

The Relatively Minimal-Anomic Czech Transition

The Case of Prague

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Abstract: The paper focuses on data from a 1993 international comparative study of post-communist metropolises (Prague, N = 486). The general and „anomic“ trend of increasing criminality in the Czech Republic (with a growth index of 3.3 between 1989 and 1993) is now slowing down. Beside the considerable amount of property crimes, some new features are appearing – an increasing proportion of first-time and young offenders and various, new forms (drugs, economic and organised crime). The level of victimisation in the Czech Republic is at least on an average level with western Europe; the increase (in Prague) is, nonetheless, not as dramatic as in Eastern Europe. Our Prague survey confirms the deepening awareness of crime and as well as an increasing contact with it. Signs of xenophobic, aggressive reactions have, however, not been observed. The changes in value orientation are rather insignificant, with the velvet revolution and the social transformation bringing increased satisfaction for one half of the population. The explanation of this trend is ambiguous: there are some signs of „ongoing modernisation“, in regard for the positive changes in the society it is possible to evaluate this modest, unexcessive reaction of public opinion as a (temporary?) low-anomic change.

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I. Introduction

Revolutions are usually followed by a wave of crime and violence, which very often escapes any form of effective social control, be it public opinion morality, the legal system, police attention, or the like. Societies in transition are characterised by a continuing, all-pervasive, fundamental change in the value system. The repressive system disappears, and a feeling of freedom dominates. Routine rules of practical behaviour lose their function and influence. This process could be classified as a text-book example of social anomie, whereby E. Durkheim assumes the role of a classic *redivivus*. Two points should, however, be kept in mind: at least two variations of this concept as outlined by Durkheim, and also the risk of simplifications: any radical social change (including a „velvet-revolution“) brings with it elements of social anomie. This, however, does not offer an adequate explanation of the differences between post-communist countries in relation to statistical data on crime, victimisation, attitudes towards crime, security and deviant behaviour.

In combination, the above mentioned factors often give rise to unclear life orientations and attitudes. In the political scene, we have empirically established that a handful of the many political parties are fully supported by a very small part of the voting public. Public opinion, however, is not lacking in a clear basic orientation: an example being the significant, long-term support of right-wing orientation in the Czech Republic. Nevertheless, some degree of uncertainty and conceptual confusion is to be

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anticipated. Although people's interest in political life (and the level of participation in the 1992 elections is surprisingly high), a gradual fall in the value of active participation in political life is to be observed in value orientation research.

For I. Horowitz,¹ alienation is an organic element of critical thinking, a condition for democracy, and a human right. Thus deviation seems to be a component of modernity. In contemporary criminological discourse, this question is apparently somewhat less fashionable. The question is if this modernisation would sustain the ideological transition from socialism to psychoanalysis...

The problem of „re-constituting society“ in the Czech Republic (in spite of the split of Czechoslovakia) does not have as its cause the loss of social identity, the attempt to return to the past, or the absence of basic social consensus: The society has agreed upon the acceptance of economic reform. The unanimous general acceptance of certain strategic (cultural) value patterns, on the other hand, does not necessarily guarantee that the social system will accomodate their easy and unquestioning fulfillment (as expressed by R. K. Merton). This contradiction of goals and means is potentially even more dramatic if the greater part of the population defines its goals for a „better future“ within the horizons of a wealthy consumer society rather than within the dimensions of human freedom.

The „super-risks“ of modern society are not, according to R. Münch, the results of an uncontrolled economy, but rather those of widespread ideas and values. „The control of its risks and superdangers cannot be completely accomplished by the simple recoupling of so-called autopoietic systems to cultural discourse as Habermas would like to have it or to some other form of cultural, public, political or legal control as others like Willke or Beck would like to have it.“ [Münch 1993: 60] It is necessary to combine economic growth with cultural discourse, societal inclusion and political decision-making.

When lingering social nivelisation (on the level of the lower classes) clashes with growing social distances, there is both an increasing risk of tensions, frustrations and a widening space for anomic problem-solving methods. The general validity of new values is not necessarily extremely advantageous if new disposable means have not been offered to social actors: conformity without reward cannot last for long.

Innovative action (with regard to, for example, the new strata of entrepreneurs) does not necessarily have a positive effect, because neither „the rules of the game“ nor the boundaries formed by the legitimacy of the various business activities are always clear. Even the problem of „dirty money“ or the transformation of social capital may be the source of a certain tension (rather from the perspective of public opinion). The valorisation of social capital by former communist leaders is one such problem. Research on public opinion towards criminality and social deviance thus far has revealed that society is highly sensitive to these questions. Indeed, for most inhabitants criminality and security are social problem number one (as of March 1993, 98 % of respondents declared it as rather urgent).

The sociological analysis (and contemporary political discourse) of this process constitutes a never-ending story: although we presented some information on the problems of social anomie in the thematic issue of *Czech Journal of Sociology*,

¹) At the XIIIth World Congress of Sociology, Bielefeld 1994.

No. 2/1994, it is still impossible to check and evaluate these changes in the legal system (changes in the sense of classification, the penal code, etc.). The influence of an extensive amnesty declared in 1990 by president V. Havel is one further specific feature.

