

Literature Review on Civil Society, Citizenship and Civic Participation in the Czech Republic

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Introduction

This paper has been inspired by and elaborated within the research project of the 6th EU Framework programme „Civil Society and New Forms of Governance in Europe – the Making of European Citizenship“ (CINEFOGO – Network of Excellence). Its aim is to gather evidence about the recent development of public discourse, and available literature on civil society, citizenship and civic participation in the Czech Republic in order to make it easily accessible to the national as well as international community.

The authors' team was composed according to the scientific interests and research experience of scholars from various Czech universities and other research establishments. It was a challenging task as the paper deals with a broad set of contested issues. The unintended positive effect of this joint effort was the improved awareness of research activities of other colleagues dealing with similar or related research questions.

We hope that the paper will encourage both a further comprehensive research of the problem in the Czech Republic and comparative studies across the European Union countries. We are open to critical comments and further discussion about the content of the volume presented here.

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The position of civil society (social economy) and third sector in the national research and policy debate



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1.1. A short history

The main impulse in the development of civil society and civil associative activities in the Czech Lands came with the Czech National Revival of the 19th century, which culminated in the establishment of an independent Czechoslovak state in 1918. The following interwar period could be described as the Golden Age of civil society and the third sector in the Czech Lands. That period, however, was brought to an end by German occupation and the Second World War. Since then, the development of the third sector has been marked by discontinuity. Authoritarian regimes have alternated with periods of democratisation. NGOs have always played a significant role in democratic changes and have always been persecuted by authoritarian regimes, whether fascist or communist. After the collapse of Communism in 1989 the third sector was re-established for a third time, drawing on the traditions of the interwar period.

1.2. Public discussion

The terms “civil society” and “third sector” are a relatively new phenomena in the Czech society. In recent years, however, the concepts of “NGOs” and “civil society” have increasingly found their way into high level political discourse in the Czech Republic, popularized by the conflicting views of former Czech president Václav Havel and former Prime Minister Václav Klaus in the middle of the 1990s.¹ In spite of the prominence of the civil society debate, the term “third sector” still remains unfamiliar to the general public and the standards to which organizations are included in the nonprofit sector and what they should do vary greatly. Moreover, there is no general awareness yet that diverse variety of NGOs forms a sector of in its own right. What this indicates is that the Czech civil society and third sector are still in a period of self-identification and the boundaries delineating the scope of this activity are still the subject of ongoing discussions.

¹ See chapter 5. Evaluation of the national perspective on civil society, citizenship and civic participation – concluding remarks and future trends.

The concept of civil society was introduced to the public after the end of the Communist Party's monopoly of power in 1989. This historical event left indelible traces on the way in which the term "civil society" appears in public usage. At first, the mass media proclaimed that civil society in the form of dissident organizations had a decisive role in the downfall of communist totalitarianism. Civil society was understood to be in organized defiance against an unjust government and undemocratic conditions. The new political leadership accordingly embraced civil society organizations as the authentic expression of the will of the people. But when the initial euphoria died down, the questions of political stability and smooth functioning of democratic institutions began to dominate the debate. Political thinking was especially influenced by Dahrendorf's (1990) proposition that civil society is not mature enough yet to fulfil the role of guardian of the stability of the political situation and that this maturation process will take several decades. Under this proposition, a new understanding of civil society as the generator of political culture among the population, a culture that will be a guarantee of the democratic and peaceful development of society has taken hold.

1.3. Terminology

In terms of organizations, civil society is most commonly associated with foundations, trade unions, political parties and movements, and advocacy associations. More recently, however, the term has also come to encompass all kinds of voluntary public activities and services provided by associations, public benefit corporations and charitable and educational establishments of churches and religious congregations. As far as terminology in general is concerned, the situation in the Czech Republic is quite chaotic. Many titles often describe one and the same thing. For instance, in addition to 'Nonprofit Sector', 'Nonprofit Organizations' and 'Non-State Nonprofit Organizations', one can frequently hear labels such as 'Civic Sector', 'Non-Governmental Sector', 'Third Sector', and 'Voluntary Sector', and indeed also 'Civic Organizations', 'Non-Governmental Organizations', or 'Voluntary Organizations'. With time, terminology is beginning to consolidate and the third sector policy arena seems to favour 'Non-State Nonprofit Sector', 'Non-State Nonprofit Organizations', 'Nonprofit Sector', 'Nonprofit Organizations', and 'Civic Sector', or the analogous 'Civic Organizations'.²

The use of multiple terms for the third sector in the Czech Republic has not been driven by the effort to identify specific components or different facets of the situation. The motivation behind the use of varied terms is entirely pragmatic as they are related to the varied perspectives of individual kinds of stakeholders. The dominant use of 'nonprofit sector' is due to the reluctance to break up with traditions³ and the shortness of the expression. This specific term is not backed by any specific group of stakeholders. The term 'Non-State Nonprofit Sector' is promoted mostly by economy-based university experts, public servants and related third sector representatives who favour it for 'precision's sake' because it allows them to distinguish between the state (budgetary and contributory) and non-state nonprofit organizations (NGOs). It also allows public servants to pursue different policies in treating state-based and non-state organizations (legislation and financing). The motivation for the use of the above-mentioned 'Civic Sector' label is its 'positive connotations'. The newly established research organization,

² Recently the new term "civil society organizations" has been discussed mainly under the influence of the CIVICUS research initiative "Civil Society Index".

³ This was further reinforced by the Johns Hopkins University Comparative Third sector Project (second wave) conducted by the Lester Salamon team in the late 1990s.

Brno's Center for Third Sector Research (*Centrum pro výzkum neziskového sektoru - CVNS*) would like to shed new light on the third sector terminology. This centre has started an internet discussion with the clearcut goal to establish consensus in the terminology and stop confusion. The results of this initiative are still not very encouraging.⁴

As regards the term „social economy”, the Czech Republic has no clearcut government document supportive of this concept. Although such concept is included in several public policies (for example NAPsi or NAPemp), there is no widespread awareness about the term and its content. In the literature one can find different interpretations with different accents on particular dimensions of the phenomenon. The significant impulse for a broader implementation of the social economy concept in the Czech conditions is the joint NGO initiative instigated by OSF Prague and NROS. This initiative is focused on the role of NGOs in the implementation of social economy ideas. A joint meeting of government and NGO officials on August 2005 established a working group for the implementation of social entrepreneurship. This is seen as the as the first success of the initiative.

1.4. Research

The Czech academic research of third sector was inspired by international research activities, namely by the second wave of the “John Hopkins University Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project” (led by Lester Salamon) started in 1996. The project focused mainly on the identification of the “basic economic parameters” of NGOs in different third-sector fields and also within the third sector. This pioneering work⁵ helps to disprove several myths about the Czech third sector being promoted mostly by liberally oriented politicians. For example, the myth that state subsidies to NGOs are but a relic of the communist era, or that the sector is fatally dependent on state subsidies, as was generally presumed).

Unfortunately this international project did not find worthy successors in the realm of academic institutions for several years. In the 1990s and into the first years of the new century third-sector research was conducted almost exclusively by foundations and other infrastructural NGOs. Chief among them was the Foundation for Civil Society Development (*Nadace pro rozvoj občanské společnosti - NROS*) which in 1998-2004 supported several quantitative and qualitative surveys focused on the representatives of grassroots NGOs and the general public. The survey topics ranged from NGO activities and needs and their impact on public policy through individual giving and volunteering to public attitudes to NGOs and the comprehensive evaluation of the civil society (Civil Society Index). Typically, the NROS research goals in collaboration with the Agency for Nonprofit Sector – AGNES, were put on the national level and often concentrated on the third sector as a whole. Other NGOs (Foundation Information Centre - ICN, Donors Forum - FD, Open Society Fund – OSF, Partnership Foundation, VIA Foundation and SPIRALIS) conducted their research activities mainly in particular fields, using small samples of respondents. The majority of the NGOs research activities have clearcut academic ambitions and their fieldwork is done in cooperation with trusted research agencies.

⁴ The results of the discussion can be seen at http://www.e-cvns.cz/soubory/Definice_neziskoveho_sektoru.pdf

⁵ Published in: (Frič et al., 1999a ; Frič, Goulli, 2001).

From the start of the first decade of the new century the research activities in the fields of civil society and third sector became increasingly attractive for academic institutions as well. During that period we also witnessed the emergence of two new academic institutions committed to the scope of our research: 1. Department of Civic Sector at the Faculty of Human Studies at Charles University in Prague and the abovementioned 2. Centre of Nonprofit Sector Research as a joint research and analytical department of the Faculty of Economics and Management of Masaryk University in Brno, and the Institute for Civil Society Development (TRIALOG). The Department of Civic Sector is focused on theoretical backgrounds of civil society research mainly from the socio-cultural and economic viewpoint with special attention on intersectoral partnership and social economy (Dohnalová, Malina, Muller, 2003; Dohnalová, 2004a). Recent empirical research in the department has been carried out in conjunction with NROS and its goals are mainly geared towards the scope of foundations, umbrella NGOs and all-round assessment of civil society development (Vajdová 2005). CVNS offers economic and statistical analyses of particular legal forms of NGOs (in cooperation with the Czech Statistical Office).

The research activities in the civil society scope, whose traditions beat the two former cases, have been carried out in conjunction with the Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences and the Charles University Centre for Social and Economic Strategies in Prague. At the Institute of Sociology, empirical research is held mainly on the community and regional levels and includes topics such as civil society, political culture, trust, regional elites and civil engagement (Vajdová, Stachová, 2005; Stachová, 2002a). In CESES, the public policy perspective on third sector prevails. The Centre has carried on with the third wave of the JHU project (Goulli, Vyskočilová-Angelovská, 2005) and was also involved in the recently completed international research project TSEP (Third Sector European Policy) (Frič, 2005).

