for transformation, but also created a number of problems and unexpected side effects. The German authors' report confirms that, in some sections of East German society, the years 1990–1999 witnessed the appearance of certain crisis phenomena associated with changes in the social structure, manifestations of social inequality and unemployment. At the same time, however, the report shows that it has proved possible to reduce some earlier symptoms of anomie surprisingly quickly, and that East Germans are today generally more satisfied than ten years ago. According to the German sociologists, this is the result of successful 'catch-up modernisation', which has brought about quite a considerable improvement in material living conditions, civil and human rights, and the liberation of citizens from domination by the state and enforced socialisation. The authors argue that overall the unification of Germany has had better results than is generally believed, and consider the trend followed in East German society to be essentially the right one.

Apart from the four national reports the book under review includes four discussion papers of a mainly theoretical and polemic character. Karel Müller proposes the concept of reflexivity and reflexive modernisation as a more effective tool than the simplified concept of the transformation process. Erik Allardt draws attention to the need for a more precise definition of modernity and modernisation; in a critical spirit, he indicates that there is no single unified modernity, but multiple 'modernities'. Jakob Juchler sees a major methodological problem in the normative and evaluative approaches of the modernisation theory; one of his critical points is that the emphasis placed on the question of economic growth often marginalises the question of political relations. Frank Bönker, Klaus Müller and Andreas Pickel refer to the need for a new paradigm, which will shift the exploration of the process of transition and transformation towards cross-disciplinary approaches.

Overall it is possible to say that *Structural Change and Modernization in Post-Socialist Societies* offers a multi-faceted, theoretically well-grounded and highly informative view of the transformation of the post-socialist countries of Central Europe. Although the national reports were not produced in a unified way, according to some previously agreed method, and although they rely on quite different sorts of data, these texts nonetheless allow considerable room for comparison. They therefore give us an idea of what is common to all these societies in transformation and what is different and specific to individual countries in the actual course of the transformation process. The polemic tone of the book ought to ensure that it has a chance of catching the interest of readers internationally and provoking wider discussion.

Jiří Šubrt

Maxime Forest – Georges Mink (eds.):
Post-communisme: Les sciences sociales à l'épreuve
Prague 2003: CEFRES, Press Dokořán, 221 pp.

In the age of production, self-reflection in science is quite rare. Even if it is promoted by such personalities, for example, as Anthony Giddens, the project of self-reflection is mainly dealt with on a theoretical level, and less often really realised. For this reason, serious attention is warranted by the publication of the book *'Post-communism: a Challenge for the Social Sciences'* (in French), which reflects on the impacts that the social reality of the communist regime and the process of transformation in Central and Eastern Europe have had on development in the social sciences.

The collection of papers in the book stem mainly from a conference organised by CEFRES (French Centre for Research in Social Sciences, Prague) in March 2002 in Prague, on the occasion of the Centre's tenth anniversary. To complete the picture the edi-

tors decided to include also some articles that raise other questions, such as the role of gender in democratisation studies.

Beyond self-reflection the multidisciplinary approach permits an analysis of the relationship between the different disciplines that are present in the volume: anthropology, geography, economics, history, political science, European studies, sociology and gender studies. Also, the mixture of authors of different nationalities – French, Czech, Polish and Hungarian – creates a fruitful dialogue, especially between Western and Eastern reflections on the post-communist era.

Even though the contributions differ in terms of discipline, style or main focus, it is still possible to find many common topics. The introductory chapter, written by George Mink, previously director of CEFRES and a distinguished French professor of politics and sociology at Institute d'Etudes politiques in Paris, offers a very clear summary of the main problems dealt with in the volume. Two areas of problems can be distinguished: the first group addresses the challenges of transforming society that are discussed in the social sciences, and the second group deals with the status of post-communist social sciences as such.

