used it alongside LFS data to describe the situation. The dataset's limitations constrain the analysis presented below. The analysis leaves much room for improvement or supplementation from other sources, but it strives to decipher the workings of those important aspects that can be tested on the data.

Description of the situation

According to the 2017 LFS data, one-third of all employed persons in the Czech Republic were aged 50+. There was a significant – 19% – gender gap in employment rates. While the employment rate of men aged 55–64 was 71.7%, only 53% of women in the same age group were employed. The largest decline in economic activity occurred between 61 and 64 years for men and between 58 and 62 years for women. The employment rate of men aged 65+ was only 8.7%, compared to 4.7% for women. Although the decline was slightly more gradual for women, it occurred very quickly for both groups, at about the time of their legal right to draw the state old-age pension.

Education was a significant determinant of staying economically active: people with secondary education who had completed a graduation exam (*maturita*) and especially people with higher education were significantly more likely to be economically active in the cohorts aged 50 and older. Concerning job position, men working as professionals, technicians and associate professionals, and services and sales workers were significantly more likely than other groups to continue working after the age of 60. Conversely, men working as craft and related trades workers, plant and machine operators and assemblers, and elementary occupations (thus mainly blue-collar workers) were significantly more likely to be out of the labour market by the age of 60 and over. While 70% of craft workers and plant and machine operators were inactive at that age, only 41% of professionals aged 60+ were out of work. Concerning women, those more likely to be

Table 1. Reasons for retirement in the Czech Republic

Main reason for retirement; percentage of all retired persons	All (%)	Men (%)	Women (%)
Eligible for state retirement benefits	76.9	79.7	74.9
Eligible for employer retirement benefits	0.2	0.0	0.3
Eligible for private retirement benefits	0.1	0.0	0.1
Early retirement offer with benefits	5.3	4.8	5.7
Became unemployed	6.8	5.5	7.7
Personal health	10.0	10.3	9.8
Poor health of a parent or friend	1.3	0.2	2.2
To retire at the same time as a partner	0.2	0.4	0.1
More time with the family	2.1	2.5	1.8
To enjoy life	2.0	1.9	2.0

Note: Share Wave 5, N = 1268.

out of the labour market were, similarly to men, in the categories of craft and related trades workers and plant and machine operators and assemblers, but also clerical support workers. Unlike men, women who worked in elementary occupations were significantly more likely to be employed than other categories.

Among the total unemployed population (people registered with the Public Employment Office), 29% of men and 33% of women were between the ages of 51 and 60. Although the unemployment rate was generally low in 2017 (2.3%), it was the highest in the 51–60 age group (4%). This age group was also more often affected by long-term unemployment (longer than 1 year).

At the age of 65, 22% of working men and 29% of women were self-employed, compared to 15.5% of men and 11% of women aged 40. This probably reflects two different trends: first, self-employment serves as a 'bridge job', allowing for flexible work and partial retirement in later age, and second, self-employed persons retire later because they do not yet meet the eligibility criteria (e.g. a minimum number of years worked). The share of fixed-term contracts was also significantly higher in the cohorts above middle age: 23% of employed men and 36% of women at the age of 65 were on fixed-term contracts, most of them short-term contracts, compared to 4% of men and 10% of women at the age of 40. These employment characteristics indicate the precarious position of older people in the Czech labour market, with women being at a greater risk than men of early labour market exit, unemployment, and precarious working conditions.

According to Wave 5 of SHARE (2013),[2] eligibility for state retirement benefits was the main reason why people retired in all the European countries that took part in the survey except Denmark and Estonia. However, the Czech Republic ranked among the countries where the largest share of retired people considered this the most important reason (together with Austria, Spain, Italy and Slovenia). In the Czech Republic, almost 80% of retired men and three-quarters of retired women chose this option, while only 10% said that the main reason was their health (see Table 1). Health was stated by 18.8% of the respondents in Germany and 17.3% in Austria.

The analysis of the 2015 SHARE data (Wave 6) for the Czech Republic revealed that the employment income of individuals aged 50 and older was correlated with education and the type of job. There were statistically significant differences between working men and women aged 60–69 in how satisfied they were in their main job. While 94% of both groups were satisfied at work, women were 'highly satisfied' much more often than men (40% of women compared to 23% of men, total N = 248). However, there were no differences in job satisfaction between working men and women aged 50–59. There may be a specific group of women who continue to work after the age of 60 and are highly satisfied in their jobs. Working men and women in their sixties also differed in how they felt about any health limits to their ability to work: men more than women were concerned about poor health preventing them from working before they became eligible for a pension. This was also the case of the younger age category of fifty-somethings. However, no statistically significant differences in subjective health or in the number of chronic illnesses were observed between men and women aged 50–59 (N = 793) or 60–69 (N = 1936) in Wave 6 of SHARE. Therefore, these factors likely cannot explain the earlier labour market exit of women.

Based on LFS data, we find that after the age of 60, men are more likely to remain in paid work than women, people with a higher (university) education are more likely to be employed than people with a secondary or lower education, and people working mostly blue-collar jobs leave work earlier than managers, professionals, and technicians. In the following section, we will try to determine how these factors are connected.

Binary logistic regression

The following section of the paper presents the results obtained from binary logistic regression (BLR) and binary logistic regression with interaction terms. This analysis is recommended for intersectional studies of combinations of various (dis)advantaging factors [Křížková, Hašková and Pospíšilová 2018]. It is also suit-

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[2] The results are similar in SHARE Wave 6 (2015), but the N of observations in Wave 6 is small.

able in the present case where the disadvantaging factors of continued labour market participation include gender (female), low education, blue-collar job, and having attained pension eligibility. In BLR, the dependent variable can have only two values (0, 1) and the odds of the phenomenon of interest occurring (1) or not occurring (0) are predicted. For categorical explanatory variables, one category is always selected as a reference and the odds calculated for the other categories are compared to those of the reference category. The dependent (explained) variable here is the economic activity of people aged 60+, namely whether they are working (1) or not (0). 'Working' means being economically active and at the same time not being unemployed. This construction of the dependent variable is based on the fact that unemployment in the 60+ age group may conceal a labour market exit: a person who has only a few months or years left until they are eligible for a statutory pension may find unemployment benefits more advantageous than early retirement. At the same time, they no longer expect to find a new job. This construction of the variable therefore seems better than the economic activity variable. The independent (explanatory) variables, then, are those expected to correlate with a person continuing to work at a later age. They include gender (male, female), education (primary, secondary with no school leaving exam – *maturita*, secondary with the school-leaving exam – *maturita*, tertiary), eligibility for an old-age pension, early retirement, or a disability pension (yes, no), job type (blue-collar, white-collar, see Křížková, Hašková and Pospíšilová [2018]),[3] marital status (single, married, widowed, divorced). Age and region were tested as control variables. Because of the high multicollinearity with the pension eligibility variable, age was eventually excluded from the model (pension eligibility was found more beneficial for the model).

Thus, the BLR model helped us to test whether the independent variables show a statistically significant correlation with staying in employment after the age of 60 when controlling for the other variables in the model. In the following steps, interaction terms were used to test the relationships between gender and each independent variable to reveal whether those relationships hold independently of gender or whether there are any differences between women and men. When an interaction term proves statistically significant, this procedure allows us to quantify the differences between men and women as the odds that the phenomenon of interest (work after sixty) will occur for a specific combination of explanatory variable categories compared to the reference category.[4]

Individuals aged 60+ (i.e. those several years before pension eligibility and older) enter the analysis. Most of the analyses are conducted on a sample of 7175

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[3] Job type refers to the person's current job in the case of working respondents and their most recent job in the case of unemployed and economically inactive respondents. White-collar jobs are deemed to include CZ-ISCO categories of 1–5, blue-collar jobs CZ-ISCO 6–9 (https://www.czso.cz/csu/czso/klasifikace_zamestnani_-cz_isco-).

[4] For more on calculating the odds for interaction terms, see Křížková et al. [2018].

Table 2. Dataset description

Variable	Categories	Distribution (%)
Economic activity	Employed	37
	Unemployed and inactive	63
Gender	Male	54
	Female	46
Education	Primary	10
	Secondary, no school-leaving exam (*maturita*)	42
	Secondary, with school leaving exam (*maturita*)	31
	Tertiary	17
Pension eligibility	No	18
	Yes	82
Job type	Blue-collar (ISCO 1–5)	57
	White-collar (ISCO 6–9)	43
Marital status	Single	3
	Married	71
	Widowed	11
	Divorced	15
Region	Prague	8
	Central Bohemia	12
	South Bohemia	16
	West Bohemia	10
	North Bohemia	17
	East Bohemia	16
	South Moravia	11
	North Moravia	10

Note: Only 60+ individuals who completed all this information.

individuals aged 60+ who completed all the information needed for the analysis.

Unfortunately, the dataset does not contain variables for a number of factors of possible significance for people continuing to work even after they attain state pension eligibility (e.g. health status, income level, or job satisfaction). While their effects cannot be controlled directly in the analysis, we draw some information from the SHARE database, which does cover such variables.

Table 3. Binary logistic regression, odds of continuing to work after 60 – first part

Independent variable	Categories	Exp(B), baseline model	Gender × education	Gender × pension eligibility	Gender × job type
Gender	Male (ref.)	1	1	1	1
	Female	0.854*	1.557	0.880	1.094
Education	Primary (ref.)	1	1	1	1
	Secondary, no maturita	1.169	1.988*	1.158	1.259
	Secondary, with maturita	1.976***	3.101***	1.961***	2.118***
	Tertiary	3.494***	5.090***	3.474***	3.641***
Pension eligibility	Yes (ref.)	1	1	1	1
	No	87.639***	88.054***	111.799***	89.697***
Job type	Blue-collar (ref.)	1	1	1	1
	White-collar	1.318**	1.365***	1.324***	1.534***
Marital status	Married (ref.)	1	1	1	1
	Single	0.702	0.711	0.707	0.709
	Widowed	1.151	1.154	1.146	1.144
	Divorced	1.358***	1.356***	1.356***	1.362***

Table 3. Binary logistic regression, odds of continuing to work after 60 – second part

Independent variable	Categories	Exp(B), baseline model	Gender × education	Gender × pension eligibility	Gender × job type
Region	Prague (ref.)	1	1	1	1
	Central Bohemia	0.796	0.800	0.796	0.796
	South Bohemia	0.948	0.954	0.945	0.941
	West Bohemia	1.042	1.050	1.041	1.039
	North Bohemia	1.010	1.022	1.006	1.003
	East Bohemia	0.892	0.896	0.890	0.885
	South Moravia	0.866	0.873	0.862	0.860
	North Moravia	0.848	0.852	0.848	0.845
Gender and education	Female, sec., no m.	–	0.445**	–	–
	Female, sec. w/m.	–	0.540*	–	–
	Female, tertiary	–	0.632	–	–
Gender and pension eligibility	Female, no eligibility	–	–	0.478*	–
Gender and job type	Female, white-collar	–	–	–	0.697*
Constant		0.166***	0.103***	0.165***	0.145***

Notes: N = 7175 respondents aged 60+. Rows labelled (ref.) = reference categories; * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001. Model characteristics: The Chi-squared test is statistically significant for all models (the model with explanatory variables explains the dependent variable better than the constant-only model), the Hosmer-Lemeshow test is statistically non-significant for all models (all models are a good fit to real data). Nagelkerke R^2 = 0.457 for the baseline model, 0.458 for all models with added two-way interaction terms.

Binary logistical regression – baseline model

The BLR model predicts an individual's odds of still working for pay after the age of 60. The baseline model results (see Table 3) indicate that gender is statistically significant. Even when controlling for other model variables, women are 15% less likely than men to work. Women seem to retire or exit into inactivity earlier even when controlling for the effects of their earlier pension eligibility, education, job, and marital status. Hence, other reasons not accounted for in the present model are probably responsible for their earlier exit.

The effect of education also proved significant. While there is no statistically significant difference between people with secondary education without a school leaving exam *(maturita)* and those with only primary education, the odds of working are twice as high among high school graduates with *maturita* and 3.5 times higher among college graduates. A close association can be expected between educational attainment and job type as well as level of career orientation, with the latter more likely found among college graduates.

It comes as little surprise that pension eligibility is the most important predictor of employment in this age group. Even when controlling for all other variables, a respondent who is not yet eligible for a pension is 88 times more likely to work after 60. Becoming eligible for a pension is the most important predictor of retirement and drives the decisions of an overwhelming majority of women and men. Job type also proved to be statistically significant. When controlling for other variables in the model, white-collar workers are 32% more likely to continue working after 60. This may partly have to do with the worse physical health that blue-collar workers often experience over time as a result of hard manual labour and with the fact that white-collar jobs are more often held by career-oriented individuals, who remain active even after becoming eligible for a pension.

As for marital status, single and divorced individuals do not show any statistically significant difference from married people (the reference category), but widowed ones do, as they are 36% more likely to be working after 60. We could speculate that their higher rate of labour market participation has to do with the absence of a partner and someone to spend their leisure time with, but the same hypothesis does not hold for singles. Economic difficulties may also play a role, as the death of a partner does not lead to any significant decrease in household expenditures (e.g. housing), so people have to remain economically active to make up for the lost income.

Geographic region was included as control variable in the baseline model. It did not, however, prove to be associated with continuing to work.

The results of this model can be summarised as follows: those who most often remain economically active after the age of 60 are men, people with *maturita* or a college degree, people who are not yet eligible for a state pension, current or past white-collar workers, and people who are widowed, even when controlling for the other variables.

The following table presents the results of both the baseline model and the same model supplemented in each case by a two-way interaction term that proved statistically significant. Presented are the individual odds (Exp(B)) of working after the age of 60, with statistical significance indicated by asterisks.

It is reasonable to assume that different factors affect labour market exits for women and men, or that the same factors affect each gender differently. For that reason, we dedicate the next step to the stepwise testing of the interaction terms between gender and all the explanatory variables. The interactions between gender and education, gender and pension eligibility, and gender and job type proved statistically significant. We present their results in the table above. We will discuss each interaction separately and quantify the differences for each combination of explanatory variables. Since the rest of the model remains the same as the baseline, it does not need to be interpreted again (the added interaction terms did not significantly change the significance or strength of the effects of the other variables).

The gender and education interaction

Table 4 contains all the combinations of gender and education and quantifies for each combination the odds that a 60+ person with these characteristics will still be working compared to the reference category, defined here as a man with primary education. The odds are calculated from the model results (Table 3, the gender × education interaction column). The interaction results suggest that men's odds of remaining economically active after age 60 grow considerably with education. High school graduates without the school-leaving exam *(maturita)* are twice as likely to continue working, those with *maturita* are three times as likely, and college graduates as much as five times as likely to be working after age 60 than men with only primary education. The situation of women is different. Above all, the effect of education is less apparent for lower education levels. The interaction term also shows that women with primary education are as much as 56% more likely to work than men with primary education. Women with secondary education without *maturita* are 38% more likely and women with *maturita* 2.6 times more likely to be working than men with primary education; in both cases, however, the odds are lower than those of equally educated men. In contrast, there is a specific group of female college graduates who are almost 8 times more likely to work after the age of 60 than men with primary education, their odds exceeding those of male college graduates. Women aged 60+ with a post-secondary education thus exhibit a strong professional orientation. Thus, while women overall exit the labour market earlier than men, this is not necessarily the case of women with primary or tertiary education (these relationships hold even when controlling for the other model variables that for their redundancy are not presented in this table; see Table 3).

Table 4. Binary logistic regression with the gender × education interaction – odds of continuing to work at age 60+

Gender	Education	B	Exp(B)
Male	Primary	0	1
Male	Secondary, no maturita	0.69	1.99
Male	Secondary, with maturita	1.13	3.10
Male	Tertiary	1.63	5.09
Female	Primary	0.44	1.56
Female	Secondary, no maturita	0.32	1.38
Female	Secondary, with maturita	0.96	2.61
Female	Tertiary	2.07	7.93

Figure 1. Gender x education interaction – odds of continuing to work at age 60+
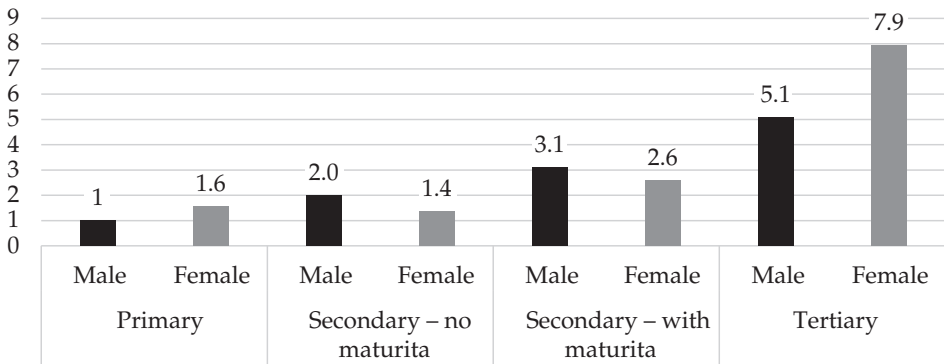
Note: reference group – male with primary education.

The gender and pension eligibility interaction

As mentioned above, pension eligibility is the strongest predictor of a respondent continuing to work after the age of 60. However, the gender × pension eligibility interaction proved significant as well. Hence, we can expect the variable to work differently for men and women.

Table 5 quantifies the odds for all the combinations of the gender and state pension eligibility categories. Men eligible for a pension are the reference category here. The difference between men eligible and those ineligible for a pension is

remarkable: those who are not yet eligible are almost 112 times as likely to remain economically active after age 60 than those who are eligible. The effect of eligibility on women is also very strong but still somewhat weaker than in the case of men. Eligible women are 12% less likely to continuing working than eligible men, while ineligible women are 47 times more likely to continue working than eligible men (however, the odds are almost 50% lower than for ineligible men). Therefore, while pension eligibility is absolutely key for men and women alike, its effect is considerably stronger among men; other factors seem to have a stronger effect on women's labour market exit.

Table 5. Binary logistic regression with the gender × pension eligibility interaction – odds of continuing to work aged 60+

Gender	Pension entitlement	B	Exp(B)
Male	Yes	0	1
Male	No	4.717	111.798
Female	Yes	−0.127	0.880
Female	No	3.851	47.051

Figure 2. Gender and pension eligibility interaction – odds of continuing to work aged 60+
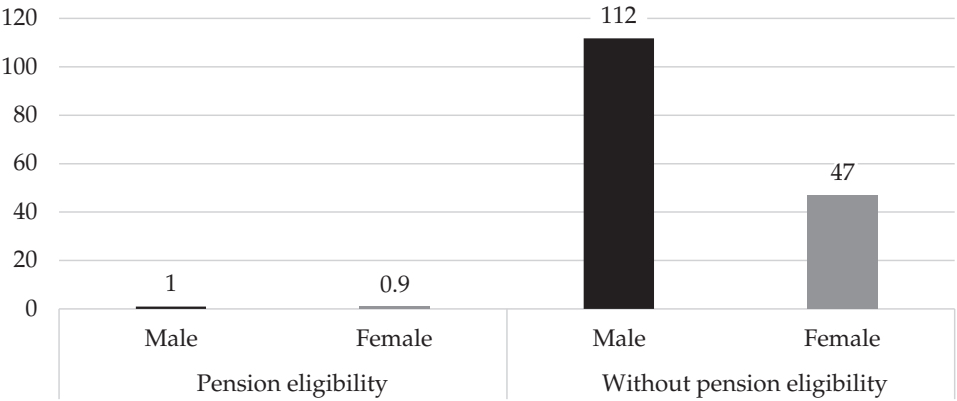
Note: reference group – male with pension eligibility.

The gender x job type interaction

The last statistically significant interaction term concerns gender and job type. Table 6 presents the quantified odds for all the combinations of the variable categories, with men who have or had a blue-collar job being the reference category. Compared to them, white-collar men are 53% more likely to work after the age of 60. Blue-collar women are 9% more likely to work than blue-collar men and white-collar women are 17% more likely to work than the reference category. Thus, blue-collar women's odds of working are slightly higher than blue-collar men's, but this is not true of white-collar workers. In other words, a white-collar job is a predictor of remaining in the labour market and the difference is more pronounced among men. This is likely caused by the different types of blue-collar jobs that are held by women and those held by men.

Table 6. Binary logistic regression with the gender × job type interaction – odds of continuing to work after the age of 60

Gender	Job type	B	Exp(B)
Male	Blue-collar	0	1
Male	White-collar	0.428	1.534
Female	Blue-collar	0.089	1.094
Female	White-collar	0.156	1.169

Figure 3. Gender and job type interaction – odds of continuing to work aged 60+
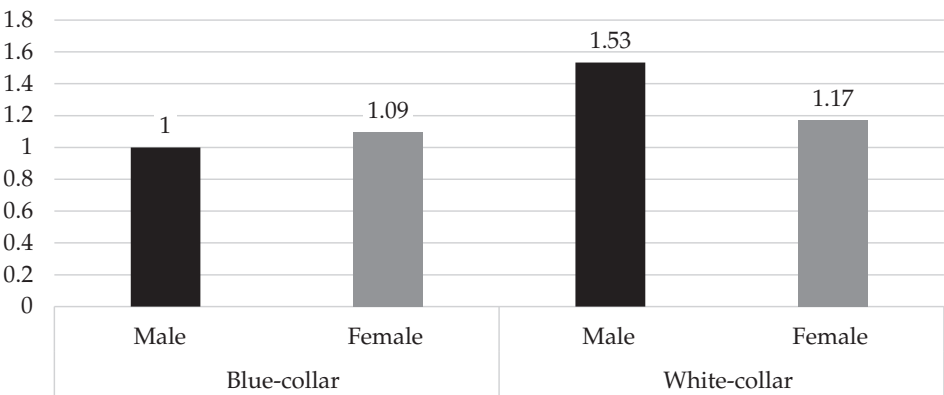
Note: reference group – males who have or had a blue-collar job.

Discussion and conclusion

Our analysis supports the prior finding that becoming eligible for a state pension is decisive for determining when a person exits the labour market. In the Czech Republic, this central factor determines when people retire. It has a much stronger effect than the other factors of interest here – gender, education, job type, or marital status – while the latter are also associated with the timing of the exit. This means that government policies, and pension policies in particular, are crucial in determining when people leave the labour market.

Although becoming eligible for a state pension is a key factor for both genders, it plays a more important role among men. Women are more likely to leave work before they obtain their pension eligibility and the effect of the gender variable exists when controlling for education. There are therefore other factors besides being eligible for a pension at a younger age and having a lower level of education that lead women in the Czech Republic to leave the labour market earlier than men. These factors may include the high rate of unemployment among women of pre-retirement age, their difficulty finding a new job, caring responsibilities such as looking after grandchildren or another loved one, synchronising their retirement with that of their husband/partner, or other reasons.

Conversely, lower-educated and blue-collar women who are eligible to retire continue to work after age 60 more often than lower-educated and blue-collar men who are eligible. The analysis of variable interactions revealed that women with primary education are 56% more likely to work than men with primary education, when controlling for the other variables. We can interpret this finding as follows: as Finch has shown [2014], low-educated women are highly likely to have experienced low income and career interruptions throughout their lives. When they reach pensionable age, their savings and assets are low and the pension benefit calculated for them is insufficient to guarantee a decent standard of living; this is why they continue to work. This may be exacerbated by the fact that the jobs available to older women with low education, such as personal services, cleaning, or various auxiliary occupations, are not as physically demanding as the jobs typically held by low-qualified men. Although this is open to further discussion [see, e.g., Messing et al. 2018], something similar is suggested by another finding of our analysis, namely that blue-collar women are slightly more likely to continue working than blue-collar men. Thus, in the year 2017, it was easier for low-qualified women than low-qualified men to participate in the labour market (in contrast to the findings of McNamara and Williamson [2004] in the United States). The question is, however, whether the jobs they found were not in most cases precarious jobs in terms of pay and working conditions [see Hašková and Dudová 2017; OECD 2019], so those women were only able to take them up because they had at least some guaranteed pension income.

In contrast, when we control for the other variables, including pension eligibility, we find that women with secondary education were more likely to exit the

labour market than equally educated men. Hence, this group of women is more often either 'required' or 'able to afford' to leave work before becoming eligible for a pension – for instance, if they leave to care for a loved one (according to the SHARE Wave 5 of 2013, 2.2% of Czech women retired because of a relative's or friend's ill health). Then again, female college graduates were more likely than men with primary education to continue to work and those odds were even higher than for male college graduates. In this age category (60–69 years old in 2017), the proportion of college graduates among women was lower than among men (10.3% compared to 15.5%). This was probably a specific group of professionally oriented women who continued working even after reaching their statutory retirement age.