In the Czech Republic, only little research attention is paid to social movements. Most of the few studies available are theoretical, without underpinning empirical data. Only in the early nineties Czech sociologists were involved in Alain Touraine's empirical project: "Social Actors in the Process of Democratization" (Hradecká, 1994).

Generally speaking, Czech research in the scope of Civil Society and Third Sector is rather fragmented and without clearcut or dominant paradigms. It is safe to say that the research activities of the abovementioned academic institutions are isolated (except for cooperation between the Economics and Management Faculty of Masaryk University in Brno and the Department of Civic Sector at the Faculty of Human Studies at Charles University in Prague) and their communication is weak.

The national debate on social capital

2

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2.1. Introduction

Social capital is an academic and policy buzzword of the 1990s. It is one of the most influential concepts in the current social sciences. It has been given too many different meanings and has been used in so many to mean both “everything and nothing”. Surprisingly, the term “social capital” has not yet been widely used in the Czech academic and policy discourse. This is not to say that there is no debate concerning the substance of social capital. The opposite is true. However, research has been pursued under different labels such as social stratification, social cohesion, or transition studies. Papers explicitly dealing with social capital have emerged only very recently.

Any review of social capital literature grapples with the breadth, heterogeneity and multi-dimensionality of the concept as well as an enormous volume of literature. Social capital can be conceptualized at micro-, mezzo- or macro-level and is connected to many substantial areas including civil society, education, health, economy, life satisfaction and many others. Luckily, several social capital reviews and handbooks are now available (e.g. Portes, 1998; Dasgupta and Serageldin, 2000; Fine, 2001; Field, 2003; Adam and Roncevic 2003). In the Czech discourse, two streams of thought on social capital are usually distinguished (e.g. Matějů, 2002)⁶:

- Social capital defined as mostly the attribute of an individual, as a person’s ability to activate and effectively mobilize a network of social connections. In this context, social capital has the properties of the **private good**, which individuals accumulate and use to achieve their own goals.
- Social capital is mostly defined as an attribute of a society, as a quality of networks and relationships enabling individuals to cooperate and act collectively. In this context, social capital has the properties of a **public good** facilitating achievement of higher levels of efficiency and productivity. This stream of thought follows Putnam’s definition of social capital: “features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions” (Putnam, Leonardi & Nanneti, 1993:167).

⁶ Labels for these streams differ. Sedláčková and Šafr (2005) for instance speak of “individual mobilizing social capital” instead of private good capital.

The Czech literature on social capital, however, does not necessarily focus exclusively on private or public good aspect. Thus in this review we group Czech social capital studies into several clusters of topics with which it has been associated. They are as follows:

- Transformation of social structure during economic and political transition.
- Importance of social networks for an individual.
- Trust.
- Social cohesion, welfare state and social solidarity.
- Socio-economic development.
- Civic participation.
- Corruption.

As the review is only part of the overall literature review on civil society, citizenship and civic participation, we have deliberately omitted aspects of social capital reviewed elsewhere. Especially we have excluded topic of citizenship and civic participation in political and social activities, which is at the core of current social capital debate. We have also excluded vast literature on institutions, social quality and corruption. On the other hand, we did include literature on social cohesion.

The review is product of bibliographic database search (including Thompson, World Bank and others), extensive web search, and personal contacts. Of special value was a critical review by D. Mihaylova (2004), and social capital website.⁷ Though we focus upon contributions of the Czech authors and the Czech context, however, when relevant, we also mention papers of foreign authors.

2.2. Transformation of social structure in the course of economic and political transition

The concept of social social capital was mostly evoked to explain the process of transition from communism to democracy and a free market. Thus the review should start with seminal work of the Brno sociologist Ivo Možný *Proč tak snadno* (1991, Why it was so easy), in which he attempted to explain the sudden fall of communism in Czechoslovakia. According to Možný, communism was based upon mutual exchanges and favors stemming from wide networks of weak connections. In the late 1980s, the system ceased to be attractive for both the communist rulers and their subordinated citizens. Because many goods (including everyday-life necessities) could have been procured only with the help of personal connections (especially extended family connections), money had lost much of its value. Consequently, personal contacts were often fostered for instrumental reasons and that was quite uncomfortable for both the rulers and the ruled. In contrast to economic capital, social capital can be hardly transmitted between generations and “dirty connections, in contrast to dirty money, cannot be deposited in any bank and than used in other context” (Možný 1991: 62). To sum up, Možný explained the change in 1989 in the communist countries in terms of the need of power elites to transform the accumulated social capital into an economic capital, and the need of the rest of society to get rid of the growing role of social capital in everyday life.

Mateju and Lim (1995) tried to verify empirically that social capital played important role in individual adaptation from communism into democracy and market democracy. Using data from the first and second wave of the longitudinal study “Family 1989” collected in 1989 and 1992 allowed them to evaluate the effects of social capital accumulated under the communists regime on intragenerational mobility that occurred after its fall. Individual social capital was

⁷ <http://www.socialcapitalgateway.org/NV-eng-transitiondemocracy.htm>

measured as a respondent's declared capacity to mobilize, in case of necessity, a network of informal contacts. Mateju and Lim proved that social capital was a significant predictor of the respondents' adaptive strategies during the first years of transition and, consequently, also the change in his or her income between 1989 and 1993. The authors conclude that social capital played a significant role in improving life-chances within the "bureaucratically coordinated" segment of the labor-market, and particularly in the private sector. They also show that convertibility of social capital increased to a considerable extent the chance of the former cadres to maintain their income privileges.

Other authors also noted the importance of social capital during transformation. Eyal, Szelényi and Townsley (1998), argue that pre-communism, communism, and post-communism are three different stratification regimes defined by the dominance of different types of capital. Transition to post-communism is quite a complicated shift from the socialist rank-order system, in which social capital institutionalized as political capital (represented by the person's position in the communist party's hierarchy) is dominant, to capitalist class stratification, where economic and cultural capitals play strategic roles in the life-success of individuals. They also argue that during the transition people try to convert devalued forms of capital into new, more valued forms. This is the preferred way individuals cope with changes in the social structure. "In a post-communist transition, for example, those who are well endowed with cultural capital may be able to convert their former political capital into informal social networks, which can then be usefully deployed to take advantage of new market opportunities" (Eyal, Szelényi & Townsley, 1998: 7). The authors also argue that the socio-economic transformation of the country would not have been feasible without the constitution of a specific power elite, which has been willing to tolerate the conversion of social capital into the economic capital.

Other empirical analyses (Hanley, Matějů, Vlachová & Krejčí, 1998) confirmed the hypothesis that the real winners of the transformation are those who have been able to effectively combine the accumulated political capital of the past (*nomenklatura* cadres, communist technocrats) with cultural capital (education, knowledge). Political capital has made it possible to build social networks and maintain useful ties (social capital). Cultural capital has led to higher flexibility and capacity to put all these assets at work under the new conditions.

Matějů and Valenčík (2003) pointed out that reconsideration/reinterpretation of the social capital had not taken place in the Czech Republic after the fall of the communist regime. There can still be found strong influence of the social capital based on the familiarity, affiliation to the specific kin structures (clans) and mutual obligations derived from the mutual favours linked to the reciprocal purchasability and blackmailing (certain individuals are in control of certain social nets, thus achieving their benefits and working on the principle 'patron-client' as was characteristic of the communist period). Consequently, the old elites are able to utilize their previous social and political capital accumulated during the former regime even in the new societal conditions. Their social upward has been facilitated via their entry into the business sphere (the members of the previous elites have exercised five times as much probability to go into business than other members of society). This was the strategy of high utilization of social capital could (Matějů and Řeháková 1993).

The role of social networks in the change of heart among the local political elites was investigated in a community study *Acquaintances of Local Political Leaders* (Buščíková, 1999). It is based on the qualitative analysis of interviews with five respondents from a small town ("Littletown") and textual analysis of the memoirs of four mayors and one town chief executive officer from the period of the first post-revolutionary elections (1990-1994). The study describes the creation of social networks of local leaders. There were two stages of social network

evolution: the initial loosening of social networks based on pre-revolutionary acquaintances and friendships, their regrouping in the field of acquaintances and partners creating local political networks, and then their subsequent stiffening in the second stage. The comparison of two mayors in Littletown characterizes the different sources of legitimacy of their political authority (traditional and modern) and implies possible connection between the character of maintained ties and clientelism.

2.3. The importance of social networks for an individual

Using Czech data from Social Stratification Survey, Buerkle and Guseva (2002) analyze acquaintances and other connections one accumulates while in school. They investigate how personal networks, conceived as a source of social capital created during the schooling process, impact occupational success. They show that these networks serve as a channel through which applicants gain information about jobs and employers acquire information regarding applicants. They follow the classic article of Granovetter (1973) on “weak ties” and argue that networks of varying types have impact on job attainment and income in many different contexts and not only in countries under transformation: “Few would dispute the fact that networks similar to the ones in Eastern Europe exist in all regions. It is their relative importance that is contested”. They, however, also insinuate that social capital can play a more important role in the transition countries than elsewhere. They cite Sik (1995) and Kolankiewicz (1996), who maintain that social networks matter more in communist than in capitalist societies and, due to economic uncertainty, they matter most in the post-communist ones.

