

The World of Hierarchies and Real Socialism

The Legacy of Communist Rule II: A volume
of contributions investigating social hierarchies

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Svět hierarchií a reálný socialismus

Dědictví komunistické vlády II:

sborník příspěvků ke zkoumání sociálních hierarchií

Martin Hájek, Tomáš Holeček, Jiří Kabele, Josef Kandert, Petr Kohútek, Zdenka Vajdová

Abstrakt:

Sborník shrnuje teoreticko-metodologické úvahy týmu, který řeší problém konstruování sociálních hierarchií v novodobých společnostech na příkladu komunistického vládnutí (grantový projekt GA ČR 403/01/1564 Dědictví komunistické vlády). První studie charakterizuje konstruktivní sílu sociálních hierarchií a sociálních ekvit (soustav asymetrických anebo symetrických vztahů, Kabele, Hájek). Při vlastním studiu sociálních hierarchií je z metodologického hlediska ovšem důležité respektovat různé významové statusy spojované s jejich laickými a odbornými popisy (Holeček). Představy o důvodech vzniku a trvání nadřazeného a podřazeného postavení mezi jednotlivci i mezi skupinami – viděno očima antropologie – jsou v mimoevropských společnostech založeny na idejích soutěživosti a předurčenosti (Kandert). V novodobých evropských společnostech se v souvislosti se sociálními hierarchiemi stává ústředním pojmem “moc” vázaná na asymetrické vztahy, jak je možné sledovat v pracích Norberta Eliase (Vajdová). Plně se toto tvrzení – podle předložené teoretické hypotézy – vztahuje na principy a způsoby organizování společenských záležitostí v reálném socialismu. Vládu v budovatelských režimech lze pojímat jako ovládnutí původně ústavních mocí nadřazenou paralelní mocí: komunistickou stranou (Kabele).

Klíčová slova:

Sociální hierarchie, sociální ekvity, moc, popis sociálních jevů, archaické společnosti, novodobé společnosti, komunistická vláda, budovatelské zřízení

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Abstract:

The volume of papers brings together theoretical and methodological concepts developed by a team studying the issue of the construction of social hierarchies in contemporary societies using the example of communist rule (Grant Project GA ČR 403/01/1564 The Legacy of Communist Rule). The first study characterises the constructive power of social hierarchies and social equities (schemes of asymmetrical or symmetrical relationships – Kabele, Hájek). When studying social hierarchies, however, it is important, from a methodological point of view, to respect various meaning statuses related to their lay and expert descriptions (Holeček). The ideas concerning the emergence and continuity of dominant and subordinate positions among individuals and groups – as seen through the anthropological lens – are, in societies outside Europe, based on ideas of competitiveness and predestination (Kandert). In contemporary European societies, “power” connected with asymmetrical relationships has become the central concept related to social hierarchies, as is made evident in the works by Norbert Elias (Vajdová). This claim applies to the principles and manners by which social matters are organised in real socialism. Rule in the socialist regimes can be understood as dominance over originally constitutional components of state power by a superior parallel power: the communist party (Kabele).

Key words:

Social hierarchies, social equities, power, description of social phenomena, archaic societies, contemporary societies, communist rule, socialist regime

Die Welt der Hierarchien und der reale Sozialismus

Das Erbe der kommunistischen Herrschaft II: Sammelband zur Erforschung sozialer Hierarchien

Martin Hájek, Tomáš Holeček, Jiří Kabele, Josef Kandert, Petr Kohútek, Zdenka Vajdová

Abstraktum:

Der Sammelband fasst die theoretisch-methodologischen Gedanken eines Forschungsteams zusammen, das sich im Förderprojekt GA ČR 403/01/1564 "Das Erbe der kommunistischen Herrschaft" am Beispiel der kommunistischen Herrschaft mit der Konstruktion von Sozialhierarchien in neuzeitlichen Gesellschaften befasst. Die erste Studie charakterisiert die konstruktive Kraft der Sozialhierarchie und der sozialen Gleichgewichte (Das System asymmetrischer oder symmetrischer Beziehungen, Kabele, Hájek). Beim eigentlichen Studium der Sozialhierarchien ist es in methodologischer Hinsicht freilich wichtig, die unterschiedlichen Bedeutungsebenen i. Z. mit der allgemeinen und der fachlichen Beschreibung dieser Hierarchien zu berücksichtigen (Holeček). Die Vorstellungen über die Gründe für die Entstehung und das Fortbestehen über- und untergeordneter Stellungen zwischen Einzelnen und Gruppen sind – in der Betrachtungsweise der Anthropologie – in außereuropäischen Gesellschaften auf den Ideen des Konkurrenzstrebens und der Vorbestimmung gegründet (Kandert). In neuzeitlichen europäischen Gesellschaften stellt der an asymmetrische Beziehungen gebundene Begriff Macht in der Sozialhierarchie den zentralen Begriff dar, was in den Arbeiten von Norbert Elias (Vajdová) gut zu verfolgen ist. Laut der vorliegenden theoretischen Hypothese bezieht sich diese Behauptung voll auf die Prinzipien und Organisationsweisen gesellschaftlicher Angelegenheiten im realen Sozialismus. Die Regierung in einem Regime des sozialistischen Aufbaus kann aufgefasst werden als Beherrschung der ursprünglich verfassungsmäßigen Gewalten durch eine Parallelgewalt: die kommunistische Partei (Kabele).

Schlüsselwörter:

Sozialhierarchie, soziales Gleichgewicht, Macht (Gewalt), Beschreibung sozialer Erscheinungen, archaische Gesellschaften, neuzeitliche Gesellschaften, kommunistische Herrschaft, Ordnung des sozialistischen Aufbaus

1. Introduction

This volume – *The World of Hierarchies and Real Socialism* – emerged as a part of the work on the grant project GA ČR 403/01/1564, *The Legacy of Communist Rule*. The aim of this project is: “on the basis of a complex reconstruction of the procedures involved in communist rule, to distinguish, describe and theoretically grasp the mechanism and strategies of rule in real socialism and the sources of its post-revolution inertia”. The intention of the project is to devote long-term and comprehensive attention to the questions of (i) the construction of social hierarchies in modern societies, (ii) governance in the conditions of constitutionally declared civic equality and (iii) the “legacy” of governance as a component in general and fundamental changes in society. Social hierarchies played a significant role in communist rule. A study of the “communist” era of hierarchies not only allows us – we hope – to gain a deeper understanding of our recent past, but also enables us to generally assess the role of social hierarchies and equities in contemporary societies. This role has of course already been studied through a variety of subjects in the fields of political science, sociology and economics (the theory of groups, the firm, bureaucracy, elites, and power), but overall it has always remained in the shadow of the macro-sociological research on class and social stratification or the ruling cult of the market in neoclassical economics, conceived as model equity.

The obvious nature of social hierarchies and equities was not the starting point in our long-term, empirical and theoretical investigation, but rather the goal. What is it that makes social hierarchies and equities possible? What causes them to form in one way or another as distinctive configurations of social positions? How do they contribute to the stability and/or transformation of societies? When do they provide fertile ground for the institutionalisation of irresponsibility?

In our first volume, “Who’s Afraid of Hierarchies?”, the title of which is a paraphrasing of Albee’s famous play, we first collectively introduced the point of departure for our project, “*The Legacy of Communist Rule*”. Tomáš Holeček showed in his study that hierarchies are the domain of our frequent complaints and a cause for our concern. Zdena Vajdová described the self-destructive hierarchisation of administration that occurred after 1945. Jiří Kabele performed a detailed analysis of the connections between the social construction of hierarchies and the protection of rights and freedoms. There, attention was focused on judicial hierarchies, which are the outcome of the efforts of many generations aimed at rendering the abuse of judicial power impossible. In that volume Martin Hájek raised the general issue of hierarchies.¹ In his view, hierarchies appeared as an oriented scheme of positions. At one end of the scheme there is a certain quality, while at the other this quality is lacking”.

This volume picks up on Hájek’s kind of questioning. We lay out the findings that have been drawn primarily from the theoretical and methodological investigations we have devoted to the question of hierarchies. We attempt to see social hierarchies and equities in a coordinative and structural/systemic perspective. In the first case at play is the methodological individualism that is built on the contextually conditioned, voluntary coordination of the sharing of influences in individual relationships. Out of these relationships arises the arranging force of symmetries and asymmetries, which are what generate and amplify social hierar-

¹ Kabele: *Ochrana práv a sociální konstrukce hierarchií: příklad soudnictví*. 2001; Holeček: *Co nechávají hierarchie otevřené*. 2001; Vajdová: *Konec samosprávy v českých zemích*. 2001; Hájek: *Hierarchie: koncept a formy*. 2001.

chies and equities. Conversely, for the second perspective a holistically conceived methodological processualism is applied, which conceives the course of events in hierarchies and equities as processes determined by their structures or systems. The voluntary coordination of persons, both individuals and organisations, is essentially subordinated to these structures.

The volume begins with a theoretical study dealing with social hierarchies and equities. We interpret these as equal and unequal formations of social relations that make it possible to summarily grasp and distinguish the flow of asymmetric and symmetric influences. The source of the constructive power of hierarchies and equities, which arrange not only social actors, can be found in the interlocking of their abstract graspability with a symbolically articulated “manifestability” of shape. In the second part of the study, titled “The Social Hierarchies and Equities of Individuals and Organisations” we address the role that is played by social hierarchies and equities in contemporary societies. We draw more attention to the two above-mentioned possible ways of understanding: coordinative and/or structural/systemic. We also look in greater detail at their sources in postulation, evaluation and social comparison, competition and struggle, balancing and outweighing, integration and disintegration, differentiation and totalisation.

The description of the hierarchical relationships, whether in academic or common terms, can be meant variously. The very same descriptive sentence can possess different meaning statuses, which must be respected if certain types of errors or misunderstandings are to be avoided. Six examples of various meaning statuses are presented in the article, each of which can be designated as a description. Anthropologists also study social and cultural hierarchies. Their conclusions are based primarily on data drawn from non-European societies. Their research has shown that there exists no society or culture that lacks hierarchies, and that the very ideas surrounding the reasons for the emergence and the continued existence of superior and subordinate positions among individuals and groups are founded on the ideas of competitiveness and predestination (or in some cases exclusively on predestination).

The concept of power in the works of Norbert Elias facilitates an understanding of the great social transformation (from the 18th to the 20th century), known as industrialisation (“Power, Rule, and Hierarchy in the Works of Norbert Elias”, Zdenka Vajdová), as a change of social hierarchies connected with a reduction of the difference in power – between the rulers and the ruled, and even between the individual social strata. Particularly inspiring here is the relational understanding of power tied to game models, as well as the emphasised “path dependency” in the interpretation of the rise of socialism and Nazism.

The volume concludes with a theoretical paper titled “Governance in the Constructivist and the Constitutional Arrangements”. These arrangements represent an epistemologically founded alternative of two conceptions for creating social order in societies, which view their order as changeable. The character of these arrangements is determined by: (i) the narrative of their genesis, (ii) the principles that determine the distribution of competences (the division of the areas of freedom), and (iii) the institutions that protect the rights and freedoms of persons affected by the execution of these competences (the division of the areas of responsibility). Both arrangements are realised as regimes, which do not resemble them specifically because their institutions, and the social hierarchies and equities at work within them, must ensure the moderately costly coordination of many agents. The governance in a constructive regime (real socialism), which the paper concentrates on to a greater degree, is described as the control over originally constitutional components of state power by a superior parallel power through the vanguard of a constructivist group: the Communist Party.

2. Social Hierarchies and Equities

Jiří Kabele, Martin Hájek

Abstract

We interpret social hierarchies and equities as equal and unequal formations of social relations that make it possible to summarily grasp and distinguish flows of asymmetric and symmetric influences. The source of the constructive power of hierarchies and equities can be found in the interlocking of their abstract graspability with a symbolically articulated “manifestability” of shape. This constructive force functions as an important element in gaining a pre-understanding of the course of events. In the second part of the study we address the role that is played by social hierarchies and equities in contemporary societies. We draw more attention to the two possible ways of understanding social hierarchies and equities: coordinative and structural/systemic. We also look in greater detail at their sources in postulation, evaluation and social comparison, competition and struggle, balancing and outweighing, integration and disintegration, differentiation and totalisation.

* * *

Social hierarchies and *equities* are relatively segregated schemes of unequal and equal relationships embedded in wider social networks. Their status and symbolic apprehension are significantly prefigured by the given culture of a society² and the dominant concept of order within it. In traditional societies, order was understood as given forever (written in the cosmos), i. e. predestined by transcendental agents (mythic ancestors, gods etc.). It is the hierarchicity of honour (and fame), tied to declared and proved non-selfishness of acts and tested by “close” actual relations, that is constitutional for the enforced coordination of choices by the institutions. It gave order not only to the relationships among large and small social groups, but also to the relationships within them. This concept of order given forever was replaced by another concept, of an order that is *changeable*. It can change because the persons (individual and collective) engaged in its coordination create this order themselves. Those persons are not in the grips of transcendental agents, because they all belong mainly to themselves. They only had to respect their equal partnership and the general validity of the rules of the game. This new “partner” concept of order took control over the modern societies in particular histories marked by the struggle between doctrines and prophetic visions. The realisation of changeable order is connected not only with crises, revolutions and wars, but also with an unusual dynamisation of society. New order asserts itself by means of a gradual de-legitimisation of the old hierarchical concept of order given forever. Also, it fundamentally transformed both the status and the symbolic apprehension of hierarchies. These hierar-

² It is enough to say the word *hierarchy* out loud to cause the back of our necks to stiffen. This involuntary reaction shows how deeply the narrative of freedom, which was defiantly won out in the battle with medieval and early modern absolutist hierarchies, has come to be inscribed within us. On the other hand, for many of us it is difficult to imagine any clearer experience of harmony than that of the family in one’s childhood, which was of course hierarchically ordered.

chies were confronted by the “equal”, richly and thoroughly organised societal orderings of equities. Symmetrical forms of influence came to be emphasised, enabling more flexible and venturesome cooperation bound to property. The original “equality” among people, limited to sharing the same subordination in the hierarchical order, was expanded to a universal and abstract equality among people as citizens.³

Here we will understand *social hierarchies* and *social equities* as those formations of social relationships which are recognised by both laypersons and professionals and which arrange both social agents and social objects.⁴ Social hierarchies of objects are social in the sense that the agents, in their understanding of social reality and in their conduct, respect them as both a limit to and source of opportunities for intervening in the course of social events. For example, judges have to respect the hierarchy of crimes when administering justice. This hierarchy of crimes does not rank a judge in the hierarchy directly, but it is naturally understood that the judgement of more serious crimes will fall to judges with higher judicial authority.

Hierarchy represents a concept more abstract than the concrete and “visible” *social hierarchies*, which we have become familiar with from contemporary forms of governance/rule, and even from fairytales about kings and princesses. Ordinal relations, giving order to asymmetries, are a concept even more abstract than that of *hierarchy*. The concept of *equity* – sets of equal relationships – is new. We introduce it as an antipode to hierarchy, i. e. a set of unequal relationships. Our equities of course also have their own abstract counterpart in *relations of equivalence*, which give order to symmetries founded on similarity or equipotency. A common background for all these “logical” correlations is the conceptual opposition: *asymmetry* versus *symmetry*. The concept of changeable order that is dominant in contemporary societies is from our perspective in itself more abstract than the considerably mythically framed concept of an order given forever. This fact is not of course the only reason why we consider it useful to deal with hierarchies and equities abstractly. Abstraction from the graphic/visual and symbolic dimensions of social hierarchies and equities allows us to reveal their important links and properties. This abstract foundation then enables us in the next step to assess the significance of their graphic/visual representation and symbolic meaning for moulding their constructive force.

Our study sets out from the assumption that in order for individuals, groups, and organisations to be able to understand the course of social events and to be capable of conducting themselves competently within it they must be able to summarily grasp, recognise, and adequately respect asymmetric and symmetric influences. This kind of orientation, through hierarchies and equities, is not of course easy in societies in which there dominates the concept of order connected with: (i) its continuous changeability evoked by new or-

³ The opposition under consideration, between the concepts of an order given forever versus a changeable order, is based on semantics, which allow contemporaries not only to understand the order of archaic societies but also confirm the contemporary prevalent dynamic self-conception of society. There is a suspicion indeed that our view of the old-world society is a derivative of our own current self-conception. Kabele: *Přerody. Principy sociálního konstruování*. 1998; Kabele: *Vlastní princip pohybu II: Pokušení vyvoleností a bytostný princip pohybu*. 2000; Kabele: *Transakce, sociální vztahy a koordinační instituty*. 2000.

⁴ The concept of a changeable order usually puts persons and things in sharp opposition. The study of hierarchies nonetheless shows that this opposition is questionable, as the hierarchy of agents and objects, although appearing independent, nonetheless reciprocally support each other in way that does not enable us to decide which came first, the chicken or the egg. This problem is the subject for example of the ANT theory of Bruno Latour. Latour: *We Have Never Been Modern*. 1988.

organisational processes and (ii) a weakly graphic equity founded on civic equality before the law. Besides, changeability is related to the equality of citizens. Equality does not refer only to their human dignity but also to their (contractually acquired) competences in certain circumstances to change the rules that determine the order of a given society. The relativity that is connected with the changeability of the order and the greater degree of abstractness proper to equities decrease the clearness and comprehensibility of social events in contemporary societies. The constructive force of equities must therefore also be satiated with the dynamic graphicness and symbolism of upward advancement and development. We will not however in this work deal with this specific type of linear hierarchisation (the idea of continuous historical progress), since it is more a matter of narrativisation than institutionalisation.

In the case of many social entities, e. g. norms, values, competences, and commitments, it is possible to constructivistically argue that they are both an instrument and a result of action. Social hierarchies, or equities, in no way differ from them in this respect. Unlike them, however, they have, according to theory, a graphically and symbolically based manifestability: people see them or at least know of them in advance. The sources of the hierarchical and equity “shaping” of the social world do not lie exclusively in institutions. Narratives mediating a rich symbolism can also strongly assert this shaping. For example, the great narrative of historical materialism, about how the progressive classes are first trampled by the retrograde ones until finally the “average Joe” – the proletarian – definitively sets us all free and carries us forth into a classless society, established a class hierarchy in communist doctrine more clearly than the contemporarily accepted theory of surplus value.

Hierarchies and equities possess an abstract dimension that the graphic and even the symbolic quality “complement”. We will address this problem in the section *Hierarchies and Equities: from an Abstract Concept to a Graphic and Symbolic One*. Here we are making use of the mathematical concept of relations, specifically, two types of relations, which we will refer to as *asymmetries* and *symmetries*. Then we characterise the graphic manifestability and symbolic values of hierarchies and equities. In the second part of *The Social Hierarchies and Equities of Individuals and Organisations* we will deal with the role that hierarchies and equities play in contemporary societies. We will look at the two possible ways of their alternative understanding: coordinative and structural/systemic. We will also examine the sources of social hierarchies and equities in greater detail.

2.1 Hierarchies and Equities: from an Abstract Concept to a Graphic and Symbolic One

2.1.1 Symmetries and Asymmetries, Equivalent and Ordinal Relations: Definitions and Examples

2.1.1.1 Symmetry and asymmetry

The origin of the terms *symmetry* and *asymmetry* lies in the field of geometry. Originally they represented and expressed an important property of transformation. From there they entered the vocabulary of the theory of relations and the vocabulary of the social sciences, specifically that of economics. What is obvious here is the difference between ownership and governance, founded on the symmetrical and asymmetrical sharing of influ-

ence. The theoretical break-through is here associated with the concept of information asymmetry,⁵ which is able to considerably change property relationships and relationships of governance, and can even overturn, hierarchise, and equitise them.⁶ Here we will be interested mainly in the tools that the theory of relations has to offer. These tools make it possible to express the properties of hierarchies and equities, and they can therefore potentially also be used to model them.

If we have a set of elements E, then the *relation* is each sub-set of all pairs of elements from set E, or, the formula unambiguously stipulates which of all possible pairs of elements from set E belong to relation R. All other pairs are not a part of the relation.

We can speak of a pair of elements A and B which are in relation as being *symmetrical* (resp. *asymmetrical*), if it is also true that: $A R B$ et $B R A$ (resp. $A R B$ et non $B R A$). We will refer to the pair of elements that are symmetrical (resp. asymmetrical) as *dyadic symmetries* (resp. *dyadic asymmetries*). Brothers represent a dyadic symmetry. A mother and son are a dyadic asymmetry.

A relation is *symmetrical* (resp. *asymmetrical*), if it is true for any given pair of elements in relation that the pair is symmetrical (resp. asymmetrical). (For each A and B in relation it applies that $A R B$, then $B R A$ is true also, resp. $A R B$, then non $B R A$ is true). We will refer to symmetrical (resp. asymmetrical) relations as *symmetries* (resp. *asymmetries*). Citizenship establishes symmetry, while, conversely, party nomenclatures were asymmetries.

The occurrence of one dyadic asymmetry renders it impossible for the relation to be symmetry, but this by no means makes it an asymmetry. Analogically, the occurrence of a dyadic symmetry renders it impossible for the relation to be an asymmetry, but this does not make it symmetry. The “majority” of relations above set E are neither symmetries nor asymmetries. This thought points to the formally combinatorial dimension of relations, which is anchored in the fixed inventory of pairs belonging to a relation, and in their formal properties.⁷

2.1.1.2 Equivalent and ordinal relations

Symmetry and asymmetry can also of course be further ordered internally as schemes of relationships. The form of this ordering that we are interested in is the *transitivity* of a relation, which, based on knowledge of the relationships between elements A and B and B and C, allows us to deduce the relationship between elements A and C. From the perspective of the study of hierarchies and equities two types of relations are important and are capable of expressing them relatively well. *Equivalent relations* (in short: *equivalence*) are a symmetrical relation that satisfies the condition of transitivity. For each A, B, and C, for which it is true that $A S B$ and $B S C$, it is also true that $A S C$ and $C S A$.

The counterpart to this is the transitive *ordinal relation* (*ordinality*), which is an asymmetry. For each A, B, and C, for which it is true that $A A S B$ and $B A S C$, it is also true that $A A S C$, but non $C A S A$. Special cases of ordinal relations are real and natural numbers, which meet the condition of transitivity. They make it possible to render a single measure as

⁵ Akerlof: The Market for “Lemons”: Qualitative Uncertainty and the Market Mechanism. 1970; Stiglitz and Weiss: Credit Rationing in Markets with Imperfect Information. 1981.

⁶ Mlčoch: Chování Československé podnikové sféry. 1990.

⁷ There of course also exists a “qualitative” dimension of relations. In our definition it is founded on the possibility of the existence of the source of the relation in the “formula”, which stipulates the shared demand that must be met by the pair of elements in order for them to belong to the relation.

a criterion of ordering. In this kind of case we will speak of the *quantification of ordinalities*. It is probably not necessary to point out that quantification represents a modus of modelling various kinds of events which is used extensively in academic research and which imbues the results of such research with the hallmark of being “scientific”. It was of course preceded by a less abstract and more graphic rendering of the world in geometric terms, which we must also take equal interest in with regard to the graphic manifestability of hierarchies and equities to be analysed here further on.

The perception of equivalent and ordinal relations is incommensurable. A single deviation in the principle disturbs ordinality and equivalence; of course in our perception, in the case of manifested hierarchies this usually involves an exception that confirms the rule, whereas more abstract equivalences can break down as a whole. For example, markets of consumer goods, which, alongside small businessmen, are entered by powerful business chains too, are difficult to perceive as equities founded on equivalence. Conversely, no one doubts that the socialistic cadre nomenclatures represented pure hierarchies, although even here we could find an entire number of examples of a breach of ordinality.

2.1.2 The Graphic Manifestability of Shape of Hierarchies and Equities

2.1.2.1 The spatio-temporal qualities of hierarchies and equities

Hierarchies and equities represent unusual types of equivalences and ordinalities, which are associated with the shapes through which they are realised. They are founded by *gestalts*, which hold together through their own orderliness. These shapes are able to assert themselves because they give order to events and render them observable, comprehensible, and reportable on the lay and professional level.⁸ This orderliness – a perceptible hierarchisation or equitisation – relates to any kind of event and not only social ones. Perceptible hierarchisation and equitisation partake in the construction of social events not only on the level of their understanding but also in a Thomasian manner as a part of the definition of the social situation, determining the actions of people and in this way even the event itself. They give birth to model (declaratively realised), and even real (really realised) hierarchies and equities.

The layman in most cases does not absorb the socially constructed nature of hierarchies. They appear as figures that belong in reality. Hierarchies recognised by specialists may be understood as models in the lay world of “imperfectly” grasped hierarchies. Elsewhere of course they represent an alternative social construction – models perceived as instruments of research. The status and graphic manifestation of equities (both lay and professional), for which it was even necessary to come up with a special term, clearly differ from the status and graphic manifestability of hierarchies. Equipotency and parity are meaningful even for hierarchies, where they signify the state of being situated on the same floor or level. To be able to form a self-supporting entity, equity, these equal relations cannot be defined only by the same relation to hierarchically higher and lower elements, and must be instead defined by the symmetric quality of the relationships between all the elements.

Hierarchisation is *gradation* when some measure comes to be applied in the ascending order of elements. We can then speak of *quantification* if this measure is numerical. Hierarchies and equities are in this case the outcome of the measuring of reality. Quantification renders hierarchies and equities more abstract. What is important for our perspective is that

⁸ They thus contribute to Garfinkel’s accountability. Garfinkel: *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. 1967.

even very abstract quantification has its “shape-ness” connected to a customary graphic representation.

The *hierarchical relation (hierarchy)* is an ordinal relation, the specificity of which is its connection with a spatio-temporal and/or a social ordering, most commonly expressed with the words “above” and “below” (*superiority*), and “before” and “after” (*precedence*). Other orderings are of course also possible, for example, in the centre and on the periphery (centrality) etc. Superiority is associated with the vertical. It evokes an entire series of geometrical notions: one-dimensional quantities, scales, or ladders, two-dimensional trees and strata, and three-dimensional pyramids. Centrality is associated with the idea of concentrated circles. Precedence hierarchises, for example, through the notion of primordially,⁹ but ultimateness can of course equally be a privilege.

Each difference or ordinal relation can be re-interpreted or used towards hierarchisation. In this way, phenomena and actions are inscribed with a quality of ascension, centrality or succession. Symbolically accentuated hierarchic relations can, through the strength of their graphicness, turn symmetry into asymmetry by postulating¹⁰ a higher position (*ascription*). This kind of re-interpretation of relationships and connections retroactively produces the need to construct a “quality” – for example, sacredness, progressiveness etc. – that expresses the content of this hierarchisation. Thanks to re-interpretations hierarchies can also temporarily or permanently be turned around. For example, in many rituals the highly positioned must be degraded and fulfil the function of the inferior. Christ, as represented through the priest, washes the feet of the disciples on Good Friday. If we accept the opinion of Lévi-Strauss, this “reversal” serves as a kind of equitisation: “The ritual has an inverse and symmetrical structure – it is conjunctive as it establishes unity (spiritual union) or in any case at least an organic relationship between two groups that at the outset were distinct – from the asymmetry between the profane and the sacred, between the believers and those performing the ceremony, or between the dead and the living, to a symmetry – the “game” consists in getting all participants on the side of the winners”.¹¹

Equity is a shaped equivalent relation, the specificity of which is its connection with a spatio-temporal figuration most commonly expressed as evenness (neither *above* and *below*, nor *before* and *after*). It can be the result of a balancing that induces uniformity or a parity of ordered relationships. Equities have – or at least they appear to us to have – less graphic potential than hierarchic relations. In the social world they are usually associated with the powerful ideals of equality and liberation. Every symmetry can be re-interpreted or used for the construction of equity. By ascription or overlooking differences equity can also turn – even though its constructive power is by all appearances less than in the case of hierarchies – asymmetry into symmetry.

The shape of the most common partial equities is usually conceived as a fragment of some hierarchy. It is founded by a horizontalness of rank, level, or stratum. Equities that exclude hierarchies therefore represent a “generalisation” of this horizontalness. It is therefore no accident that the group that bears this generalisation in the mythic framework surrounding fundamental transformations of society is usually the lowest ranking group, for example the

⁹ We do not wish to use the perhaps more appropriate term *priority*, which we utilise in our theory in another meaning.

¹⁰ I. e. by the supreme attribution of a higher position.

¹¹ Lévi-Strauss: *Myšlení přírodních národů*. (The Savage Mind) 1971.

masses or the proletariat. The undisturbed plane is of course a very abstract shape, which often asserts itself by forming a background for prominent figures of vertical aberration.

2.1.2.2 Cooperation as the tie of hierarchies and equities

The manifestability of shape of hierarchies and equities is not tied only to a spatio-temporal orderedness. The general qualities of the ties between the components of these shapes also often contribute to these shapes, in which we can easily find a reference to social worlds. They characterise the cooperation of elements and components through an established specialisation. We can indicate two such methods of cooperation: (i) the coordination by interplay and/or counterplay and (ii) incommensurability. The general qualities of ties considered here lend greater consistency to the shape: various and potentially isolated elements connect in one unit. Thanks to these qualities the shape is held together and resists decomposition. However, it also maintains in itself significance and naturally attracts a variety of symbolic values.

Bishop Adalbero of Leon accounted social hierarchies of medieval society in a poem for the Capetian King Robert the Holy using cooperation in this way: “The society of believers forms one body; although the state contains three bodies. For another law, human law, distinguishes two other classes: the nobility and the serfs do not follow the same provisions... The nobility are warriors, the protectors of churches, the advocates of the people, great and small alike, in short, of everyone, and at the same time they ensure their own safety. The second class is the class of serfs: this unhappy breed can only own something at the price of suffering. Who could succeed, tablet in hand, in calculating the services that the serfs must cope with, their long marches, their difficult labours. The serfs supply everyone with everything, money, clothing, food; no free man would survive without the serfs... The house of God, which people believe is one, is thus divided in three: the first pray, the second fight, and the third labour. These three parts, existing jointly, do not suffer in that they are separate from each other; the services that the one demonstrates, condition the deeds of both the others; each then bears the burden of relieving the whole.”¹²

No one would probably doubt at first glance that a consonance of values or styles could be a bond in the social world. Nevertheless, it is not quite so, if the bearers of this congruence strive together for some scarce resources. Their congruence then transforms into contrariety. The possibility that contradiction can become a no less powerful bond than consonance is counterintuitive. What seems to us on the conceptual level to be counterintuitive, can, conversely, on the level of shape appear to be self-evident. The inter-operative ties that we recognise are illustrated in the following paradigm:

Abstract types of ties in hierarchies and equities

TYPE OF RELATION →	EQUITAL	HIERARCHIC
EXPRESSIONS OF COORDINATION ↓		
CONSONANCE	Congruence (parity)	Harmony (accordance)
CONTRADICTION	Opposition (contrariety)	Superposition (discord)

Since the time of Max Weber, the discourse of *power* has been, like Marx’s *class* discourse, superpositional. Conversely, the discourse of *authority* and *public administration*

¹² Le Goff: Kultura středověké Evropy. 1991.

tends usually to be harmonic. The socialistic discourse of a classless society, even though having emerged out of cooperation between non-antagonistic classes, favoured the working class, and was more harmonic than congruent. One of its components was of course the story of how in socialism the superposition of antagonistic classes persisted thanks to the remnants of a bourgeoisie and the external aggressive influence of imperialism. These circumstances prevented society from creating a harmonic (let alone congruent) union of workers, and a be-friended peasantry and intelligentsia.