Therefore, our first question, namely which personal and employment characteristics are linked to an earlier labour market exit when other characteristics (such as gender, education, and the eligibility for retirement benefits) are controlled for, can be answered as follows: Pension eligibility is the central predictor of economic inactivity after age 60. When pension eligibility is controlled for, however, gender, education, job type, and marital status still play an important role in determining when a person leaves the labour market. Even when we control for education, we find women leave work earlier than men, regardless of whether they are eligible for a pension. The answer to our second research question, namely whether the characteristics that determine labour market exits (such as pension eligibility, education, job type, etc.) interact in the same way for men and women, was provided by our analysis of interaction terms in the binary logistic regression model. In the case of education, higher attainment increases the odds of continuing to work for both groups, but the effect is less pronounced for women. Women with primary and post-secondary education are more likely to continue to work than men with the same educational attainment. Pension eligibility is key to both men's and women's decisions about leaving work, but the effect is stronger among men. Women are more likely than men to leave work even if they are not yet eligible for a pension. Similarly, the effect of having or not having a blue-collar job is stronger among men than women. Blue-collar women are slightly more likely to work than blue-collar men. In short, the factors that shape the odds of continuing to work longer are similar for men and women, but their weight is lower for women.

Thus, the earlier labour market exit of women in the Czech Republic is primarily driven by their earlier state pension eligibility and partly also by their lower education, but a role is also played by other factors that are not as substantial for men. Policies designed to extend working lives must take these factors into consideration and go beyond a sole focus on balancing the state budget by deferring pension eligibility to a later age. For low-qualified women, continuing to work, even if the work is underpaid, is a necessity and they do it to avoid falling into poverty. Later pension eligibility could force them to depend on other welfare benefits. In general, it is more common for women than men to stop working even if they are not yet eligible for a pension; this could become even more

common if the pensionable age rises. In contrast, college-educated women may be more inclined than college-educated men to continue working even after they are eligible to retire; the question, however, is how this trend is going to evolve in cohorts where the proportion of women with post-secondary degrees is similar to that of men.

Data availability is the primary limitation of our analysis. We were unable to find a suitable dataset that had a large enough number of observations with which to investigate labour market exits before or at a later time after becoming eligible for the state old-age pension and that, at the same time, covered all the variables that could influence an exit from the labour market. For example, the dataset we used did not allow us to assess the effects of health status and health-related limitations on a person's work ability. It is clear from other analyses that health does influence retirement timing, yet the effect is not unequivocal. In the SHARE datasets of 2013 and 2015, only about 10% of the respondents stated health as their main reason for retirement. The analyses of the Czech sample of Wave 6 of SHARE (2015) by Krejčová and Žiaran [2018] and Bédiová, Šácha, and Žiaran [2018] identified concerns about health limitations and having multiple chronic diseases as significant for seeking early retirement. However, according to our analysis of Wave 6 of SHARE (2015), the indicators of health did not differ significantly between men and women. Moreover, working women were less likely than men to indicate a concern about having to leave work due to health issues before becoming eligible for a pension. Lower job satisfaction may be another reason for earlier exit not covered by LFS data [see Krejčová and Žiaran 2018; Axelrad and McNamara 2018]. According to our analysis of Wave 6 of SHARE (2015), working women aged 60+ more often than men strongly agreed that they were satisfied in their jobs, while there was no such gender difference in the 50–59 category. This may suggest that women who are strongly satisfied with their jobs are more likely to continue to work after age 60. Unfortunately, the SHARE database does not provide enough observations to compare the effects of men's and women's health and job satisfaction on the real timing of their labour market exit while controlling for state pension eligibility.

Another possible reason for an earlier exit that we could not cover in the present analysis is the fact that women are more often than men subject to workplace ageism and discrimination based on age and gender. As shown, for example, by Itzin and Phillipson [1995] and Jyrkinen and McKie [2012], older women more often than men face ageism and discrimination at work in consequence of the intersection of gender and age, and therefore are victims of multiple disadvantaging. Women who are not under economic strain and at the same time have weaker professional identities (typically middle-educated married women) may prefer to exit a labour market in which they face age discrimination, lower pay than their male colleagues, and limited career prospects.

Another limitation of the present analysis is that we are aiming at a moving target: every cohort changes in terms of both the statutory pensionable age and the distribution of the factors influencing people's labour market exit deci-

sions. A suggestion for future research would be to investigate the relationships between gender and the effects of health, job satisfaction, and other potential reasons (e.g. caring for loved ones) on labour market exit and how those effects evolve in time.

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A Guide to Communication and Participation in Decision-Making on Siting a Deep Geological Repository: The Case of the Czech Republic

Martin Durdovic

A Guide to Communication and
Participation in Decision-Making
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Repository

The Case of the Czech Republic

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SOÚ
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Prague 2016

The Czech Republic is currently confronted with the need to select a site for the construction of a deep geological repository for spent nuclear fuel and high-level waste. The processes of siting and building such a facility are comparable in scope and significance to the construction of nuclear power plants in the country in the past, the decisions for which were made by the communist regime. Now, by contrast, the process must respect democratic principles. This guide is the outcome of a qualitative and quantitative empirical research project that sought to examine the social embeddedness of decisions about the location and construction of a deep geological repository in the Czech Republic. The principles and procedures elaborated in these pages are centred oon the idea of organised dialogue among all stakeholders.
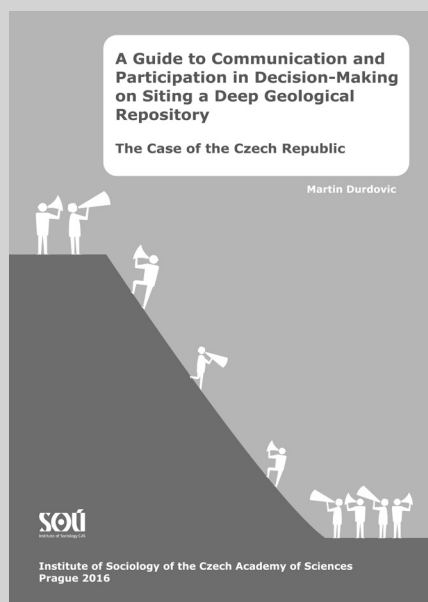
Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy Prague 2016

'The Core of My Work Is in Being with People Who Do Not Practise Faith in Any Way': The Self-Perception of Czech Hospital Chaplains*

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Abstract: The article focuses on the understudied topic of contemporary hospital chaplaincy in the Czech Republic, its development, and the current issues this work is dealing with. Based on a study conducted among Czech hospital chaplains affiliated with the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, the Roman Catholic Church, the Czechoslovak Hussite Church, and the Church of Seventh Day Adventists, the article examines the experiences of Christian providers of spiritual care in the secularised environment of a hospital and sheds light on how they perceive their work and role. Two waves of interviews were conducted among thirteen hospital chaplains, male and female, and subjected to an applied thematic analysis. This produced four thematic areas that the article explores in detail: (1) the localisation of the chaplaincy within the hospital, (2) the chaplains' methods of working with patients, (3) the chaplains' relationships with other hospital personnel, and (4) the self-identification of the hospital chaplains. The results of this research revealed that the secularised environment of the Czech Republic is a crucial factor that affects the work of chaplains in several ways, but their role in the hospital has at the same time developed in ways that are separate from their religious affiliation, as the understanding dialogue they engage in with patients forms a core part of their work.

Keywords: Czech Republic, hospital chaplains, secularised institution, chaplaincy

Introduction

This article sheds light on the chaplaincy profession that is currently developing in hospitals in the Czech Republic. The focal interest is the experience of hospital chaplains themselves. Chaplaincy has gained new attention from scholars owing

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to a documented increase in the secularisation of public institutions, which has led to a 'paradigm shift' of the role of religion in the public space [Norwood 2006: 7], leaving religious groups with less authority [De Groot 2010; Martínez-Ariño and Griera 2018]. At the same time, in recent decades, the reintroduction of spirituality into medical practice has increased the importance of religious experts in hospitals [Norwood 2006]. This trend has only continued through the current pandemic, as attention has turned to spiritual care during the health crisis [Bard 2020] and to the role of chaplains as figures who can support patients in the absence of family members [Riggs 2020].

Studies indicate that hospital chaplains are often viewed as 'jacks-of-all-trades' by their institutions [Martínez-Ariño and Griera 2018: 150; Weaver et al. 2008]. For instance, Martínez-Ariño and Griera [2018] identified in their research four major roles that Spanish chaplains serve beyond their official work tasks: providing social services to fill in gaps in welfare services, dealing with religious illiteracy and diversity, attending to problematic situations, and sometimes serving as religious innovators. Data from different countries also seem to suggest that the chaplain role is still professionalising and leaving strict denominational borders [De Groot 2018; Martínez-Ariño and Griera 2018; Norwood 2006]. This professionalising trend is also evidenced by the existence of the special *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy*, indicating that chaplains themselves are also taking a more active part in the research itself [Piderman and Johnson 2009; Weaver et al. 2008].

Hospital chaplains usually view their role as primarily that of representing a human approach in the cold medical world since they are trained to be patient-centred [Piderman and Johnson 2009]. This aspect of humanity is expressed as empathy, patience, accompaniment, closeness, and participation in a patient's personal story [Harvey et al. 2008]. However, hospital patients are people of different approaches to spirituality and religion. Two distinctive subgroups deserve closer attention in this regard. First, there are patients who find themselves in a religious struggle as they have negative religious coping – for example, where they are 'feeling abandoned or punished by God' [Piderman and Johnson 2009: 14]. Second, there are patients at spiritual risk, whose 'religious needs are high, but their religious resources are low' [ibid.]. The second group appears less likely to ask for a chaplain's assistance, as their needs can be very specific. To be open and learn about a patient's spirituality is described as a new demand that the diversity and privatisation of religion has brought to chaplaincy [ibid.]. The approach to patients, issues relating to the institution and other personnel, and the self-understanding of Czech hospital chaplains are the main focus of this article.

Hospital chaplaincy in the Czech Republic

Pastoral care has been provided at Czech medical institutions since the Middle Ages. In the 1950s the communist regime stopped the clergy, members of religious orders, and pastors from being present in hospitals, and this remained the

situation for almost 40 years. The 1989 Velvet Revolution made the slow revival of chaplaincy possible. Baštecká, Doskočil, and Janečková [2020] state that, in comparison with the situation abroad, two different tendencies affecting spiritual care in hospitals can be observed in the Czech Republic: the level of secularisation is higher in this country than elsewhere, while the experience with hospital chaplaincy is shorter than in many other countries.

The development of hospital chaplaincy in the Czech Republic after 1989 was slower in comparison with prison and army chaplaincies. The process was rather unsystematic and spontaneous [Baštecká, Doskočil and Janečková 2020]. Legally, hospital chaplaincy was only sanctioned for the first time in 2006 by an agreement between the Ministry of Health, the Czech Bishops' Conference, and the Ecumenical Council of Churches. The agreement was later widened in 2011 when the necessary qualifications for hospital chaplains were defined, from which point it was determined that chaplains had to have a theological university education, had to complete a hospital chaplaincy course, and had to obtain authorisation from the chaplain's church. In a later methodical paper from 2017, the service was characterised as non-medical, non-evangelical, and voluntary on the part of care receivers. Menke [2017: 28] mentions that the religious aspect was marginal here. More interestingly still, the paper also banned spiritual caregivers from non-registered churches and groups in hospitals. The latest version of the agreement was signed in 2019 and has led to a larger formalisation of the hospital chaplaincy in the form of a compulsory qualification course that has generated pressure especially on the older and long-serving chaplains.

To date, almost half of all Czech hospitals offer a chaplain service [Nešpor 2020]. Only a portion of the chaplains are employees of their hospitals; others are only able to be present in hospitals with the financial support of their church. Czech hospital chaplains are organised within two organisations: the Association of Hospital Chaplains (ANK; Asociace nemocničních kaplanů), established in 2011, and the Catholic Association of Hospital Chaplains (Katolická asocicace nemocničních kaplanů), which separated from the ANK in 2012 to gather the more traditional (primarily Moravian) Catholics. The first organisation does not favour any specific church affiliation but is nonetheless an entirely Christian organisation. This is, however, compelled by a law requiring pastoral care in secular institutions be provided only by churches that have been granted special rights by the state. Czech hospital chaplains can best be characterised as diverse in terms of their church affiliation, age, and gender.

New discussions and platforms about chaplaincy in general have started to appear in recent years. Most of these have been initiatives from within the inner circles of chaplaincy, but the topic has also attracted more media attention during the COVID-19 pandemic [Doskočil and Beláňová, forthcoming]. Nešpor [2020] claims that the service has become quite well known and relatively popular. Nevertheless, very little is known still about the experience of hospital chaplains themselves and their understanding of the chaplaincy role, a fact which has fostered this research.

Research design

The article is based on a content-driven qualitative study. The data were gathered over two periods: first between 2017 and 2018 and second during 2020 and the beginning of 2021. The main aim of the first research period was to collect experiences from hospital chaplains across the Czech Republic and to understand their views on their role and work. The second period was added to enrich the original dataset by further exploring the issues raised in the first collection period and to pursue the recommendations made by reviewers.

To begin, both professional Czech hospital chaplain associations were approached and asked for contacts. In the interview scheduling, I attempted, for purposive sampling, to incorporate a variety of research sites, including both big and small hospitals, while taking into account regional differences in religiosity,[1] church affiliation, and gender. During the first period, interviews were conducted in person, whereas during the second period interviews were conducted online (Skype, Zoom, Whatsapp) because of the pandemic. All the chaplains selected for this study were asked for a semi-structured interview in an e-mail message that described the main objective of the fieldwork as identifying the role they play in hospitals.

The interviews began with questions directed at personal history and the chaplain's path to the hospital. Next, I asked about the spatial facilities provided by the hospital, the daily practice of the chaplain, and the organisation of their time in the institution. Special emphasis was put on the character of interaction with personnel and patients. The chaplains were also asked about their self-perceived role. Concluding questions were aimed at the topics of highest importance and sensitivity to the chaplains. In the second period, the interviews focused more on the topics that appeared to be the ones most frequently mentioned in the first interviews, such as relationships with the hospital institution, interactions with medical personnel, methods of working with patients, and the chaplains' relationship with their church.

In total, thirteen in-depth interviews were conducted, eight in the first period (2017–2018) and five in the second (2020–21). The interviews from the first period are referred to as A in the article and those from the second period as B. The sample included eight men and five women. Five of the chaplains were affiliated with the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren, four with the Roman Catholic Church, three with the Czechoslovak Hussite Church, and one with the Seventh Day Adventist Church. The average length of practising hospital chaplaincy (including volunteering) was five years. One former chaplain was included in the sample.

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[1] For example, hospitals in the more secular Bohemia and the more Catholic Moravia were chosen, along with hospitals in the largely atheist Sudetenland. These differences were suggested by the chaplains themselves.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Detailed notes were also taken. Observations were usually not possible in the hospitals during the work shift, except for visits to hospital chapels, photography, and the gathering of relevant materials, such as leaflets and promotional materials. I was also allowed to take part in two meetings of the hospital chaplains' professional associations in 2019 and 2020. My notes from these meetings are part of the analysis and are marked in the text as E1 (Event 1) and E2 (Event 2). All the data were anonymised so that neither the hospitals nor the chaplains can be identified in the text.

The final dataset consisted of interview transcripts, text-based field notes, and the chaplains' printed promotional materials. The data were analysed according to methods usually referred to as applied thematic analysis (ATA), while the codes were derived from the data [Guest, MacQueen and Namey 2012]. This inductive method made it possible to identify key themes and to create a codebook during a re-examination of the materials. The first analysis period was guided by a desire to understand the identity of the Czech hospital chaplain. The first round of coding revealed four main areas of concern: the self-localisation of the chaplains within the institution, the chaplains' methods of working with patients, the chaplains' position among other personnel, and the self-understanding of chaplains. The second coding round focused on details within these areas so as to identify the main issues and problems chaplains had to deal with. The following sections provide insight into the findings according to the coding process.

Findings

Self-socialisation in secularised hospitals

As a researcher I tried in my questions to propose that there could be a conflict between the chaplains' role as rooted in religion and the secularised institution they work in. Nevertheless, the chaplains usually tried to overcome the suggested language of conflict and pointed to other issues that were of importance for them. In regard to what could be described as 'finding one's place within the space of the hospital', they mentioned the following issues: the rather slow legitimisation process for the chaplaincy, part-time contracts, questions concerning private space, and fruitful cooperation with chaplains of other denominations.

More than half of the interviewed chaplains reflected on their uneasy beginnings within the hospital. However, the secularised environment was only partly responsible for their sometimes uncomfortable start. What was a problem was that the chaplains entered the hospitals as an unknown entity, so to speak; personnel did not know who they were or what they do. These unsure beginnings usually demanded a great deal of improvisation both on the part of the chaplains and the employers (and, as is noted further on in the text, much of this improvisational approach has remained intact):

> I was just finishing my theological studies, and the former hospital chaplain there [in the hospital where this chaplain worked] was just going back to his region. So, I stayed in his place, and I also took over his duty as a chaplain. I somehow automatically became a chaplain. (A7)

The informants reflected that their first experiences were sometimes uncomfortable, especially if they were the first chaplains at the institution they were working at. The progress was at times slow and demanding:

> To begin, this new service at the hospital faced difficulties because you would go to the hospital and say to everyone: 'chaplaincy services'. And you would still have to explain what that's all about. (A8)

It seems, however, that over the years chaplains have progressively incorporated themselves into the hospital structure. In many cases, time was needed for the institution to have experience with the service:

> I succeeded in being invited onto the palliative team as a regular member. The head doctor wanted me there. But this is only a consequence of the fact that I've been at the hospital frequently and for a long time. (B5)

Importantly, most of the chaplains I spoke with did not do chaplaincy as a full-time job. For many of them – and this seems typical of all Czech hospital chaplains across denominations and regions – it was a one- or two-day duty combined with other jobs and leading a parish. Below, I provide two examples from interviews:

> I have an employment agreement, not a full contract, for three hundred hours a year. And that is just enough for me, though the hospital would probably like more. (B2)

> I work Wednesdays and beyond that only if someone actually calls me to come. (B4)

Most of the chaplains who were interviewed chose part-time as the best solution to combine their daily duties. But it could also be seen as limiting given the character of chaplaincy work:

> I'm there just six hours a week, which can be a problem with patients if their condition worsens extremely quickly. It's difficult then to be able to establish trust with them. (A6)

In all the interviews with chaplains an issue that was worth mentioning was their contract with the hospital. Not all chaplains are automatically paid by the hospital, but many of them are financially supported by their churches. Salary was

also a hot topic and was seen as something that had to be communicated very carefully:

> For six years I have done this service here for free, so to have a very part-time contract is a small victory for me now. When I started here at the hospital, I had to be very careful. I did not want to bother anyone about money … I can only bring this up now. (B5)

On the other hand, part-time employment usually has one unintended advantage: it can lead to greater interdenominational cooperation among chaplains within one institution. Ecumenical cooperation was a frequent topic among the informants and, prevailingly, it was evaluated positively. For instance, in one hospital, two Catholic lay chaplains and a female Seventh Day Adventist chaplain share the provision of spiritual services. Another example is described as follows:

> My mentor at that time, he worked with a Hussite chaplain. Later on, a Catholic priest joined us, and he is still with us now, and the Hussite chaplain has left. (A7)

It seems, however, that contracts and ecumenical cooperation were topics that related to the question of the area where the hospital is located. The particular region in which a hospital was located appeared repeatedly, especially in reference to the degree of the area's religiosity:

> The problem is that there are no people, there's no one in this region who'd be interested in providing spiritual services full time. But the hospital would be interested in it. (B3)

The structure of the population and the expected nature of the region may also affect the way chaplains have had to change their thinking about patients and the work they do with them. For instance:

> This region is specific, full of atheists. (A6)

Another aspect of the chaplains' presence in the institution was how they tried to become part of the hospital's physical environment. Their visible difference from other personnel was one issue that the chaplains discussed in the interviews. In most cases they were given an identification card with a photo and the name of their position. ID may be important in the process of becoming part of the structure:

> As the coordinator of multiple chaplains, I insist on them having ID as a team member, even if the chaplain is not paid by the hospital. (B5)

However, an ID card does not always mean that chaplains are immediately recognisable as such, which some consider a disadvantage. There was no clear agreement on this topic among the chaplains interviewed. One Protestant chaplain decided to wear a shirt with a collar, the way Catholic chaplains do. This particular chaplain was making a clear reference to the stereotypical appearance of Catholic priests, which is familiar to most of the population and makes him recognisable as a religious figure. A few Catholic chaplains (priests and nuns) opted for the same strategy, but doing so brought new complications given the stereotypes about religion among the patients and personnel:

> When I come dressed like this, everyone knows what's going on, everyone recognises me. But, at the same time, many also think that I've come to share the faith. (B1)

The stereotype of 'passing on the faith' surfaced more often in cases where the chaplains preferred to wear religious clothing. Clothing was one of the stereotypes that chaplains mentioned bound them to their roles – other situations are described later in this text.

The organisation of the space within the hospital building was also significant. For example, the space in the hospital where the chaplains are able to store their personal belongings and have a rest was an important topic for the interviewees. Some were lucky enough to have their own office within the hospital:

> You [to the interviewer] were admiring my office too, weren't you? Yes, all of it, including the furniture, that is all hospital property. They gave me the printer, PC, a phone. I really have no reason to complain. (A7)

Nevertheless, the following scenario appeared to be much more common:

> I have a small shelf in the room for nurses, with a prayer book and a Bible and slippers in their bathroom. (B2)

Some chaplains are not able to store personal belongings in the hospital at all. They were viewed – and viewed themselves – as visitors who come and go and must ask on each occasion for a place to hang their coat. The hospital's willingness, or not, to provide chaplains with their own personal space affected their self-esteem. They mentioned this topic also in connection with the space of the hospital chapel. Some hospitals have no chapel and are not planning to have one in the near future, while others had them in the past but no longer do:

> There is no chapel. It was closed two years ago, without even asking us chaplains. The patients used to go there to smoke. It's now some kind of storage space. (B1)

Nevertheless, other chaplains are more than satisfied with the state of affairs:

> We have a chapel, a beautiful one, for ecumenical purposes. We have services there twice a week. (B5)

But this case seemed an exception. Interestingly, there are hospitals that have a room called the Space of Silence. As one chaplain noted, this name was a deliberate choice: 'The name is liberating for patients, because it is not a chapel' (notes from E1). The liberating aspect here derives from avoiding any overt reference to Christianity. Spaces of Silence are thought of as nondenominational, but many of them contain very Christian paraphernalia. The spaces I had the chance to see usually had a cross, chairs, and a bookshelf. The room could also be used for patients seeking privacy and silence, but it was rarely used for such a purpose:

> We have a Space of Silence, which is mostly used only for religious services. I don't know if this means that we don't promote it enough or that people are embarrassed to come here. (A7)

The next important topic related to this thematic area was the integration of chaplains into the hospital regime. One chaplain laconically described the chaplain's self-localisation:

> The chaplains are relegated to the margins of the hospital. And hospitals have their own problems too. (B3)

The question of (not) being a part of a medical team was an issue here:

> No one knows exactly what you're doing, so it's not at all easy. The hospitals where they [chaplains] formed teams are better to work in. They have leadership, supervision, responsibilities – that's how it should be. But when there's only one chaplain in the hospital, or two, they burn out within a few years. (A8)

It seemed that the topic of belonging to a team was also crucial for self-understanding and for the effective organisation of the work, both with one another and with other personnel in the hospital:

> There are three of us chaplains here. We communicate by phone and leave each other notes about the patients … which works with the personnel too; they give us tips on whom to visit. (A6)

Not surprisingly, the level of cooperation and feeling of (not) being part of a team also affects how the chaplains evaluate themselves. Here are two examples of very different experiences:

> I am aware it's expected that the chaplain should be part of some bigger team. But up to now it hasn't worked that way here. In part, it may be my mistake – I'm more of a closed person, an introvert; I don't push these things. So, for me to be a part of an ethical committee or something like that … never. (A7)

> I regularly attend the team meetings. We work really well together. We are open to each other. We share a lot with each other about our work. I feel accepted, and I feel my approach is part of how they understand the work. We complement each other. (A4)

In sum, the ways in which the chaplains become incorporated into the structure of the hospital have a significant effect on their self-identification. The type of contract, personal space, or participation on a team were all experiences central to the chaplains' self-understanding. However, as they all indicated, their work primarily focused on the patients and their well-being.

Methods of working with patients

During the interview, the chaplains were asked how the patients learn about their service. They were aware that self-promotion was important given the nature of their work in the hospital. Because they could be left feeling that they are out on the margins and not really a part of the hospital team, they found themselves being proactive and introducing their roles and work to others. The strategies they used to do this could differ; some preferred to walk around and explain, while others used printed materials:

> We cannot wait until someone approaches us, because very little is known about what to expect from the chaplain. (B5)

> There is a contact for a chaplain on the bulletin board. Not everyone reads that, however. I also have leaflets where I describe my services, and I leave them on the table in the ward. (B2)

The chaplains also mentioned the stereotypes about their roles when they were explaining the nature of their work. A good example of how some people react to their work is provided by a leaflet produced by the Catholic Association of Hospital Chaplains, which emphasises the following:

> Attention! Hospital chaplains are not engaged in any religious campaign, and they never offer patients miraculous healing. … Chaplains are not allowed to try to persuade anybody to enter or change their religious affiliation!