Sirovátka (1997) links social capital with labor market marginalization. He identifies social capital as one of the crucial assets of the labor force. Its role is conceptualized in the theoretical introductory part of the monograph and analyzed in qualitative/quantitative case study of people marginalized in the labor market in the Czech Republic: the role of family, social networks and community for their (un)successful strategies of coping with unemployment as well as for job search is recognized as a crucial one.

2.4. Trust

Questions on trust form a regular part of opinion polls. In the Czech Republic one can mention for example two main public opinion agencies CVVM (Public Opinion Research Centre of the Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic) and STEM (Empirical Research Centre). From the early 1990s they have regularly measured trust in institutions and since 1994 they have paid attention also to the level of interpersonal trust (general trust in others, set of question about trust in partner, colleagues, and neighbors) (Hartl, Huk, 2000)

Different types of trust (interpersonal or institutional) in Czech society have been measured also in international surveys: World Values Survey (WVS), European Value Survey (EVS), or New Democracies Barometer (NDB). Data from WVS was used in deeper analyses by a number of Czech researchers. For example Rabušic analyzes the relation between trust and intolerance and their relation to per capita GNP (Rabušic, 2000). In his study of the relation of anomy to attitudes towards minority groups, he finds out that the deficit of interpersonal trust increases the level of xenophobia and intolerance (Katrňák, Rabušic, 2002). Vlachová investigates the domain of institutional trust and studies also the relation between interpersonal trust and the legitimacy of democracy, or satisfaction of Czech citizens with democracy and doesn't prove any statistical significance of the relationship; in the Czech case (Vlachová, 2001). Burjanek (2001) finds a significant difference in the level of xenophobia between trusting and distrust-

ing people in the Czech Republic (Burjanek, 2001). Gabriel uses data from NDB in 1995 to observe similarities of postcommunist countries in patterns of trust in different institutions (police, courts, church, political parties, parliament, media, army, government, president) (Gabriel, 2000). Ryšavý confronts Sztompka's culture of the trust model with research done by Rose, Mishler, Haerpfer, referring to the problems with validity of general trust indicators and comparing results of international surveys on the development in the Polish and Czech societies (Ryšavý, 2001a).

Raiser (1997) and Raiser, Haerpfer, Nowotny & Wallace (2002) analyze data on social capital in the transition countries of Central/Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Using data from the World Values Survey 1990 and 1995 they document the degree of trust and of civic participation and find that these indicators of social capital are significantly lower than in the OECD countries. They also find that unlike in the market economies, in the transition countries trust is not positively related to growth; while participation in civic organizations shows a positive correlation. They also construct indicators of trust in public institutions and find positive correlations with growth rates.

Pechačová, Hraba, Bao & Lorenz (1998) examine trust in government in the Czech Republic through the criminology model of perceived risk of crime in connection with postcommunist transformation consequences. They find out that the relation between trust in government and perceived risk of crime is rather reciprocal. Trust in government can be not only an antecedent to perceived risk of crime but also perceived risk of crime can undermine people's trust in the government.

Kalous tries to map different types of trust in the Czech society using the empirical survey of life strategies conducted by the Centre for Social and Economic Strategies (May 2002). He finds some positive relations between trust and education, life optimism and future expectations of the respondents (Kalous, 2002). Sedláčková verifies the validity of the hypothesis about interconnection between interpersonal trust and trust in political institutions (Rose, Mishler), using survey data from the Czech Republic (survey Aktér 2001). The results demonstrate that while trust in institutions is strongly connected to the democratic system, interpersonal trust does not relate much to institutional trust either in democracy (Sedláčková, 2004). Šafr and Sedláčková treat the problem of trust in the context of social cohesion. Based on the public opinion survey "Our society" 2004 and 2005 they discuss Czechs' opinions on the notion of social cohesion and its sources and analyze interpersonal trust and evaluation of interpersonal relations in Czech society and their connectedness to social status and subjective attitudes and evaluations (Sedláčková, Šafr, 2005a). Using a representative sample of Czech society (survey Aktér 2001, 2003) they study the degrees of trust people have in selected professional groups and how that relates to the general degree of interpersonal trust (Sedláčková, Šafr, 2005a). Rakušanová analyzes trust in the context of democratic participation in the Czech society using data from ISSP 2004 (module Citizenship). The high level of trust in social networks shows, according to her, the remaining separation of private and public spheres in a post-communist society (Rakušanová, 2005).

Due to the fact that the topic of trust is rather recent in the Czech sociology, we don't really find an original Czech theorist of trust. We can only find some reviews of existing theories of trust. For example Sedláčková offers a genesis of the theories of trust from the 19th to the 20th century (Sedláčková, 2005), or Ryšavý offers in his thesis an overview of mainly Anglosaxon theories of trust (Ryšavý, 2001b). Ryšavý and Sedláčková also introduced the theory of trust of Polish sociologist Piotr Sztompka in Czech sociology (Ryšavý, 1999; Sedláčková, 2003). Sedláčková in her thesis compares Sztompka's theory with Fukuyama's and Giddens's theory

of trust and she tries to apply Sztompka's structural model of social culture of trust to an analysis of Czech society during the 1990s (Sedláčková, 2001). Sedláčková discusses from the "trust perspective" also the problem of family and intimate relationships, using theories of Putnam, Fukuyama, Giddens, Coleman, Sztompka and de Singly (Sedláčková, 2006).

Trust plays an important role not only in social transition but also in transformation of economic institutions. Mlčoch views trust as a key concept -meet point- of social sciences and also a decisive cultural parameter of prosperity, and the ability to compete and self-govern (Mlčoch, 2002). Sedláček focuses on the economic aspects of trust, analyzing spontaneous rule creation in a low trust industry, using case study approach to describe the importance of trust at capital markets in the Czech Republic (Sedláček, 2004). Ryšavý (2004) analyzes role of social networks in the development of small business in a small South Moravian town. He combines different theories of trust (Seligman and Yamagishi) with the theory of postcommunist transformation (Kabele, 1999). Expressions of trust are identified as acts overlapping the borders of family networks and cohesive communities within a town. He singles out the "crisis of trust" in institutional framework of entrepreneurship during the 1990's.

2.5. Social cohesion

In the Czech discourse, the public good aspect of social capital is also associated with the mechanisms of social cohesion. There is an ongoing large research project "Social and cultural cohesion in differentiated society project (2004–2008)" where the concept of social capital as well as the focus on social inequalities play very important role⁸. It follows on a previous project, "Mechanisms of Social Cohesion, Stratification and Role of Social State" which implemented a representative survey (Cohesion 2003) on inequalities and differences (Machonin et al. 2004). Five different dimensions of social cohesion are distinguished: socially-structural (mobility, social structure, inclusion / exclusion), institutional (institutions and norms), culturally-symbolic (cultural symbols and values), dimension of identities (sense of belonging to a community and tolerance) and activity (participation) (Musil, 2005).

The purpose of the project is to propose a realistic strategy of strengthening cohesion on the macro level, i.e. the State, as well as on the mezzo and micro levels of society. At present several parallel surveys of particular teams are in progress: international comparison of social indicators of quality of life among EU countries; community research of small localities and secondary analysis of potential peripheral development areas in the Czech Republic; survey of experts view of social exclusion and inclusion; qualitative research of solidarity in families taking care of old and ill relatives; continual public opinion pool on selected topics (trust, social justice, social norms, etc.). (Sedláčková, Šafr, 2005a). The largest of them is the 2005-6 representative sociological survey on social cohesion and mobility and transmission of value orientations, which widely covers concepts of collective social capital (values, interpersonal and institutional trust, participation) as well as some individual social contacts and subjective evaluation of involvement in social networks), perceived cohesion of a residential locality and identity (evaluation of quality of life, common identity and belonging), Srole anomie scale, and dynamics of inequalities (perceived cleavages, conflicts, social distances, social mobility, legitimacy of inequalities). The conceptual framework of the project and the indicators of social cohesion are summarized in (Musil, 2005; Bayer, Sedláčková, Šafr, 2005).

⁸ Researcher: Charles University - Centre for Social and Economic Strategies (CESES UK) in cooperation with the Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University in Prague and Masaryk University in Brno.

Social capital has been also linked to social solidarity and welfare state functioning (Sirovátka, van Oorschot and Rabušic 2002). The findings showed that in general the level of solidarity, public support and expectations vis-à-vis the welfare state are high, based on individual as well as altruistic motives of solidarity, although some marginal groups of citizens seem to be excluded from the community of solidarity of the mainstream. The principles of social justice include rights, needs and above all the merits (the last being more strongly than in the old EU countries). Expectations vis-à-vis the welfare state are relatively high; on the other hand satisfaction with existing solutions and trust to effectiveness and fairness of the institutions are rather low or modest. This contradiction undermines the legitimacy of the welfare state and solidarity in society.

Veselý (2004) analyzed social isolation (as opposite to social capital) at secondary schools. Using the PISA 2000 dataset, he documents that prevalence of social isolation in the Czech Republic schools is higher than in most other countries and differs substantially for various types of schools. It is especially high for vocational schools, where it is most needed because of student composition.

2.6. Socio-economic development

Using Eurobarometer data, Fidrmuc and Gërkhani (2005) document that social capital in Central and Eastern Europe (measured by civic participation and access to social networks) lags behind that in Western European countries. They find that this gap persists when they account for individual characteristics and endowments of respondents but disappears completely after controlling for aggregate measures of economic development and the quality of institutions. The negative perception of social capital is thus explained by the destruction of old operating institutions on one hand and the creation of new ones, often associated with the accumulation of “negative” social capital throughout transition.