2.1.2.3 Commensurability and incommensurability as a source of the accomplishment of hierarchies and equities

The relationship of commensurability and incommensurability can be defined in abstract terms. Each commensurability, as a relation, establishes a complementary relation of incommensurability, wherein both commensurability and incommensurability represent symmetry.¹³

The described complementary correlation of commensurability or incommensurability stems from the fact that the selected classes of relations are possible¹⁴ only in the case of entities that are commensurable, or, conversely, in the case of entities that are incommensurable. Persons can own things, but they can only among themselves share mutual love for one another. Considered complementarity entails that, semantically, sometimes commensurability can dominate and at other times incommensurability can prevail. If we generally take into consideration persons, it is their “commensurability” that moves to the forefront. If we have in mind the gods, their incommensurability with respect to persons dominates. A frequent case of abstract incommensurability is the relationship between the part and the whole, establishing the holistic conception of reality and the idea of gestalt/shape itself (holistic perception).¹⁵

A set of elements (for example people) that is commensurable in a single manner can be broken down into a number of sub-sets of elements that are commensurable in different ways (they were party members and non-party men etc.), which are of course then incommensurable. This kind of incommensurability can be hierarchised through ordinality. Given the historical mission of the communist party and loyalty to its purpose party members had been “something more” than non-party men. Out of this hierarchy, further divided up by the nomenclature hierarchy of functionaries, another hierarchy could be derived. In this hierarchy the people were broken down into the functionary corps of the party and the masses (encompassing both non-party men and down-the-line party members). It is clear from this derived break down that it served to unite what the original break down into party members and non-party members had disconnected. Between the functionary corps of the party and guided masses there should have been a close connection, which is what the functionaries continu-

¹³ In both cases it applies that:

If A is *COM* B, then B is *COM* A.

If A is not *COM* B, then B is not *COM* A.

¹⁴ This does not mean that this possibility is fulfilled.

¹⁵ Incommensurability can unintentionally introduce some confusion into our lexicon. It is obviously associated not only with hierarchies but also with oppositions. But opposition of course involves a fundamentally different type of contradiction than that under consideration in the case of inter-operation. We could distinguish between these two ‘natural’ interpretations of contradiction by referring to *inter-operative oppositions*, for example in the case of political parties, and *incommensurable contradiction*, for example, in the case of gods and people.

ally had to strive for, as the course of history under socialism was after all determined by the masses. In this sense the hierarchy of the superiority of the masses over the functionary corps represented the foundation of the so-called socialist democracy, which posed as a more perfect variant than the democracy of the bourgeoisie.

The manifestability of shape of hierarchies is not only connected with the aspect of decomposition but also with composition. The incommensurable contradiction, although it presents itself, as in the case of the counter-play, as similarly paradoxical, here contributes to achieving cohesiveness. Luis Dumont drew attention to these circumstances in his concept of hierarchies.¹⁶ He reduces them to a relationship of two entities and describes it as an “encompassment of oppositions” (using our proposed terminology of incommensurable contradictions, see note 16). “In the hierarchic relationship the whole stands opposed to its parts: on one level it concerns opposites or complements (e. g. the “black” and “white” races of man), while on a higher level they are identical (the “white” race as a species prototype encompasses the “black” race, too; similarly, some languages suggest that this relationship has applied also in the case of men and women – the myth of Adam and Eve: *man, homme* as a man and man as human beings altogether); hierarchy is this kind of dual-leveledness, when on one level two phenomena are revealed as contradictory (another example: the power of good and evil), while when viewed from a higher level, these phenomena represent actually the same and a single phenomenon (the power of god)”[Hájek, 2001].

2.1.3 The Symbolic Values of Hierarchies and Equities

“The people we rule over, as they are unable to penetrate the substance of a matter, reason according to what they see on the outside and do so most often from the privilege and ranks according to which they measure their respect and obedience.” Louis XIV

The graphic manifestability of shape of hierarchies and equities not only lays out the possibility of studying them iconographically but also relentlessly draws our attention to the much richer world of the symbolic values of their shapes. Both specific spatio-temporalness and the cooperation or incommensurability of components have their overlap, whereby they reveal hidden, but nonetheless important inner meanings. These meanings must be apprehended rather through “iconological” approaches.¹⁷ The possibility for the symbolic overlap of certain hierarchies and equities, or inversely their crucial inclusion into the symbolic universe, is not only culturally specific it is also universal. It is clearer and perhaps also more thoroughly addressed in the case of hierarchies pertaining to societies with an order given forever. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann show, however, that it would be foolish to underestimate in contemporary societies the legitimising role of this kind of symbolic universe, the privileged source of which is in their view science.¹⁸ However, “iconography” and “iconology” of the hierarchies of real socialism, which after twelve years we are now able to take in with greater detachment, indicate that inspired histories¹⁹ and revolutionary myths occupied a very significant role in the social construction of its symbolic universe.

¹⁶ Dumont: *Homo hierarchicus*. 1980, Williamson: *Market and Hierarchy: Analysis and Antitrust Implications*. 1975; Tullock: *Autocracy*. 1987; Hájek: *Hierarchy: concept a formy*. 2001.

¹⁷ Panofsky: *Význam ve výtvarném umění*. 1981, 35–37.

¹⁸ Berger and Luckmann: *Sociální konstrukce reality (The Social Construction of Reality)*. 1999.

Literature from the fields of anthropology, history and art theory offers an overwhelming number of descriptions of the symbolic inclusion discussed here. For example, Mircea Eliade demonstrates that “*Zikkurat* was in strict terms a cosmic Mountain: the seven levels represented the seven cosmic heavens; when a priest entered into it, he ascended to the peak of the universe. Similar symbolism elucidates the structure of the Barabudur temple in Java, which was built as an artificial mountain. To ascend the mountain means as much as an ecstatic journey to the centre of the world; the pilgrim who reaches the highest level accomplishes a fracture in the levels and he enters into the “pure regions”, which transcend the profane world”.²⁰ The same author notes that the “stairway bears an extremely rich symbolism, without ceasing to be perfectly coherent: the fracture of the levels figures vividly and enables the transition from one way of being into another; or, when we find ourselves within the cosmic plan, it enables communication between Heaven, Earth, and Hell. For this very reason the stairway and the ascension play a significant role also in initiation rites and myths, such as funeral rites, not to mention the royal enthronement... The ascension or climb symbolises the *path to absolute reality*; and in profane knowledge the act of approaching this reality evokes an ambivalent feeling of fear and joy, attraction and repulsion etc.”²¹

An even closer tie between the symbolic inclusion and the manifestability of shape exists of course in the case of the bonds established by cooperation and incommensurability. Consequently, we could quite naturally have used for the interpretation of the role of cooperation depiction of the tripartite hierarchisation of society (*oratorres, bellatores, laboratores*) as put forth by Bishop Adalbero of Leon.²² It is not by accident that this also calls to mind the above-mentioned doctrinal divisions of socialist society distributed into three amicable classes (the workers, the peasants, and the intelligentsia) led by the Communist Party and the Soviet Union. It is symbolised by a sickle crossed with a hammer.

Incommensurability is no less rewarding a field of symbolisation. The semiotician Vladimír Macura attempted to analyse one such symbolically emphasised incommensurability typical for real socialism as follows:²³ “Here we encounter the expected duality. The leader is on the one hand conceived as one of many (the principle of equivalence), and on the other hand is placed above them (the principle of hierarchy). (...) We soon discover that the principle of equivalence and the principle of hierarchy are in such similar cases definitely not in balance, that, on the contrary, each manifestation of the “equality” of the leader remarkably increases his distance from the others. (...) To summarise: the attribute “one of us” was only a partial aspect of the sign “Klement Gottwald”,²⁴ important, but otherwise remaining in the sphere of its semiotic nature. In formal terms it indeed declared that the party leader is the

¹⁹ The role of inspired histories in the case of new-world “hot” societies stems from the fact that they are a source of orderly motion or they render the motion of society as constituent of order. They possess some features in common with myth. They bear the seal of fatality bound to a “metaphysical tuning”. They are collective and understood as truthful. Their transcendental dimension is drawn from the references to national liberation and modernisation.

²⁰ Eliade: *Posvátné a profánní*. 1994, 30.

²¹ Eliade: *Images et symboles*. 1952, 63-64, 65.

²² The French sociologist Georges Dumézil, in the view of Jaques le Goff, brilliantly defended the thesis that this tripartition is typical for indo-european societies. Vasilij Abajev allegedly believes that this tripartite scheme is a necessary state in the development of the ideology of a society. This tripartition corresponds to transcendental relation, which is constitutive for the understanding of the order given for ever and splits all matters into the spiritual and the secular. Le Goff: *Kultura středověké Evropy*. 1991.

²³ Macura: *Šťastný věk: symboly, emblémy a mýty 1948–89*. 1992, 47–48.

²⁴ Ex-Chief of Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (1929–1953).

“same” as any other citizen, but at the same time it presented this “sameness” not as a natural fact but essentially as a mystery.“

In the relationship to hierarchies it is always necessary to consider the dual symbolism: the symbolism that relates to the whole, intended to express the unity of the hierarchy and the affiliation of the parts to the whole and the symbolism of positions, intended to distinguish them from one another. An example of the symbolism of the whole could be a ship, a tree, a pyramid, stratification etc.; an example of the symbolism of individual positions are various insignia, robes, stripes, markings, manners etc.²⁵

The symbolism of equities is rather poorer than that of hierarchies. The most typical example of the symbolism of equality²⁶ thus remains the circle, which is of course tied to a micro-social context. Its extension is the symbolic union of people through their hands. It was as though it would be extremely difficult to exceed the purely geometric visualisation of the plane that alone contains the “masses” of equals. In any case the most striking are the symbols of the revolutionary groups striving for a world of equality. Their exclusive historical mission of course already counts on the hierarchisation of society. Their symbolism of ribbons, flags, and uniforms makes use of the modified symbolism of hierarchies rather than creating a “new” symbolism of equities. It is this point that Vladimír Macura probably intended to express in the following, questionable theory:²⁷ “Socialism presented itself as a world of equality, and it genuinely was directed towards a model resting on equality. However, this equality was not only civic, its ideal was rather a part of a general drift of the system in the direction of equality in a universal sense, towards equivalence, the interchangeability of elements, and thus also towards an extreme internal homogeneity (...) However, this homogeneity founded on “equality” requires – by all appearances paradoxically but nonetheless lawfully – a strict hierarchic ordering, in which the meaning of every component in the system, up to a particular person, is based exclusively on a degree of participation in the general Subjectivity of the system. Outside of the system this person is nothing. It is thus graded like a pyramid towards a single point where fusion with the all-encompassing equivalence culminates in the absolute identification of the system with a single leader.“

Our exposition, which progresses from the abstract towards the graphic/visual manifestability and on to symbolism, could erroneously suggest that the symbolic values of hierarchies and equities represent something like the “icing on the cake”. This kind of understanding of the symbolic dimension of hierarchies and equities would of course clearly be incorrect. For “controlling” of minds by hierarchies and equities the symbolic inclusion is constitutive. On the one hand, symbolism aptly captures the nature of social organisation, and on the other hand, of course, it also produces it.²⁸

²⁵ As far as the symbolism of hierarchies is directly concerned it is possible to pose the following question: Were social hierarchies constructed according to an analogy with nature or does its hierarchisation reflect the understanding of the social worlds? According to Durkheim the classifications have a social origin, which means that our cosmo-logic is derived from a socio-logic: we associate objects (or the names of objects) with the masculine, the feminine, or neutrality (as, for example, a child). Following Durkheim’s line of reasoning it is possible to claim that people imagined nature according to how they perceived their own society (e. g. the lion as king in the animal kingdom; nature as harmony and cooperation vs. nature as a struggle to survive and as natural selection etc.). The extra-social symbolism of hierarchies appears here as a strategy for legitimation, which consists in the naturalness of social hierarchies as derived from the (extra-social) world, the form of which was of course constructed on the basis of those very same social hierarchies. It is matter of a kind of cyclical proof. Durkheim and Mauss: *De quelques formes primitives de classification*. 1901, 903.

²⁶ The term *equality* has not so much a social relevance as it has a political-legal one.

²⁷ Macura: *Šťastný věk: symboly, emblémy a mýty 1948–89*. 1992, 46.

2.2 The Social Hierarchies and Equities of Individuals and Organisations

2.2.1 Social Hierarchies and Equities as Schemes of Social Relationships among Persons and Objects

Social hierarchies and social equities express and create – if we take into consideration their constructive power – a complex concurrence of symmetric and asymmetric influences in the course of social events. In this sense they are an instrument and a product of governing, but also of ownership and knowledge management. They derive their appearance in modern societies mostly from such a coexistence of governance, ownership, and knowledge. We can understand them in coordinative and structural/systemic terms, and we can also look for their sources. It is these points that we would like to clarify in the following text.

Social hierarchies – as the ladders, trees, pyramids, layers and castes – represent from the very outset a problem with respect to their specific setting, their “casting” (occupying them with actors) and their genuine coordinative and systemic role they play in the course of human matters. They are associated with oppressive power, with ineffectiveness (economics),²⁹ with general inflexibility (sociology)³⁰ and with the institutionalisation of irresponsibility.³¹ Nevertheless, we continually hear the undying call for rule “with a firm hand” or for the governing of “specialists”, which would finally remedy the critical situation in state affairs. Social hierarchies without a doubt also establish an independent motivation that is connected with the effort to achieve a rise in social advancement. Machiavelli, Adam Smith, Pareto and others, all seriously reckoned with this fact. Today there is a tendency more to forget it. It is taken very abstractly as being a part of models of mobility, or it is eclipsed in various ways by the motivation of gain, for example, in a variety of theories relating to “capital”.³² The current popularity of identity studies shows of course that this idea, at least as a part of the subject of the struggle for recognition, is more notably maintaining again.

Conversely, social equities as expansive structures and schemes of relationships are empirically rather dubious. It were as though they had no firm ground beneath their feet. They always exist only virtually, in the form of normative demands surrounding how things should be but are not. It is these normative demands that measure mainly the concrete relationships of a small number of persons. Within these relationships all those affected can very easily recognise any deviation from symmetry thanks to Hayek’s senses of injustice or Rawls’ senses of unfairness towards the practices employed.³³

In connection with social equities and hierarchies we could mainly be interested in schemes of partner and dominant social relationships of persons.³⁴ *Partnership* is equity of

²⁸ For example, according to Erving Goffman status symbols are used because they better suit the requirements of communication than rights and commitments they signify. Therefore it is essential that status symbols remain distinct and separate from what they symbolise. Nevertheless, this fact opens up the possibility of using status symbols in a “fraudulent” manner, that is, they designate a status that its bearer does not in fact represent [Goffman 1951, 294–5].

²⁹ Williamson: *Market and Hierarchy: Analysis and Antitrust Implications*. 1975; Tullock: *Autocracy*. 1987.

³⁰ Crozier: *The Bureaucratic Phenomenon*. 1964; Downs: *Inside Bureaucracy*. 1994; Merton: *Social Theory and Social Structure*. 1957; Kabele: *Česká byrokracie a korupce*. 1999; Harrington Jr.: *Rigidity of Social Systems*. 1999.

³¹ Reuter: *Hierarchies in Action: Cui Bono?* 2001.

³² E. g. Bourdieu: *The Forms of Capital*. 1986, Coleman: *The Foundation of Social Theory*. 1990

³³ Hayek: *Právo, zákonodárství a svoboda*. 1) *Pravidla a řád*. 1991, Rawls: *Teorie spravedlnosti (Theory of Justice)*. 1995.

persons belonging to a certain group founded on the symmetry of game agendas of membership: competences, commitments, and conduct. There thus exists civic, property, and electoral partnerships, which create social equities of citizens, owners, voters etc. It is important to realise that the symmetricalness of the relationships does not necessarily establish a partnership; for example, a friendship or a love relationship are not partnerships because they are exclusive. The friendship between A and B, and B and C does not necessarily establish a relationship between A and C. *Dominance* by analogy is the hierarchy of persons belonging to a certain group founded on the asymmetry of certain game agendas, which establish their relationships. Traditional family is dominance not partnership.

We can illustrate the co-existence of hierarchies and equities in the example of the judiciary. In the contemporary Czech judicial system we can encounter at least five clear hierarchies: the hierarchy of legal norms, the hierarchy of the seriousness of conflicts and illegal acts, the instance hierarchy of courts, the administrative hierarchy of courts, and the hierarchy of judicial authority. The counterparts to these hierarchies are the equities of independent judges and independent courts.³⁵ In real socialism, the judiciary was founded on the distinct coexistence of hierarchies. Trials were always held in the senates, which were comprised of professional judges and judges named from among the people. There was no constitutional court or European court of justice. We should also include in our considerations the hierarchies of state prosecutors, which were subsumed in constitution in the judicial power and executed supervision over the courts. Obviously an important role was played here by the party hierarchy, the presence of which ushered in the law on the judge's oath 270/1948/. Judges pledged that they would "*fulfil the commitments of their duty fully, conscientiously and impartially, that they will obedient to the orders of the representatives* (party members – author's note)..." The independence of the courts and judges was mentioned only in the socialist constitution.

All these judicial hierarchies seem to be self-supporting. Nevertheless, we can easily notice that their individual existence is established at first glance by an unperceived coexistence of a number of hierarchies and equities that mutually render one another accountable and apparent. For example, the hierarchy of the seriousness of conflicts and illegal acts is natural in the sense that all conflicts and acts are spontaneously assessed by all participating parties according to their respective importance and from this the degree of criminal responsibility of the defendants is derived. This hierarchy is of course also fundamental in establishing the appropriate judicial authority (higher judicial officials > single judges > senates > senate committees > the High Court assembly) necessary for the decisions making of the courts. To a certain degree it also serves the territorial distribution of judicial authority in the instance hierarchy of courts and thus contributes to its formation (this is especially clear in Czech four-step hierarchy of courts: district > regional > high > supreme).

2.2.2 The Coordinative and Structural/Systemic Concept of Social Hierarchies and Equities

It is clear in the hierarchies and equities of courts that they do not formally order otherwise unrelated entities. Courts and people are connected here by social relationships, for

³⁴ Leflaive: *Organizations as Structures of Domination*. 1996.

³⁵ Kabele, Hájek, and Holeček: *Lesk a bída hierarchií českého soudnictví*. 2001; Kabele: *Ochrana práv a sociální konstrukce hierarchií: příklad soudnictví*. 2001.

which it is characteristic that in fundamental matters they are arranged asymmetries or symmetries. These relationships can be understood coordinatively or structurally/systemically. According to this the recognised symmetries and asymmetries of influences can also be subject to different processes of thematisation.

The coordinative concept of *social relationships* is drawn from methodological individualism. Social relationships of persons are created by the shared, either low or high, transaction costs³⁶ of any field of common transactions (as dynamically realised in recapitulations and scenarios of actions). This understanding of social relationships follows up on Weber's concept, according to which, in the case of social relationships, what is involved is "the behaviour of a number of people which in terms of its sense is reciprocally aimed and in this way oriented."³⁷ Beyond the framework of Max Weber this points to a source of expectation that persons as a rule will behave in a certain way. Low costliness ensures that the transaction is feasible, while a high costliness rules it out as being either unfeasible or purely virtual. The understanding of social relationships in this way means that their asymmetricalness or their symmetricalness is a matter of both (i) how they are conceived and declared by participating persons (model conception), and (ii) how they are performed and the results of the social transactions (effective realisation). The famous statement of the last Czech ruling communist general secretary, Milouš Jakeš, from the meeting of the functionary corps at Červený Hrádek in 1989 – "I feel like a fence picket." – shows that there can be considerable differences between the indications of asymmetry stemming from the conception, the performance, and the results of the transactions. Practised actions can make asymmetries more symmetrical or even inverted. The strength of the coordinative concept clearly lies in the fact that it respects the choices of the participating persons and the contractual or semi-contractual character of their relationships.

The structural understanding of schemes of social relationships is not aimed as much at the intentions and actions of individual agents, but rather at the logic and "functioning" of the entire structure. The significance of any social relationship becomes clear only once it is put into relation with the entire scheme of relationships, forming a coherent and to a certain degree finite unit – a kind of unity of differences. The precondition for understanding the actions of any one agent in the social hierarchy or equity is knowledge of the structure of the relationships into which the agent is "woven". Special significance is attributed to the inner differentiation of the structure, where on the one hand the identity of each part is determined by its distinctiveness from the rest of the parts, and at the same time all the different parts are unified in a coherent whole. The coherence of the whole can but need not be regarded from a functional perspective. When studying structurally social hierarchies and equities emphasis is of course often placed on the specialisation and mutual dependence that is established by the division of labour.

The shape, or more precisely, the gestalt of hierarchies and equities represents the structure in particular. In this sense the structural/systemic understanding of social relationships can appear as a more adequate way of grasping social hierarchies and equities. However the easiest path does not always lead to the goal fastest. The coordinative approach more clearly shows that the problem of hierarchies is a problem of the ordering and administrating of

³⁶ Transaction costs according to institutional economy. Coase: *The Nature of the Firm*. 1988.

³⁷ Weber: *Metodologie, sociologie a politika*. 1998, 158.

asymmetries and symmetries. It becomes evident from this understanding that hierarchies are frameworks of complex strategic games, as is the target object actors are playing for.

2.2.3 Sources of Social Hierarchies and Equities

The question concerning the sources of social hierarchies and equities is equally a question about the sources of asymmetries and symmetries of influence. The answer depends on the approach. It will be different for the coordinative and for the structural conception of social relationships. The postulation, evaluation and social comparison, the competition and the struggle, the balancing and outweighing, the integration and disintegration, and the differentiation and totalisation we will discuss in this connection simultaneously reflect and generate the symmetry and asymmetry of influences. They can play a role in both approaches. Nevertheless, evaluation and social comparison, the competition and struggle, and balancing and outweighing clearly draw in the perspective of game coordination, while integration and disintegration, differentiation and totalisation are rather more associated with the development of structures.

Not only dyadic symmetries and asymmetries, but also coherent hierarchies and equities can all be *postulated*. Postulation in itself, if it is not interpreted as predestination, involuntarily generates social hierarchies, as it encompasses the precondition of the sovereignty of the one doing the postulating. That sovereignty is incommensurable with everything that is subject to his claims. The power of postulation in traditional societies lay in the hands of spirits, mythic ancestors and gods, and in a weaker but still effective form in the hands of monarchs also. Gradually the public, represented by parliaments, leaders, or party conventions, acquired it. As we already mentioned, theoretically, hierarchies and equities of any kind and combination could be postulated. In real terms, however, this freedom is limited by the accepted concept of order and according to the nature of how the sovereignty of the one postulating is respected. In either case, as a rule there exists a certain lack of correspondence between the postulated and the realised schemes of social relationships.

Social comparison is the reciprocal likening, contrasting, and distinguishing of procedures, objects, or structures in terms of their capability to effectively influence the course of events or contribute to the development of the encompassing whole.³⁸ If we have people in mind then the comparison is a natural aspect of the game-like character of events. It belongs among the central motives of games. It partakes in the attendant negotiations and infiltrates the general self-improving of the balance sheet of losses and gains, expressed in the terms of benefits and costs, or of honour and failure. The social comparison unleashes mentally expanding mechanisms of envy. Its outcome is not only the social ladder or scale; it also significantly confirms the identity of persons. It can also link up with a “third” party in the game: a professionally proficient or independent authority.

The role of *competition* or *dramatic encounter* in forming social hierarchies and equities is set in the game frameworkings of an uncertain course of events. These frameworkings relay the uncertainty into a clash with an opponent. They allow an assessment to be made of the successfulness of the game conduct of a person and they determine who are the victors and the defeated. The visible ascription of superiority here can have a dual character: (i) a priori – which is bound to a prioritised acting or other privileges (e. g. the advantage of the white figures in chess), or (ii) a posteriori – which stems from the outcome of the competition or dra-

³⁸ Festinger: A Theory of Social Comparison. 1954.

matic encounter. Prioritised acting, for example, is established with the aid of the entitlements of initiation in decision-making, in acting, and in entry and exit manoeuvring. An outcome of it is the dependence of the manoeuvring space of the subordinate person co-ordination (co-actors) on the manoeuvring space of the superior person in the game. Concisely put, the subordinate person in the game is allowed to manoeuvre, choose, and act only once the superior person in the game has manoeuvred, chosen and acted.³⁹

We can view *balancing and outweighing* as a special form of the combination of game coordination and social comparison. It serves to organise relationships of a larger number of social entities connected by numerous symmetrical and asymmetrical reciprocal relationships that can be partnerial or counteractively dominant. For balancing and outweighing what is fundamental then are the socially compared summary results of their varied transactions. Balancing is, for example, the principle behind the constitutional division of power.

Integration represents processes of the coalescence of structures or the encompassing of sub-structures into structures. *Disintegration* is the inverse process of separating structures from original structures or the break down of structures. Both these processes direct and change the relationships of the parts and the wholes and strengthen or weaken the roles of the components within the structures. We unwittingly associate integration with the existence of hierarchies because it emerges or strengthens the whole. We need of course to be interested in both the vertical integration that generates hierarchies and the horizontal integration that leads to equities. Ronald Coase opened up the problem of vertical integration in his famous theory of the firm.⁴⁰ He set it in opposition against the horizontal integration of the market, which is connected with civic partnership. In the article for which he won the Nobel Prize in economics, Ronald Coase demonstrates that the size of the transaction costs decides on the expedience of vertical or horizontal integration. Any preconceived attitudes like “integration is good and disintegration is bad” or “horizontal integration is better than vertical” do not, at least in the world of economics, hold up.

Differentiation is the process of diversifying structures, wherein sub-structures emerge with new typologically different “tasks” or relationships to structures. Totalisation represents the inverse process of agglomerating structures, wherein the variability of “tasks” is reduced and the relationships between sub-structures and structures are obscured. Mauss total reciprocity – which relates to communities and societies, both things and persons, and inseparably all spheres of life, which then lose their significance – takes over.⁴¹ Differentiation ranks among the constitutive attributes of the development of modern societies with a changeable order. It is primarily connected with the division of activities. Our preconception of totalisation is therefore necessarily substantive and it encompasses even its strong associa-

³⁹ For the game formation of social inequalities the kind of competitions/dramatic encounters that are meaningful are particularly those in which it is possible to gain wealth or make a career. Where a posteriori game inequalities (caused by successes and failures in the game) cumulate through repetition.

⁴⁰ In his work he was followed by Oliver Williamson in particular. Today the well-studied problem of corporate governance is associated with vertical integration. Coase: *The Nature of the Firm*. 1988 Berlin: “We Control the Vertical”: *Three Theories of the Firm*. 2001; Williamson: *The Mechanisms of Governance*. 1996; Fligstein: *Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives on Corporate Organization*. 1995.

⁴¹ “Together and at once a variety of institutions manifest themselves within them: religious, legal and moral, political, family and economic institutions ... And this is without taking into consideration the aesthetic phenomena, which are the outcome of the realities and morphological phenomena that reflect these institutions.” Mauss: *Esej o daru*. (The Gift) 1999.

tion with oppressive hierarchies. Nevertheless, as with every preconception, it is necessary to guard against this.⁴²

Although in the introduction to this section we spoke of the multiple sources of social hierarchies and equities, it is not possible to then deduce that these sources are independent and exclusive in their effects. On the other hand, these sources can be sufficiently independent for them to be able to lead to overlaying schemes of relationships that are simultaneously in effect.⁴³ Sociology and economics recognise some such dualities as being standard. For example, among all organisations we can find schemes of formal and informal relationships.

If we step down onto the elementary level of symmetries and asymmetries of influences it becomes clear that symmetries can be turned into asymmetries and vice versa. Elsewhere, asymmetries may lose meaning while the weight of symmetries strengthens, and this too applies both ways. These processes, without changing the basic arrangement of symmetries and asymmetries, can cause relationships to straighten out or, conversely, to diversify through new, clearer inequalities, or simply to strengthen the authority of one type of relationship to the detriment of another. These countervailing actions, which can take effect both locally and globally, will be referred to here as *relative equitisation* and *relative hierarchisation*.⁴⁴ They are not defined by their resulting in equities or hierarchies, but rather by the direction in which these schemes of relationships are transforming. For example, one of the products of relative equitisation is the weak-rule syndrome. This involves circumstances well known from the period of real socialism and even today: superiors pretend to rule and subordinates pretend to obey. Conversely, markets easily hierarchise in a spontaneous manner, so that several players, or even one strong enough establishes exclusively for itself the desirable conditions for exchange. The chains of supply-and-demand relationships of real socialism de facto represented these kinds of “strong” markets.

We have attempted to show that it is not possible to simply transfer the problem of social hierarchies to the problem of social inequalities generating social stratification or an analysis of the organology of governance. It is necessary to deal with them as schemes of unequal relationships expressing an asymmetry of influences. We must of course also devote equal attention to the symmetries of influences and the schemes of equal relationships, equities, which are their counterpart. It is the comparison of hierarchies and equities that has led to our basic

⁴² In the article by Josef Kandert two sources of hierarchies are highlighted: the ideas of predestination and competitiveness. Seemingly these two ideas can easily be assigned to the area of the postulating of transcendental agents and the competition/dramatic encounter. The sources remaining to us, evaluation and social comparison, balancing and outweighing, integration and disintegration, and differentiation and totalisation would thus automatically reach the position of being extra sources and put both studies into disagreement. This is not so. Here sources of hierarchies and equities are considered (i) somewhat differently – they are founded by symmetries and asymmetries of influences, and (ii) in two perspectives – coordinative and structural/systemic. While evaluation, social comparison, balancing and outweighing could relatively easily be reconciled with Kandert’s text, integration and disintegration, differentiation and totalisation belong in another world entirely, because they point to the symmetries and asymmetries of structures and the system, which Kandert was not looking at.

⁴³ Mlčoch: Chování Československé podnikové sféry. 1990.

