Editorial

This issue of the *Czech Sociological Review* deals with Czech values as they were recorded in two waves of comparative research called the *European Values Study* (EVS) in 1991 and 1999.[1] All the papers presented here are based on the Czech EVS data and their aim is to map whether there has occurred a change in value orientations during the 1990s.

We are aware of the fact that to make an inquiry into the values of individuals and the value orientation of populations is difficult.[2] Values are constructs that are not directly observable, the concept itself is not sufficiently defined – at least there is no broad consensus in the international community on how to define values. Moreover, from the methodological point of view, sociology has not given clear-cut instructions on how to measure them. We therefore understand those arguments that object to the possibility of inquiries into values,[3] the result of which was a certain retreat from value research during the 1970s and 1980s.

Nevertheless, the activity of scholars grouped around the European Values Study and the *World Values Study* (WVS)[4] seems to have revived the interest in values. A number of articles and monographs published from EVS (and WVS) data – the detailed list can be found on the EVS web pages (see http://www.kub.nl/faculteiten/fsw/onderzoek/worc/) – have made the enterprise famous, not only among social scientists but also among journalists and even politicians.

We regard research of values and value preferences as a very important social science topic. We hold the view that values are cognitive representations of human needs [Rokeach 1973] and that they "indicate preferences people share for certain types of outcomes in their lives and for certain types of conduct" [Ball-Rokeach and Loges 1992: 2222]. In other words, to hold a specific value "means a disposition, a propensity to act in a certain way" [Halman and de Moor 1994: 22]. Values are important elements of social structure, they are also thought of as a central part of cultures. Since values are dispositions of behaviour, we perceive values – together with van Deth [1995] – as phenomena crucial to the interpretation of social and political change.

Value change seems to be a substantial condition for any society that undergoes fundamental political, economic and social/cultural change. The difficulty and relative slowness of the process of transformation from a totalitarian society into a democratic one, as recorded in all former communist countries, is brought about, in our view, by the very value structures and by their inertia. Basic value structures and orientations are formed in individuals during their formative years of age, which is, according to Becker [1995], from the age of 10-25. As such they are relatively resistant to change – their

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[1]) A general description of the EVS is given in the next article of this issue by Jan Řehák.

[2]) Van Deth and Scarbrough [1995] made a comprehensive analysis of the concept of values, Halman and de Moor [1994] put the concept of values into a comparative research context.

[3]) Hechter [1992] made an excellent review of impediments to the study of values.

[4]) World Values Study is a similar enterprise to EVS, it is directed by the US scholar Ronald Inglehart.

change would mean the transformation of an adult's cognitive organisation, which could consequently produce deep uncertainty and anxiety [Inglehart 1990].

This does not mean, however, that to change these central parts of culture is impossible. However, as Inglehart reckons, it is rather a gradual process carried "through intergenerational population replacement than by the conversion of already-socialized adults" [ibid.: 19]. He therefore sent an indirect warning to transforming communist countries to halt their optimism with respect to the speed of change, saying:

> "...a culture cannot be changed overnight. One may change the rulers and the laws, but changing basic aspects of the underlying culture will take many years. Even then, the long-run effects of revolutionary transformation are likely to diverge widely from revolutionary visions and to retain important elements of the old pattern of society. Furthermore, when basic cultural change does occur, it will take place more readily among younger groups (where it does not need to overcome the resistance of inconsistent early learning) than among older ones, resulting in intergenerational differences" [Inglehart 1990: 19].

Dahrendorf, when commenting in one of his interviews on the revolutions in Central and East Europe and the breath-taking speed they took when occurring in 1989, compressed this notion bluntly and stated that politics can be changed within six months, the economy within six years, but culture within sixty years.

These ideas lead us to the view that values as conceptions of the desirable, appropriate, good or bad, can be understood as social facts which serve as a regulatory mechanism of people's behaviour – people's acts are determined by their values [Musil 2000]. The pattern of determination, some scholars believe, is not difficult to outline - for instance according to van Deth, the scheme is simple and only two assumptions are needed: "The first is that individual behaviour is determined by behavioural intentions, which, in turn, are shaped by values and political orientations. The second assumption is that people's values are highly influenced by the social environment and by their social position in that environment" [van Deth 1995: 5-6]. In his view, macro-level developments shape one's social position and these two elements influence his/her values. Values then determine one's political orientation, and these two are the co-determinants of behavioural intentions. Behavioural intentions are the direct determinant of one's behaviour. Van Deth stresses nevertheless that the central position in the link between macro-structural conditions and individual behaviour is occupied by values. Moreover, the whole process is of a circular character because individual acts shape macro-structural conditions.

This line of reasoning could suggest nevertheless a certain kind of structural determinism and, to the objection of many social constructionists, that people behave not with respect to the objective qualities of the world around them but with respect to their subjective perceptions. I am not going to pursue the never-ending polemics of 'objectivists' (structuralists) versus 'subjectivists' (phenomenologists) here. From my point of view, the centrist's approach could be interpretatively fruitful, and it could sound as follows: An actor (agent) is formed and shaped in his/her everyday behaviour by outside forces – not only in the sense of e.g. Marx's economic substructure or Bourdieau's first-order (social and economic) reality, but also, as evolution genetics and sociobiologists show, by biological/genetic forces – but the way he/she acts in concrete situations is influenced by his/her definition of a situation, by meanings, by cultural patterns, by his/her habitus.

"Neither cultural determinism, nor economic determinism", maintains Inglehart [1997: 12].[5]

To cut a long story short, people's values are important phenomena for the life of society. They belong to basic elements of social structure. Their knowledge – especially in a time series – can serve as important predictors of behaviour of different social groups and sub-populations. The importance of such knowledge is very high, especially in societies which transform themselves from communism to democracy. The success of the transformation depends heavily not only on economic advancement but also on the culture shift.

