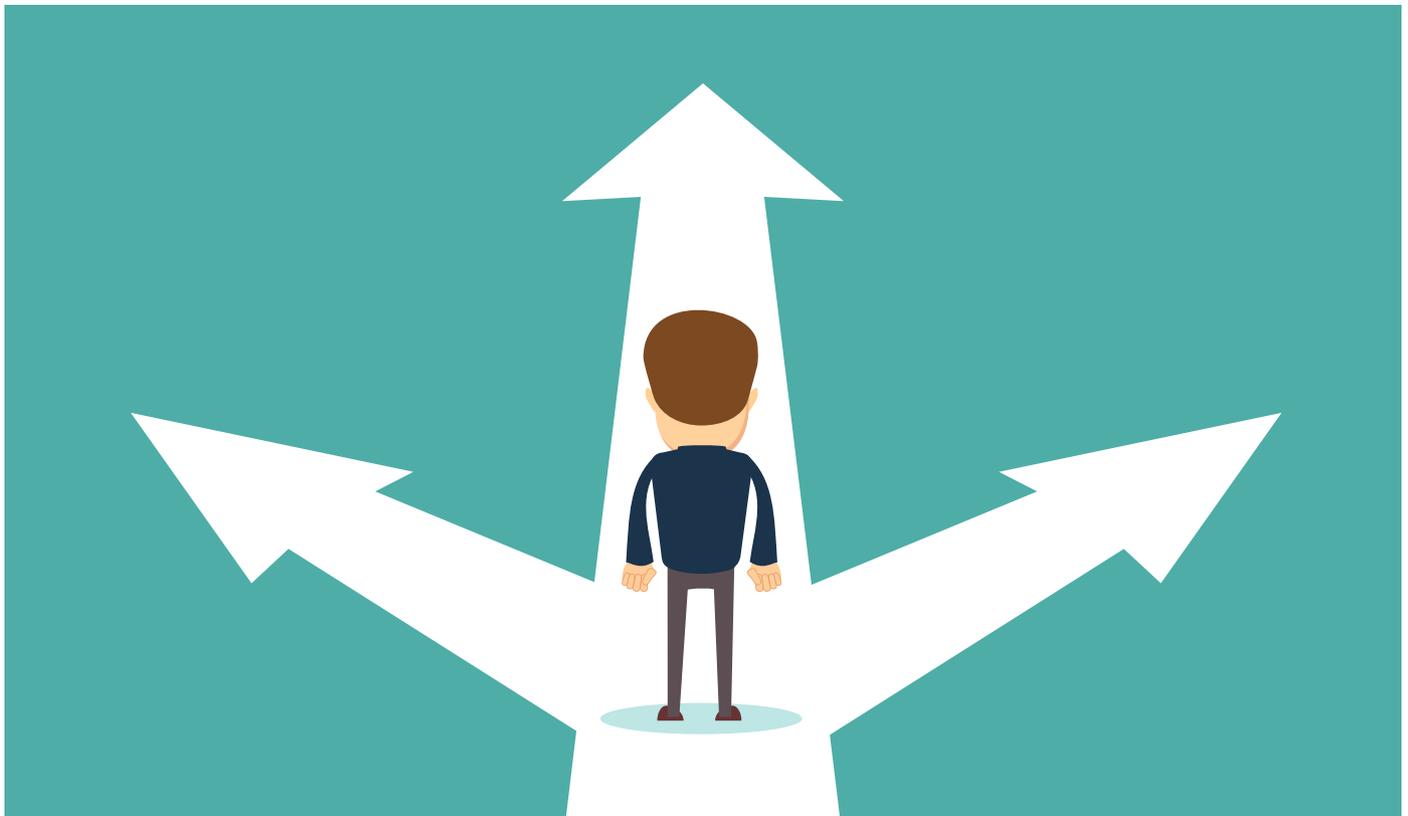


Middle Class at a Crossroads

Lucie Tungul et al.



Wilfried
Martens Centre
for European Studies



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Project partners

TOPAZ was established in 2012 as an educational platform and think tank associated with the political party TOP 09. Its goal is to open up discussion with the public concerning conservative ideas. Its main activities are focused on social debates with independent experts, cooperation with TOP 09 expert committees, fundraising, presentation of alternative views on the work of public authorities and preparation of analytical and conceptual policy documents suggesting alternative answers.

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) is a German political foundation closely associated with the Christian Democratic Union (CDU). At home as well as abroad, the civic education and dialogue programs aim at promoting freedom and liberty, peace and justice. Primary concerns are strengthening representative democracy, promoting European integration, expanding transatlantic relations and increasing development cooperation.

The Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies (WMCES) was established in 2007 as the political foundation and official think tank of the European People's Party (EPP). The Martens Centre has four main goals: advancing centre-right thought, contributing to the formulation of EU and national policies, serving as a framework for national political foundations and academics and stimulating public debate about the EU. It promotes a pan-European mind-set based on centre-right, Christian-Democrat, conservative and like-minded political values.

Contributors

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Jana Šimanová is currently assistant professor at the Department of Economics, Faculty of Economics at Technical University of Liberec. She is a member of several applied research project teams processing data from public authorities. Her areas of research include regional development, international trade and application of mathematical and statistical methods in economics. She has written four monographs and over 20 academic articles in these areas.

Jaroslav Poláček graduated in journalism and mass communication at the Faculty of Social Sciences of Charles University, Prague. He worked for KDU-ČSL from 2001 and as TOP 09 election manager (until 2016) and as deputy secretary general (until 2018). He works as senior analyst at TOPAZ and founded PRodukujeme agency, which focuses on political marketing. As the chairman of the TOP 09 expert committee on information and communication technologies, he was responsible for its IT programme and published several articles in this area. He was a member of the Czech Government Council for *Information Society* and co-authored the books *Internet nejen pro historiky* [*The Internet, Not Only for Historians*] and *Mezinárodní marketing a informační technologie: vybrané kapitoly* [*International Marketing and Information Technologies: Selected Topics*].

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Tomáš Dvořák majored in sociology at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, Prague, where he is currently employed. His focuses on political sociology and methodology of empirical research. His research areas include direct democracy, changes in political values, populism, and development of the party systems in Czechia and abroad.

Abstracts

Social Class, Political Attitudes and Media Consumption

The objective of the chapter is to introduce the concept of the middle class and determine if there is a link between unequal living conditions, selected social world-views and media consumption. The chapter is primarily concerned with the position of the middle class as a fundamental section of society. We used a questionnaire survey (TOPAZ, WMCES and KAS 2019) to compare the attitudes and behaviour. The results indicate that attitudes to political topics are very similar for the middle and upper classes. The lower class is, in comparison, more dissatisfied, suspicious and sceptical. The lower class is also less interested in politics and less likely to vote. The interest in politics is the only attitude where the middle class and lower class are more alike. Another exception is the attitude to election turnout, which increases with class. Our media consumption analysis found no significant differences across classes in frequency of watching TV and surfing the Internet. We found differences in watching of news coverage, which is most often consumed by the upper class, significantly more so than by the lower and middle classes.

Entrepreneurs as Members of the Middle Class

Small entrepreneurs are a significant and growing segment of the middle class in Czechia. The chapter first describes the structure, the role and evolutionary tendencies of entrepreneurs and the small and middle-sized enterprises in the economy and society including their attitude towards the single market of the European Union. It also analyses the relationship between entrepreneur earnings and electoral results at the level of municipalities and city districts. Apart from the fact that there is a positive relationship between the revenues of individuals and the electoral results of centre-right parties, and a negative correlation between the revenues from entrepreneurship and the electoral results of centre-left parties, the analysis comes to rather surprising conclusions. The last part of the chapter discusses the labour market changes in the context of digitalization and industry 4.0. While the employment rate of highly qualified professions has increased, the employment rate of the traditional middle class, where a range of professions are routine and therefore replaceable by computers or robots, has decreased. Creative and dynamic individuals capable of independent and critical thinking will assert themselves even more which will lead to higher demands on education levels. At the end of the chapter, the recommendations of the relevant policy leading to the development of entrepreneurship and the development of the middle class in Czech society are described.

The Middle Class and Changes in Voting Behaviour

The last three parliamentary elections have been interpreted as electoral or political earthquakes. The chapter focuses on the question of how these earthquakes changed Czech politics with a special emphasis on the changing electoral behaviour of the middle class. The most striking manifestations of this change have been the erosion of established parties and the emergence of new parties, whose success has had a significant link to their ability to mobilize economic, ethnic and political grievances. ANO 2011 benefited the most from the changes in electoral support because it managed to effectively mobilize the economic, political and partially also ethnic grievances. The successful strategy of ANO 2011 led to its highest electoral support among a large section of middle class voters, which can be observed across its individual segments as defined in the TOPAZ, WMCES and KAS survey (2019). The only exception is the liberal young digital elite that has a preference for the Pirates over ANO 2011.

A Life Less Ordinary? The Middle in This Age of Discontent

The early decades of the twentieth century were primed as a golden age for Europe's middle classes. Higher levels of education, rapid technological advance and increased globalisation should have delivered an economic environment based on long term growth. However, the global crises since 2007 have amplified a feeling of discontent among the "*middle*" sections of society. In this context, the case of Czechia is consistent with the broader sentiment of middle class disenchantment evident around Europe. However, Czechia, as a newer member of the EU with strong economic growth, also highlights that this age of insecurity is not driven solely by economics, or by a perceived East versus West divide. Rather, it reflects an increased polarisation between perceived "*winner*s" and "*loser*s" in society. For centre-right political parties the key challenge is to re-establish the aspirational nature of a middle class lifestyle.

Foreword

**Mikuláš Dzurinda, President of the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies
and Prime Minister of Slovakia (1998-2006)**

Two years ago, the European Union commemorated the sixtieth anniversary of the successful European integration and cooperation project. This year, we will commemorate the thirtieth anniversary following the events that led to the collapse of communism and made it possible for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe to be included in the European Community. These milestones undoubtedly confirm the uniqueness of European integration and the successful transformation of nearly half of the continent from communism to a market economy, democracy and rule of law. In the European Union, we have become richer and freer, living in a world safer than ever before in our history.

Since we are no longer isolated from the rest of the world, as we were during the time of communism, the turbulent development outside Europe touches us inherently and affects our daily lives. While writing this introduction, we still do not know how the United Kingdom will leave the EU, and we are preparing for the worst scenario. It is the first time that a member state has left the EU, and we suspect that it can have disastrous consequences, especially economically, if no agreement is reached. In addition, after a long-term transatlantic alliance with the United States, the EU now faces politics of protectionism and isolationism as reflected in trade wars. Additional geopolitical challenges, such as the permanent threat of Russia, this time much more sophisticated than during the Cold War, and long-term instability in the Middle East, require our permanent vigilance. Finally, climate change and the massive refugee crisis have suddenly provided new challenges that change our lives and which will shape the consequent nature of the EU.