As well as leaflets, the patients usually get information about chaplains upon entering the hospital when they complete their admissions form:

> The patients can learn about us from the admissions form. But I don't think the personnel read it carefully [so that they know which patients might want to see a chaplain]. (B1)

All the chaplains interviewed confirmed that the patients do not usually ask to see a chaplain. There could be two main reasons for this: the generally low level of institutionalised religiosity in the country and the population's unfamiliarity with the chaplaincy service.

> The service has existed in this particular hospital for years, but the patients were by no means asking to see us. A very small percentage of them would ask to see us at their own initiative. (A3)

Under these conditions, the chaplains are mostly forced to 'walk around' the hospital and continuously introduce themselves. Although they may receive recommendations from personnel on whom to visit, the first moments with any patient can be uncomfortable on both sides, as the patients do not know the chaplains or do not usually expect their visits. Some of the chaplains interviewed felt that on first meeting a patient they had to adapt their strategies to get past the stereotypes attached to their role. The following excerpts describe two different strategies that chaplains use that relate to their clothing and how they introduce themselves:

> As soon as they see me in my traditional robe I often hear, 'Am I dying?' So I choose the grey robe at least, instead of the black one. (B1)

> When I arrive, I don't introduce myself as a chaplain but as the 'ears' of the hospital, ears that don't judge and know how to keep secrets. (B3)

Another important point that arose from the interviews was that the main aim of the chaplains was to have a dialogue with a patient that would resemble a casual conversation. The dialogue between a chaplain and a patient is usually considered a way of relieving the person's tension, while it is usually up to the patient to initiate the topic. The dialogue is more about letting the patient speak and listening to them:

> When I arrive, I don't know what the patients expect, what they think our meeting is about. We have to get to that. So, I come in with the approach that I will listen, and, hopefully, I will learn what the person needs, and that we can relate to each other somehow. (A4)

> I am always waiting for the questions from the patients, what they want to speak about. I never start speaking myself, and definitely not about Christ. (A7)

Obviously, most of a hospital chaplain's work, as described in the interviews, consists of individual consultations that border on psychological therapy – the interactions with patients are calming and emphatic. An interesting question arises here: Who are the patients who interact with Czech hospital chaplains? Drawing from the interviews, it can be stated that some of them are believers, mostly affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church, who know what to expect, and who ask for the sacraments to be administered to them, for instance, even by a Protestant female chaplain. However, most patients who interact with chaplains are of a much different nature, as all the chaplains confirmed:

[They're] blank slates, I would say [laughter]. (A7)

99% of them have no connection to the church. (B3)

Believers, but more often sympathisers with the church, and people who were baptised a long time ago, in childhood. (B2)

Many of the patients here claim to be non-believers. Their spirituality lies somewhere else [than mine]. I respect that and approach them accordingly. The core part of my work is in being with people who do not practise their faith in any way. (A3)

This experience affects how the chaplains approach their work. Religiosity is not usually a steady part of their interaction with patients:

The topic [of the conversations] is not God explicitly, but hope, suffering, motivation, sources of strength. (B3)

If you were to ask how often I use the Bible or pray with people … then I'd answer 'not often'. (A7)

The experience of meeting this type of patient often leads chaplains to rethink their working methods:

I very rarely pull the Bible out of my pocket. I have only prayed with a patient a few times. I admit that my idea of the chaplaincy was different from this at the beginning. (A6)

The Czech society requires a special non-religious approach. What makes sense here is ecumenical or non-religious but humanistic spiritual care. (A2)

People are surprised they are not being beaten over the head with the Bible by me. (B3)

The chaplains overall appeared to be trying to avoid the stereotypes attached to religion and to provide comfort to the patients at the same time. They also actively redefined their understanding of the conversations that they were having with patients. The absence of spirituality was not interpreted as lessening the benefits of the mutual encounter:

> Very often it is about the closeness, the humanity, and we don't get to the religious stuff at all. … Even talking about the weather can be spiritual in a way. I can pray with a person and then go bake and bring him the cake he likes … both are spiritual acts. (A7)

> In most cases the conversations are good, beneficial, though we don't talk about religious stuff. Often, there is someone in the room who rejects me, so I speak with someone else who is interested. And then the first one, the one who rejected me, joins us and then asks me to come back. (A3)

The idea of chaplains destroying the stereotypes about religion was one that very frequently came up. The chaplains prefer to talk and listen and sometimes consciously mute their religious identity to get closer to the patient. Moreover, most chaplains I interviewed were conscious of the specific Czech conditions for adopting this special non-religious approach, but at the same time they refused to abandon their own Christian identity. In some cases, the chaplains reported that they acted as intermediaries on religious issues. Mostly this meant supplying contacts for Catholic priests who could anoint the sick or for a representative from a different denomination than the chaplain's:

> Yes, as chaplains here we serve as intermediaries for Catholic priests. And this works well. For the hospital this is understandable, it makes sense … they themselves wouldn't know who to call. (B4)

Last but not least, the chaplains emphasised one big advantage that they have over other personnel when working with patients, which is time:

> The chaplain is the person who always has time, whereas the personnel do not. (A1)

> The chaplain? The person who can spare the time. (A2)

This self-definition led chaplains to think about how they are seen by the hospital's medical personnel. The following section refers to the chaplains' accounts of this relationship.

Working with the hospital personnel

The patients are obviously the focus of the chaplains' attention. Chaplains try to approach them according to their needs and devote enough time to each one. However, everyday communication with the hospital personnel appears to be a much more complicated but inevitable issue. Some called it the 'weak side of the work' (A1). The chaplains shared their general sense of uncertainty about how to approach medical personnel. This is again related to the lack of definition as to what their role is:

> Practically, you walk, you explain to the personnel that you are here, and they suggest this lady or that one ... Cooperating with the personnel is a number one priority, it's very important. But the personnel do not know who you are until they make an experience. (A8)

Some of the chaplains in this study also experienced unkindness from the personnel and felt like an unexpected or uninvited figure in the hospital, or even worse, they were unable to have an effective impact on the situation:

> I got into a conflict with the personnel at the very beginning. One group took a 'beware of the chaplain' approach to me, which interfered with relationships with those individuals who would otherwise have been interested in talking with me. (B2)

Nevertheless, the chaplains also agreed that the relationships are very individual and depend on each individual employee and their attitude:

> I feel accepted. For example, when a doctor comes to visit a patient, they give me time to finish my conversation – only a few nurses are not very nice to me. (B1)

> There are several teams. I have great relationships with one, with two it's okay, and one doesn't accept me – they don't know what the chaplain is here for. (B3)

The chaplains suggested that one of the reasons for the personnel's sometimes rude attitude could have to do with the country's communist history. In many cases, the same personnel were kept on in hospitals after the regime change, and these 'old structures', as the chaplains called them, were suspicious of the chaplains' work. This mainly means that, as the chaplains put it, some personnel are not able to leave behind a militantly atheistic way of thinking:

> The problem is a just the totalitarian way of thinking of the older personnel… They don't get what I am doing here, especially when I am praying with someone – They think I'm crazy. (B2)

From time to time, you pick up a bit of a negative reaction to you, kind of like the service we provide is completely pointless … If no God exists, a chaplain can't be of any help to a person. (A7)

As a consequence, some chaplains develop strategies to deal with the prejudice. One particular chaplain focused on his behaviour towards the personnel:

At first, I was just walking around and smiling all the time. Now the personnel approach me themselves. They asked me to take part in a conference. They are mostly friendly to me. (B5)

Another chose a more institution-focused strategy:

I have forced myself into the senior doctors meeting, two or three times, and presented the chaplaincy service to them. And I tried to explain to the doctors and the head nurses what it's about. I guess that helped too. (A7)

One interesting finding, however, is that in situations where the chaplains felt that they were truly accepted, that they were part of a team, usually a palliative team, they generally evaluated their situation and their relationships better. The closeness of the chaplain to the issue of death and their expected expertise on this matter were topics that surfaced repeatedly in the interviews. Belonging to the palliative or after-care teams was felt to be the most intuitive choice for a chaplain from the personnel side as well:

We as chaplains were asked to join the palliative department. This somehow came about on its own. (B4)

In one case palliative care was used as a reason in the debate around whether (or not) to have a chaplain in the hospital:

The head doctor pushed the possibility of having spiritual care here. Palliative care was the argument given. (B2)

Last but not least, as part of the definition of the chaplains' work they sometimes found that they were also asked to provide the medical personnel as well as the patients with spiritual counsel. The chaplains who were asked this saw it as a complicated task:

It's only happened to me two or three times that personnel asked to speak privately with me themselves … but it's tough to find the time and space to approach them… when I manage to do so, however, they are surprised that they can speak normally with me, and I won't preach to them. (B1)

> I've only twice received a direct request to have a conversation from the personnel. Mostly these are chats in the corridor. (A6)

Speaking in the corridors for a few minutes was found to be a typical way in which the chaplains tried to approach personnel:

> It is only possible to communicate speak briefly together. I have to find room for this myself, and then I have only a few minutes to talk. (B4)

Communication with personnel, however, is more typically evaluated as functioning well. The chaplains feel they are called to attend to the cases where they're needed and that the personnel are aware of them. This 'friendliness' is at present as far as interactions between chaplains and personnel extend, as personnel only rarely and sporadically ask them for spiritual counsel, while pastoral care for personnel is rare and occasional.

To conclude this section, it is worth mentioning future directions, as some chaplains suggested that educating personnel as to the spiritual needs of patients would help with cooperation:

> I really appreciate what they do. They're with the patients, all the time, in an intimate way. They must be supported. But they also have to educate themselves about the mind and the soul of the patient. (B2)

What the practical solution is to attain this 'dream', as one chaplain called it, is a difficult question. Some ideas include incorporating spiritual themes into educational seminars for the medical personnel or making the chaplains important agents in meetings with new employees. The chaplains could also be given a chance to organise a programme for the personnel. All of this could help make their roles clearer.

Self-understanding

How chaplains understand their own roles can be divided into positive claims (what I provide) and negative claims (what I'm not sure I want to be). It also includes strategies on how they can fulfil their role in the given environment and the relationships beyond the hospital (with their own church and professional organisations).

A positive self-understanding among chaplains was observed in the interviews when they described chaplains as representatives of humanity in the 'cold and mechanical world' of medicine:

It's about empathy, companionship, offering a relationship. Medical discourse makes the patient an object, but the chaplains should provide them with understanding. (A2)

Conversely, a rather negative self-understanding was observed in the interviews in relation to the lack of a clear definition as to who a chaplain is and what he or she should do. This can have uncomfortable consequences:

A chaplain is something like a highly absorbent rag that sucks out all the inconsistencies of the system. (A1)

However, the lack of definition has a bright side, too, as many of the interviewed chaplains mentioned that they feel a significant amount of freedom during their workdays:

The main advantage of this work is that I have enough time to do what is important, and I am not constrained by any regulations. (B1)

I had a chance to write down the content of what my work consists of. That was great. At the hospital, they said to me: 'You know, we don't know about this. You'll have to explain it yourself.' [laughter] Sometimes, it even feels odd that no one oversees me, and I don't have to report anything to anyone. (A7)

Generally, though, the chaplains' working conditions and positions improved rapidly. Often there was a great deal of improvisation regarding which hospitals they visited and what they had to do. In this case, the freedom referred to above means that many of the chaplains are working rather intuitively and learning from experience as they go along:

The boundaries of being a chaplain are always shifting. But, more and more, it is clear to me what kind of dialogue is useful for patients and what isn't, as well as which patients are in need of support. (A6)

An attitude repeatedly observed among the interviewed chaplains was a sense of respect towards the hospital setting and, hence, a certain carefulness in how they spoke. The chaplains are grateful for the opportunity they have. They are aware of their marginal position in the hospital and are very careful not to break the fragile trust:

I understand my role as setting the path for future chaplains. I am happy where I am, and I am not trying to expand into other wards. (B2)

The identity work of chaplains also encompassed the need to combine different roles in their lives. Most hospital chaplains in the Czech Republic do not work in the hospital full time but combine that role with leading a parish, for example. For many chaplains, this double duty can be a source of stress and tension:

> A big issue for me is how to perform my dual role as a parson and a chaplain. That's a topic for me to deal with in the future as well. (A5)

> Chaplaincy is a demanding job. It requires full engagement. I can't imagine doing it with just half the energy. If you have your own parish, you can't be the only chaplain at the hospital at the same time. (A8)

In relation to the topic of parishes, some of the chaplains interviewed mentioned the issue of the attitude of their church. Some noted that their church did not support the service their work as a chaplain as much as it could. Chaplaincy was viewed by church members as a partly forgotten service, sometimes perceived as ancillary in comparison to their parish work. The chaplains mentioned an occasional need to explain to their parish members and church officials what they really do at the hospital (notes from E2), or they noted a lack of understanding church members and the possibility of being able to share things with others:

> For many people in my church, chaplaincy is a marginal issue – something like half volunteering. (A1)

> The church is in many ways outdated. Its old structures have a hard time absorbing modern concepts like chaplaincy. (A4)

> Some chaplains seek support in chaplain associations instead. Some claim that support from the association is much more important for them than support from the church (notes from E2):

> I don't feel supported by the church. It seems like the bishop sees this work as clashing with my work for the parish. I only get support from our association. (B2)

Other chaplains would continue their work even if they did not have the official recommendation for this work from their church, as some hospitals do not care whether the chaplain has this authorisation from the church or not (notes from E2). But others were content with the way things were. Again, the chaplains' views on this topic greatly depended on the church and the individuals in it:

> The church? It's okay. Our bishop understands these issues. He is open and supportive. (B5)

A few of the chaplains also shared their worries that chaplaincy work is quite unpopular among theology students. As a result, it could in the future be difficult to find young people interested in continuing to provide this service in hospitals:

> Regarding chaplaincies, we in the churches should speak more about educating new, young chaplains, providing them with internships and such. (A2)

Finally, I would like to briefly reflect on the question of the chaplains' particular distinctiveness. The chaplain's personality is what is regarded as making them unique, more so than their affiliation:

> The chaplain's personality is key. The chaplain just has to be a non-confrontational person, a communicative person. (A1)

> It's about the chaplain as a person. Problems may arise, but still, it's about the skills of the chaplain. (B5)

I will conclude this section with the chaplains' thoughts about their special place at the hospital, something that I called their 'distinctiveness' above. The chaplains' concluding remarks in the interviews usually pointed to their 'churchness' located within a secularised environment:

> I ask myself whether it makes sense to insist on this exclusive status. To me it makes sense to be part of a team going forward. (A2)

> A chaplain cannot be seen as partisan. The hospital agrees with their presence. This is an important fact. (A5)

> To me, a chaplain is a machine that ploughs through prejudices. (A1)

Indeed, some of the chaplains saw themselves as warriors combating stereotypes about the church and religion. This seemed to be of added importance in the largely secularised Czech Republic.

Discussion and conclusion

In the analysis of the Czech hospital chaplains' accounts, there emerged four important thematic areas, which were described and quoted above. Within these areas the following topics appeared to be especially significant for the chaplains.

First, there are several different layers to their self-localisation within hospitals. Questions about part-time contracts are issues that were felt to require

further discussion with both hospitals and churches, in addition to gaining new candidates for the occupation. On the other hand, the ecumenical work, largely the result of the fact that many hospitals have chaplains on part-time contracts, is vital, works well, and is unique from an international perspective [cf., e.g., Martínez-Ariño and Griera 2018]. Nevertheless, the chaplains who were interviewed all felt that they figure on the margins of the hospital. Yet, as Norwood [2006: 26] notes using the example of American hospitals, being on the margins does not mean being ignored, it means being in a position where you are 'alive and well'. In line with this claim, the Czech hospital chaplains in this sample seemed to be content, proactive, and finding their path with patience through the system.

Second, Czech hospital chaplains are met with very different reactions about what their role is when they meet patients. They can be rejected as strangers or 'bearers of foreign ideology' (a term used by Baštecká, Doskočil and Janečková [2020]), but, at the same time, their ability to talk, listen, and always have time is appreciated by the patients. However, in regard to working with patients, an especially interesting topic in the Czech context is exactly 'who' are the patients that chaplains work with. If I were to define the typical patients Czech hospital chaplains meet with, I would borrow the term 'believer-in-something' (the Czech term for this is *něcista*, a person who believes that something exists; Halík [2006]), without a clear religious vision but with some undefined spiritual needs. This could be close to what Weaver et al. [2008: 14–15] call 'patients at risk': people who have high spiritual needs, weak religious anchoring, and do not adhere to any one faith. The chaplains also appear here as religious intermediaries and spiritual experts, something that research from abroad had also noted [Martínez-Ariño and Griera 2018].

Third, with respect to how chaplains relate to other personnel, some of them experienced an uneasiness at work related to negative attitudes toward them as religious figures. This is largely the result of the country's communist history and the atheistic views of most hospital personnel. However, they agreed that these problems have greatly diminished over the decades. It seems that the secular personnel simply needed to get used to the presence of religion within the institution [Nešpor 2020].

The chaplains agreed that hospital personnel may see them as experts on unpopular topics, be it religion or, more often, the personal problems of patients, and death. It is a common experience for hospital chaplains to be approached as experts on this 'dirty work' [Martínez-Ariño and Griera 2018: 151] or on existential issues in general [De Groot 2010]. The most important intermediaries for chaplains appear to be nurses, who, at the same time, may be very unsure of what to expect from chaplains. A long-term plan to solve this problem could be to educate personnel more extensively about the spiritual needs of patients and provide personnel with targeted support [Baštecká, Doskočil and Janečková 2020]. Providing personnel with spiritual counsel was a more complicated and still open issue that the chaplains treated with care. Finding a way of integrating what they

do with the work and routines of the personnel seems to be a universal problem among hospital chaplains [Norwood 2006]. In the Czech Republic, however, this may be further complicated by the areligious attitudes of the population.

Fourth, the last section of this article, reviewing how chaplains understand themselves, also provided some interesting insights. Chaplains understand their role primarily as introducing a human element into the cold world of medicine. The medicinal system is perceived as mechanical in contrast to the holistic world of religion [Norwood 2006]. This point, however, has complications. A chaplain who provides 'human, psychological, emotional and supportive means towards the sick, their families, other close people, visits and the personnel' [Menke 2017: 40] can be overburdened with tasks and suffer from the unsure definition of their work. Furthermore, the metaphor of a 'highly absorbent rag' that one chaplain used seems to accurately summarise the experiences of others. The chaplains in the Czech hospitals felt that they were approached in cases where other personnel did not have the skills or the time to deal with them themselves. This finding is consistent with the argument that contemporary chaplains are often 'filling the gaps' [Martínez-Ariño and Griera 2018].

Another interesting finding shows that chaplains somewhat play down their religious affiliation during their work. This seems similar to the approach taken by the Australian government's school chaplains, who claimed not to be religious in a traditional sense, and instead referred to themselves as followers of Jesus in a conscious reaction to the negative stereotypes associated with religious institutions [Isaacs and Mergler 2018]. For De Groot [2010], spiritual care in hospitals is a case where religious beliefs and practices move beyond the original religious sphere and are only partly determined by any one religion. As a consequence, the identities of chaplains may start to melt [De Groot 2018]. Norwood [2006: 20] recognises the increasingly nuanced practice of contemporary chaplains in religious and scientific discourse as leading to an 'ambivalent chaplain' who is in a constant process of negotiation, where chaplains are expected to 'facilitate' and 'initiate' spiritual care and religious rituals. Using Norwood's [2006] terms of facilitating and initiating, the Czech chaplains in this sample are more like facilitators of care and connection than the initiators of religious rituals and spiritual healing. De Groot [2010: 27] describes this process as getting 'close to, but [remaining] distinct from the psychological profession'. The downplaying of the topic of religion by chaplains could also be interpreted as a tendency to professionalise the chaplaincy. Czech chaplains and volunteers gather in professional associations outside church structures based on their profession but not on the religious affiliation.

The potential for the future development of the Czech hospital chaplaincy outside church structures can also be identified in the abovementioned 'patients at risk', who have high spiritual needs but little religious background [Weaver et al. 2008], which is exactly how an increasing portion of the Czech population can be characterised. As sociologists, we are facing what seems to be a uniquely

Czech combination of religious apathy and atheistic views [Vido, Václavík and Paleček 2016]. However, more than strictly atheistic, the available data indicate that most Czechs are religiously indifferent and 'passively agnostic' [Vogel 2017: 453]. As scholars suggest, the Czech Republic is typical of a high level of individualised and privatised spirituality in combination with a certain 'religious illiteracy' [Václavík, Hamplová and Nešpor 2018: 101]. In an international comparison, the Czech Republic is stereotypically portrayed as one of the most secularised countries in Europe, if not in the world [Lužný and Navrátilová 2001]. A long-term distrust of religious institutions can be observed in the population [Nešpor 2010] and a negative view is taken of most attempts by churches to influence public affairs [Václavík, Hamplová and Nešpor 2018].

All these factors have a strong effect on Czech hospital chaplaincy. For example, as stated above, the strategy of not making a display of the church they belong to makes it easier to find a way to interact with patients – something that seems very helpful within the Czech environment. Menke [2017: 41] claims that Czech hospital chaplains can only succeed if they come across as ecumenically open and serving, as this can make them a 'reliable witness' to the faith of their churches and religious organisations. It seems probable that chaplains could potentially become popular figures in their churches. From the interviews it was possible to observe that the chaplains' careful work with patients helped them to overcome some deep-rooted stereotypes about religious institutions. Thus, together with the widely accepted and valued charitable and helpful role that European churches play [Manuel and Glatzer 2019], the chaplaincy has the potential to reach a wider population.

In this regard, the Czech Republic can be considered an example of a nation with a very advanced secularisation process, but the level of subjective religiousness is relatively high [Stark 1999]. This presents an essential challenge for hospital chaplains and their self-promotion. Future research on these developments would be useful, especially if it were based on long-term and in-field observations. The biggest limitation on the findings of this study has been the dramatically changing situation with COVID-19. These new experiences for chaplains, hospital personnel, and patients may affect the future development of chaplaincy as well.

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'A Milestone in the History of Slovakia': Two Narratives about the 2015 Referendum on the Family in Slovakia*

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Abstract: This paper examines a discursive controversy that arose in Slovakia after a conservative civic association initiated a referendum to protect 'traditional families' against the supposed encroachment of LGBTI rights. The 2015 referendum represents a tipping point in the formation of a new Slovak conservative political front. In this article, meaning-making among actors civically engaged in the referendum is brought to light by re-constructing the deep cultural structures in which they are immersed. Drawing upon the strong programme in cultural sociology, I analyse the master narratives woven through the discourse of the referendum organisers and boycotters. These narratives are re-constructed from 20 semi-structured interviews with the engaged actors and a corpus of 82 written documents, such as blogs, speeches, and declarations concerning the referendum. The analysis employs the methods of thick description and the structural analysis of narrative genres. It shows that, first, the referendum controversy presents a clash between a narrative of social decline and a narrative of social progress. The narratives serve as moral regulators by deploying emotionally loaded images of nostalgia for 'traditional families' and a utopia of unconditional progress. Second, although both narratives interpret the referendum as a milestone in the history of Slovakia, they do so in different genres with specific implications for action. Using the example of the decision by referendum opponents to withdraw from the pre-referendum debates, I demonstrate how narrative genres as implicit and deep cultural structures have the power to orient action and shape the contours of controversy.

Keywords: narrative, genre, culture, meaning-making, referendum

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Introduction

'Join us and go down in history.'[1] With these words, the newly formed conservative initiative Alliance for Family launched a mobilisation campaign for the 2015 Referendum on Family [Aliancia za rodinu 2013]. The referendum proposed a ban on gay and lesbian marriages, adoptions, and compulsory sex education in schools.[2] This popular initiative was a manifestation of the conservative backlash against LGBTI[3] rights and gender equality resonating transnationally as part of an anti-gender movement [Giebel and Röhrborn 2014; Paternotte and Kuhar 2017]. Using right-wing populist rhetoric, the movement representatives voiced concerns about the disruption of 'traditional families' and the negation of sexual differences that they believe endanger the preservation of humankind [Korolczuk 2016]. The escalation of anti-gender mobilisation into national referenda has been characteristic of post-communist EU member states,[4] in which progressive EU policy collides with worries about the disappearance of 'traditional values' and Eurosceptic sentiments [Anić 2015; Kahlina 2015; Slootmaeckers and Sircar 2018]. Such disputes have admittedly polarised public discourse, leaving certain conservative and progressive sectors of society in an antagonist relationship and with little ability to cooperate on common matters [Ondrušek et al. 2017: 99; Sekerák 2015].