⁴⁴ A brand-new and far-reaching influential equity is the Internet. The minimal costs of entry and the exceptionally quick and effective spreading of information that it is founded on can of course in the view of some experts lead gradually to the drastic hierarchisation of Internet participants: In the onslaught of information the pages that will be followed will be those that are capable through investments into advertising to attract the attention of the Internet participants.

finding that in social hierarchies particularly there resides a usable and abusable, but nonetheless independent, constructive strength, which has always been impressing human affairs with their nature.

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3. The Description of the Hierarchic Relationship

Tomáš Holeček

A certain degree of descriptiveness is typical for sociological study, including the sociological study of hierarchies. As soon as a sociologist begins to address any social phenomenon, his account of the given phenomenon will be formulated as “something is like this and like that...”, thus descriptive in form. Although description is not the only style to be encountered in sociological work, it is indeed an important one.

Description is a part of everyday life outside the realm of scientific work, too. Everything that I will write here of scientific description should also apply in the case of everyday descriptions. The difference between the two plays no role in the considerations that will be presented in this chapter.

At a closer glance we can see that the designation “description” covers various but nonetheless mutually related modes of speech. In this chapter I intend to thoroughly distinguish between them. My view is that the mutual interchangeability and generalisation of the properties of any one of them to represent all has tended to be a source of many fallacies in contemporary meta-theoretical treatises.

An example of one such fallacy could be found in the unconsidered interpretation of the following text by Václav Bělohradský:

“... Every description of the world is a selection from among various possibilities and selection signifies “a passion”, a conviction, a singular bias, which can never be erased from the description of the world...”⁴⁵

It is necessary to understand this correctly: this holds just very generally, we cannot suppose that every description is equally biased. But usually people envision only one type of bias and ascribe it with surprising ease to all descriptions.

In order for my account to be comprehensible and for its connection with the sociological research into hierarchies to be clearer, I’ll take the following example and demonstrate the differences between various modes of speech through it:

Let us assume that in a sociological text we come across the sentence “Mr. Jaroslav Šabata occupies a lower position in the party hierarchy than Mr. Josef Špaček”, and from the context it is clear that the author presents the sentence as being true. This simple indicative sentence refers to individual people, and therefore it would probably not be too significant for the main point of the text. It is, however, an illustrative example of the descriptive style, because it is difficult for us to imagine that the legitimacy or the authority of the sentence could be drawn from anything other than a correspondence with reality.

I will begin my discussion with the question: How might this sentence be meant? I will then present several different answers.

⁴⁵ See the article “Každý může být stou opicí”, www.tady.cz/hawkmoon.

Each answer that will be presented captures one possible meaning or sense of the chosen sentence. As it is not my intention to indicate the meaning as it appears only in this case, and rather I will refer to the overall mode of speech in which it is possible to formulate other sentences and even the negation of the chosen sentence, instead of speaking about meaning I will speak about meaning status. The meaning status of the descriptive sentence will therefore represent the more general characteristics of its meaning; from the logical perspective this will be established by determining what other sentences could contradict the chosen sentence, and which of them we can connect it with in deduction.

It is necessary to be aware that the meaning status of a sentence does not stem from the personal psychological experiences of the speaker (the author of the text) or the listener.⁴⁶ It is easy to imagine how the speaker or listener could be mistaken and believe that some written or articulated sentence has a different meaning status than it actually has. Imagine, for instance, a situation where someone says “I didn’t know it was an insult”, or “I didn’t realise it was a joke”.

Should the term “meaning status” be hard to comprehend for someone, it is possible to simply imagine it as a manner of descriptive speech or a specific mode of speech. It does not really matter either way.

What meaning statuses (or what modes of speech) can the sentence “Mr. Jaroslav Šabata occupies a lower position in the party hierarchy than Mr. Josef Špaček.” have? I will not attempt to list all the possibilities, which would be impossible anyway, because new ones can always continue to emerge, and furthermore each of us would probably be capable of finding their own. However, I will show as many responses as will be sufficient to illustrate their variability.

1

One possibility is that the sentence is communicating a current state of affairs, and uses the following rules of the mode of speech: The author or speaker states that he knows what is going on in the party and communicates to the others (who may not know this) what the hierarchic relationship between Mr. Šabata and Mr. Špaček is. When the reader reads this sentence he can accept or reject its truth – but in either case he could become convinced by some inquiry, like the speaker, about how things really are. A part of this mode of speech is that potential conflicts can be confronted and addressed; moreover, if after examining the party hierarchy there were still varying opinions, one of them would have to be mistaken.

I will reiterate that I am just attempting to show the possible meaning status of the chosen sentence and not to describe the epistemic situation when describing a party hierarchy. In other words: I am certainly not claiming that the selected statement on the hierarchic relationship can be verified; I am only demonstrating that it could be meant in this way. Of course it does not matter whether it was justifiably meant in this way and thus whether it is possible to verify it. (And it also does not matter what the speaker thinks about this epistemic situation: he can use a meaning status that contradicts his own ideas.)

⁴⁶ Here I am referring to the tradition of the non-psychological approach to the term meaning, which we can encounter for example in *Philosophical Investigations / Philosophische Untersuchungen* by Ludwig Wittgenstein.

The reader or listener can reject this mode of speech, and refuse to recognise the meaning status of the chosen sentence – he can as it were refuse to play this game. If, however, he accepts the rules that have been presented, his reaction must follow them. This is valid also in the case of other possible statuses:

2

The sentence “Mr. Jaroslav Šabata occupies a lower position in the party hierarchy than Mr. Josef Špaček” could be meant as a speculation on a current state of affairs, which it would then be appropriate to deal with according to the following rules: The speaker would consider (again in the logical and not the psychological sense) it to be obvious that he cannot have certain knowledge of the relationships in the party hierarchy, and on this basis he would establish his idea concerning the hierarchic organisation. Explaining it he could say, “I acknowledge that things could be otherwise, but if I were to have to decide who has the higher position I would say that it is Josef Špaček.”

In this case we must guard against the impression that the sentence is more of a hypothesis than a description. Hypotheses have a specific meaning status, which is not however descriptive. We deal with hypotheses in a different way, and they belong to a particular mode of speech: hypotheses serve for testing and verifying, and beyond that they are no longer really hypotheses. They are guidelines and sources of work, but in themselves they state nothing. Conversely, the meaning status introduced above is descriptive. With its help it is possible to share with others a certain view of something, which we do not intend to consider as unambiguously determinable.

What is the connection between the two descriptive statuses that I have indicated? On the one hand, both serve to communicate a certain sentence, the meaning of which is founded on a basis derived from a correspondence with reality – and accordingly I have designated them as descriptive statuses. On the other hand, however, each is characterised by different rules, which determine how we are to deal with the given correspondence with reality. The first meaning status is founded on the possibility for a verification and decision on its truth to be made in common, while the second is founded on the absence of this possibility for a shared decision to be made, but with the presence of the individual decision of the speaker concerning the given matter. If one person were to articulate (or write) the sentence with the first status and a second person its negation, but with the second status, they would not be in mutual contradiction: the sentence “Mr. Jaroslav Šabata occupies a lower position in the party hierarchy than Mr. Josef Špaček”, according to what is meant in the first mode, does not contradict the sentence ‘Mr. Jaroslav Šabata does not occupy a lower position in the party hierarchy than Mr. Josef Špaček’, when meant according to the second mode. We must be similarly cautious if we intend to combine sentences with various statuses in deduction.

Under certain circumstances it can occur that a sentence with one meaning status contradicts a sentence with another meaning status. However, it is not these two sentences themselves that are in disagreement; the disagreement would be mediated by some particular presumption or postulate of the transferability of statuses, or by some particularly rule of transfer. However, this goes beyond my intentions in this chapter.

I will present four more meaning statuses that the chosen sentence could have. They too will be descriptive, but just as with the first two they will stem from a different mode of dealing with the question of correspondence with reality.

3

The chosen sentence could also be meant as a communication of knowledge, the verification of which plays no role at all. The speaker may only be passing on knowledge and in no way prove or substantiate this knowledge. Just as a schoolteacher does not explain where she obtained her knowledge on how many continents there are or on what the name of the French president is. In this case we can imagine the rules of the mode of speech as though they were founded on the idea of an individual list of pieces of knowledge, from which the speaker draws, and conversely the listener or reader compiles them. As no supportive evidence is attached to the individual items on the list the reader can accept or reject the new piece of knowledge without any grounds. In the case of the sentence on the party hierarchy: the speaker can communicate what “is known” about the relationship between Jaroslav Šabata and Josef Špaček, but not be drawing from his own observations of what is going on in the party, or from any documents or direct testimony from participants.

We could of course search for the source of this type of knowledge. We would find that what usually occurred was that the speaker acquired the knowledge from other people (whether through reading or discussions), in the same way that he is passing it on. He could however have acquired the knowledge from direct experience, or someone could have communicated it to him in another manner of descriptive speech. However, in the communications of knowledge that I am indicating the way by which they were acquired plays no role.

Given that meaning statuses of sentences are not unambiguously given (the speaker can articulate the same sentence in various modes of speech), someone could communicate a sentence with this status even if he could communicate it with a different one, i. e. if he could have provided listeners with reasons for accepting it.

4

Another possibility of how the sentence “Mr. Jaroslav Šabata occupies a lower position in the party hierarchy than Mr. Josef Špaček” could be meant is through the introduction of the listener or the reader into a certain social situation or social frame. The rules here would apply as follows: the competence of the speaker is assumed in advance and the listener is submitted with sentences that he must accept if he wants to join the social frame. If he were not willing to grasp what the hierarchic relationships between the members and officials of the party are like, he would not, for example, be able to partake in any decision-making or would be incapable of negotiating effectively. It is somewhat like being introduced into a game: if someone does not grasp the rules of the game, he cannot play it.

This meaning status can appear in sociological studies, even if at first glance it may not be obvious. In order for the reader to understand the main ideas it may be necessary to first introduce him into the relevant social frame. At the same time, this kind of introduction is descriptive in character: it shows the reader what the party hierarchy looks like.

5

The following meaning status that I will attempt to demonstrate is similar to the previous in that its usage introduces a change in the interpretative stance of the reader. The introduction into the new social frame is of course this kind of change. Now it is no more a question of new knowledge that the reader must accept, but rather a question of a change in language – or better put: it involves an expansion of the expressive potential of description.

Let us assume that between the speaker and the listener (or, between the author and the reader) there has to this point been no mention of any hierarchic organisation. Conversely, mention has already been made of other relationships and connections between Jaroslav Šabata and Josef Špaček. In this situation the speaker can use a specific mode of speech, which contains the following rules: The speaker utters a sentence in which a fundamental role is played by an expression that up until that point has not been used (“to occupy a lower position in the hierarchy”), and which then as a result enters into the game. The listener has a choice: either he accepts the new expression, and then easily becomes convinced, if of course it is not already clear to him that the chosen sentence can be confirmed; or he refuses to use the expression and then the confirmation or the rejection of the chosen sentence is not of concern at all.

This meaning status is thus founded on the point that the correspondence of the chosen sentence with reality is easily acceptable if the expressions within it are accepted into the descriptive language, but the use of these expressions is not self-evident. Even in this case I believe that it is a matter of description.

6

The final meaning status that I wish to point out is indication. The mode of speech this time is guided by the following rules: the speaker declares his certainty about the subject of description and calls on the listener to turn his attention in the direction indicated – if the listener does this, he may or may not manage to verify the validity of the chosen sentence. Failure of course in this case does not signify its rejection. The speaker assumes that the listener has the opportunity to catch sight of the validity of the sentence. And it is as though the listener would respond, “Yes, I see that it’s like that”, or “I’m sorry, but I wasn’t able to find that out.”

We can compare this status with a conversation between two people in a moving train, one of whom points out the window saying, “Look, there’s a cow, there’s a castle...” and the second confirms what he saw of this and what he didn’t manage to see. The descriptiveness of this mode of speech is undeniable; in sociological study it often plays a large role – it shows the reader the social life he has had right before his eyes all the time but never noticed. At the same time this status differs from all of the previous ones because a negative response is only a statement of failure and not the presentation of an individual stance or a denial.

It would of course be possible to think of various combinations of the statuses presented here, as well as of more and more forms of statuses.

With respect to our description of the hierarchic form of communist government, we should be aware which manner of description we have in mind – whether this means a description with one of the above-mentioned meaning statuses or a description with some other status.

My view is that it would be fallacious to believe that every description is a kind of proposal for a change of expression, that every description is a kind of indication, or that every description assumes the possibility of a common verification of the validity of the descriptive sentences etc. I have attempted to show that there can exist modes of speech in which one feature of description dominates and another feature can be absent entirely. I am not prescribing my analysis to anyone. I am only pointing out that that *‘singular bias, which can never be erased from the description of the world’* can indeed take various forms.

4. Rulers “By the Grace of God” versus “The Best Ones” – Social and Cultural Hierarchies as Reflected in Anthropological Research

Josef Kandert

Hierarchies are a subject that social anthropologists have dealt with throughout the entire period in which the field of anthropology has existed. It is important here to note, however, that when referring to a hierarchised system, anthropologists tend to use the terms superordinate and subordinate rather than speaking of a lower or higher position in rank. The research most closely aligned with this hierarchic concept is that which focuses on the issues relating to the existence of social strata and social classes, and on the question of the emergence of the state. Anthropologists interpret the problem of superordinate and subordinate positions and the behaviour of superior and inferior members of groups quite broadly, and they study these problems – and have always studied them – in the widest variety of forms and shapes that they can take, and in the most varied groups and periods that they can occur in.

If we set out from the assumption that each situation in which one person decides something and another person accepts his decision is a case of the “potential beginnings of hierarchy” – or the potential beginnings of hierarchic behaviour – then we find that we are faced with a vast subject area.⁴⁷ If, however, we start from the assumption that we are only interested in the kinds of situations in which the participants behave “in the same way” – that is, they behave according to certain patterns of behaviour or as the bearers of certain social roles – then the situation becomes remarkably simplified. In the following text I will be interested only in those situations in which the participants demonstrate “recurrent behaviour”.

In the second half of the 19th century, the anthropological interest in hierarchies was linked primarily to the question of the rise of the state and the question of the form or existence of tribal societies – or, of the existence of “office holders” in tribal societies. Within the framework of evolutionary categories, intellectual considerations turned to focus on the periods of human history in which primitive communism existed – i. e. a society without social or cultural hierarchies. In their research, the “forefathers” of anthropology relied on reports from classical authors and on the idealised accounts of “noble savages” from the 17th and 18th centuries, and from these they drew the inspiration for the construction of their theories.

The oldest research studies of “living societies” are associated with the American lawyer and ethnologist, Lewis Henry Morgan, and with his studies of the tribal (political) structures of the Seneca tribe of the Iroquois peoples, and subsequently of the entire Iroquois tribal confederation.⁴⁸ Morgan managed to distinguish who the tribal elders were and to define their function on the level of the lineage, the tribe, and the entire confederation, which was comprised of six tribes. Although the research gathered “oral tradition data”,⁴⁹ it is nonetheless still used and cited even today – not only for the uniqueness of the data that was gath-

⁴⁷ See also Kabele’s article “Governance in the Constructivist and the Constitutional Arrangements”.

⁴⁸ Morgan 1877, 1881.

⁴⁹ Morgan obtained oral tradition narratives relating to the situation in the second half of the 18th century, thus, to a situation that existed at least seventy or eighty years before the period of research itself, which was conducted in the 1850s.

ered, but also for its historical value as the oldest such work. The majority of the other anthropological research studies dating from the second half of the 19th century were based on written accounts that varied in quality and which, as data, were less facilitative in allowing a genuine analysis to be accomplished – they served more as illustrative materials for enterprising theories. Morgan's field research is a full half century older than any and all other examples of field research of similar quality.

It was the onset of long-term field research, the early phases of which date back to the 1890s, that introduced qualitatively new materials on which it was possible to construct different theories. A strong influx of data occurred during the years between 1930 and 1960, when dozens of fieldwork studies on specific societies – both state and non-state – were done, usually employing a functional-structural approach. From our perspective what is important is that the studies also included research on societies featuring a minimal degree of hierarchisation – e. g. the Nuers, the Tallensi, the Pygmies, the San people, and other African and Oceanian tribes.⁵⁰ After the Second World War research focusing on Africa⁵¹ was expanded to cover research on Latin America, Asia and Oceania, and historical anthropology began to take off, and this introduced new outcome that was drawn from the analyses of written materials, usually from medieval state societies or ancient and early modern societies.⁵² On the basis of these studies, analyses, and summaries, it is today possible to construct an idea of the rough features of what the socio-anthropological understanding of the term "hierarchy" was at that time.

Understandably, social anthropology is not capable of determining how the idea of the social and cultural hierarchisation of human society emerged and developed; it can only propose theories that are based on so-called parallels, and these can either be believed or disputed, but they cannot be proved. The question of the origin of cultural and social phenomena and their relationship to the "biological nature of man" is the subject of considerable attention from socio-biologists, who have observed elements of hierarchies even among animal species – and not just among primates. Anthropologists tolerate their opinions, but given that they are more advocates of constructivist opinions, they approach these conclusions with some reserve. However, they often mention them in the introductions to textbooks, and especially in chapters devoted to the emergence of *Homo sapiens* as a species. The reasons behind the caution and hesitancy of anthropologists with regard to constructing big theories of this type are lodged in their bitter experience with the theories of ethnologists and anthropologists that emerged in the 19th and the early 20th centuries, the scientific value of which proved to be minimal.

The only exception, which could also perhaps facilitate the study of the emergence and development of new hierarchies, could be the studies tracing the history of social engineering – i. e. the history of the influence of theories compiled by professional thinkers (philosophers, sociologists, anthropologists), which were adopted by certain groups and societies and "popularised" in the form of so-called popular explanatory models. It would indeed be of clear interest to observe how Marxist ideas gradually took root in former Czechoslovakia, dividing the population of a state into workers, peasants, the working intelligentsia, and the re-

⁵⁰ Evans-Pritchard and Fortes 1970, Firth 1957, Turnbull 1961, Lee 1979 etc.

⁵¹ Tait and Middleton 1970, Bohannan 1970 etc.

⁵² Claessen and Skalník 1977, 1980.

mains of the defeated order – i. e. former capitalists, members of the bourgeoisie, and their lackeys.⁵³

It is quite possible that the studies by archaeologists dealing with the issue of social institutions could contribute to clarifying the question of the emergence of social and cultural hierarchies; the great weakness of these theories, however, is the poor informative value of archaeological data – i. e. of the recovered material objects.⁵⁴

The only thing that archaeologists are able to add to the debate on hierarchies are descriptions of actual behaviour expressing the superior or inferior position of the participants – that is, specific examples of hierarchised social systems. Then there are also the generalisations – the generally valid rules of human social/cultural behaviour. Their validity and plausibility, at least in the anthropological community, is founded on a broadly conceived inter-cultural comparison. On the general level, reference is made to the principles of social and cultural behaviour that are observable among the majority of groups inhabiting the different reaches of the planet. The discussions of anthropologists dating from the 1980s and 1990s somewhat specified the validity of these generalising constructions (theories). There exists an understanding that the theories are accepted (and thus valid) in the Euro-American civilisations, whose members/bearers perceive the world around them (world cultures and societies) through the medium of these theories. The point of departure for these considerations was the notion of the role of anthropology as such. It arose as “a sociology of non-European nations” with the aim of gaining knowledge and understanding of the social and cultural behaviour of people belonging to groups and civilisations different from the Euro-American ones. It was therefore a tool for identifying these civilisations. In the debates dating from the late 20th century the question then arose of whether these other civilisations also accept the anthropological theories as a tool for learning about and understanding their “different” societies and cultures. Anthropologists did not know the answer to this question and therefore they limited the validity of their knowledge to their own social and cultural environments. The acknowledgement of a validity limited to within the dimensions of one (our) civilisation alone relates to all the data and theories that have existed and thus also to the research and theories relating to hierarchies.

In literature we encounter both scholarly generalisations and generalisations (explanations) from the “non-scholarly” inhabitants of this planet, so-called “folk models”, wherein both types of theories are often lined up beside each other as being equal in significance. Scholarly theories are of course a tool for learning about and understanding members of a certain group, while the “folk models” are a tool for living within a group – they serve not only for learning and understanding, but also, for example, as the reason behind a certain kind of behaviour, or as a recruiting principle etc. They differ in their meaning for the “external” observer (for example a foreigner/anthropologist) and for the “internal” participant (member of the group). Filling in the content of these models with meaning enables the individual or the group to occupy a superior position; the circumstance of being unable to do this “holds” the individual or the group in a subordinate social position.

⁵³ The influence of the “ideological effect” became evident in the early 1990s in the restitution process – some people were embarrassed to ask for property that would be acquired by them in an “unearned” manner. And yet these were older people who had experienced the onset of socialism when they were already adults.

⁵⁴ See, for example, Robinson 1973.

In written works it is possible to encounter references to some groups of hunters and gatherers – specifically, the South African San people, the Central African Pygmies, and the Arctic Inuit – which present them as though they were entirely egalitarian. This is not quite exact, as even in the case of these groups there exist figures that stand as representatives of families and groups; among the Inuit, the presence of chiefs and servants has also been detected. Moreover, even in these groups there exist social mechanisms aimed at reducing the increase in the power of an individual, so long as this power is founded on competitiveness. The members of these groups are wary of the possible hierarchisation of individuals; they are familiar with this phenomenon and try to prevent it from emerging. In practice, for example, they make use of the public opinion of the group and the technique of ridicule.⁵⁵ Therefore, from the anthropological perspective, there is no society or culture in which hierarchies are not present.⁵⁶

Let us now look at which principles leading to the emergence of actual social and cultural inequalities anthropologists are aware of. All of them explain the existence of specific social and cultural inequalities.

First, there are the principles that distinguish between people on the basis of personal capabilities, age, and sex. Often, in “folk models”, these are referred to as natural principles, because theoretically they provide each member of the given group with the same chance. The measure of these are the characteristics that members of *Homo Sapiens sapiens* believe each person is equipped to make use of or that can be attained by each person at a certain stage. Usually it has been assumed that these characteristics have nothing to do with culture – they are the properties of man as a biological creature. It could be said that they are understood as “egalitarian” and “universal” – as they are inherent to each human being. Of course, anthropological research has confirmed that these “natural principles” are actually culturally constructed. This construction relates, for example, to questions like what the terms “equal chance”, “older/younger age”, “child” and “adult”, and “man” and “woman” mean in one society or another.

On the basis of personal capabilities certain individuals are singled out, individuals we recognise as the “headmen” of the North American Indians or as the “big men” of the New Guinea inlanders.⁵⁷ Both terms convey the same content; they were discovered and defined in different social and cultural environments but they are used as synonyms – and only in their “domestic” areas are they used as singular, designative terms. For the purposes of simplicity and clarity here I will mainly employ the term “headman”. In groups that recognise headmen, an assessment is made of the physical capabilities of each individual – i. e. strength, skill, mental abilities – such as dauntlessness, boldness, and what is usually referred to as a gift for leadership (tact, the ability to negotiate and the ability to lead other people). A gift for business is also important, the recognised symbol of which is the accumulation of property. Among the North American Indians, the sign of a headman lay particularly in the reputation of a certain individual as a great warrior, a hunter, and an owner of horses.⁵⁸ In New Guinea,

⁵⁵ Lee 1971, 7–14. This research showed that members of communities are conscious of the possibility (danger) of the emergence of relationships based on superiority and inferiority among members of the group, and through their behaviour – ritualised ridicule – they minimise the possibility for its emergence.

⁵⁶ Cohen and Middleton 1967; Bohannan 1967; Weyer 1967, 1–14; Marshall 1967, 15–43; Flanagan 1989, 245–266.

⁵⁷ Marcel Mauss was the first to make a theoretical evaluation of them in his “*Essai sur le don*” [1925], in which he re-interpreted the studies of Bronislaw Malinowski and Franz Boase.

⁵⁸ Hoebel 1960.

the sign of the headman ("big man") was his reputation as a warrior, negotiator, and a successful accumulator of property – especially pigs.⁵⁹ The position of the headman is not hereditary and it is necessary to constantly work on one's own reputation – otherwise someone more successful will replace the "superior" in question. Among the Indians, headmen were the leaders of their own nomadic camps, in which they lived with their supporters, friends, and relatives. In New Guinea, headmen were representatives of individual villages; some of the "big men" were even representatives of allied confederations of several villages – in such a case they had beneath them several other village headmen.

Headmen were recorded in research dating from the end of the 19th century and in the 20th century; the existence of "big men" was recorded in research from as early as the first quarter of the 20th century, but they were the subject of more thorough attention after the Second World War. The principle of the singling out of individuals along the lines of the method of the headmen was, however, also traced in the borderland regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan, in the so-called tribal zones, during the 1950s.⁶⁰ In these records such people were referred to as "chiefs", which probably stemmed from the fact that the researchers conformed to the terminology of the British colonial administration; local people used the term "lord" or "ruler", i. e. khan. This kind of lack of precision in the designative terms that are used is not exceptional in written works – not even in scholarly texts. Even in the case of the Indian headmen we can encounter their being referred to with the term "chief".

Although ideas about the significance of "personal qualities" and how they function were studied with regard to non-European groups, it is possible to come across the existence of the same or at least similar opinions with respect to European (American) societies. The same principle that applies to headmen would seem to apply also in the case of mafias – in so far as it is possible to judge from the known facts. "Big men" or "headmen" can also be found among various other groups – gangs of children or youth etc. The principle of personal abilities forms the basis of our whole (contemporary) society – take, for example, "the invisible hand of the market" with its self-made men, or programmes aimed at encouraging competitive qualities (for example, the television game "The Weakest Link" etc.).

The way in which the principle of personal abilities is applied in individual societies is founded on the idea of competition, which as a principle is supported by the entire group. The existence of someone who is "the best" is conceived as an essential precondition for the existence of the group itself and as a factor contributing to the improvement of the standing of the group in the world of other similar groups; in the case where the leader is lost the group ceases to exist or falls apart. The principle of competitiveness can at times lead to the destruction of cultural goods, which was the case of the "competitive potlatch", known among the Indians of the Pacific coast of North America, which were even mentioned by Marcel Mauss. At other times competitiveness led to the physical elimination of opponents; cases of this type were recorded in connection with the Afghan headmen, as well as among other groups.

The second principle is age – people and groups can be divided into the "old" and the "young"; here I have in mind the social or the cultural age, not biological age. Older individuals and groups are superior in rank to younger individuals and groups. It is on this principle, too, that the representatives of blood-relative, kinship groups are selected, which we are fa-

⁵⁹ Pospíšil 1978, Heider 1979.

⁶⁰ Barth 1961, 1972.

miliar with as ,elders‘. From eastern Africa we have knowledge even of entire social structures that are founded on this principle – in written works they are referred to as systems of ,age sets‘ or ,age groups‘, or as ,age grades‘.⁶¹ In the foundation of these systems – which exist primarily among the east African pastoral populations – there is the idea that as the age of an individual and the individual’s age group increases, his political rights should increase and his political obligations decrease. In these societies, age groups are closed circles, and once an age group has been sealed off – which is usually performed in connection with initiation cycles – it is no longer possible to enter it, and the group ceases to exist as its members die out. The same principle is usually applied even in relations between localities (villages). Audrey Richards⁶² observed these kinds of relations between the ,old‘ and the ,young‘ among the inhabitants of neighbouring villages of the Bemba nation. Settlers from older villages established younger villages and the inhabitants of the new settlements were obliged to demonstrate obedience towards the inhabitants of the older (originally their home) villages. The age principle also plays an important role in groups of relatives – some cultures feature, for example, terms for older and younger relatives that are the same in kind (e. g. older brother versus younger brother).⁶³ Research indicates that recognition of the age principle is associated with the idea that as the age of a person increases his knowledge or experience also becomes greater. The motive of the wise and experienced fathers and elders often appears in fairytales or in proverbs, and even in the names used for some particular age grades.⁶⁴ Among some nations it is also maintained that only old people are able to communicate with ,non-humans‘ and with the ,non-human‘ worlds – e. g. with the world of the deceased ancestors.

The age principle can also be found in practice in our society – for example, in groups of small children: the children are divided into “small” (= younger) and “big” (= older) children, and often a mere one-year difference can be of decisive importance.⁶⁵ Evidence of the age principle is found in the Bible, thus as practised since the time of Mediterranean antiquity, manifested in the principle of “primogeniture”, applied in matters related to inheritance. The principle of “age” – in this case, age as rank – was and is applied also in some armies (e. g. in the British navy) and in administrative (bureaucratic) systems – e. g. in the Austro-Hungarian Empire prior to 1918.

The significance of age for social position in tribal societies has been addressed in the studies by Leo W. Simmons.⁶⁶ The author conducted a statistical analysis of data from seventy-one societies (tribes), and assessed the social position of old people by examining several spheres of human activity: the provision of food, property rights, respect, the possibility to be active, participation in political and civic activities, employing the experience (knowledge) of old people, participation in magic acts, participation in religious events, obligations in the family, and the burial of deceased, elderly individuals.⁶⁷ This study is today outdated. It was content to just supply readers with facts without making any evaluation of them. How-

⁶¹ Mair 1964, 1974; Merker 1904; Gulliver 1953.

⁶² Richards 1970, 83–120.

⁶³ L. H. Morgan recorded the existence of a similar situation among the Iroquois (mid-19th century). Similar behaviour was also observed in research on Chinese and Japanese societies.

⁶⁴ For example, in the Kikuyu nation there existed age degrees known as ,learners‘ and ,wisemen‘ [Middleton and Kershaw 1965]. Merker [1904, 225–226] mentions a Massai fairytale dealing with the same topic.

⁶⁵ A common question directed towards newcomers is ,how old are you‘?

⁶⁶ Simmons 1970.

⁶⁷ A total of 234 perspectives were established to work with from the start, which were then grouped into the above-mentioned ,main perspectives‘.

ever, it did manage to demonstrate the special position that old people occupied in all of the societies that were studied.

The third principle is sex – i. e. the division of the population into men and women, each of which is at the same time ascribed with certain rights and obligations. Anthropologists have studied this subject since the field of anthropology began – originally as a part of the debate on the evolutionary priority of the matriarchy and the patriarchy. Research today has continued rather on the level of gender studies – thus, on the level of examining the cultural construction of men and women and male and female behaviour, and on the level of the rights of men and women.

Both these principles (age and sex) are based on the idea of predetermination; the consequent superior or inferior social position in society is a result of this predetermination.

Other principles influencing the unequal positions of people are frequently described (and understood) in popular models as elitist principles, wherein their emergence is explained as being a result or consequence of some human action. By the term “elitist” I mean the fact that the bearers of the cultures in which these elitist principles appear applied them to only a certain group, stratum, or nation etc. Of course, the “folk models” of these principles need not usually be also so explicit, as in some societies they are again understood as being principles that are “natural”.