Different views on the role of social capital in economic development can be found in the Wallace, Shmulyar and Bedzir (1999) study on the growth of small-scale trading. Uneven development among the postcommunist countries has encouraged small-scale informal traders to cross the borders between these countries in order to buy and sell goods to supplement their incomes. It was demonstrated that, in a risky environment where trading is either illegal or only semi-legal, small-scale traders try to minimize risk by building up different kinds of relationships with customers, representatives of law and partners in trade. In the absence of formal institutions the only possibility how to regulate these activities is in an informal way. Social capital is created and cemented in these conditions through family, ethnic and social ties which can be ‘strong’ or ‘weak’ in character.

Clark (2000) analyzes the role of social capital in business. He stresses that only new firms can offer dynamism and flexibility while privatized firms often reproduce the old institutionalized practices. The reason is that many new firms were founded by the old *nomenklatura*, which had accumulated a high level of social capital before the communist regime breakdown and took advantage of possessing better information, contacts and skills under the new circumstances. Their stock of inherited social capital had given them a privileged position in the drive to build new companies and thereby also access to the legitimate accumulation of economic capital, which completed their personal assimilation to the emergent form of market-economy capitalism.

Uhlíř (1998) deals with institutional and regional change. He emphasizes that regional change in the Czech Republic is a combination of network restructuring and struggles for the

redistribution of symbolic capital. The case study section of the article presents an example of restructuring in the Lanškroun region, which previously had been dominated by one single employer. The conclusion is that the symbolic capital of foreign investors can be successfully combined with parts of the pre-1989 local networks of social capital and reinvigorate the regional economies.

Social capital is also linked to agricultural development. Nešpor (2005a) stresses the importance of social capital during the transformation of Czech agriculture and points out the difference in approaches in the EU and the Czech Republic – the former advocates the role of social and cultural aspects of agriculture, the latter emphasizes only the adoption of legislation and the use of EU funds for new candidate countries. It was supported by a large extent of collectivization in comparison with Poland or Hungary, where small farms produced up to 30% of the agricultural output.

Chaloupková and Bjørnskov (2002) focus on the role of social capital (defined as trust and various norms that facilitate cooperation) in the context of the Czech agricultural sector. Obtaining credit, sharing machinery, and spreading information serves as examples where the awareness of and reliance on the social capital of rural communities do matter. The authors argue that by forming groups and strengthening existing networks, Czech farmers can improve their productivity as well as their welfare. The authors conclude that it is not possible to invest directly in social capital, but the government should provide necessary legal and economic incentives to encourage the formation of social capital.

2.7. Conclusion

Czech sociologists employed the concept of social capital well before Putnam's famous conceptualization. Therefore social capital has been understood primarily as a private good (individual mobilizing social capital) and used mainly in the area of intergenerational and intra-generational social mobility and educational attainment. The concept of social capital as a public good entered the Czech discourse at the time when critical comments on its merits had been already published in the West. This led (perhaps together with traditional Czech scepticism) to academic reluctance to take social capital as "all-inclusive" term and we have not witnessed uncritical acceptance of social capital as "a cure-for-all option". It is probably no coincidence that one of the themes of the National Research Program is called "social cohesion" and not "social capital" as it probably would be the case in the West.

The positive thing is that social capital is taken as a multidimensional and inherently contradictory concept, the different aspects of which are not to be mixed up. It enables a more sophisticated analysis and comparison between various types of social capital across various contexts. Matějů and Vitásková (in press), using the confirmatory factor analysis, have proved that at least in the Czech data from the Social Network Survey, social capital has two distinct dimensions: trust and mutually beneficially exchanges. While trust is only weakly linked to socio-economic status (being more or less evenly dispersed across the categories of education, social class etc.), participation in exchange networks is highly associated with one's socio-economic status.

Thus it is generally acknowledged that there is no *one* particular social capital but *several* types of social capital. Moreover, some argue that the problem of the postcommunist societies consists of basically contradicting effects of the two forms of social capital. While there is lack of trust and civic participation, the abundance of "weak ties" (informal networks and exchanges) may actually hinder - at least temporarily – the effective functioning of market mecha-

nisms and, consequently, economic growth (Matějů and Vitásková, in press). It is also claimed that different types of capital are important in different contexts. Matějů (2002) compares the situation in CEE and Western Europe and concludes that in CEE generalized trust is not as important as in the West. While in advanced countries, social capital is being used to contribute to the explanation of cross-national variance in economic growth and overall well-being, in the post-communist context social capital is particularly useful in understanding the process of social change and its consequences for peoples' career mobility and life chances (Matějů and Vitásková, in press).

The negative thing about the parcelling of social capital is that researchers only tend to focus on several aspects of the concept and ignore others. Several important topics seem to have been neglected in the Czech context. We have seen that social capital is mostly connected to the transformation of society, and is associated with clientelism. Because social capital has been mostly conceptualized at individual levels and its perception has been largely negative, we lack knowledge about the positive role that social networks can play (their effect on health, social support, friendship etc.). In sharp contrast to foreign literature, and to the best of our knowledge, there is no contribution describing the positive effect of social networks on health in general and mental health in particular and on individual well-being (for a review of foreign literature see Cullen and Whiteford, 2001). In other words, we lack information on the positive role that social support and social networks can play in the specific context of the Czech Republic. Thus a lot of work lies ahead.

The importance of citizenship in defining social rights for different groups of citizens

3

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3.1. Introduction

There have been some important moments for discussion about citizenship, rights for different groups of citizens and the inclusion of newcomers in the last years. Chief among them were 1989 which completely changed the political system and ushered a process of transformation; secondly there was the split of Czechoslovakia in the 1993 (citizenship problems for some Czechs and Slovaks but also for the Roma) and the Czech Republic's approximation and ultimately membership of the EU (2004).

The Czechoslovak and later Czech society or population probably see the biggest problem in their coexistence with various ethnic groups, traditionally the Roma and lately also migrant workers. The questions of intergenerational relationships and gender differences are not considered really urgent. This attitude is typical for the general public (as indicated in longitudinal opinion surveys⁹ and special surveys - see Table 1) and in some respect for political leaders as well.

Table 1: Tension in the Czech Republic (Quality of Life (2004))

Tension in the Czech Republic	
different race and ethnic groups	55%
rich and poor people	44%
management and workers	35%
young and old people	15%
men and women	6%

3.2. Legal concept of citizenship in the Czech Republic

Generally, the *Constitution of the Czech Republic* sanctions human and civil rights in a broad form, and its important part is a definition of social rights concerning all groups of people mentioned in the following text. So defined social rights represent a framework in which concern for people's social inclusion should take place (see Table 2).

⁹ Examples of longitudinal surveys are available at www.cvvm.cz.

Table 2: Characteristics of fundamental social rights guaranteed by the Charter on Human Rights and Freedoms (Head 4) (taken over from Potůček 1999b)

Article(Section)	Characteristic of a Social Right
26 (3)	Individuals have the right to work to earn means to provide for life's necessities. Citizens who, through no fault of their own, cannot exercise this right, will be materially insured in an appropriate manner.
27 (1)	Individuals have the right to associate freely with others to protect their economic and social interests.
27 (4)	The right to strike is guaranteed.
28	Employees have the right to just remuneration for their work and to satisfactory working conditions.
29 (1)	Women, minors and the disabled have the right to increased health protection at work and to special working conditions.
29 (2)	Minors and the disabled have the right to special protection in labor relations and to occupational training.
30 (1)	Citizens have the right to appropriate social security in their old age, when they lose their capacity to work, or after the loss of the breadwinner.
30 (2)	Needy individuals have the right to such assistance as is indispensable to assure basic living conditions.
31	Individuals have the right to health care. Citizens have a fundamental right to public, free health care and to medical aid, as outlined by law.
32 (1)	Parenthood and the institution of family are protected by law. Special protection is guaranteed to children and minors.
32 (2)	Pregnant women are guaranteed special care, protection in labor relations and appropriate working conditions.
32 (3)	Children born in and out of wedlock have equal rights.
32 (4)	Childcare and upbringing are the rights of parents; children have the right to parental upbringing and care.
32 (5)	Parents who are raising children have the right to assistance from the state.
33 (1)	All individuals have the right to education.

The fundamental principle of citizenship was formulated by *the Bill of Rights* (1991), namely that no person must be deprived of his/her citizenship. We see that since 1993 citizenship has become part of the concept of newly acquired national identity, sovereignty and statehood, has since been strictly conceived as excluding dual citizenship as a matter of principle.

This problematic concept of no dual citizenship for former Czechoslovaks citizens was adopted due to the consequences of the split of the Czechoslovak federation, but was violated in 1999. Further changes in the original concept arrived with accession to the EU. This is enlarging the scope of rights to persons which do enjoy the rights derived from EU citizenship. Still under public debate (and in the form of a draft bill) is the claim by groups of former Czechoslovak emigrés to regain Czech citizenship without meeting the valid condition of residence in the Czech Republic.

Ever more attention is being paid to the rationale of the participatory aspect of citizenship. Some of the literature stresses the need to educate citizens on their rights as a supportive element of promoting citizens interests, some of it provides information on public agenda (policies, power structures, EU, etc...) and serve as a guide to the maze of "knowledge participation".

Another aspect covered by the literature deals with discrimination of Czech citizens by private or government (non-private) bodies. Analyses of equal treatment, opportunities and status are to be found mainly in relation to the minorities (Roma community) and focus on the access to justice and the social welfare system, labor market, specific education or integration programs at large.

A raising concern for a set of special treatment schemes for non-EU citizens, namely Russians, Ukrainians, Vietnamese and Chinese – with the prospect of a full fledged integration (economic, cultural and political) in the Czech community was declared by the Czech government in 2000. Related to it a set of measures announced by the respective ministries (e.g. Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, 2004, Ministry of the Interior, 2005).