In this article, I explore the public controversy over the 2015 Slovak referendum from a cultural perspective. Social movement scholarship predominantly conceptualises culture as a set of cognitive schemas used to frame a matter of concern [Snow and Benford 2000] or as a toolkit of cultural practices employed strategically by engaged actors [Swidler 1986]. To complement these approaches, I follow the call to incorporate a broader notion of culture into movements and protest studies [Jaspers, Goodwin and Polletta 2001; Ullrich, Daphi and Baumgarten 2014]. This holistic cultural perspective does not limit culture to a partial area of social life but treats it in an anthropological sense – as a shared web of meanings that are not only cognitive and strategically used but are also uncon-

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[1] All quotations from the data are the author's translations from Slovak.
[2] The referendum was supposed to consist of the following questions: (1) Do you agree that no cohabitation of persons other than a bond between one man and one woman can be called marriage? (2) Do you agree that same-sex couples or groups shouldn't be allowed to adopt children and subsequently raise them? (3) Do you agree that no other cohabitation of persons than marriage should be granted special protection, rights, and duties which are only granted to marriage and married couples? (4) Do you agree that schools cannot require children to participate in education pertaining to sexual behaviour or euthanasia, if their parents or the children themselves do not agree with the content of the education?' The third question was later found to be in conflict with fundamental rights and freedoms and was not accepted by the Constitutional Court.
[3] Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex
[4] Similar referenda took place in Croatia (2013), Slovenia (2015), and Romania (2018).

scious, symbolic, and emotional [Geertz 1973; Lévi-Strauss 1974]. It aims to reflect and bring to light the deep cultural realm and how it informs social action – providing motives and imbuing everyday life with meaning.

Drawing upon the strong programme in cultural sociology [Alexander and Smith 2003], I explore the deep cultural structures of the 2015 referendum controversy, re-constructing the master narratives underlying the conflict to better understand conservative vs progressive battles in general. How is the referendum narrated by the actors civically engaged in the controversy as either referendum organisers or boycotters? What kinds of arguments, images, emotions, and genres do these narratives deploy to make the referendum meaningful and significant? Additionally, I want to provide comparative insight into the narrations of referendum proponents and opponents. This objective stems from the prevailing trend in social movement scholarship to examine LGBTI activism [O'Dwyer 2012; Paternotte 2016] or anti-gender mobilisation [Paternotte and Kuhar 2017; Kováts 2017] as two separate phenomena. Moreover, the scarce comparative research on movements and counter-movements regarding gay rights is primarily based on the analysis of instrumental framing and strategies [Ayoub and Chetaille 2017; Fillieule and Broqua 2020]. However, my ambition is to compare and bring to the fore the non-intentional, implicit, and latent cultural repertoires within the conflicting movements that make their efforts meaningful and legitimate.

The meaning-centred analysis of data from 20 semi-structured interviews with civil society actors and 82 documents (including blogs, web content, declarations, media interviews and legislation) reveals two different master narratives in which the conflicting groups enwrap themselves: the narrative of social decline among the proponents and the narrative of social progress among the opponents. They delineate antithetical portraits of the development of society, eliciting moods such as nostalgia, hope, or frustration. Although both narratives portray the 2015 referendum as a milestone in the history of Slovakia, they apply different genres. While the referendum proponents lean towards apocalypticism, depicting the referendum as an emergency brake to deflect a civilisational threat, the opponents use the romantic genre to portray the referendum as an obstacle in the natural development towards an inclusive society. I argue that these genres have social implications, shaping the controversy in a specific way: first, the apocalyptic genre enables referendum proponents to narrate the referendum as a meaningful and relevant initiative; second, the less-exaggerated romantic genre of the opponents allows them to decide to withdraw from pre-referendum debates and undermine the significance of the proponents' narrative. The analysis shows the capacity of narrative genres to orient and enable action or, in this case, inaction.

Referendum background: actors, activities, opposition, and legal framework

The Alliance for Family, an umbrella association of conservative NGOs, announced the referendum in the summer of 2014 after collecting over 400,000 signatures.[5] The referendum was heralded as the 'protection of family' [Aliancia za rodinu 2013], and it incited a heated public debate, as several controversies accompanied it.

First, though presented as a secular initiative,[6] the referendum was morally and financially backed up by the Roman Catholic Church[7] [Smrek 2015]. The Episcopal Conference of Bishops of Slovakia mobilised people by depicting same-sex partnerships and gender equality as a 'culture of death' in pastoral letters to be read as homilies in Catholic churches across the country [Konferencia biskupov Slovenska 2013]. Second, the voters were mobilised to take a position on what had already become a law through the Amendment to the Act on Marriage ratified in June 2014, which defines marriage as the unique bond between a man and a woman[8] [Mesežnikov 2015]. Therefore, the referendum could only confirm the status quo, which fostered disputes over its significance and the expenses incurred from the national budget concerning it. Nevertheless, the referendum petitioners feared the redefinition of marriage in the future because the Constitution still did not contain an explicit ban on same-sex marriage. It has resulted in a paradoxical situation in which 'the State is unable to prohibit same-sex marriage just because it does not regard bonds other than those based on a woman-man relationship as a marriage' [Sekerák 2017: 41]. Third, referendum organisers constantly downplayed the topic of LGBTI rights and voiced the protection of the traditional family to be the referendum's only purpose [Raučinová 2014; Tódová 2015]. In September 2014, Slovak president Andrej Kiska submitted the referendum questions for judicial review to verify whether the referendum violated fundamental rights and freedoms [Krošlák 2015: 152]. Consequently, by the decision of the Constitutional Court, the question suggesting that there should be no legal protection for cohabitations other than marriage was found unconstitutional and was excluded.

These three points were also emphasised in the referendum boycott engaging progressive NGOs, activists, scholars, and independent media. The public

[5] The citizens of Slovakia can initiate the referendum by submitting a petition with minimum of 350,000 signatures of eligible voters [Spáč 2010: 188].
[6] The official status of the Alliance for Family is 'a civil initiative not bound to any ideology, religion, or political party' [Aliancia za rodinu 2013].
[7] Slovakia is one of the most religious countries in Europe, with 62% of the population self-declared Catholics [SODB 2011].
[8] This amendment to the Slovak Constitution was adopted by the parliamentary majority. However, it should be remarked that the legal solutions pertaining to the definition of marriage in the Slovak Constitution contradict Article 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights [Kużelewska 2019: 21].

initiative 'Let's Say No to the Nonsense Referendum' organised a hunger strike in protest and launched a social media appeal depicting the referendum as a vote against human rights. Opponents united under the boycott campaign 'We Won't Go' a month before the referendum, creating a paradoxical mobilisation for ignoring public voting. Thus, while the referendum organisers aimed to mobilise people for voting in the referendum, the opponents engaged in a demobilisation strategy to lower the voter turnout not to reach the 50% threshold to make the referendum results valid. By the date of the vote on 7 February 2015, the tension between referendum proponents and opponents had turned into a nationwide controversy drawing the attention of mass media. Eventually, even though all the referendum questions received over 90% support, the voter turnout at 21.41% was insufficient to make the results valid, similar to the outcome of the Croatian, Slovenian, and Romanian referenda on same-sex marriage.

However, although such popular votes may seem zero-sum, they are conflict-maximising [Kuželewska 2019: 23]. The referendum represented a tipping point in the crystallisation of a new conservative political front [Gajdoš and Rapošová 2018]. It brought the topic of same-sex marriages and civil unions into the spotlight and initiated unprecedented public debate [Rybár and Šovčíková 2016: 86]. It also created the possibility to articulate conflicting positions by setting the tone for further public disputes on values and human rights.[9] Moreover, as this paper shows, while the low turnout points to the public's indifference towards the topic of LGBTI rights, media and civil society discourse on the referendum reveals greater polarisation of the conservative and progressive sectors of society.

The role of narratives in social life

This section introduces the theoretical background of the paper with a particular focus on the concept of narrative. Smith [2005: 28] argues that 'when events happen they are not treated in an isolated way, but rather are inserted into a broader narrative matrix that tells us what they mean'. The study of narratives is the study of conflict-maximising, the focus of the strong programme in cultural sociology [Alexander and Smith 2003]. Its proponents suggest examining culture as an underlying realm of social action and as the locus of meaning-making processes [Spillman 2002: 4]. Culture is conceived as collective common sense, a web of meanings people themselves have spun and are suspended in it [Geertz 1973]. Drawing from structuralist approaches in anthropology and linguistics [Saussure 1959; Lévi-Strauss 1974] and textual approaches to cultures rooted in Weberian Verstehen sociology [Burke 1941; Ricoeur 1973], the strong programme

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[9] The topic of same-sex partnerships and parenting continues to resonate in Slovak electoral campaigns, such as the latest parliamentary (2016, 2020) and presidential (2019) elections.

introduces 'structural hermeneutics' as a theoretical and methodological model. While structuralism seeks to identify patterns of meanings and construct a general culture theory, hermeneutics captures the temper and texture of meanings [Alexander and Smith 2003: 26]. Treating culture as a patterned and self-contained system of meanings makes it possible to grant culture relative autonomy by distinguishing it from social structure [Kane 1997]. In the analysis, culture stands as an independent variable with explanatory power [Alexander and Smith 2003: 12]. Accordingly, the narrative dimension of the referendum controversy is analysed as an autonomous realm with implications for action.

Narratives form a specific axis of meanings complementary to cultural codes in binary oppositions within the cultural realm. While binary codes, such as good-evil, active-passive, and rational-irrational, classify the world according to moral criteria, narrative structures allocate responsibility, agency, and causality [Smith 2005: 14]. Narratives are stories constructed and exchanged by people and communities through which they come to understand themselves and the world they live in; they carry meanings in a story-like structure that employs characters, space and time, plot, and a timeline [Kane 1997: 258; Smith 2005: 18]. Narratives provide explanations by representing events in cause-and-effect relations [Polletta 2006: 10]. According to Jameson [2001: 103], all historical events, despite their great complexity on a phenomenological level, pass through narrativisation and are accessible to us only in narrative forms. Different groups of actors, however, may narrate the same event in different ways. The event can be 'real', but what it means and what should be done about it is defined by a narrative genre that carries implications for social life [e.g. Jacobs 2001; Polletta and Bobby Chen 2011]. Romance, for instance, generates optimism, tragedy stimulates fatalism and resignation, irony opens space for social critique and innovation, and apocalypse legitimates exceptional acts as risks, sacrifice, or war [Alexander and Smith 2003: 25].

Drawing from structuralist poetics, Smith [2005] proposes a model of the genre to categorise formal genres according to their structural attributes: with greater polarisation in the moral sides of a story, motivation moves from mundane to ideals, the scope of the object of struggle enlarges, and powers of action increase (see Figure 1).

The model shows three narrative genres – low mimesis, tragedy/romance, and apocalypse – positioned on a scale of narrative inflation. Low mimesis represents mundane affairs, and it is the least inflated narrative genre because characters are slightly polarised with limited powers of action and the object of their struggles is local. Tragedy and romance adopt middle positions as they depict morally polarised characters with elevated powers of action and greater motivation to struggle for an object of national scope. Last, apocalypse represents the most inflated genre, with strong moral polarisation between characters motivated by ideals, endowed with extraordinary powers, and struggling for an object of global scope. In other words, the more inflated the narrative is, the greater the threat it predicts and the more it stresses the urgency to take action on it.

Figure 1. The structural model of genre
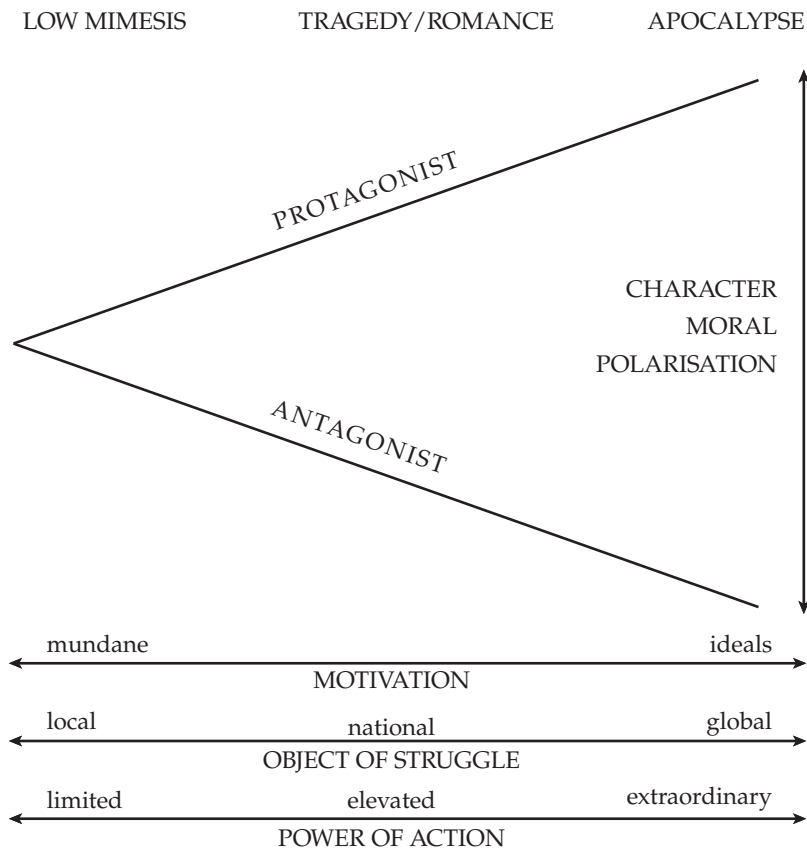
Source: Smith [2005: 24].

Unlike frames and other strategic speech acts, movement leaders do not use narratives to maximise their power; instead, they serve as a guiding mechanism, creating a meaningful context for action. The cultural-sociological analysis of narratives differs from frame analysis [Snow and Benford 2000] and the toolkit perspective on culture [Swidler 1986] along three dimensions. First, narratives are moral regulators enabling and constraining human agency. They align actions with ultimate purposes and implicitly or explicitly indicate the morally right thing to do [White 1980]. Second, narratives employ emotional registers evoking powerful passions, hopes, dangers, or triumphs [Barthes 1977: 124; see

Jaspers 2009]. Thus, they bring feelings to the centre of the analysis of meaning-making, whereas approaches that treat culture as a strategy tend to overlook emotions and overrate cognition. Third, the strategic use of culture also ignores cultural autonomy by disregarding that people first need to make sense of situations by referring to cultural models, which may lead to false cultural causalities [Kane 1997: 250–254].

Nevertheless, this paper does not aim to deny the relevance of frame analysis in the study of movements and conflicts.[10] Instead, it aims to illuminate the deeper and unconscious meaning-making processes of actors engaged in the referendum controversy, since movements not only use culture but also embody culture without always applying it [Ullrich, Daphi and Baumgarten 2014: 4]. It also aims to bring to the fore the cultural background in which the motivations and actions of the engaged actors are immersed. Drawing upon these premises, I analytically separate the cultural-narrative dimension of the referendum controversy with the objective of examining cognitive, moral, and emotional aspects of the narratives concerning the 2015 referendum that circulated within the media and the civil sphere.

Data and methods

Since meaning-making can hardly be measured regarding frequency or amount, this study employs qualitative methods of interpretation and reconstruction [Denzin and Lincoln 2011: 8]. I analysed 20 semi-structured interviews with proponents and opponents of the referendum and 82 written documents concerning the referendum. The selection of the participants and the documents was conducted using purposeful sampling, following a constructivist approach [Rapley 2014]. First, I delineated the case as 'the referendum controversy' to provide the research with a clear focus and coherence [Reed 2011: 103]. Second, I created a sample of 'information-rich' actors and documents from which I could learn a great deal about the case [Patton 2002: 230]. Third, I collected and analysed the data simultaneously to construct and re-construct an analytical puzzle until I reached theoretical saturation – until fresh data stopped sparking new theoretical insights [Thornberg and Charmaz 2014: 167]. Finally, after reaching saturation, the case appeared as a coherent web of meanings.

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[10] For instance, examining the discursive strategies among the leaders of the Slovak Referendum on Family, Valkovičová [2017] has aptly pointed out how the actors use frames (e.g., 'collapsing European civilisation', 'threat to nation', etc.) to create a cleavage between 'depraved Europe' and 'pure/traditionalist Slovakia'. In another study, the critical frame analysis helped to identify the role of the ethics of care in narratives of sex education related to one of the referendum questions [Libáková, Valkovičová and Jesenková 2019].

The interviews were collected between 2016 and 2018. I addressed civically engaged individuals[11] who actively and publicly participated in the controversy, either as proponents or opponents of the referendum, by writing blogs, organising mobilisation campaigns, or administrating social media. The interview sample contained ten actors from each side of the dispute. Since the studied field is relatively small, considering the country's size and the selection of publicly known actors, I have chosen not to include a table with participant characteristics to maintain their anonymity. Regarding the type of engagement in the controversy, 18 out of 20 participants were engaged through non-governmental organisations with either conservative or progressive orientations, and 13 were main representatives. Nevertheless, 11 participants pursued a parallel career outside the civil society sector. During the interviews, I followed the principles of the 'comprehensive interview', based on empathy, with the aim of gaining deeper insight [Kaufmann 2010]; I also strived for the maximum possible standardisation of my approach towards all participants.

The second source of data was a corpus of documents written between December 2013 and February 2018. The selected documents were sorted into five categories: (1) blogs, commentaries, and speeches; (2) content of web pages; (3) declarations and open letters; (3) media interviews; (4) legislative documents; and (5) Church declarations. Out of 82 documents, 50 fell into the first category. The blogs and commentaries were published under the platform of national journals, with approximately half advocating pro-referendum positions and the other half espousing anti-referendum positions. The online content was collected from the official web pages of the 16 engaged NGOs. Out of the six analysed declarations, three were pro-referendum and the other three anti-referendum.[12] Two out of four analysed media interviews were published in national dailies and the other two on web pages of the engaged movements. The legislative documents included three strategies discussed during the referendum campaign.[13] Third, I analysed three pastoral letters written by the Episcopal Conference of Bishops of Slovakia to be read as homilies in all Catholic churches in the country.

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[11] Since some of the interviewed actors do not want to call themselves activists, I use the term 'civically engaged individuals', as they are all engaged with civil society issue(s), working within civil society institutions.

[12] The Alliance for Family Declaration (2013), Declaration of Conservatives after the referendum (2015), Declaration for Family before the parliamentary election (2016), Open Letter to the Government from Human Rights Organisations (2014), Declaration of theologist against the referendum (2015) and 'We Won't Go!' – Declaration of LGBT organisations before the referendum (2015).

[13] The Action Plan for Gender Equality in the Slovak Republic for the Years 2014–2019, National Strategy for Gender Equality in the Slovak Republic for the Years 2014–2019, and Nationwide Strategy for the Protection and Support of Human Rights in the Slovak Republic (2018).

The data analysis entailed constructivist coding. I started with initial open coding to avoid forcing data into preconceptions and to stay open about the direction of further research; then, I used focused coding to synthesise the codes into tentative conceptual categories. Finally, I engaged in theoretical coding by bringing theoretical perspectives into the codes [Thornberg and Charmaz 2014: 156–159]. The analysis was conducted using Atlas.ti software. I also used thick description to grasp the complex nature of meaning making in all its colours, shades, and tempers [Geertz 1973]. Thick description is a meaning-centred approach to data analysis rooted in the epistemology of interpretive research, in which the researcher treats the collected data as an ensemble of texts saturated with meanings requiring constant attention to every detail. Following this premise, I created thick summaries of the data from interviews and documents to construct a complex and coherent picture of meaning-making about the referendum within the media and the civil sphere. The narratives about the referendum were re-constructed from the data organised into codes and summaries aiming to deliver an interpretive explanation[14] of the referendum controversy [Reed 2011: 128]. Since meanings bear motivation for action and define the social context of action, their interpretation can provide a better understanding of the motivations underlying both sides of the controversy and an explanation of the actors' decisions to act accordingly.

Narrative of social decline and narrative of social progress

Public controversies often involve stories about the dangers of descent and the hopes of rescue [Smith 2005: 23]. This scenario played out in my findings. The Alliance for Family publicly asserted a narrative about the gradual regress of people's morals – the disruption of families, society, and, eventually, all of civilisation – and proposed a national referendum to help reverse such an impending future. The conservative movements sketched an image of social decay, generating feelings of nostalgia for the disappearing 'traditional' world of clear gender roles and heteronormative society. The referendum opponents articulated an alternative view of society. They pointed to the continuous, albeit slow, progress of society in recognising individual rights, solidarity, and freedom, seeing the referendum as a hindrance to such progress, an obstacle in the struggles for a better world that must be overcome. The utopian idea of progress, notwithstanding the backlash, imbued the narrative of progress with feelings of determination and hope that, however, could be easily interrupted by frustration caused by the conflict between expectations and reality. The following sections elaborate on these two master narratives about the referendum and the emotional registers they employ.

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[14] Reed [2011: 23] considers thick description to be also the maximal interpretation of the studied case.

Nostalgia for disappearing traditions

In December 2013, the Episcopal Conference of Bishops started to warn people through pastoral letters about spreading a 'culture of death' that endangers the natural, God-given order of things:

> Followers of the culture of death come with a new 'gender ideology' … They aim to assert the union of two men or two women as equal to marriage. By doing so, they create a Sodomite mockery that is contradictory to God's will and presupposes God's punishment. Through high-minded slogans, the disruption of family life is being asserted into society.
>
> [Konferencia biskupov Slovenska 2013]

LGBTI and feminist activists were accused of disrupting 'traditional' – heterosexual – families by promoting so-called 'gender ideology' and a 'culture of death'. The allegory sowed the seeds of the master narrative of social decline that later permeated all referendum-promoting activities.

The narrative of decline was later shorn of its religious character, when the Alliance for Family initiated the referendum campaign, but the actors and the narrative's plot remained. For example, consider the following quotation from the blog of a conservative activist:

> If the government will invest money in the analysis of curricula and teaching methodologies to 'eliminate unfair information about sexual orientation'; if it will uproot 'hetero-normativity', adjust birth numbers individually to avoid discrimination against transsexuals; if it will sexualise our children in an untimely way instead of investing in education about relationships, marriage and parenting, the development of children's talents and support of the disadvantaged, not only will it have to address and finance the treatment of various addictions but also Slovakia can await the fate of the Roman Empire. It was also rich and modern until it fell to the social support of homosexual partnerships and disappeared.
>
> [Ocilková 2014]

By drawing a causal link between social acceptance of homosexual partnerships and the fall of the Roman Empire, the allegory of social decline escalates dramatically. The narrative allows for future predictions using a particular interpretation of the past.

In the interviews, the predictions of catastrophic decline were implied rather than communicated straightforwardly:

> Family is crucial, and I perceive that step by step – if we look at statistics – the family situation, its functionality, marriage stability or, for instance, reproductive function are worsening in society. For example, few children are born, and it is a problem, an indicator that something is not right.
>
> Interview, referendum proponent, male, 38, 6 February 2018

Although this participant did not explicitly blame LGBTI politics for the decline, he suggested that society has moved out of the realm of the ordinary, predicting further deepening of these problems. Another participant shared her worries about society being distorted by overlooking gender differences:

> Boys and girls should be educated differently, not all in the same way. Because the duties of women are totally different from those of men, but society throws them into one bag … So, it is all distorted in this society, and I hope it will change one day.
>
> Interview, referendum proponent, female, 47, 9 February 2018

The participant described her concerns using the Slovak phraseme 'to throw into one bag', which implies the resignation of sorting fundamentally different things. After progressive feminist politics had problematised the taken-for-granted model of family based on a heterosexual partnership and fixed gender roles, nostalgia for an imagined golden age, when everything was clear and simpler, began to resonate and nourish a quest to establish firmer foundations [Paternotte and Kuhar 2017: 14]. Non-heterosexual identities, LGBTI movements, and gender equality politics have reawakened the fluidity and complexity of reality, disturbing neo-conservative movements [Harari 2019]. The narrative of decline elicits feelings of nostalgia for a disappearing world, in which everything was clear and simple – when a family consisted of a mother, a father and their children, and when men were men and women were women.

The assumption that what was once all right is nowadays disappearing results from the politics of nostalgia based on the myth of an ideal past. Narrative relies on essentialism to understand history and naturalises past values and beliefs to formulate a 'normative judgement of certain social practices and relationships in the modern world' [McCutcheon 1997: 34]. This judgement is emotionally loaded. The past depicted in narratives elicits emotions of lost happiness and emphasises nostalgic disillusionment for supposed decay:

> It is something kind, human, intimate, beautiful that gives me a feeling of the beauty of life … Slovakia is rather conservative, and I think that it is our task in Europe to speak about these still present values because in many Western countries, it has already shifted.
>
> Interview, referendum proponent, female, 58, 14 June 2016

The narrative of decline is exponentiated by a nostalgia for disappearing 'traditional values' that are glorified as beautiful, kind, joyful, heartwarming, true, and simply right. The appeals to preserve traditions are born in reaction to a constantly changing modern society, as a response to a novel situation, to structure life as unchanging and foreseeable [Hobsbawm 2000: 2].