First to be mentioned is the principle of “supernatural powers”, which in all the societies and cultures that have been studied refers to communication with non-human worlds. Individuals and groups that have the gift of being able to communicate with non-humans (or, of whom it is believed that they have such a gift) acquire their powers either at birth (it is usually assumed that this feature is inherited from ancestors) or through “a return to the world of humans” following a fatal illness or injury etc. The people possessing these exceptional capabilities are imbued with them by the non-humans who facilitate their return to the world of humans. This is the case of shamans, fortune-tellers, prophets, magicians, and witches etc.

There is also the principle of kinship, denoting that certain positions, or certain privileges, are inherited on the basis of tight blood ties (real or fictitious). The kinship principle can often be combined with the age principle, the principle of personal abilities, or the principle of sex. By this I mean that a certain position is acquired by a relative of whoever it is that until that time has been the holder of these “privileges” or this “position”, not only owing to the existence of a family tie but also because the individual has reached the proper age (he is suitably old enough or, conversely, suitably young enough); or in some cases owing to the fact that the individual is the most capable among the possible candidates. In societies in which origin is derived along the maternal line (matrilineal societies) the position is inherited by women or men who are members of the maternal blood relatives. In patrilineal societies, emphasising origin derived along the patriarchal line, the position is inherited by men and women who are members of the relevant group of paternal blood relatives. In double-descent societies both possibilities exist (men and women from both lines inherit). Experience with the inheritance of position and property in a bilateral society, which is what for example Czech society is, is something we have ourselves.⁶⁸

A variant of the kinship principle is the idea that being born into a certain group or family plays a decisive role. In the past, for example, it was of decisive importance whether one was born into a group/family of free people or into a group/family of unfree people

⁶⁸ There is an almost insurveyable amount of literature on this – e. g. Murdock 1949, Goody 1973, Forde 1964 etc.

(slaves, serfs etc.). Discussion relating to the natural state of the superior position of free people over unfree people occurred even in the 18th century; the roots of these debates, however, can be traced back to antiquity – a similar issue is dealt with, for example, in the works of Aristotle.⁶⁹

A special case is formed by the relations of superiority and inferiority within the family and within groups of close relatives. Small children submit to the authority of their parents and various uncles and aunts, and they are also instructed to do so. Usually in puberty they begin to challenge this hierarchy of family and relatives.⁷⁰ This schema, in which the family and the group of close relatives is portrayed as a hierarchy, appears in many “popular models’ as a model or justification for political, religious, economic and other hierarchies.

The principles of “exceptional powers’ and “kinship”, as well as “birth into naturally hierarchised groups”, are founded on the idea of predetermination – perhaps the notion of predetermined electedness – and, as was indicated, they can be combined in various ways within the actual societies.

Thus far I have been looking at the principles that facilitate hierarchisation within a certain group. However, there are also principles, which explain and enable hierarchisation among different groups, and in this way lead also to the emergence of superior and inferior social (cultural) positions among individuals. This category of group principles includes divisions based on race, nationality, religious affiliation, the fact of belonging to a “backward” or an “advanced” group, and many other possibilities. These principles are usually studied as a part of the issue of “us and them” or “natives and foreigners” – within ethnic relations and multicultural relations

What is often conceived as a natural principle, or a principle of nature, is the race principle. The social division of groups and individuals according to the colour of their skin or the shape of their skull, and so on, is one of the concomitant phenomena emanating from contact among different and mutually alien cultures and societies. In the modern age it was mainly a consequence of the colonial efforts of Europeans and North Americans. The division of people on the basis of “natural principles” – i. e. skin colour, height and build, or other anatomical features – was however also evident in some societies unaffected by colonialism (for example, in the states of the East African Interlacustrine region, stress was laid on the distinct physical appearance of the rulers and the ruled; there is also the example of Easter Island, where it is known that the groups of the “long-eared” and the “short-eared” lived alongside one another).⁷¹ In colonial systems, however, social stratification, founded on a division into racially pure groups of the population and racially mixed groups of the population, was cultivated to a degree of perfection. The Spanish and the Portuguese in Latin America managed to go “furthest” with this, and over the course of the 16–18th centuries divided up the populations of their colonies into particular groups of “pure” and “mixed” inhabitants.⁷² This divi-

⁶⁹ Dahrendorf 1974, 16–44.

⁷⁰ Schneider 1980, Segallen 1986, Lévi-Strauss 1969 etc.

⁷¹ Heyerdahl 1961, Roscoe 1911.

⁷² There existed three terms for the offspring of Spaniards and Africans and those of mixed African-Spanish heritage (Mulato, Morisco, Albino), four terms for the offspring of Spaniards and Indians and those of mixed Spanish-Indian heritage (Mestizo, Castizo, Coyote, Chamizo) and eight terms for the offspring of Africans and Indians and those of mixed heritage from both groups (Zambo, Lobo, Albarasado, Chino, Barsino, Cambujo, Campamuleto, Albarado). The individual combinations of “pure” and “mixed-race” types were even illustrated in graphic contemporary portraits of imaginary families (the parents with one child).

sion was even adopted in North America during the colonial and the early republican periods (at least up until 1865).

There are also two frequently cited examples of this dating from the modern age. The first refers to the racial divisions practised in the German Third Reich (1933 –1945), which distinguished between “sub-humans” (Gypsies, Jews), “inferior people” (the Slavic and Latin peoples), and “people” (the Germanic peoples). The second example refers to the system of South African apartheid, where the racial division was “scientifically substantiated”⁷³ through biological studies of the population. Despite any alleged biological objectivity this system of South African races was a blatant cultural construction, which is demonstrated in the attempt to re-classify the Japanese as “whites” instead of “Asians”.⁷⁴

Since the 18th century there has also existed, at least in our civilisation, the principle of nationalism. The foundation of this principles is the conviction on the part of the individual or group that one’s own nation (one’s own group) is exclusive and unique and is superior to all other nations (groups) – and particularly with regard to neighbouring nations (groups).⁷⁵

Both the race and the nationality principles are based again on the idea of predetermination or predetermined electedness. It has never usually been entirely clear, however, who it is that establishes, influences, or creates this particular predetermination.

The principle of “religious exclusiveness” and the superiority of a certain religious system over other religious systems is linked to the monotheist religious systems and their believers, i. e. Jews, Christians, and Muslims (and their societies and cultures). This principle is founded on the idea of the exclusiveness of the faith of a particular individual or group and the superiority of all co-believers in this faith over non-believers. It is only the faith of the given individual that is capable of communicating God’s message, to him and to his group, and in this way it sets them above other people – even if they too believe in someone. This principle can be classified among the group of principles relating to “predetermination”, which in this case stems from the word of God and its interpretations. This notion is most precisely defined in Islam. Muslims, Jews, and Christians are understood to be the “people of the book” (i. e. they know and recognise similar sacred texts) and as such they are superior to others – the “non-believers”. Of course, in this the Muslims are – as the “true believers” – superior to the Jews and the Christians. Nothing similar to this view can be found among the polytheist religious systems, or among the animistic or magical systems. If we compare the only three monotheist religious systems, we find the strongest ideas about exclusiveness in connection with Judaism (the idea of strong religious exclusivity is combined with the notion of being the elect nation).

It could be possible even to classify the Marxist (communist) ideological system as belonging to the same category, i. e. to the same principle, as the above. The conveyors of this ideology, communists by conviction, or those pretending to be, were superior to all other people because they knew and correctly interpreted the “classic” works regarding the future of all human kind. A precise delimitation was made between those who were the “cognisant”, those who were the “incognisant” but who could possibly be convinced, and those who

⁷³ The German racial theory was also supplementarily “proven” through the scientific research of biological anthropologists; some of these worksites existed in 1939–1941 even in Bohemia.

⁷⁴ Originally the Japanese were classified as “Asians”, but under the threat of trade embargos from the Japanese the South African government re-classified them. For a summary of the racial hierarchisation in South Africa see, for example, P. L. van den Berghe [1974].

⁷⁵ There is a large amount of literature on this – for example Gellner 1988; Romanucci and DeVos 1995 etc.

were enemies of the ideology – whether they had knowledge of the ideology or not. Some of the “cognisant” then had power entirely in their own hands – “they lived according to their needs” – and they did not differ from the “incognisant” through any notable symbols of material property. The religious character of the real experience of communist ideology has already been the subject of some discussion and continues to be discussed even today.

Another principle through which groups distinguish themselves from one another is the principle of advancedness/backwardness (civilised people vs. barbarians). This is also a concomitant phenomenon of contact between different and mutually alien cultures. Within European and North American societies this principle is expressed through “knowledge” – the idea that it is possible to rule the world and the universe with the aid of science (i. e. the exact sciences). This thought appeared in Europe for the first time during the Renaissance. Even the phenomenon of the curio cabinets that European rulers and various potentates of the time set up for themselves were conditioned by the idea that “I can only rule over that which I know”. From the time of the Renaissance, the attempt to rule the universe – and understandably, even its individual parts – through knowledge gradually intensified and sometime around the turn of the 19th century gave rise to the cult of science. The search for objective laws – both natural and social – became the leading motive for all of the 19th century and for a large part of the 20th century, too. Only at the end of the 20th century did the search for objective laws that would make it possible to be in full control of the world begin to somewhat waver – at least in some fields.

The principle of the advancedness/backwardness of other civilisations or cultures was also known in Chinese civilisation, at least up until the middle of the 19th century, i. e. until the time it came into a sharp and unsuccessful confrontation with European civilisation (the period of the Opium Wars).

The principle of knowledge – a variant of the principle of advancedness/backwardness – led to groups being divided into the advanced (they ruled through knowledge) and the less advanced (they did not rule through a corresponding degree of knowledge) and thus also to the groups being assigned either a superior or inferior position. This division has persisted to date – usually it is conceived in terms of the “north” (with wealth and knowledge) and the “south” (poor and without knowledge). It also exists in the form of a number of sub-variants, among which we can include, for example, the principle of education, and the principle of “literate” versus “illiterate” cultures and societies.⁷⁶

The principle of knowledge was already observable in the behaviour of the conveyors and creators of ancient societies – in these cases it was usually applied within one and the same society. Jaroslav Krejčí has worked with the principle of knowledge, or more specifically with the religious view of the world (or, it could be said, with religious philosophy) in his studies, comparing Christian civilisation with the Asian, non-Christian civilisation.⁷⁷

A variant of the principle of advancedness/backwardness is the division of groups into “industrial” and “non-industrial” – thus from the technological perspective of being advanced and less advanced. This principle is regularly applied in sociological writings, both in the comparisons of contemporary societies and in the comparisons of societies existing in different historical periods.

⁷⁶ Goody 1986, 1993.

⁷⁷ Krejčí 1993, 1996.

The principles of knowledge, education, industrialisation, and literacy are based on the idea of competitiveness, and in sociological writings could be classified among the categories of “global stratification” or “global inequalities”.⁷⁸

Although the principles of “knowledge”, “industrialisation”, and “literacy” are interpreted within the specific societies and cultures as total or holistic, from the external, anthropological perspective they represent only a partial measure, which the given society ascribes with a disproportionate degree of importance. Similarly, personal qualities, age, exceptional qualities, kinship, sex etc., are also partial measures. It would seem that creatures from the species *Homo Sapiens sapiens* give preference to simple measures and perspectives over complex comparisons when explaining and substantiating their hierarchies. The reason for this is most likely the fact that at a certain period, in a certain situation, or from a certain perspective some groups (some individuals) perceive one of these principles as being decisive – as the principle of the most immediate importance.

The principles leading to the hierarchisation of individuals (explaining this hierarchisation) and the principles leading to (explaining) the hierarchisation of groups tend to interconnect and combine; the position of the group influences the hierarchic position of its representative and the personal hierarchic position of the individual influences the hierarchic position of his group.

All these principles converge and intermix in stratification situations. Social stratification is interpreted by anthropologists as a consequence or outcome of the combination of superordinate and subordinate positions of individuals and groups in economic, political, kinship, religious, and other structures. For the time being research on this has been conducted only within the boundaries of a given single society or culture. Studies that generalise or abstract socio-anthropological and sociological materials are quite rare.⁷⁹ Anthropologists have conducted their research, and continue to do so, on social stratification both in non-state and state societies, and in the framework of the functional-structural approach they have been able to distinguish between several paths or trajectories that lead to the acquisition of a superior position. These trajectories can be economic, political, or religious, or a combination of any of these. Research has shown that the trajectories can overlap and complement one another, and that they can even be explained in an entirely different manner – e. g. they can be defined in the terms of kinship or other similar ways. The simplest forms of stratified systems have been studied and discovered among some African societies (e. g. among the Nilotic tribes, tribes from the so-called “tribal belt” in western Africa). An attempt at developing a classification of stratification societies – at least within the geographical dimensions of Polynesia – was essayed by Marshall Sahlins in his studies.⁸⁰ In his book he employs a four-grade division of societies, running from the most highly stratified island societies (Tahiti, Hawaii, Samoa etc.) to the least stratified island societies (Pukapuka, Tokelau etc.). Several African cases have been summarised in the book “Social Stratification in Tribal Africa”, edited by Ladislav Holý and Milan Stuchlík, which represents a Czechoslovak contribution to these studies.⁸¹ Also worth mention here is the volume “Early State”, edited by Henry Claessen and Petr Skalník, which deals primarily with the subject of early statehood, but in the framework of this subject looks also at the question of social stratification.⁸²

⁷⁸ Pettman 1979, 139–179.

⁷⁹ Burke 1996.

⁸⁰ Sahlins 1958.

⁸¹ Praha 1968.

There are quite a number of anthropological studies that have focused on researching the caste system and its various specific manifestations in India, Pakistan, Ceylon and other parts of the world.⁸³ Analyses of caste societies have, on the one hand, shown how great significance is ascribed to professions, thus to economic activities, and, on the other hand, they have demonstrated the variability of the caste systems – they have demonstrated the differences between the ideal (theoretical) image of castes and the practical (real) form of an actual system.

Studies have also revealed that it is necessary to make a distinction between the (proclaimed) "poor" and the (non-proclaimed) "poor"; there exist differences in the behaviour of poor people who consider themselves to be part of a certain stratified society (they are members of a stratified group) and those who do not consider themselves to be part of a certain stratified society (they consider themselves to be independent members, or rather members of a different group, and they are members of some cultural minority).⁸⁴

Overall it is possible to say that the majority of anthropological studies are at loggerheads with the theories of American sociologists, who, drawing on the research studies of North American societies, proclaim the existence of only a minimal degree of social stratification. From the anthropological perspective it would seem that some of the conclusions reached by sociologists have been influenced more by their ideological opinions than by an evaluation of actual data drawn from field research. These can be understood as cultural constructions confirming the nationalistic notion of North Americans about the idea of a just and equal society. Attention has been drawn to this possibility by, for example, Rita Caccamo, in one study⁸⁵ in which she looks at the famous American "Middletown" case study. Anthropological debates relate most often to determining "stratification boundaries or limits", i. e. at what point is it still possible to speak of a superior position within an egalitarian society and when is it rather a matter of a superior position within a society that is stratified. Another subject is the relationship between the substances of the terms "stratum", "class", and "caste". Finally, a third subject of frequent discussion refers to the question of the influence exercised on so-called egalitarian societies by hierarchised ones (e. g. European state societies) during the periods of colonialism and colonial expansion (17–20th centuries).⁸⁶

In stratification research anthropologists examine everything that could indicate differences in the social positions of individuals and entire groups (here I am indicating only rough areas of study perspectives, the more precise forms of which are contained in the above-mentioned volume by Ladislav Holý and Milan Stuchlík).⁸⁷

⁸² Claessen and Skalník 1978.

⁸³ Leach 1971; Srinivas 1974, 265–272; Bêteille 1974, 273–294; Dumont 1974, 337–361.

⁸⁴ Lewis 1971, 206–216; Gladwin 1971, 261–267.

⁸⁵ Caccamo 1992.

⁸⁶ Diamond 1979.

⁸⁷ Who dispose what,

Who controls those who dispose something,

The incomes of individuals and groups and their shape or form,

The expenditure of individuals and groups and their shape or form,

How are the positions of command, monitoring, and obedience filled,

The rights and obligations of the commanding, the monitoring and the obedient,

Assessing the behaviour of those who command, control and obey something – or, the differences in assessing their behaviour,

Professional divisions,

Differences in the approach to education,

The explanations the individual social positions of members of a society,

In modern societies – which have thus far not too often been the subject of anthropologists' research – the opportunity presents itself for observing, within the framework of stratification studies, the significance of affiliation with political parties. Data for this kind of research could even be provided by Czech society – both recent and contemporary. It seems to me that today it could be quite interesting to observe the results of research on the rise of the social strata of parliamentary deputies – thus of the group of those two hundred representatives of citizens who are assigned many above-standard rights and privileges. It would, for example, also be possible to consider the members of the Senate in the same way.

Anthropological research has suggested that the study of hierarchies – behaviour in superior and inferior positions – is the study of a changing concrete reality within the framework of one and the same society. Changeability and social mobility are a sign even of those societies that declare of themselves that they feature a stratificational constancy. Research – at least in relation to groups – has also shown that the opinions of two groups on a position in a certain hierarchy can fundamentally differ. For example, settled central African farmers view nomadic groups of hunters and gatherers as their "clients" – thus as people in an inferior position. Groups of nomadic hunters and gatherers, however, do not feel themselves to be in a position inferior to the farmers; on the contrary, they view the farmers as entities suitable to take advantage of. Hunters and gatherers feel themselves to be independent and superior to the farmers.⁸⁸ A similar situation can be observed in the Czech Republic in the opinions among some Roma/Gypsy groups and the opinions of some groups of the majority population. Other examples can be found, for example, in the United States in the opinions of Indian groups (members of the "First Nations") and in the opinions of North Americans.

The above-mentioned information and summaries indicate that in the background of all natural – egalitarian – universal principles and elitist principles leading to the emergence of hierarchies in human societies there are two main ideas or thoughts: the idea of competition and the idea of predetermination (or predetermined electedness). The principles founded on both these ideas inseparably and simultaneously appear in analyses of stratified societies. They change only with respect to the mutual proportions (share) of principles founded on the one idea or the other. I know of no anthropological work that would deal with the origins of these two ideas, which of course does not mean anything. If someone were to set out in search of the origins of the ideas they would possibly need also to focus on psychological or socio-biological works. Both ideas appear in the explanations and interpretations of the representatives of the individual, specific societies and cultures.

In our own society, "competitiveness" is interpreted as a human trait and a human asset; "predetermination" is understood as the outcome of the influence (effect) of non-humans, as the contribution of non-humans to human activity. Opinions on the proportion (proportionate influence) of competitiveness and predetermination have in the history of our society (civilisation) changed – today the fundamental significance of competitiveness predominates.

The closedness or openness of groups,

The external symbols of social status,

The explanations for the status of individual groups,

Opinions on the significance of social positions, on the individuals and groups in a certain social position,

The factor of inertia in social positions (achieved and granted), that is, what is often referred to as the "hollow-effect" of a certain social status and what is associated with the theory of reference groups.

Opinions on the existence of hierarchised individuals and groups.

⁸⁸ Schebesta 1932.

In so far as other societies are concerned, the idea of "predetermination" is considered to be the outcome of the influence (effect) of non-humans and as the contribution of non-humans to human activity. In Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist societies competitiveness is interpreted as a human factor. I did not find an explanation for the idea of competitiveness among many other societies – perhaps no one focused on this aspect in research and relevant data from fieldwork is lacking. Perhaps, however, it is possible to propose the hypothesis that the idea of competitiveness is applied as a result of human will and wishes (notions), while the idea of predetermination is applied as a result of the will and wishes (notions) of non-humans. In the formation of social hierarchies then, both ideas interconnect and apply their influence in various ways, and in various times and places on Earth *Homo Sapiens sapiens* ascribe them with varying amounts of significance.

Thus far I have considered and mentioned here the theories and ideas that have been observed through anthropological research. If we turn to the theories of philosophers, historians, economists, political scientists, sociologists, and other specialists on our civilisation, which also relate to the problem of hierarchies and social and cultural stratification, then we discover that, albeit in more complex language and often more extensively, they nonetheless arrive at the same opinions and ideas. These specialists on our civilisation can also be divided into those who advocate the principle of predetermination and those who support the principle of competition.

The roots of the ideas of those who support the principle of predetermination can be traced back to the period of antiquity, where we can find corresponding ideas, for example, in the works of Aristotle, Plato and others. The idea of predetermination also played an important role throughout the Middle Ages and up until the Modern Age (Jean Jacques Rousseau, Johann Gottfried Herder).

The principle of competition can be traced back to the beginnings of the Renaissance and we can find corresponding opinions, for example, in the work of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Adam Smith etc. At the start of its existence the idea of competition was of course also a part of the idea of predetermination – competitiveness ranked among God's intentions and these needed to be explained and understood. Only over the course of the following centuries, and especially during the 18th and 19th centuries, was this idea "liberated" from divine ordinance.

It was with the evolutionists in the 19th century that both principles (both ideas) were united on the level of the historical evolution of human societies and cultures. The idea of predetermination was then historically ranked above the idea of competition. This construct or thought appears for the first time in the works of Henry Maine, one of the "forefathers" of evolutionary anthropology. Maine of course uses the terms "the concept of natural law" and "the concept of freely concluded social contracts" in the spirit of the dualism of "the traditional" versus "the modern". Maine's concept even had an influence on some of the other "forefathers" of sociology – e. g. Ferdinand Tönnies and Emil Durkheim, and later, in the 20th century, also Robert Redfield.

If we intend to study hierarchies then we must also investigate ideological systems, which include the ideas of competition and predetermination. If we intend to study the hierarchies in our society then we must also investigate the ideological system of our society. It is quite possible that we will find that our symbolic system is also under the spell of myths, legends, and folklore in general.

It is possible to conclude that social and cultural hierarchies are understood to be human constructions. It is possible to distinguish the principles that influence the position – whether superior or inferior – occupied by individuals within the framework of their own group and the principles that influence the superior or inferior position of different groups. In specific situations of course both principles are variously combined. All principles of hierarchisation converge in situations of stratification. From the anthropological perspective, there exist no groups (societies) that are not hierarchised; in every group (society) we can find individual (groups) in superior and inferior positions. The background to all these well-known principles, with which members of various groups/societies work and of which I have only named a small portion within the framework of this article, is formed by the ideas that explain their character (ideas – characteristics). There exist two such ideas: the idea of predetermination and the idea of competition. The former is often associated with the notion of non-human intervention (by gods, spirits etc.) in human life, while the latter, at least in the Euro-American civilisation, is associated with the notion of "natural" human efforts to achieve a certain kind of future, however variously envisaged, and as such is conceived as a purely human affair.

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5. Power, Rule, and Hierarchy in the Work of Norbert Elias

Zdenka Vajdová

5.1 Introduction to this Chapter and to the Concepts of Norbert Elias

Elias' conception of power is based on his basic idea of society as a complex of interdependent individuals and groups of individuals. The structural characteristic of the relationship of interdependence is power. The relationship itself is always what Elias refers to as a "balance of power". For this concept I will employ the expression "*ne-rovnováha*" in Czech, ("imbalance of power") as a simple translation of "balance" into Czech evokes too static an impression. Power is usually deflected towards one side, and consequently it is never really a question of balance but rather of an imbalance, which continually re-establishes itself in a new arrangement in the aftermath of upheavals, revolutions, and gradual transformations. Elias rejected both the Marxist and the Weberian approaches to the problems of power and to the problems of the relations between strata on the rise and on the decline and the relations between strata with greater or less power.

He explicitly rejected the idea that these problems could be reduced to issues of control over the economic sources of power, as the Marxist approach dealt with the subject. Implicitly, he also rejected the concept of class, status, and party, as the three dimensions or factors involved in the distribution of power opportunities. In Elias view, power is a polymorphous, figuratively generated property of all social interdependences [Mennell 1989].

The difficulties that are associated with reflections on the problems of power arise out of the polymorphous character of its sources. What prevents the problems of power from being addressed with the kind of cool reasoning that a central sociological issue would warrant is that it is difficult to avoid emotional involvement during reflections of this nature. The power of one person evokes fear – it can force us to do something whether we want to or not – and it is suspect – people employ their power to exploit others into serving their own purposes. Also, power would seem to be unethical: everyone should be in such a position to be able to make his or her own decisions. All of this somehow seeps into scientific reflections on the issue as well. Moreover, it is often said that someone "has power", as though it were a thing that can be taken and then left again.

But a better solution to problems of power depends on power being understood clearly and unequivocally as a "structural characteristic, neither good or bad" [Elias 1978:93]. It can indeed be both. In the figurations of many interdependent people, we behave as we would when under coercion. And in such a situation we have a tendency to personify this interdependence. The language as we use it for expression directly pushes us into believing that there must be someone here who "has power". Since we feel the pressure of "power", we always find some person that has it, or find some other entity that has power, such as nature or society, in which power resides.

As a structural characteristic of interdependent relationships, relationships that create a web or network into which individuals and groups are woven in figurations of various

kinds, power as such is the central concept of Elias' sociology.⁸⁹ Power is a broader concept than hierarchy. Hierarchies refer to the special figurations where relationships of interdependence distinguish themselves through the specific features of the imbalance of power.

If we wished to pick out the works in which Elias discusses his concept of power we could line them all up all in a row without exception. But among them it is still possible to find certain texts in which the discussion of power is actually the centre of his reflections. These texts have been collected in a reader compiled by S. Mennell and J. Goudsblom [1998]. In the chapter titled "Power" (p. 113) in this reader we find some basic writings that could also hold significance for empirical research into the legacy of communism:

- (a) "Game Models" – a chapter drawn from Elias book *What is Sociology* [1978]
- (b) "On the Monopoly Mechanism" from *The Civilizing Process* [1994]
- (c) "The Decay of the State Monopoly of Violence in the Weimar Republic" from the book *The Germans* [1996].

In addition, some passages from the chapter titled "The Sociologist as a Destroyer of Myths", also from the book *What is Sociology* [1978], and some of (Elias') community studies, *Established and Outsiders* [Elias, Scotson 1965] are of great significance for research on certain processes in society under communist rule.

However, my chapter here is only an introduction into Elias' reflections, specifically those which I consider important for gaining an orientation in research on communist rule and social hierarchies in Czech society during socialism.

If we wish to mediate Elias' thoughts, but have no available translation, the only way is essentially to re-tell them and to fill them in with our own associations drawn from the text and with examples that come to mind. This means giving an account of Elias' thoughts in such a manner that the person doing so understands them himself and so that even after time the account will be understood in the same way. Therefore, my text should not be considered to be a creative act or a critical presentation of a sociological work. It is only a summary of Elias' thoughts and his reflections on the subject of power, in so far as I have managed to achieve this following a necessarily incomplete study⁹⁰ of Elias' work and the work of the circle of individuals who have followed up on it. At times difficulties have been encountered with the English terminology. In his work Elias employs his own special vocabulary, through which he has attempted to break through conventional meanings, while conserving the intellectual framework from which he intends to set out. I have consulted the book of Jiří Šubrt (1996), which represented the introduction of Elias' sociology to the Czech community and

⁸⁹ Formulations found in the textbook of sociology by de Swaan [2001] show how this concept of power can be described:

People are always woven into relationships of power and dependence on others;

Power is a characteristic of the position in the network of interdependent relationships;

It is not possible to ask "who has power?"; power is a component in the relationship and the network of relationships can be characterised as more or less asymmetrical relationships of power. This is to say that Elias' concept of power was generalised through its inclusion in the textbook.

⁹⁰ There are several reasons why I consider the study to be incomplete: I have read Elias' work only in its English translations; I first became acquainted with his work in 1990; amidst everyday obligations governed by other paradigms and given the simple lack of literature ten years has been too short a time.

was directly based on the original language used in Elias' work in German. I have based my own studies on the English translations of Elias' works.

5.2 Game Models⁹¹

Game models serve to reveal, in its simplest form, what the subject of sociology is: "that is, manifold groupings formed by human beings who are *interdependent* in a variety of ways" [Mennell, Goudsblom 1998: 22]. "In order to understand the feelings, thoughts, and actions of any group of people, we have always to consider the many social needs by which people are bonded to each other and to other people – needs which range from sheer physical security and material well-being to intellectual orientation and emotional satisfaction, and which the people themselves often do not consciously experience as "social" [ibid]. Here, game models are not theories, but rather an aid to understanding how the long chains of interdependences in human society are formed, and how the complexity of human figurations grows; game as a metaphor for how people create a society. Game models make it possible to imagine how people are interconnected with one another in space and time.

The chapter on game models in the book *What is Sociology* relates to models of competition, and just as in real games and sports, it involves a competition or contest that occurs more or less within the framework of certain rules. One model defies this description and represents an extreme example of an unplanned, unintended interdependence. The model of the Primal Contest represents a real, unregulated, and deadly contest between two human groups and is certainly no game. However, on pages 71 –103 of the book, Elias points out that this is only an exercise in the sociological imagination [Elias 1978]. The basis of these contests is the comparison of the strength of one individual against another. "This is a basic situation encountered wherever people enter into or find themselves in relations with one another" (p. 73). Often, however, the awareness of the fact that it is a matter of comparing strength is suppressed: on the one hand, the person is concentrating more on other, more superficial aspects of the relations, or on the aims with which he has entered into the relations; on the other hand, the person is distracted by the surrounding circumstances, the setting, and his own situation. But regardless of whether it is a larger or smaller confrontation of strength, the question always arises of who in the given situation is stronger – me or the other one? After some time a certain balance is reached, which, depending on personal social circumstances, is either stable or unstable. However, in either case this balance will sooner or later also be disputed and a new balance will be established. Nevertheless, power relations in a society are and have always been unequally distributed.

"The balance of power is an integral element in all human relationships" (p. 74), which are at the very least bi-polar, but are usually multi-polar. In this connection Elias presents the examples of the relationships between a child and a parent, or a master and a servant, relationships characterised by an unequal distribution of power opportunities. Regardless of whether the differences in the power opportunities in a relationship are large or small, a certain imbalance is present whenever there is a functional dependency between people. *Power is a structural characteristic of all human relationships*. "Power is not an amulet possessed

⁹¹ The material background for this chapter is Elias' work *What is Sociology* [1978] and the Foreword to the book by Mennell and Goudsblom [Elias 1998].

by one person and not by another; it is a structural characteristic of human relationships – of *all* human relationships” [Elias, 1978:74].⁹²

Another basic observation relates to the fact that the imbalance of power opportunities in relationships of interdependence is not a constant but rather changes over time. It is impossible for us to understand human relationships, which follow certain rules, if we accept the hidden assumption that the given rules have always existed. We would then be incapable of describing how it happened that the real contests that took place without rules were transformed into feigned ones within the framework of the rules. Using the model of the Primal Contest Elias shows how this transpired, what it was that gradually became socially regulated, and how social norms and rules took shape. As Elias notes (p. 75), according to a strong sociological tradition, norms are identified with structure. He aims at showing through the primal contest that relationships between people can be structured even in the case where the rules which that game should be following do not exist: “Even a situation that appears to be a height of disorder to the people involved in it forms part of a social order. There is no reason why historical disorders – wars, revolutions, rebellions, massacres and power struggles of every kind – cannot be explained.” Moreover, he points out, this is in reality the task of sociology.

