



НАУЧНАЯ ЖИЗНЬ

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Ten years of historical sociology in Prague: A new perspective branch of Czech sociology*

N.P. Narbut

RUDN University (Peoples' Friendship University of Russia)
Miklukho-Maklaya St., 6, Moscow, Russia, 117198

Federal Research Sociological Center of Russian Academy of Sciences
Krzhizhanovskogo St., 24/5-5, Moscow, Russia, 117218

(e-mail: narbut-np@rudn.university)

Abstract. About ten years ago, a new theoretical branch appeared in Czech sociology — historical sociology. The first step and prerequisite for its development was publication of the impressive collective monograph *Historical Sociology: Theory of Long-Term Development* (edited by J. Šubrt) including works of famous Czech social scientists (P. Machonin, M. Petrussek, J. Musil, M. Hroch and others). The concept of historical sociology curriculum appeared in 2007, its form gradually developed in the discussions of J. Šubrt, J.P. Arnason (La Trobe University), M. Havelka (Charles University) and W. Spohn (University of Wrocław). In 2008, its accreditation documents were prepared under the guidance of J. Šubrt, and it was included in the academic year 2009/2010 schedule. At the same time, at the Faculty of Humanities of the Charles University the Department of Historical Sociology was founded. Until now, there are Master's and PhD programs in Historical Sociology in Czech in the form of regular daily and combined (distance) studies. In the academic year 2012/2013, a doctoral studies program was also opened, and both programs — Master's and PhD's — started in English. The article considers the decade-long development of historical sociology in the Czech Republic focusing on the research and study programs at the Faculty of Humanities of the Charles University. The author explains how historical sociology is defined and developing in the Czech Republic, emphasizing its research traditions and current interests. The article pays particular attention to the topics and representatives of historical sociology mentioning the importance of its publications — both monographs and the journal established in 2009. To conclude, the author summarizes the results of the current stage of the development of Czech historical sociology, its challenges and risks, hopes and perspectives. Ten years is usually a very short period for any science but for Czech historical sociology they became a period of significant results.

Key words: historical sociology; theory; research; curriculum; social system; social processes; social change; collective memory

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According to the accreditation document on the website of the Charles University, the curriculum of historical sociology program aims at research activities and professional training of students focusing on long-term development processes and trends especially those that significantly affect the life of contemporary societies. These are mainly issues of social change and modernization, continuity and discontinuity, globalization, integration and disintegration, religious and cultural pluralities, opportunities and risks of social development [11]. According to the accreditation document, historical sociology is not just a combination of history and sociology or an interdisciplinary integration of historical and sociological approaches. Historical sociology is a research program studying historical spatially-temporally determined social reality: it combines theory and research methodology, conducts analysis of the present and near and distant past, thus, presenting an interdisciplinary theoretical-methodological perspective applied in both fundamental and specialized research to explain long-term social processes and differences and similarities of social phenomena in different historical periods.

The authors of the historical sociology curriculum at the Faculty of Humanities developed it to avoid narrow branch orientation. It is not a study based on one theory or method, it is rather a theoretical multi-paradigm based on the plurality of methodological approaches [58; 61]. In its theoretical part one can find elements of many disciplines — history, political science, economics, and anthropology. The curriculum of the Master's studies can be divided into three blocks: the theoretical-historical block consists of courses on the general concepts of historical sociology and civilizational analysis, on the perspectives of historical sociology in relation to the issues of knowledge, culture, religion, nationalism, economy, politics, international relations, democracy and everyday life. The methodological-research block introduces basic approaches of sociological-historical methodology, methods and techniques of both quantitative and qualitative analysis in the archival research. The third block is selective and focuses on (a) modernization and social change, (b) historical sociology of politics and international relations, (c) cultural history and sociology of leisure [61]. Such a program is to prepare graduates for their future professional work in both academic and practical fields, i.e. to train competent specialists with a wider outlook, good expertise and skills.

Another feature of historical sociology at the Faculty of Humanities is its personnel's efforts to strengthen international cooperation in the field of research and teaching. Over the last ten years, many foreign scientists — W. Spohn, D. Sayer, M. Maslowski, H. Staubmann, D. Smith, D. Kaesler, M. Abraham (President of the International Sociological Association) and others — visited the Department of Historical Sociology.

Over the last four decades, historical sociology has evolved globally. Thus, a good overview of the development of historical sociology in Russia is presented in the *Historical Sociology in Russia* by N.V. Romanovskiy [45], an author of the book *Istoricheskaya sotsiologiya* (Historical Sociology) [44] published in Moscow. According to J. Šubr [63], historical sociology has its own classics (M. Weber, N. Elias, etc.) and prominent scholars today (Sh. Eisenstadt, Ch. Tilly, Th. Skocpol, M. Mann, E. Wallerstein, etc.). It also has its journals (*Journal of Historical Sociology* established in 1988;

the Czech journal *Historická sociologie* [Historical Sociology] established in 2009), expert forums and conferences; it is represented in the International Sociological Association (Research Committee 56); it has extensive book production [1; 6; 10; 28; 46; 48; 49; 65; 66]. Historical sociology today is a very diverse and internally differentiated field striving to develop a general theory instead of the current range of theories moving in different directions, and to conduct more empirical studies. In 2009, the position of historical sociology in the Czech Republic was recognized; in a short period of time several important monographs were published [3; 4; 15; 17; 19; 22; 34; 57; 59]; it is presented in the Masaryk's Czech Sociological Association (Section of Historical Sociology); it has its journal and department at the Faculty of Humanities of the Charles University.