The story about the 'traditional family' evokes an image of a golden age that ought to be re-established to recover the well-being of society and the happiness

of its members. However, it is rather a myth than a memory of how things were because family models have been changing constantly. In fact, the family of a married couple and their biological children sharing together a common household has become an exceptional model since the late 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s an exceptional model [Ondrejkovič and Majerčíková 2006: 10].[15] Moreover, the image of the 'traditional family' combines characteristics of families from different historical eras, such as the expectation for a woman to fulfil both the roles of mother and wife equally. Since the mother-child relationship was accentuated in the mid-19th century in white, middle-class families and the maintenance of romantic and sexual intimacy between partners was first articulated in the 1920s, the traditional family 'is an ahistorical amalgam of structures, values, and behaviours that never co-existed' [Coontz 1992: 9]. The appeal to preserve tradition condenses the nostalgia of decay aimed at delegitimating calls for recognition of same-sex partnerships and alternative family models.

A utopia of progressive tomorrows

While the narrative of social decline situates the vision of a golden age in the past, the narrative of social progress among referendum opponents finds its ultimate destination in the future, implying the development of a better world. The representatives of progressive politics who formed the active referendum opposition predict greater inclusion of minorities and respect for human rights in liberal democracies, as the following two quotations from media commentaries illustrate:

> To use nature as an argument is ridiculous and embarrassing. These kinds of arguments were maybe relevant centuries ago but not nowadays. Nowadays, women fly into space, manage prestigious scientific workplaces and universities, and lead world powers. And no one will stop this development anymore.
>
> [Pietruchová 2014]

> The argumentation against evolutionary theory or against heliocentrism based on the Bible has become unsustainable. It will be similar to argumentation against homosexuality.
>
> [Prostredník 2017]

In the first quotation, a gender equality expert points out the progress in women's emancipation to emphasise the outdated character of the arguments used by the referendum proponents. In the second, a progressive theologist anticipates the

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[15] For a closer discussion on changes in family models and intra-household division of labor in Slovakia and Czechia see, for example, Možný [2002] and Mendelová [2014].

end of the conservative backlash by comparing it to past struggles against what is nowadays considered a matter of fact.

The narrative of progress implies a world of universal human rights and unconditional recognition of individual authenticity, echoing the ideals of the culture of modernity [Wagner 1994]. Such a notion of the world is the utopia of liberal humanitarianism, which originated as a belief in the arrival of a thousand years of God's kingdom, was later secularised, merged with French revolutionary ideals, and has served until the present time as a moral regulatory device [Mannheim 1936: 219–224]. Just as nostalgia for the 'traditional family' delivers a normative judgement of the present time through the narrative of decline, a utopian vision of a better tomorrow sets the criteria for assessing the current situation through the narrative of progress. It allows for the visualisation of a scale of development in the world and for judging the current state of affairs according to it, as indicated by a commentator for a progressive daily:

> From its beginning until its end, the whole referendum hysteria is proof of the undeveloped and backward Slovak democracy. In a developed liberal democracy, in the first place, nobody would think about initiating a referendum that suppresses the rights of a group of citizens … Building democracy is a long-term process full of obstacles. There is a saying that those who do not fight for democracy do not deserve it.
>
> [Bučko 2015]

The referendum boycott results from a broader narrative of progress through which it can be interpreted as an act of overcoming obstacles and the actualisation of progress itself. The image of a gap in the development between (Western) democracies and Slovakia can serve as a push factor and an indicator regarding the next course of action.

The utopia of progressive tomorrows elicits feelings of hope and determination that are classified as moods with the capacity to 'affect our means for carrying out political ends' [Jaspers 2009: 85], which, in turn, stimulate action by providing actors with confidence and a vision of success in achieving their goals:

> I truly hope that young people who have the opportunity from an early age to be free concerning this topic and support each other in groups where the others give you the idea that: 'you are absolutely alright; you only live in a fucked-up society'. Then, these people will be those who will gradually get to the point when this [idea] will be a matter of course, and they will change society only by that matter of course, you know?
>
> Interview, referendum opponent, male, 39, 27 November 2017

Nevertheless, when utopian vision sharply contrasts with the real situation, feelings of great hope may eventually result in a loss of motivation and fatigue. This applies especially to highly engaged individuals – volunteers and activists –

whose motivation by the vision of progress collides with the limited possibilities for pursuing their goals:

> I, actually, thought that after 15 years of work in this sector, we would get further. That, for example, there would be at least an elementary civil union law. This is what I perceive as very demotivating. It is demotivating because we keep repeating – in arguments, words, strategies, activities… It is only about constant repetition.
>
> Interview, referendum opponent, female, 39, 12 May 2016

Although contradictory in nature, feelings of hope and demotivation are two sides of the same coin, both nourished by a utopian vision of inevitable progress. Great determination can be easily transformed into resignation after not seeing the results of one's work. The unsuccessful lobbying for institutionalisation of a civil union law for the last 20 years is a significant source of fatigue within Slovak LGBTI activism.[16]

Altogether, narratives of decline and progress provide groups of referendum proponents and opponents with different understandings of the world. Moreover, by employing visions of ultimate goals and colourful emotional registers, narratives embody the capacity to motivate actors to adopt a certain position in the controversy and act accordingly.

The apocalypticism of decline, progressive pushback, and the implications of genres

Whether narrated as a way to prevent decline or to slow down progress, the referendum is depicted by both narratives as a decisive moment for the future of Slovakia. The engaged actors narrate the referendum as a historically significant breakthrough moment – a milestone in the country's history. For example, consider the following quotations, the first from the official declaration of the Alliance for Family and the second from the main anti-referendum initiative 'We Won't Go':

> Join us and go down in history. We want and will protect family, marriage, and children as long as it is possible. Join us, and together, we will create a milestone in the history of Slovakia! Together, we can stop the ideology against the family from spreading across Europe.
>
> [Aliancia za rodinu 2013]

---

[16] The first petition for civil unions in Slovakia was initiated by the civic association 'Inakosť in 2006, but the legislative proposal was rejected at the first reading in 2008. The liberal party 'Sloboda a solidarita' repeatedly submitted drafts of civil union law in 2012 and 2018, but again both proposals were rejected.

> My decision not to vote is crucial for the future character of our country: whether it will protect our rights only because we are human beings or whether there will be a space for spreading fear, hate, and creating other than secular rules.
>
> [Nejdeme.sk 2015]

Inflated narrative genres reinforce the urgency of the calls of both sides of the controversy. They both represent the referendum as an event exceeding the mundane state of affairs and transgressing the limits of the present time.

The narrative of decline approaches apocalyptic narration much more than the narrative of progress. Apocalypse is characterised by an extraordinary drive for action and high moral impulses [Smith 2005: 21]. The referendum proponents predict an upcoming catastrophe, which can be averted by voting in the referendum. The apocalyptic genre stimulates a vision of the fight against time, which stresses the urgency to act, as articulated by the chair of the Alliance for Family before the referendum:

> Who knows how much time is left? … The European Parliament pushes member states without laws on civil unions to recognise civil unions formed abroad legally. How long will Slovak politicians be able to withstand this pressure? We do not know.
>
> [Chromík 2014]

Furthermore, through the expression 'culture of death' [Konferencia biskupov Slovenska 2013] or 'dying out Europe' [Chromík 2017], the fate of humanity as a whole is at stake. Therefore, the apocalyptic genre allows for extraordinary powers of action, such as the national referendum. The referendum voters are addressed as heroes who self-sacrifice for the good to destroy the evil. The following quotation from a blog post reflecting on the referendum after three years illustrates such moral polarisation symptomatic for apocalyptic narratives:

> We wanted to give people the opportunity to choose good or evil. So that they could make their own decision and not let elites decide for them. And we succeeded! Almost a million people went out in the frost and ice to testify before the whole of Slovakia about what they think of family. The politicians did not decide for them. They did. This will not be forgotten. Everyone who self-sacrificed and decided for the good has also realised this in their personal life.
>
> [Chromík 2018]

Finally, apocalypticism is also reinforced by feelings of nostalgia for a disappearing 'traditional world', loaded with positive emotions, which is now in danger of extinction.

In contrast, the narrative of progress employs romance and tragedy as narrative genres. Since it is capable of generating moods of either hope or resignation, it can also vary between romance and tragedy. The theme of ascent to a

Figure 2. Narrative of progress and narrative of decline categorised according to genres

NARRATIVE OF PROGRESS   NARRATIVE OF DECLINE

LOW MIMESIS   TRAGEDY/ROMANCE   APOCALYPSE

PROTAGONIST

CHARACTER
MORAL
POLARISATION

ANTAGONIST

mundane	mundane/ideals	ideals

MOTIVATION

local	national	global

OBJECT OF STRUGGLE

limited	referendum boycott	referendum mobilisation

POWER OF ACTION
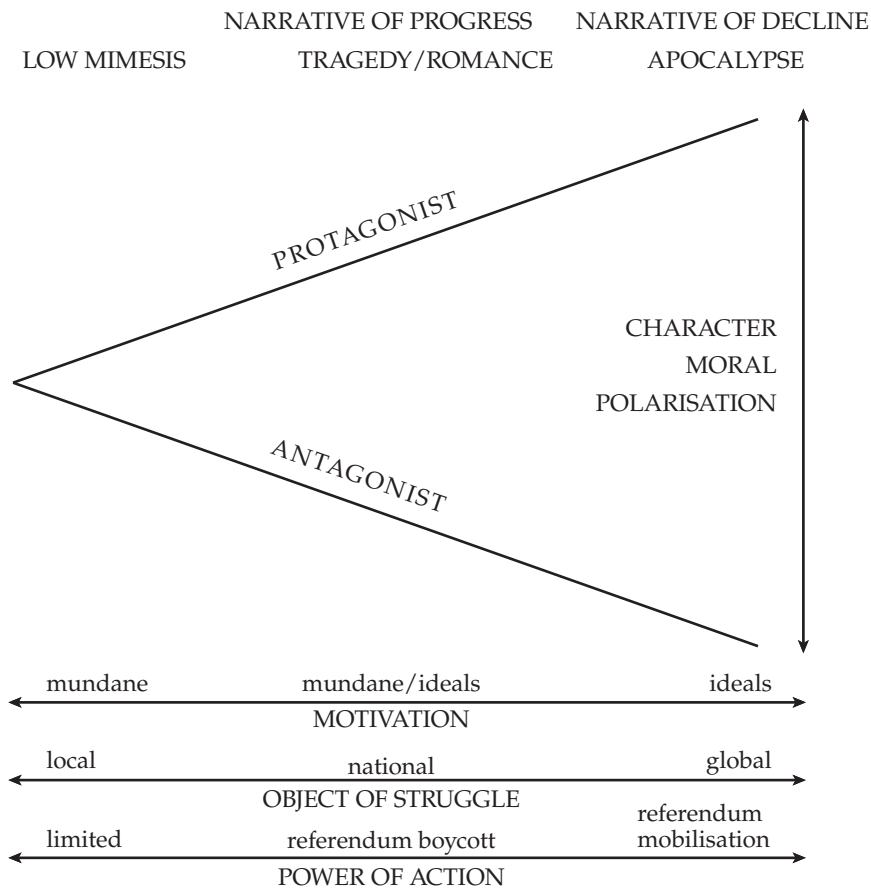
Source: Smith [2005: 24]; the analysed narratives categorised by the author.

better world is characteristic of both romantic and tragic genres [Frye 1976: 129 in Smith 2005: 26]. These genres differ in their emotional charge but match the structural characteristics, situated in the middle position on the scale of narrative inflation, between low mimesis and apocalypse. In this regard, the motivation for action that the narrative of progress sets is a combination of the mundane matters typical of low mimesis and the abstract ideals characteristic of apocalypse and myths. The referendum opponents articulate both types of motivation in the interviews – they point out the practical, everyday life problems of same-sex cou-

ples that they aim to eliminate and also abstract ideals such as freedom, equality, and dignity:

> We have been dealing with x-cases when a couple pays together a mortgage, but the primary heir is the family. And I have, for example, a very good friend whose partner from a ten-year relationship died, and if his family wants, it can gain all the money through the courts.
>
> Interview, referendum oponent, female, 32, 18 September 2017

> The most important value for me – for which I have been doing all of this my whole life – is equality and dignity. Because when we are equal and have the same starting positions, we respect each other, and we have dignified living and dignified lives. That, I think, is all we need.
>
> Interview, referendum oponent, female, 55, 9 August 2016

By adopting the middle position, romance and tragedy make room for both types of motivation (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 shows the characteristics of the romantic-tragic genre within the narrative of progress, compared to the apocalyptic genre evident in the narrative of decline. While referendum proponents are much concerned about the fate of the world, opponents articulate national interests, making comparisons between the level of inclusion of LGBTI people in Slovakia with other – more developed – countries through the narrative of progress. In this respect, their narrative defines the national object of struggle. Moreover, the powers of action that the narrative of progress stimulates are elevated but not as extraordinary as in the case of the apocalyptic narrative of decline. Since the referendum boycott aims to demobilise the public and calls for inaction, it does not require raising exceptional powers or legitimate exceptional acts such as the national referendum.

The genres of the referendum narratives also shape the overall dynamics of the controversy. First, the intense moral polarisation of the proponents' apocalyptic narrative allows them to tar their opponents with a morally polluting brush. Whereas they are depicted as righteous protagonists of the narrative of decline, the referendum opposition is accused of hypocrisy and hatred:

> They [LGBTI activists] do not adhere to any principles; they would tell whatever is convenient for them as the right ideologues and recipients of financial grants. They speak of hatred against them, but they hate others. They speak of falsehoods of others, but they themselves lie, misrepresent, and mislead. They say they are being hurt, but they hold a cane in their hands to beat everyone with a different opinion.
>
> [Lučanič 2015]

Like antagonists in a morality play, the referendum opponents are stigmatised as the embodiment of evil. However, their reaction to such attacks is not simply a

switch in the moral coding of the story. Since the narrative of progress among the referendum opponents is less inflated than the narrative of decline, it allows the referendum opponents to 'prick the balloon of apocalypticism through redescription of objects, actors, and motivations' [Smith 2005: 27]. The genres of romance and tragedy, which the narrative of progress employs, are not so intensively polarised into absolute good and evil. Thus, they enable opponents to talk down the apocalyptic decline the referendum proponents portray. By doing so, they undermine the credibility of the referendum as such. An example of these implications of genres can be found in the development of the controversy a month before the referendum.

In January 2015, the referendum opponents, represented mostly by LGBTI activists, made a public statement about their withdrawal from discussion with referendum proponents. The statement was the result of a deliberative strategy formulated after a series of discussions within the opposition. In the statement, the opponents expressed their concerns about societal polarisation, in which referendum proponents kept repeating already refuted arguments [O médiách.com 2015]. One of the research participants described this shift as follows:

> We have tried very hard, even during the referendum, to get rid of the label of 'the other side' of the dispute. At one point, we actually left the discussion because they [referendum proponents] had created the picture of a villain – a child abuser. So, we took a step back, since we can't be a sparring partner in their heated discussions as we do not represent any child abusers.
>
> Interview, referendum opponent, female, 39, 12 May 2016

The withdrawal of the opposition from the debates was facilitated by the less-inflated genre of the underlying narrative of progress within which they operate. The opponents could refuse to engage with referendum proponents further because romance and tragedy leave some space for compromise or flexibility in action. By rejecting the label of 'the other side', the referendum opponents challenged the image of irreconcilable sides fighting for public attention. Their resignation expressed a refusal of the fundamental opposition between good and evil defined by the narrative of decline. Moreover, the narrative of progress, driven by the hope for a better world, enabled the opponents to maintain the inclusion of LGBTI people as their primary objective and to leave the pre-referendum struggle as a secondary concern.

In short, narrative genres shape the dynamics of the referendum controversy. The apocalyptic genre enables the referendum proponents to legitimise the importance of the national referendum, despite that it only confirmed the status quo and bore illiberal foundations [Gajdoš and Rapošová 2018]. While referendum mobilisation requires a highly inflated narrative about salvation from an apocalyptic decline, the demobilisation endeavours of the referendum opposition correspond to the moderately inflated genres of romance and tragedy.

These moderately inflated genres enable the opposition to talk down the threat – aligning the referendum's issues with mundane things and practicalities, shrinking the object of struggle, and undermining moral polarisation. In this way, the meaning-making processes in media and civil discourses operate through and within the narratives and their genres, which prove capable of drawing attention to certain issues, providing them with greater or lesser significance and enabling or disabling action or inaction.

Discussion and conclusion

This article has brought to the fore the narratives circulating in media and civil discourse about the 2015 referendum in Slovakia – a narrative of social decline among civically engaged referendum proponents and a narrative of social progress among civically engaged opponents. In addition to the contrasting visions of decline and progress, the analysis has shown how the narrative of decline employs an emotional register of nostalgia for the disappearing 'traditional world'. In contrast, the narrative of progress highlights the utopia of a better world to come. Moreover, different narrative genres have been identified: the narrative of decline is articulated in the genre of apocalypse, and the narrative of progress manifests through the genres of romance and tragedy, based on the emotional charge of either hope or frustration. Finally, the culturally sensitive analysis adopted in this study draws attention to the deep cultural realm as a locus of meaning-making to provide a better understanding of the dynamics of the referendum controversy. However, this does not mean that other factors, such as positioning within the social structure, power struggles, and the instrumental rationality of social actors should be dismissed. On the contrary, I suggest that structural and cultural perspectives should be treated as complementary rather than competing analytical models.

Narratives represent cultural mechanisms in the referendum controversy in several ways. First, they infuse the referendum within certain interpretations of the past and the future, thus filling it with special significance – the referendum is depicted as a 'milestone' in both narratives because participation in, as well as disregard of, the referendum is narrated as bearing future consequences. Second, the emotional load of the narratives precipitated by either nostalgia or the utopian longing for a better world evokes powerful moods that stimulate or impede action. Third, narrative genres have implications for action. While the apocalyptic narrative of decline helps to legitimise the national referendum as an exceptional act, the romantic/tragic narrative of progress can undermine apocalypticism by leaving space for moral transformation and flexibility in action. Through the example of the withdrawal of referendum opponents from pre-referendum debates, I have shown how the less-inflated narrative of progress enabled the opponents to redefine the positions of the conflicting sides and challenge the referendum's legitimacy. In this regard, the controversy around the 2015 referendum about gay

and lesbian family rights is not merely a legal but also a symbolic dispute. It is driven by the narratives concerning the referendum to infuse action with meaning, elicit emotion, and provide motives and drivers of action.

The contradictory narrations about 'social decline' and 'social progress' can also further highlight the process of deepening polarisation between conservative and progressive sectors of society. Narratives provide conservative and progressive positions on LGBTI rights and gender equality with a coherent and self-contained cultural meaning system – the logic of a story. Through this logic, the referendum can be easily turned into a meaningful and significant event – as either an emergency brake against the decline or as an obstacle that must be overcome in the path towards progress. This article aims not to explain why some actors adopt conservative positions while others embrace progressive ideas, nor to analyse the referendum results or public opinion on LGBTI rights. It is, however, to provide a careful elaboration of the cultural background meanings – arguments, emotions, and images – by which the controversy is driven in the media and the civil sphere, but which are not always reflected and examined. The example of the strategy of the referendum opponents to leave the pre-referendum debates documents how deliberate action does not emerge *ad hoc* but stems from cultural backgrounds as the locus of meaning-making. Focusing on narratives as complex meaning structures, I have shown how culture provides unconscious mechanisms with the capacity to inform and enable action and inaction.

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New from the Institute of Sociology
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Democracy Under Stress.
Changing Perspectives on Democracy,
Governance and Their Measurement

Petra Guasti and Zdenka Mansfeldová (eds)

Democracy, defined as liberal pluralism, is under stress worldwide. Pluralistic democratic institutions such as: a free press, civil society, and the rule of law all seem to be under attack. Democracies are being hollowed out from within while preserving the fundamental facade of elections.

The strength of this book is in providing a range of perspectives on the study of democracy under stress. The authors, renowned scholars of democratic theory and democracy in Central and Eastern Europe, highlight the potential of different approaches – from comparative meta-assessment using indices and survey data, to case studies focused on understanding context and causal processes – for obtaining a better grasp of the loci of the stress.

Together, we offer the reader the opportunity to assess different conceptual frameworks and approaches, to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses, and to advance the study of democracy in the future. This volume is also an invitation for scholars to redirect their attention to Central and Eastern Europe, which offers an opportunity to deepen our understanding of democracy.

We see democracy in Central and Eastern Europe under stress but avoid general labels such as the crisis of democracy and deconsolidation. Instead, we argue that to understand the contemporary situation in the CEE region, we need to move beyond assessing institutional frameworks and to include citizens in our understanding and measurement of democracy.

The book is not for sale. Print versions are available on request (contact the Press and Publications Department at the Institute of Sociology: prodej@soc.cas.cz).

The full text can be downloaded at: https://www.soc.cas.cz/publikace/democracy-under-stress-changing-perspectives-democracy-governance-and-their-measurement.

Institute of Sociology
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SPECIAL REVIEW ESSAY SECTION

Michael J. Sandel: *The Tyranny of Merit: What's Become of the Common Good?*
London 2020: Allen Lane, 288 pp.

The Lens of Morality, Dignity, and the Common Good

Can meritocracy become a tyrant, an unjust ruler? Has it? Both answered in the affirmative, these are the central questions of Michael J. Sandel's new book *The Tyranny of Merit.* In a meritocracy, the winners have earned their place, supposedly at least, and so have the losers. What could possibly go wrong? Quite a bit, it turns out. The winners come to suffer from hubris; the losers suffer humiliation. Sandel argues that more than anything else, this is the real venom that has poisoned public life in recent years. Quite apart from its wanting implementation, is meritocracy then even the right ideal by which to run our lives, our societies, our morality?

The venom has a history. Sandel traces it back as far as the schismata in the Christian church, which revolved, *inter alia*, around the question whether absolution can be earned, or whether it is a gift bestowed by the grace of God. If the former, then those who lead morally better lives (as per the standards set by the church) have reason to look down upon their fellow human beings: through their own virtue, they are better Christians than their peers. An interesting corollary of this situation is that God is not omnipotent. In dishing out absolution to the deserving, he is playing by the book.

The dual spirit of meritocracy has never gone away, and once every so often it breaks through the surface beneath which it is always lurking. Meritocracy returned to centre stage in the Reagan era, after which subsequent presidents doubled down on it.

Obama, whom Sandel classifies as an arch-meritocrat, used meritocracy as a means against racism. After all, he himself had been able to rise because he was given the chance; clearly the solution to systemic racism was making society more meritocratic. But Sandel argues that this is replacing one problem with another, and one downcast class with another.

The problem, according to Sandel, is in fact broader. Oftentimes, meritocracy is seen and used as a clean and value-neutral tool (labelled as 'smart'), which solves problems across party-political lines. The left in particular has espoused this construct, which has allowed it to sidestep an actual moral debate for decades. Until the voters walked away. And here we return to the original point, which is the terror that meritocracy unleashes on the souls of those who cannot keep up, and who are now given not only an economic cost to bear, but also a moral one. This was the real cause of Trumpism; not economic circumstances *per se*, but the belief internalised by many Trump voters that they had earned their place at the bottom of society; that meritocracy was not an ideal, but a description of the prevailing state of affairs. A classic case of adding insult to injury, one might say.

Language matters, and Sandel gives a researched account of the change in language used in society as well as by US presidents that signalled the change in perception and that drove meritocracy forward. Sandel finds phrases like 'being on the right side of history', rising 'as high as your talents and hard work will take you', and the like, supposedly signifying the

American dream, to be particularly misplaced, as well as the increasingly prevalent rhetoric of merit and desert, which now applies to health as well as wealth.

Insight into the callous side of meritocracy is not entirely new, as Sandel shows by digging up literature as old as a century that warns against exactly this: for those lower on the socioeconomic ladder, a perfect meritocracy is more emotionally violent than the worst aristocracy. This warning has clearly gone unheeded, but more than that, Sandel also shows how meritocracy harms the winners. Getting to the top does not come without a price, and ranking and grading behaviour becomes part of the winners' personalities. As a Harvard professor, Sandel has decades of first-hand experience to bring to the table on this point. The extensive and expensive preparations that teenagers undertake, which allow them to survive the gauntlet of ranking and grading, makes them internalise a feeling that they have earned their place, but also leaves them empty, unsure, and emotionally vulnerable. And *have* they earned their place? Their hard work is real enough, but building the CV that gets one into a selective college requires resources that most cannot muster. The arguments that talent and the disposition to use it are nobody's own doing, that the set of talents that society rewards is not something anyone controls, and that even the most entrepreneurial spirit benefits from the social and physical infrastructure that others have created, complete the case for the prosecution.

