

Editors: Jan Vávra, Zdenka Sokolíčková, Miloslav Lapka

Summaries of the papers

Jan Vávra, Miloslav Lapka, Zuzana Dvořáková-Líšková, Eva Cudlínová

Media coverage of climate change in Czech daily newspapers 1997–2010

The paper deals with daily print media coverage of climate change in the Czech Republic in time period 1997–2010. Together 5663 articles from six countrywide daily newspapers, including four prestige-press, one tabloid and one political party affiliated newspapers, were chosen for the content analysis focused on the intensity of media coverage. Several categories were also observed, with special attention to the quality of information and its possible consequences. This study is the first long-term content analysis of media depiction of climate change in the Czech news. The results show that intensity of media attention in the Czech newspapers is similar to other EU or US daily newspapers. Regarding the observed categories, the articles in Czech papers mostly do not refer to scientific sources of information, focus more on the natural issues than social ones and equally link the climate change topics to the Czech Republic and global issues. Most of the articles can be labelled as catastrophic or sensational, only 11 % of them are serious, i.e. not stressing the sensation or catastrophes and referring to some source of information. With respect to this problematic quality of information we discuss previous studies dealing with the effect of information form on the recipients. Despite the fact, that people perceive the media in various ways, some studies show that catastrophic messages can increase the climate scepticism and undermine the willingness to act in some mitigation processes. We argue that the style of media coverage can influence public perception of climate change, which could partially explore, why the Czech population belongs to those more sceptical among the EU.

Eva Kyselá

Theory of risk perception: from psychology to sociology between reality and construction

Risk perception, as it is related to the fundamental concept of risk, poses an important research problem and its constitution represents a question difficult to answer. The theoretical field is therefore fragmented and the theories differ even in the basic assumptions about the reality of risk. The most influential psychological, cultural, and social theories of risk perception are introduced with emphasis on environmental risks and in relation to their assumptions of either constructed or objective reality of risk. These premises have serious implications for policy and decision making and for the role public perception of risk plays in it, as well as in the valuation of the public perceptions in the process of social construction of risk. The plurality of theoretical approaches used to tackle the problem of risk perception is, despite its obvious drawbacks, argued as beneficial, especially in relation to the complexity of risk and its perception and the dangers of inadequate reductionism. The need for interdisciplinarity and a critical debate between particular approaches is advocated and the problems that environmental risks pose to the risk perception research are discussed.

Nadia Johanisová

Alternative enterprise in de-growth economy

Aggregate economic growth has proved to be deeply detrimental to the environment, yet it remains an icon of mainstream economic discourse. The paper suggests that we need to start thinking instead about degrowth strategies, and looks at the concept of social enterprise from a degrowth perspective. With the central question of “what should an enterprise in today’s altered circumstances look like?”, it looks at six examples of successful current and historical social enterprises and discusses some of their strong and weak points. Finally, it attempts to identify aspects of social enterprises which make them a better choice in a future degrowth society.

Josef Šmajš

Ontological understanding of culture

The author interprets culture from the evolutionary ontology’s viewpoint. He notes that culture is a young, artificially created system, inside an older, naturally created system of nature. Culture originated as a human-constructed non-biological system with its own internal information, which is not genetic information but conceptual information, a spiritual culture. Therefore culture is not a direct continuation of natural evolution – its relation to nature is ontically opposite. The author describes two main processes of cultural structures’ origination by means of human activity: 1. An indirect process, when these structures originate without a scenario, i.e. by means of a historical succession (e.g. social institutions and ethnic languages); 2. A direct process when they originate according to a scenario, i.e. as structures with specified information (e.g. the material culture and technology). He also reminds that social wealth originates only at the expense of the natural wealth, i.e. at the expense of the evolutionarily originated inanimate and animate systems of the planet. Yet human species is not responsible for nature, which it had not created and which it does not fully understand. It is responsible for culture, its own creation, which ravages the Earth in an irreversible way.

Barbora Půtová

Civilizational collapse of sociocultural systems: ancient Roman Empire and today’s global society

The subject of this study is the issue of collapse of sociocultural systems as a specific kind of a cultural change. In this study I determine collapse as such, together with its basic features and mechanisms. The central category of the analysis is the phenomenon of complexity growth concerning sociocultural systems, which – as a secondary product of technological advancement – brings on one hand economic advantages and enables more feasible production of goods and services, but on the other hand it results into growth of entropy, manifestations of retardation and subsequent developmental regression. Paradoxically, as a consequence, the complexity growth changes into an indispensable necessity, which persists for reasons of securing inertial functionality of the society. Investments into complexity become more and more expensive and energy-intensive. Concomitant phenomena accompanying the complexity growth are surplus creation and ever decreasing profits. The scope of the study is to carry out an analysis of the complexity growth and collapse in the context of a wider range of interconnected demographic, economic, social, technologic and environmental factors. In the first part of the study I present sources and factors of collapse as a specific kind of a cultural change on the example of factors that caused the fall of the Western Roman Empire. In the second part the analysis focuses more on modern industrial

societies and relative processes of economic integration and globalization. The crucial hypothesis is the statement that in current societies the threat of a collapse is linked to expansion of multinational companies. The study strives to contribute to theory of sociocultural change through culturological analysis of one of the most actual phenomena of the present time – complexity growth of the modern civilization.

Jana Karlová

Journeys beyond the horizon: contemporary order and wilderness

The study concerns the theme of “horizon” (i.e. the boundary defining contemporary world view) and characteristics of current “Umwelt” (place to live). Based on the thesis “our place is part of what we are” (Gary Snyder’s *The Practice of the Wild*) the essay aspires to draw metaphorical comparisons of the Western world and the personalities of those who live there. It almost seems as though we have lost both the wilderness in the form of natural landscape and civility – the cultural information and symbolic meanings that have always been contained in cultural landscape. Our space-time is no longer what it was: is it possible that a glimpse into the alluvium of the modern suburban areas will help us better understand the soul of Western human beings? Again, here we are in the middle of a chaotic world, like early medieval colonizers surrounded by wilderness. This time, however, the wilderness is “cultural”.