All these current developments create societal pressures and have some impact on the middle class, the backbone of our economies. Whether it is globalization and rapid development of technologies that replace human labour with artificial intelligence, uneven social conditions, or the degree of digitalization and job opportunities within the EU, these factors often burden the most the middle class. We often hear about the end of the middle class caused by the widening gap between the poor and the rich. While the OECD still confirms the presence of the large middle class in the Central and Eastern European region, the dynamics are changing as a result of the fact that our countries are already included in the larger union and the trends of the western world are quickly entering our market. As with any other problem, there are solutions for preventing this trend.

Based on my own experience, I consider creating and maintaining a motivated business environment and supporting education, science and research as key issues. The main tools for achieving such an environment, in my view, include low direct taxes, a flexible labour market and a fair social system. Obviously, creating such an environment is not an isolated process that can be torn out of the context of

complex structural reforms. This process is directly linked to a number of other reforms in the sectors of health care, education and social welfare, which are important for the final success. Only such an environment will be able to provide suitable conditions for work, education and raising children.

I believe that this book will contribute to our better understanding of the trends affecting the middle class, but it will also encourage politicians to undertake the necessary changes. It will require cooperation on all levels, and it is also an opportunity for each member state to contribute to the prosperous home environment and ultimately to motivate the EU as a whole. Additionally, the announcement of a designated President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, can accelerate the changes because her main priorities for the upcoming period include support for small businesses, equal job opportunities for men and women as well as a fair tax system.

Abbreviations

AfD	Alternative for Germany
CE	Corporate Entities
CMT	Critical Media Theory
CPI	Corruption Perceptions Index
CR	Czech Republic
CVVM	Public Opinion Research Centre
ČSP	Czech Pirate Party
ČSSD	Czech Social Democratic Party
ČSSZ	Czech Social Security Administration
ČSP	Czech Pirate Party
ČSÚ	Czech Statistical Office
EC	European Commission
EP	European Parliament
EPP	European People's Party
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFŘ	General Financial Directorate
GDP	Gross National Product
GNI	Gross National Income
KDU-ČSL	Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party
KSČM	Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia
LCA	Latent Class Analysis
LFS	Labour Force Survey
MCD	Multidimensional Correspondence Analysis
MPO	Ministry of Industry and Trade
ODA	Civic Democratic Alliance
ODS	Civic Democratic Party
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OLS	Ordinary Least Squares Regression
PI	Private Individuals
PE	Private Entrepreneurs
PNS	Party System Nationalization Score
SEP	Self-Employed Persons
SMEs	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
SPD	Freedom and Direct Democracy

STAN	Mayors and Independents
TL	Trade Licenses
UK	United Kingdom
US	Freedom Union
US-DEU	Freedom Union – Democratic Union
VV	Public Affairs

Introduction

Lucie Tungul and Tomáš Dvořák

The middle class and its connection with various different social phenomena and their impact on our society is a very complex topic that requires an interdisciplinary approach when attempting to capture the individual aspects and influences. The term “middle class” is used in everyday speech by many politicians and journalists and is traditionally associated with centre-right politics, the assumption being that the middle class, as the guarantee of stability and prosperity, lies at the very heart of liberal democracy. The definition has changed over time, however, due to social and economic developments, this being reflected, among other things, by the changing political map. The technological development of past decades, the introduction of Industry 4.0, European integration and new global challenges such as migration and climate change modify the way people engage in the world around. There is an increase in individualism, while confidence in the ability of national and supranational democratic institutions to solve their problems effectively is decreasing. Young people and their parents feel that education and stable employment may not guarantee better lifestyle than previous generations. There is a growing willingness, however, to engage in public life outside established institutions, with new technologies bringing people together online all over the world, increasing the possibility of global democratic participation.

Being in the virtual world brings numerous threats and opportunities to redefine own identity and understand own culture. Active citizenship, often associated with the middle class, is an instrument of the possible struggle against the democratic deficit and low transparency of the decision-making process, this being the issue dealt with in the post-socialist countries whose middle class was forcibly liquidated by the socialist regime. A gradual process of recovery occurred after the non-democratic regimes collapsed. The recovery process should have been relatively fast. Prior to its stabilization, the societies undergoing a turbulent transformation and Europeanization had to cope with the new challenges of a technological information revolution which changed the economic and social indicators of the middle class but also had a major impact on the media environment. This resulted in the destabilization of the political and party-based systems which have not yet managed to establish themselves properly.

This book aims to define the concept of the Czech middle class. It also intends to analyse and evaluate its economic, social and political aspects in the local as well as wider European contexts. The class structure of the Czech society was determined based on data obtained in a questionnaire survey followed by a sociological, economic and political analysis of selected phenomena associated with the current Czech middle class. The findings were subsequently placed into the context of the development of the middle class in the European Union. In the following section, we will introduce the design and methodology of the survey, as well as its main findings.

Design of the Analysis

Data collection and analysis were performed by NMS Market Research. The process of data collection took place between 6 and 17 March 2019, using the sample of the on-line population in the Czech National Panel (N=980), and in the form of personal interviews with those who do not use Internet (N=291). The total size of the sample was N=1271. We addressed a representative sample according to gender, age (over 18), size of place of residence and region. The sample was weighted according to the representative structure of gender, age, education, region, size of place of residence, electoral behaviour in the 2017 parliamentary elections and according to Internet usage. The detailed structure of the sample is provided in Annex 1.

Methodology of the Analysis

The analysis is aimed at describing the class structure in Czechia in terms of different types of capital: economic, social and cultural. The size and structure of the individual types of capital then made it possible to describe the positions in the class hierarchy at the level of individuals. Working with three dimensions of capital was a key element of the analysis, meaning that the position in the class hierarchy is not determined by a single dimension, but may be somewhat ambiguous.

The methodology used in the analysis was based on the approach of Mike Savage (Savage et al. 2013) who analysed the class structure of the United Kingdom (UK). Savage worked with three dimensions of capital: economic, social and cultural. Savage operationalized economic capital on the basis of total household income, total household savings and the value of owned real estate (or properties). He viewed these three variable-indicators as manifestations of economic capital. Social capital was measured on the basis of the amount of contacts people have in different professions with varying prestige. Mike Savage et al. (2013) measured it according to the scale comparing the prestige of individual occupations with which people had active contacts. The total social capital thus expressed the degree of prestige of the network of social contacts related to individual respondents. Mike Savage also took into account the total number of social contacts. The measurement of cultural capital was inspired by Pierre Bourdieu (1984) and by distinction between “high” and “popular” culture (Bourdieu 1984). Mike Savage et al. (2013) investigated the different dimensions of cultural capital using a multidimensional correspondence analysis (MCD). They inductively identified the factor corresponding to the findings of Bourdieu (1984): classical cultural capital distinguishing between high and low culture. They also identified the second dimension that described the emerging digital capital. Cultural capital was thus measured on the basis of these two factors. All of the above-mentioned variables were then used as the foundation for the analysis of latent classes, on the basis of which the authors described the class structure of the UK.

The analysis for Czechia was consistent with the procedures of Savage et al. (2013). As with the authors of the British study, we worked with three types of capital: social, economic and cultural. The methodology

has been simplified, however, due to limitation in the scope of research. In the case of social capital, we worked with the amount/intensity of contacts, meaning the width of social networks. Mike Savage et al. (2013) distinguished between the prestige of the contacts and examined more than 30 contacts. Our analysis used - due to scope limitation - only 5 professions with high prestige, and the examination of the scope of social capital in this segment is equal to Savage's dimension of contact quality.

Regarding cultural capital, the factor analysis was used to reduce the battery of questions that measured interest in a variety of cultural and leisure activities. These were the first two factors used for further analysis. The first one was called traditional, the second digital. The results thus generally correspond to those of the British research (Savage et al. 2013: 226-227). In comparison with the results from the UK, the difference is that the first factor captures cultural capital in general, not only high cultural capital. This difference can be attributed to the fact that the cultural capital in the Czech environment did not seem to be as strongly differentiated as in other Western European countries (France, United Kingdom, etc.). The second factor was clearly associated with the digital environment. Regarding the economic capital, our analysis evaluated the income and total wealth of the households. To reduce the amount of missing values, the missing incomes were supplemented according to the educational level, while the missing values related to wealth were recoded to the middle category. All the variables were distinguished to low, medium and high levels, meaning the low, medium and high levels of a particular type of capital.

The latent class analysis (LCA) method was used to describe the class structure. This is an inductive and explorative method. Thus, the form of the resulting latent classes is based on the nature of the data, not on a predetermined deductive scheme. The aim is to find unobserved latent classes that can be identified according to the variables observed (Muthén and Muthén 2009). Latent classes are identified on the basis of manifest variables, meaning the basis of the above-mentioned indicators of economic, cultural and social capitals. When applying the latent class method, one should first determine the number of classes. Therefore, the model for one latent class was calculated first and then other classes were added. For models with various number of latent classes, we compared their quality and adequacy based on the data used. According to information criteria, there was a preference for models with 6 or 7 classes. The LCA analysis was performed in poLCA package (2013) in R software (see Annex 2).

Definition of the Middle Class¹

The definition of the middle class was also a key part of the analysis. It is not easily defined in the multidimensional view of the class structure. Pure economic delimitations, using the boundaries as 75-200% of median income (Vaughan-Whitehead 2016), are unusable in Czechia, because they include into the middle class respondents with very low cultural and social capital and people with net income of

1 Similar class structure methodology but with more detailed descriptions of social, human, and cultural capital was used by Daniel Prokop, Tomáš Dvořák, Martin Buchčík, Paulína Tabery and Matouš Pilnáček in a survey titled *Česká společnost po 30 letech [Czech Society 30 Years Later]* (N=4039) prepared for the Czech Radio Broadcasting Service in 2019.

about CZK 23 thousand per month whose household may suffer from poverty, especially if facing high mandatory housing costs. Mike Savage (2013) found two segments in British society that he directly called the middle class - i.e., the traditional middle class (25% of the UK population) and the technical middle class (6% of the UK population). Both segments were characterized by above-average amounts of all types of capital, although unlike the elite, they did not reach the highest values for all capital types combined (Savage et al. 2013). Our definition of the middle class was based on this narrower definition of a group sharing above-average capital type scores. Respondents who were in the 50 to 90 percentile of the average social, economic and cultural capital and who were also not in the lower quantile of population in any of the capital types have been defined herein. This definition leads to designation of 34% of the population which can be described as middle class (see Annex 3).² This book is based on this definition unless otherwise stated.³

Status and Attitude Segmentation

It was therefore possible to divide the population according to the standard of living (status segmentation) and social status (attitude segmentation), knowing that these variables were interconnected. It was also possible to subsequently measure the proportion of the middle class in individual segments. Both segmentations are discussed in more detail below.⁴

