
Letter from the Editors

This issue of the *Czech Sociological Review* presents the first Book Reviews section edited by our new Reviews Editor, who came on board in January 2008. We take this opportunity to redefine and restate how we see the mission for the Book Reviews section of the English-language issues of this journal. We consider this section to be an essential component of the journal, providing a core service to the community of sociologists, but also to academics from other disciplines and interested laypersons. This service, we believe, consists in presenting and critically, yet fairly and constructively, analysing a carefully selected crop of new academic books, mainly but not solely about and from Central and Eastern Europe. For an academic discipline aiming to understand and critically reflect upon a complex social world that is changing fast in terms of technology, demography, norms, values, institutions and behaviour, we believe this to be a task of ever-increasing importance. Ideas no more flow backward than rivers do, as Victor Hugo said. The academic study of social life today needs places that report in timely fashion about the progressive accumulation of new knowledge. This journal's Reviews Section aspires to be one such place.

In terms of geographic scope, we want to be open to the world, yet firmly anchored in Central and Eastern Europe. We remain as committed as ever to a strong focus on the Czech Republic. But this republic is nested more and more within various concentric circles that span the Visegrád region, Central and Eastern Europe, the European Union, and a globalising world economy that is coming to terms with a range of new socio-political, economic, technological, and demographic challenges. So, too, does the *Czech Sociological Review* want to open its pages to discuss books, subjects, and authors drawn even from those outer circles, provided that they can be relevant to understanding democracy and society in the inner circles. It is useful here to re-emphasise that, in its mission statement, this journal affirms its commitment to contributing to the study of Czech and Central and Eastern European societies, to the development of special transition methodology and analysis, to the presentation of new dimensions and facets of transformation, and to the bridging of Central and Eastern European sociology, European sociology, and world sociology. These remain worthy aims for us today.

In terms of disciplinary boundaries, we aim to be intellectually curious and interdisciplinary in a critical sense. We welcome, first and foremost, reviews of new high-quality books from all established fields of theoretical and empirical sociology. But we are in principle equally open to review books from related social science disciplines, including, but not limited to, anthropology, ethnography, political science, economics, philosophy, demography, and regional studies. The sole requirement is that such books draw on sociological evidence or insight, or

could make important contributions to advancing sociological theory building – and good social science almost invariably does. Once every two or three issues, we aim to devote a larger space to a peer-reviewed review article discussing a set of two to four books which we deem to be especially relevant, wide-ranging, or original.

Of course, we may not often succeed in timely recognising the Lazarsfeld or Merton, the Coleman, Elias, Tilly, or Stinchcombe of today. Nor may we ever succeed in spotting the Offe or Granovetter, the Baumann, Fox Piven, Esping-Andersen, or Castells of tomorrow. But if we do not, it ought not to be for lack of trying. The Book Reviews section can become a way for the *Czech Sociological Review* to highlight those academic advances that especially merit the sociological community's critical attention – those ideas that particularly deserve to flow forward.

To make their availability wider and faster, all book reviews and review articles shall henceforth be made accessible online, starting with the journal's present issue. Let us conclude, therefore, by thanking all colleagues who have contributed to the Book Reviews section in recent years. Looking towards the journal's future issues, we warmly invite all interested members of the academic community, irrespective of location and seniority (and we would like to emphasise this especially), to send ideas and to submit high-quality reviews and review articles, to Pieter Vanhuysse.

With collegial regards –

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