3.3. Minorities, foreigners – rights and integration procedures

The debate about the problems of ethnic minorities acquired a new dimension after 1989. The Czechoslovak/Czech society was forced to address various influences. Of course, there used to live different ethnic groups before the change of political system, but their problems were not well visible. Opening the outer and, symbolically, also the inner borders was the start point for changing of Czech society. Also the political and scientific segments of the public started to deal with this issue. One of the key documents, *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* was ratified by the CR in 1995 and the *Council for National Minorities of the Government of the Czech Republic* is an advisory body on ethnic minorities.¹²

One of the most frequently discussed themes is the situation of the Roma. They can be considered a traditional minority, which has always had an apparently different life style (Navrátil at al., 2003; Řičan, 2000). Their not always successful integration in society represents an important part of discourse about rights, discrimination and adequate possibilities for the life of ethnic minorities. Roma people face particular problems in education, housing (Baršová, 2001), employment (Bičáková, 1997), but also in self-identification (Hubschmannová, 1999) and in an erosion of family relationships.¹¹ Relatively many investigations are focused on the description of situations and some recommendations how to free the Roma from their social exclusion (Katrňák, 2003; Štěchová, Večerka, 2002). Other papers focus on analysis of state policies on the Roma (Gjuričová, 1999). Slovaks, Poles and Germans are chief among the other traditional minorities. Smaller groups are represented, for example, by Greeks (Hradečný, 2000). Very specific minorities are represented by Vietnamese (Kocourek, 2004) and especially Ukrainians, whose presence here is mostly connected with work, but a certain part of them is settled here permanently (Drbohlav, Lupták, Janská & Šelepová, 1999).¹²

Czech politics had to reflect a new situation, namely the Czech Republic's is becoming a country for immigration. In this context there is a fundamental impact of the EU which determines, to a certain extent, the attitude of Czech politics. Barša (2004) compares the Czech approach to West European and overseas approaches and divides it into three periods – (1) liberal (1990-1995), (2) a period of restrictions (1995-2000) and (3) a period of formulating more comprehensive and self-confident immigration policies (2000 up to present). As a consequence of this, the official attitude is changing from a multicultural approach to more individualistic civic integration of immigrants (Baršová, 2005).

The basic principles of Czech immigration policy were formulated in 2002¹³ and the principles of the integration policy were titled *Integration of Foreigners in the Czech Republic* (1999).¹⁴ Over time, migration has been seen in terms of management or assessment of mi-

¹⁰ First postcommunist council was established in 1991.

¹¹ One of the most controversial views on the Roma minority is represented by the statement (predicate) that the Roma have no self-identification and therefore they shouldn't be considered an ethnic group (Jakoubek, Hirt, in press).

¹² At present there are 12 officially recognized national minorities.

¹³ Government Resolution of 13 January 2003, No. 55

¹⁴ Government Resolution of 7 July 1999, No. 689

gration needs. Although there is traditional focus on long-term and permanent migration and refugees, there is an interest now in a more flexible arrangement for highly skilled and educated immigrants in particular. Earlier, the demographic argument (ageing and shrinking of the population) dominated the media in terms of active immigration policy, nowadays the focus is on the mismatch between supply and demand in the labor market. The current immigration policy's *Active Selection of Qualified Foreign Workers*¹⁵ project was designed to attract highly qualified, skilled foreigners, who are preferably young, have some work experience and have already got a job in the CR to enable them to settle and integrate.

3.4. Gender differences

In a broader sense, gender issues in the Czech Republic surfaced as early as in 1990, after the change of political regime. Many NGOs were established and the first research department was launched in 1990.

Czech women's activism can be characterized by two periods. The first was a period of international help (1990-1997), with many foreign NGOs finding partners in the CR and providing funding. Topics addressed by these NGOs were mostly civic participation of women, women in politics, domestic violence and rape, and environmental issues. Foreign aid was instrumental for their activities. During this period, there was only one gender research department – at the Institute of Sociology, Academy of Sciences.¹⁶

The second period is one of accession to the EU (1998 until today). The EU was the engine that forced the Czech government to start addressing the issue of gender equality and equal opportunities for men and women. This led to the establishment of *the Council of the Government for Equal Opportunities of Men and Women* (1998) which brought together deputy ministers from each department, gender experts, and representatives of NGOs, and resulted in the adoption of *Priorities and Procedures of the Government in Implementing Equal Opportunities for Men and Women*.¹⁷ The primary areas addressed by the document are: participation of women in civic life, domestic violence, education, labour market, discrimination, retraining, health and childbearing, cooperation with the NGO sector, and legislation. However, Czech NGOs and academic sector are very critical and have released a *Shadow Report* (Pavlík, 2004) criticizing the cabinet's half-hearted response to the issue.

Gender mainstreaming has been adopted by the Czech government as the policy approach to implement equal opportunities for men and women. Gender mainstreaming means “penetration” of the perspective of equal opportunities for men and women through all conceptual and decision-making processes in all phases (incl. planning, implementation and evaluation).. ...Consequential application of gender mainstreaming means the **integration of the gender perspective into all existing policies**, including those that may seem at first sight gender neutral (transport, finances, the environment).¹⁸

¹⁵ Government Resolution of 26 September 2001, No. 975, of 10 July 2002 No. 720 and of 14 April 2004 No. 340. The Government approved it on 28 July 2003.

¹⁶ Gender research was established in the CR as late as 1990 when Dr. Marie Čermáková established the Gender and Sociology research department at the Institute of Sociology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. At the start, emphasis was placed on large quantitative research studies mapping the female population. This allowed to establish initial information base and to identify problems facing the Czech female population. Gradually, individual researchers in the department have profiled their research interests and started developing qualitative sociology.

¹⁷ The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs was empowered to coordinate equal opportunities policies.

¹⁸ Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs at <http://www.mpsv.cz/cs/940> downloaded on 8 March 2006

Since 1998 the issue of discrimination of women on the labour market and the wage gap, domestic violence, women in politics, and trafficking in women have become serious topics of public discourse. Many others, however, are marginalized or not vocalized at all. These topics include the position of Roma women (e.g., forced sterilisation), prostitution and child prostitution, and gay and lesbian rights.

The emphasis is on the concept of equal opportunities in the labor market. The most obvious form of discrimination is the wage gap. Today, the wage gap between men's and women's salaries is approximately 25 % and the gap increases with education attained (Vlach, 2005). Women are also strongly under-represented in decision-making and top positions (Maříková, 2003) and there are differences in men's and women's unemployment patterns. Women's position on the labor market is the most insecure.¹⁹ Discrimination of women on the labor market is seen as general – i.e. the type of work which is done by women is less paid only because it is done by women (Čermáková, 2005).

To this day, incomparably more women in the CR stay on parental leave than men (99% - women and 1% - men)²⁰ and child custody is in the majority of cases awarded to mothers (90% against 10%). These two facts document everyday prevalence of gender stereotypes: women are seen primarily as being responsible for the private sphere (family), while men's domain is public life. Division of labor inside of family is unequal (Jaklová, Štěpánková, 2005).

Compared to the other EU countries, participation of women in Czech politics is still weak. This is true particularly of the most senior political level (government, parliament); women more often become politically involved on a local level (mayoress, community)(Gender studies, 2005).²¹ Nor is there much support for women's issues among the liberal right-of-centre parties. Women in Parliament do not come together to lobby for women-specific issues, largely due to the fear of being labelled feminist.

Sexual harassment has long past unrecognized as a relevant issue in the CR, especially due to early-1990s media reports from "the West". Change is slow to come. Thus in 2004, 28% of the questioned women mentioned that they met (personally or by hearsay) with such a kind of behavior but few cases (briefs) came through on this theme (Křížková et al, 2005a).

Most of the analyses document that the Czech media often employ gender stereotypes and "gender correctness" is not a dominant issue in the media. Although reports on labor discrimination and domestic violence appear in the media reported increasingly with sensitivity to gender aspects, generally the media promote deep-rooted stereotypes. Gender stereotypes are still very much prevalent and despite shifts at the attitudinal level their erosion and transformation in everyday life is very slow and the assertion of equal rights is problematic.

¹⁹ Table 3: Unemployment rate ((Ed.)Marksová-Tominová, M. 2003 & MPSV 2005)

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	February 2005
Total	4.8	6.5	8.7	8.8	8.1	9.6
Women	5.9	8.2	10.5	10.6	9.9	10.9
Men	3.9	5.0	7.3	7.3	6.8	8.7

²⁰ Parental leave for both mother and father was established (legitimized) in 2001.

²¹ There exists direct proportion between the size of municipality and the gender of mayor(ess) - smaller municipality means higher probability that a woman is mayor.

3.5. Generational differences

There is discussion about the problem of intergenerational relationships, their continuity and differences in the Czech society in connection with structural population aging. Its insistence is increasing.²² However, the activity of political representation has certain limits and gives attention to its partial aspects, especially the pension reform. Indeed, there has been a *National Programme of Preparations for Aging 2003 -2007* (inspired by the *International Plan of Action on Aging* (Madrid 2002) and the *International Plan of Action on Aging* from 1982), but its practical merit is questionable. It is focused on seniors, their participation and safer (more comfortable) inclusion in society. An active aging policy should be an instrument for this purpose. An important part of intergenerational relationships is a question of discrimination and negative reception of seniors, as well.

Green Book: The New Intergenerational Solidarity as an Answer for Demographic Changes (European Commission, 2005) is a recent document whose task is to encourage discussion about these problems. It notes among other things that this agenda is rather in jurisdiction of individual countries and in regard of an explicit aging trend all around Europe (resulting from a low measure of natality and increasing life expectancy), mutual coordination of policies is necessary.

