

Editorial

This thematic issue of the *Czech Sociological Review* focuses on legislatures and representation in Central and Eastern Europe, where democratic parliaments have now been functioning for almost fifteen years. There is a growing amount of literature on CEE parliaments, ranging from country studies to inter-country comparisons, and from institutional descriptions of individual legislatures to analyses of more specific features of CEE legislatures. Recent scholarship on CEE parliaments has been based on accounts of the post-communist transition and consolidation, and some say that CEE parliaments are now beyond transition. Current parliamentary research in the CEE region should therefore now more resemble that of Western Europe and should focus on typical issues in this field such as the role of committees, party discipline, electoral links or relations to interest groups and the executive. There have also been many empirical research projects on CEE parliaments employing either surveys of MPs or detailed analysis of activities of legislatures and MPs recruitment.

In addition to the article summarising the basic features of CEE parliaments and describing the most important changes that have accompanied the consolidation of parliaments in transition countries in Central and Eastern Europe since the start of the 1990s, and the article focusing on an analysis of the relationship between the legislative and the executive power in the Czech Republic, in this issue we have decided to concentrate on topics of *representation*. Representation is a traditional topic in the body of literature on Western parliaments but has been largely neglected by contemporary scholars of CEE parliaments, even though it relates to the core role of parliaments as places of representation and to the role of MPs as the people's representatives. We are interested in addressing a fundamental question that, even after decades of research and theoretical reflections, remains unchanged: whom do MPs represent? Some would answer that MPs represent the voters, either as a median, mean or something else expressed in voter preferences. Or at least this assumption is taken as the starting point of the analysis. This perspective emphasises the mass-elite linkage, where voters are the principals and the representative relationship is studied as a problem of either representation or accountability. Another school of thought notes that MPs have more principals than voters and analyses the relationship of MPs to party activists, who have a strong say in the reselection process, and the relationship to interest groups, which evaluate the quality of MPs' proposals and behaviour in different policy areas. The topic of *representation* in this issue encompasses more than just the question of whom MPs represent and also looks at the circumstances of representations.

The Sociology of Politics Department at the Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic has been studying and analysing parliaments in general and the Czech parliament in particular since the start of the 1990s. In 2000–2004 the department's researchers set up the *Documentary Centre for Research*

on Central European Parliaments – Parliamentary DICE (based on a research project supported by grant no. S7028003 from the Grant Agency of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic), the objective of which was to create an information database on the parliaments of Central and Eastern Europe. Towards the conclusion of the project the research team reached the opinion that it was time to summarise and evaluate the fifteen years of research on parliaments conducted at the Institute of Sociology and other academic institutions in CEE countries, and establish research priorities for the future, in the context of EU accession and changes in the parliamentary agenda. The outcome of this endeavour is this thematic issue on legislatures and representation in Central and Eastern Europe. In addition to the articles focusing on CEE parliaments the issue also contains an article on the German Bundestag, looking at the similarities and differences between East and West German MPs. Although German MPs in the new federal states constitute an 'exceptional case' in comparison with their colleagues from Central and Eastern Europe, given that they were faced with established structures and received enormous institutional support, they nonetheless for us represent a unique opportunity to study the influence of the transfer of institutions and transformation paths on the behaviour and attitudes of MPs.

This issue also contains a section with information on the numerous studies that have been conducted on the Parliament of the Czech Republic during the past fifteen years and particularly information on the *EurElite* project on European parliamentary elites, which is designed to make a comparative study of the similarities and differences between the personal characteristics and patterns of recruitment and careers among European representative elites and to create a database of this information as a research resource.

Editors

Zdenka Mansfeldová

Lukáš Linek

Petra Rakušanová

SS 05:1

**Measuring Value Orientations
with the Use of S.H. Schwartz's Value Portraits**

Blanka Řeháková

The study acquaints readers with two methods of measuring value orientations developed by S.H. Schwartz. Attention is focused especially on the Portrait Values Questionnaire that was used in the European Social Survey in 2002 and 2004. The analysis in the study uses ESS 2002 data sets from ten selected countries (the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland) and creates four higher order value types (conservation, openness to change, self-transcendence, self-enhancement). It is then shown how strongly these types are represented in each of the countries included in the analysis and how the percentages of represented types change in relation to sex, age, education, and religiosity. For the Czech Republic the odds of each of the types are modelled in relation to age, education, and religiosity.

To order a copy of this publication, please contact: The Press and Publications Department, Institute of Sociology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Jilská 1, Prague 1, Czech Republic; tel.: +420 222 221 761, e-mail: Eva.Strnadova@soc.cas.cz