II. Data

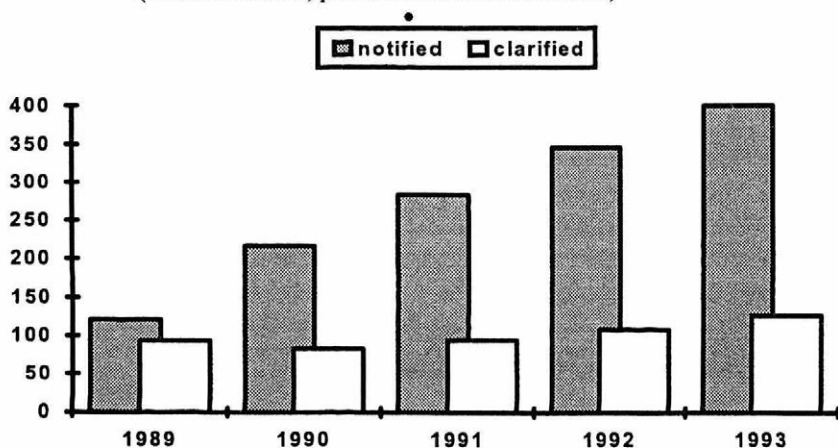
The present article sums up primarily the first results of a survey conducted in Prague in June 1993 on a sample of 484 inhabitants (over 16 years) selected on the quota sampling basis. It forms part of a more extensive international research project on criminological aspects of the social environment in post-communist metropolises (co-ordinator U. Ewald, Kriminologische Forschungsstelle HU Berlin).

Here, we will first sketch a general outline of problems as indicated by the official statistics, with critical respect to concrete methodological problems due to changes in the law (the latent criminality), for example.

1. Statistical Trends

The prevalence rate of notified criminal acts in the Czech Republic in 1993 is 3.3 times higher than in 1989. This trend could be evaluated as a relatively dramatic rise; in fact, the curve is declining and – perhaps – stabilising on the new level (see Graph 1). Some problems characteristic of police work should be pointed out: while the proportion of criminality is diminishing, a efficiency is slowly increasing (due to reorganisation and personal exchange). There are some instances of obstruction in the legal system: the emphasis on human rights, on the protection of personality (including operations with money). Meanwhile the police's new image, public co-operation and public ignorance are all problem areas.

Graph 1. Criminality in the Czech Republic
(Police statistics, prevalence rate in thousands)



Source: [Marešová, Scheinost 1994]

On the other hand, some changes to the penal code have „improved“ the statistics. Politically motivated penalties and other forms of criminality (for example, so-called „parasitism“, the lack of regular work or income, interconnected with prostitution, etc.) have disappeared.

The different forms of robbery dominate in the criminality structure (see Table 1), with standard robbery (street) and burglary (of the home) at the top of the list. We could add about 85 per cent of this criminality against ownership to the economic crime (5 %). The proportion of violence is only 5 %. Officially, the rate of moral delicts is nowadays very low (0.5 %), although motorway prostitution (in the North-West, combining with dwarf-shops) offers a picturesque image of transition and the grounds for discussion on the regulation at the regional and even central levels.

New features of the crime field

Experts have summed up some of the new experiences (especially concerning drugs and organised crime) as follows [*Organizovaný* 1994: 77]:

1. Crime will be better organised; on an international level, however, the participation of Czech citizens is on the rise.
2. Acts of violence are hard, brutal and more conspirative.
3. The tendency to penetrate the system, including elites, has arisen.
4. The rapid „economization“ of crime, the increasingly pivotal role played by money, as well as some special results (the fall in the price of some drugs).

Czech drug producers display an interesting influence with their high skilled trade or „qualifications“. It is also a question of an experimentation period, a fashion. School surveys hold some surprises: the highest incidence of drug use was identified in secondary schools (oriented towards higher education), and not in the area of vocational training [Kuchař 1993].

Table 1. Structure of Crime – Czech Republic 1993
(classification of the police)

robbery	45.1
burglary	31.2
other ownership crime	8.2
violence	4.9
economic crime	4.6
other	5.5
morals	0.5

Criminal statistics reveal other features: namely, that the age of offenders is on the decrease, the rate of first-attempt offences is increasing, the proportion of Gypsies is estimated as relatively higher. The total victimisation level for 1991 corresponded to the European standard (average). [Marešová, Scheinost 1994]

2. Personal Experience of Crime in Prague: Victimisation

Returning to the data from our survey, one extensive part of the interview/questionnaire reveals both victims' and – when confessed – of offenders' experiences. In this paper, we will consider the former, focussing on the victimisation of Prague inhabitants. Since it concerns the extension of contact with the reality of committed crimes, we are not only establishing the nature of personal experience, but also that of the close social environment. The respondents positively answered the question, as to their acquaintance with anybody with experience of the following situations, as follows (see Table 2).