Status Segmentation

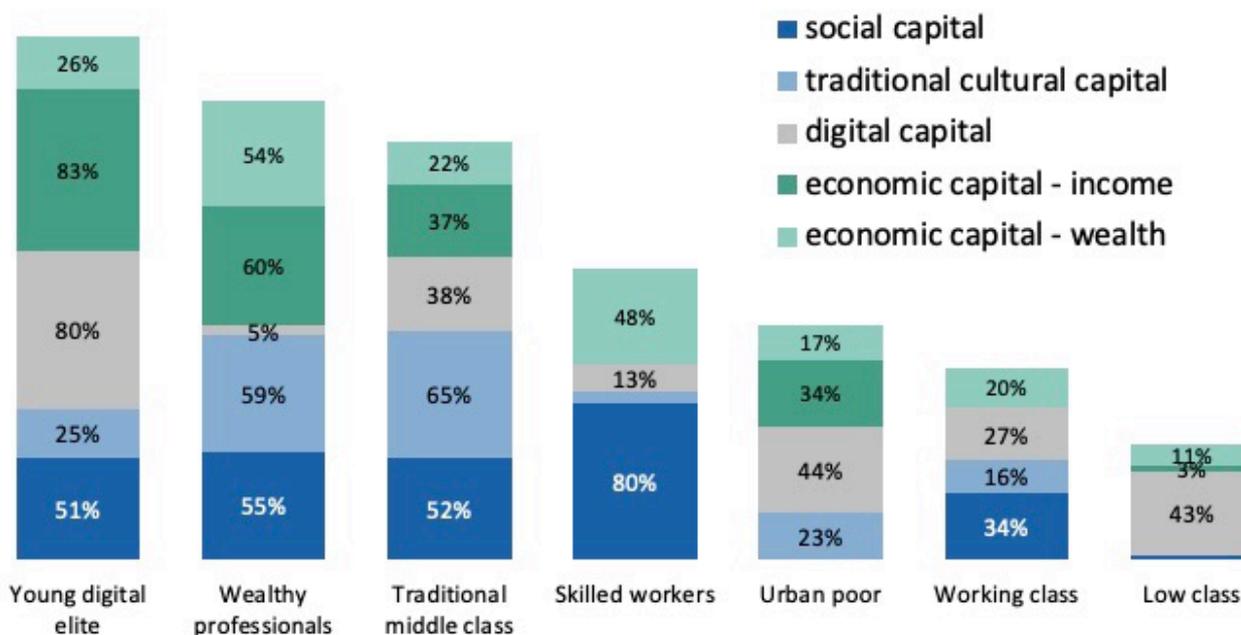
Status segmentation depends on position in the social structure, based on the division of society by status. This latent class model is based on the social, economic and cultural dimensions. The status segmentation consists of seven groups: *Young digital elite*, *Wealthy professionals*, *Traditional middle class*, *Skilled workers*, *Urban poor*, *Working class* and *Low class* (for the proportion of all five types of capital for all groups, see Graph 1).

2 An alternative definition considered was that respondents must be in the 40 to 90 percentile of all capitals. This definition is also disadvantageous, however, as it is more sensitive to operationalization of the measurement of the capitals examined. It limits the respondents who have one of the capitals temporarily lower but can soon acquire/exchange it due to the significant amount of other capitals (students from wealthy families). It is the exchange and mutual transformation of capital that is at the core of the Bourdieu theory (1984) on which Savage's analysis and our analysis are based.

3 In the chapter called "Entrepreneurs as Members of the Middle Class" Zemplerová et al. discuss among other issues the electoral preferences of small entrepreneurs. Their analysis at the municipal level presents the results of their own correlation data analysis based on data from the Czech Statistical Office and the Czech Social Security Administration. The planned analysis of the Czech household incomes could not be performed because the available data are from the years 2011-2013 and are now of limited relevance. The current data will not be available until autumn 2019, that is after the completion of this book. It was therefore not possible to carry out an overall economic analysis of the middle class. It will be dealt with in a separate book in our future research.

4 Status and attitude segmentations in this book were primarily dealt with in the chapter by Jakub Charvát and Pavel Maškarinec, in the section dealing with party-like preferences and middle-class electoral behaviour.

Graph 1: Division of Classes According to the Total Size of Capital and Its Structure



Source: TOPAZ, WMCES and KAS 2019.

The upper class consists of the *Young digital elite* and *Wealthy professionals*. The middle class is represented by the *Traditional middle class*, while *Urban poor* and *Working class* are on the border line between the middle and lower classes, depending on the type of capital (see Table 1).

Table 1: Class Structure in Czechia Divided into Seven Classes (% of Population)

ELITE	Young digital elite	Emerging elite. High on social capital, income and digital capital.	5%	433 058 inh.
	Wealthy professionals	High wealth, income and traditional cultural capital.	21%	1 818 845 inh.
UPPER MIDDLE CLASS	Traditional middle class	Reasonably high in all forms of capital. Average wealth.	17%	1 472 398 inh.
LOWER MIDDLE CLASS	Skilled workers	High social capital and wealth. Low income.	8%	692 893 inh.
	Urban poor	Average digital capital and income. Lower wealth and social capital.	13%	1 125 951 inh.
	Working class	Very low income. Average social capital. Other forms of capital below average.	20%	1 732 233 inh.
LOW CLASS	Low class	Only digital capital above average. Other forms of capital very low.	16%	1 385 786 inh.

Source: TOPAZ, WMCES and KAS 2019.

The *Young digital elite* typically has a university degree, is younger (especially 25 to 34 years old) and represents an emerging group. It achieves high social and digital capital, but also attains high results in economic capital (while its traditional cultural capital is rather low). Although the *Young digital elite* has high incomes, its members tend to be less wealthy. In contrast, the *Wealthy professionals* are wealthy and represent the traditional elite. They have high incomes and possess high cultural capital, and also attain high values in other types of capital, apart from that digital capital. Representatives of this group are spread evenly across all generations, more frequently receiving a university education.

The *Upper middle class*, which achieves lower values of economic capital compared to the elite, is represented by the traditional middle class which manifests reasonable values of economic, social and digital capital, and which also displays the highest values of cultural capital among all the classes. Members of the *Traditional middle class* are moderately wealthy, mostly middle-aged (35-44) with a secondary education. *Skilled workers* have high social capital and are relatively financially secured,

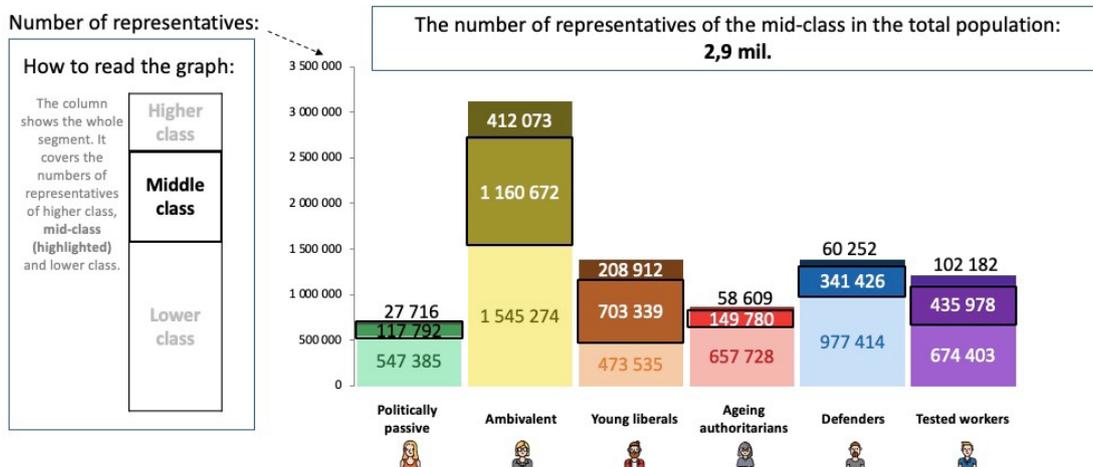
although they have rather low incomes. They are close to the *Traditional middle class* regarding the amount of social contacts and property but have a much lower cultural capital and similarly have a very low digital capital. This group mainly includes people over 45 years of age living in medium-sized or small towns, with the vast majority of the *Skilled workers* having achieved a secondary level of education (more than half of them without the school leaving exam). The *Urban poor* has an average digital capital and income, they are not wealthy, and their social capital is low. They mostly live in Prague or in large cities, tend to be young (25 to 44 years old), are often families with children and have mostly attained a completed secondary education.

The *Working class* has very low income, often due to economic inactivity. Despite the low income, however, *Working class* has relatively good assets and their social capital is also at average levels (manifesting below-average values for other capitals). These are mostly older people (65+ years) living in towns, but also younger people living in villages, typically with a secondary education. Finally, the *Low class* typically has above-average digital capital, but is below the average values in other capitals, having only little chance of improvement in the future. They are spread across all age groups and are characterized by the lowest level of education (primary or secondary without the school leaving exam), compared to other classes.

Attitude Segmentation

Attitude segmentation is based on the opinions and attitudes of the Czech population (worldview, public life, international politics and globalization, electoral behaviour, electoral preferences and experience with economic stressors). There are 6 segments identified in the attitude segmentation: *Politically passive*, *Young liberals*, *Ageing authoritarians*, *Defenders*, *Tested workers* and the *Ambivalent*. Each segment differs in political attitudes, electoral activity, and economic stressors but also in age and education levels (for methodology, see Annex 4). The middle-class representatives can be found in all segments, but most among the *Ambivalent*, *Young liberals*, *Tested workers* and *Defenders* (see Graph 2).

Graph 2: Attitude Segmentation and the Middle Class



Source: TOPAZ, WMCES and KAS 2019.

The *Politically passive* are not satisfied with social development but feel endangered by migrants; they have nationalistic and anti-European attitudes. Only 39% of them believe that Czechia belongs to the West and only 21% of them consider the EU beneficial. They do not trust politicians, show little interest in politics and do not vote regularly. Women predominate in this group and representatives of the youngest generation of 18 to 24 years are missing. *Tested workers* are the most affected by economic stressors yet are fairly satisfied with the post-1989 development; they trust politicians and are politically active. They do not tend to support authoritarianism, oppose nationalism and they also do not perceive migration as a threat. They are interested in international events and believe that Czechia belongs with the western countries (67%) and most of them consider the EU beneficial (59%). *Ageing authoritarians* are interested in politics but see it rather critically and tend not to trust politicians; their willingness to vote is not particularly high. This group mostly includes the older generation (55+ years of age) who are rather conservative, materialistic and nationalistic, and therefore against migrants. They nevertheless consider the EU beneficial (69%) and think that Czechia belongs with western countries (78%). *Defenders* attain a lower education and are affected by economic stressors, being less wealthy and having a lower social status. They are most often middle-aged (35 to 54 years), are characterized by strong nationalistic feelings, are anti-European and strongly against migration. They do not trust politicians, are not very active in elections and are inclined to populism. Their attitudes to the benefits of EU membership (18%) and to the question of whether Czechia belongs with western countries (41%) are closest to the *Politically passive*, but they fear migration and migrants much more.