The Primal Contest, or the model of the contest without rules, is represented in the example of two tribes⁹³ on a single territory where there is not enough food for both and where they are beginning to get in each other’s way. Between them an animosity forms which stems from this lack. Each of the two tribes must consider what the other will do in this situation of animosity, with the aim of defending their lives. In order for the tribe to succeed, it must take into consideration the other tribe and estimate what it itself is capable of and what the other tribe will do. It must compare its *idea* of what the other tribe has available to it with what it itself has available in the contest for food.⁹⁴ Elias narrates the problems that the Primal Contest encompasses as follows: Does the group of the more experienced, bigger, stronger, but slower people (A) manage to lure from the safety of their camp the people from the second group (B) who are less experienced, smaller, but more active, and manage to kill at least some of their women and children? Does the second group (B) manage to provoke with abuse the people from the first group (A) into such a rage that they will recklessly pursue them and fall into their trap? Will they mutually destroy and wear each other out to the extent that neither A or B will ever recover? Even this case of interdependence between two enemies entangled in a life and death struggle involves a process of interweaving. Although it is a process without rules, it is still a process with a clear structure and it can be analysed.

In the next pages of the chapter on game models there follows an account of models of interweaving processes with norms: models of two-person games and multi-person games at one level, the model of multi-person games at several levels, the model of the oligarchic type

⁹² This is a basic claim, which it is necessary to be well aware of and which should be kept in mind amidst the everyday life of our own networks of interdependent relationships with others.

⁹³ Elias’ term is translated into English as “tribe”. With regard to the ensuing text we understand this as such that by tribes he meant groups of people from a related family, which somewhere at the dawn of the human age are inhabiting the same territory; it does not mean dynasties (like the Habsburg dynasty for example) or clans (like the Kennedy clan); but these again are not aboriginal tribes in the sense of the vocabulary of contemporary anthropology (such as, for example, the Kwakiutl tribe).

⁹⁴ No tribe is represented by concepts such as rules, norms, ideal types, which, as Elias notes (p. 80), points to the fact that these concepts are the product of intellectual processes.

of two-tier games, and the model of the democratic type of two-tier games. It is clear from the list of models cited here that these models involve an increasing number of players and an increasing degree of complexity of interdependence, while simultaneously involving decreasing differences in the strength of the players over the course of the game. The models graphically illustrate a conclusion that is by no means (otherwise) obvious: the more relatively equal the relation of power between a large number of people and groups⁹⁵ the greater the likelihood that the outcome of the process will be something that no individual person or group had planned or even thought of. J. Goudsblom adds: “Yesterday’s unintended social consequences are today’s unintended social conditions of intended human actions” [1977:149, cited in Mennell, Goudsblom 1998:23].

Let us devote a few words to the oligarchic type of two-tier model. The players are interdependent, but they do not play directly with each other. This function – playing directly with each one – is taken up by special functionaries who coordinate the game; these functionaries could be parliamentary deputies, leaders, the government, a royal court, a monopolistic elite or a narrow circle of elites. Together they form a narrow group of players at the second level. At the second level each one plays with the other, but they are in some way bound to the mass of players who form the first level. If there is no first level, there will be no second level either. Both levels are dependent on each other and maintain towards each other reciprocal power opportunities, which correspond to their interdependence. The power differentials between the first and the second level are large, to the advantage of the second level. The players at the second level are able to influence access to the game, they have a good idea of the figuration of the game and its players, and for them the game is more or less transparent. But this is an illusion held by the players at the second level. For insight into the complex and complicated multi-tier game scientific research is required – systematic research with little emotional involvement. This in turn can happen only when people are aware that for them the game is not transparent. “This is only marginally possible within the framework of dynastic aristocratic societies which correspond to an oligarchic two-tier model” [Elias 1978:87]. The players at the second level see the game not as a process but as a series of individual actions, or as a series of actions of individuals. The two-tier game is of course so complex a figuration that no player, however great the dominance of that player is, can control the game according to his individual wishes and aims. Alliances and enmities, and cooperation and rivalry at various levels are also involved. Enemies at one level can be in an alliance at the second level. In this model it is possible to distinguish four types of imbalance of power: balance between players at the second level, between players at the first and the second level, between groups of players at the first level, and within groups of players at the first level. To conclude: “In a two-tier game of the older, oligarchic kind, the balance of power in favour of the upper tier is very disproportionate, inelastic and stable. The smaller circle of players on the upper level is very superior in strength to the larger circle on the lower level. Nevertheless, the interdependence of the two circles imposes limitations on every player, even on those at the upper level. Even a player on the upper level in a position of very great strength has less scope for controlling the course of the game...” (p. 88). An historical description of societies of this kind is often dealt with by a small group of players from the upper level of the multi-tier society. In these descriptions it often appears as though the individual acts in and for himself, as though he were in a position of the all-controlling player. But, as Elias concludes (p. 88),

⁹⁵ Elias refers to this process as functional democratisation.

even the player at the highest level must at the very least respect the power opportunities of the players at his level. The above-mentioned types of imbalance (balance) permit many constellations, which seriously limit the opportunities for controlling the game by even the strongest player, and under certain constellations of power opportunities they make it possible to question or consider the power opportunities of the second level.⁹⁶

5.3 The Process of the Radical Transformation of Society⁹⁷

Societies oligarchically run by a hereditarily privileged class were transformed into societies run by recallable representatives of mass political parties. This shift in the inner balance of power (within the state) is typical for the overall transformation of society in the majority of European countries; it ranks among the common features of development in the 19th and 20th centuries (cit.: p. 65 on). Governmental positions began to be filled more and more with representatives from political parties – mass organisations, which took up the place of the narrow stratum of elites, which were distinguished by their inherited property or inherited privileges. “Nowadays parties occupy such an obvious place in our social life that even in scientific studies we are usually content to describe and illuminate only their institutional exterior. Efforts are no longer made to explain why in all these societies, oligarchic rule by small privileged dynastic-agrarian-military groups has somehow given way sooner or later to oligarchic rule by parties, whether the regime is multi-party or one-party. What overall change in the structure of each of these societies has caused the ruling strata of previous centuries to decline in power in relation to the social heirs of those who were often referred to as the common herd? As history, all these details are quite well known, yet beyond these details people do not see at all clearly. They cannot perceive the broad common direction of the transformations within the functional interconnections and figurations people form together. Nor, in consequence, do they see the sociological problems posed by the common direction of development in many state-societies. Their history is in many respects diverse. How is it then that the internal balance of power in each of these countries has nevertheless shifted in much the same direction?” The answer lies in the reconstruction of the reduction of power differentials in the several types of imbalance of the multi-tier society.⁹⁸

5.3.1 Reduction of the power differentials between governments and the governed

“The extension of the franchise was the most conspicuous institutional expression of this reduction in power differentials.” (p. 65). But it is not so that the franchise and the extension of the franchise were the cause behind the redistribution of power in the state to the advantage of the broader social strata. The franchise law was only one institutional manifestation of redistribution, which had already latently been taking place. In the preceding centuries access to the central monopoly of the state⁹⁹ and to influence in occupying government positions was limited to a small group of either family or dynastic elites. However, the

⁹⁶ It would appear that the model of oligarchical rule could be useful for a reconstruction of the end-days of communist rule. From the two-tier model it is already evident that no player can control the others and furthermore no player can determine the course of the game and the course of the game process, and no player can direct the game according to his own aims and wishes, whatever they may be.

⁹⁷ From the chapter “The Sociologist as Destroyer of Myths” [Elias 1978:51–70].

⁹⁸ I am referring to the two-tier oligarchic type of model in the preceding paragraph.

⁹⁹ Elias defines the monopoly on power in the state as a centralised monopoly on violence and taxation.

changes in the texture of human relationships which occurred in each of the more developed countries during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were such that no section of society remained simply a relatively passive object of domination by others. None of them remained entirely without institutional channels through which they could exercise pressure, directly or indirectly, upon governments, and in some cases they could influence appointments to government offices. The emergence of mass political party organisations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was simply a manifestation of this limited reduction of the power differentials between governments and governed” (p. 66).¹⁰⁰ This shift in the imbalance of power, or the reduction in power differentials, was small, but large enough for the government to be forced to legitimise itself in the eyes of its subjects “by means of relatively impersonal principles and ideals concerning the ordering of social conditions”. They (the government) had to offer their own idealistic programmes for the social re-organisation of society in order to gain followers and co-advocates. And so they attempted to govern the masses with plans for the improvement in living conditions. There are all characteristic symptoms of the relative change in the distribution of power between the rulers and the ruled.

5.3.2 Reduction in the power differentials among various strata

Over the course of the century the power differentials between the ruling and the ruled, as well as between the individual social strata, have decreased. In previous centuries, landowners were much less dependent on their peasants, and generals much less dependent on their soldiers than today the industrialist is dependent on his workers or the official is dependent on his subordinates. For the large part of the population, which is usually practically powerless, this means an increase in their relative power potential. Elias points out that “in the wake of the overall social transformation usually labelled by one of its aspects such as “industrialisation”, there has been a lessening of power differentials between all groups and strata.... This indicates that... in the course of social differentiation and corresponding integration, certain social groups have suffered reductions in the scope of their functions, and even total loss of function; the consequence has been loss of power potential... even down to those between men and women, parents and children” (p. 67). This trend is referred to as functional democratisation (already mentioned above).

5.3.3 The transformation of all social relationships towards a higher degree of reciprocity, multilateral dependence and control

At the centre of this entire social transformation (“usually labelled by one of its aspects such as “industrialisation”, as Elias states) were the impulses for the growth in the specialisation and differentiation of social activities. In correspondence with this there were also impulses towards the greater integration of specialised activities. “In this case too, social scientists often pay attention only to the institutional veneer and not to the total structure of society. Thus they talk about “pluralistic societies”, by which they chiefly mean a structural arrangement of institutions subject to self-regulation or government control.” (p. 68) But this

¹⁰⁰ It seems to me that the search for these changes in the texture of human relationships could lead to an understanding of the process of the reduction of power differentials. In so far as our research is concerned: Evidently since at least 1977 the following years represented a “reduction in power differentials” between the Communist Party and ordinary people. Perhaps what is indeed relevant is to seek out and find convincing manifestations of the reduction of power in various sections of the life of society.

again is only an institutional manifestation of changes that consist in a reduction of power differentials between groups or individuals over the course of transformation. As the functions of these subjects are specialised, the functional dependency of each one on the other also grows. “Chains of interdependence become more differentiated and grow longer; consequently they become more opaque and, for any single group or individual, more uncontrollable.” (p. 68)

5.3.4 Social science and social ideals

Social science and social ideals function as orientational tools, when social bonds are relatively opaque and when awareness of their opacity is increasing [Elias 1978:68]

The opacity of the social networks for the people who form them is a characteristic of networks in every stage of their development; the opacity is the consequence of interdependence and control. Only at a certain phase in the development are the people aware of this opacity and are consequently also aware of their own precariousness as a society. The structural characteristics of this phase are functional democratisation, a reduction in power differentials and development towards an unequal distribution of power opportunities. With increasing differentiation and specialisation of all social activities the dependence of each person and each group on many other groups also increases. “People experience the increasing opacity and growing complexity of human interweaving. They find that the possibility of any one person, no matter how powerful he may nominally be, taking decisions purely on his own account, independently of other people, is obviously restricted. They witness decisions constantly being made in the course of trials of strength and struggles for power between many people and groups – struggles sometimes conducted strictly according to rule, sometimes less so.” (p. 69) People realised that the explanation of social processes as the outcome of activities of individuals is inadequate, and that some impersonal way of thinking is required that would make it possible to understand opaque social processes. Two solutions were found. One solution refers to scientific methods, which are good for one part of the population. The other solution is ideological: “People tend to orientate themselves to relatively opaque social situations with the aid of relatively impersonal but emotionally charged social belief systems and ideals” (p. 69) These are more satisfying than science because they usually promise the immediate redress of all social deficiencies and privations, or total bliss in the near future.

These two intellectual orientations, scientific and ideological, have usually evolved in close proximity to one another and long disputes could be led over what difference exists between them. Elias concludes: “The development of human society still remains opaque and is still beyond our powers of control. Sooner or later we shall consciously have to decide which of the two types of orientation, the scientific type or that based on preconceived social beliefs, is the more likely to succeed in elucidating it and making it more susceptible to control” (p. 70).¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ This is a strange task! Can we really consciously make a decision in favour of either science or ideology? Perhaps each individual on his own behalf can. But even here it is probably more a situation of both orientations running through each other, both in the case of individuals, and in the case of groups of individuals and in society. Perhaps it is a matter of the dominance of one or the other orientation among people, and the willingness to use what would most likely be even strong efforts for defending and asserting one orientation or the other. It would be possible to draw up an entire array of situations in which one of the orientations is reproduced, defended and asserted, and which instruments are being used, and it would be possible to historically demonstrate these kinds of situations and how they turned out. For example, “the end of autonomy in the Czech lands in the years 1945–1948”.

5.4 The Decline of the State Monopoly on Violence in the Weimar Republic

Elias begins his study of the Weimar Republic, published in the larger work *The Germans* [Elias 1996:150–160], with a recapitulation of the situation in Germany in 1918. The aristocracy that had ruled in Germany up until that time, and which primarily represented the agrarian class, derived its power and legitimised it through military successes. As industrialisation continued in Europe and in Germany the aristocracy gradually lost its privileged position. This process peaked with the defeat in the First World War and subsequently with the Emperor's abdication. However, Elias indicates one area of exception: despite defeat in the war the position of the aristocracy in the army remained unshaken. The upper middle class was catapulted by this outcome into the position of the upper class. The position that the French middle class had had to seize through a revolution – depriving the aristocracy of its privileges and political sovereignty through violence – fell into the lap of the German middle class as a result of the lost war, the uprising of workers and soldiers, and the disappearance of the crown. The gain of the middle class was balanced on the other side by the opportunities that organised labour gained through the decline of absolutism and the introduction of genuine parliamentarism, which in other words meant that position in the political system was dependent on elections.

If the working class had been unified in organisational terms, it could have gained dominance and a long-term sovereign position within the framework of parliamentary rules.¹⁰² But as an unintended consequence of the Russian Revolution and the coming to power of the Communist Party in Russia, the organised working class in Europe split into two camps which feuded bitterly with each other: the camp of those who sought a way of organising society which would serve the interests of the workers without violence; and those who sought to achieve this in the end by using violence, following the Russian example. This splitting of the working class and their sympathisers in the middle-class intelligentsia into a nationalist and a Russophile group had far-reaching consequences: "...organisational unity was for the industrial working class a more important determinant of their power-ratio than it was for middle-class groups. The split into two antagonistic camps therefore had as one unplanned consequence a considerable reduction in the power-potential of the workers."

The state, as we know, represents a centralised monopoly on violence and taxation. The situation in which extra-state violence – violence organised by something or someone outside the state – has been used to seize hold of this basic monopoly is as Elias notes referred to as a revolution. Elias' intention in this study is not to analyse whether the Tsarist regime would have crumbled without the effect of extra-state violence. But rather to explain something about the far-reaching consequences of the Russian Revolution: it was simultaneously both a model and a nightmare. The example of the violent Russian Revolution showed that the use of extra-state violence is an effective tool for depriving the ruling class of its power and for seizing the centralised state monopoly on force/violence and taxation. As a model and as a threat the Russian Revolution influenced the entire century, and became the dominant model of action in the 20th century.¹⁰³

¹⁰² A look at the history of the labour movement in Czechoslovakia would certainly provide some new and interesting results with respect to the position, role and action of the Communist Party between the wars.

¹⁰³ It is impossible in this connection not to recall the armed people's militia in 1948. It would certainly be worth the effort to analyse the emergence of this militia and its role from this very perspective.

There is an important difference between the French Revolution and the Russian Revolution. Elias explains this as follows: “One reason for this difference is that belief in the ideals of the French Revolution was not linked to a belief in the necessity of using violence – revolution – for the realisation of these ideals. Nor did it possess any firm theoretical base in a canon of authoritative books. The extraordinarily far-reaching effect of the Russian Revolution acquired its specific character, however, precisely because in this case it was both linked to a belief in the necessity of violence and based on a theory set out in books. Certainly the starting point was the class stratification of industrial (and also predominantly agrarian) countries, with their often firmly institutionalised and unequal distribution of power. But over and above that, there were a small number of books of intellectually high calibre, which served to standardise and spread the belief. And in them, in the works of Marx and Engels, realisation of the ideals of greater equality and humanity was intimately linked, even theoretically with the use of extra-state violence. In the French Revolution the use of violence was by and large spontaneous and unplanned. After the Russian Revolution, it became an integral part of the plans of weaker outsider groups. Moreover, the leaders of the new, massive empire (USSR) now supported the expansion of these ideas to other countries.”

Groups of Russophiles outside the USSR, which were oriented around the working class and the middle-class intelligentsia, sought the implementation of their ideals ultimately with the help of extra-state violence. These groups were confronted by other groups, which, concerned about groups of Russophiles gaining the state monopoly, began to defend themselves through their own extra-state violence. Elias describes one mechanism that which he believes to be little understood: when one group (A) wants to use violence against another group (B), it is most likely that second group (B) will use violence against the first group (A), as soon as the slightest opportunity presents itself; the violence of group B against group A motivates the increased violence of group A against group B; and thus the circle of escalating violence of one group against another, and vice versa, begins, and the double-bind process is set in motion.

Since the Russian Revolution many countries around the world, and in Elias’ view probably every country, found itself in the double-bind process of this mechanism. The fact that the use of extra-state violence proved to be a valuable tool against the violence of the state gave impetus to similar processes around the world. The first case occurred in Germany. In comparison with Russia, Germany was a more industrialised and urbanised country, with a more educated population, and featuring a number of other special aspects of the modernisation process. Similarly, the working class in Germany was more organised and more politically educated. Following the country’s defeat in the war, the share of power maintained by the working class unquestionably increased. Middle-class circles had reasons to fear an emulation of the Russian example. These concerns only increased further following the Russian Revolution and its violent expropriations, as well as its close association with the military defeat of the Tsarist regime. Among the middle classes a similar division occurred as that among the organisations of workers. There were groups that allied their aims to the existing state monopoly; under its protection and within its rules they intended to assert their interests. There were other groups that called for extra-state violence, particularly against workers’ organisations, but also against the state, which provided them with legitimacy. While the workers’ organisations for and against violence led angry disputes and squabbles with one another, among the analogical organisations of the middle class an open or silent consensus was reached. This resulted in the support for the organisations oriented towards violence.

The high estimation of physical force, which in some sectors of the middle class had become a tradition, was reinforced. As in the case of the Russian Revolution, here too the conscious manipulation of threat and violence became a deliberate weapon in the struggle between class organisations. A process was initiated, over the course of which the threat of violence from communist groups provoked and reinforced a similar threat from among the fascist groups, which conversely increased the threats and violence on the side of the communist groups and vice versa. Elias refers to this process as the double-bind process, which is a vicious circle of reinforcing effects, in this case, the use of violence from two opposed sides. And this process became, according to Elias, a permanent feature of many countries in Europe and elsewhere.

To what degree the double-bind process actually led to a disruption of the state monopoly on force depended on the strength and stability of the central power, and especially on the stability and effectiveness of the means possessed by the central power and on the stability and development of the national economy. In this respect the situation in Germany following the war was very poor and the central power was in no way capable of putting a stop to the decline of the state monopoly on force. Elias analyses other circumstances surrounding the decline of the state monopoly on force, including the economic crisis in 1929. He concludes: "The economic crisis stood in a double-bind relationship with a political crisis bordering on civil war. Both aspects of the crisis mutually reinforced each other... In the end the republic of the Weimar period foundered on the structural weakness of its monopoly of violence and the purposeful exploitation of this weakness by middle-class organisations which, because of the lack of a parliamentary tradition, felt that the parliamentary-republican regime discriminated against them and therefore sought to destroy it." And this is indeed what happened.

5.5 Conclusion

We will conclude this chapter with a recapitulation of what the works of Elias represent in the field of sociology. A paradigm? Yes, a paradigm.

According to Thomas Kühn, the scientific paradigm is a kind of set of theories that:

- (a) Offer solutions to some of the basic problems in the field,
- (b) Leave a number of specific problems unsolved,
- (c) Introduce guidelines for how these specific problems can be solved.

J. Goudsblom [1990], in his Foreword to the Bibliography of Figural Sociology in the Netherlands [Krakendonk 1990], reflects on what ways Elias' work is actually a paradigm. In his view Elias makes available an elegant and consistent solution to lasting problems of conceptualisation in sociology. These are the problems of how to cope with the relationships between the individual and society, between change and structure, and between an intentional action and unintended consequences. The late 1960s and early 1970s was a time of great turbulence in the social sciences, says Goudsblom in the cited Foreword. The paradigm of sociology became the subject of discussion, structural functionalism, like the technique of surveys, came to be considered as unsatisfactory, students had just discovered the Frankfurt school and other breeds of Marxism; and young people came to be attracted by symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology. Here Elias was a central figure, as his work dealt with things

that then everybody was aware of: “changing codes of behaviour and morality and their connection with shifts in power balance” [Goudsblom 1990].

According to Robert van Krieken [1998] Elias offers an unusual paradigm of sociological thought, which challenges the structural-functionalistic and methodological-individualistic tendencies in sociology, but in a way that differs from how Marxist or neo-Marxist criticism and the post-structuralists or the post-modernists do. He developed a special concept for the analysis of social life, which he hoped would transcend some of the dilemmas specific to sociology. Particularly the dilemmas of action and structure, conflict and consensus, and the individual and society. Krieken introduces five principles of Elias’ sociology:

1. *The intentional action of human beings and the unplanned results of their combination.* Society is composed of human beings, which make deliberate actions, their behaviour is directed towards a certain goal; but the common outcome of these actions is often unplanned and unintentional.

2. *The interdependency of human individuals.* Human individuals can be understood only in their interdependence, only as a part of a network of social relationships. An important corroborative principle here is that the study of the processes of social development and transformation – socio-genesis – must be brought into connection with psycho-genesis – the processes of psychological development and transformation, and changes in personality structures or habitus, which accompany and are a component of social changes.

3. *Relations rather than states.* Human life in society should be understood as relations rather than states. For example, power is not something that people have, but rather an attribute of a relation in which there is an ever-changing balance or ratios of power between individuals and social units.

4. *Long-term processes of development and change rather than timeless states, conditions.* Human societies can be understood only in their development, and only as long-term processes.

5. *Involvement and detachment.* Sociological thought permanently oscillates between social and emotional involvement in the subject of study and detachment and distance from it.

With this recapitulation I conclude this chapter, the only aim of which was to arouse interest in the interesting things Elias’ work has dealt with and which both in the 1960s and in the first decade of this century remain important, and still not fully comprehended.

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6. Governance in the Constructivist and the Constitutional Arrangements (a theoretical hypothesis)

Jiří Kabele

6.1 The Subject Matter of Communist Rule

In this essay we are going to focus more on the constructivist arrangements, and within them the question of applying social hierarchies as instruments for controlling society within the framework of the social construction of the superior parallel power of the “vanguard” of the constructivist group – the Communist Party. The constructivist arrangement¹⁰⁴ is interpreted as the alternative to the constitutional arrangement. Together they represent two types of general arrangement of modern societies. The *general arrangement* will be defined by us here as the declared and the relatively consistent concept of how society should be organised: what is its proper social order. General arrangements are implemented, or become realised, as regimes. There is always a difference between the outlined general arrangement and the regime that realises itself through transition and piecemeal transformations.¹⁰⁵

The reader will easily discover that the alternatives – the constructivist or the constitutional arrangement – presented here are simply substitutes for already quite familiar oppositions: socialism versus capitalism, totalitarian /authoritarian/ versus democratic regimes, the market versus the centrally planned economy etc.¹⁰⁶ The new and – we hope – clear contradistinction between an arrangement that has to be implemented and a real regime will make it possible to reveal the “derivation”¹⁰⁷ of the alternative arrangements in the study from the principle of game coordination, and, specifically, from a certain concept of the role of ownership and governance in modern societies. The visible power of the “party and government” collapsed in November 1989 in Czechoslovakia within the space of several weeks. Conversely, the social hierarchies, with their typical methods of decision-making and their guarantees of security, have demonstrated to date how very durable they are and how capable they are of adapting to new conditions. Despite the “easy” breakdown of communist rule,¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ The term *arrangement* has been borrowed from the Czech socialist Constitution of 1960, in which immediately after the section titled “Declaration” there follows a chapter titled “Social Arrangement”. The purpose of this section is for the constitution to declare its socialist character and thus to distance itself from the bourgeois social arrangements.

¹⁰⁵ If the vacant space between them increases, the suspicion emerges that the lifeline between them has been cut. Behind the facade of the declared arrangement society evolves towards a “different” regime. This kind of development can be considered also as a process of disorganisation.

¹⁰⁶ Aron: *Democracie a totalitarismus*. 1993. Linz: Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown and Reequilibration. 1974; Marx: *Kapitál*. 1954; Popper: *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. 1950; Dahl: *Democracie a její kritici*. 1995; Schumpeter: *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*. 1942; Berger: *The Capitalist Revolution*. 1986; Arendt: *Totalitarismus I-III*. 1995; Friedrich and Brzezinski: *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*. 1956; Carr: *The Soviet Impact on the Western World*. 1949; Przeworski: *Some problems in the Study of the Transition to Democracy*. 1988.

¹⁰⁷ This derivation will be presented in greater detail in the upcoming monograph by the author: Kabele: *Z kapitalismu do socialismu a zpět. Teoretické vyšetřování přerodů Československa a České republiky*. 2003.

¹⁰⁸ *Rule or governance* are here defined broadly as the execution of any kind of institutionally encharged competences or otherwise acquired power in relations of superiority. In this sense, governance hierarchically permeates all of society from the top down.

we are going to view the regime of Czechoslovak real socialism and its arrangement as having been relatively successful. The regime actually collapsed only once it had lost the backing of the Soviet Union and the other footholds in the neighbouring socialist countries.

The offered theoretical hypothesis presented here on the constructivist arrangement draws theoretical conclusions on the findings of several years of heuristic investigations into Czechoslovak transitions: both socialist and, especially, capitalist.¹⁰⁹ It refers, however, more to the governance of real socialism under normalisation in the 1980s, when the revolutionary myth in particular lost its vanishing point in communism, and state terror was not public. Here, for the accountability¹¹⁰ of the leading role of the party, key significance lay in the “trade off” of private advantages for loyalty. This trade off consisted of a “fair” agreement, which in essence generously enabled each individual to enter into the Communist Party and to become a part of the ruling class, as long as they were willing to observe party discipline. Also, if one were loyal to the regime, anyone could enjoy the universal socialist conveniences, consisting in official and unofficial shares in the re-distribution processes and opportunities for participating in the shadow economy.

The theoretical model of communist rule set forth here is based on a dual social constructivism.¹¹¹ This theory stems from the seemingly trivial principle of game coordination. According to this principle human worlds are socially constructed by persons, which have coordinatively flexible minds, capable of transmitting themselves into the minds of others. Thanks to this flexibility, they are able to acquire a valuable understanding of the course of events. They see, they know, and they believe with sufficient certainty — what for them the givens of the event mean beforehand or retrospectively in terms of their manoeuvring spaces for action. Therefore they can relatively competently decide, act, and participate in the order that is emerging out of the game coordination of their actions.

Both individual and collective persons make their decisions in accordance with their estimation of the opportunity costs and the transaction costs of individual scenarios of action.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ The study of transition processes in the Philipstown micro-region of Revermo district /1997–99/, the study of the social hierarchies of judicial power, investigations conducted on the occasion of the compilation of the monograph “From Capitalism to Socialism and Back”, and the collection of data from the research project “Legacy of Communist Rule” /2000–2001/. Kander: Filipov I. 1998. Kabele, Kabele, Hájek, and Holeček: Lesk a bída hierarchií českého soudnictví. 2001.

¹¹⁰ In his ethnomethodology Harold Garfinkel pointed out for the first time that the acceptance of everyday reality as something “taken for granted” is no accident, but rather the result of ways of accounting used in realisation. Through their action, persons unwittingly imprint accountability on social phenomena and events, or render them, with the help of ethnomethods, potentially accountable. They are as they are in their eyes and accounts. Nothing can change that fact. Garfinkel: *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. 1967.

¹¹¹ Kabele: *Přerody. Principy sociálního konstruování*. 1998. Kabele: *Vlastní princip pohybu II: Pokušení vyvoleností a bytostný princip pohybu*. 2000.

¹¹² There is complementarity between the opportunity costs and transaction costs, which can be expressed in the following paradigm:

Complementarity of opportunity costs and coordination costs

UNDERSTANDING →	SUBSTANTIVE (Independent of the path)	PROCEDURAL (Dependent on the path)
FACTORS OF CHOICE ↓		
INTERESTS	Opportunity costs	
DECISION MAKING		Coordination costs

Kabele: Transakce, sociální vztahy a koordinační instituty. 2000.

Opportunity costs are associated with the making use of the manoeuvring spaces, as this is known in the field of neo-classical economics: here persons “sacrifice” unselected alternatives of action in the name of their stronger interests. Transaction costs are considered in institutional economics. In our theory they are bound to the management of manoeuvring spaces. The estimation of these costs is connected with a “sacrificing” of the current manoeuvring space for a manoeuvring space that is offered to the person after a chosen act has been conducted. This sacrifice is made in motion, during the coordination with others, which significantly contributes to completing the form of the new manoeuvring space based on the principle of path dependency. The path along which persons go through the manoeuvring space takes them into the new manoeuvring space, whose character is more or less co-determined by the already made coordination.

This theoretical orientation obliges us to think out what kind of constellations of circumstances tied to institutions and narratives must occur in order for all players to have the opportunity to participate and a sufficient reason for staging communist rule in its empirically observed forms. One important and strong conclusion stems from this very brief theoretical excursion we are to make: the constitutional and constructivist regimes, like all their inner organisms¹¹³, represent settlements whose constitutive features must be drawn into relation with the basic principles of coordination. Otherwise they would cease to be stageable. They are not a random historical outcome of the course of events and individual decisions of leaders. Both regimes considered below transform themselves continually and under certain circumstances are even reversible. The relatively high costliness of even partial transformations ensures, of course, their strong inertia.