Table 2. Respondents' or their friends' experience of crime (%)

They were troubled by adolescents	35
They were beaten up and injured	32
They had their house or flat burgled	68
They were attacked and robbed	31
They were robbed	55
They were cheated (in the sphere of insurance, investments, travel, etc.)	27
They were affected by other people illegally gaining their disputed ownership using unjust ways (harrassment, blackmail, threats)	12
As tenants they were the victims of the illegal practices of a landlord, seeking to evict for financial gain	15
When looking for a flat they were victims of a speculator	14
They were the victims of sexual harrassment	31
They were the victims of sexual attack and were injured	13
They were raped	8
They were murdered	7

The influence of age is reflected most in sexual affairs (45 % of young women under 20 or their friends were harrassed, of that, 20 % were sexually attacked and injured).

Education levels negatively only reflect on one type of crime – breaking into flats (73 % of university graduates have their own or mediated experience). Naturally, this is in keeping with the robber's strategy (the interesting general image of „winners“).

With only one exception, the individually declared incidence of the above mentioned crimes has increased since 1989. The greatest growth was registered in the theft of car equipment and shop-lifting (by 9 %). A small growth in violent robbery, petty theft, physical threats and sexual harrassment was evident. The only sphere showing some decline was the theft of motorbikes, mopeds, and should be seen in connection with the above-mentioned overall tendencies.

As is suggested by the term „low-anomic“ in the title of our paper, in comparison with other metropolises of the Eastern Block (made by [Ewald 1994]), the level of violence in Prague is the lowest in almost every sphere.

A comparison of the incidence of the given offences with their frequency reveals people's often repeated experience with them. This concerns namely sexual offences as well as car-theft or shop-lifting, suggesting that a part of the population does not acknowledge the risk factors and therefore takes no precautions in response to them.

The final question in this set concerned the respondents' most unpleasant or worst offences. Clearly, these offences were connected with car, motorbike, and bicycle ownership and differed in gender. Irrespective of these connections, burglary was the most frequently mentioned crime (4.5 %).

3. The reaction: The Awareness of Crime

Public opinion surveys dealing with perceptions of the basic problems people face nowadays, arrived at the same results: the main problems do not evolve in the economic or political spheres, but are security problems. Obviously, it is a big city problem, especially in Prague, which has become of late not only a business centre, but also a haven for criminal elements of every variety (including drug-trafficking and organised crime).

This was clearly recorded in our interviews. About one third of the interviewees feel safe on the streets in the evening, 39 % feel somewhat insecure, while 26 % of the Prague population is afraid. Women fear more.

Unlike the conditions prior to 1990, the situation since then has rapidly worsened: at that time only one tenth of people felt scared, while the same number of people felt secure. A feeling of safety prevailed (46 % felt very secure, 35 % somewhat insecure).

The growth in feelings of insecurity in public places has not however shifted to a similar feeling at home. In comparison with the past, there has only been a slight decrease in the feeling of safety: today most people still feel safe at home (31 % very secure, 43 % enough – in the past 37 % and 44 % respectively). 23 % of respondents feel somewhat insecure at home and 4 % very insecure (in the past 17 %, 3 %).

A general epistemological note should be added to this rating: if contemporary problems are perceived as overwhelming, the tendency is to rate the present situation as much worse than in the past, although an objective comparison of the situations then and now (where possible) would probably not uncover such marked differences.

The most often stated reasons for feelings of insecurity are property crimes (theft, robbery, burglary). Breaking into flats seems to be the most frequent cause of fear (25 % are very scared, 38 % are scared). More than a half of the population fears attacks (21 % very, 31 % rather) and theft (19 %, 31 %). The percentage of women who are scared of sexually motivated assault (25 %, 21 %), of molestation (21 %, 26 %) and of rape (27 %, 18 %) is quite high.

The answers to the question as to risk probability (one's district at night) establish a similar order (drawn up by means of rating on a four-degree scale where 1 = not at all, 4 = very probable). The possibility of breaking into a flat was admitted (variant 3 = quite probable) by 58 %, for another 13 % it is even very probable.

It is certainly a positive discovery that anxiety concerning personal security is deeply rooted in the general consciousness. People have to adapt to the new conditions, to be more responsible for their well-being. On the other hand, it is obvious that in most particular offences the possibility of personal danger is perceived as less probable (with the exception of theft and harassment by adolescents). Another question is whether the possible dangers are underestimated.

Table 3. The extent of anxiety and the probability of being the victim of violent offences (Mean, 4 = maximum)

	scale of anxiety	scale of probability
1. To have one's flat/house broken into	2.800	2.786
2. To be attacked and robbed	2.638	2.573
3. To be robbed (other than cases 1. or 2.)	2.588	2.598
4. To be sexually molested – only women	2.516	2.441
5. To be sexually assaulted and injured – only women	2.516	2.320
6. To be raped – only women	2.494	2.251
7. To be attacked and injured	2.313	2.290
8. To be killed	2.113	1.956
9. To be molested by adolescents	2.031	2.342

Behavioural Aspects

The above-mentioned risks necessitate some form of self-protective behaviour. The following summary shows that the avoidance of empty streets is the most frequently employed defence (26 % always, 28 % often) against possible danger. Only a few people implement some form of self-defence (11 % always, 7 % often). Given that 76 % of respondents never avoid public transport, we can assume that it is used as the means of protection.