The *Ambivalent* are quite satisfied with social development, are politically active and therefore interested in voting. They are represented the most in the middle-aged group (35 to 44 years), with the generation of the youngest voters (18 to 24 years) also significantly represented here. The *Ambivalent* are relatively well secured by property, identify themselves with the centre-right and perceive migrants as a potential threat to their way of life. Regarding other opinions, however, they are very ambivalent. They believe that Czechia belongs with western countries (57%) and a thin majority perceive the EU as positive (51%). *Young liberals* are rather young (18 to 34 years), hold university degrees and mostly live in Prague. They earn higher incomes than people from the other segments, are satisfied with the social development of the last 30 years and although they do not have positive views of politicians, they follow on domestic and foreign political developments. Their attitudes are strongly liberal and pro-European, supporting aid to migrants, rejecting authoritarianism, populism and nationalism. Their support for the statement that the EU is beneficial is the highest of all segments (84%), similarly to their belief that Czechia belongs with western countries (79%).

Structure of the Book

Apart from the introduction and conclusion, the book is divided into four chapters. The first three of them gradually address the sociological, economic and political aspects of the middle class as defined by the above-described survey. The fourth chapter puts these findings into the European context of middle-class research and its impact on the centre-right politics.

In the first chapter “Social Class, Political Attitudes and Media Consumption”, Aleš Kudrnáč and Markéta Škodová deal with the concept of the middle class and social stratification in their historical and theoretical contexts, as related to the political and social attitudes. They deal with the position of the middle class in the Czech society since the establishment of independent Czechoslovakia in 1918 up to the present, its current state, ongoing changes, their reasons and consequences. They explain the complexity of classifying the society into classes, including the strengths and weaknesses and further explain the method of Mike Savage (2013) (see above). The authors describe the classification of opinions and behaviour of the population according to social class in relation to social attitudes, economy, satisfaction with life and political attitudes. They also address the issues of media use according to social classes and the impact on media consumption.

In the following chapter “Entrepreneurs as Members of the Middle Class”, the authors Alena Zemplerová, Lenka Sojková and Jana Šimanová analyse the specific segment of small and medium-sized enterprises in terms of their number, structure of activities and importance for the Czech economy. They also focus on their perception of the European unified market, their political preferences and the future challenges mainly to be brought about by digitalisation, including automation and robotization. In the conclusion, they deal with policies that would help in the development of the middle class in business and thus stabilize the Czech economy.

In Chapter 3 entitled “Middle Class and Changes in Electoral Behaviour”, Jakub Charvát and Pavel Maškarinec deal with the middle class from the perspective of political party system and the electoral behaviour of the middle class segments, with a particular emphasis on the changes in the Czech party system since 2010 and how it reflected the changes in the Czech middle class structure. The chapter also presents the electoral behaviour of the Czech middle class and places it in the context of mobilization of economic, ethnic and political grievances that significantly contributed to the accession of new party-based entities after 2010.

Chapter 4 “Life Less Ordinary? The Middle in this Age of Discontent” by Eoin Drea puts the above-mentioned findings in the European context of discontent which, since 2007 has had a profound impact on the middle class. The middle class has felt that it had lost much of its traditional certainty. The chapter deals with the causes and consequences of increasing polarization between winners and losers which corresponds to economic changes and also political and security factors. As shown in the previous chapters, we witness the same development in Czechia. Drea discusses the problem of middle-class dissatisfaction and its mistrust of the current system within the EU’s East-West division debate and in the context of economic liberalization in the new member states, which failed to meet the expectations of a speedy convergence between the lifestyles in the West and the East. Drea finally analyses the abilities and possibilities of the centre-right parties to adequately respond to these feelings of dissatisfaction and the risk of their voters moving over to the populists.

Our book identifies the common problems but also acknowledges specific national trends that need to be known and respected when designing and implementing individual specific short-term and long-term strategies that would strengthen the political, economic and social stability of Czech society. The presentation of this phenomenon in the European context also provides an opportunity to work together at the EU level looking for appropriate answers and solutions that would support the stability of the national and European political institutions, the economic order and society as a whole without sacrificing individual prosperity and satisfaction.

Social Class, Political Attitudes and Media Consumption

Aleš Kudrnáč and Markéta Škodová

Introduction

In every age and society, there are inequalities between people. Inequalities are mainly due to people's differences in their property, acquaintances, or cultural background. This issue is mainly dealt with by economists and social scientists within the framework of social stratification research. Their main theme in this area is the emergence of inequalities and their impact on society. A large degree of social stratification is perceived as an undesirable phenomenon, which causes tensions in society. In order to talk about inequalities in society more easily, the social class concept is used.

The basic idea of a social class is that people belonging to the same group (class) are more similar in their resources than people from other groups. Resources are not only economic but also social, cultural and symbolic. Social stratification can be simply defined as inequalities in life chances and living conditions between different social classes. These inequalities are closely related and often complementary. They are differentiated, however, in their analyses. The analysis of social mobility deals with the research of inequality of life chances, while the class analysis is focused on inequality of living conditions. In this chapter, we deal with the question of how unequal living conditions are related to people's social and political attitudes. As the title of the paper suggests, the focus will be on the middle class. We have to deal with the middle class, however, in the context of the other classes, and for this reason we need to first clarify the concept of social class and the way of measuring it.

In sociology, few concepts have received as much attention and discussion about its meaning and way of measurement as the concept of social class. There is still no agreement on its definition or on the method of its measurement. Certain authors (e.g. Beck 1986; Bourdieu 1998) consider social class to be an artificially created concept which is detached from reality and rejects the notion that the division of society, according to social classes, significantly affects the way of life and people's opinions. For other authors (Matějů 1998; Večerník 2010; Savage 2015), the social class concept was and still is a very useful way of explaining differences in society, for instance, as concerns life satisfaction, electoral behaviour, choice of media, health, etc. "The discussion can be basically characterised as a dispute over whether classes in advanced capitalism are at least potential collectivities (if their representatives have a common interest which they may or may not be aware of), or if classical classes today are rather social categories" (Šanderová 1995: 62).

It was Karl Marx who, with his idea of class struggle, in all probability contributed the most to the general knowledge of the term social class. Marx identified the poor proletariat without resources, on the one hand, and the bourgeoisie abounding with resources, on the other, as the main classes. His ideal was a classless society, and this was what the Czechoslovak Communist Party sought to achieve through the equalisation of the middle class. Be it for political or economic reasons, the strength and role of the

middle class in Czech society has changed over time. Today, the middle class is considered a vital part of society and the engine of the economy and is therefore the central theme of this book.

After a brief introduction to the middle-class concept, this chapter will focus on the values and political attitudes of the current Czech middle class and whether these attitudes differ across other classes of society. We will also deal with the question of what attention this part of society pays to the media and political reports.

The Position of the Middle Class in Society

Most reflections on the history of the middle class, its importance, and position in society begin with Aristotle. In his *Politics* (Book 4), Aristotle states that there are three classes of citizens in all municipalities – very affluent, very poor and the middle class. Aristotle is a supporter of a strong middle class, because “the [middle class representative] is the most likely to listen to reason, while a beautiful or extremely strong or very rich man and a man who is very poor or extremely weak, or one who has absolutely no honour, does not listen to reason for they become somewhat rebellious and bad people in important things” (Kříž 1998: 153). Aristotle argues for the middle class as a group that is hardworking and does not want to hold offices. The middle class is not pampered and disobedient like the rich or as subdued as the poor, and this makes the middle class most suitable for the municipality administration. According to Aristotle, a strong middle class is a guarantee of democracy because it has the greatest interest in democracy. Where one has very much and the other has nothing, disagreements arise and there is a risk of tyranny (Kříž 1998).

If we look shortly at Czech history, it is apparent that, since the eighteenth century, Czech society has had a relatively strong middle class. This was due to a strong layer of peasants and city bourgeoisie, as well as the decline of the aristocracy after the battle of White Mountain. The middle class remained strong during the First Republic. Although Tomáš G. Masaryk emphasised the role of the workers in particular, he meant the attributes of the middle class (Večerník 2010). The decline of the middle class began during World War II. Occupying Germany was not interested in a strong middle class full of domestic intelligence, but in a mass of workers who would keep the war industry running and blindly serve the needs of the Third Reich.

After 1945, the fascists were replaced by communists, but the trend of suppression of the middle class continued. The communists put promising (ideologically correct) careerists in higher and managerial positions, not the intelligentsia. Since 1948, one can speak of a targeted effort to destroy the middle class in the spirit of Soviet social engineering. Tradesmen, farmers, intelligentsia, and other middle-class leaders were to become part of the working class, which would be dominated by career communists, whose middle-class origins were only to a disadvantage. While in Czechoslovakia, the emphasis was on heavy industry, in Western countries, business and services developed to support the growth of the middle class. For Czechoslovak Communists, however, the existence of the middle class was not

desirable. The property of its representatives was confiscated, and they were often forced to change their jobs from qualified to unqualified ones. An equally important goal was not to talk about the middle class positively. The middle class was described as bourgeoisie and thus stigmatised as an enemy of the socialist system.

The change in the situation of the middle class came about along with the change of the regime in 1989. Its renewal was due to the end of the persecution of the original middle-class representatives (the so-called “old middle class”) and the transition to a market economy, which allowed private business and a focus on services. Another important factor was the opening up of Czechoslovakia and later the Czechia to the Western world. Access to new information, processes, and technologies allowed people with higher qualifications to develop. Due to the fall of the communist regime, values in both the economy and society shifted (Večerník 1997).

After 1989, there was an awakening of the middle class, which had been suppressed by the previous regime, and efforts of other Czech inhabitants to become part of the middle class become apparent. Conditions for the emergence and development of the middle class were far from ideal, however, in the 1990s. The transformation policy focused primarily on privatisation and ensuring favourable conditions for business development was not a priority. The old middle-class property restitution and transformation was slow in some areas. Priority was given to the financial sector over public services (Večerník 2010). Looking at the current state of affairs, it seems that we would also agree with Aristotle at present. The middle class is essential for economic growth and social reconciliation. According to the OECD report, business activities in countries with more middle-class households have a positive effect on the growth of GDP. In this respect, a strong middle class is an appropriate environment to support SMEs and to develop a strong business sector (OECD 2010). The economic argument is unambiguous – economic growth is stronger in countries where the middle class is strongly represented (Brueckner et al. 2018). The middle class invests in their education and in the education of their children, thereby providing society with sufficient human capital (Brown and Hunter 2004). It is not just, however, the motivation to educate themselves and their children. The middle class also invests in health, housing, quality public services, is less tolerant of corruption, and generally contributes to the development of society through its activities (OECD 2019).