How to get out of this situation? Quoting Yale admissions tutors who believe that a random selection of students who meet certain minimum standards would yield just as good a class of students as the hyper-selected classes that are now common, Sandel proposes that competition for admission to prestigious colleges should assume the form of a threshold selection and a lottery applied to those who meet certain

minimum criteria. This, I might add, would be much more attainable for students from modest backgrounds than the top of a ranking that rewards expensive and exclusive extra-curricular activities like sailing, golf, cello lessons, and so on. In addition, we need to restore the dignity of work, and should give up the absurd notion that financial reward tends to track with the value for society. Further, we should move beyond the credentialism that reserves positions of power and influence almost exclusively for holders of prestigious degrees. Sandel (p. 98): 'It is more than a little troubling to notice that this is a reversion to the way things were before most working people had the right to vote'. We should do away with 'the last acceptable prejudice', that is, prejudice against the uneducated. And finally, we should return to a shared public life, 'a broad equality of condition' (p. 224) that rests on decency and dignity.

Sandel makes a strong case. He presents a shrewd analysis of the amalgam of follies that is our present meritocracy. While his focus is primarily America, much of what he writes applies elsewhere. Some of the book echoes well-known arguments about the failure of the left: its doubling down on deregulation, free markets, and small government, all in the name of meritocracy, instead of implementing traditional policies to protect those in need. But Sandel departs from this well-known critique, his meritocratic slant revealing that the classic materialistic angle of the winners and losers in globalisation misses much of the point. People are more than economic agents. People crave dignity and self-esteem just as much as a bath and a sandwich.

And Sandel is right, of course: every economic theory, right or wrong, intelligent or naive, honest or fraudulent, can serve as a legitimising system for those with an interest in the status quo. If, through effective propaganda, those whom it serves manage

to convince the wider population that an ideology is morally just or indeed that a conception is ideology-free ('smart'), then the riches it bestows upon a small part of the population can go unchecked. And incontestable meritocracy's propaganda potential is: those who deserve more, get more. Who could oppose that? And it is precisely this incontestability that makes it so difficult to pinpoint the flaws. The first response to an emerging unease is sought within the prevailing system of beliefs. Making the world *more* meritocratic, Sandel shows, has been the proposed solution to many a problem. Only when the earth keeps shaking do we inspect the deeper roots of our beliefs. This closer inspection, so goes Sandel's urgent message, should happen now regarding meritocracy.

Although the scope is different, and although the argument is very well made, this is not the first book in recent years to object to the meritocratic enterprise. Piketty [2013] quotes the founding principle of a selective Parisian college as stating that since their place in society is no longer inherited, the elite must now acquire the merits that justify their position: an open acknowledgement of the objective of maintaining a hereditary elite. He also observes the tautology we perpetrate when we ascribe merits to those who earn the big bucks, rather than insisting it should be the other way round. And both Piketty [2015] and Graeber [2018] take the measurability inroads to the problem: the whole idea of marginal productivity, which means that the economic output of a single person can be measured, is largely a theoretical construct that modern concepts of causation directly dismiss [Rothman 1976]. Like meritocracy then, this construct justifies inequalities without making the world a fair(er) place. Graeber also suggests that the popularity of the military among working-class Americans is rooted in the prospects it offers for dignity, success, and a feeling of belonging that is no-

where else to be found. And Sandel's discussion of the role of elite colleges could certainly be informed by the classic works on social reproduction by Bourdieu and Passeron [1990].

The argument could also have been broadened in scope to encompass the love market and aspects of intellectual life. It is well known that assortative mating has increased over recent decades. More and more, the meritocratic winners want their partners to be winners as well, and so finding a partner has, in some circles, become the competition that Sandel so loathes. Sandel mentions health, but not beauty and sex appeal, which are increasingly seen as a function of the talents and efforts of those who possess it, feeding into the hubris of the haves and the humiliation of the have-nots. In fact, even literature, which should convey beauty and sensitivity and brutality and pain, cannot be read nowadays without carefully avoiding the panting praise of the author and book on the dust cover: what prizes have been bestowed on the author, what acclaim they have won.

The philosophical and historical depth of the book notwithstanding, in one respect Sandel perhaps let himself off too easy. Any system of beliefs and rules, whether it be an old religion or modern civic society and government, is there to make people behave in certain ways rather than others. Where would the church be if a murdering thief had the same chance of absolution as a baker who supplies an orphanage on a non-profit basis? Such a church would make a mockery of itself and would be ignored. There is also human physiology to reckon with: whatever ideology of modesty prevails, the brain finds few things so rewarding as the successful exercise of its faculties – just observe any child. It will be difficult, therefore, under any philosophy to ban hubris from the winners' psyche altogether. If ethics consists in giving a post hoc justification for our gut feel-

ings, which always win in the end, the conclusion then seems to be that yet another post hoc justification has simply reached the limits of our gut feelings. Perhaps the conclusion should just be that we have been overdoing it.

In sum, although the argument could have been made in both broader and deeper ways, it is clear to me that Sandel has written an important book that tells the reader where it really hurts. The simple analysis that the populist backlash is the result of material circumstances has always been too simple, but seeing the case made so well, and so historically and philosophically informed, is particularly convincing. Indeed, one might very well say that the standard analysis of discontent – that the populist backlash has its roots mainly in material circumstances – suffers from the same limitation as the political programme that was its cause: Sandel very convincingly argues that viewing everything through the prism of value-neutral, material circumstances is precisely the problem. Rather, we need to relearn how to talk and behave in terms of morality, dignity, and the common good.

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In a World Governed by Merit, All the Poor Are Undeserving

The 2016 election of Donald Trump as President of the United States, Brexit, and the rising support for authoritarian figures elsewhere have left politicians and commentators scrambling to understand where politics has gone wrong. These events have been widely interpreted as populist backlashes against rising inequalities, globalisation, immigration, and the elites. But there may be a deeper story that most commentators have missed. Michael J. Sandel argues that at the heart of this widespread popular discontent lie the social attitudes generated by the meritocratic discourse that politicians of all stripes have been pushing for the past four decades. Written in the gripping and accessible style that has become Sandel's calling card, this book mounts a powerful case that Western democracies have gone wrong by putting merit at the centre of politics.

In a meritocratic society, individuals achieve political and economic success based on their abilities and their merits, as opposed to their socioeconomic class. This ideal tells us that, provided we enjoy equal opportunities, any of us can study, gain the skills we need, and rise to the top if we work hard enough. This is, after all, the long-cherished American Dream. The problem with this ideal, Sandel points out, is that it fosters attitudes that are 'corrosive to the common good'. The 'winners' of this competition, often having strived to reach the top, tend to be convinced of their deservingness and superior qualities. Meanwhile, the 'losers' must contend not only with their lack of economic and political standing, but also with whatever purported intellectual and moral failings prevented them from reaching the top. The arrogance of the winners and the humiliation of the losers eventually erode the bonds of equality and of solidarity between citizens. Sandel's ultimate diagnosis, which he de-

livers in the very first chapter and continues to unpick throughout the book, is that this 'meritocratic way of defining winners and losers' has combined with our mistaking market efficiency for the common good to lead to the populist backlash we are witnessing today (p. 19).

The book paints an overall convincing – as well as chilling – picture of the moral and political pitfalls that our societies have fallen into in their pursuit of merit. Politicians of the left and of the right seem to have assumed that the answer to all inequalities and popular discontent is simply to expand equality of opportunity (pp. 85–89). The thought seems to be that if we can ensure that everyone can rise 'as far as their talents and ambition can take them' (p. 87) by expanding opportunities for education, we have done our job. Amongst the many resulting problems that Sandel canvasses is that we have now reached a point where the primary, or sometimes only, path to making a decent living and to earning the respect of the community is to pursue higher education. This ignores the fact that the overwhelming majority of people do not have nor want a college degree, and yet without one they face not only grim economic prospects but also a lack of social esteem (pp. 95–96, 198–199). The narrow focus on improving equality of opportunity has also led to a failure to engage in important public debates about our other needs, values, and goals as a political community – in short, about the common good. Perhaps most perniciously, we have encouraged people to believe in the false promise of social mobility. Politicians pushing the narrative that anyone can make it if they try, including prominent figures like Bill Clinton, Barack Obama, and Theresa May, have allowed the educated rich and successful to believe that they have earned their privileges, and have left the poor to shoulder the blame for their position, despite overwhelming evidence that social mobility is largely just a myth (pp. 75–76).

The book certainly mounts a convincing indictment of current politics and of the role that the merit narrative has played in leading us to where we are: a place of deep cultural division, resentment, and entrenched inequalities. But it is less successful in rejecting the very ideal of merit altogether. For Sandel claims not only that we have failed to implement a true meritocracy anywhere, which is true enough, but also that it would not be desirable to do so. His critique of the very *ideal* of merit boils down to two arguments. First, rewarding merit is inherently unfair because whatever we achieve is due in part to factors that we cannot claim credit for. Second, rewarding merit inevitably gives rise to attitudes that are inimical to equality of esteem and to the common good, namely hubris among the better-off and humiliation among the worse-off. Let us look at each in turn.

Sandel's fairness objection to rewarding merit is that our talents and abilities are to a large extent themselves undeserved. Whether we are born with certain talents, and whether our particular talents are valued in our economy, are a matter of pure luck and therefore just as unearned as being born an aristocrat in a class-based system. And while effort and hard work may make us more deserving, Sandel points out how difficult it is to disentangle effort from natural abilities and other bits of luck.

This is a powerful objection that goes back to John Rawls, who famously argued that a fair distribution of advantages should not reflect the morally arbitrary distribution of natural talents [Rawls 1999]. Rawls's rejection of luck was so influential that it sparked the development of a whole family of prominent theories of justice, namely luck egalitarian theories, whose key tenet is that a just society should eliminate all inequalities that are traceable to pure luck. Since Rawls, however, many have doubted whether rejecting luck should necessarily mean we must reject all

claims of merit. Some have argued that we need not deserve the very *foundations* of what enables us to come to deserve something. In Robert Nozick's formulation, we need not be deserving 'all the way down' for (some) merit claims to be plausible [Nozick 2006; also Zaitchik 1977 and Schmidtz 2002]. Others have said that someone may deserve a reward if their choice to use their talents in one way rather than another made all the difference to what they ended up achieving [Hurka 2003].

The debate over whether merit has any legitimate role to play in a just society, then, is much more complex than the book suggests. Yet instead of engaging in any sort of principled conversation that would help us make progress on the matter, Sandel slides back into a criticism of our societies' *actual* practices. He points out that, even assuming that effort makes people more deserving, we tend to mistakenly overinflate the significance of effort over talent in order to save the idea that some people are more deserving than others. He cites Olympics commentators who focus on stories about athletes overcoming hardships while downplaying their natural gifts. He also points to polls which show that, despite evidence to the contrary, a majority of Americans believe that most people can succeed if they work hard (p. 125).

While it may be true that, as a matter of fact, we tend to overemphasise the importance of effort for our achievements, this does not seem to be an intrinsic feature of an ideal merit-sensitive principle of justice. In this case, and at other points throughout the book, Sandel muddies the waters in terms of what the target of his criticism actually is: an ideal meritocratic arrangement, or our current, non-ideal practices around merit. This weakens, in particular, his claim that merit has no place in an ideally just society.

The second argument Sandel offers in his offensive against the very ideal of merit is that rewarding merit unavoidably leads to harmful attitudes about success and failure, attitudes that are corrosive to the common good. Those who land on top must have been *better* in some key respects than those who land on the bottom. This would be so particularly in a perfect meritocracy, in which true equality of opportunity prevailed. In a truly fair competition where everyone had an equal chance to succeed, those who failed must have failed at least partly because they were not talented enough, ambitious enough, or hardworking enough. As Sandel convincingly shows, this is worrisome because it is ultimately a *political* problem. For this undermines the relationship of equality and of solidarity between people. If each person's lot in life is their own doing, we are less inclined to see each other as equals who share in each other's fate. In a move that would take the Victorian 'Poor Law' ethic even further, a true meritocracy seems to make the *entire* working class 'undeserving' of their more fortunate neighbours' aid and esteem.

Here we have an objection that strikes at the very ideal of merit indeed. Whenever we claim that someone deserves a certain reward, the implication is that someone else, who is not equally rewarded, is less deserving. To say that a lawyer deserves to earn more money than a lorry driver automatically implies that the lorry driver is less deserving. In the last chapter of the book Sandel gestures towards an alternative political philosophy that would combat this rhetoric of merit. Instead of awarding income, wealth, and recognition based on what individuals have allegedly earned in a fair competition, we should reward people based on their contribution to the common good. This would involve, first, democratically reflecting together on what makes for a good life and on the goals we deem worth pursuing as a political community. Such deliberations would likely result in the recognition of a wide range of productive activities as valuable

for the common good, and not just intellectual work that requires a college degree. Additionally, Sandel recommends that spurious ideas about merit should be abandoned in favour of a healthy acknowledgment of the role that luck and circumstance play in people's lives.

No doubt that widening the range of lucrative and respected forms of work, as well as embracing the humility that comes with acknowledging good fortune, would be a huge improvement to the status quo. It is unclear, however, whether the solutions that Sandel sketches would ultimately avoid corrosive judgements about people's worth, as opposed to merely redrawing the boundaries between the worthy and the unworthy. Unless he is prepared to argue for a full-blooded egalitarian distribution of outcomes, inequalities of income might combine with ideas about the relative value of social contributions to the common good to suggest that those who earn less are less valuable, and less valued, contributors to society. For suppose that a community democratically decided that being a lawyer was valuable for advancing the common good. Unless everyone else made roughly the same income, a highly educated, relatively higher-earning lawyer would still be susceptible to hubris. After all, Sandel himself tells us that 'social esteem flows, almost ineluctably, to those who enjoy economic and educational advantages' (p. 145). Granted, the lawyer would have to admit that their ability to provide a valuable social contribution was not exclusively their own doing but was due in part to luck. Nevertheless, it would be clear that their contribution was highly valued by society.

In a meritocracy, being worse-off carries the damning judgement that you are to blame for your own failures. Unless Sandel is prepared to say that a lawyer, a lorry driver, and everyone else should enjoy roughly equal income and work recognition, the message sent to those who have less is just as clear: 'Your social contribution is less valuable to the community, and by extension *you* are less valuable.'

Without a deeper, principled discussion of the feasibility and desirability of incorporating merit into our theories of justice, and without a more fleshed out alternative political morality, *The Tyranny of Merit* falls short of persuading us to abandon the ideal of merit altogether. However, the book achieves one of its key aims of sounding the alarm on the moral and political harm that merit-focused systems, at least as they are today, have done to our communities. The book is relentless, most of all, in its indictment of centre-left elites who are considered guilty of egregious betrayal. They have left the working class they were supposed to champion to fend for themselves against a backdrop of global competition, entrenched inequality, and a harsh rhetoric of personal responsibility for their own failures.

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What about the Dignity of *Unpaid* Work?

While on the campaign trail for the election that would determine who would succeed Angela Merkel as chancellor in Germany, Olaf Scholz, the leader of the Social Demo-

cratic Party expressed his conviction that 'among certain professional classes, there is a meritocratic exuberance that has led people to believe their success is completely self-made. As a result, those who actually keep the show on the road don't get the respect they deserve. That has to change' [Oltermann 2021]. As it turned out, his words were heavily drawn from Michael Sandel's new book *The Tyranny of Merit*. Sandel is no stranger to criticising how we tend to conflate market prices with value, not least of all because the monetary value markets ascribe through supply and demand is not always a good representation of *worth* [Sandel 2012]. In this new book, however, he takes the argument further and considers whether the pursuit of meritocracy has actually caused more harm than good, culminating in Brexit and the election of Trump, to the point that it might not be worth pursuing meritocracy at all from a justice standpoint.

At the heart of meritocracy is the notion that society should reward the best, the most talented, and the hardest-working among us and not those who happen to be born in a certain milieu or possess or lack particular traits that are beyond their control, such as a particular gender or skin colour. The meritocratic ideal is appealing not only because it promises to deliver greater efficiency – the best or more able are selected – but because it rings just and fair – the rewards equal one's capacity or effort [Tepe et al. 2021]. Sandel presents a number of examples of just how deeply flawed are the mechanisms through which present societies reward merit, so that people can hardly be said to face a 'level playing field'. Even defenders of meritocracy will concede that, but Sandel's issues are deeper, and he questions meritocracy as a goal in itself.

Arguably Sandel's most convincing argument is that 'merit' is no less subject to luck or to 'circumstances beyond our control' (i.e. potentially unfair) than birth is in the context of an aristocratic regime. It is not just a matter of being favoured because of the family into which one is born, it is also about possessing talents that are in short supply and valued by society at the particular time and place in which one is born. Sandel does not draw on the life-course literature to support his critique – which would have further validated his case – but his argument is very much in line with the concept of 'life-course reflexivity' put forward by scholars such as Dale Dannefer. This presents outcomes as the result of the interaction between social context, contingency, and human intentionality or action. Besides this argument, Sandel contends that a meritocratic system will always instil a sense of undue superiority among the winners and despair and resentment among those who lose out, because it attributes their accomplishments to their own doing, conflating success or failure with virtue or lack of deservingness. The distinction between market value and worth is something that both free market liberalism and welfare state or egalitarian liberalism – arguably the two dominant strands of philosophical and economic thought in the Western world in the past half century – have been careful to state. But in market societies, the conflation of the two is almost inevitable, as money is the yardstick used to measure most things.

When agency (i.e. the notion that one controls one's destiny) meets deservingness (i.e. one gets what one's due), this creates a powerful meritocratic ethic based on individualism and a rhetoric of individual responsibility. This rhetoric of individual responsibility first took root on the right under Thatcher and Reagan and was best summarised by the former when she stated 'there's no such thing as society. There are individual men and women and there are families. And no government can do anything except through people, and people must look after themselves first'. This was soon taken on board by centre-left parties

in the mid-1990s and early 2000s. Not only did they embrace markets as a way to enhance welfare, but this rhetoric permeated discourses and indeed policies that linked access to welfare with deservingness and individual responsibility. Moral hazard concerns therefore came to trump redistributive considerations when thinking about welfare policies. While the deservingness rhetoric took hold of the policy discourse, inequality was widening, while real income stagnated for large shares of the population and social mobility faltered, at least in the United States.

Sandel argues that governments failed to heed these outcomes, partly because they were by then made up of people who not only came to embrace the meritocratic ethos, but turned out to be blinded by the hubris that meritocracy generates in the winners. According to Sandel, this *credentialism* and the technocratic governments and arguments that it spawned played an outsized role in driving the resentment of elites and the growth of populism. Credentialism infused the policy discourse with a sense of inevitability or lack of alternatives, dressing particular political options as uncontested facts – political stances were presented as either 'smart' or 'dumb', but kept decidedly above the traditional divisions between the 'right' and the 'left', and thus stripped of their political or moral implications. As it turned out, such governments proved not to be more effective than previous ones, but they were decidedly much less diverse, and their policy discourse contributed to further alienate large sections of voters. Meritocracy provides no antidote against rising inequality. In fact, it acts to legitimise it.

Having delivered a scathing criticism of meritocracy, what alternatives or solutions does Sandel propose? The last two chapters of *The Tyranny of Merit* are occupied with possible actions. First, Sandel turns his attention to higher education, which now commands higher wage premiums than ever, not least because of its role in what economists would call signalling one's worth through the completion of a higher university degree at one of the top universities. Ivy League universities have, according to Sandel, become 'sorting machines' that remain deeply unmeritocratic in their admission processes and have steered away from their educational mission to instil civic values and concern for the common good in their students. Every year, thousands of seemingly equally qualified and able students go through the highly anxiety-inducing process of applying to the top universities, even though only a diminishing share are eventually selected. Sandel suggests that those who meet admission criteria should be selected based on a lottery system. The quality of the student body would likely be similar to that of present cohorts, while saving students the anxiety, reducing incentives to game the system, and deflating the hubris of those who are eventually selected.

In addition, Sandel proposes increasing the overall number of places in higher education and investing strongly in technical and vocational education and on-the-job training. Not only are the latter able to better match the skills in demand from the labour market, but this would be a first step to enhance the 'recognition of work'. Meritocracy has legitimised 'the lavish rewards the market bestows on the winners and the meagre pay it offers workers without a college degree' (p. 198) by entrenching the idea that income earned reflects the value of one's contribution to society. According to Sandel, economic thinking and policies have for too long focused on our role as atomised consumers and have thus strived to maximise individual consumer utility. This has meant increasing access to goods by lowering prices and, as a consequence, wages. Sandel argues that it is our role as producers that brings us recognition (from oneself and from others), as we contribute our work to provide for the

needs of other members of society, thereby accruing self-esteem. On exactly how to achieve this, however, Sandel is relatively vague, even though he draws from proposals on both sides of the American partisan divide. These include, on the one hand, providing tax credits for workers with low pay and enacting possible restrictions on migration and free trade – proposals he takes from Oren Cass, a former adviser to Mitt Romney's presidential campaign. On the other hand, he also proposes shifting taxation away from productive work and thus advocates for higher taxes on capital gains and especially the introduction of a Tobin tax on speculative capital transactions.

Most of the examples presented by Sandel are rooted in the US context and one wonders how much the arguments presented could have benefited from taking in a broader set of realities and empirical studies. Some readers may find the reliance on a lottery system to allocate university places to be a far-fetched proposal, but this was a long-standing practice among Dutch universities for courses in which the number of applicants exceeded available places. Sandel may be on to something when he intuits that such a lottery system might not really affect the quality of the students, as evidence from the Netherlands seems to confirm [Stegers-Jager 2017]. Conversely, the other proposal for fixing higher education comes very close to setting up the kind of dual track education system that is in place in German-speaking countries in Europe, which has been marred by similar issues of credentialism and inequalities in access based on family background [Blossfeld et al. 2015].

Sandel's critique and call for 'renewing the dignity of work' is still firmly embedded in the concept and value of *paid work* [my emphasis]. Readers will find no word on what meritocracy means for unpaid work such as care and how the failure to recognise the worth of such work is very

much at the heart of the failures of meritocracy. This is an important omission, as Sandel extols the importance of the common good even in the subtitle of this book. Not only does this limit meritocracy to a masculine-centred concept built solely around the transactions that take place in the market, but Sandel would find a lot of common ground with the criticism of markets from feminist economics [cf. Folbre 1995; Nelson 1999].

Sandel is a political philosopher and in this book he traces the roots of meritocracy's hold on the Western world back to the theological discussions on the role of grace and deeds in guaranteeing salvation that took place during the Reformation and Counter-Reformation religious movements in Europe. This is a not a central point to Sandel's arguments, but an understanding of just how and why individualism came to gain such a foothold in Western Europe could have perhaps been gained from broader insights from other disciplines such as psychology or anthropology [Henrich 2020]. These insights might be relevant for understanding how best to dismantle the tyranny of meritocracy that the author identifies. For although Michael Sandel has provided us with compelling arguments on the flaws of meritocracy as an ideal, this is still a powerfully appealing concept. After all, even the long-standing Dutch practice of ascribing students to university through a lottery was repealed in 2017.

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How Do We Decide What Constitutes the Common Good?

In *The Tyranny of Merit*, Michael Sandel addresses social divides in Western society, especially the United States, and looks at how we could work better towards the common good and how this relates to meritocracy. The book offers an insightful and relevant take on the importance of social esteem in politics and showcases Sandel's talent at addressing important issues in an approachable way. Sandel uses the introduction of the book to discuss the recent US college admissions scandal and highlights how it caused a wider debate. While many people specifically criticised cheating and the use of money to enter elite universities through a side door, others pointed out that money has always played an important role in getting the children of the rich and powerful into the most sought-after universities. Proponents of this view would argue that students should not be admitted to universities based on their

background but based on their talent and effort alone. That this is far from being the case is no secret, as Sandel points out. A third criticism, however, argues that there are still deeper flaws in the system. A society that regards higher education as the main prize, as the ticket to getting a well-paying job, is at risk of experiencing not only rising economic inequality but also a widening social divide. With an increasing emphasis on the role of merit in obtaining college degrees and job opportunities, those who end up on top will believe that their success is justified. This is the main inspiration for Sandel's new book.

Meritocracy, as defined by Sandel, is the belief that rewards should only depend on factors that you have control over. In his discourse analysis, however, it becomes clear that this condition is often loosened, to mean effort and talent (for a behavioural experiment, see Tepe et al. [2021]). Sandel argues that there are several problems with meritocracy. First and most obviously, there is the problem of our poor performance on this measure. College admissions are just one expression of a deeper problem. Social inequalities persist and they continue to be inherited, which severely reduces intergenerational mobility. People would, therefore, have every right to be angry about being told that their advancement depends solely on their effort and talent, when this is clearly not the case. Second, it is hard to clearly identify what factors people have control over. How can we venture to adequately design a system in which this distinction has great moral importance?

Third, Sandel argues that even a perfect meritocracy would not be desirable. He rejects meritocracy not only because of how unattainable it is, but because it has harmful social consequences. A system that puts a strong emphasis on assigning rewards based on merit and that highlights individual responsibility risks instilling in its winners a sense of hubris and in its losers a loss of social esteem. In such a society,

Sandel argues, it is to be expected that the successful will think that their success is to a large part their own doing, regardless of whether this is true. This creates a certain sense of desert in the winners, and subsequently of hubris. The losers, on the other hand, are told that their failure is their own doing and that they have no right to complain.