Table 4. Forms of protection against crime (Mean)

1. Do you avoid empty streets, spaces and parks?	2.644
2. Do you avoid adolescents on the streets?	2.253
3. Do you avoid foreigners on the streets?	2.027
4. Do you use a car, a bicycle or taxi?	1.905
5. Do you let somebody walk you home in the evening	1.869
6. Do you carry tear gas, a stick, a knife, a gun or something similar with you?	1.666
7. Do you avoid public transport?	1.359
8. Are you learning a martial art?	1.269

With regard to specific problems of age groups old people's fear of some adolescent groups (35 % frequently fear them, 21 % always) is worth nothing.

Attitudes to safety are, among other things, also formed by massmedia. Crime is now a component of the massmedial landscape: 36 % of people very often and 45 % often read, hear or see news reports on crime.

The situation in this field requires every individual to assume greater responsibility for his/her own safety. Half of those questioned had introduced additional safety measures (locks, chains, and so on) in their homes as a protection against growing criminality.

Trust in an Institution: new experience or expectation?

The public's trust is a necessary pre-requisite for the success of state institutions. The order was established only for those who answered within the scale „1 = full trust, 4 = no trust“. Those who answered „cannot say“ are not included.

Table 5. Public trust in selected institutions (Mean)

1. Schools	2.130
2. Police	2.340
3. Psychiatric hospitals	2.376
4. State prosecution	2.457
5. Criminal justice	2.462
6. Institution for the protection of the constitution	2.513
7. Social institutions	2.553
8. Institutions for the care of the young	2.589
9. Arbitrary institutions/commissions	2.757
10. National Property Fund	2.764
11. Prisons	2.787
12. Clearance commission of the Ministry of Internal Affairs	3.013

We naturally posed a question concerning the extent to which the shown rating reflects a real knowledge of the institutions' function and how far this rating reflects more general feelings.

In the resulting order, trust in courts is roughly on the average level. Attitudes to some aspects of current judicial practice is obvious from the next table. The displayed order was established solely on the basis of those who answered on the four-grade scale (1 = absolutely agree, 4 = absolutely disagree; those who chose the variant „cannot judge, do not know“ not being incorporated).

Table 6. Evaluation of local court actions (Mean, 1 = ++)

1. It is good that you can go to the court with every dispute	2.161
2. The accused are judged correctly, such that the innocent are not charged	2.288
3. The sentences are lawfully correct	2.412
4. Under the present system it is possible for the innocent to be convicted	2.414
5. It is decided so that a conflict is really solved	2.526

The rating concerning the possibility of charging and convicting the innocent is, however, ambiguous. Most of the negative reactions were based upon recollections of the local authorities' so-called committees for offences, as existed in the Czech Republic before 1990, as well as the suggestion of a certain imperfection in the administrative procedure of courts. Indeed, there is a indirect risk inherent within the arena of legal regulation. It is also important to note at this juncture that the protracted procedure of solving of cases often runs contrary to the normal functioning of market forces. The typical solution for debts is then a violent one (threats, attacks).

Indeed, the population places more trust in the police than the courts. In this case study, Prague inhabitants rated some aspects of police practice. The order was established in the same way as before.

Table 7. Evaluation of police actions (Mean, 1 = ++, 4 = --)

1. The police respond to crime lawfully	2.225
2. The police tend to peace and order effectively/adequately	2.407
3. The police take the victims of crimes seriously and help them	2.425
4. The police behave justly toward suspects, so that the innocent are not charged	2.430
5. The police is the public's „friend and helper“	2.455
6. There has only been a minor change in police behaviour since before the Velvet Revolution	2.533
7. The impression left by police behaviour contributes to repeated violent skirmishes with police during demonstrations	2.662
8. The police treats lower class people unjustly	2.964

Unlike the results of other public opinion studies, the police rated quite well. This shift can be explained as follows: if the rating is put into a thematically delineated block, it incorporates the criminological context of police work, such that results are more favourable than when a general expression satisfaction or unsatisfaction is registered.

4. Social problems and problematic social groups

The investigation of people's opinions concerning actual social problems is doubly important: on the one hand, it reflects the state of the social environment and its possible anomic features; on the other hand, it can signal sources of personal tension, which are potential triggers of deviant behaviour.

Table 8. Attitudes toward essential social problems (% , means)

	(3)		(4)
	rather anxious	very anxious	Mean
1. Price increases	34	32	2.91
2. Gender-Inequality	8	2	1.45
3. AIDS	29	39	2.99
4. Fall in standard of living	34	23	2.68
5. State of health care	35	33	2.91
6. Unemployment	24	15	2.26
7. State of environment	27	60	3.44
8. Economic situation of some individuals	30	19	2.50
9. Drug addiction	26	31	2.69
10. Old-age pension scheme	25	18	2.31
11. Former communist officials keeping their posts	28	37	2.86
12. Aggression and violence	25	67	3.57
13. Possibility of being evicted from one's flat	20	20	2.30
14. Inflow of immigrants and foreigners	29	17	2.48
15. War and danger of war	26	35	2.84
16. Political right-wing radicalism	26	15	2.30
17. Loss of family ties	19	23	2.29
18. General loss of social identity/individualization of life	29	15	2.33
19. Frauds, illegal financial and foreign-exchange businesses during the transformation period	30	32	2.81
20. Manipulation of former state-owned property under the privatization process (e.g. low cost)	28	30	2.76
21. Organized crime – such as organised car theft, drug sale, arms sale, blackmail	29	59	3.45
22. Mortgage and economic transaction frauds	25	32	2.74