Vidovičová and Rabušic (2003a), on the basis of field research *Ageism 2003*, conclude that there exists age discrimination in the Czech Republic. Although they recommend fresh international comparison for the measure assessment of ageism in the society, it is clear that the percentage of the people above the age of 70 (55% of them), who have perceived a change of behavior to them due to their age, is high.

A construct which partially characterizes the views of the Czech society (on a macro social level) is called *demographic panic*. It means in simplified definition, that the richness of a society and its age structure are openly considered as being interconnected. In other words investment in seniors has no future since it has no effect on an increased well-being. This concept is closely related with the legitimization of anti-welfare state policy. (Život 90, 2004)

The family and the care it takes of its older members doubtless play an important role in intergenerational relationships. It is estimated that from between 80% and 90% of the population over 65 is self-sufficient with the help of family neighbourhood; 13% of the old people need help in household, about 7% of them depend on day-to-day home care and about 2% of them depend on daily institutional care (Kopecká, 2002). On the other hand, a research carried out by the Memory Disorder Clinic shows that 23.5% of the Czech families take care of somebody who is not self-sufficient. (Tošnerová, 2001)

Although the opinions of Czech seniors reveal the tendency not to complicate the lives of their offspring and bother them with additional problems (Veselá, 2003), many other researches indicate that old people actually do reckon with help from their children. According to the international survey *Value of Children and Intergenerational Relationship in six Cultures* (Možný et al., 2004; Možný, Přidalová, Bánovcová, 2003) Czech mothers, more often than their German counterparts, for example, expect their children to take care of them when they grow older.

²² It is estimated that this proportion will reach 20% of people above age 65 years in 2020 and 27% in 2040. By contrast, the percentage of people between 0-14 years is basically the same during the same period (about 12%) – in the frame of the whole population. (from http://www.demografie.info/?cz_detail_clanku&artclID=34)

3.6. Political instruments to ensure social rights

Besides the legal framework (including ways how to enforce law in the CR, as seen above in the text (part 3.2)) that helps to improve the rights of all mentioned groups, there are political instruments as well. *The National Action Plan on Social Inclusion 2004 – 2006* and *The National Action Plan for Employment 2004 - 2006* came into being in strong connection with the EU accession process.²³ Both documents should serve as political instruments for the rights of social citizenship implementation and against social inequalities. Their purpose (according to The EU's *Lisbon Strategy*) is firstly to anticipate the perils of exclusion, help to increase employment, and provide help to the needy. Although, the Czech Republic has both the framework (law) and the instrument (action plans) leading to more successful social inclusion, the awareness about them, real respect for them and their active usage in life and political practice still seem to be deficient.

²³ The European Commission has asked all the Candidate Countries' governments to elaborate Joint Inclusion Memoranda in order to identify key problems and policy measures to combat poverty and social exclusion in 2002. The agenda of social inclusion was formally set up with the preparation and approval of this document by the representatives of the European Commission and the Czech Government in 2004. (Joint 2004)

Level and type of civic participation in political and social activities

4

Petr Just (guarantee), Zuzana Drhová, Zdena Vajdová

4.1. Historical background: Interest representation during Communist Regime

In 1948-1989, Czechoslovakia was a totalitarian state. One of the characteristics of totalitarian regimes – as described e.g. by C. J. Friedrich or Zbigniew Brzezinski – is total control of all organizations, groups, individuals executed by the ruling party. This of course includes control over all interests and their representation. The “representation of interest” in communist Czechoslovakia was performed by the so-called National Front, initially an unconstitutional body but rendered constitutional in 1960, in which all political parties and interest groups had to secure a membership if they wanted to exist at all. All decisions, including the decision who can or cannot be a member of National Front, were actually made by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. The National Front incorporated not only political parties, but also other interest groups such as trade unions (Revolutionary Trade Union Movement) and groups such as the Czechoslovak Students’ Union or the Czechoslovak Union of Women.

With a fair measure of simplification we can talk about state corporatism during this period, because the number of associations was limited and they were closely connected to the state (even directly dependent on it). However, they did not take real part in any decision making processes, they had to incorporate what the ruling communist party had decided. In the totalitarianism, however, it makes no sense to talk about any levels of decision making, whether horizontal or vertical. All decisions were made within a relatively small group, the Politburo (Presidium of the Central Committee) of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. If any interest group wanted to act independently, it had to act illegally (Charter 77 and many others).

4.2. Changes after 1989: Discussion over the Model of Representation

The situation changed after 1989. The National Front was dissolved and political parties and interest groups independent of the centralized system was allowed. Politics became a field for competition for distribution of values in the society and the competition of interests. This has naturally opened up space for discussion on which model of interest representation should be used – pluralism or corporatism. In the first period after the fall of the Iron Curtain we can see tendencies to implement corporatism in the form of a tripartite system; later on, when rightwing forces came to power, the role of tripartity was reduced to advisory status, while in the late 1990s the revival of an effective tripartite system and possibly also neocorporatism helped the

Social Democrats to come to power in 1998. However, for example sociologist Lubomír Brokl believes that the existence of tripartity is not enough to classify the Czech Republic as a corporative state (Brokl et al., 1997: 67). He writes that only trade unions have the organization and structure that meet the criteria of a corporative system. Lubomír Brokl considers the Czech Republic as a pluralistic state with a dominance of representative democracy (Brokl et al., 1997: 67). It is rather difficult to define the model of interest representation used in the Czech Republic. The main problem was that the discussion about the form of interest representation had not been effective enough and taken place primarily on the academic level and in the NGO sector. In fact, many people with political decision-making powers probably are not much aware of the different models of representation.

4.3. Constitutional regulation of political and social participation

The Constitution of the Czech Republic states that “the political system is based on the free and voluntary foundation and free competition of political parties respecting fundamental democratic principles and rejecting force as a means for asserting their interests.” (Article 5) Details about the civic participation in political and social activities are included in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Basic Freedoms, which is an integral part of the Czech constitutional system. The problem of civic participation in political and social activities is addressed in Parts II (Political Rights) and IV (Economic, Social and Cultural Rights).

Part II, Article 20 of the Constitution guarantees the right of association in clubs, societies and other associations. According to this article, citizens also have the right to form political parties and political movements and to associate in them. Political parties, political movements and other associations are by law separated from the state. Article 21 regulates the right of the citizens to participate in the administration of public affairs either directly or through the free election of their representatives. The right to vote is identified as universal and equal and it shall be exercised by secret ballot. This article also guarantees to every citizen the right of access to any elective and other public office. Article 23 permits resistance to anyone who would attempt to eliminate the democratic order of human rights and fundamental freedoms established by the Charter, if the actions of constitutional institutions or the effective use of legal means have been rendered ineffective.

Part IV, Article 27 guarantees the right to associate freely for the protection of one's economic and social interests. It stipulates that trade unions must be established independently of the state. The state is not allowed to set any limits upon the number of trade union organizations and also cannot give preferential treatment to any particular enterprise or sector of industry. The activities of trade unions and the formation and activities of similar associations for the protection of economic and social interests may be limited by law in the case of measures necessary in a democratic society for the protection of the security of the state, public order, or the rights and freedoms of others. The right to strike is guaranteed under the conditions provided for by law; this right does not appertain to judges, prosecutors, or members of the armed forces or security corps.

4.4. Political Parties and Public Participation

Several forms of participation on political processes are associated with political parties. However, on a long-term basis public polls have shown quite critical evaluation of political parties by citizens. This negative approach is documented by the low number of fully convinced supporters of political parties, a low level of party membership and decreasing election turnouts.

Currently only 11% of the voters describe themselves as fully convinced supporters of any political party, while 10 years ago the number was twice as high. A majority of the voters (40-60%) have only partially the same or similar opinions as the parties of their choice. However, the number of voters, who cast their vote for the party that symbolizes the “least evil” (i.e. they do not identify with any party), has risen over the past ten years to 27%. (see Table 4)

Table 4: Measure of support of political parties (1995-2005)

	5/95	9/95	1/96	5/96	3/97	6/98	9/98	9/99	6/00	6/01	1/02	6/02	1/04	10/04	10/05
Fully-convinced supporters	22%	18%	19%	22%	16%	20%	15%	10%	11%	13%	14%	14%	12%	12%	11%
Support most political party opinions, with small differences	39%	49%	47%	50%	45%	40%	41%	36%	31%	29%	32%	35%	30%	35%	38%
Opinions of political party are close to voter with different opinions	21%	18%	19%	17%	20%	17%	22%	27%	25%	27%	23%	20%	25%	25%	23%
Supporters who favor certain political party as the „least evil“	17%	14%	14%	11%	17%	23%	21%	26%	30%	30%	30%	30%	32%	38%	27%
Other	1%	1%	1%	0%	2%	0%	1%	1%	3%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%

(Source: CVVM)

Also the level of membership in political parties shows a generally decreasing trend. (see Table 5)

Table 5: Trends of membership trends in political parties

Year / Party	ČSSD	ODS	KSČM	KDU-ČSL
1993	11,031	23,269	317,104	80,000
2005	16,328	23,138	94,396	44,308
Difference	+5,297	-131	-222,708	-55,692

Abbreviations: ČSSD = Czech Social Democratic Party

ODS = Civic Democratic Party (conservative-liberal)

KSČM = Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia

KDU-ČSL = Christian-Democratic Union-Czechoslovak Peoples' Party

(Source: Mansfeldová & Kroupa, 2005: 61)

The deep decrease of membership of the KSČM can be explained by two major factors: (1) members of KSČM are mostly older people, therefore the decrease is caused by natural factors; (2) especially in the first period the decrease was caused by the fact that KSČM lost power after the 1989/1990 and had not regained it.