From the perspective of how realisable they are, both arrangements represent equal alternatives,¹¹⁴ if they both offer an accountable framework for asserting a broad range of interests of many persons at once. These persons then, of course, have a common interest in adapting the game frameworks to the given state of affairs and enforcing them. The actual realised regimes of the same type – either constitutional or constructivist – may as a result differ considerably. Obvious differences can lie also in the degree to which they encompass the organisational practices and the whole worlds belonging more to the opposite type of arrangement, or worlds that coordinatively correspond more to traditional societies.

6.2 Constitutional and Constructivist Arrangements as Interchangeable Sources of Order

6.2.1 The Alternatives of Constitutional and Constructivist Arrangements

Constitutional and constructivist arrangements represent epistemologically founded alternatives of two concepts of the social organisation of societies, which perceive their order as changeable.¹¹⁵ These conceptional arrangements assert themselves coordinatively in various ways in ordinary and extraordinary times. In ordinary times they offer individual and col-

¹¹³ We use the notion of *organism* in connection with coordination in opposition to the frequently used, but misleading term *mechanism* in social sciences.

¹¹⁴ Constructivist regimes as a rule try to catch up to and outstrip constitutional regimes. This allows them also to parasite on the more innovative constitutional regimes.

¹¹⁵ Modern societies, which perceive their social order as changeable and continually developing, differ from traditional societies, built on a concept of order given forever, which is transcendently rooted. Kabele: *Vlastní princip pohybu II: Pokušení vyvoleností a bytostný princip pohybu*. 2000.

lective persons suitable outfits and limits for dealing with their affairs, so they force the realisation of a constitutional or constructivist regime. In extraordinary times of social upheaval these concepts have formed the content of a concrete vision of revolutionary forces, and thus marked out the Czech path to socialism (1945–1953) and back to capitalism (1989–1993). The regimes of Czechoslovak capitalism during the First Republic, post-war socialism, or Czech capitalism at the end of the millennium were not, of course, such clear-cut opposites as the arrangements under consideration, and nor could they be. As we have mentioned, between the arrangement as a concept that has been already realised and the regime as a resulting realisation of the staging of human affairs there always exists only an approximate correspondence. The disparity between the arrangement and the regime is usually more vivid in the constructivist arrangements, as these arrangements do not place strong constitutive demands on maintaining this kind of correspondence as such.

We will discuss in greater detail the alternative of both arrangements in the monograph *From Capitalism to Socialism and Back*. From this book, prepared for publication, we have borrowed the table presented below, which indicates the partial oppositions that “fill in” the large difference between the constitutional and the constructivist arrangements:

Types of general arrangement

ARRANGEMENT	CONSTRUCTIVIST	CONSTITUTIONAL
KEY GAME FRAMEWORK	An alliance ... headed by ... a part of the world system of ...	A legal state of free citizens
SOURCE OF SOVEREIGNTY	The vanguard of the working people	A people comprised of citizens
DISTRIBUTION OF COMPETENCES	Nomenclature administration	The constitutional competitions
POWER	Superior parallel and state (Party and led state power)	Constitutional state (Legislative, executive, judicial power)
DIVISION OF POWER	Constitutional amendments implicating superior parallelism (Communist Party statutes)	A written constitution directed towards equipoise
TYPICAL INSTITUTIONS		
GAME FRAMEWORKS OF OWNERSHIP	Central planning	Private enterprise
INSTITUTES OF OWNERSHIP	State, and collective cooperative property	Private property
GAME FRAMEWORKS OF GOVERNANCE	A leading role	The division of power
INSTITUTES OF GOVERNANCE	Democratic centralism	Public representation
GAME FRAMEWORK OF COMMUNICATION	Central propaganda and censorship	The media as ‘a fourth power’

The nature of the arrangement we have been considering here stems from: (i) the account of its emergence, (ii) the principles that determine the distribution of competences (the division of the areas of freedom), and (iii) the institutes that protect the rights and freedoms of persons affected by the execution of these competences (the division of the areas of responsibility). In this perspective the arrangement manifests itself as a model arrangement, which serves to connect the division of the areas of freedom and the division of the areas of responsibility and matches them with one another. The arrangement organises the distribution of the competences of ownership, governance, and in cases even knowledge-management. Ownership is associated with the use of goods and the dealings with goods within the framework of entrepreneurship or central planning. Governance consists

in dealing with other persons, and especially in publicly representing them and/or leading them.

The constructivist arrangement, in the diction of the Czechoslovak constitution, is not a legal state. It is an “alliance of workers, peasants and intelligentsia, at the head of which is the working class”. This harmonious alliance of the classes under the leadership of the Communist Party constructs socialism, or communism, as the case may be. At the same time, it must struggle against the tenacious enemies of progress, who are trying to thwart the constructivist efforts of masses. All institutions in the described constructivist arrangement are in this narrative framework primarily an instrument of collective construction. The possibility of the realisation of a constructivist regime is founded – and here lies the core of our theoretical hypothesis – on the principle of democratic centralism (see p. 75), the role of which is reinforced by socialist ownership of the means of production. The skeleton of this regime is thus formed by a duplication of all state hierarchies with the hierarchies of the Communist Party, which procedurally enables the Communist Party, with the aid of bureaucratic administrative practices and constructivist ceremonies, to execute leading role and to centrally “plan” the economic activity of the country.

From the outlined theoretical hypotheses of constructivist regimes it would be possible to deduce that typical for these regimes are: Merton’s displacement of goals,¹¹⁶ Crozier’s deficit of feedback processes (error-information-correction)¹¹⁷ and the practices of Foucault’s pastoral power and discipline.¹¹⁸ Linz’s criticism of the theory of totalitarianism, expressed in the theory of authoritarian regimes, is also close to our reflections.¹¹⁹ In terms of theory we can also draw on the numerous works of institutional economists,¹²⁰ who already in the 1980s were intensively studying the role of hierarchies in the socialist economy, and eventually came to focus on the problem of social transformation in East European countries.

6.2.2 The Constitutional Hypothesis and Its Constructivist Negation

The basic idea connected with the alternative of constitutional and constructivist arrangements is this: these arrangements do not differ in that discrepant model game frameworks for governance and ownership are asserted within them, but only in that within them their different selections dominate semantically. The dominance of the legally rooted and decentralised public representation and private enterprise determines the form of the constitutional regime. Placing emphasis on the “extra-legal”¹²¹ leading role and central planning is characteristic for the constructivist arrangement and regime.

As a rule constitutional regimes make a commitment in their constitutions to maintaining a relatively close correspondence between the arrangement and the regime. According to the constitutional hypothesis it is possible to achieve this kind of *rule of law*, or *the legal state*, when two conditions have been fulfilled:

¹¹⁶ Merton: Bureaucratic structure and personality. 1957, 199.

¹¹⁷ Crozier: The Bureaucratic Phenomenon. 1964, 187.

¹¹⁸ Foucault: Dohlížet a trestat. 2000; Foucault: Moc a subjekt. 1994

¹¹⁹ Linz: Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown and Reequilibration. 1974.

¹²⁰ Mlčoch: Chování Československé podnikové sféry. 1990; Stark and Bruszt: Postsocialist Pathways: Transforming Politics and Property in East Central Europe. 1998; Elster, Offe, and Preuss: Institutional Design in Post-communist Societies. 1998; Nee and Stark: Remaking the Economic Institutions of Socialism: China and Eastern Europe. 1989; Przeworski: Democracy and the Market. Political and the Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America. 1991

¹²¹ The leading role and central planning are substantiated by expert or moral superiority, or through a historic mission.

- (a) When the legal system clearly sets out the rights and freedoms whereby citizens are and can be equal much like in dignity,
- (b) When these rights and freedoms not only can be but also are relatively effectively protected.¹²²

The background to these conditions is formed by a strong but not easily demonstrable assumption – conviction – about the priority of protecting game agendas, rights and freedoms: if rights and freedoms have been clearly set out in the legal system, then the long-term and effective impact of the judicial protection of these rights shapes them in such a way that they establish to a satisfactory degree equality before the law, even with respect to dignity. At the same time the legal system stays open to changes in society.

Differing from the constitutional arrangements are those arrangements that do not place big emphasis on the existence of a correspondence between the arrangement and the regime, and do not even strive to maintain any such correspondence. Indeed, they do not have clearly set out rights and freedoms, or do not protect them or even prevent the existence of certain privileges and monopolies. Constitutions, as the highest laws in the modern societies with legal states, cannot be based on any logic other than representative. Therefore, constitutions tend to be modified in a specific way in constructivist arrangements, so that as opposed to the spirit of constitutionality they guarantee a select group the desired competences associated with the leading role and central planning. At the same time they are usually supplemented in their constitutive role by other texts procedurally describing such a leading role. For example, in Czechoslovak socialism this kind of constitutional status was held, as we shall see, by the Statutes of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (KSČ).

The vision of the constitutional arrangement is of a free and responsible society, and therefore also of a developing society. Other arrangements must offer an alternative vision to the constitutional arrangement: a vision of not only a prosperous but also a higher ranked society. This may for example consist in the elimination of capitalism and the construction of socialism and eventually even a classless communist society. We can therefore refer to arrangements and regimes of this type as *constructivist*. One of their constitutive features is the mythic story of the building up of a “new” world, describing how the discredited constitutional regime will be eliminated and what it will be replaced with. For example, in the case of capitalism, it was a matter of forging a dam against the acquisitiveness and power-hungriness that private ownership in particular had unleashed and which plunged the masses of workers and peasants into deepening poverty. A perverted constitutional system created the conditions for the exploitation of man by man, and this deems the construction of socialism, and eventually communism, a necessity.

We will not be so interested here in the dispute over the higher quality of the alternative arrangements or in the questions of mythic frameworking. Our main question will be: How were and are these arrangements institutionally possible? We will present the leading role and public representation as alternative modes of governance. We will show, also, that cen-

¹²² In the British interpretation of the „Rule of Law” the priority is the “processual principle that it is only possible to punish and convict if a law has been broken by the accused and only on the basis of due process and before a regular court.” (p. 86). Out of this is derived the principle of equality before the law and the subordination of administrative and judicial bodies to the law, which are rather typical for the French interpretation of the legal state. Klokočka: Ústavní systémy evropských států (srovnávací studie). 1996.

tral planning and private enterprise are mutually interchangeable forms of ownership, at least on the level of the conceptual construction of the arrangement. In the following section – devoted almost exclusively to governance in the constructivist arrangement – we will demonstrate how the leading role of the party was able to gain accountability not only thanks to the support it garnered from the great narrative of the construction of a higher type of society, but also owing to its institutional protections.

6.2.3 Governance as Public Representation or as the Leading Role

Public representation is constituted in the form of a legal state by the kind of arrangement which guarantees that any group can lay claim to acquiring the competences to govern, even if this means that it must state that it has an exclusive mission. At the same time, of course, it rules out the possibility of this group or organisation acquiring the leading role permanently (in political theory this condition is expressed in Locke's idea of restricted government). The authority to govern can only be acquired temporarily and under strictly legally defined conditions (victory in fair elections). However, the arrangement must also prevent this temporarily acquired leading role from expanding uncontrollably and becoming permanently institutionalised. An essential precondition for the constitutional arrangement is thus the legitimacy of the governance authority whereby the restricted leading role is executed. It is also necessary for other institutional conditions to be met, which, alongside effective protection of rights and freedoms, also find expression in the institutional know-how surrounding the competition relating to the acquisition of the competencies to govern and in the institutes that guarantee the division and balancing of state power.

Constitutional rights and freedoms stipulate the inviolable political and economic commitments of every instance of governance towards the governed. Their institutional guarantee lies with the institutes of the judicial review of all decisions taken by the holders of the competences of governance, including the constitutionality of the decisions of state power. The principle of competition requires that competences are acquired in an open and fair competition, and thus it opens itself to the possibility of rotating persons in governance positions. The principle of the division of power is founded on a very elaborate system of legal institutes, which bring about a balance between components of state power, the paramount task of which is enforcing the law.¹²³ The principles under consideration here are not independent of each other. The effective division of power as a rule demands to some degree a forced rotation of persons in governance positions.

Conversely, the constructivist arrangement rests on the game frameworking of governance founded on the leadership or leading role of a select group. In this way it substitutes public representation. The educated Central European harbours an intuitive distrust towards the term *leading role*. Consequently, let us recall the significance that is ascribed, for example, in the USA to leadership in the political and economic organising of society. But, the leading role must be understood neutrally, devoid of its value connotations, as an alternative method of legitimation and coordination in governance. The authority for executing the leading role by a certain person, group, or organisation in the constructivist arrangement is not, in a Weberian manner, drawn primordially from law, as in the constitutional arrangement. Instead, it is drawn from dispositional virtues: knowledge, art, or a vision, and the associated historic mission of the select person or group. The leading role is, in the

¹²³ Kabele: Ochrana práv a sociální konstrukce hierarchií: příklad soudnictví. 2001.

constructivist arrangement, also supported by the idea of central planning, which, with reference to expert virtues, appears more rational, and thus also more appropriate than private enterprise. Although the assumed expert superiority of the select persons, groups and organisations may be founded on argument, its transcendence into the historic mission of the party and the proletariat is primarily a narrative construction. This mission consists of a struggle, which will lead the impoverished society, in the throes of class conflict, to a new harmonious arrangement.

The leading role in practice meant the controlling of constitutional and unconstitutional institutions as a means of asserting a desirable social change against the influence of an enemy group that had to that point covertly executed the leading role and held on to it stubbornly. This old ruling group erroneously believes in its own historic mission or is merely defending its sinecures. For this reason it tries to thwart the historic mission of the constructivist group. An essential condition of the constructivist arrangement is thus the accountability of the authority of the leading role of the progressive group by its historic mission or vision. Other conditions must of course also be met, which practically ensure the dominance of the leading role over public representation. They can be expressed – here without evidence – on the one hand in the dominance of social rights over civic and political rights, and on the other hand in the substitution of exploitative private enterprise with socially just central planning. Procedurally the dominance of the leading role over public representation guarantees the institutional know-how of democratic centralism and sovereign administration of the nomenclature.

6.2.4 Ownership in the Form of Private Enterprise or Central Planning

The general arrangement specifies the form of ownership of goods and firms (productive assets). It is therefore no accident that the path to new regimes with a different arrangement has in the Czech case always been opened by extensive transfers and a transformation of property rights: nationalisation and privatisation. The nationalisation of property meant wagering on central planning and on the solidary socialisation (a re-distribution of resources led by the state) that is associated with this. Reverse privatisation opened up space for the operation of private enterprise and the accompanying capitalisation. These two processes involved transformations that logically stemmed from the implementation of first the constructivist and then the constitutional arrangement, because central planning and private enterprise – as adopted and competing general game frameworks of ownership – are what constitute these two arrangements.

In the area of ownership the institute of private enterprise fulfils the same requirements as public representation in the area of governance. What is involved is the execution of property rights in an environment of open competition. Here, it is presumed that the “power” of property owners will be reciprocally brought into balance as a result of an enforceable legal framework, which forces the players to respect the property and entrepreneurial undertakings of others. It ensures that no individual engaged in enterprise is able to acquire an overall and lasting monopolistic position. An essential condition of this market arrangement is therefore the legitimacy of the ownership authority through which the dealings with goods are executed. As we will attempt to demonstrate, other conditions must however also be met, which are expressed in the institutional know-how of the open market competition.

An alternative to this kind of distributed and continually distributing planning through private enterprise is central planning. It is founded on practically universal state property, on

high surrenders of state enterprises and a directed redistribution of resources, and on the privileged competences of the state to rent out resources and engage in “enterprise”.¹²⁴ In this way, in the constructivist arrangement, the very harmonious satisfaction of the needs of the entire population was to be (or, ought to have been) eventually ensured. The problem of central planning lies, of course, in that, as Hayek correctly pointed out, it is unrealisable in terms of its original intentions.¹²⁵ In practical terms all that can feasibly be attained is the establishment of budgetary and nomenclature control over state enterprises and offices in the annual cycle, accompanied by planned investment activities.

State property does not negate but rather only conceals an entrepreneurial power founded on the handling of resources acquired according to a given plan. It dissolves the market competition only apparently, as in fact it opens up space for its hidden and indirect forms. In this ousted competition, what enterprises are mainly interested in is acquiring resources from the state (Kornai’s sucking reflex).¹²⁶ Central planning organises this “competition” by means of transactions occurring within economic hierarchies. In the 1970s these were formed by: the planning centre → the state planning commission → the ministry → so-called economic production units → the enterprise → the plant. These hierarchies here counterbalance the described hidden entrepreneurial power. In this way they thus replace the legal framework of the market that usually serves to ensure an open competition.

An essential condition of the planned economy is the accountability of the central planning authority. Given the unrealisability of central planning this authority must necessarily rely on the economic hierarchy and the leading role of the “vanguard” of the constructivist group that possesses the exclusive right to construct these hierarchies. Of course additional conditions for a planned economy must also be fulfilled. These are expressed in the uniformity of the institutional know-how of the leading role and central planning, which consist in democratic centralism and in the sovereign administration of the nomenclature. The essential uniformity of the institutional know-how of the leading role and central planning not only lends the regime a coordinatively very important internal homogeneity, but it also supplies the regime with the key organism of distribution of competences and commitments. It makes the dominant methods of ownership and governance out of the leading role and central planning. In their shadow a deformed form of know-how typical of the constitutional arrangement – the political and economic competition or the division of power – can be exercised. In this connection we can refer to a *limited competition* and a *hierarchic balancing of power*.

Types of arrangements

DISTRIBUTION OF COMPETENCES → MANAGING CHANGE ↓	SUPERIOR PARALLEL POWER	CONSTITUTIONAL COMPETITIONS
CENTRAL LEADING ROLE + PLANNING	Constructivist arrangement (Social rights)	
PUBLIC REPRESENTATION + PRIVATE ENTERPRISE		Constitutional arrangement (Civic rights)

¹²⁴ Klvačová: Ekonomická úloha státu. 1989.

¹²⁵ Hayek: Právo, zákonodárství a svoboda. 1) Pravidla a řád. 1991, 47–49.

¹²⁶ Kornai: Economy of Shortage. 1986.

6.3 The Constructivist Arrangement and the Leading role of the Party

6.3.1 A Firm Alliance ... Headed by ... a Part of World System of ...

The all-encompassing game framework of the constructivist arrangement does not according to our theory possess a dominantly institutional character but rather a historical-scenic character. We must take seriously the statement in the constitution of 1960 that “*the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic is a socialist state, founded on a firm alliance of workers, peasants and the intelligentsia, headed by the working class... the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic is a part of the world system of socialism; it strives towards friendly relations with all nations and for the ensuring of lasting peace throughout the world.*” (Art. 1), just like the assertions in the preamble about the constructivist aims: “*As the process of building up socialism reaches completion, we move on to the construction of a socialist society and gather our forces for the transition to communism*”. In this, the following well-known principle then applies: “*Each according to his own abilities, each according to his own needs!*”

The object of idealisation is not freedom, but work and prosperity providing social security. At play here is the liberation from class rule acquired in the struggle, from a rule that is not founded in the first place by hierarchies of superiority and the privileges stemming from this, but by monopolies and the despotism of property owners exploiting the workers; the very workers in which the constructivist power lies.

The institutional component of constructivist regimes also possesses an internal logic. This stems from the transformation of the constitutional arrangement which arises as a result of the installation of a superior parallel power of the vanguard of the constructivist group: the communist party as a “*voluntary fighting alliance of the most active and the most conscious citizens from the ranks of the workers, the peasants and the intelligentsia.*” (Art. 4, Constitution of 1960). It is the classic state power and the general public against which the Communist Party as the social vanguard executes its leading role. Within the framework of central planning it arranges the constructivist tasks and fulfils the solidary commitments that are tied to the social rights of the firm alliance of workers, peasants, and the intelligentsia.

The form in which the parallel power is constituted and operates can be found in the statutes of the Czechoslovak Communist Party. It is possible to reconstruct it along the following lines:

- (a) The constitutional and unconstitutional weakening of the legislative and judicial power, which accompanies the subordination of all state powers to one superior parallel power,
- (b) The separation of the armed forces from the executive power as the basic disciplinary and combative instrument against external and internal enemies,
- (c) The restriction of the political and economic competition implemented by the leading role of the party and the planning monopoly of administrative and economic organisations linked to state property,
- (d) The crossing of equal citizenship and the unequal relationship of the member – non-member of the superior parallel power (party-member and non-party-member), which is concealed within the framework of the labour comradeship by the egalitarian and solidary employees’ status.¹²⁷

¹²⁷ The specificities of the status of socialist employees has been described on many occasions, in our country, for example, in Večerník: *Občan a tržní ekonomika*. 1998.

The constitutional equilibrium of the legislative, executive and judicial powers typical for the constitutional arrangement is spontaneously transformed in the constructivist arrangement into a contention, which in a manner other than constitutionally is hidden and regulated among more or less autonomous components: (i) the superior parallel power (in this case the Communist Party), (ii) state power (which overlaps most with the executive power) and (iii) the armed forces (state and public security, the army, and a criminal justice system). The regulated contention between these three components has the character of a hierarchical balancing. It secures the Communist Party a superior position over both of the remaining two powers. It also effectively prevents these two components from colluding and does not permit any one of them from gaining lasting dominance over the other. Instead it rather separates them and cultivates exclusive relationships with each of them. “Party and government” construct socialism. Party and armed forces combated for peace and paralysed the tenacious internal enemies.

We can discern four sources of the hierarchical balancing of power based in the protection of game frameworks discussed below:

Sources of the hierarchical balancing of power

SOURCE OF ACCOUNTABILITY → LEVEL OF INSTITUTIONALISATION ↓	DEFINING RELEVANCE	ESTABLISHING CONFORMITY
BASAL LEVEL (Game framework)	Leading role as the nomenclature administration (Bans on entry and exclusion)	Leading role as discipline (Anonymous complaints and ritual voting)
META-LEVEL (Law/justice)	Labour comradeship (Celebration and initiation)	Non-public dictatorship of the armed forces (Enforcement of discipline and trials)

In the execution of leading role of communist party, the nomenclature administration represented a basic tool of its cadre and personnel policy. Its obverse side lay in the disciplinary system, which supervised the fulfilment of party tasks by functionaries and regular party members. The disciplinary system thus encompassed, and even went beyond the nomenclature administration. This administration of course remained the most important area of its outcome. In addition to the social networks, the cadre assessments were what most significantly determined people’s careers.

In the activity of the Reverno Presidium of the District Committee KSC, for example, two-thirds of the decided items in 1988 referred to cadre and personnel work, 4% referred to practical issues, and the remainder referred to organisational matters within the DC KSC and relations to higher- and lower-situated bodies.

Alongside the hierarchies of the apparatus of the Communist Party, with their specialised hierarchies of control and auditing commissions, also integrated into the disciplinary system were the party-administered hierarchies of mass organisations¹²⁸ and administrative

¹²⁸ Revolutionary Trade Union Movement, Czechoslovak Union of Women, Czechoslovak Socialist Union of Youth, Pioneers, Union of Agricultural Cooperatives, Union of Anti-Fascist Fighters, Union for Cooperation with the Army, Peace Committee, and Physical Culture Association etc.

and planning hierarchies, which possessed extensive competences of control and obligations to deal with complaints.¹²⁹ Of no less importance were people's control committees, prosecution councils and more broadly aimed hierarchies, especially state and public security. Finally another significant part of supervision lay with the general and party¹³⁰ educational hierarchies. In addition to multiple, overlapping, formal hierarchies with vaguely defined competence, party discipline was also, of course, executed through informal structures and procedures. Both party and state functionaries regularly organised their own private networks of informers.

6.3.2 The Constructivist Arrangement, the Historic Mission of the Constructivist Group and Its "Vanguard"

Of key importance for the constructivist arrangement is the existence of a social group whose accountable historic mission is to construct a new arrangement. In order for this *constructivist group* – in this case the proletariat – to be able to fulfil its constructivist and especially its combative task, it must have its own well organised "vanguard", which has knowledge of the only correct path of transition. It knows how to win for all of society a happy future and to pursue this through all the difficulties of the dramatic pitfalls along this path. It is capable of galvanising all of society into its own self-transformation. The privilege to lead society and the monopolies of central planning of this society belong to the vanguard, which therefore has the "right" to protect its virtue through every means possible. Its privileged position is moreover rooted in "scientific" laws (historical materialism, the theory of racial superiority etc.). The most inherent aspect of the privilege of the leadership is therefore the sovereign application of the constructivist (in this case class) "approach" to all controversial matters through their insertion in the framework of the revolutionary myth.

The national position of the "vanguard" group was strengthened by its appertaining to the world system of progressive countries, led by their predestined hegemonic centre. The hold of the described, fateful power was not in the end a feature of the Czechoslovak Communist Party in our case, but rather of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Accordingly, the Czechoslovak Communist Party respected the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, with which the above-mentioned armed forces and the state power had their own rather independent contacts.

The game framework of the leading role has its background in constructivist law and justice, which correspond to the historic mission of constructivist group to build up a new society. In the socialist constructivist regimes this involved class law, which to a significant extent was mythically determined by the cult of work and the revolutionary doctrine of the struggle between progressive and reactionary forces, which served to legitimise the dictatorship of the constructivist group.

¹²⁹ A government decree on addressing the complaints, notices, and initiatives of the working public (150/1958), which is to date still a part of Czech law.

¹³⁰ On the top are institutes for Marxism-Leninism found in Prague, Brno, and Bratislava and the Advanced School of Politics in Prague.

Liberated human work has become the basic factor in all of our society. It is now not only an obligation but a matter of honour on the part of each citizen. The principle of socialism is being realised: "Each according to his abilities, each according to his work!" The people's democracy as the path to socialism has fully proved itself: the path has led us to its victory.... In the next development, when work becomes the first necessity of life, we want to achieve the kind of advancement in the forces of production and the kind of enhancement of the wealth of society that will render it possible to satisfy all the growing needs of society and the all-round development of each of its members. Then it will be possible to move on to the realisation of the highest principle of distribution – the principle of communism: "Each according to his abilities, each according to his needs!" Constitution 1960

The institutional dimension of the class form of constructivist law and justice can be viewed in the labour comradeship and the non-public dictatorship of the armed forces. We connect labour comradeship with the celebration, the ostentatious social policy for the working people, and the selective practices of initiation into party events. It is constituted in constructivist regimes as a "total social fact". We can come closer to this idea by paraphrasing Mauss' famous definition of the total social phenomenon: "In the first place these are not individuals but organisations which exchange, conclude contracts, and make reciprocal commitments; the persons indicated in the contract are legal persons: families and institutions, which encounter each other and face each other as groups, and which meet through their heads of families, chairs, secretaries, and influential connections. Moreover, what is being exchanged are not exclusively goods and wealth, movable and immovable property, economically profitable items. To a significant degree they exchange also the expression of labour comradeship, loyalty to the party, hunts and feasts, rites, power assistance and protection, medals, honours and last but not least posts, during which the trading is only a single moment, and the circulation of material goods only a single point in a contract that is more general and more lasting. These mutual services and reciprocal services are also moreover significantly formally realised in the principle of voluntariness, by means of gifts and courtesies, even though this power patronage is essentially under pain of private or group struggle strictly obligatory."

The counterpart of the labour comradeship was the non-public dictatorship of the armed forces. It protected the superior position of the Communist Party, not so much from the other components of state power as from reactionary power inside the whole society. It consisted eventually in the shadow enforcement of discipline and the control of judicial power.

6.3.3 The Duplication of all Pragmatic Hierarchies with the Hierarchies of the Communist Party

Socialist constitutions were not merely irrational facades of the regime that concealed their true nature, as Zbigniew Brzezinski understands them.¹³¹ They fulfilled their constitutional role in a peculiar way: in its basic contours they defined the relationship between the superior parallel power of the vanguard group (the Communist Party) and the subordinate components of state power. The socialist type of constructivist arrangement constituted so-

¹³¹ Brzezinski: *The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict*. 1961, 77.

cialist lawfulness as an 'as if rule of law', which instead of ruling out the leading role of any one organised group, on the contrary secured this for the Communist Party.

The hypothesis concerning the control of constitutional institutions and all other organisations of the arrangement is based on the existence of a duplication of all pragmatic hierarchies (ministries, enterprises, judicial courts, offices) with hierarchies of the Communist Party. This duplication was established in the Statutes of the KSČ:

- (a) Through the existence of party organisations within all economic, administrative, armed, interest and mass organisations of this arrangement including constitutional ones,¹³²
- (b) Through the existence of party groups within all larger boards and committees ensuring the functioning of these institutions,¹³³
- (c) Through the right to summon, by regulation of the Central Committee, ad hoc functional conventions of the KSČ in pursuance of important issues, campaigns and actions,
- (d) Through the resident position of each member of the party in all spheres of social life, as established in his party obligations.¹³⁴

This permeation of all of society enabled the hierarchically organised Communist Party to control, through the external influence on internal residents, all institutions and organisations of the constructivist arrangement. This involved a very specific and opaque form of control founded on the principle of democratic centralism.

The duality of socialist constructivist hierarchies is not like Siamese twins, where some organs are doubled while others remain shared. In our case the duplication is founded on a hierarchical balancing of power, in which the Communist Party acquired the privilege to effectively influence the key decisions of all functionaries in institutions, who themselves were party members, but who also had at all echelons party counterparts in the functionaries of party organisations.

When, in connection with this ordering of matters, we refer to the parallel superior power of the Communist Party, it is not a substantive parallelism that we have mainly in mind, where alongside pragmatic hierarchies there existed the hierarchies of the Communist Party comprised of separate personnel. It is rather a coordinative parallelism we are referring to. For this parallelism, conversely, the overlapping of hierarchies is constitutive. The position of each member of society is at the same time defined on the one hand by the status derived from his position in the pragmatic division of activities, and on the other hand by his

¹³² Basic-level organisations are formed in factories, firms, plants, business enterprises, state farms, mechanical stations, armoury units, in villages, offices, streets etc., where there are at least three party members. In firms, offices and villages where there are less than three party members and a larger number of party candidates, candidate groups are formed, headed by a contact man that has been a member of the party for at least one year and who is named by the district or municipal committee.

¹³³ At all congresses and meetings, and in the elected bodies of the people's administration, trade union organisations, youth, cooperative, and other mass organisations where there are at least three party members, party groups are formed, the task of which is to overall reinforce the influence of the party and implement its policy among non-party members, strengthen party and state discipline, and fight against bureaucratism and verify that the directives of the party and the state are fulfilled. Party groups are subordinate to the relevant party bodies and are obligated to strictly and unwaveringly adhere to the regulations of these bodies in all matters.