The following question sought to identify those social problems connected more with the individual. The order of problems labels the following as „almost unsolvable“:

Table 9. Scarcely solvable problems in order of difficulty (%)

1. Organised crime	31
2. Former officials/elites	21
3. Bureaucracy	19
4. Privatisation frauds	16
5. Rehabilitation of victims	10
6. Financial problems	10
7. Living/housing	9

The proportion of „unsolvable“ problems within the entire group of problems rarely exceeded 5 %. We therefore combined categories 4 („unsolvable“) and 3 („significant, solvable“).

In these data a relatively harmonious picture of the („post-anomic“?) development of society, as reflected by public opinion, materialises. Our survey confirms respondents', relatively stable life-condition. The general employment/occupational prospects were rated as good or even very good. Gender (women), unsuitable qualifications and old age were, however, the most frequent reasons for less favourable prospects. The unemployment analysis (J. Večerník, P. Kuchař) did not confirm that young people in particular have problems securing jobs and utilising qualifications has been as identified in research abroad.

Reflections on „social“ pollution

The occurrence of concrete negative phenomena in the respondent's dwelling place (social environment) is limited to certain areas identified earlier. Some phenomena were not very well known, with some respondents being unable to comment on them (squatting apartment houses, political radicalism).

According to the mathematical mean (the scale of the extent of problems 1 to 4) the following ladder was made (see Table 10). Since in this scale, level 2 showed „only small problems“, the situation appears almost idyllic. Political radicalism and demonstrations are rare in the Prague of today.

Table 10. Evaluation of negative phenomena (Mean)

	Mean	Mentioned more often by
1. Pollution, smog	3.07	
2. Dirt, waste	3.00	Women
3. Reckless drivers	2.67	People with higher secondary & university education
4. Faulty telephones	2.58	
5. Gypsies	2.50	
6. Drunkards	2.41	Women (highest – 23 %)
7. Bored youth	2.35	Women
8. Graffiti	2.23	
9. Dilapidated buildings	1.98	
10. Closing down public institutions	1.94	People with higher secondary & university education
11. Car collisions	1.89	
12. Immigrants	1.84	People with vocational training
13. Drug addicts	1.80	
14. Squatting	1.70	
15. Prostitution	1.64	
16. Illegal business	1.56	
17. Behaviour of neighbours	1.56	
18. Beggary	1.55	
19. Political radicalism	1.54	
20. Sex-shops	1.31	
21. Demonstrations	1.24	

The above demonstrates that minor social differences (e.g. sex and education) play no role here. The perception of social problems generally continues to reveal a tendency toward a homogeneity of opinions. We have not succeeded in proving the influence of more considerable social barriers (e.g. the respondent's level of education).

Aversion to radicalism is typical of public opinion. Most Prague inhabitants show no tendency towards such behaviour, especially when it implies infringing the law. Even relatively harmless graffiti, for example (and here we do not mean the destruction of an historic object) was approved by a mere 8 % of respondents.

The following group of questions aims to identify the tendency to actively respond to life situations. Only 28 % of respondents stated that their lives are almost fully influenced by external forces, that is, other people and circumstances. The statement that although equally qualified, Czech people have less opportunities than Western inhabitants reveals more pessimistic sentiments: 53 % of those questioned agreed (40 % of university graduates).

5. Xenophobic reactions?

Attitudes to some social groups may be connected with political radicalism. Xenophobia, stereotype and prejudice can be seen in this sphere, sometimes initiating the tendency towards deviant behaviour.

The predominantly positive attitudes towards policemen is highly interesting from a criminological point of view. The protective attitude toward Jews and the aversion toward anti-Semitism is also worthy of note. With those groups rating below the index 2.5 we can talk about explicitly negative attitudes, which shows the Czech population's clearly negative stance toward Neo-nazism and Fascism.

The influence of education was registered in many variables. Generally, we can conclude that university graduates are characterised by higher levels of tolerance and enlightened liberalism – as is evident, for example, in their attitudes toward both homosexuals and Jews. They express a stronger aversion toward skinheads, Neo-nazis and illegal moneychangers. A higher proportion of xenophobic reactions, primarily in connection with ethnic groups or refugees, can be observed among working class people.

The question is whether we could prove a correlation between public opinion and the number of violent attacks against foreigners, as T. Ohlemacher [1994: 222] has demonstrated in Germany. Such „great cases“ are fortunately not present in the contemporary Czech Republic. Nevertheless, the most recent police report states that 94 race-motivated attacks occurred in the Czech Republic from January to July 1994 (as compared with 55 cases in the whole of 1993). There were also serious conflicts between skinheads and Gypsies.