Among the most discussed factors influencing the transformation process are the implementation of the free market system, the impact of international institutions and the process of accession to the European Union. Looking back, from today's perspective, it must be admitted that the papers pay primary attention to external factors, and only minor attention to research concerning the deeper, insider's look into everyday life, the change of values and behaviour.

In terms of paradigmatic approach, two are discussed most as relevant for the analyses of post-communist societies: transitology and the theory of path-dependence. Transitology represents a transversal concept, a unique trajectory drawn mainly from the experience of Latin-American countries, which assumes that the simple introduction of democratic institutions can lead to the restoration of democratic regimes (instant democracy). By contrast, other social scientists promote the path-dependency approach, pointing out the need to pay attention to the particularities of post-communistic countries. The majority of contributors conclude that unfortunately there is nothing resembling a new original paradigmatic approach to be drawn from post-communist analysis. Even if it is possible to find a great deal of creativity in the labelling and classifying of the new phenomena of post-communist societies, including interesting metaphors, a coherent new theory has yet to be formulated. Is this due to the large variety of post-communist experience, or is the obstacle embedded in postmodernist pluralism as such? This remains unanswered.

Finally, the authors have not forgotten to raise broader methodological-ethical questions. They agree that communist ideology has strongly affected the social sciences and that their emancipation from the past is not yet complete. Other questions, to initiate future debate, are also raised: what to do with communist archives, what is the role of the social sciences in the reconstruction of the past, what is the relation between science and politics and science and the media, what is the role of scientific expertise in the reconstruction of post-communist societies. Thus, the post-communist experience stresses, with a new urgency, general questions of scientific ethics.

In addition to the general topics and problems dealt with in the volume, its multidisciplinary character offers the possibility of comparison among different disciplinary approaches and traces their particularities. Although it is impossible to reproduce the vast content of the volume here, the main trends at least will be addressed.

The largest section is dedicated to sociology, represented here by Piotr Sztompka (Jagiellonian University in Warsaw), two Czech scientists, Miroslav Petrusek (Charles University in Prague) and Jiří Večerník

(Academy of Sciences, Prague) and Elemer Hankiss (Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest). Piotr Sztompka reflects on the changes in 'Eastern' sociology in the larger context of globalisation, offering a very ambitious project for a general theory of social change. His very general and slightly normative approach may perhaps be considered an extreme reaction to the boom in empirical sociological studies about post-communist societies. This 'boom in numbers' lacks a unifying theoretical background and sociology then becomes public knowledge as pure statistics. Miroslav Petrusek offers an interesting, more personal view of the history of Czech sociology, covering also the normalisation era and its effects on recent sociological research. He mentions many positive changes in Czech sociology – the boom in translations of foreign literature, scientific and student exchange programmes, the emergence of a new sociological generation that is successfully integrating into the international scientific network. Nevertheless he describes the post-communist experience in rather a pessimistic tone, as a trauma of retarded science, which is still suffering from the long period of physical as well as mental isolation. Jiří Večerník, the main figure in the sociology of economic life, stresses the necessity to study social transformation as an interaction between two domains, social cohesion and the motivations of individual actors, and he criticises the absence of both a multidisciplinary and a long-term approach in Czech sociology. He asks whether the social sciences have not found themselves in a schizophrenic state – analysing social transformation during the process of their own transformation. In conclusion he offers a very instructive and systematic overview of comparisons between the classic economical approach and the socio-economic approach.