Table 6: Election turnouts (in %)

Year	Czech National Council, later Chamber of Deputies	Senate (1st round / 2nd round)	Regional Assemblies	Municipal Assemblies	European Parliament
1990	96.9	-----	-----		-----
1992	85.08	-----	-----		-----
1994	-----	-----	-----	60.68	-----
1996	76.41	35.03 / 30.63	-----	-----	-----
1998	74.03	42.37 / 20.36	-----	45.02	-----
2000	-----	33.72 / 21.56	33.64	-----	-----
2002	58.00	24.10 / 32.55	-----	43.39	-----
2004	-----	28.97 / 18.41	29.62	-----	28.32

(Source: Czech Statistical Office, 2006)

4.5. Tripartite System and its Development

The tripartite system, an institute for cooperation between the state and non-governmental organizations, is the only visible official example of participation of interest groups in the decision-making process. This system brings together representatives of the state (government), employers and employees. Its main purpose is to solve common problems and seek consensus in the area of social partnership.

The Czech tripartite system has changed frequently during its existence, always depending on the political representation of the day. It sprang to life in 1990 as the “Council of Social Accord“. It was composed of 7 representatives of the government, 7 representatives of trade unions (employees) and 7 representatives of employers, and was conceived as a platform of social dialogue. It was empowered to make proposals on all matters related to economic, social and wage policies, working conditions, employment and unemployment. It helped to negotiate a general agreement and advised state institutions on the above-mentioned matters. It served as a consultation body in the legislative process and in forming conceptions of economic policy. At that time, trade unions acted more like a cooperative partner to the government than its opponent. They supported the proposed transformation moves. However, the changing political and economical situation had altered the position of the tripartite system.

The 1992 elections brought about a swing to the right on the Czech political scene and the new right-wing cabinet wanted to change the status of the tripartite system. They wanted to create a body for consultations just between the employers and employees, i.e. without an active presence and role of the government. The government would merely play observer role. However, after a series of TU protests the partners refused to meet in 1994. In early 1995 the government changed the status of the Council which was renamed the “Council for Dialogue with Social Partners“. The name clearly indicates what actually happened. The Council became a noncommittal forum for employers and employees, with the government sitting on the fence. The change of status logically altered the powers of the Council. These were reduced to labour laws, employment, wages, work safety and social matters. Often the government was represented only by deputy ministers instead of the ministers, as was usual before. Prime Minister Václav Klaus from the rightwing ODS said that the tripartite system had made sense only in the period of reform and radical change (Klaus, 2001: 2). Klaus is one of the staunchest supporters of pluralism in the Czech Republic. He admires the U.S. and British political systems where – in his own words – interest groups can influence, but not co-decide. Small wonder he didn’t like the original concept of tripartite system and tried to change it. Trade unions changed their approach accordingly. Strikes and protests were more frequent in this period than before. And they had a little positive impact on the government’s position. The worsening economic situation and growing social chaos made the government change its heart and led to a change of status of the tripartite system. Once again incorporating three partners, it was renamed the *Council for Economic and Social Agreement*. According to its statutes, the council was supposed to engage in negotiations so as to reach consensus on the basic matters of economic and social development. The powers of the council covered economic policy, labour legislation, collective bargaining, employment, social affairs, wages, the non-productive sector, work safety and newly also the Czech Republic’s intergration in the European Union (with focus on social dialogue); newly also taxes, insurance and regional development. The structure again changed to 7-7-7. In 2000 this status was amended by adding the field of human resources to the spectrum of tripartity activities.

Who is represented in the tripartite system? According to its statutes, all members must meet the criteria of representation. The delegation of employers must be composed of representati-

ves of large, medium and small businesses, it must cover industry, construction and building industry, transportation, agriculture and services. The employers' associations represented must operate nationwide and must not be politically active. One delegate must represent at least 200 thousand employees. Currently the employers' delegation consists of the Union of Industry and Transportation and the Confederation of Employers' and Business Unions. Employees are represented by non-political groups which defend their economic and social interests, are independent of their employers, have a confederal structure and represent at least three labour unions with at least 150 thousand members each. Their activities must be nationwide. Currently the employees are represented by the Czech-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions and by the Association of Independent Trade Unions.

4.6. Public in the Decision Making Process (case study)

Specific discussion about public involvement in decision-making concerns environmental issues in relation to the Aarhus Convention (AC). This convention on access to information, public participation and access to justice on environmental issues was signed by the Czech Republic in 1998 and was ratified by Parliament in 2004.

The AC ratification process took a few years and opened political debate on the role and legitimacy of civic groups and on the recommended level of their involvement in making decisions concerning policies or projects with an impact on the environment. Another open issue was demand for a balance between participatory and representative democracy principles in decision-making. The main participants of this debate are NGOs and politicians. As far as political parties are concerned, we can see a strong long-term position of the Civic Democracy Party, which is opposed to the strengthening of the role of NGOs in society and to participatory democracy principles in decision-making. Other political parties represent a mix of opinions on these issues. The usual arguments questioning public participation are the legitimacy of NGOs and their manipulation of public opinion, their level of expert knowledge, complications with lengthy decision-making processes, postponing of decisions at the expense of investors etc. In contrast, NGOs as the main advocates of participatory democracy mainly argue that it is not the public and the NGOs which make decisions (this is the role of politicians); they can only influence decisions by providing information important for such decision-making. Decisions are delayed and legal suits are brought due to inactivity and professional misconduct on the part of public administration bodies the arrogance of power towards public opinion.

4.7. NGOs in the Czech Republic: Organizations and Organizational Membership

The debate on which *organization* is part of civil society (i.e. non-state non-profit organizations) usually end in a list of types of organizations. Such lists are compiled with regard to the ends a report or study is supposed to serve. There exists a list of 22 types carefully debated and compiled in the framework of comparative research CIVICUS (Vajdová T., 2005; STEM, 2004) that illustrates the wide variety of NGOs but does not indicate "how many NGOs there are in the CR". The list includes the following organizations:

- Business federations and chambers
- Trade unions
- Professional organizations and employees' federations
- Faith-based organizations
- Cultural organizations

- Sports organizations
- Education organizations
- Student and parent organizations at schools
- Healthcare organizations
- Social services organizations
- Humanitarian organizations
- Youth organizations
- Women's organizations
- Ethnic, racial and traditional organizations
- Civic action organizations
- Organizations for the protection of human rights
- Organizations for the protection of the environment, ecological organizations
- Political initiatives
- Local and neighbourhood organizations
- Leisure organizations and sport clubs
- Burial associations
- Mutual savings and mortgage banks

It is known (Mansfeldová et al., 2004) that the number of NGOs has steadily risen since 1990. In 1990 there were some 5,000 NGOs registered; their number rising to 22,000 in 1993 and to 46,000 in 2000. In an attempt to find out what the situation is today, we have consulted different sources (mainly on the internet) only to conclude that it is difficult, and indeed impossible, to obtain comprehensive and reliable information. But some sources should be taken as more important than others.

One important source of information about NGOs is the Ministry of the Interior whose duty it is (in accordance with Law 83/1990 Coll., as amended by later regulations) to issue registrations to civic associations and trade unions. There is a list of these organizations on the Ministry website (Jmenný seznam ..., 2004). It is updated every two months. Last updated on March 6, 2006, the list includes 62,972 organizations in simple alphabetical order without any categorization, and foundations or professional organizations are not listed.

Another important source of information is the Czech Statistical Office (CSO). The information for the period 2002-2004 is the content of one table that refers to the number of active reporting units in "nonprofit institutions serving households" as legal forms (Number of Active ... 2005); most of the legal forms in the table refers to NGOs.

Table 7: Number of active reporting units in NGOs by years

Name of legal form	2002	2003	2004
Foundation	252	227	250
Endowment foundation	666	534	573
Public benefit organization	338	376	610
Association (club, union, etc)	37.226	33.304	34.343
Church organization	3.595	2.983	3.209
Organizational unit of association	22.486	21.302	
Professional organization	77	70	71
Hunting club	253	2,497	2,432
Total	64,893	61,489	61,920

Source: CSO (Number of Active ... 2005), accommodated.

There are other sources which give different numbers of NGOs; e.g. the ICN (NGO Information Centre) presents in its database (Databáze ..., 2006) only 3,600 NGOs. It seems that the most reliable numbers are those provided by the CSO in Table 1, as this information refers to “active units”: there are cca 62 thousand NGOs in the CR.

As we see, it was difficult to obtain precise information about the number of NGOs in the CR. The same holds true of their *membership*. No institution collects information about membership in NGOs. Research provides the only sources bar one exception: in the case of civic associations for physical education and sport the Statistical Yearbooks inform about their membership. As this is a very important cluster of NGOs we report on it separately.