Latent tendencies and inclinations

We sought to identify the attitudes towards some problematic types of behaviour (F3), battery F4 then asked about the possibility of such behaviour. In the third column of the following table we placed the percentage of those who admitted to the possibility of such behaviour in their own lives.

Table 11. Attitudes toward social groups (% , mean)
Scale: 1 = not likeable, 7 = likeable

	Not likable	Mean
1. Prostitutes	36	2.5
2. Homeless	24	2.8
3. Gypsies	43	2.2
4. Refugees	13	3.2
5. Independent („alternative unconventional groups“)	14	3.3
6. Members of Republican Party	37	2.4
7. AIDS sufferers	7	3.8
8. Immigrants	8	3.7
9. Skinheads	43	2.2
10. Homosexuals	20	3.2
11. Communists	40	2.4
12. Drug-addicts	29	2.5
13. Members of religious sects	27	2.7
14. Jews	3	4.5
15. Palestinians	8	3.8
16. Neo-nazis	60	1.8
17. Israelites	5	4.1
18. Turks	7	3.7
19. Blacks	6	4.0
20. East Germans	11	3.5
21. West Germans	5	4.1
22. Poles	6	3.8
23. Russians	9	3.6
24. Hungarians	5	4.0
25. Czechs	1	5.3
26. Slovaks	5	4.4
27. Rumanians	11	3.5
28. Bulgarians	7	3.8
29. Vietnamese	12	3.4
30. Antisemites	35	2.4
31. Members of peace movements	1	4.8
32. Feminists	21	3.1
33. Policemen	4	4.2
34. Americans	1	4.7
35. Blackmarket moneychangers	41	2.2
36. Tourists	3	4,6

Table 12. Evaluation of selected modes of behaviour (% - F3, F4)
Scale: 1 = wrong 4 = not at all wrong

		F3	F4
	wrong	rather wrong	probability of doing it
1. Not paying for public transport	10	32	75
2. Tax evasion (individual)	28	47	34
3. Shoplifting	57	36	10
4. Prostitution in „public houses“	23	15	17
5. Violence against foreigners	72	23	4
6. Car theft or breaking into cars	74	22	4
7. Illegal employment (without paying social insurance)	22	48	x
8. Selling drugs on streets	76	18	3
9. Drug consumption	68	22	11
10. Environmental pollution by individuals	61	34	24
11. Street prostitution	52	31	4
12. Abortion within the first twelve weeks of pregnancy	13	16	62
13. Squatting	13	39	21

It seems that Prague dwellers are strictly against drugs, car theft and violence against foreigners. There is an obvious tendency to tolerate prostitution in „public houses“ somewhat and travelling „black“ on public transport. The attitude towards abortion is very liberal.

The added column F4 shows a marked latency to not pay for public transport (81 % among people without university education) and 62 % of women as pro-abortion. The problems of tax evasion (39 % of people with higher secondary education) and environmental pollution can be seen to pose a certain threat, while 11 % of respondents condoned drug consumption (23 % of people with only primary education) should be noted. The tendency to bribe officials, which was confessed by 36 % of people questioned.

The influence of education was only very selective: people with only primary education more frequently tolerated (and admitted in their own cases) theft and violence against foreigners (this being more typical of men). Women more often rejected prostitution. On the contrary prostitution was not rejected so much by people with primary education.

6. Individual dispositions to deviant behaviour

The individual disposition to deviant behaviour is dependent on certain reactions to life problems. The attitude toward certain forms of problematic behaviour is also important. The questions in block F pertain to these points.

Table 13. The most frequent modes of behaviour (%)

	Yes	Women
1. I am trying to solve the situation by planning concrete steps, which I will then try to implement	90	
2. I am looking for help from other people	59	
3. A glass of alcohol usually helps me	15	
4. Pills usually help me	6	8
5. I am looking for a change (sport, music, travel)	70	
6. I am waiting for help from somebody	25	30
7. I think about moving to a Western country	9	

Respondents explicitly declared an active approach, while positive compensation reactions (change of environment or activity) were also wide-spread. The importance of social background and the support of friends were also confirmed. We can therefore expect a transfer to passive reaction from one fourth of the respondents.

Table 14. Approaches to problem-solving (%)
Scale: 1 = fully agree 5 = do not agree at all

	agree	
	fully	rather
1. I would personally try to keep my distance	34	36
2. Alcohol would help me	2	7
3. I would get some drugs	2	2
4. I would not give up	59	30
5. I would seek social assistance	11	37
6. I might commit suicide	4	3
7. I would spend more time on my political activities	3	6
8. I would try to solve my problems differently: perhaps through theft, illegal business, inflicting my anger on somebody else	3	4
9. I would go to the streets (prostitution)	2	2
10. I would seek comfort in religion	7	12
(Only for working people:)		
11. I would concentrate more on my work	25	31

In this highly hypothetical situation, respondents also showed positive reactions. Even in Prague, it is still uncommon to seek help from specialised institutions (social assistance). The influence of religion is not particularly strong. Maladaptive reactions are not common, except a certain tolerance to alcohol consumption. The greatest resistance to deviation was declared by university graduates (drugs, suicides), who more frequently declared they would choose concentration on their work.