Who Is the Middle Class?

We have been talking thus far about the middle class as a relatively vague part of society that is “in the middle”, i.e., neither poor nor rich. This was possible mainly because the overall organisation of society was clearer in the past. Nevertheless, there was a change over time. The reasons can be found in the differences in the orientation of the economy, the labour market, technology and access to education. Today, many jobs, such as plumbers who have traditionally been part of the working (lower) class, despite reaching a lower level of education, have higher incomes than, for example, teachers, who we would call traditional middle-class representatives.

The basic question is: Who is the representative of the middle class today? If we ask the people themselves, about two thirds of people in the OECD countries identify themselves as part of the middle class (OECD 2019). People who should not fall there by objective standards also often identify themselves as belonging to the middle class. This is partly because low-income people perceive the middle class lower and wealthier people higher (Reeves 2017). According to the findings of Petr Matějů from the 1990s, subjective social class membership is more important for political attitudes and electoral preferences than the objective inclusion in this group. Matějů (1998) argues that people become members of a given class only when they subjectively identify with it. Večerník (2010) also views the middle class as a “state of mind”, which predetermines the self-classification of the individual in the imaginary social hierarchy.

When speaking about the objective aspects of belonging to the middle class, the question is, of course, what these objective aspects are. There are many approaches to the definition of the middle class, which often vary by subject, but the focus will only be on two approaches – income and sociological. Income is crucial for class determination, and many economic analyses use income to determine a social class exclusively. The OECD prefers, for example, to talk about lower, middle, and higher income classes rather than marking a particular class directly. It defines the middle class, or middle-income class, as households with income ranging from 75% to 200% of the median income. People with income below 75% of the median belong to the low-income class, and people with income above 200% of the median are considered as belonging to the higher-income class. Recent OECD data show that, for a Czech family of four members to be included in the middle-income category, the family’s net income would have to be between CZK 28,686 and CZK 76,495 (OECD 2019). This category includes 71% of the Czech population.⁵ Such a large scale is due to the fact that a comparable standard of living in smaller municipalities is possible with lower incomes than in larger cities, but also because the middle class is defined so broadly. Nevertheless, the question is whether we can still talk about the same group of population.

While income is not only important for the determination of social class for economists but also for professionals in other fields, additional approaches take into account that income is not everything, and that the prestige of the profession, cultural capital, and acquaintances are also important. As a rule, sociologists do not determine class based on observed data, but determine the membership of the social class on the basis of a theory (e.g. Bláha 1937; Havelka 2002; Večerník 2010). The basic assumption is that resources and constraints in society are not a coincidence but are related to the class structure of the society. For this reason, similar behaviour and similar views on politics and life within particular social classes should be observed.

How do sociologists classify somebody, however, as belonging to a certain class? First, they define class structure based on sociological theories and then create empirically measurable criteria that divide people into respective classes. Tomáš Katrňák (2005: 35) states that two questions are essential for class

⁵ 23% belong to the category of the low-income class and 6% belong to the high-income class according to the data and method of the OECD.

analysis: 1) Which criteria will be used to determine the class positions? And why exactly are these criteria chosen?; and 2) Who belongs to which social class? And why to this one? It sounds relatively simple, but because different sociologists answer these questions differently, there are more possibilities for defining classes and assigning people to them. This chapter does not intend to discuss critically and in detail the concept and measurement of a social class, as it would be necessary to write an entire book on this. We want, however, to provide the reader with a brief explanation of how people are assigned to classes and why it is possible to observe some inconsistencies in the number of classes and even in their different numbers or names in various publications.

In this section, we work with an approach described in detail in the introduction to this publication, based on the work of the popular sociologist Michael Savage. He based his method of operationalisation on a large questionnaire survey and a large number of in-depth interviews with the British. His method of operationalisation is described in detail in his publications (Savage et al. 2013, 2015). In our chapter, we do not follow his seven groups (classes), but we do adhere to his logic and method of measurement to delimit the classical hierarchy of the lower, middle and upper classes. The basic principle of his measurement is that, in addition to income, i.e., economic capital, he takes into account social and cultural capital, which is closest to the original concept of Pierre Bourdieu (1986), according to whom the position of a person in the social space is given by his or her economic, social, and cultural or symbolic capital. In terms of having these capitals, some authors classify as the middle class, for example, those individuals who have either only cultural capital (routine experts and “white collars”) or have economic capital but lack cultural (independent small entrepreneurs, self-employed) (quoted according to Večerník 2010).

In this regard, the role of the mass media, which is related to cultural capital, cannot be overlooked. Like the modern theory of social stratification, the theory and research of mass media goes back to the late nineteenth century, when the importance of the media as a social and political actor had grown significantly and where the adjective “mass” had become a reality for this area of communication. It was the very existence of modern society and all its characteristics and manifestations that enabled it to spread information to a large, disparate, widely dispersed – thus mass – *audience*. Since then, researchers have focused on describing media effects, audiences, systems and content. Numerous media surveys or public opinion surveys mainly include audience development of individual media types (press, television, radio, Internet) or citizens’ trust in specific channels/titles or their content (news).

Among the most important roles of the media in modern societies is their position as a mediator between political power and citizens. The media provide their audiences with information on what is happening in various spheres of politics, help to shape public opinion, the ideological setting of individuals and their electoral behaviour. The most important and sometimes the only source of information is communication through the media since it often mediates events that are beyond the direct experience of the majority of society members (Škodová 2013) and is therefore one of the key platforms of shared social and political knowledge as it (re)constructs and determines the public sphere of the national state (Curran et al. 2009).

Therefore, media audiences can always be understood as political audiences and a way of perceiving and reading (especially political) news as one of the indicators of a more general relation to politics (Macek 2015). This relationship also lies in the research focus of social stratification, which, however, as will be shown below, does not work with the knowledge of media communication theory in more detail.

In the following empirical subchapters, we will focus on the relationship between the social class and political attitudes and media monitoring. Using data from the spring 2019 questionnaire survey, our aim is to demonstrate, based on several charts and pivot tables, whether classifying opinions and behaviour in society according to social class is still a useful way of thinking about Czech society.

Social Class and Social Attitudes

The main assumption is that class positions are related to attitudes and values. Just as people in the same group are similar in their position in society, they can be expected to share the same concerns and preferences. These concerns or preferences may be affected by domestic and global events, and people in the same class are expected to be affected by these events in a similar way. One of the visible recent examples is the situation of the housing market.

Home ownership was one of the main features of the middle class. The economic crisis and rising property prices have led to a situation when achieving home ownership and thus middle-class status is often an unattainable goal for today's 30s and younger generations. Housing is crucial in this respect as it represents the largest part of middle-class expenditure. The rising cost of housing, services and goods mean that the middle class have difficulty saving money and often spend more than they earn (OECD 2019: 25). Another factor is potential job insecurity due to upcoming automation and robotization. According to OECD (2019), automation in Czechia is not only a threat to the low-income group, which is the most vulnerable, but also to 15% of the middle class.

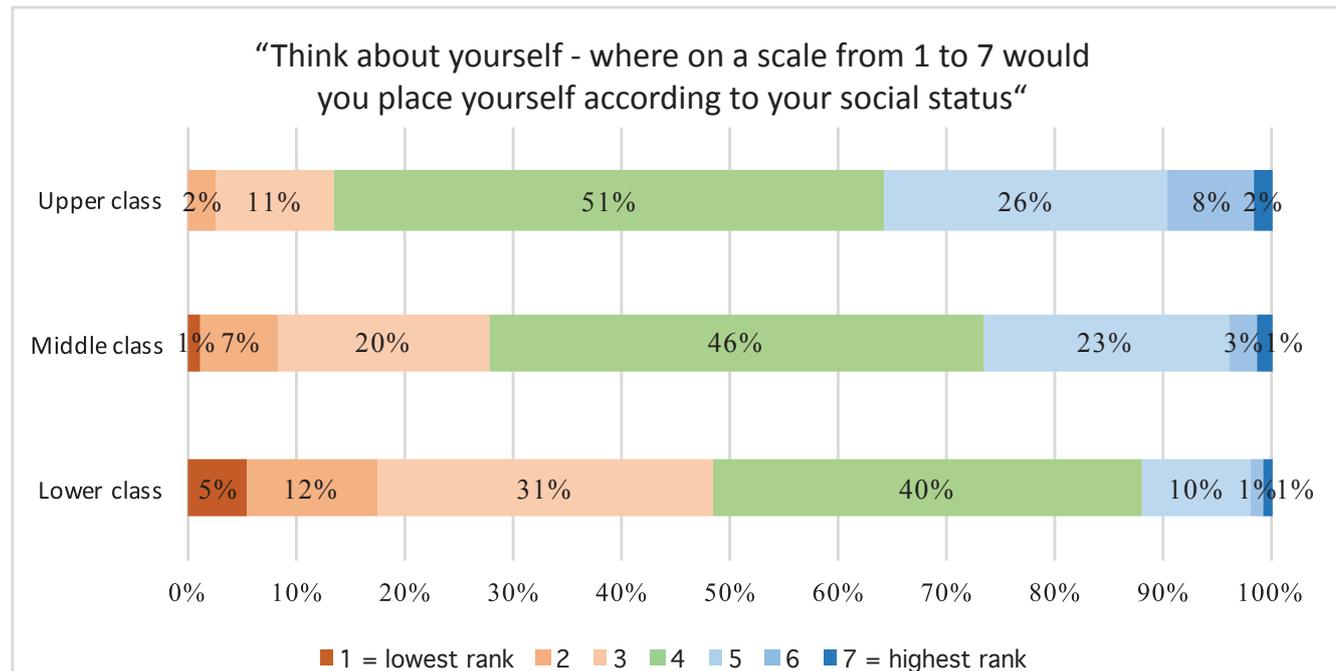
For younger generations, it is and will be much more difficult to attain the middle-class level than it was for their parents. It is almost unthinkable at present that a middle-class household would suffice with the income of one of the household members, as it was before. Even with the employment of both partners, the middle-class level is difficult to be attained for a large part of society. The economic stagnation of the middle class subsequently influences social attitudes and politics.

The dissatisfaction of the middle class or of those who would like to belong to the middle class encourages the emergence of populist and nationalist movements. Discontent, disillusionment from political developments, distrust of political figures and polarisation are often the unpleasant consequences of a problematic middle-class situation.

The economic situation is only one of the possible causes of changes and differences in middle class political attitudes and behaviour. In this chapter, our goal is not to investigate the causes of the differences in attitudes, but to discover whether the differences in attitudes and media consumption still exist with regard to social class membership.