Political science is represented in a more diverse manner. Georges Mink focuses on the domain of French sovietology and the need for its conversion once its object of study had disappeared. On the one hand the collapse of the Soviet Union destabilised sovietology as such; on the other hand it increased the interest in more practical knowledge and specific expertise, and thus helped lead to the formation of new research centres and scientific journals, and opened up access to confidential documents. The actual topic of the relationship between political science and EU enlargement is addressed by Laure Neumayer (University of Paris-I Sorbonne). She suggests studying the scientific work about enlargement of the EU in the context of the impact of the preparation of candidates on the level of the political structure, while the political structure was at the same time undergoing its own transformation. According to Laura Neumayer the terms of consolidation and Europeanisation, used in the analysis, became normative, and this has had an impact on the character of recent social sciences. It is also interesting to notice that unlike sociologists, who seem to complain that more attention has been paid to external factors than internal ones, the political scientists, on the contrary, seem to criticise the lack of consideration given to external factors in the process of transformation. This again puts emphasis on the need for and fruitfulness of a multidisciplinary approach. Maxime Forest introduces an approach that is quite untraditional, both in the French and Eastern circles of political science, and he links democratisation studies to gender studies. He argues that the gender perspective in the study of social transformation has been often overlooked as being irrelevant. The practical requirement of resolving the problem of women's participation in politics in the new democracies forced political science to enhance this new perspective. The very dynamic development of the gender studies department at the Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic was mentioned as an example of the successful achievement of this end.

The situation in economics is described by Bernard Chavance (University Paris VII Diderot), who offers a critical overview of

the theoretical approaches to post-socialist reality. He evaluates the clash between neoliberalism and institutionalism, two mainstream paradigms, as a problem inherent to economics as such, namely the search for a balance between rapidity and efficiency. Even if the real experiences of transformation had influenced economic theory, Bernard Chavance does not see any evolution in the paradigm, just the return of institutionalism. But should we not at least refer to neo-institutionalism? If other social scientists have complained about the dominance of economic analysis of the post-communist transformation, Bernard Chavance critically reflects on the fact that the economic mainstream lost touch with the other social sciences and that a change of direction toward interdisciplinary communication is needed.

As regards historical science, Françoise Mayer (University in Montpellier, previously director of CEFRES in Prague) brings brilliant insight into the actual challenges of the Czech community of historians. She claims that, in comparison with other social sciences, the status of historical science was the most discredited by communism, as it occupied the role of legitimising the totalitarian regimes. At the time of the crisis of its own identity it was hard to satisfy the public demand that history be made clear. How to be objective and scientific when treating such a delicate question as, for example, collaboration with regime? A consequence of the fact that professional historians wanted to avoid denunciatory history and rather maintain silence, the public demand for simple answers was often met by amateurs, journalists and lay historians.

Even though the classification of geography among the social sciences may be viewed as unusual, especially in terms of the way East Europeans understand it, Marie-Claude Maurel (EHESS Paris) manages to present the case for the geographical approach as an integral part of social scientific analysis with great force. If the spatial dimension of social reality is considered, then spatial modification could reveal a great deal about the construction of national, ethnic or cultural identities. In contrast to the other social sciences, geography offers a more regional approach, which was up-dated with the entry of the post-communist countries into the European Union. Marie-Claude Maurel points out that the re-composition of the spatial matrix in Central and Eastern Europe has been mostly a spontaneous process, especially on the regional level, and lacking systematic change.

The key strength of this book lies in the fact that it has dared to deal with the very unpopular communist heritage still present in post-communist social sciences. It should be considered the beginning of a reflection on the mutual influences between the transformation of post-communist societies and the transformation of current scientific research. As the contributors have shown, the transformation did not relate only to the Central and Eastern European scientific arena, but also challenged Western social scientists. The volume undoubtedly introduces an impressive array of new information about the social sciences in the post-communist societies, and even attempts to formulate a more general hypothesis on the impact of the real social change in the social sciences. The multidisciplinary and international approach, especially the combination of French scientists and 'native' Central and Eastern European scientists, has facilitated the creation of a bright and vivid portrait. The most glaring problem with this book is at times the somewhat too sentimental and subjective evaluation of the post-communist period; but this is, in a way, quite understandable and will probably disappear from future reflections as the period moves deeper into the past.

To conclude, the book is an innovative, instructive and informative work that should be of great use and interest to a wide range of social scientists. The message of the book is that, 'Even if self-reflection is painful, it's a guaranteed means to move social sciences forward'.

Markéta Sedláčková