¹³⁴ A member of the party had to: be an active campaigner on behalf of the fulfilment of party resolutions, maintain party and state discipline and inform the chief bodies of the party, up to the Central Committee of the party, about any shortcomings at work regardless of the persons involved.

position as a party or non-party member. The second component of position considered here, stemming from the relationship of the person to the Communist Party, is not only strictly hierarchised (non-party members – full party members – party functionaries), but it also inter-personally and intra-personally (in the case of the Communists) participates in controlling the pragmatic components of the position. For example, a party functionary, the chair of the District National Committee (DNC), not only came under the authority of his party organisation at the DNC and the superior collective bodies of the party which he could be a member of (in the given case the Presidium of the District Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (DC KSČ) or the Security Commission, but also, as a party member, he controlled himself as the chair of the DNC. The party tasks of a member of the DC KSČ not only considerably defined the manoeuvring space of the chair of the DNC, but also wherever he asserted his influence he could also rely on the authority of his party function and his party contacts.

6.3.4 The Superior Parallel Power of the Communist Party and Democratic Centralism

The superior parallel power of the Communist Party was constituted along with (i) how in the constructivist arrangement the economic and political competition was transformed or counteracted and (ii) how the constitutional division of power was replaced by a hierarchical balancing of the party, state power, and armed forces. The transformation of the political competition was closely connected with the formation of the superior parallel power of the Communist Party and its role in determining public interests by applying the class approach. The transformation of the economic competition was predetermined by nationalisation, which established the necessity of central planning. The constitutional division of power had already lost its footing before February 1948 in the Czech case owing to the National Front and the unscrupulously undertaken colonisation of state power by the Communist Party. After February it was then definitively finished off by the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

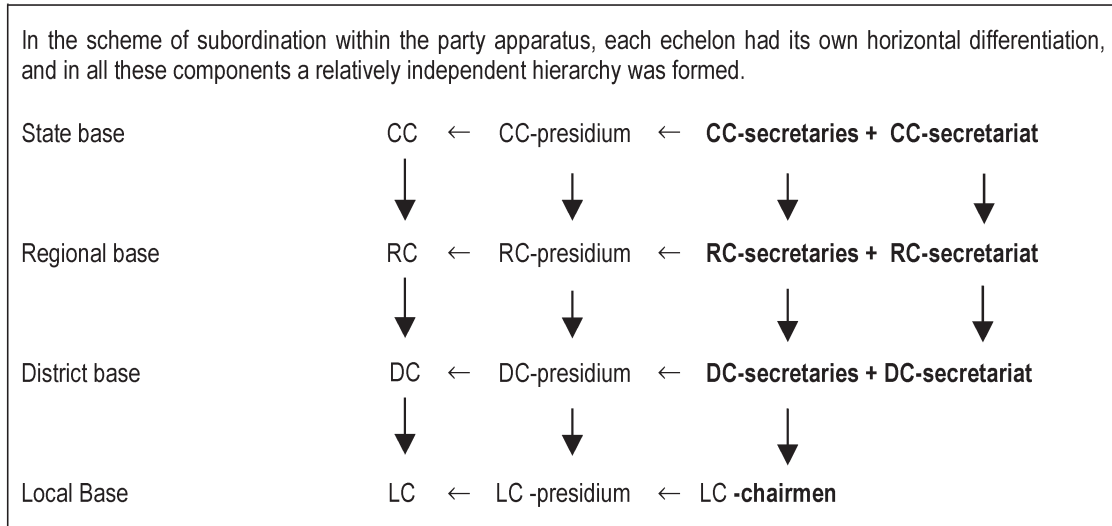
The normalised form of superior parallel power, as we indicated in the previous section, was constituted in the statutes of the Communist Party. These statutes invested all bodies and organisations of the Communist Party with the competence to manage, control, or just to point out weaknesses, not only within the hierarchical organisation of the Party – in declared terms, even from the bottom-up – but also horizontally, extending even beyond the party into all bodies and organisations that were part of the pragmatic hierarchies.¹³⁵

It is necessary to comprehend these entitlements derived from the statutes of the KSČ in the context of democratic centralism. If the principle of democratic centralism is applied universally for the purpose of building up the hierarchies and if the pragmatic hierarchies are universally permeated by the bodies and organisations of the Communist Party, then the party hierarchy becomes the mainstay or backbone around which the remaining bodies and organisations are positioned. Even each central body of the pragmatic hierarchies has as an agent its own principal in some body of the Party.¹³⁶ The condition for the effective execution

¹³⁵ For example, the basic-level organisations (except in the Ministries and other central, regional, district, and urban offices; author) had “the right to control the activities of the administration of the enterprise, which means maintaining continuous contact with the management of the firm, sensing a responsibility for the fulfilment of tasks, and without actually substituting the management of the firm pointing out weakness and assisting in their elimination. Statutes of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (Stanovy Komunistické strany Československa. Praha: ÚV KSČ. 1954).

¹³⁶ Agency theory is built on the idea that superiors (principals, e. g. firm owners, top managers, foremen etc.) would only with difficulty be able to control the fulfilment of their orders among subordinates. They are usually more or less de-

of the leading role with regard to the pragmatic hierarchies is first of all to assert the leading role of the central bodies within the party, based on the principle of democratic centralism. A party that is centrally controlled, on the basis of the same principle, can then as a superior parallel power also control the colonised pragmatic hierarchies.



Democratic centralism is defined in the 1954 Statutes of the KSC as follows:¹³⁷

- All leading party bodies are elected from the ground upwards (*institute of universal eligibility*),
- Party bodies are held regularly accountable and submit reports on their activities to the party organisations that elect them and to higher bodies (*institute of horizontal and vertical party accountability*),
- Minorities and individuals submit without objection to the decisions of the majority (*institute of horizontal loyalty*),
- Resolutions carried by higher bodies are unconditionally binding for all lower bodies (*institute of vertical loyalty*).

It is necessary to add to the above-mentioned institutes, as described here, the principle of universal collective decision-making. Also, the institute of the general dischargeability of all functionaries belongs here, which is a supplement to the institute of universal eligibility,¹³⁸ as well as the obligation of party members and organisations to indicate shortcomings in work from the bottom up. Democratic centralism as a basic principle of the organisational con-

pendent on the information the subordinates (agents) provide them with. The latter naturally provide information that is modified to their advantage. Superiors can potentially invest in an independent source of control, but for them this pays off only when the costs of the control do not exceed the gains to be had from the control. Alchian and Demsetz: *Production, Information Costs, and Economic Organization*. 1972, Bowie and Freeman: *Ethics and Agency Theory*. 1992, Coleman: *The Foundation of Social Theory*. 1990.

¹³⁷ The shared perception among party members of democratic centralism probably only partially overlapped with the official form discussed here: "Everything was founded on democratic centralism. This was comprised of two components, democracy and centralism, which were in balance. Up until the time a resolution was made on a matter everyone was able to comment on their subject, but as soon as a resolution was passed, it was binding for all subordinate components." (secretary of the DC Revermo district).

¹³⁸ All functions in the party were elected.

struction was incorporated without specifications into the Czechoslovak constitution (of 1960) and was systematically inserted into all statutes and organisational codes of the organisations in the pragmatic hierarchies. In these codes, like in the constitution itself, usually nothing more was written about the role of the Communist Party.

The organisational principles of the Municipal National Committee of Philipstown in the 1980s were: the leading role of the KSČ, democratic centralism, socialist lawfulness, the principle of planning and budgeting, the participation of citizens and the unity of political and economic management.

Democratic centralism emerged out of a synthesis of the incompatible, the idea of democratic self-government and bureaucratic administration; the grafting of bureaucratic hierarchical elements onto an originally self-governmental equity substratum:

The farrago of democratic centralism

ORGANISATIONAL FORMS → INSTITUTES ↓	DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM	DEMOCRATIC SELF-GOVERNMENT	BUREAUCRATIC ADMINISTRATION (Weberian ideal type)
SUPERIORITY	Universal eligibility	Representative eligibility	Appointment
DECISION-MAKING	Collective	Collective	Individual
LOYALTY TO DECISIONS	Horizontal and vertical	Horizontal	Vertical
ACCOUNTABILITY	Horizontal and vertical	Horizontal	Vertical

We can therefore also demonstrate through democratic self-government how organisms founded on the described democratic centralism “turn around” the hierarchies founded by institutes of public representation. In democratic self-government the principal in the terms of the above-mentioned agency theory¹³⁹ is always the public, and the agents are the representative bodies. In order to the public to be the only principal, the representative bodies must not be allowed to be incorporated into the hierarchy, wherein they would have to respect in the sphere of their exclusive competences the decisions of higher bodies. It is this inadmissible incorporation into the hierarchy, however, that democratic centralism produces with the aid of institutes of vertical accountability and loyalty. The public ceases to be the principal and is selectively supplanted by a higher body.

The described synthesis of the incompatible – the verticality and horizontality of incidence, asymmetric and symmetric influences – systemically creates Crozier’s areas of uncertainty,¹⁴⁰ which can then be controlled by a parallel, but internally impacting power. No functional, committee or assembly could, under the assertion of democratic centralism, be altogether sure which horizontal or vertical argument would in the end be applied in his disciplinary process. Because, however, the final arbiter in all questionable cases was the Communist Party, each decision-maker had to count on the fact that, for the assessment of his competence, in the end the party dimension of his formal position would be a more important factor than any other relating to the pragmatic division of activities. The application of a ver-

¹³⁹ See note 136.

¹⁴⁰ Crozier: *The Bureaucratic Phenomenon*. 1964.

tical or conversely a horizontal dimension in a rendering of account and an assessment of loyalty was always accounted by the constructivist (class) approach, i. e. by the public interest as derived from the mythic role of the constructivist group.

Organisms founded on democratic centralism represent a coordinative fence-straddler; they are half hierarchically administrative and half equitably self-governmental. According to the needs of the situation they alter their appearance. Behind the facade of the declared electing of all bodies and collective decision-making they create manoeuvring space – if we return to the table above – for the shadow application of the institute of appointment and for individual decision-making. This space for the application of authoritarian practices was rendered quite opaque by the practice of nomenclature administration. An unquestionable advantage of democratic centralism as a coordination principle is the fact that it ensures the operation of social hierarchies, albeit in a manipulative manner from the constitutional perspective, but independent of the application of any “hard” repression.

6.3.5 The Nomenclature Administration and the Systems of Supervision

The main functional content of the nomenclature administration consisted in: (i) approving, confirming, voting, or only reflecting on cadre proposals for the manning of all important and even functions in the state (so-called active deployment of cadres) and (ii) managing the membership bases of the party (admitting party candidates and party members, executing disciplinary procedures of punishment and expulsion). These main activities were complemented by other agendas dealing with the formation of cadre reserves, the political-ideological training of cadres and reserves, and decision-making relating to matters of importance for the cadres, such as awarding honours, granting scientific titles, assigning functionary internships, easing tours to capitalist and non-capitalist states etc.

The institutional backbone of the nomenclature administration was formed by the hierarchy of party and non-party decision-making bodies, committees, and assemblies, which proposed, approved, elected or only reflected on proposals for the cadres. Attached to this hierarchy was a complete list of nomenclature positions relating to all areas of the life of society. The hierarchy of decision-making bodies complied with the statutes of the KSC, or had another type of foundation (e. g. legal in the case of the bodies of the national committees). The hierarchy of nomenclature posts was derived from the hierarchy of the party bodies that made decisions pertaining to them. The higher the decision-making lay, the more powerful the function. Of course, decisions concerning the very highest positions were presumably made in Moscow.

The nomenclature administration followed the procedural directives worked out primarily for the deployment of cadres. In particular they stipulated who from the Communist apparatus submitted cadre proposals to the commissions and what kind of form they must take (a questionnaire, reports from former employers and social organisations, colleague assessments, criminal records and possible also medical certifications, statement from cadre documentation allowing an evaluation of professional qualifications and loyalty to the socialist arrangement). Conversely, the process of being dismissed from a function was not procedurally dealt with, as it was the party that made the sovereign decision.

For example, a minister conducting a change in personnel relating to the position of a deputy submitted his cadre proposal to the CC KSČ. This proposal was then investigated by the secretary of the CC KSČ and only then was it submitted to the presidium or the secretariat of the CC, which made a decision on the matter through a vote.

Nomenclature positions also encompassed those positions in the commissions and assemblies that made decisions in the affairs of the cadres. What was involved, therefore, was a complex, self-productive organism, which controlled the careers of all people with ambition. Every functionary not only had a higher body to thank for his function, but was also aware that only the will of this body could prevent the group voting of his subordinates from threatening his position. The nomenclature administration ensured for the Communist Party (or more precisely for its apparatus) a safe majority of loyally supporting voters in all important commissions, committees and assemblies. It could therefore with privilege govern not only itself but also all components of state power and economic organisations. A less obvious, but for that all the more important effect of the nomenclature administration was the fact that, owing to this specialisation, the party was separated from the pragmatic hierarchies, even though it still penetrated them. The “cadre work” imprinted on the hierarchies a characteristic atmosphere of comradely relations.

The administration of the membership base encompassed not only the admittance of party candidates and members, but also the assigning of party tasks and their control, as well as political training, and potentially also disciplinary punishment and expulsion, carried out in compliance with Lenin’s principle of discipline built on expulsions. Such an expulsion was not merely a matter of a platonic threat. The KSČ throughout the 1950s not only intensively took in new members, but also expelled members on a regular basis. To this purpose campaign screenings were conducted, along with the exchange of membership cards (following the extensive party purge in 1947, and thereafter in the years 1950, 1958, 1972 etc.).

Even in the late 1980s in the Revermo district, expulsion from the party was not merely a formal matter. It was not enough here to simply pay membership fees. Up until November 13, 1989, in less than one full year a total of 120 comrades in the district were expelled (approx. 1%).

In order for us to understand, from the coordination perspective, what the party supervision over the “castrated” public representation was like, we need to present it in closer detail. The institutes of public representation are determined by pledges (from the president, judges etc.) or through contractual relations between those representing and those represented, which exclude from decision-making within a select field not only all other persons but also the represented persons themselves. This occurs legally, as the represented have contractually entrusted their representatives with their representative rights. A part of this contractual superiority is the commitments of the representatives to the represented, which are essentially independent of the successfulness of the decision-making of the representatives. The latter are obligated to make responsible use of the competences they have acquired so that the public of the represented will be able to reap the benefits promised out of this contractual bond. Unlike property rights, which are not bound to other persons, the acquired representa-

tive rights are conditioned by the loyalty of the represented persons. Without this loyalty they become mere window-dressings, veiling the powerlessness of the given superior.

Contractual representative rights encompass the formulation of a given problem (setting the agenda), decision-making and negotiation, the pursuit and organisation of an action, and its evaluation on behalf of the represented persons. The content of this public representation consists of governance (dealing with the represented and inspecting their actions), the representation of the represented in relations to other persons, the formation of hierarchic positions and the filling of these positions with the represented persons (setting over and subordinating), and in cases also the constitution of representation through the establishment of norms and the execution of disciplinary power.

Authorities of the institute of public representation

TYPES OF COORDINATION→ RELATIONS ↓	HANDLING (Production)	DISTRIBUTION OF AUTHORITY (transactions)
INNER (Towards members and organs)	Governance (administration)	Setting over (subordinating)
INTERPERSONAL (Towards other persons)	Representation	Constitution of representation (establishing norms and judicial authority)

An obvious aspect of public representation is found in the competences indicated in the column “handling”: governance and representation. However, key to this institute of public representation are the authorities of defining and distributing competences: who and under what circumstances acquires the representative rights for dealing with other persons. These transaction competences make it possible to execute relatively effective supervision over productive ones: governance and representation. They are able to establish a hierarchic balancing of the power between the Communist Party, state power, and the armed forces. The led pragmatic hierarchies were eventually left with the handling authorities: the administration of society and the economy, and as the case may be, even looking after the security of the state. The functionaries in these pragmatic hierarchies, however, had to be accountable to the party, and party discipline was demanded from them.

In order for the constitution of public representation to be able to be used for this kind of execution of the leading role, the vanguard group must be capable of depriving the public and the representatives of having the final word on the distribution of competences. This undoubtedly demanding task¹⁴¹ can be successfully achieved as a result of the systematic application of the principle of democratic centralism, which makes the vanguard group capable of depriving the public and the representatives of having the final word on the distribution of competences. In order to explain how this principle enables the appropriation of the competences to construct hierarchies and fill hierarchic positions at the expense of both the public and their representatives, we must again return to our table presenting democratic centralism as an administrative “farrago”. What happens if the institute of vertical loyalty is applied on the institute of universal eligibility (and/or the concealed institute of the general dischargeability of functionaries) in the circumstances of the general validity of the institute of collective decision-making? All leading party bodies are in this case indeed elected from

¹⁴¹ Neither the public nor the quasi-owners of state firms or the quasi-administrators of offices disposing of large sources of these genuinely significant competences gave up easily. They could conspire, and they did so, too.

the bottom up, but the electors are bound by party loyalty to elect these bodies in accordance with how these bodies, or more precisely the bodies on the higher echelon, have decided in advance. If any elected functionary loses the trust of the higher bodies owing to a lack of loyalty, by the same organism of led collective decision-making he is removed from his function. The nomenclature administration, conducted within the framework of the most important agenda of the Communist Party, “cadre and personnel policy”, was procedurally based on the leading of collective decision-making, facilitated by the voting loyalty of the functionaries, party-members, and in the end even non-party members. Without this voting loyalty, the organisms of the nomenclature administration would collapse immediately, which is what happened after November 1989. Conversely, with this loyalty the “setting over” and subordinating begins to move within a closed circle: voting loyalty ensures, for voting on the filling of positions in the nomenclature, the kind of publics that are willing to vote loyally.

The Revermo¹⁴² Presidium of the DC, like all collective bodies of the party, was comprised of a small group of truly influential functionaries and a majority of relatively non-influential party members in the district echelon. In the Presidium of the Revermo DC, the ratio of influential and non-influential functionaries, as can be judged by functions, was 4 (the leading secretary, the ideological and organisational secretaries and the chairman of the DNC) to 13. This means also that the influential functionaries could always be outvoted if the more highly positioned body decided to do so. These non-influential members of the DC dispersed following a meeting with the tasks and missions that had been adopted at the meeting and returned with them to the areas and places of the lower echelon, in which they were influential.

A critical point in the nomenclature administration is the effectiveness of party disciplinary measures in ensuring voting loyalty, which enabled the leading of collective decision-making. “Career” motivations among potential party-members must be sufficiently strong so that they will relinquish any intentions of expressing their own evaluations in the group voting and so that they will not demand any procedural specifications or transparency in the approach to representation.

6.3.6 The Protection of Commitments, Competences, and Conduct Tied to the Nomenclature Administration

The nomenclature administration could come across as an effective tool for party discipline only if the commitments, competences and conduct connected with it were effectively protected without dependence on the judicial power.¹⁴³ The game frameworks can be protected generally with the following types of protection:¹⁴⁴

We can expect that in the case of an arrangement founded on the protection of leadership privileges and planning monopolies the dominating types of protection will be those that in the constitutional arrangements recede into the background and play “second fiddle”.¹⁴⁵ In

¹⁴² Revermo is a district town of Philipstown.

¹⁴³ The stronger position of the courts could effectively limit the superior parallel power of the Communist Party.

¹⁴⁴ Kabele: Ochrana práv a sociální konstrukce hierarchií: příklad soudnictví. 2001.

¹⁴⁵ Kabele: Z kapitalismu do socialismu a zpět. Teoretické vyšetřování přerodů Československa a České republiky. 2003.

Types of protection of competitive game frameworks

SOURCE OF ACCOUNTABILITY →	RELEVANCE	ACHIEVING CONFORMITY
LEVEL OF INSTITUTIONALISATION ↓		
GAME FRAMEWORK (Base level)	Entry/Exit (Starring the game)	Complaint/Group voting (Expression of the binding assessments of conformity and the qualification)
FRAMEWORK OF LAW AND JUSTICE (Meta-level)	Rooting/Publicity (Way of constituting)	Discipline/Lawsuit (Enforcement of redress)

the paradigm, these types are marked in bold. They are intended here to strengthen: (i) the role of control over entry (the nomenclature administration), (ii) the systems of anonymous complaint, (iii) the rooting of the leading role (in the revolutionary myth and historical materialism), and (iv) disciplinary enforcement of loyalty. The leadership privilege is, of course, itself a source of its own self-protection, based on the traditional principles of ruling. These principles need not be differentiated and procedurally worked out. What is important is that they are a firm component of the “gestalt” of relations that serve to establish the leading role. The state of falling into “disfavour” is here signalled through rumours, being “cut off” from behind-the-scenes information, the withdrawal of protection from “party” criticism, not being invited to ad hoc assemblies, being bypassed in decision-making, not being included in assemblies and peripheral functions etc.

The administration of the nomenclature and the membership base primarily had control over entry. It made an initiate and select group out of the apparatus of the party, the functionary conventions and party-members, and as such all of the Communist Party. Its members were used for fulfilling the party tasks, but in this fulfilment of tasks, many times it was not as important what the content of the task actually was, as the way in which loyalty was expressed and labour comradeship was demonstrated through it. An advanced system operated in parallel for enabling the rendering of anonymous complaints about anyone, including party functionaries. As at the assemblies and meetings criticisms were expressed in only a limited form, and there was no even thinking about expressing complaints about superiors in such a public way, it became customary that the more delicate complaints and exceptions were usually submitted anonymously. These were then taken as seriously as complaints and exceptions submitted without anonymity.

Every complaint, even anonymous ones, was documented at Revermo and investigated under the direct lead of the secretaries of the DC KSCĚ and then concluded with a decision: substantiated, partially substantiated and unsubstantiated, always with an appendix of steps taken.

We have already characterised the role of the rooting of the leading role in the revolutionary myth.¹⁴⁶ It protected the party leadership by equipping it with the privilege to apply, in the final instance, the constructivist, i. e. class, approach in democratic centralism. The enforcement of discipline was directly connected to the system of complaint, which without this arbitrary enforcement of redress (the party like the individual functionaries liked to be forgiving so that people would then be indebted to them) would not have been effective. In addition, it represented a possible sequel to the systematically conducted rendering of ac-

¹⁴⁶ See also „The Constructivist Arrangement, the Historic Mission of the Constructivist Group and Its ‘Vanguard’.”

counts. This system was institutionalised both in the party control and auditing commissions and in the standard agendas of the party presidiums, where the rendering of accounts ritually took place.

The “vanguard” group in the constructivist arrangement asserts its leadership privileges and planning monopolies by starrng all key game positions of the regime. It administers the nomenclature thanks to the effective enforcement of voting loyalty. This “vanguard” leads the governments, parliaments and the courts. If the key types of protections of rights and freedoms are, from a constitutional perspective, fundamentally disturbed, persons – both individuals and organisations – must seek support from a leading force, Communist Party. The significance of complaint and the disciplinary enforcement of redress in particular is reinforced. At the same time the narratively constituted constructivist approach is also always applied. As the constructivist regime is not capable of being fully guaranteed by the principle of democratic centralism, its revolutionary myth is both its basic weapon and its Achilles heel.

Such a strong protective bulwark of leadership privileges and planning monopolies of the constructivist groups that is described here was not superfluous. These regimes are forced to count on the unrealisable central planning. In order that the responsibility for the consequences of this systemic weakness does not fall on the vanguard of the constructivist group, all of the above-mentioned types of protections of rights must eventually come to fulfil opposite functions: they become the building stones of the “organisms” that enable the re-distribution of responsibility for the central failure of the “vanguard” group, by putting it on the shoulders of all of society.

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7. SUMMARY: The World of Hierarchies and Real Socialism

Social Hierarchies and Equities

Jiří Kabele, Martin Hájek

In order for individuals, groups, and organisations to be able to understand social events and to act competently in their midst, they must be capable of distinctly grasping asymmetrical and symmetrical influences, and of recognising or identifying and adequately respecting them. To this end they employ *social hierarchies* and *social equity*, formations of equal and unequal social relationships, which organise social agents and social subjects. Owing to their abstract dimension, which “complements” their more graphic and even symbolic qualities, hierarchies and equity possess a constructive power of their own, and function as an important element in a kind of pre-understanding of events.

Hierarchies represent a more abstract concept than the concrete and “visible” *social hierarchies*, which we have become familiar with from contemporary forms of governance/rule. *The ordinal relationships*, giving order to asymmetries, are a concept even more abstract than that of *hierarchies*. The concept of *equity* is newly introduced here as the opposite pole of hierarchy. Here, of course, *equities* have their own abstract counterpart in *relationships of equivalence*, which give order to a symmetry founded on similarity or equipotency. A common background for all these “logical” correlations is the conceptual opposition: *asymmetry* versus *symmetry*.

Hierarchies and *equity* represent a special type of equivalence and ordinality, which are connected with shapes. These shapes assert themselves because they give order to events and on the lay and professional level render them observable, comprehensible, and reportable. This ordering partakes in the construction of social events of course not only on the level of understanding, but also in Thomasian terms, as a part of the definition of the social situation that determines the behaviour of people and as such even the event itself. They give birth to model (realised in declaration), but also real (really realised) hierarchies and equities.

A *hierarchic relationship (hierarchy)* is an ordinal relationship, the specificity of which is its connection with the spatial-temporal and social arrangement most commonly expressed in the terms of *above* and *below* (superiority), and *before* and *after* (precedence). Other orderings are of course also possible, for example, in the centre and on the periphery (centrality) etc. Superiority is associated with the vertical. It evokes an entire series of geometrical notions: one-dimensional quantities, scales, or ladders, two-dimensional trees and strata, and three-dimensional pyramids. Centrality is associated with the idea of concentrated circles. Precedence hierarchises, for example, through the notion of primordality, but ultimateness can of course equally be a privilege.

Equity is a shaped equivalent relation, the specificity of which is its connection with a spatio-temporal figuration most commonly expressed as evenness (neither *above* and *below*, nor *before* and *after*). It can be the result of a balancing that induces uniformity or a parity of ordered relationships. Equities have – or at least they appear to us to have – less graphic

potential than hierarchic relations. In the social world they are usually connected with the powerful ideals of equality and liberation.

The manifestability of shape of hierarchies and equities is not tied only to a spatio-temporal orderedness. The general qualities of the ties between the components of these shapes also often contribute to these shapes, in which we can easily find a reference to social worlds. They characterise the “cooperation” of elements and components through an established specialisation. We can indicate two such methods of cooperation: (i) the coordination by interplay and/or counterplay and (ii) incommensurability. The general qualities of ties considered here lend greater consistency to the shape: various and potentially isolated elements connect in one unit. Thanks to these qualities the shape is held together and resists decomposition. However it also maintains in itself significance and naturally attracts a variety of symbolic values.

The graphic manifestability of shape of hierarchies and equities not only lays out the possibility of studying them iconographically but also relentlessly draws our attention to the much richer world of the symbolic values of their shapes. The specific spatio-temporalness, more clearly than the cooperation or incommensurability of components, herein has its overlap, whereby it reveals hidden, but nonetheless important inner meanings. These meanings must be apprehended rather through “iconological” approaches. The possibility for the symbolic overlap of certain hierarchies and equities, or inversely their crucial inclusion into the symbolic universe, is not only culturally specific it is also universal. It is clearer and perhaps also more thoroughly addressed in the case of hierarchies and societies with an order given forever. On the one hand symbolism aptly captures the nature of social organisation and on the other hand of course it also produces it.

Social hierarchies and social equities express and create – if we take into consideration their constructive power – a complex concurrence of symmetric and asymmetric influences in the course of social events. In this sense they are an instrument and a product of governing, but also of ownership and knowledge management. We can understand them in coordinative and structural/systemic terms. The coordinative concept of *social relationships* between persons (individual and collective) is drawn from methodological individualism. Social relationships of persons are created by the shared, either low or high, coordination costs of any field of common transactions. The structural understanding of schemes of social relationships is not aimed as much at the intentions and actions of individual agents, but rather at the logic and “functioning” of the entire structure. The significance of any social relationship becomes clear only once it is put into relation with the entire scheme of relationships, forming a coherent and to a certain degree finite unit – a kind of unity of differences. The precondition for understanding the actions of any one agent in the social hierarchy or equity is knowledge of the structure of the relationships into which the agent is “woven”.

The sources of social equities and hierarchies lie in the postulation, evaluation and social comparison, the competition and the struggle, the balancing and outweighing, the integration and disintegration, and the differentiation and totalisation, which simultaneously reflect and generate the symmetry and asymmetry of influences. They can play a role in both approaches. Nevertheless, evaluation and social comparison, the competition and struggle, and balancing and outweighing clearly draw in the perspective of game coordination, while integration and disintegration, differentiation and totalisation are rather more associated with the development of structures.

It is the comparison of hierarchies and equities that has led to our basic finding that in social hierarchies particularly there resides a usable and abusable, but nonetheless independent, constructive strength, which has always been impressing human affairs with their nature.

The Description of the Hierarchic Relationship

Tomáš Holeček

A certain degree of descriptiveness is typical for sociological study. Description is a part of everyday life outside the realm of scientific work, too. At a closer glance we can see that the designation “description” covers various but nonetheless mutually related modes of speech.

We can distinguish between various meaning statuses of descriptive sentences. The meaning status of the descriptive sentence will therefore represent the more general characteristics of its meaning; from the logical perspective this will be established by determining what other sentences could contradict the chosen sentence, and which of them we can connect it with in.

For example, the sentence “Mr. Jaroslav Šabata occupies a lower position in the party hierarchy than Mr. Josef Špaček” can have the following statuses:

One possibility is that the sentence is communicating a current state of affairs, and uses the following rules of the mode of speech: The author or speaker states that he knows what is going on in the party and communicates to the others (who may not know this) what the hierarchic relationship between Mr. Šabata and Mr. Špaček is.

It could be meant as a speculation on a current state of affairs, which it would then be appropriate to deal with according to the following rules: The speaker would consider (again in the logical and not the psychological sense) it to be obvious that he cannot have certain knowledge of the relationships in the party hierarchy, and on this basis he would establish his idea concerning the hierarchic organisation.

It could be meant as a communication of knowledge, the verification of which plays no role at all.

It could be meant as the introduction of the listener or the reader into a certain social situation or social frame. The rules here would apply as follows: the competence of the speaker is assumed in advance and the listener is submitted with sentences that he must accept if he wants to join the social frame.

It could involve a proposal for an expansion of the expressive potential of description.

It could involve indication, an appeal to the listener (or reader) to turn his attention in the direction indicated.

It would of course be possible to think of various combinations of the statuses presented here, as well as of more and more forms of statuses.