Firstly, we are interested in the extent to which a social class, based on the theory described in the introduction of the book, coincides with the subjective position of the respondents. Overall, 43% of respondents chose the mean value (4) in the survey. 38% of respondents chose the value 1–3, i.e., lower than the center, and 19% of respondents identify with a higher position in society. Graph 1 demonstrates the difference between self-identification with social status and objectively determined social class according to theory.

Graph 1 Social Class (Subjective Position of the Respondents)



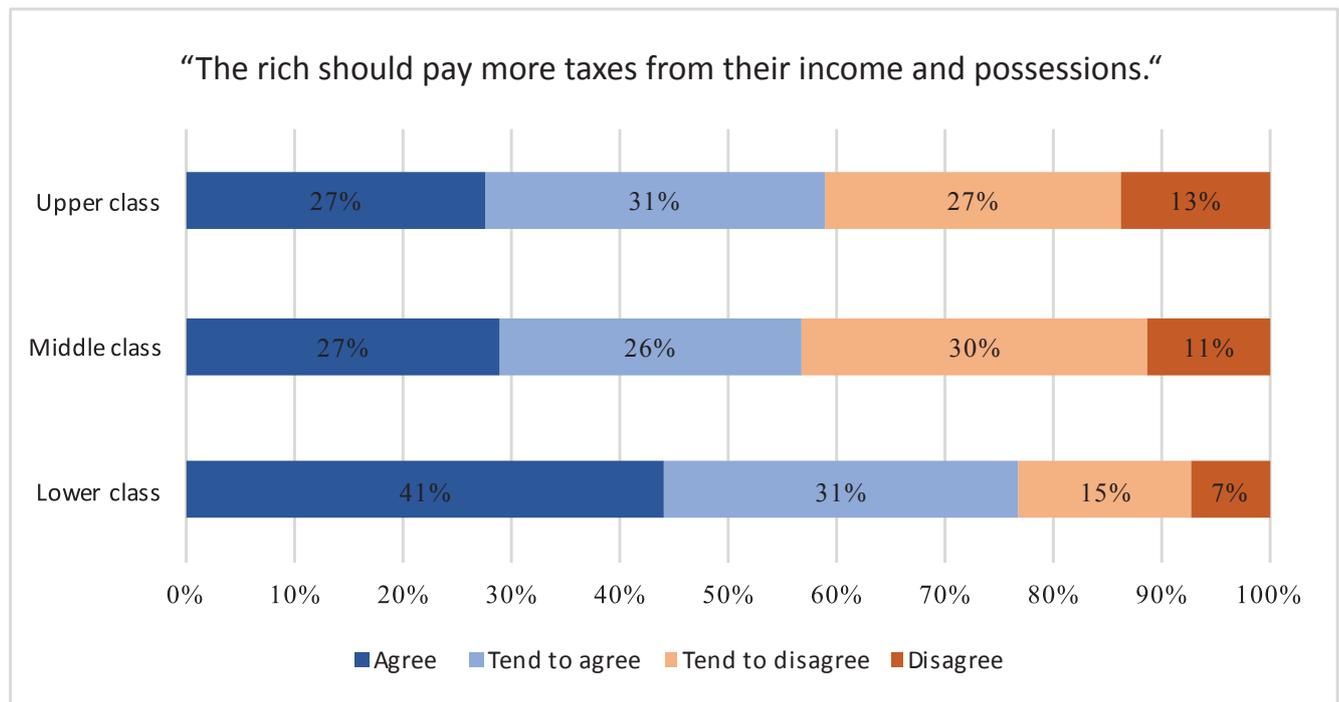
Note: N= 1271, weighted data.

In all classes, the strongest identification with the centre of society can be observed. Although the positive link between self-determination of status and the identified social class is evident, disagreements can be observed such as 13% of the upper-class respondents who feel part of the lower-class, and the same proportion of the lower-class respondents identified as part of the higher-class.

Attitudes to the Economy

The connection between social class and attitudes to the economy has been known for a long time. This is due, among other things, to the fact that income is one of the important indicators of measuring social status. Higher taxes and stronger redistribution of funds would mostly affect the higher class, which is most often in opposition to these state policies. This conclusion can also be drawn from the available data. While over 72% of the lower-class representatives agree with progressive taxation, in the upper class it is only 58% of respondents and a lower proportion of positive answers (53%) can be found in the middle class. The structure of the middle-class responses is more similar to the upper-class responses than to the ones of the lower class. Of particular importance is the fact that almost the same proportion of middle class (41%) and higher class (40%) disagree with progressive taxes.

Graph 2 Agreement with Property Redistribution by Social Class

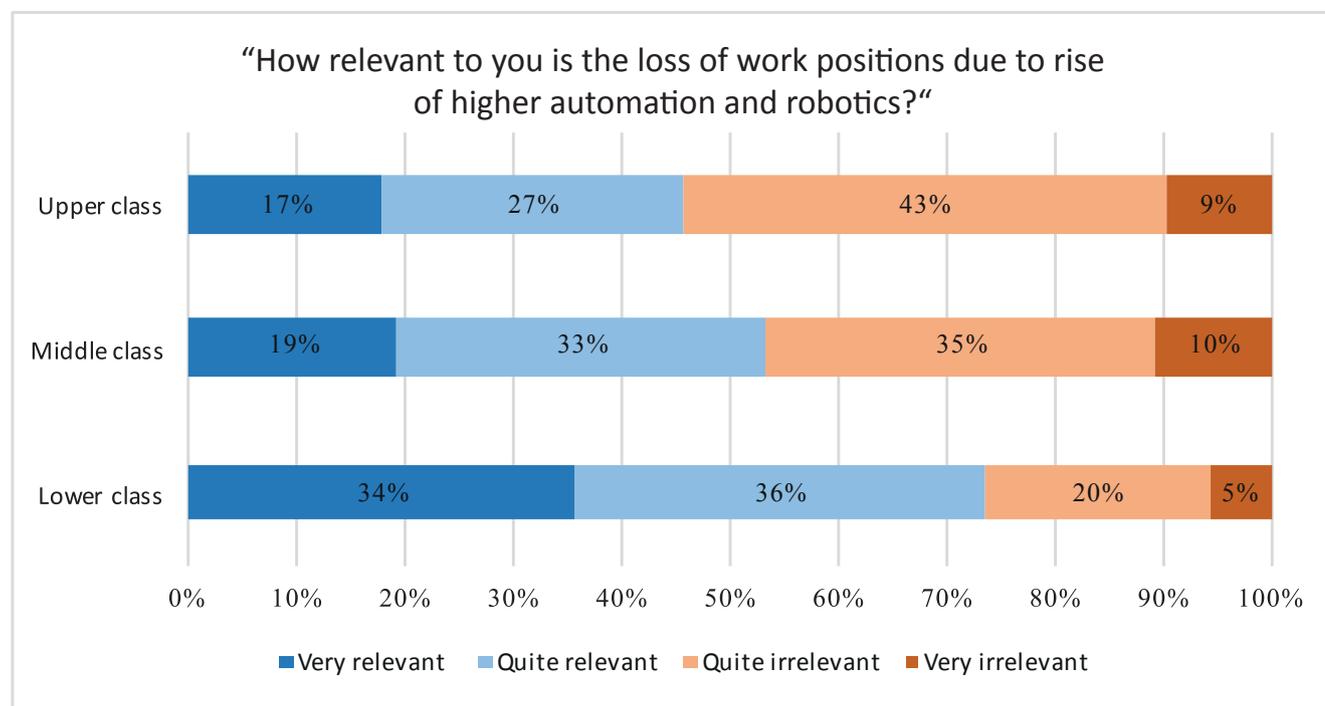


Note: N= 1271, weighted data.

Attitudes to economic issues also include labour market insecurity. Specifically, concern about the emerging automation industry was identified. 61% of all respondents feel the threat of job loss due to

the advent of higher automation and robotics. Although half of the middle-class representatives (52%) are seriously concerned about their employment due to automation, 45% do not consider the risk to be serious, and 4% have no opinion on this issue. Although according to OECD (2019: 29), the lower class (19%) is the most vulnerable with regard to automation in Czechia, followed by the middle class (15%) and then by the upper class (9%), these data do not match the perceived threat. The middle class together with the upper class can be described as having the least perceived fear of losing their jobs due to automation because 44% of the upper class, 52% of middle class and 70% of the lower-class respondents are seriously concerned. Approximately half of middle and upper class but only one fourth of lower-class respondents expressed disagreement with the fear of losing work due to automation.

Graph 3 Perceived Fear of Losing Employment by Social Class



Note: N= 1271, weighted data.

The lower level of concern about automation in the middle class is in all probability due to the higher proportion of sole traders in this class. Table 1 presents the proportions of consent that automation

is definitely or rather a serious threat to employment according to social class classification by three selected employee groups. The greatest concern is among private sector employees. In the middle class, a decrease of more than 20% can be observed if the respondent is a public sector employee or sole trader.

Table 1 Perceived Fear of Losing Employment by Selected Employment Categories and Social Class

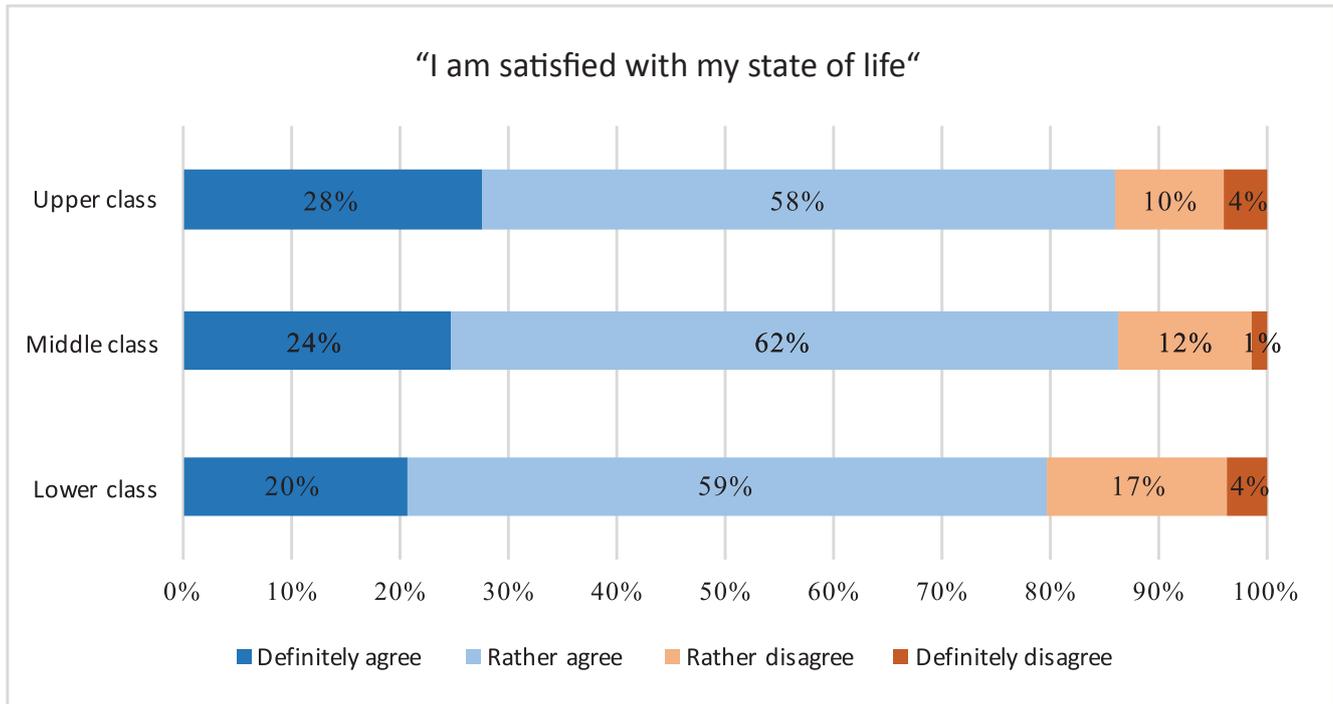
	Lower class	Middle class	Upper class
Employee in private sector	75%	61%	44%
Employee in public sector	76%	40%	37%
Self-employed	65%	38%	50%

Note: N=738, weighted data. Other employment status types not presented here: Temporary job; Working without a labour agreement; Student; Stay-at-home, Parental leave; Unemployed; Other)“.