According to J. Šubr [63; 64], historical sociology has roots in the very beginning of sociology — already in Comte's theory of social dynamics, then in the works of K. Marx, H. Spencer, E. Durkheim, M. Weber, and other scholars of the second half of the 19th — early 20th century (the same applies to Czech sociology, its founding fathers T.G. Masaryk, E. Chalupný and I.A. Bláha). However, in the first half of the 20th century, the idea of interconnection of history and sociology was abandoned, and sociology defined itself as a science of contemporary societies leaving the past for historical science. Nevertheless, there were some exceptions such as P. Sorokin's *Sociocultural and Cultural Dynamics* [50], N. Elias's *The Civilization Process* [12], some ideas and works of T. Parsons [39] and his colleagues (R.N. Bellah, N. Smelser, and S.M. Lipset).

What is known today as new historical sociology [51] is the western concept represented mainly by the work of B. Moore [36] and his followers — Th. Skocpol [48] and Ch. Tilly [57] who were primarily interested in armed conflicts, revolutions and wars [see also: 21]. The second important orientation is analysis of the world system by I. Wallerstein [68] based on the Marxist path-dependency theory. The third orientation is civilizational analysis developed by Sh.N. Eisenstadt [11], the Czech-born sociologist J. Krejčí [25] and J.P. Arnason [2].

Historical sociology at the Faculty of Humanities of the Charles University recognizes this tradition and aims at developing it. At the same time, it is open to new themes, for instance, J.P. Arnason [3; 4] focuses on the civilizational analysis. At the beginning, in historical sociology there were two leading figures of then-Czech sociology — M. Petrušek [40; 41] and J. Musil [37]. J. Šubr considers theoretical-methodological problems of historical sociology [63; 64], N. Elias's civilizational theory [55], issues of social and historical time [56], historical consciousness and collective memory [33; 60]. M. Havelka [15] develops historical sociology of knowledge and religion, B. Šalanda — historical sociology of everyday life [34], J. Štemberk [52; 53] studies issues of economic development, mobility and tourism, K. Černý [8; 9] — development of the Islamic world, A. Marková [30; 31] — the past and present of post-Soviet space, A. Kumsa [26; 27] — conflicts on the African continent, M. Německý [38] — political processes and functional analysis. Thus, such a small team of the Department of Historical Sociology covers a broad range of themes.

One of the key issues for the Department of Historical Sociology is collective memory. This research was supported by several grants and resulted in many publications

in Czech, English, Russian and Belarusian, and the collective monograph *Collective Memory: On Theoretical Issues* [25] that identified theoretical concepts and methodological approaches (M. Halbwachs, P. Nora, P. Ricoeur, A. Assmann, J.C. Alexander, etc.) to study collective memory. J. Šubr contributed to the research by his own concept ‘historical consciousness’ as a combination of four elements: personal or interpersonal historical experience; ideology, especially state ideology for political regimes introduce ideological interpretation of history for the aims of their legitimation; knowledge produced by historiography and historical science; and collective cultural-historical memory, i.e. various manifestations of culture reflecting the past in a variety of ways [60].

Another internationally important contributions — the book by J. Šubr *The Perspective of Historical Sociology: The Individual as Homo-Sociologicus Through Society and History* [64], who is well-known to Russian readers by many articles and the book *Historical Processes, Social Change, Modernization in Sociology* published by the RUDN University [63]. The English book consists of seven chapters in which the author presents his ideas on historical sociology as a discipline. He begins with a search for answers to the question of how to define historical sociology and relationship between history and sociology and continues with time frames and various concepts of social change. The book is based on the classical sociological works (by O. Comte, M. Spencer, K. Marx, M. Weber and E. Durkheim), theories of structuralism, functionalism and systems approach (K. Lévi-Strauss, M. Foucault, T. Parsons, R.K. Merton, L.A. Coser, R. Dahrendorf, N. Luhmann, and I. Wallerstein). Particular attention is paid to the civilizational analysis in both monistic (N. Elias) and pluralistic versions (J. Krejčí, Sh.N. Eisenstadt), and to modernization processes such as modern nationalism (M. Hroch, E. Gellner), totalitarian trends (H. Arendt, K. Popper, R. Aron), revolutions and violent conflicts (B. Moore, Th. Skocpol, Ch. Tilly, M. Mann), transition from the first to the second modernity (D. Bell, Z. Bauman, A. Giddens, U. Beck, etc.). The final part of the book presents a historical-sociological interpretation of human life and explains the influence of prominent personalities on history and society (G.V. Plekhanov’s idea of “the role of the individual in history”).