Sandel sees the beginning of this trend at the start of the 1980s and assigns a large part of the responsibility for it to the Democratic Party and to centre-left parties in general. Instead of opposing the neoliberal advance brought on by their right-wing or conservative counterparts, these parties fully embraced the overall idea of a society of equal opportunity and increasingly began to make use of the 'rhetoric of rising' (p. 59). This narrative paints a picture of a society in which there are equal opportunities, education is a vehicle of social mobility, and rewards are based on merit. It both promises to free society from its stratified past and makes people believe that this society has already arrived. Using political discourse analysis, Sandel shows that this language of rising was increasingly used by Democratic presidents. This period since 1980, however, has also been a time of bad governance, globalisation, and starkly rising inequality. Compensation for the losers in globalisation remains a failed project and, according to Sandel, might not have been enough. So while presidents and prime ministers were arguing that everyone deserved an equal opportunity and that people should be rewarded based on their merit, socioeconomic conditions got worse for many, among them the white working class, and with this came a loss of social esteem. According to Sandel, this loss of social esteem led to a deep resentment against the liberal elites and was fertile ground for the election of Donald Trump in 2016 and for the Leave campaign in the Brexit referendum earlier that same year.

To address this, Sandel argues, we need to look beyond distributive justice and include concerns of contributive justice. This means that while redistributive policies remain important, we need to consider the way individuals contribute to society, and what this means to them. According to Sandel, helping others and contributing is a central human need and is key to human flourishing. A society that disregards the contributions of many hinders the fulfilment of this need and consequently impedes human flourishing. Sandel acknowledges that this might require bigger changes, but he suggests some initial reforms to improve on the current situation. First, he proposes reducing the element of competition for the most sought-after universities by imposing some form of lottery system that randomly assigns those who are competent to different universities. Second, he argues that we need to shift the focus of the tax system. In line with his approach to contributive justice, this means shifting the tax burden from things that contribute something worthwhile to society to things that do not. Sandel's approximation of this is to shift taxes from labour to financial transactions and capital income. On a larger scale, he points out that this requires restoring the dignity of work even beyond taxes. How this can be achieved, Sandel argues, must be decided through deliberation among citizens.

This book presents a convincing account of the politics of esteem, issues of distributive versus contributive justice, and the dangers of meritocracy. The strengths of the book lie in Sandel's insightful analysis of political and societal discourse, the wide range of practical and theoretical issues included, its approachable tone, and the strong case he builds against meritocracy. The book also disappoints in certain regards. Sandel repeats his core argument numerous times across the book, without adding much theoretical nuance, and this takes up space that should have been used

for a more thorough discussion of the theoretical arguments he only briefly touches upon. Sandel remains unclear through large parts of the book about why he is talking mainly about the white working classes. On the other hand, the book clearly points at the portions of the population that voted for Trump or Brexit. Considering the heterogeneity of those groups, the issue of identity remains unclear. The question, however, of why this problem of resentment should be particularly present among the white working class is not addressed in great detail. The reader has to wait until the seventh chapter to find more in-depth theoretical arguments as to why this should be a problem specific to one ethnic and socio-economic group. One of the key arguments presented in this section is the following. In the first decades after the Second World War, the white working classes, while disadvantaged compared to the white middle and upper classes, were able to partake in most functions of social and political life. This was not true for most of the non-white population. Moving to a society of greater equality of opportunity would rob the white working class of the comfort of not being at the bottom of the hierarchy, instead giving them the impression that other people had jumped in line. While this could invite a discussion of the Marxist arguments of class co-optation, Sandel does not delve deeper into the theoretical argument. Rather, he points out that it would be wrong to simply accuse the white working class of racism because of the way they react to this development. Given that the issues of class and ethnicity are so tightly intertwined in this, and in the light of developments in both civil rights and racial justice on the one hand and socio-economic conditions on the other, a more intersectional and encompassing take on this issue is surely warranted. To put it differently, it would be interesting to see how the rhetoric of rising and the promise of meritocracy affect the parts of the population that during the golden age of capitalism were still mostly excluded from its spoils.

Another point worthy of being highlighted is the alternative that Sandel hints at. His proposals, however, are wanting in both clarity and scope. His argument that our contribution to society should matter and be valued appropriately would surely sound attractive to many people. The same might hold true for his proposal to reform the tax system by lowering taxes on labour income and increasing them on financial transactions. How exactly these ideas would affect the social esteem attached to different occupations is not clear. How do we decide which occupations contribute to the common good? Maybe more importantly, how do we decide what constitutes this common good? Sandel's answer to this is safe, unimaginative, and a little disappointing. He points out that the right way to decide these questions would be through citizen deliberation. This surely is a very safe answer in that it remains in the democratic tradition. Sandel does not want to prescribe what precisely we should aim for and which jobs are better than others, but he does not shy away from hinting at his preferences. Sandel's comparison of how the market rewards doctors compared to casino moguls and janitors compared to doctors might tell us something about his personal take on the issue. What we decide on as a society, he argues, should be exactly that, the product of our joint decisions.

Sandel presents two proposals on how the dignity of work might be restored. Both proposals, unfortunately, do not dare to step outside the realm of economic policies and consist mostly of policies that would affect the distribution of income. This, however, might not be enough to address the larger problem of the lack of social esteem that is inherent in US society, especially in relation to work and occupations. The advance of the post-industrial economy makes it harder for people to find jobs in which they can make a tangible contri-

bution to society. Restoring the dignity of work might, therefore, require not only that we treat everyone's contribution with the respect it is due, but also that we change the kinds of occupations that exist in our economies and the tasks that are required in most jobs, both private and public. The first step in answering these questions might be to determine what we define as the common good after all.

Here Sandel's answer is somewhat disappointing. Telling those who are suffering under the current system and are looking for change that we need to find a common solution to change our narrative will not bring them much solace. Considering Sandel's description of the United States as a deeply divided society that is morally unprepared to handle big challenges, the task of redefining its common good looms very large and potentially unattainable. Sandel does not offer specific ways of bridging that gap, and most of the policies that are proposed in the book already seem too controversial to be successfully and sustainably implemented in the current political climate of the United States. However, to those in politics who claim to be interested in fighting for the common good, alleviating social exclusion, and overcoming the divide, this book can act as an important wake-up call. Stop preaching a meritocratic society that might be neither attainable nor desirable.

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REGULAR REVIEWS

Krisztina Arató, Boglarka Koller and Anita Pelle (eds): *The Political Economy of the Eurozone in Central and Eastern Europe: Why In, Why Out?*
New York 2021: Routledge, 308 pp.

In a Europeanisation process that has generally unfolded as an 'ambivalent force for change' [Delteil and Kirov 2020], monetary integration has without a doubt been the thorniest challenge. The post-2008 Eurozone crisis has even revealed, above and beyond an East-West difference, that opinions can diverge quite sharply even within the respective clusters of member states. Arato, Koller, and Pelle zoom in on the political and economic factors that have shaped CEE states' options for joining, attempting to join, or expressly rejecting membership in the Eurozone (p. 2). Across 12 dense chapters, this co-edited volume argues specifically that CEE views on the Eurozone cannot be understood from a purely economic point of view, as they are warped in numerous ways by 'political gains and losses, the identity of the citizens, the status of democracy and the attitudes of other stakeholders' (p. 2). To begin with, the editors highlight that diverging CEE attitudes can in no small part be explained by changes in the nature of the Eurozone itself (p. 4). For instance, if the acceptance of Greece as a Eurozone member in 2001 signalled a 'soft and open' approach, later changes in crite-

ria introduced stricter conditions for CEE membership (pp. 4–5). Furthermore, the reforms pushed in the aftermath of the crisis by a de facto German leadership signalled to former applicants such as Hungary and Poland that the Eurozone is in fact less stable than it had appeared to them before their accession and this made it less appealing (p. 5). On a deeper level, however, this is also not straightforward. The entire CEE region is dependent on European and, more poignantly, German capital, which means that monetary integration could be driven from above by stakeholders that wield enough leverage to influence policymaking (pp. 5–6). Similarly, given the EU's multi-layered structure, shifting perspectives on the relevance of monetary integration for the overarching 'European identity' may also be reflected in CEE responses (p. 4). Such factors, further complicated by the global crisis, have led to diverging developments in CEE going virtually unnoticed, with membership or the lack thereof being at best partially explained (p. 5).

Following this line of thought, the individual chapters in this book uncover the nuances of the co-constitutive relationships between agency, structure, and historical-political contingency in forging options for or against monetary integration. Let me provide an overview of four key chapters, two from the theoretically minded Part I and two from the empirical analysis offered in Part II: Pelle's international political-economy perspective on Eurozone membership in the post-socialist economies, Tabajdi and Vegh's chapter on the global crisis and CEE economic performance, Borowski's study of Poland's radical shift regarding Eurozone accession, and Ban and Volintiru's comparative analysis of Bulgaria and Romania.

For Pelle, the crucial observation is that while European accession may act as a catalyst that generates the political will and societal impetus to catch up, it is no substitute for the lack of policymaking experience and institutional structures required for such a complex process (p. 13). For instance, the CEE states needed to define and pursue new monetary regimes, but they had to do so without threatening a crippled previous system (p. 14). Intimately linked, EU accession also required the introduction of structural changes, such as making the central bank independent and inflation control, changes that had not been made and were painful for transition economies that require more flexibility (p. 14). What is more, while such changes were not ipso facto Eurozone conditions, the Maastricht Treaty bound CEE states to full monetary integration once the convergence criteria were met (p. 16).

This complex background makes it easy to understand why arguments for and against accession both have strong constituencies (p. 18). For instance, early accession was envisaged as giving further impetus to small economies largely dependent on FDI, as it would further ease access to credit markets (p. 18). On a more discrete level, given that liberalisation itself is not homogenous [Appel and Orenstein 2018], various facets of monetary integration produce different responses – for instance, while all the transition economies strove for some type of inflation control, not all CEE states sought a euro-centred exchange rate (pp. 18–20). On the other hand, reluctance can also be linked to the specific characteristics of the transition economies. Concretely, given the currency appreciation that was an inherent part of the process of upgrading the post-communist economies, pegging the national currency to the euro may in fact have only been rational once the catching up had been achieved (p. 18). In this sense, if in the Czech case fixing the exchange rate to the euro was the natural corollary of reaching EU-level GDP per capita, in the Hungarian case competitive devaluation itself was the key to achieving at the very least an EU level of exports-to-GDP ratio (p. 18).

According to Tabajdi and Vegh, understanding the impact of the 2008 crisis in CEE requires disentangling the legacy of multiple recessions during the transition (p. 81). For instance, the increasing dependency on FDI and rising debt meant that the economic shock was widespread, affecting consumption, investments, trade, and the labour market itself (p. 81). Over the long term, this meant that the post-2000s partial convergence that was part of the EU-accession process was unsustainable (p. 82). Clearly, while there were variations between countries, the overall trend seems to be that privatisation, deregulation, and de-industrialisation led to a decrease in production with multiple socioeconomic consequences (p. 82).

Against this intricate background, the global and Eurozone crisis naturally had very different spill-over effects. For instance, GDP declines were highest in places such as the Baltics and Slovenia, with credit-based growth occurring in the pre-2008 period (p. 85). This was not, however, the case in Poland, the only country in the region that did not actually experience a recession, and Bulgaria, whose over-reliance on public debt made the drop in GDP less spectacular (p. 85). A crucial insight across the board is that the increase in intra-EU export and import activities after 2008 acted as a kind of buffer, whereby, despite the waxing and waning of EU-15 trade, CEE countries were able to use intra-EU exports to kick-start recovery (p. 88). Another common denominator was that since growth relied crucially on FDI in the entire region, the Eurozone crisis meant the loss of a crucial engine of growth (pp. 88– 89). Last but not least, the crisis pushed all the CEE countries towards excessive deficit procedures, which triggered automatic stabilisers and structural reforms in public finances (p. 89). Although there were some commonalities in terms of overarching effects, given the intricacies of each specific transition path, individual

countries resorted to sui generis solutions that layered tax cuts, active labour market policies, austerity, and/or fiscal consolidation (p. 93).

In the Polish case, Borowski identifies three distinct discursive-institutional phases of the debate for and against joining the eurozone: a mostly theoretical debate on (potential) convergence through euro-accession that went on between 2000 and 2008; the 2008–2019 crisis period when the floating exchange rate, as opposed to pegging the rate to the euro, was hailed as the tool that allowed the country to weather global turbulence; the currently still emerging debate driven by the pandemic that is primarily focused on the disadvantages of losing policy autonomy and the advantages of easing access to credit and markets (p. 183). The common denominator is that global changes have revamped the nature and scope of both the benefits and disadvantages of Eurozone integration (p. 183). The first phase unfolded within the theoretical framework of optimal currency areas, with most participants in the debate agreeing that, over the long term, monetary integration would lead to a decrease in the risk premium (p. 184). This then ushered in a range of growth avenues – an increase in foreign trade, a drop in interest rates and decreased transaction costs, easing FDI etc. (p. 184). At the same time, while scholars concurred on the theoretical advantages, they also highlighted a potential problem: the need for a very specific political consensus that may not be easy to achieve. Specifically, introducing the euro would require constitutional changes regarding the functioning of the national bank *and* a politically driven fiscal tightening that could clash with previous sources of growth such as productivity in tradable goods and prices in non-tradable sectors (p. 184).

Clearly, the 2008 global crisis reshaped the debate, as the depreciation of the zloty made it necessary to reconsider

the long-term benefits of monetary integration (p. 186). The crux of the issue was whether adopting the euro would deprive Poland of the autonomous monetary policy that most saw as the central tool that had allowed the country to weather the global crisis (pp.186–187). The key debate revolved around identifying the role floating exchange rates would play in maintaining internationalisation in the form of FDI inflows and in growing exports (pp. 186–187). Yet, while empirical studies generally seemed to show that floating exchange rates on their own were not enough to explain Polish resilience to the crisis, Covid-19 introduced a high degree of uncertainty, making political debates on monetary policy much more indeterminate (p. 188). The outbreak of the pandemic made it even more difficult to say, both at the theoretical level and in political debates, whether a floating exchange rate is a clear tool for stabilisation (p. 189). Because the national bank relied centrally on reducing interest rates almost to the point of turning negative, it is not fully clear whether losing autonomy over monetary policy would still be accompanied by the costs that occur in the 'normal' times of positive interest rates (pp. 188–189). In turn, lowering interest rates raises questions about the national bank's ability to stimulate demand, as asset purchase becomes limited in both quantity and scope (pp. 189–190). On a broader level, the asymmetric effects of the pandemic seem likely to give rise to a debate on whether countercyclical monetary policy is a reliable tool (p. 191).

For Ban and Volintiru, while Romania and Bulgaria are not at all as similar as conventional studies claim, they nonetheless serve as useful heuristics to raise a number of questions facing the entire CEE region vis-à-vis Eurozone integration (p. 254). Disentangling the nuances of 'growth regimes' and respective implications for monetary integration, Ban and Volintiru detail how and why the early 1990s' path-dependent

legacies and specific partisan trajectories led to diverging options for Eurozone accession. In the Bulgarian case, the hyperinflationary shock of 1997 not only paved the way for a discursive-political acceptance of a fixed exchange rate, but also gave rise to the currency board, which effectively created an institutional system without monetary policy autonomy (p. 258). Given the Bulgarian currency board's successful navigation of an extremely turbulent period, the broad political consensus was that Eurozone integration was needed, and dissensions related only to the technical aspects of policy (p. 258). So strong was this commitment that it persisted even in the face of a lagging economy and sharp decrease in employment rates (pp. 258–259).

Conversely, in Romania the outward political consensus for monetary integration is in fact fraught with many underlying tensions (p. 262). Specifically, the crux of the issue is that Eurozone membership would entail structural reforms that stymied the impetus of wage-based growth (pp. 262–263). The crux of the issue is that while inflation and/or deficits can be controlled from above to meet accession criteria, the structural transformation needed for de facto convergence would imply a costly and not readily achievable transition from over-reliance on low value-added manufacturing sectors (p. 264). Essentially, as a dependent market economy with a wage-lead growth model, Romania appears, in the eyes of both politicians and many in the central bank itself, to be ill-equipped to benefit from the euro (p. 267). Furthermore, while the country has a larger internal market that would mitigate some of the problems foreseen in the Bulgarian case, the huge rural-urban disparities would not in fact allow the domestic market to accommodate the pressures of monetary integration (p. 267).

Summing up, this book impresses with its level of analytical clarity, which sheds new light on the otherwise hotly debated

field of monetary integration. By drawing on various perspectives in international political economy and on a wealth of empirical data, all the chapters unearth new causal relationships among the multiple policy aspects of Eurozone integration. As such, the book sends out the strong message that above and beyond the core of static tenets derived from the Maastricht criteria, Eurozone integration can only be understood from the contingent perspective of political actors.

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Partha Dasgupta: *Time and the Generations: Population Ethics for a Diminishing Planet*
New York 2019: Columbia University Press, 344 pp.

This book is part of a series that builds on the work and spirit of the late economist Kenneth J. Arrow. It contains some of Arrow's thoughts on the central piece of this publication, Dasgupta's essay 'Birth and Death', along with a foreword by Robert Solow and contributions by Scott Barrett, Eric Maskin, and Joseph Stiglitz. These three commentaries are followed by Dasgupta's response to their concerns. The book ends with an essay co-authored with Aisha Dasgupta on socially embedded preferences and the environmental externalities of fertility choices. The book pre-

sents an excellent example of ambitious and interdisciplinarity-informed scholarship on what may be the most pressing issue of our time: the sustainability of human society in a diminishing ecosystem.

The book's main essay, 'Birth and Death', starts with a short introduction on the different rationales behind people's reproductive choices, ranging from children as vehicles for self-transcendence to children as a source of old-age insurance. The first chapter of the book provides a very broad overview of the economic demography of the rich and poor countries of the world – their differences in fertility, infant mortality, income, and population – and introduces the concepts of environmental externalities and intergenerational transfers. Reproductive choices and the way people use the environment can have consequences for the environment and other people – consequences that might as yet be unaccounted for. As Dasgupta takes on the role of a population axiologist, the key philosophical question is: 'How should one value possible populations so as to decide which would be best?' (p. 6). Chapter 2 presents the reader with the utilitarian foundations of Dasgupta's approach and outlines the path from Sidgwick's Classical Utilitarianism to his own Generation-Relative Utilitarianism (GRU). The third chapter contains further explanations of his take on the concepts of capital and well-being, and the fourth chapter contains the synopsis of the theoretical and empirical work Dasgupta presents in the remainder of the essay. In chapters 5 to 9, Dasgupta focuses on building evaluation models of population numbers. He argues that other approaches have so far ignored the important socio-ecological constraints that are becoming more dire and more apparent every year, and it becomes the main task of this volume to take them into account. This warrants a closer look.

Dasgupta starts with Total Utilitarianism (TU), where the Decision-Maker (DM)

is an entity separate from the future population. This view, as the author abundantly clarifies, disregards the fact that the current generation shapes the world and the future as they live in it, but it is nevertheless deemed useful to study the Genesis problem of creating the optimal amount of people in a timeless world. The optimum population is the one that makes the best possible trade-off between the size of a population and its average individual well-being. As a simplification, all people are considered equal and social well-being is distributed equally. Thus, social well-being is an aggregate of individual well-beings, which are a function of consumption. Simultaneously, (personal) consumption is total output divided by population size. Here lies one of the crucial points of the book: total output does not just depend on population size, it also depends on the value of the biosphere in its current condition. In this way, Dasgupta manages to incorporate the importance of sustainability into his model, unlike in mainstream economics, where it has been mostly ignored. Returning to the TU model, it is assumed that personal well-being increases with consumption, albeit at diminishing rates, just as the total output does with respect to both population size and the biosphere. It's worth noting that these assumptions imply that the optimal model of wealth distribution is the very one that we chose for simplicity, the egalitarian one. Assumptions about the shapes of the functions used in Dasgupta's theory allow him to seek a local optimum, which exists and is unique with minimal assumptions. This yields what the author calls the Sidgwick-Meade rule, which is at the very centre of TU, as it leads to an easy way to calculate the optimum population as soon as the specific functions are chosen to model the variables. This is exactly what Dasgupta does, opting for specific simple functions which are standard choices that get the point across without making the math overwhelming.

Following this capstone of TU, Dasgupta critiques it in a discussion of death and several variations of the Sleeping Beauty problem, which then prompt discussion of what he calls Generation-Relative Utilitarianism (GRU). In this scenario, intuitively, the DM is the current generation (or more precisely, a representative of that generation). An important notion here is the one of discounting future generations – whether and how much the well-being of potential future people is valued by the current DM. Dasgupta lays out an array of reasons – invoking the work of Tjalling Koopmans – that make discounting a desirable trait of the model. Notably, high future returns on current investments would lead to the current generation making sacrifices far and wide, because the well-being of a potentially extremely large amount of people in the future would outweigh any current benefit. The author, however, chooses to discount on the grounds of a risk of planetary extinction. This guarantees that the series of the values of well-being of each future generation will converge by considering expected well-being values instead. Mathematically, the well-being values are multiplied with the probability that the world will not face extinction before that generation comes to be. Dasgupta also then chooses to additionally discount for potential people and uses the parameter μ to set the scale of the discounting.

To model generations, the author again chooses a representative model that can be used to examine complex issues despite its simplicity. In short, generation-0 chooses the size of the next generation. For the first period, they are the parents, and the following generation is the children. Only the parents contribute to total output, but the children also reap the benefits from it. In the next period, the children become the parents and are the ones who choose the size of the following generation, while the previous parents die. With this model, the

author obtains a counterpart to the Sidg-wick-Meade rule under GRU. This is the theoretical culmination of the book. He then looks at the model's applications, examines the ways in which politics has largely neglected the importance of the biosphere and population numbers, and provides some statistics to help estimate the model parameters in order to yield tangible numbers. The optimal population suggested by the model varies strongly even with small changes of parameters, so the author clarifies that the estimates are only to be seen as a small illustrative exercise to add some meaning to the model, rather than as a guide. In the closing chapter, Dasgupta offers a beautiful view of the human attitude towards mortality. It is written from a place of deep love for humanity, and yet it remains in synergy with the analytical approach evident in most of the book. It is a display of empathy that makes the book all the more appealing.

In the main essay, and later in the response to the commentaries, Dasgupta rejects the idea of Average Utilitarianism (AU). The main difference between AU and Dasgupta's TU is that the former maximises average instead of accumulated utility. Dasgupta mainly rejects AU based on his assumption of a completely concave production function, as AU would then lead to the peculiar optimum of a population of zero. In his commentary on the main essay, Maskin questions Dasgupta's choice of production function and argues that it should instead be seen as convex at the beginning and concave when reaching resource constraints. Dasgupta accepts this criticism and argues that there is an additional reason to reject AU, even when it does not recommend a population of zero. He argues that it seems implausible that a DM would not add another person simply because that person would have a slightly smaller - but still positive - utility. It must be noted, however, that this argument only works in a situation where we do not assume equality between all members of the population, which is assumed in some of Dasgupta's early models. What then happens when the DM follows this logic? Most populations that are bigger than the previous one would still not give the DM a reason to reject adding another person, at least as long as the utility of doing so remains positive. This would eventually lead to a very large population at a living standard just above zero utility. A situation that Parfit fittingly called 'the Repugnant Conclusion' (Parfit cited on p. 46). In fact, Dasgupta also objects to this version of utilitarianism. In a first step, he considers a version of TU that establishes a critical value, above zero utility, that acts as a minimum for average utility (Critical-Level Utilitarianism). The propensity of TU to recommend a large population with a low standard of living would then be bounded by this new minimum ensuring a higher average living standard. Dasgupta argues that this approach is flawed, as there would not be a good reason for parents not to have a child if their living standard were slightly below the critical value, as long as the child's utility is still positive. He further argues that his approach to utilitarianism is also more practical and acts as a 'normative theory for potential parents' (p. 210). It remains unclear, however, how families can use his abstract theories to inform their reproductive choices, considering the impossible task of collecting enough data to calculate their potential child's utility. This is especially questionable, as this would also require them to predict future socio-ecological developments.

Finally, approaches such as AU and TU have another impracticality according to Dasgupta: They are applied to Genesis problems, as mentioned above, and this means that decisions about consumption levels and population size will be made in a context in which the DM is removed from actually inhabiting the world she is making decisions about. In GRU the DM does not approach the problem from Genesis, but represents a generation that cur-

rently exists. This distinction is key, as by giving the DM this perspective Dasgupta endows her and her generation with agent-centred prerogatives. In this approach, it is possible to justify valuing the utility of others less than one's own. Dasgupta applies a lighter version of this principle to the generational DM, arguing that she would only discount the lives of potential people. This discounting is represented in his models with the parameter μ and it acts as the main changeable next to the minimum subsistence level of consumption in Dasgupta's back-of-the-envelope calculations in chapter 11. It is this approach, next to including the limits of the biosphere into population axiology, that can be seen as the main added value in Dasgupta's theory.