Satisfaction with Life and Society

Belonging to a social class is related to living standards. The theoretical assumption that higher economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital will be related to higher satisfaction with life and state of society is also confirmed in Czechia. Given the history of the middle class before 1989 and the rapid development of the market economy after 1989, it can be assumed that the representatives of the “old” middle class may not be satisfied with the development of the society after the fall of communism in November 1989. Again, satisfaction can be expected by the upper class as they have probably been mostly successful over the past 30 years.

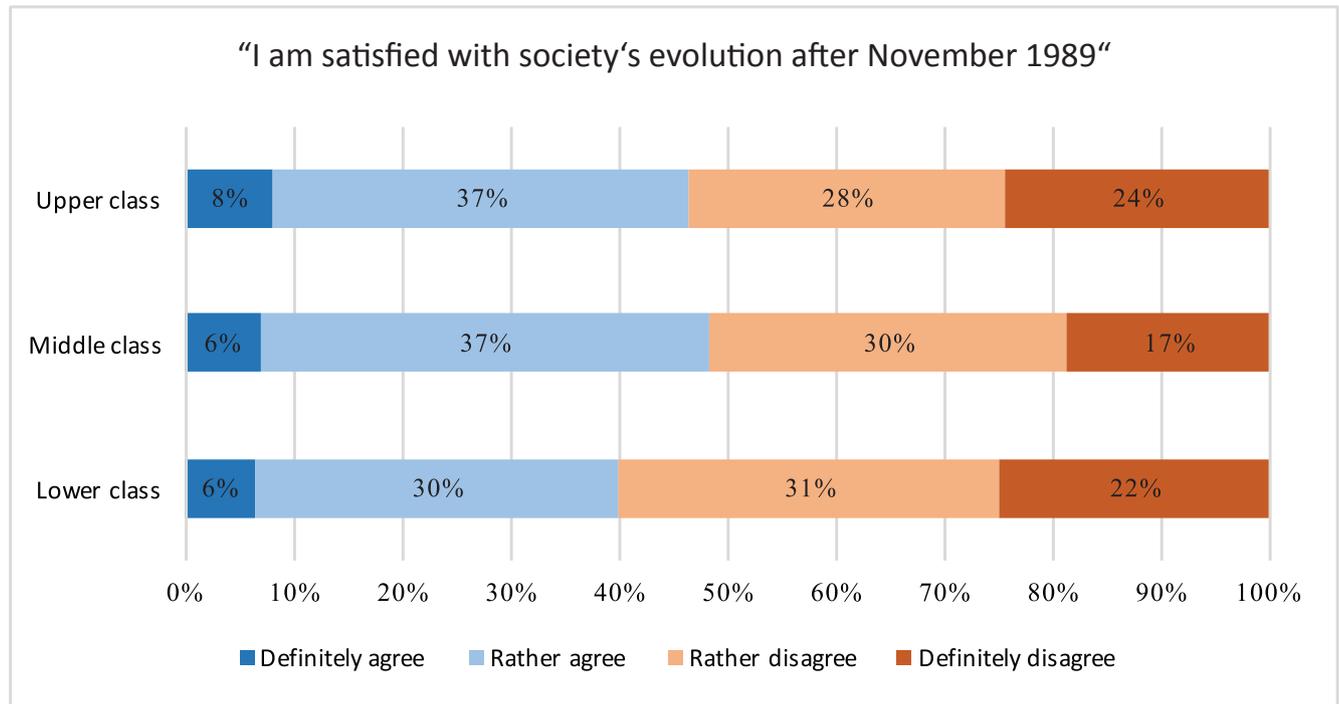
Graph 4 Life Satisfaction by Social Class



Note: N= 1271, weighted data.

As regards the level of satisfaction with life and satisfaction with the development of society after November 1989, a link can be observed between social class and expressed satisfaction (see Graph 5).

Graph 5 Satisfaction with Societal Developments after 1989, by Social Class



Note: N= 1271, weighted data.

Although the differences are not particularly big, a lower level of satisfaction is evident in the lower class. It also appears that the middle and upper classes are very similar in these respects. If we count together the categories I decisively and somewhat agree that I am satisfied, then, in the aspect of life, the upper and middle class have expressed satisfaction in 86% of cases. Among the lower-class respondents, 79% of the respondents are satisfied. The same can be said about satisfaction with the development of society after 1989. Satisfaction was expressed by 45% of the upper class and 43% of the middle-class respondents. In the lower class, 36% of respondents expressed being satisfied with the development of society after the fall of communism.

Political Attitudes

The link between political attitudes and social class is a very traditional way of explaining the differences in behaviour and attitudes in society. In his book from 1981, Lipset describes how the middle class tends

to be more conservative and likely to hold centre-right views but rejects extreme opinions. The dataset we are working with in this chapter included questions on different attitudes: authoritarianism, political confidence, fear of cultural threats of immigration, fear of economic threats of immigration, attitude to the EU, interest in politics and attitude to voter turnout. For the sake of clarity and simplicity, Table 2 presents only the degree of agreement with the particular statements. Consent is measured as the sum of “definitely yes” and “rather yes” answers.

Table 2: Agreement with Statements by Social Class

		Lower class	Middle class	Upper class
O1 – authoritarianism	A strong leader is crucial for Czechia - even if he/she does not always act according to the established rules.	64%	51%	48%
O2 – trust	I do not trust the majority of political institutions such as the Government or the Parliament.	75%	64%	65%
O3 – immigration	The Czech culture is strongly endangered by immigrants.	63%	42%	48%
O4 – immigration	Immigrants can endanger Czech economy and welfare state.	81%	64%	63%
O5 – foreign countries	I deem the European Union as beneficial.	45%	59%	59%
O6 – interest in politics	I follow our political scene and events almost every day.	48%	53%	69%
O7 – behaviour	Would you take part in the parliamentary election if it were held today?	69%	87%	93%
O8 – behaviour	Will you take part in the European Parliament elections (May 24 - 25)?	57%	71%	82%

Note: N= 1271 for all questions, weighted data.

The first question concerns the inclination to authoritarianism. About half of the middle- and upper-class respondents would prefer a strong leader who will not always follow the established rules. In the lower class, the proportion of positive answers is close to two thirds (66%). This position is likely to be related to the distrust in existing political institutions such as the government and parliament. Political mistrust is expressed by three quarters of the lower class and approximately two thirds of the upper and middle class.

The other two questions concerned attitudes to immigration. Two questions were deliberately used since one measure the fear of its threat to Czech culture and the other the fear of immigrants' impact on the Czech economy. The middle class (42%) is afraid of immigration as a threat to culture the least, even 6 percentage points less than the upper class (48%). The lower class is worried about immigrants' threat to culture to a higher degree (63%). Immigrants are perceived as an economic threat to a similar extent by the middle and upper classes (63 and 64% respectively) while the lower class is again much more sensitive (81% agree). The survey results also demonstrate that Czechs are more concerned about the economic rather than the cultural impact of immigration. Irrespective of social class, their fear of economic threat is 20 percent higher.

The fifth question identified the differences in class attitudes towards the European Union; 6 out of 10 middle-class and upper-class respondents perceived the EU as beneficial. The lower class was slightly more sceptical, given that less than half (45%) of the respondents were in favour of the EU. The last three questions dealt with interest in politics. The first measured the interest in politics expressed by the frequency of following the domestic political developments, and the other two focused on voter turnout in parliamentary elections and the 2019 European Parliament elections.

Although the middle class has been similar in its attitudes to the upper class thus far, it is not so as concerns the interest in politics. When it comes to following the Czech political scene, the middle class is more similar to the lower class (48% and 53%). The upper-class respondents are interested in the current political situation almost daily, 7 out of 10. A comparison of classes, according to potential and upcoming voter turnout, confirms the assumption that willingness to participate in elections will increase with the higher social classes. If the elections to the Chamber of Deputies were held tomorrow, the election turnout would be 69% for the lower class, 87% for the middle class and 93% for the upper class. The upcoming EP elections (the survey was conducted in March 2019) demonstrated the same pattern of behaviour, with the only difference that the general interest in voting in the EP elections was considerably lower than in national elections. 57% of the lower class, 71% of the middle class and 82% of the upper class were expected to vote in the EP elections. In general, the announced voter turnout is overestimated, and the attitude to the turnout differs by about 20 percentage points from the actual voter turnout.

The Middle Class and Media

For most Czechs, television is currently the main and primary source of information (about politics). If they are interested or looking for other sources, they frequently turn to the Internet (Eurobarometer 2018). Radio (62%) and television (52%) are regarded as most trustworthy by Czech citizens. In this respect, according to the Eurobarometer, we are not all that different from the EU28 average. More than three fifths (64%) of Czechs believe that the media is influenced by political or commercial pressures, while only a quarter (compared to 42% of the EU average) disagree with this statement. There is a broad consensus on the sufficient diversity and plurality of views (60% agree), but there is still a large group of those who consider that the Czech media do not provide a variety of views of speakers (Eurobarometer 2018). A somewhat different picture of the confidence of Czech citizens in the media is provided by ongoing public opinion research by the Public Opinion Research Centre. Although its analysts recorded a rise in confidence in television and radio and a decrease in confidence in the Internet and press compared to their previous survey in November 2018, 52% of respondents trust the radio, 44% trust television, 42% trust the Internet and 41% of Czechs trust printed media (Hanzlová 2019). The differences in the surveys by the Public Opinion Research Centre and Eurobarometer can be due of course to different formulation of questions and their placement in questionnaires.