7. Selected social determinants of attitudes

The influence of the respondent's sex is apparently only proved in some questions, and when so, then in an highly typical manner. This factor would only acquire greater powers of distinction in combination with other factors (especially age, and partly with education). The factors connected with economic activity and its results are of greater importance, while it should be noted that the present changes are more positively

reflected in the social position of university graduates. Among those people with lower secondary education we can see symptoms of a certain sublimation of partial frustrations (see e.g. employment prospects) in the sphere of ethnic prejudice. A latent tendency to crime (theft, aggressive behaviour) was more directly displayed among people with the lowest educations. We believe, however, that the people of Prague evaluate the crime situation in a relatively homogeneous manner. Most of the registered differences are admittedly of statistical significance, but it cannot be interpreted as an absolutely different trend in each social group. This opinion was confirmed by other previous analyses.

Social contacts survive...

We shall focus on changes which have occurred in the interviewees' most intimate social background, i.e. family ties, friendship, community. Due to the high value placed on them, it is necessary to identify any tensions, frustrations, loss of identity, and so on.

Table 15. Changes in social contacts (%)

Social contacts have:

1. lessened	13	With vocational training	22
2. remained the same	65	University graduates	80
3. increased	22	With primary education	35

The possibility of gaining support from other people has not decreased. It is interesting to note that respondents with the lowest education more often revealed a positive change (35 %). The general opinion on the quality of social relations shows, among other things, that the social climate at work places has improved.

The changes also created a new situation in the exploitation of disposable time. Free time has logically lessened (for family – 37 % lessened, 13 % enlarged). The burden of work has grown, especially for some groups (university graduates, entrepreneurs); nevertheless, a part of those people questioned also experienced a positive change.

8. Some Contextual Characteristics of the Investigated Population

We have connected some additional characteristics concerning the economic and political context. We take it as a pre-condition for the adequate evaluation of the observed trends.

41 % of Prague inhabitants have experienced an improvement in their financial situation since 1990, while for 21 % it has worsened. However, there is an age-correlation here: (56 % of the youngest but only 14 % of the oldest group claimed an improvement).

The prevailing satisfaction is reflected in political attitudes. One fifth situates themselves to the right while a further 34 % incline to it. The centre is occupied by 34 %. It is therefore, possible to speak of a relatively clear orientation in Prague inhabitants' political attitudes.

We should add that one fourth of respondents are followers of some religious group or adhere to some denomination – most of them being Roman-Catholics (71 %). For almost half of them, their commitment to a religious group is, however, purely symbolic. Only about one tenth of Prague inhabitants may be considered to have real religious convictions. The age correlation was confirmed.

Changes of Attitudes and Values

The so-called „velvet revolution“ did not cause any dramatic, open social conflicts, but did signify a total social change with many consequences. The pace of cultural change is slowing down, and the adoption of new (sometimes rather former) values is sometimes difficult. Efforts to accommodate opinions within the new conditions as well as a certain rigidity of attitudes are both identifiable. Special studies have revealed that value orientations are only slowly changing. The importance of some achievement orientation variables is rising slightly [see Matějů, Tuček 1992] while, on the other hand, the importance of political activity variables has decreased rapidly.

From this perspective, it is not surprising that in our research only a part of those questioned see their previous life in the socialistic republic as constituting a certain burden (12 % definitely agree, 26 % rather agree). A larger group of the population displays a somewhat indifferent distance to their past and no strict rejection: three quarters of respondents more or less identified with what they did in the past. In general, people are unwilling to wholly discount their experience and memories of their past life in socialistic Czechoslovakia.

The effectiveness of the totalitarian ideology of the „corruptible majority“ is, to a certain degree, reflected in answers concerning general life satisfaction before and after November 1989 (see Table 16). It is, however, important to specify each type of attitude change. One fourth of respondents maintained their position on the rating scale. The rest of the population have experienced a change in feelings of satisfaction. For half of the respondents it is a positive change, while for a quarter of them it is a negative change. This may account for the certain stability, confidence and optimism we discovered.

Table 16. Level of global life-satisfaction before and after November 1989 (%)

	fully dissatisfied				fully satisfied	
	1-3	4	5	6	7	Mean
Formerly	35	22	24	16	4	4.13
Today	21	14	30	27	8	4.74

We investigated in detail whether dissatisfaction with one's life can be reflected in radicalism or intolerance. We discovered that dissatisfaction is in fact reflected in people's political attitudes, especially in an individual's identification with the state social order, and is even related to their evaluation of employment prospects. However, we have not found any significant correlation in the sphere of attitudes towards various social groups.

Privatization enlarged into value-orientation

The research-design accommodates the reconstruction of the actually declared and the former value system. The first stratum of highly preferred values is now represented by health and family. The second stratum involves the values of environment, living standards and friends („social environment“). The third, relatively important group of values consists of occupational and economic values: money, social security, free time and work. Only then do the values of active self-assertion occur (success in occupation, possibility of political influence, travel, sexual life). A life without restraints was not considered an important value, thus signifying a certain reservation towards voluntarism.