1. Statistical Yearbooks. “The area of physical education and sports in the CR has undergone substantial organizational and structural changes since 1990. A number of independent civic associations came into being by breaking away from the Czechoslovak Sports Association (ČSTV). Similar developments occurred also in the former Svazarm (Association for Cooperation with the Army), which associated so-called technical sports. Other changes were brought about by the split of Czechoslovakia on 1 January 1993. According to estimates approximately 15% of the Czech Republic’s population have been members of civic physical education and sports associations since 1995. Figures on this field are tapped from the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports and from the Institute for Information on Education.” Statistical Yearbooks for 1996-2000 provide Table 23-14, Statistical Yearbook 2001 provides Table 22-14 (“Membership and tangible assets of the most significant civic associations for physical education and sport; the most significant among them are the Czech Sports Association, the Czech Sokol Organization, The Association for Technical Sports and Activities, The Czech Marksmanship Federation, the Automobile Club of the Czech Republic, the Christian Physical Education Organization OREL, the Association of PE and Sports Clubs, the Czech Association of Sports for All, the Association. of School Sports Clubs, and the Light Aircraft Association. Memberships of these organizations are presented in the tables below:

Table 8: Membership in NGOs (1995-2000)

Year	Membership (in thousands)
1995	1,550.6
1996	1,973.4
1997	1,970.5
1998	1,494.9
1999	2,467.3
2000	2,488.1

(Source: CSO, Statistical Yearbooks)

Information about membership ends with 2000. Subsequent Statistical Yearbooks only inform about assets and grants.

2. Research. Research could yield information about the “average membership in a survey” (“P”) that could be compared with the results of other researches.

According to Vajdová (Vajdová, Marc, 2005) there is an opportunity to compare the research problems of municipalities and self-government, addressed by the Institute of Sociology, the data collected in 1992 with a representative sample of Czech population, where an open question was asked concerning membership in NGOs. Then $P1 = 0.72$. In the World Value Survey in the CR 1995-1997 is $P2 = 1.07$. In the Region and Politics research, conducted by the Institute of Sociology, data collected in 2000 on a representative sample of the Czech population, the open question was also asked and in this case, $P3 = 0.24$. The differences in “P” are due to a different wording of the questions.

According to research by CVVM (CVVM, 2006) the “P” values are different. In 2002 there is $P4 = 0.36$ and in 2005, $P = 1.26$. The explanation of the differences is the same as in the previous cases. Membership in NGOs could be described also as a ratio of the respondents from the given sample who are engaged as members of NGOs. For 2002 and 2005 respectively, CVVM also reports one third of people engaged in NGOs. STEM (STEM, 2004) refers about half the respondents engaged in NGOs.

It is difficult to tell more about the membership in NGOs, apart from stating that between one third and one half of the Czech population are members of NGOs.

Evaluation of the national perspective on civil society, citizenship and civic participation

5

Martin Potůček (guarantee), Vladimíra Dvořáková, Petr Just, Jiří Musil and Jan Sokol

The contemporary dialogue about civil society in the Czech Republic started way back in 1977, when Charter 77 released its first statement on human rights violations perpetrated by the Czechoslovak communist regime. Rigid authoritarian political structures allowed little space for civic activism but the concepts of human rights, citizenship and civil society were discussed in dissent circles and became inspiring and formative political ideas after the collapse of Communism in 1989. Václav Havel, a leading figure of the dissident movement, became president (1989-1992 of Czechoslovakia, 1993-2002 of the Czech Republic), and has been actively involved in public discourse about the future “choice of society” (Potůček, 1999a).

The experience of dissidents in the Czech Republic and other countries worshipping “real socialism” in rediscovering the concept of civil society was singled out by Ernest Gellner, a Czech-born British author, in his trendsetting “Conditions of Liberty. Civil Society and Its Rivals” (1994), London. The book was completed while Gellner was working at the Central European University in Prague. He wrote: “*We are reminded of it (i.e. of civil society) above all by East Europeans who have found a name for what they ... sorely miss.*” (Gellner, *op.cit* p.13)

There were two core topics of public discourse about citizenship and society: the confrontation between the concept of civil society vs. the idea of society of free citizens; and the appropriate forms of democracy and civic participation. The book also estimates future developmental trends.

5.1. Civil society vs. a society of free citizens

Two competing concepts of citizenship and society have raised pitched battles.

Václav Klaus (Czech Prime Minister 1992-1997, Czech President 2003+) insisted on the mediating role of institutions of representative democracy and political parties *vis-à-vis* the interests of individual citizens. “It is the state (or a municipality) which should secure public goods, as exclusively these institutions represent us – citizens, based on the democratic elections’ outcomes.” (Klaus, 2002:75). The concept of civil society is associated with morality, seeking of absolute truth, romanticism, and illegitimate political influence of various pressure groups.

Václav Havel (1999) sees civil society and its institutions as a legitimate and necessary component of democracy. Citizens should have the opportunity to form and run associations actively involved in public life. State and political parties need a vibrant pluralistic civic sector that adds to the content of public dialogue and contributes to more efficient choice from options available. There are other thinkers that support this concept of citizenship, namely Šamalík (1995), who sees the mutually dependent duality of democratic state and civil society, Sokol (2000), who defines civil society as society of citizens not reliant on professional politicians and civil servants only, and ready to take care about public issues, Bělohradský (1996), who takes civil society as an active societal integration of citizens through communication, consensus seeking and mutual respect, and Musil (1996), who believes that civil society is a sort of buffer between the state and the individual, that generates suggestions how to alleviate conflicts and tensions and thus smoothes societal transformation.

Another bone of contention for Havel and Klaus was thrown in by Havel's concept of "non-political politics". Znoj (1995) sees its merit in the conception of state as an association of humans in individual, civil and political sense. In real political terms this conception failed in the 1992 general elections and was replaced by Klaus' libertarian neoconservative conception reducing citizens to individuals pursuing mostly their own interests, and denouncing "non-political politics" for their link with communitarianism and "civil society" (Klaus, 2000).

A fresh round of this old fight started in the spring of 2005 when Václav Klaus issued a battle call against what he called postdemocracy. At his speech at the Council of Europe Summit in Warsaw (May 2005) Klaus attacked the NGO sector and its role. He said that the new major role of Council of Europe should be to fight "post-democracy", which meant the pressure exerted by the NGO sector on the politicians in an effort to influence the public life without having previously been given a mandate by voters in general elections. While the contemporary liberal democracies are based on the principle of representative democracy, post-democracy is – according to Klaus – facing the pressure of political groups that do not take part in the electoral process. Klaus said this is dangerous and risky. NGO people retorted that Klaus – by attacking them – degrades the activities of thousands of people. Klaus's critics do not understand why someone who, say, takes care of disabled people or protects the environment or educate people should not be able to influence public issues.

For a systematic comparison of both conceptions and the analysis of their impact on public and political life in the Czech Republic, see Potůček (1999b).

5.2. Appropriate forms of democracy and civic participation

The contest about the concept of civil society has found its reflection in the discussion about the appropriate forms of democracy and civic participation.

Not surprisingly, Klaus' concept is based on the idea of "standard system of political parties without any National Fronts²⁴ and civic movements". Political parties are legitimate institutions mediating and aggregating the interests of individual citizens into decision-making mechanisms of representative democracy, namely through free elections. Brokl (1997) adheres to this concept, associating all other institutional forms of articulating and mediating interests with the proximity to the totalitarian forms of corporatism (state corporatism). Both approaches were challenged by Potůček (1999a), who suggested the inevitability to apply diverse forms of me-

²⁴ The National Front was an umbrella organization of various "social organizations" and was, used by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia to control their activities. (for more information see Part 4.1)

diating interests: participatory, representative, as well as direct democracy, due to differentiated forms of human conditions and lifestyles in contemporary complex societies.

The seminal volume “*Democracy and constitutionalism*” enriched the public discussion about democracy and its institutions with a deeper historical, social, and cultural context, including the core concept of human – civic, political, social, and cultural – rights, the character of the Czech Constitution, and the deficits in the enforcement of the rule of law. Can democracy be reduced to its institutional forms, or is it a way of societal life? What are the obligations of a modern state toward its citizens? What are the challenges of parallel economic, political, and social transformation after the fall of Communism? (Kunc et al., 1999)

Dvořáková (2000) analyzes the soft spots of the Czech state formation, including a protracted public administration reform, the top-to-bottom way of building political parties, and low credibility of the state and political institutions in the eyes of the general public. This indicates the existence of a considerable (and widening) gap between the citizens and the political elite. The vicious circle of civic apathy stemming from the lack of trust and fruitful communication is no exemption among the many other developed market economies with democratic political institutions.

The further discussions dealing with the role of civic participation, the role of civil society and its relation to politics rose in the context of the analysis of two strong civil initiatives - Impuls 99 and Thank you, Time to Go. These two civil society organizations mobilized the public in 1999 but the effect was very limited and in the long-term perspective it actually deepened general frustration. For the analysis of the rise and fall of these initiatives by both activists and social sciences (in some cases these two categories overlapped) see Nekvapil (2003). Both initiatives also became part of the analysis of Vladimíra Dvořáková (2003, 2005) who deals with the relationship of the social and political spheres, the challenges faced by such initiatives whose internal pluralism and very broad scope of interests (all the important questions of society) prevents them to find a positive consensus and mechanism to include their proposals in the political agenda.

5.3. Future trends

Communism collapsed more than sixteen years ago, and that’s a lot of time. However, the no-holds-barred theoretical discussion about the nature of the societal, economic and political changes in the country, and its future developmental needs has continued till this day.. The constitution of a modern state, civil society and its institutions out of the Communist caricature is a long-term process. The early 1990s Dahrendorf’s hyperbole about the six months necessary to reconstruct the political system, six years necessary to transform the economy, and sixty years to change society and human mindsets is still inspiring. His last estimate (which in the Czech case is taken for granted by Brokl et al., 1997) is very true for a strong civil society, its robust institutions, and popular adherence to the idea of civic responsibilities.

A relatively new issue, which is bound to gain prominence in the next decade, is the question of multiple civic identities, namely the coexistence of national and European identity and citizenship. This will further complicate the public discourse as the Czechs were given, in psychological terms, only very limited time (1993-2004) for the development of a formally independent nation state, without having to adhere to formal relations with other administrative and political units. (Potůček, 2005)

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