Rulers “By the Grace of God” versus “The Best Ones” – Social and Cultural Hierarchies as Reflected in Anthropological Research

Josef Kandert

Hierarchies are a subject that social anthropologists have dealt with throughout the entire period in which the field of anthropology has existed; they tend, however, to use the terms superordinate and subordinate rather than speaking of lower or higher position in rank in a hierarchised system. The research most closely aligned with this hierarchic concept is that which focuses on the issues relating to the existence of social strata and social classes, and on the question of the emergence of the state. Anthropologists interpret the problem of superordinate and subordinate positions and the behaviour of superior and inferior members of groups quite broadly, and they study these problems – and have always studied them – in the widest variety of forms and shapes that they can take, and in the most varied groups and periods that they can occur in.

In the second half of the 19th century, the anthropological interest in hierarchies was linked primarily to the question of the rise of the state and the question of the form or existence of tribal societies – or, of the existence of “office holders” in tribal societies. Within the framework of evolutionary categories, intellectual considerations turned to focus on the periods of human history in which primitive communism existed – i. e. a society without social or cultural hierarchies. In their research, the “forefathers” of anthropology relied on reports from classical authors and on the idealised accounts of “noble savages” from the 17th and 18th centuries, and from these they drew the inspiration for the construction of their theories.

It was the onset of long-term field research, the early phases of which date back to the 1890s, that introduced qualitatively new materials on which it was possible to construct different theories. A strong influx of data occurred during the years between 1930 and 1960, when dozens of fieldwork studies on specific societies – both state and non-state – were done, usually employing a functional-structural approach. From our perspective what is important is that the studies also included research on societies featuring a minimal degree of hierarchisation – e. g. the Nuers, the Tallensi, the Pygmies, the San people, and other African tribes. After the Second World War research focusing on Africa¹⁴⁷ was expanded to cover research on Latin America, Asia and Oceania, and historical anthropology began to take off, and this introduced new outcome that was drawn from the analyses of written materials, usually from medieval state societies or ancient and early modern societies. On the basis of these studies, analyses, and summaries, it is today possible to construct an idea of the rough features of what the socio-anthropological understanding of the term “hierarchy” was at that time.

On the whole it is possible to say that from the anthropological perspective there are no societies or cultures without hierarchies.

Anthropological data make it possible to distinguish several principles, with the aid of which people (members of society and the bearers of culture) explain the existence of specific social and cultural inequalities.

First, there are the principles that distinguish between people on the basis of personal capabilities, age, and sex. The way in which the principle of personal abilities is applied in individual societies is founded on the idea of competition, which as a principle is supported by the entire group. Both these principles (age and sex) are based on the idea of predetermination; the consequent superior or inferior social position in society is a result of this predetermination.

¹⁴⁷ Tait and Middleton 1970, Bohannan 1970 etc.

Other principles influencing the unequal positions of people are frequently described (and understood) in popular models as elitist principles, wherein their emergence is explained as being a result or consequence of some human action. First to be mentioned is the principle of “supernatural powers”, which in all the societies and cultures that have been studied refers to communication with non-human worlds. There is also the principle of kinship, denoting that a certain position or certain privileges are inherited on the basis of tight blood ties (real or fictitious). A variant of the kinship principle is the idea that being born into a certain group or family plays a decisive role. A special case is formed by the relations of superiority and inferiority within the family and within groups of close relatives. This schema, in which the family and the group of close relatives is portrayed as a hierarchy, appears in many “popular models” as a model or justification for political, religious, economic and other hierarchies. The principles of “exceptional powers” and “kinship”, as well as “birth into naturally hierarchised groups”, are founded on the idea of predetermination – perhaps the notion of predetermined electedness – and, as was indicated, they can be combined in various ways within the actual societies.

There are also principles, which explain and enable hierarchisation among different groups, and in this way lead also to the emergence of superior and inferior social (cultural) positions among individuals. This category of group principles includes divisions based on race, nationality, religious affiliation, the fact of belonging to a “backward” or an “advanced” group, and many other possibilities. These principles are usually studied as a part of the issue of “us and them” or “natives and foreigners” – within ethnic relations and multicultural relations. Both the race and the nationality principles are based again on the idea of predetermination or predetermined electedness. It has never usually been entirely clear, however, who it is that establishes, influences, or creates this particular predetermination.

The principle of “religious exclusiveness” and the superiority of a certain religious system over other religious systems are linked to the monotheist religious systems and their believers, i. e. Jews, Christians, and Muslims (and their societies and cultures). It could be possible even to classify the Marxist (communist) ideological system as belonging to the same category, i. e. to the same principle. Another principle through which groups distinguish themselves from one another is the principle of advancedness/backwardness (civilised people vs. barbarians). This is also a concomitant phenomenon of contact between different and mutually alien cultures. A variant of the principle of advancedness/backwardness is the principle of knowledge. A variant of the principle of advancedness/backwardness is also the division of groups into “industrial” and “non-industrial” – thus from the technological perspective of being advanced and less advanced. The principles of knowledge, education, industrialisation, and literacy are based on the idea of competitiveness.

The principles leading to the hierarchisation of individuals (explaining this hierarchisation) and the principles leading to (explaining) the hierarchisation of groups tend to interconnect and combine; all these principles then converge and intermix in stratification situations.

In the background of all natural – egalitarian – universal principles and elitist principles leading to the emergence of hierarchies in human societies there are two main ideas or thoughts: the idea of competition and the idea of predetermination (or predetermined electedness). The principles founded on both these ideas inseparably and simultaneously appear in analyses of stratified societies. They change only with respect to the mutual proportions (share) of principles founded on the one idea or the other. In our own society, “competi-

tiveness' is interpreted as a human trait and a human asset; 'predetermination' is understood as the outcome of the influence (effect) of non-humans, as the contribution of non-humans to human activity. Opinions on the proportion (proportionate influence) of competitiveness and predetermination have in the history of our society (civilisation) changed – today the fundamental significance of competitiveness predominates

Power, Rule, and Hierarchy in the Work of Norbert Elias

Zdenka Vajdová

Elias' conception of power is based on his basic idea of society as a complex of interdependent individuals and groups of individuals. The structural characteristic of the relationship of interdependence is power. The relationship itself is always what Elias refers to as a balance of power. Power, as a structural characteristic of interdependent relationships that create a web or network into which individuals and groups are woven in figurations of various kinds, is the central concept of Elias' sociology. Power is a broader concept than hierarchy, as the latter refers to the special figurations where relationships of interdependence distinguish themselves through the specific features of the imbalance of power. This paper presents a summary of Elias' thoughts and his reflections on the subject of power.

Game models serve to reveal what the subject of sociology is in its simplest form – manifold groupings of variously interdependent human beings. Here, game models are not theories, but rather an aid to understanding how the long chains of interdependence in human society are formed and how the complexity of human figurations grows; game as a metaphor for how people create a society. Elias refers to models of competition, which involve a competition or contest that occurs within the framework of certain rules, with the exception of the Primal Contest, which represents a real, unregulated and deadly contest between two human groups. The basis of these contests is a comparison of strength, through which a balance is established, that is then again challenged or disputed. The power relations in a society are always unequally distributed.

Societies oligarchically run by a hereditary privileged class were transformed into societies run by recallable representatives of mass political parties. This shift in the inner balance of power (within the state) is typical for the overall transformation of society in the majority of European countries and is among the common features of development in the 19th and 20th centuries. The question is, how is it that the shift in the internal balance of power in these societies occurred much in the same direction? The answer lies in the reconstruction of the reduction of power differentials in the several types of imbalance of the multi-tier society. There was a shift towards a reduction of power differentials between the governments and the governed, large enough for the government to be forced to legitimise itself in the eyes of its subjects. Over the course of the century of industrialisation, the power differentials between the ruling and the ruled and between individual social strata decreased, and the dependency of some groups on others increased. For the large part of the population, which is usually powerless, this has meant an increase in their relative power potential in the trend towards functional democratisation. All social relationships were transformed towards a higher degree of reciprocity, multilateral dependence, and control. At the centre of this social transformation were the impulses for growth in the specialisation and differentiation of social activities and corresponding impulses towards the greater integration of these activities, increasing

the level of functional interdependency. The opacity of the social networks for the people who form them is a characteristic of networks in every stage of their development; the opacity is the consequence of interdependence and control. Only at a certain phase in the development are the people aware of this opacity and are consequently also aware of their own precariousness as a society. People realised that the explanation of social processes as the outcome of activities of individuals is inadequate, and that some impersonal way of thinking is required that would make it possible to understand opaque social processes. Two solutions were found – the ideological and the scientific orientation, which have usually evolved in close proximity to one another, though long disputes could be led over what difference exists between them.

Governance in the Constructivist and the Constitutional Arrangements

Jiří Kabele

The theoretical model of communist rule set forth here is based on a dual kind of social constructivism. The constructivist arrangement is interpreted as the alternative to the constitutional arrangement of modern societies. While the general arrangements are indeed realised in declaration, there emerge orderings of society – further *regimes* – that do not specifically resemble them. Nevertheless, these regimes offer an accountable game framework for applying a broad range of interests of many individual and collective persons at once. Persons, of course, then share the common interest in adapting the game frameworks to the given circumstances and in enforcing them.

The character of general arrangements is determined by: (i) the narrative of their genesis, (ii) the principles that determine the distribution of competences (the division of the areas of freedom), and (iii) the institutions that protect the rights and freedoms of persons affected by the execution of these competences (the division of the areas of responsibility). In this perspective the arrangement manifests itself as a model arrangement, which serves to connect the division of the areas of freedom and the division of the areas of responsibility and matches them with one another. Constitutional and constructivist arrangements do not differ in that different model game frameworks for governance and ownership are asserted within them, but only in that within them their different selections dominate semantically. The dominance of the legally rooted and decentralised public representation and private enterprise determines the form of the constitutional regime. Placing emphasis on the “extra-legal” leading role and central planning is characteristic for the constructivist arrangement and regime.

As a rule constitutional regimes make a commitment to maintaining a relatively close correspondence between the arrangement and the regime. Arrangements other than constitutional do not achieve a very high degree of correspondence between the arrangement and the regime, and do not even strive for it. They do not have clearly set out rights and freedoms, and do not even protect them. As a rule they do not even prevent the existence of certain privileges and monopolies for certain groups. Constitutions are therefore usually supplemented in their constitutive role by other texts (e. g. Statutes of the Czechoslovak Communist Party) procedurally describing the leading role of a certain social group.

Public representation is constituted in the form of a legal state by the kind of arrangement, which guarantees that any group can lay claim to acquiring the competences to govern. At the same time, of course, it rules out the possibility of this group or organisation acquiring

the leading role permanently. Conversely, the constructivist arrangement rests on the game frameworking of governance founded on the leading role of a select group. But, the authority for executing the leading role by a certain person, group, or organisation in the constructivist arrangement is not, in a Weberian manner, drawn primordially from law, but from dispositional virtues: knowledge, art, or a vision, and the associated historic mission of the select person, group and the organisations representing it. It is also supported by the idea of central planning, which, with reference to expert virtues, appears more rational, and thus also more appropriate than private enterprise.

The all-encompassing game framework of the constructivist arrangement has a dominantly historical-scenic character. The institutional component of constructivist regimes stems from the transformation of the constitutional arrangement, which arises as a result of the installation of a superior parallel power of the vanguard of the constructivist group, in this case the Communist Party. The constitutional equilibrium of the legislative, executive and judicial powers typical for the constitutional arrangement is spontaneously transformed in the constructivist arrangement into a contention, which in a manner other than constitutionally is hidden and regulated among more or less autonomous components: (i) the superior parallel power (in this case the Communist Party), (ii) state power (which overlaps most with the executive power) and (iii) the armed forces (state and public security, the army, and a criminal justice system).

In constructivist regimes there occurs a duplication of all pragmatic hierarchies with hierarchies of the vanguard of the constructivist group. The duplication in this case was established in the Statutes of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, particularly through the existence of party organisations within all economic and administrative organisations of this arrangement, including constitutional ones, through the existence of party groups within all larger boards and committees ensuring the functioning of these institutions, and through the resident position of each member of the party in all spheres of social life, including private, as established in his party obligations. These statutes invested all groups, bodies, and organisations of the Communist Party with the competence to manage, control, or just to point out weaknesses. It is necessary to comprehend these entitlements in the context of democratic centralism. It emerged out of a synthesis of the incompatible, the idea of democratic self-government and bureaucratic administration; the grafting of bureaucratic hierarchical elements onto an originally self-governmental equity substratum. The described synthesis of the incompatible – the verticality and horizontality of incidence systemically creates areas of uncertainty, which can then be controlled by a parallel, but internally impacting power. This space for the application of authoritarian practices was rendered “perfectly” opaque by the practice of nomenclature administration.

In the communist rule, the nomenclature administration had its obverse side in the disciplinary system, which supervised the fulfilment of party tasks by functionaries and regular party members. The main functional content of the nomenclature administration consisted in: (i) approving, confirming, voting, or only reflecting on cadre proposals for the manning of all important functions in the state, and (ii) managing the membership bases of the party. A critical point in the nomenclature administration is the effectiveness of party disciplinary measures in ensuring voting loyalty. Voting loyalty ensured, for the voting on the filling of positions in the nomenclature, the selection of the kind of publics that would be willing to vote loyally.

The protection of leadership privileges and planning monopolies of the vanguard of the constructivist group is based on (i) the role of control over entry (the nomenclature administration), (ii) the systems of anonymous complaint, (iii) the rooting of the leading role (in the revolutionary myth and historical materialism), and (iv) disciplinary enforcement of loyalty. The strong protective bulwark of leadership privileges and planning monopolies of the constructivist groups is, of course, for the existence of constructivist regimes essential, because they are forced to count on the unrealisable central planning. In order that the responsibility for the consequences of this systemic weakness does not fall on the vanguard of the constructivist group, all of the above-mentioned types of protections become the building stones of the “organisms” that shift responsibility for the central failure of the “vanguard” group onto the shoulders of all of society.

SEMINAR

Communist Rule in the Rear-view Mirror

Main subject:

Hierarchy as a strength and weakness of the communist government

Complementary subject:

Soviet domination of Eastern European satellite countries

The mirror of normalisation did not reveal the truth about the communist regime. Not even the transition mirror of the velvet revolution and transformation is able to offer a realistic portrait of communist rule. This seminar, *Hierarchy as a Strength and Weakness of Communist Rule*, attempts to offer a more faithful portrait of communist rule. The assumption is that it is possible to study some key features of modern government through communist rule, which can help us in the battle against institutionalised irresponsibility.

The main subject of the seminar is derived from the goal set in the research project entitled *The Legacy of Communist Rule*.¹⁴⁸ It involves a study of Czech “really existing” socialism, which attempts to theoretically grasp and describe, without distortion or bias, the procedures of the communist domination of society (the implementation of rule as a task of the Czechoslovak Communist Party – KSC) at the end of the 1980s. A description of this type should form the basis from which to set out on any further study of the possible shapes that the post-revolutionary inertia of these forms of rule can assume.

We are interested in looking at the role occupied by hierarchy in the relatively stable institutional functioning of Czech real socialism at the end of the 1980s. The assertion of democratic centralism and procedures of administration by the nomenclature rendered hierarchy – despite the claims of egalitarianism – at once the end and the means of communist rule. After November 1989 they were no longer able to apply their “totality” without the privileged position of the Communist Party. Nevertheless, a number of indices suggest that formerly implemented methods and procedures of rule, just like the various forms of institutionalised irresponsibility, successfully adapted to the new conditions in society and were able to relatively easily colonise the newly introduced constitutional forms of governance. Our assumption is that this was a result of the fact that communist governance was founded on specific forms of dominating the originally constitutional institutions, which in the new conditions proved to be useful to various interest groups. Communism was a school for learning how, under the facade of democracy, to rule undemocratically.

The complementary subject covers an important dimension of the task of our research, which we ourselves have been unable to solve. We expect that in this area the contributions of other domestic and foreign colleagues could considerably contribute to enriching our re-

¹⁴⁸ Here we define *government* or *rule* as the execution of authority or otherwise acquired powers in relationships of superiority. It is in this way that government hierarchically permeates all of society from the top down.

search. The Soviet domination of the Eastern European satellite countries represented a very important, if not the most important, condition of stability for the socialist regimes in Eastern European countries. We realise that this dominance was not without problems. The disturbances in the German Democratic Republic in 1953, Hungary in 1956, and Czechoslovakia in 1968 were concluded with Soviet intervention. Poland in 1981 avoided this at the price of martial law. But on the other hand, the dominance only genuinely failed once there was an internal lack of will to execute it.

Aims of the seminar:

The seminar is to be held prior to the completion of the grant research and is intended to serve three main purposes: to cultivate international cooperation, to critically evaluate in particular the theoretical work that has arisen as part of the grant research, and last but not least to discuss the open questions of communist rule, thus facilitating a more precise and deeper coherent interpretation of the described methods of rule in Czechoslovak real socialism.

Organisational matters:

Location: Praha 5 – Jinonice, U kříže 10

Proposed date: September 11–13, 2003

Programme:

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	Contributions	Morning programme to be agreed
	<i>Break</i>	
	Contributions	
	<i>Lunch</i>	
Afternoon Tea	Discussion of the open questions	
An introduction to the open question	<i>Dinner</i>	

Seminar organisation timetable:

Contacting specialists and issuing a “call for papers”:	15. 11. 2002
Date of submission for applications:	15. 3. 2003
Date of submission for contributions:	15. 8. 2003
Presenting the contributions on the Web:	30. 8. 2003

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Shrnutí: Svět hierarchií a reálný socialismus

Ve sborníku Svět hierarchií a reálný socialismus tým skládá účty především z teoretického a metodologického uvažování o problému hierarchií. Pokoušíme se sociální hierarchie a ekvity vidět v koordinační i strukturní či systémové perspektivě. V prvním případě je ve hře metodologický individualismus stavící na kontextově podmiňované volní koordinaci sdílení vlivů v jednotlivých vztazích, z nichž se teprve rodí pořádající síla symetrií a asymetrií generující a rozvíjející sociální hierarchie a ekvity. Pro druhou perspektivu je naopak typický holisticky pojímaný metodologický procesualismus, který veškeré důležité dění v hierarchiích či ekvitách pojímá jako jejich strukturami či systémy určené procesy. Těmto strukturám se volní koordinace osob v zásadě podřizuje.

Sborník začíná teoretickou statí Sociální hierarchie a ekvity (Jiří Kabele a Martin Hájek). Rozumíme těmto sociálním útvarům jako formacím nerovných a rovných, které umožňují aktérům přehledně uchopovat, rozpoznávat a přiměřeně respektovat asymetrické a symetrické vlivy. Zdroj konstrukční síly hierarchií a ekvit spatřujeme ve skloubení jejich abstraktní uchopitelnosti se symbolicky artikulovanou tvarovou evidentností. V druhé části práce Sociální hierarchie a ekvity jednotlivců a organizací se zabýváme rolí, kterou sehrávají hierarchie a ekvity v současných společnostech. Poukazujeme na jejich dvojí možné chápání: koordinační a strukturně-systemické. Podrobněji se zabýváme jejich zdroji: postulováním, ohodnocováním a sociálním srovnáváním, soutěží a bojem, vyvažováním a převažováním, integrací a desintegrací, diferenciací a totalizací.

Studie O popisu hierarchického vztahu (Tomáš Holeček) ukazuje, že tento vztah může být míněn různě, ať už jsou autory těchto popisů laici anebo odborníci. Tatáž popisná věta může mít různé významové statusy, které je třeba respektovat, nemá-li docházet k určitému typu omylu a nedorozumění. V článku je ukázáno šest příkladů různých významových statusů, které všechny mohou být označeny jako popis.

Stať Vládce “z boží milosti” versus “ti nejlepší” (Josef Kandert) přehledově zpracovává antropologické výzkumy věnované zejména mimoevropským společnostem. Tyto výzkumy ukazují, že není společnosti/kultury bez hierarchií a že samotné představy o důvodech vzniku a trvání nadřazeného a podřazeného postavení mezi jednotlivci i mezi skupinami jsou založeny na idejích soutěživosti a předurčenosti (případně výlučné předurčenosti).

Koncept moci v Eliasově díle dovoluje pochopit velkou sociální transformaci (18. až 20. století) známou pod jménem industrializace (Moc, vládnutí a hierarchie v díle Norberta Eliase, Zdenka Vajdová) jako proměnu sociálních hierarchií spojenou s redukcí rozdílu moci – mezi vládou a ovládanými i mezi sociálními vrstvami. Inspirativní je zejména jeho vztahové chápání moci vázané na herní modely, stejně jako jím zdůrazňovaná “závislost na cestě” při výkladu vzniku socialismu a nacismu.

Závěr sborníku tvoří opět povýtce teoretická stať Vláda v budovatelském a ústavním zřízení (Jiří Kabele). Představuje epistemologicky založenou alternativu dvou pojetí společenského uspořádání společností, které svůj řád nahlízejí jako proměnlivý. Povaha těchto zřízení je určována: (i) příběhem jejich zrodu, (ii) zásadami, které určují rozdělování způsobilostí (dělba teritorií svobody), a (iii) instituty, které chrání práva a svobody osob dotčených výkonem těchto způsobilostí (dělby teritorií odpovědnosti). Tato pojetí se uskutečňují jako reži-

my, které jsou původním zřízením specificky nepodobné: jejich instituce a v nich se uplatňující sociální hierarchie a ekvity totiž musejí splňovat podmínku, že uvnitř nich musí být koordinace více aktérů středně nákladnou. Vláda v budovatelském zřízení, na níž se stať více soustřeďuje, je popsána jako ovládnutí původně ústavních mocí nadřazenou paralelní mocí, především budovatelské skupiny: komunistickou stranou.

Summary:

In the collection, *The World of Hierarchies and Real Socialism*, the team gives an account primarily of theoretical and methodological concepts pertaining to the issue of hierarchies. We view social hierarchies and equities in a co-ordinating and structural or systemic perspective. First and foremost, methodological individualism is applied, which builds upon the context-contingent volitional co-ordination of influence sharing in individual relationships, from which only the organising power of symmetries and asymmetries is born, which in turn generates and develops social hierarchies and equities. The second perspective is, on the other hand, typical of a holistically understood methodological processualism, which understands all important events and actions in hierarchies or equities as processes determined by structures or systems. Volitional co-ordination of individuals is, in principle, subordinated to these structures.

The collection starts with a theoretical study, *Social Hierarchies and Equities* (Jiří Kabele and Martin Hájek). We understand these social formations as formations of unequals and equals, which allow actors to clearly understand, distinguish and adequately respect asymmetrical and symmetrical influences. We see the source of the constructive power of hierarchies and equities in the combination of their abstract comprehension and symbolically articulated clarity of formation. In the second portion of the study, *Social Hierarchies and Equities of Individuals and Organisations*, we deal with the role which hierarchies and equities play in contemporary societies. We point to the two possible readings of hierarchies and equities: co-ordinating and structurally systemic roles. We investigate their sources in greater detail: postulation, evaluation and social comparison, competition and struggle, balancing and domination, integration and disintegration, differentiation and totalisation.

The *Description of the Hierarchic Relationship* (Tomáš Holeček) shows that this relationship can be understood variously, no matter whether the authors of such descriptions are laymen or experts. The same descriptive sentence may carry various meaning statuses which must be respected if certain types of errors and misunderstandings are not to occur. The article shows six examples of various meaning statuses, all of which may be seen as a description.

The article *Rulers “By the Grace of God” versus “the Best Ones”* (Josef Kandert) gives a summary account of anthropological surveys concerning non-European societies. These studies show that there are no societies/cultures without hierarchies and that ideas pertaining to the origins of the arising and continuation of subordinate and dominant positions among individuals and groups are based on ideas of competitiveness and predetermination (or exclusive predetermination).

The concept of power in the works of Norbert Elias makes it possible to understand the grand social transformation (18th through 20th centuries) known as industrialisation (Power,

Rule and Hierarchies in the Work of Norbert Elias, Zdenka Vajdová) as a transformation of social hierarchies related to the reduction in power differentiation between the government and the ruled as well as among individual social strata. Elias's relational understanding of power related to game models is very inspirational as is his much emphasised "path dependence" in the explanations of socialism and nazism

The volume concludes with a theoretical paper titled "Governance in the Constructivist and the Constitutional Arrangements" (Jiří Kabele). These arrangements represent an epistemologically founded alternative of two conceptions for creating social order in societies, which view their order as changeable. The character of these arrangements is determined by: (i) the narrative of their genesis, (ii) the principles that determine the distribution of competences (the division of the areas of freedom), and (iii) the institutions that protect the rights and freedoms of persons affected by the execution of these competences (the division of the areas of responsibility). Both arrangements are realised as regimes, which do not resemble them specifically because their institutions, and the social hierarchies and equities at work within them, must ensure the moderately costly coordination of many agents. The governance in a constructive regime (real socialism), which the paper concentrates on to a greater degree, is described as the control over originally constitutional components of state power by a superior parallel power through the vanguard of a constructivist group: the Communist Party.

Zusammenfassung:

Im Sammelband werden vor allem theoretische und methodologische Gedanken über das Problem der Hierarchien zusammengefasst. Wir versuchen, die Sozialhierarchien und die sozialen Gleichgewichte in der Perspektive der Koordinierung, der Struktur und des Systems zu sehen. Im ersten Fall spielt der methodologische Individualismus eine Rolle, der auf der kontextbedingten freien Koordinierung gemeinsamer Einflüsse in Einzelbeziehungen aufbaut, aus denen dann die ordnende Kraft der Symmetrie und Asymmetrie geboren wird, die Sozialhierarchien und soziale Gleichgewichte erzeugt und entwickelt. Für die zweite Perspektive ist dagegen der holistisch aufgefasste Prozessualismus typisch, bei dem alle wichtigen Geschehnisse in Hierarchien oder in Gleichgewichten als struktur- bzw. systembedingte Prozesse aufgefasst werden. Die freie Koordinierung von Personen ist diesen Strukturen grundsätzlich untergeordnet.

Der Sammelband beginnt mit der theoretischen Abhandlung "Sozialhierarchien und soziale Gleichgewichte" (Jiří Kabele und Martin Hájek). Diese sozialen Gebilde fassen wir als Formationen von Ungleichen und Gleichen auf, die es den Akteuren ermöglichen, asymmetrische und symmetrische Einflüsse mit Übersicht zu erfassen, zu unterscheiden und angemessen zu respektieren. Die Quelle der konstruktiven Kraft der Hierarchien und Gleichgewichte sehen wir in der Verbindung ihrer abstrakten Erfassung mit der symbolisch artikulierten Gestaltevidenz. Im zweiten Teil der Arbeit, "Sozialhierarchien und Gleichgewichte von Einzelnen und Organisationen", befassen wir uns mit der Rolle, die Hierarchien und Gleichgewichte in den heutigen Gesellschaften spielen. Wir verweisen dabei auf zwei Auffassungsmöglichkeiten: die Koordinationsauffassung und die strukturell-systematische Auffassung, und wir befassen uns eingehend mit ihren Quellen: durch Postulierung, Bewertung und

sozialen Vergleich, Wettbewerb und Kampf, Aus- und Überwiegen, Integration und Desintegration, Differenzierung und Totalisierung.

Die Studie “Über die Beschreibung der hierarchischen Beziehung” (Tomáš Holeček) zeigt, dass diese Beziehung je nachdem, ob der Autor dieser Beschreibung Laie oder Fachmann ist, unterschiedlich gemeint sein kann. Der gleiche beschreibende Satz kann unterschiedliche Bedeutungsebenen haben, die zu berücksichtigen sind, wenn bestimmte Irrtümer und Missverständnisse vermieden werden sollen. Der Artikel zeigt sechs Beispiele unterschiedlicher Bedeutungsebenen auf, die alle als Beschreibung bezeichnet werden können.

Die Abhandlung: Herrscher “von Gottes Gnaden” versus “die Besten” (Josef Kandert) verarbeitet in einer Übersicht anthropologische Forschungen, die sich insbesondere mit außereuropäischen Gesellschaften befassen. Diese Forschungen zeigen, dass es keine Gesellschaft oder Kultur ohne Hierarchie gibt und dass die Vorstellungen über die Gründe der Entstehung und des Fortbestehens über- und untergeordneter Stellungen zwischen Einzelnen und Gruppen auf den Ideen des Konkurrenzstrebens und der Vorbestimmung (ggf. ausschließlich auf den Ideen der Vorbestimmung) begründet sind.

Das Konzept der Macht in Elias’ Werk ermöglicht das Verständnis der großen unter dem Namen Industrialisierung bekannten sozialen Transformation des 18. bis 20. Jahrhunderts (Macht, Herrschaft und Hierarchie im Werk Norbert Elias’, Zdenka Vajdová) als einem Wandel der Sozialhierarchien in Verbindung mit einer Verringerung des Machtunterschiedes – zwischen Herrschern und Beherrschten und zwischen den sozialen Schichten. Inspirativ ist insbesondere die beziehungsmäßige Auffassung der an Spielmodelle gebundenen Macht, ebenso wie die durch diese betonte “Abhängigkeit auf dem Wege” bei der Interpretation der Entstehung von Sozialismus und Nazismus.

Am Schluss des Sammelbands steht die theoretische Abhandlung “Herrschaft in der Ordnung des sozialistischen Aufbaus und in der Verfassungsordnung” (Jiří Kabele), die eine epistemologisch begründete Alternative zweier Auffassungen von Gesellschaftsordnung, die ihre Ordnung als veränderlich ansehen, vorstellt. Das Wesen dieser Gesellschaftsordnungen wird bestimmt durch: (i) ihre Entstehungsgeschichte, (ii) die Grundsätze der Verteilung von Befugnissen (Teilung der Freiheitsterritorien) und (iii) die Institutionen, die Rechte und Freiheiten der durch die Ausübung dieser Befugnisse Betroffenen schützen (Teilung der Verantwortungsterritorien). Diese Auffassungen werden als Regime realisiert, die der ursprünglichen Ordnung spezifisch unähnlich sind: ihre Institutionen und die in diesen zur Anwendung kommenden Sozialhierarchien und sozialen Gleichgewichte müssen nämlich die Bedingung erfüllen, dass die Koordinierung mehrerer Akteure innerhalb dieser Institutionen gemäßigt aufwendig sein muss. Die Herrschaft in der Ordnung des sozialistischen Aufbaus, auf die sich die Abhandlung mehr konzentriert, wird beschrieben als Beherrschung der ursprünglich verfassungsmäßigen Gewalten durch eine übergeordnete Parallelgewalt, der Vorhut der Gruppe des sozialistischen Aufbaus: der kommunistischen Partei.

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The World of Hierarchies and Real Socialism

The Legacy of Communist Rule II: A volume
of contributions investigating social hierarchies

**Martin Hájek, Tomáš Holeček, Jiří Kabele,
Josef Kandert, Petr Kohútek, Zdenka Vajdová**

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