Religion was the least represented value (only being an important factor for about every eighth respondent).

The two latter mentioned values can be considered „saturated“ where satisfaction predominates over importance. Indeed, the greatest tensions (in the sense of the difference between declared importance and actual satisfaction) can be viewed in connection with the value of money and, mainly, in the value of the environment and social security. In the case of social security, the anxiety is probably not specific (for some time there has been almost no unemployment in Prague!), but in the case of the environment, Prague inhabitants' highly realistic assessment of the present situation is to be noted.

Many of the observed changes may be understood as the necessary consequences of the totalitarian regime's collapse. In general, a considerable stability of attitudes is predominant, although the mean values cannot provide a complex picture of all the changes in individuals' conditions and reflections.

III. Discussion

It is difficult to create a wholly reliable picture of the special features of the Czech situation from a comparative analysis. Nevertheless, it is clearly possible to expect some differences in future developments in connection with those relatively favourable economic, social and political conditions which create a specific cultural context. Obviously, this would, however, require a deeper and more detailed analysis.

When the social differentiation of value orientations is not sufficiently clear (and has not succumbed to some „anomic“ change), then people's relatively homogeneous attitudes towards the criminological aspects of the social environment may also be explained by this circumstance. As yet, the coming social differentiation has found no adequate reflection in the sphere of public opinion and specific attitudes to particular issues. An explanation of the relative stability in society can also be located in the fact that the changes have brought increased life satisfaction to a greater part of the population; this fact represents important social (and in this specific period naturally also political) capital. It seems that as a result of the velvet revolution, the comfortable transition has begun.

Naturally, this patient, flexible and non-excessive identification with the system change could be interpreted as „blind“. The prospective identity crisis [see Ewald 1994] operates rather on the individual level or within some social group. The modernisation of society as a whole tends to „standard consequences“ in the criminality rate and victimisation. As discussed, the actual statistics show an easing off in the growth of criminality in the Czech Republic (Table 17).

Table 17. Comparison of Criminality in the Czech Republic
(I.-VI. 1993 – I.-VI. 1994)

	1993		1994	
	notified in thous.	clarified %	notified in thous.	clarified %
ownership	160.7	20.0	144.1	19.8
petty robbery	83.9	16.8	76.9	16.5
burglary	65.4	18.1	58.2	19.1
violence	9.4	70.8	9.4	72.8
morals	1.0	80.9	1.1	85.5
economy	9.1	79.6	8.5	82.7
Total	194.8	30.4	177.1	31.2

Source: Lidové noviny, Vol. VII, No. 211, 8. 9. 1994

Although in the past, the growth in the crime rate was reflected narrowly as a pathological deviation, and the threat to civilisation, it is now increasingly the trend to explain criminality in terms of modernisation. Should we, however, accept this new level of criminality as the anomic by-product of modernisation or even as a simple measure of modernity, of progress?

On the other hand, the post-modernistic approach offers a relativistic solution based on the pluralism of norms, on the dynamics of everyday discourse. It also carries with it a number of methodological and practical obstructions.

Some difficulties in the use of fashionable terms of transition and/or modernisation were demonstrated by J. C. Alexander [1994]. From his point of view, there is an alternative to post-modern concepts, one which is based on the principle of reconstruction and which, historically, could attain the form of neo-modernism. The key role is being played by the world-wide changes demanding new approaches of intellectual reflection.

The classical Parsonsian concept of ongoing modernisation is still used today in the interpretation of the transformation of post-communist countries. It is an implementation of modern institutions, the innovative capacity of which stands out doubtless as being to initiate modern social integration. However, I. Srubar prefers to pursue the question of whether the modernisation mechanisms postulated by the theory really do operate in a post-socialist reality with the „directional constancy“ and „structural improvements“ [Srubar 1994: 199]. He emphasises the time-factor in the ongoing changes, in the formation of the new institutions. „If we wish to clarify what happens during the U-curve of the transformation process itself, we have to view the effect of the implemented institutions in the context of the social structure of the post-socialist countries, and examine the „interaction“ of this effect with the semantic inventory of the societies concerned“ [Srubar 1994: 199].

Finally, we could abstract some proposed explanations of the increase and stabilisation of the observed prevalence violence and criminality rate. We should therefore emphasize:

- the concept of social anomie (E. Durkheim, R. K. Merton), the cultural lag concept (F.Ogburn);

- the problem of identity, the conflict between social de-nivelisation (inequality) and the need for universalistic individual participation [Ewald 1994];
- the correlation between acts of violence and reactions of public opinion [Ohlemacher 1994], which could be treated as the homeostatic, self-regulating mechanism (in terms of system theory) or as the collective looking-glass-self (in terms of interactionism);
- the by-product and/or sign of modernisation, or, on the contrary;
- the signs of societal crisis, of social pathology, of disintegration.

We would not like to overestimate the weight of actual anomic features: nevertheless, the past regime was not really „normal“ („nomos“ sui generis). The dualism of value orientation in the previous period [see Možný 1991] found opportunity to change some latent or unofficial ideas and forms of behaviour to manifest ones. For Czechs it means no drama, no problems...

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