As far as the culture shift is concerned, Inglehart maintains that the culture shift consists in "gradual changes in prevailing basic values concerning politics, work, religion, the family, and sexual behaviour" [Inglehart 1990: 4]. Politics, work, religion, and the family are therefore the very topics which are dealt with in this issue. They are supplemented by analyses of Czech post-materialism, xenophobia and educational values.

Klára Vlachová opens this issue with her paper *The Legitimacy of Democracy and Trust in the Political Institutions in the Czech Republic*. She focused on questions that are basic to Czech democracy, namely what kind of support the democracy receives, how democracy is assessed, and whether the Czechs trust their institutions. Her finding that they regard democracy as highly legitimate (nine out of ten respondents considered democracy as the best form of government) sounds optimistic – even the fact that only 30 percent of respondents were satisfied with the development of democracy, which seems at face value to be a low proportion, has its positive side. The dissatisfied were mainly 'good democrats' who were critical of the current state of affairs and who were interested in the improvement of democracy.

The next paper by Blanka Řeháková, entitled *Who Are the Czech Materialists, Post-materialists, and Those who Are 'Mixed', and How Do They Differ in Their Opinions and Attitudes on Selected – Primarily Political – Subjects*, brings in an exploratory manner an analysis of Czech data with respect to what extent Inglehart's well known materialist, mixed, and post-materialist types differ. After Rabušic's [1990 and 2000] theoretical and methodological introduction of the 'post-materialism' concept, Řeháková's paper is the first detailed empirical analysis of the bearers of this typology within the Czech population (i.e. individuals who belong to these types). Contrary to doubts raised by Musil [2000], in his essay on Czech values, who refuses Rabušic's [2000] conclusion that the post-materialist dimension is present among the Czech population and that there has been a tendency toward a certain dematerialisation during the 1990s, Řeháková confirms that post-materialism does exist in the Czech Lands, and she moreover claims that there is a tendency toward its increase.

It has often been declared that one of the obstacles to Czech transformation and to the incorporation of the Czech Lands into international structures might be the certain inertia of the Czech population in their attitudes towards 'strange' foreigners, i. e. their

[5]) His theory of the *silent revolution* and of post-materialism, which Inglehart [1977] elaborated in the 1970s, is based, though, on certain economic determinism. He assumes that the unprecedented rise in the standard of living, prosperity and security has brought about substantial change in value preferences among young age cohorts (born in the 1950s) of advanced industrialised countries leading to the spread of post-materialist values.

xenophobia. In his paper, *Xenophobia among the Czech population in the Context of Post-Communist Countries and Western Europe*, Aleš Burjanek raises questions that are from this point of view very interesting for Czech society: How xenophobic the Czechs really are, and to what extent their degree of xenophobia differs from other European countries. As he says, despite some improvement, the Czechs were still much more xenophobic at the end of the 1990s than their counterparts in Western Europe. The fact that there were other countries (mostly, except for Italy, Belgium and Greece, from Eastern European ones) with a higher xenophobic index can be no consolation for the Czechs.

In the fourth paper, *The Czechs: Jobs and Work*, by Petr Mareš, we move from the realm of politics to the sphere of work. The author has focused on the meaning of work: what role do jobs and work play in the lives of the Czechs; which aspects of work do they regard as important; how satisfied are they with their jobs; do they feel secure with respect to their jobs and employment? The main findings reveal that work is highly evaluated by the Czechs and that they are quite satisfied with their jobs. However, in comparison with EU countries, the Czechs are less concerned with the social dimension of work as well as with the self-fulfilment one.

The next paper deals with a much discussed topic in the Czech Republic – religion. In *Religion and Secularisation in the Czech Republic* by Dušan Lužný and Jolana Navrátilová, the authors were mainly interested in secularisation, its form and its scope. They confirmed what has already been guessed – according to various indicators, the Czechs belong to the most secularised country in Europe. Czechs also have a low level of trust in church institutions; they think that churches do not deal with family and social problems. Moreover, the authors found a trend towards the privatisation of religion.

In the next paper, *Value Change and Demographic Behaviour*, Ladislav Rabušic seeks to find the causes of why there have been fundamental changes in the demographic behaviour of young Czech cohorts during the 1990s. He relates the changes to the deep value change of the young population with respect to the role of women, the role of children and the timing of demographic events (like marriage and having babies). The author assumes that the course of demographic development we are witnessing in the Czech Republic resembles the process labelled as 'The Second Demographic Transition', the beginning of which was observed in the Western European countries in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The final paper of this collection entitled *Which Qualities Should Children be Encouraged to Learn at Home*, by Milada Rabušicová and Ladislav Rabušic, deals in an exploratory manner with the educational values in the family preferred by Czech as well as some European populations. The authors discover that the structure of most preferred Czech qualities which children should be encouraged to learn at home remained basically the same during the 1990s, and that it is more or less universally distributed across various social groups and categories. The structure of these Czech value preferences is similar to those in many other European countries.

The collection of papers presented here is the first batch of analyses based on EVS data. I personally hope that many will follow soon, especially now the Czech EVS team has made the Czech EVS 1999 data publicly available by placing them on the internet in the Czech Sociological Data Archive (see http://archiv.soc.cas.cz). Anyone from any part of the world can download them free of charge for scholarly purposes now. I believe therefore that there will soon follow comparative papers written either by bilateral or

multilateral international teams of collaborative authors in which the Czech scholars will have their place.

We are ready for such a challenge.

Ladislav Rabušic, the guest editor

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