In the foreword to the book, Solow raises concerns about μ and muses about his devotion to his own children and grandchildren. In the exercises in chapter 11, Dasgupta chose to set the parameter at 0.01, 0.05, or 0.1. Solow questions whether the values have been set too low and is sceptical about their intuitiveness. In the response to the commentaries, Dasgupta admits that he derived those values in a backwards fashion from population numbers, and that they are indeed not, as Solow doubted, 'intuitively natural' (p. xxiv). However, there is something reasonable about such low numbers. We might believe that we would not discount the lives of our grandchildren and children, but there could be a great distance between how we think we would discount and how we would act in reality. Research by Frederick [2003] on time discounting and different elicitation contexts shows that there are many different answers to the question of how much we discount future lives. The rate of substitution for a life ranges from around 45 to below 1 over a time horizon of 100 years. Frederick argued that some of the higher rates of substitution could be drastically overvalued as a result of biases in the elicitation context, as intertemporal comparisons are not always presented in a neutral context. The lowest rate of substitution is found in an elicitation context called *equity*. Respondents have the choice of saving 300 lives now or of saving 100 lives now, 100 lives in their children's generation, and 100 lives in the grandchildren's generation. What Frederick fails to mention in the discussion of the results, however, is that this is the only elicitation context in the experiment that elicits a family connection over time. These results appear to match with Solow's intuition that he obviously cares a lot for his own children and grandchildren. However, there are several problems with this intuition. First, would we still care as much about our grandchildren's potential children, who are more likely to be included in the group of potential lives that are being addressed by μ? Second, do we only *say* we care about our descendants, or do we actually *do* something about it? A lot of people argue that they care about their children and grandchildren, and yet continue to vote for parties with an insufficient or even devastating performance on fighting climate change and protecting the environment. This is, of course, not to say that this failure to care for our children's and grandchildren's future is out of malicious intent. Many factors play a role in determining this myopia and the complexity of the political system, the economy and, even more so, the biosphere could be sufficient enough cognitive hurdles for people to be unable to act on their preferences. In conclusion, even though Dasgupta did not choose the different parameter values for μ as 'intuitively natural', there is also no apparent reason as to why they should not be as low as they are here.

The final point that we want to highlight is Dasgupta's position on how to solve the problem of sustainability. In the beginning of the essay he co-wrote with Aisha Dasgupta, he applies the $I = PAT$ metaphor to outline the three main dimensions that determine our impact on the biosphere (p. 226). Population, affluence, and

technology, however, are not equally covered in his theory. GRU uses the first two as variables and keeps the third one constant. Technology, which also includes institutions, is kept constant perhaps in part because of how difficult it is to reduce it to a single number. Dasgupta deals with this exclusion in several ways. First, he argues that techno-optimistic ideas are unfounded and that we should not make the mistake of believing that we can innovate ourselves out of the climate crisis. At the same time, however, he emphasises the pressing need to move to less resource-intensive patterns of consumption, especially in high-income countries, if we want to have any shot at reaching a sustainable level of impact. This would also imply a change in T, in the way we use our resources. As consumption levels in his models are measured in monetary terms and are simply derived from total world GDP, it is hard to understand how we could incorporate T into his theory. We can here refer to a comparison made by the World Bank. According to their 2010 *World Development Report*, 'switching from SUVs to fuel-efficient passenger cars in the U.S. alone would nearly offset the emissions generated in providing electricity to 1.6 billion more people' [World Bank 2010: 3]. While this does not invoke technological innovation per se, it could be addressed with an 'innovation' in US emissions policy.

There are several ways in which we could interpret this development with the tools Dasgupta provides. First, a switch to smaller cars, at lower prices, would be read as a reduction in consumption levels, leading to a smaller impact on the environment, but possibly also to lower utility levels. Second, and this is where Dasgupta offers some theoretical innovation, this fall in consumption does not have to have a negative impact on people's utility. In the second essay of the book, the authors elaborate on the idea of socially embedded preferences and argue that understanding this mechanism can help in addressing the problems

at hand. If a high fertility rate is partly due to socially embedded preferences, reforms that address social values or encourage lower fertility could succeed without people acting against their actual preferences. Similarly, when the societal norm for the size of passenger cars changes, it might not be read as a reduction in utility to 'only' own a smaller car. Examples like this show that it is not straightforward which recommendations can be read from Dasgupta's work. Family planning policies are presented as a key pathway. However, the book remains vague on both consumption patterns and levels, as well as on technological and institutional innovations.

In conclusion, *Time and the Generations* represents an innovative and relevant contribution. The main added value surely lies in Dasgupta's Generation-Relative Utilitarianism and in his introducing the socio-ecological constraints of a diminishing planet into population axiology. Dasgupta's modelling of GRU is well-founded with argumentation from both a philosophical and a mathematical perspective, and the model manages to be both elegant and representative at the same time. And while the choices Dasgupta makes in the book are not always immune to criticism, the book has great value for its interdisciplinary approach and Dasgupta's diligent scientific work. This intersectionality makes it relevant for scientists and policy makers alike.

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Sander van der Linden and Ragner E. Lofstedt (eds): *Risk and Uncertainty in a Post-Truth Society*
Oxford and New York 2019: Routledge, 81 pp.

Has the world finally become a 'risk society'? German sociologist Ulrich Beck, in his seminal 1992 book *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, defines a risk society as '...a systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernisation itself' (p. 10). The eminent British sociologist Anthony Giddens summarises a risk society as a society increasingly preoccupied with the future – as well as safety – generating the idea of risk. With the worldwide coronavirus pandemic, 2020 ushered in the concept of risk like no other time in history. As the world negotiates the new environment, overwhelmingly influenced by Covid-19, everyday situations such as going to work, attending school, even shopping for essentials take on new levels of 'risk'. Governments warn of risk. Businesses consider risk. Even the average citizen weighs risk almost daily. Risk could be considered 2020's 'Word of the Year'.

Pertinent in today's milieu, the editors of this book bring together leading experts in the field of risk assessment and management to explore the '...communication of risk and decision-making' in what they designate as a 'post-truth world' (p. 1). Van der Linden, a professor of Social Psychology at the University of Cambridge and the director of the university's Social Decision-Making Laboratory, and Lofstedt, a professor of Risk Management at King's College London and director of their Centre for Risk Management, both have pedigree when it comes to the subject of risk management. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines post-truth as 'relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal be-

lief'. Today, known more popularly as 'fake news', it has gained greater attention over the last few years, exacerbated by the pandemic. While fake news has always been an issue, now, with digital social media's immediacy, this is more of an issue than ever before. This, together with the growing importance of the concept of risk, makes for a complex contemporary world.

Risk, decision-making, and uncertainty are words that characterise most, if not all, governmental and popular responses to the pandemic. Terms such as 'risk profile', 'risk assessment', 'risk aversion', 'threshold of risk', and 'risk communication' are becoming a part of the common lexicon. The editors have brought together people who work or have worked for the British government in roles related to risk assessment and management from different perspectives; in positions such as risk communicator and president of the Royal Statistical Society (Chapter 1), Head of Policy at the Royal Society (Chapter 2), Director-General of the UK's Statistical Authority (Chapter 3), Chief Scientific Advisor at Department of Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) (Chapter 4), and Chief Executive of the Foods Standard Agency and the European Food and Safety Authority (Chapter 5). In the introduction, the editors note that it is not just their knowledge but also their 'real world experience' which is significant because it illuminates their concepts with applied situations. Although risk is viewed from different perspectives, the common thread among the essays is the facilitation of risk communications between those who create and disseminate those communications and those on the receiving end. The issues covered throughout this book are being played out regularly in the news.

The first chapter, 'Trust in Numbers', sets the focus of just this idea. Considering the UK's daily televised coronavirus update, with accompanying charts and graphs, along with news coverage (with their own numeral graphics), the informa-

tion included in this essay is very enlightening. David J. Spiegelhalter juxtaposes the concepts of claims of reproducibility crisis in science and 'fake news'. These two can come together to create an environment of mistrust in scientific expertise and the accompanying numbers. This could prove to be problematic when dealing with cooperation from the public while battling significant amounts of fake news about the virus – some coming from what are deemed 'reliable sources' such as presidents and heads of states. As the author states, '...we are in a time of populist political discourse in which appeals to our emotion triumph over reason' (p. 10).

The next chapter also directly relates to the UK's pandemic response. Using the lens of climate change, Emma Woods, Head of Policy at the Royal Society, sets out the idea that scientists and policy makers have a different relationship with evidence, causing complications when dealing with the public and public health issues. This can be highlighted by the UK easing of the lockdown where there seems to be a growing rift between the scientific advisors (official and unofficial) and those who make the policy choices (i.e. government ministers) that the public ultimately follow. Directly focusing on the issue of science policy in a post-truth world while drawing from her own experiences, the author identifies two significant issues; evidence synthesis (which includes diverse types and sources of information) and public dialogue. Pointing out that science and public policy have different '...values, constraints, and approaches to risk and uncertainty, as well as different levels of trust afforded to them by the public' (p. 28), bridging this gap can prove problematic. The author gives a 'crude characterization' of policy makers using 'multiple lenses' to make policy choices. The advising scientists are more 'myopic', wanting their research to hold up to scrutiny, thus reducing uncertainty and bias.

The next chapter, 'Trustworthiness, Quality and Value: the Regulation of Official Statistics in a Post-Truth World', continues along the same lines, with issues presented paralleling events of today. Ed Humpherson begins the essay with the same definition for post-truth stated earlier, mentioning how it was the Oxford dictionary's 2016 'word of the year'. He goes on to emphasise the growing importance of the word as well as the concept itself by giving examples of several books rushed to print on the subject. Bringing together the ideas of post-truth and statistics in an increasingly 'data-rich world' with problems of data processing and loss of confidence in our appointed experts, the chapter 'summarizes changes in response to these factors to the governance of UK statistics', which, the author says, 'involved the creation of a new Office of Statistic Regulations (OSR 2018) and a refreshed Code of Practice' (p. 45). Again, this subject can be poignantly mirrored with the UK's pandemic response, particularly with issues revolving around easing of the lockdown such as the reopening of schools and businesses and the introduction of 'local lockdowns' in response to localised spikes in infections.

The next chapter, 'Risk and Uncertainty in the Context of Government Decision-Making', speaks most directly and comprehensively to the initial UK response and the seemingly more complicated 'easing of the lockdown'. As a past Senior Civil Servant and Chief Scientific Advisor to the UK government, Ian L. Boyd, if employed in the same position now, would most likely be working on the pandemic response. Boyd starts by saying that he 'will present a view of how risk manifests in government and how it is managed' (p. 54). He concludes that 'risk, at least in the context of government, is mostly a social construct...and is as much a matter of perception as it is of a problem set within a physical reality' (p. 70), making a distinction be-

tween 'perceived' and 'real' risk. He concludes that timing and circumstances are just as significant as the actual physical manifestations of the risk. Early in the essay, when giving an example of a previous health issue the UK government was dealing with, he mentions 'the perception of the risk had changed in the intervening time rather than the risk itself' (p. 54). This statement sums up the development of the pandemic so far.

The final chapter, 'The Handling of Uncertainty', sums up the whole book's approach to the subject of risk management and risk managers' handling of uncertainty, a constant in social policy making. Using examples from his time professionally concerned with issues of UK food safety standards, Geoffey Podger succinctly lists four factors that would best serve risk managers in communicating with the public. First, there is a need to develop the work on scientific uncertainty in scientific assessment, meaning embracing the idea of uncertainty. Second, one ought not to underestimate the public's ability to cope with uncertainty. This factor is even more crucial when dealing with something as pervasive as a pandemic which requires full involvement of the public for successful containment. Third, further discussions of uncertainty in isolation should be avoided. And lastly, experts should 'state uncertainties more fully and plainly explain why the opinion is nevertheless valid on present knowledge' (p. 77).

Risk has now taken a prominent place in society. The unprecedented health crisis and subsequent economic fallout introduced by Covid-19 has brought on a feeling of general uncertainty around the globe. Much like there was no precise date for the formation of a class-based society, this holds true for a 'world risk society'. As quoted above, a risk is 'a systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernisation itself'. Not only the first appearance of the

Covid-19 virus, but also climate change, the global financial crisis, the growing feeling of war in Europe, as well as the prospect for international terrorism have made the world increasingly preoccupied with the future (and also with safety), generating the atmosphere of greater risk. This situation has been made vastly more complex by the rise of a designated 'post-truth society'. This volume of essays directly 'reacts' to such a scenario. The 'common thread' is the emphasis on the two-way process between public (and private) 'experts'' and those they serve, albeit from different disciplines and perspectives. The underlying purpose of these essays is analysing how to regain and keep public trust. A laudable aim in pandemic times.

The writings included in this volume have application for contemporary concerns. Unlike any other time in recent history, as the world tries to ease lockdown, the feeling of uncertainty enters almost every aspect of life. As many governments have moved in that direction, cases of the virus have spiked, prompting 'local lockdowns'' and creating systemic responses 'on the fly'. And if true what many health experts are predicting, the world must brace itself for potentially more global pandemics. These essays, using past professional situations as a reference, make a direct connection to the ongoing issues cropping up on a daily basis. This gives these writings added policy relevance, making them useful even for the non-scientific layperson.

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Andrey Makarychev (ed.): *Multifaceted Nationalism and Illiberal Momentum at Europe's Eastern Margins*
New York 2021: Routledge, 162 pp.

While the CEE post-communist transition had been forecast from the outset as sinuous if not doomed altogether [Offe 2004], the Euro-success of the early 2000s [Vachudova 2005] was perceived to be so far-reaching that the recent 'backsliding' [Greskovits 2015; Vanhuysse 2019], both resulting in and caused by the exit of young human capital and the 'angry voice' of the rapidly ageing remaining population segments [Vanhuysse and Perek-Bialas 2021], appeared as a major shock. The conundrum was in fact twofold: not only were the challenges to liberal-democracy more than fleeting episodes, they were also quite varied, porous in nature, and difficult to fully dissect (p. viii). Attempting to shed new light on the umbrella concept of 'populism' used to designate a wide array of phenomena related to CEE 'backsliding', Andrey Makarychev's co-edited volume argues that understanding the 'transformation of illiberal nationalism from a marginal phenomenon into a universally recognized challenger' can only be done through an in-depth reconsideration of 'politicisation' itself (pp. 2–3). In this line of thought, across eight dense chapters almost all the contributors detail how 'populism' can essentially be both an exogenous threat to democracy itself *and* an intrinsic part of electoral competition (p. 3). The volume shows that while the notion of populism mostly reflects a specific form of popular appeal, disentangling the nature of its content requires understanding the call for a 'radical re-politicisation' of the conventional Western-European order 'grounded in technocratic policies of administrative and managerial elites' (p. 2).

Broadly speaking, the book argues that the momentum behind all varieties of 'populism' is formed by two individual strands of it, which are interweaved and redefined in a contingent fashion: 'on the one hand, it reasserts the virtues of nation-state-based politics against global elites and supranational institutions; on the other hand, it militates against the liberal project with its cosmopolitan values' (p. 1). Yet, according to Makarychev, existing studies do not fully dissect how this discursive hybridisation essentially revolves around a 'trans-ideological agglomeration of different forms of resistance' to the Western teleology of 'politics' (p. 2). The crux of the issue is that particularly from the vantage point of CEE states, which can be construed in a way as 'newcomers' to the ebb and flow of global capitalism and liberal democracy, a 'political order' is not immutable. More concretely, if in Western Europe a long-term structuring and layering has gradually kept some issues out of 'politics', in Eastern Europe the multiplicity of challenges in the aftermath of communism and then after 2008 made the political order malleable, to the point of it being contingently defined (pp. 1–3). This fundamental difference generates a series of crucial distinction between 'Western' and 'Eastern' variations of illiberal nationalism such as: the different role(s) ascribed to ethnic legacies and to migration; the interaction between nationalism and democracy; and a highly specific 'decolonisation' narrative built on the putative 'second-class' status of CEE member states (pp. 3–5).

While the emphasis of the book is clearly on agency and discourse, the individual chapters also offer a more layered analysis of the co-constitutive relationship between actors, structure, and process in shaping the nature and reach of populism. Although the list of contributors contains an impressive array of well-established scholars, within the modest confines of this review not all chapters can be given the consideration they are due. Let me thus provide an overview of three key chapters: Daniel Hegedüs's study of Viktor Orban's multi-layered anti-EU rhetoric; Monika Ga-

briela Bartoszewicz's comparative study of Poland and the Czech Republic; and Taras Kuzio's analysis of non-EU CEE variations of populism.

Daniel Hegedüs uses a case study of Fidesz's long-term success in Hungary to challenge the main assumption of existing studies, namely that multiple incumbency is typically followed by electoral losses for populists (p. 56). Concretely, the existing consensus in the literature is that given specific structural weaknesses, populist parties can only maintain power through a 'mainstreaming' process, which involves various forms of drifts towards the centre (pp. 57–58). Drawing on Moffit's conceptual framework wherein a crisis is not exogenous and immutable but internal and 'performed', Hegedüs demonstrates that Fidesz resorted to an 'externalisation strategy', which bypassed the need for 'mainstreaming' by outsourcing the 'them–us' dichotomy that typically wins populist electoral appeal (pp. 60–61). In this line of thought, the chapter argues that Fidesz essentially conserved its electoral appeal by shifting the focus of 'existential and moral conflict existing between "the People" and the elites, to the existential and moral conflict between "the People" and "the others"' (p. 58). This was particularly effective at overcoming the incumbency challenge as it allowed the party to both consolidate its infrastructure and crucially to 'occupy elite and government positions, while in the same time also keeping their radical populist claims' (p. 58).

Concretely, between 2010 and 2015 the key topos was the way in which 'speculative capitalism' allowed "liberal capitalist elites in Hungary to alter work relationships in a manner that directly pre-empted 'national revival' (pp. 61–62). This framing allowed Orban to label a variety of the putative actors in 'global capitalism' as the 'others' to which the existential 'them–us' dichotomy could be externalised (p. 63). By introducing, in 2012, the amorphous con-

cept of a 'freedom fight', Orban opened up a vast conceptual space for potential existential threats, which shifted seamlessly between economic terrain and the fluid grammar of nationhood (pp. 64–65). The ensuing narrative thus revamped the otherwise heterogeneous 'Hungarian nation' and the 'hard-working people' into very narrow and 'homogenous categories … in existential conflict with the public enemies' (p. 66).

While harkening back to the initial anti-liberal position, Fidesz's 2015–2018 narrative mostly emphasised the 'cultural and biopolitical survival of the Hungarian nation' in the specific context and aftermath of the refugee crisis (p. 68). Furthermore, on a more fundamental level, if the crucial concepts of the 2010–2015 narrative required more-or-less stable content, the key topoi of the 2015–2018 stance on nationhood have more often than not been defined 'in a negative way, as a reference to the absence of the imagined doomsday that would have been by the public enemies' (p. 71). Essentially, by coupling questions from the economic fields with new ones from the terrain of ethno-cultural survival, Fidesz managed to conserve its electoral appeal through the same type of populist radicalisation that had swept it into power (p. 69). By identifying liberal multiculturalism as the key failure of the global political status quo, Orban externalised the source of a putative perpetual crisis – while internally the 'public enemies' were stopped, they were (re)labelled as being part and parcel of a more global structural problem that now impeded the development of the nation (pp. 69–70).

Pursuing a comparative analysis of Poland and the Czech Republic, Monika Gabriela Bartoszewicz identifies the distinct sequences of elite recruitment that underpin the rise of 'celebrity politics' as a distinct facet of CEE populism (p. 100). Starting with classical theories on political elites, the author essentially seeks to un-

derstand how, in the context of Poland's and the Czech Republic's weak post-socialist institutions, representative democracy and the massification of politics have facilitated 'celebrity politics' (p. 102). By focusing specifically on parliaments, arguably the key drivers of mass politics and the post-socialist transition, Bartoszewicz shows that although 'celebrity presence' remains relatively minor in absolute terms, it essentially demarcates a novel phenomenon (pp. 103–105). On the whole, both Poland and the Czech Republic passed through an initial stage of 'politics as a vocation' and a second wave of 'politicians with skill, not zeal', both fully explicable as a result of the post-communist transition (p. 106). Within a pan-European 'surge of anti-establishment parties', Bartoszewicz argues that the third wave consists of 'charismatic politicians, who see politics neither as a mission, nor as a profession, but rather as an opportunity' (p. 108). Against this background, the author argues that populism can be defined not just as a fluid ideology but as a 'unique form of political emotion' that allows the framing and subsequent institutionalization of 'extraordinary measures' to deal with putative 'security concerns' (p. 108). Democratic representation failed to fully consolidate the 'symbolic and instrumental links between social groups and elites', so celebrity populism, predicated on a sharp division between state and society, filled in a highly specific void (p. 110). In both Poland and the Czech Republic this gap has typically been formed by the way in which a 'professionalisation' trend yielded representative elites who, in 'living off politics', appear disconnected from the interests of 'the people' (pp. 109–111).

For Taras Kuzio, the Ukrainian case both reconfirms and deviates from the main tenets of European populism: on the one hand, it does not include clear stances on anti-immigration, Islamophobia, EU-blaming, or typical ethno-national-ism; on the other hand, it does feature anti-globalism, anti-establishment in the shroud of anti-corruption, authoritarian tendencies with anti-reformism at its core, a fluid approach to political ideologies, and the discursive trope of 'perpetual crisis' (p. 116). Clearly, the legacy of a protracted and meandering post-communist transition is crucial in such a hybridisation, which Kuzio in fact shows to be the common denominator of populism in Europe more broadly (pp. 117–118). For instance, because the 1990s generated weak political parties that were typically driven by oligarchs, ideology in general plays such a weak part in Ukrainian politics that it could not easily be incorporated into populist narratives (p. 117). Similarly, given Ukraine's specific geographical position, immigration is simply a common trope rather than an exceptional event that could be incorporated into a narrative of crisis (p. 120).

Arguably the central issue that has shaped Ukraine's unique populist discourse is the legacy of the USSR. Broadly speaking, the USSR underpins a narrative of nostalgia that is vastly different from the one constructed in Europe and the US vis-à-vis a putative pre-immigration nation-state (p. 120). While both narratives gravitate around the idea of loss – the 'losers of [the] transition in Ukraine' and the 'losers of global multicultural capitalism' in Europe, in essence the nostalgia for the USSR is more geographically confined and concretely tied to oligarchs and highly specific energy and trade ties (p. 121). Although the more fluid tropes of 'longing for order' and a Russophile view of history are present, according to Kuzio they are not key conceptual drivers of the discourse (pp. 120–122). Similarly, Ukraine's historical background implies a very specific stance on nationalism, which is neither ethno-centrist nor devoutly anti-American (p. 121). In fact, because present-day Russia is a clear threat for Ukrainian nationalists, most populist

narratives are constructed around a pro-NATO and pro-EU stance (p. 122). Conversely however, the legacy of the USSR has also created the space for Ukrainian populists to use otherwise pan-European tools such as anti-corruption rhetoric, anti-globalisation, an overemphasis on authoritarian politics as more efficient than democratic means, and disillusionment with conventional politics (pp. 122–124).

Summing up, Makarychev's edited volume impresses with its analytical clarity, which sheds new light on the otherwise porous concept of populism. By drawing on multiple conceptual toolkits from the fields of elite theory and discourse analysis, all the chapters unearth new facets of existing explanations and new causal relationships concerning the intricacies of the umbrella concept of 'illiberal nationalism'. Furthermore, by expanding the geographical scope of conventional studies, the book also discusses some of the limitations of conventional studies on European populism and sends out the strong message that, above and beyond a range of core ten-

ets, populism is essentially fluid and contingently defined.

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Ranking objective and perceived inequality.
A comparison of the Czech Republic in the European context

Jiří Večerník a Martina Mysíková
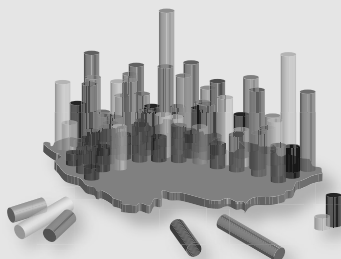
Ranking objective
and perceived inequality

A comparison of the Czech Republic
in the European context

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In Czech public and professional discourse there is strong rhetoric about the rooted egalitarianism of Czech society and its extremely low socio-economic inequality. This study thus traces various objective and subjective dimensions of inequality in an attempt to examine the validity of this rhetoric. The study uses various sources of data on the levels and trends in earnings, household income, and living conditions in the Czech Republic and compares them to other European countries. It appears that although the country ranks among societies with a low level of social inequality, Czechs are not particularly 'exceptional' when it comes to objective economic equality, nor are they remarkably egalitarian in their attitudes.

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