
Editorial Introduction

While the articles in the first issue of the *Czech Sociological Review* were thematically oriented and internally connected to the prognoses of Czech society and its development, the second issue of this review arose spontaneously from the many contributions the editors received over the course of the year. The careful reader, however, will discern a certain unity within this common field of interest which determines the long-term orientation of sociological knowledge, not only in the Czech Republic, but in the whole post-communist Central-European region. These unifying elements are distinct, if not always explicit. They constitute the question of social change, its character and the very effort to distinguish the aims of the change from its means, its path from its end. The different titles – Change, Transformation, Transition, or Transmission – themselves reveal varying perspectives, a range of accents. It is also from this point that different types of questions and answers may arise: Is the understanding of the changes in post-communist societies based on the concrete form of their past, with the accent on the differences in their initial state? Or, conversely, is this understanding bound solely to the clear pattern created from contemporary western liberal market economies, its mechanisms and rules considered at once common and exclusive, a goal which knows no development? Further, is it not necessary to elaborate an eventual vision of a common European future towards which we could all move, where the demonstrable inequalities, cultural deficits and other „errors“ of the Western pattern would not have to be repeated? Are we dealing with a singularly linear change, where a given system has changed under certain conditions and in accordance with universal rules into another system, or is it necessary to put the accent on the qualitative difference and individuality of each particular situation? And what to do with those social elements, traditions, values and so on, which cannot be incorporated, which cannot be reintegrated? And further, should the accent be placed on the continuity or on the discontinuity of the processes of change?

The problem of choosing from three possible interpretative accents – past, present and future – is also the problem of the „foil of representation“. In his essay, *Vested Interests Versus Strategies of Systemic Transformation in Poland*, Władysław Adamski points to the inappropriateness or the scientific unacceptability of South-American patterns of transition from authoritarianism to democracy. He emphasises the uniqueness of the totalitarian heritage, the surmounting of which is complicated by the simultaneous need to reintroduce the long-absent real market economy. Under such circumstances, would the envisaged scale of systemic transformation and its accompanying strategies clarify questions as to how to change the type of ownership in relation to social classes and socio-professional structures, how to radically modernise technologically and structurally obsolete industry, public service institutions and traditional agriculture, or how to achieve the necessary reorientation of mainstream value orientations and group interests.

These considerations are also of inspiration for Czech milieu, where relatively little attention is paid to questions which would explicitly thematise the unself-evident transformation of the society, the concrete changes of its components and its undesired consequences with regard to the whole course of necessary modernisation, i.e. with

regard to the increasing the mobility of commodities, information, the increasing social mobility, even the acceleration of differentiation, specialisation and rationalisation processes in the spheres of the labour division, the effectiveness of education, the secularisation of life and so on.

It is this level of attention, this division of accents, in the examination of the transformation which renders this particular issue of the *Czech Sociological Review* highly instructive. It is introduced by P. Machonin and M. Tuček's essay, *A Historical Comparison of Social Structures in the Czech Republic in 1984 and 1993*. It is of interest that between the otherwise extremely different social structures of 1984 and 1993 a range of conjunctions and analogies are found to reveal themselves rather clearly. According to the authors, the process of post-communist social transformation is not taking place in a void and is not an enlightened construction of a „new“ society „ex nihilo“. In spite of the initial radicalism of the political changes, in spite of the exchange of political elites and despite the ideologising declarations about quite new principles of social arrangement, the authors seek to direct our attention to the fact that the real political changes occur rather as a gradual historical alteration of inherited social structures under the active co-ordination of many individuals, who were engaged also in previous social life (the so-called „second society“) and who are driven by the need to solve the old problems which still exist.

The collective essay by J. Hřaba, F. Lorenz, G. Lee and Z. Pechačová *Economic Change, Inequality and Distress in the Czech Republic* examines social consequences of economic reforms in Central Europe with regard to the unequal distribution of wealth and the unequal influence of psychical consequences of poverty (stress and financial difficulties). It is supported by results from extensive surveys on the distribution of these consequences, especially in the USA and Poland, and suggests the closeness of the survey results to the situation in the USA.

The third essay in this issue, *The legitimacy of Privatisation* considers the problem in the context of public opinion (and partly even from the perspective of specific interests of different social actors), seeking to explain it with qualitative research in employee attitudes towards privatisation of their firm, at the same time indicating the differences between managers and employees attitudes. The final two articles are devoted to topics of special sociologies. The problems of regional specificities in the Czech Republic, especially space variations of political preferences and their specific differences from global state policy is analysed *Economic, Social and Historical Determinants of Voting Patterns in 1990 and 1992 Parliamentary Elections* by T. Kostelecký. He demonstrates, that political behaviour in local and regional communities is not merely a reflection of contemporary changes, however revolutionary they may be, but has its own specific inertia and autonomous life. The final essay, J. Buriánek's *The Relatively Low-Anomic Czech Transition* is supported by data gained from wider comparative research of criminological aspects of the social development in post-communist metropolises. It is possible to see this as a contribution to the wider contemporary discussion on the possible interpretations of the relations between the transformation of values and attitudes, social anomie and the phenomenon of criminality.

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