What is most likely to affect the further development of historical sociology is the journal of Historical Sociology established in 2009 and headed by B. Šalanda. With two issues annually, first it was published in Kolín by the Independent Centre for Policy Studies, and from 2012 by the Karolinum Press of the Charles University. In 2016, the journal was accepted into the Scopus database; its articles are published in Czech and English and are in open access on the journal website [7]. The thematic structure of the journal is rather broad and diverse but with four basic clusters: 1) analysis of historical phenomena/events and their influence on social development (for example, “The unimaginable revolution: 1917 in retrospect” by J.P. Arnason or “The First World War and the population of the Czech lands” by L. Fialová); 2) issues of regional history, memory and identity (for example, the article by S. Kreisslová and V. Jaroš “German past Czech borderland in the historical consciousness of the population of Karlovy Vary Region” or “Cornerstones of Breton regionalism, its emergence and development until 1914” by M. Reiterová); 3) studies on theory and methodology (for example, “Historical socio-

logy in Russia” by N.V. Romanovskiy or “Homo sociologicus and the society of individuals” by J. Šubrt); 4) works on the contribution of prominent authors to the historical-sociological tradition (for example, “Violence control and the civilization of intimacy: Remarks on Norbert Elias” by M. Hadas, “Universal rationalization: M. Weber’s great narrative” by D. Kaesler or “Theory and practice. The establishment of sociology in the Czech environment by T.G. Masaryk” by V. Kozák).

Recently, two issues have been published by guest editors in English. In 2015, J.P. Arnason and N. Maslowski focused on key issues of historical sociology and published works by foreign contributors: M. Maslovski — “The soviet model of modernity and Russia’s post-communist political transformation” [32]; B. Strath — “The nineteenth century revised: Towards a new narrative on Europe’s past” [54]; P. Wagner — “From domination to autonomy, two eras of progress in world-sociological perspective” [67]. In 2018, J.P. Arnason published a monothematic block dedicated to the French Revolution and including, for instance, works by D. Inglis — “Is it still too early to tell? Rethinking sociology’s relations to the French Revolution” [20] and I.A. Reed — “Power and the French Revolution: Toward a sociology of sovereignty” [42].

Thus, the article summarizes results of the ten-year development of historical sociology at the Faculty of Humanities of the Charles University in Prague, which prove a success beneficial not only for Czech sociology but to some extent for international social studies. A general feature of Czech sociology — and to some degree of historical sociology too — is that its representatives focus on certain narrow topics, which is rather a rational strategy for individual scientific work. However, contemporary Czech sociology in general and historical sociology in particular still lack united efforts for the comprehensive analysis of the past and present of the Czech society. Moreover, despite its obvious successes Czech historical sociology faces serious challenges such as a shortage of students and funding for research projects (both challenges are typical for sociology in general). Ten years is a very short period for any science but regarding its results for Czech historical sociology they became a period of significant results, that is why one cannot but wish Czech colleagues further scientific successes in the next decade.

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Десятилетний юбилей исторической социологии в Праге: новое перспективное направление в чешской социологии*

Н.П. Нарбут

Российский университет дружбы народов
ул. Миклухо-Маклая, 6, Москва, Россия, 117198

Федеральный научно-исследовательский социологический центр РАН
ул. Кржижановского 24/5-5, Москва, Россия, 117218

(e-mail: narbut-np@rudn.university)

Около десяти лет назад в чешской социологии оформилось новое дисциплинарное направление — историческая социология. Первым шагом и предпосылкой для ее становления стала публикация внушительной коллективной монографии «Историческая социология: Теория долгосрочного развития» (под редакцией И. Шубрта), состоявшей из статей известных чешских ученых (П. Махонина, М. Петрусек и др.). Концепция учебного плана новой дисциплины оформилась в 2007 году в дискуссиях И. Шубрта, Дж.П. Арнасона, М. Гавелки и В. Шпона. В 2008 году под руководством И. Шубрта были подготовлены аккредитационные документы новой программы на 2009—2010 академический год. В то же время была создана кафедра исторической социологии на факультете гуманитарных наук Карлова университета, где и сегодня существуют магистерские и аспирантские программы по исторической социологии на чешском языке в очном и дистанционно-очном формате. В 2012—2013 академическом году была открыта докторантура по исторической социологии, а магистерские и аспирантские программы начали читаться на английском языке. В статье представлено развитие исторической социологии в Чехии за последние десять лет, акцент сделан на исследовательской и учебной программах факультета гуманитарных наук Карлова университета. Автор показывает, как историческая социология воспринимается и развивается в Чехии, подчеркивая ее исследовательские традиции и нынешние интересы. Особое внимание в статье уделено представителям и тематике историко-социологических исследований, подчеркивается многочисленность и значимость ее публикаций — как монографий, так и созданного в 2009 году журнала «Historická sociologie» («Историческая социология»). В заключение суммированы результаты развития чешской исторической социологии, ее проблемы и риски, надежды и перспективы. Десять лет — совсем небольшой срок для развития науки, но чешской исторической социологии они дали значительные результаты.

Ключевые слова: историческая социология; теория; исследование; учебная программа; социальная система; социальные процессы; социальные изменения; коллективная память

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