There is no ongoing research on the differences in the evaluation and use of media and its content across social classes in Czechia as social scientists do not work with the concept of social classes in their studies devoted to mass media. We ignore the research inspired by critical media theory (CMT), which views the media as a tool for realising the power interests of the ruling class: this includes texts framed by (critical) political economy, cultural studies, (post)structuralism and critical social theory (see Taylor and Harris 2008).

In the field of social stratification, contemporary Czech authors deal with selected and generally defined types and contents of mass media most often within the saturation of the category of mass, or rather low culture. “[...] a mass culture, which is close to a low culture, is represented by the products which are produced for the widest possible consumer market. They are characterised by standardisation of production and mass behaviour in their consumption” (Bayer et al. 2007: 28). In addition, “the affiliation to upper or middle class [...], together with high and university education, partially reduces the tendency towards mass/low culture and increases participation in high culture” (Šafr 2008: 80). In Czechia, these ideas are based on the concept of socio-economic status as multidimensional (Machonin 1970; Machonin, Tuček et al. 1996; Tuček et al. 2003), in which one of its five dimensions is a scale derived from the individual’s leisure activities, related especially to high culture. Very marginally, the role of the media in the theory and practice of social inequality and mobility is also noted by a contemporary representative of the subject of class stratification Tomáš Katrňák (2004a, 2004b). Consequently, the conclusions of important studies generally only suggest that the lower social classes tend to so-called low, mass culture

more often than the higher classes, but we do not take into account the problematic nature and variability of the terms mass, low, and popular culture, and their different conceptualisations, especially by the Birmingham School (Jansová 2016), which is dominant in the above-mentioned cultural studies.

A recent exception that works with the term “middle class” in describing the way in which media is consumed – given only with regard to the specific content of the term itself, as it does not work with “classic” social stratification conceptualisation – is one of the outputs of the *Media Map* project, which is the result of cooperation between the Endowment Fund for Independent Journalism, the Department of Media Studies and Journalism at the Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University in Brno, and the subject of New Media Studies at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague. In their survey *Czechs and News* (2018), the authors identified two basic groups of consumers of news content in their sample of respondents (approx. 14 thousand respondents aged 15–79 years, year of data collection: 2016). In the first group, which was represented by a third of the research participants, there were people who did not watch the news at all or minimally. The remaining two-thirds were divided into four groups: *Grannies with glasses*, *Mainstream satisfied parent*, *Tabloid readers and Consumers* and *Educated middle class*. According to the study, the latter group represents just a little over 20 percent of the Czech population over 15 years of age, which has the highest incomes, a high level of education and lives mainly in large cities. They are strong consumers of the Internet and the so-called reputable press, with a strong focus on news. They tend to read all serious and news printed titles such as *Lidové noviny*, *Hospodářské noviny*, *Mladá fronta DNES*, *Deník*, etc. and similarly prefer the public service media to the commercial media. With the exception of tabloid themes, they are interested in all the topics above average.

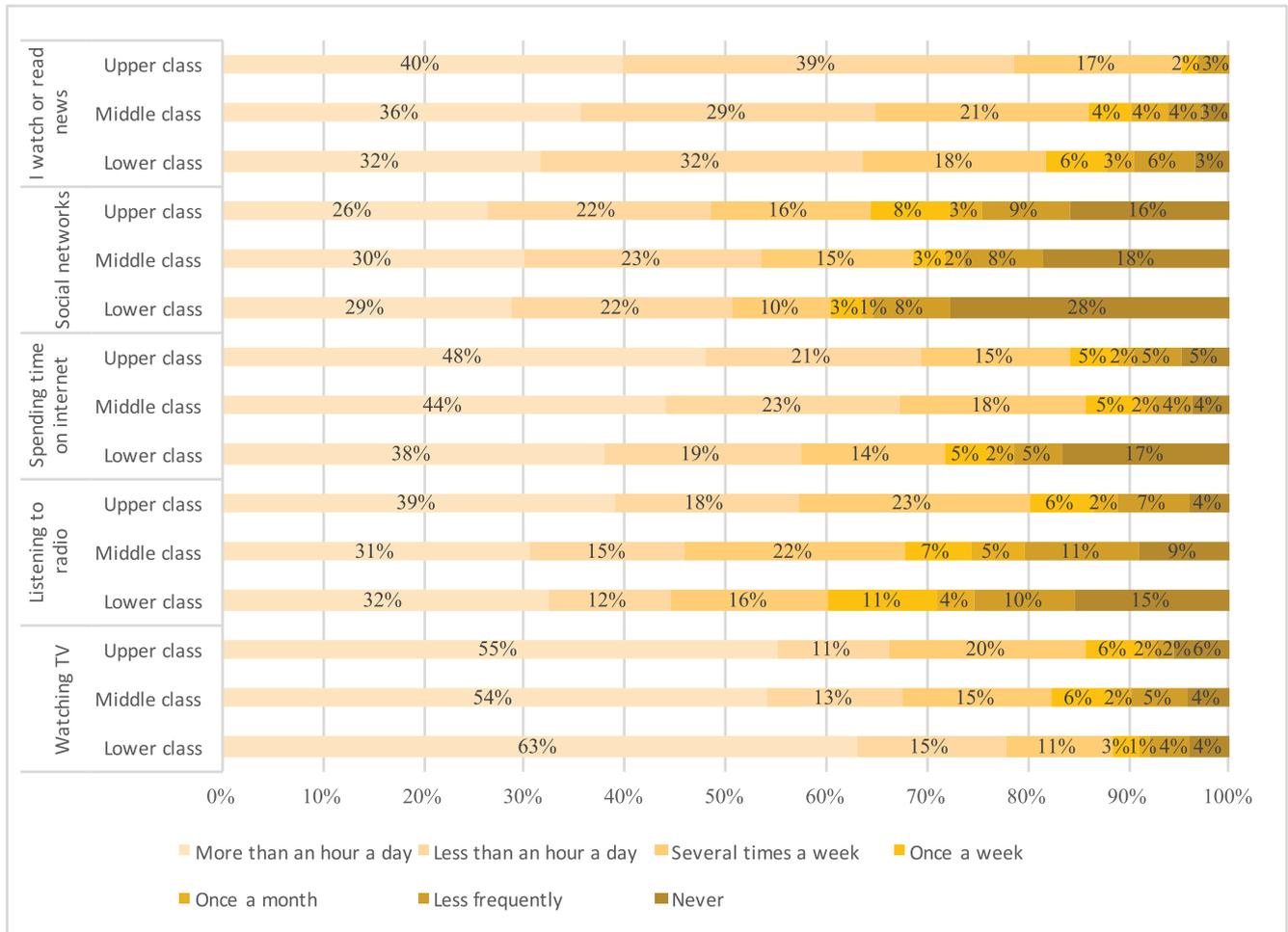
As has already been mentioned, the data presented works with a different and predefined definition of the “middle class” category. The research only focused on how often people in the upper, middle, and lower classes watch news and selected media types. Graph 6 shows that, as concerns news coverage from any media source, the upper class is “a significant leader” compared to the other two classes – nearly eight out of ten members watch or read news on a daily basis. The differences between the middle and lower classes in the daily consumption of news are not all that significant; 65% and 64% watch news daily. In a rough comparison, the research entitled *Old and New Media in the Everyday Life of Czech Audiences* (Macek et al. 2015) indicated that 66% of Czechs read or watch the daily news, 90% of news consumers watch (non-local) news on television, 46% read the news on the Internet, 28% read printed newspapers, 35% of people declare that they are interested in political news while watching, listening or reading the news, 91% of them obtain information about politics from television and 51% from the Internet.

In our research, the most frequent television viewers can be found among the lower class, with 78% of its representatives watching it daily, 11% several times a week. The differences in the declared television viewers of the middle and upper classes are not so significant: 67% and 66% watch television every day, and 15% and 20% watch television several times a week. A similar situation exists in the answers to the

question about the time spent on the Internet; the upper and middle classes show similar values: 69% and 67% are online daily, 15% and 18% several times a week. In the lower class, the research found (with the sum of “I watch daily” answers) a difference of about ten percentage points: 57% of its representatives reported watching the Internet daily, 14% several times a week. Regarding the time spent specifically on social networks, there are no significant differences between their regular/frequent users (daily or several times a week) across classes. Differences can only be observed in the option “not watching at all” chosen by more than a quarter (28%) of the lower class but compared to “only” 16% and 18% of upper- and middle-class representatives.

Compared to other classes, the frequency of radio listening is higher with the upper class, with 57% of people listening to the radio daily and 23% several times a week. The 46% of the middle class and 44% of the lower class listen to the radio daily, while 22% and 16% listen several times a week.

Graph 6 Frequency of Using Media Sources by Social Class



Note: N= 1269, weighted data.

The results of the questionnaire survey demonstrate that the members of the Czech middle class are relatively active consumers of news and mostly watch television and the Internet. At the same time, however, there are no significant differences in the frequency of television and Internet audience figures across classes, but these appear in news coverage, in which the upper class “wins” over both others.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to describe the concept of social class and compare the attitudes and behaviour of people according to their class membership. A particular emphasis was placed on the position of the middle class, which is historically regarded as an essential part of society. The definition of the middle class involves not only income distribution or wealth, but also social and cultural capital, lifestyle, chances and perspectives, and finally that the person declares himself or herself as belonging to the middle class. The definition of the middle class is described well by Večerník's (2010: 491) statement: "Despite its schematic obviousness, the concept of the middle class is rather dim".

Although the method of class determination varies according to the used theory, the available data, and the researcher's approach, class differences are still present in many aspects. Being born into a family with a lower social status means a lower probability of reaching a middle or higher standard of living compared to those who were lucky enough to grow up in a family with a middle or higher social status. What is changing, however, are the clear differences in attitudes and behaviour according to class. Simply speaking, while during the First Republic workers mostly voted social democracy and read *Právo lidu* and *Večerní Právo lidu* (or *Rudé právo* issued by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia), farmers voted for the Agrarian party and read *Venkov*, there are no such obvious borderlines between these groups (classes) and no such differences in attitudes and behaviour. Regarding the historical example, it is important to point out that today, with some exceptions, political parties do not publish their own daily newspapers. Nevertheless, one can say that, at present, all the classes follow media on a large scale (mainly television and the Internet), with news being much more favoured by the upper class, which corresponds to their higher interest in politics. About two-thirds of the middle and lower classes admit, however, daily news consumption. In the other media topics studied, there is a mutual proximity of the upper and middle classes.

As regards their attitudes to political themes, the upper and middle classes showed similar response patterns. Their attitudes were in slight contrast to the more dissatisfied, distrustful, and sceptical lower class, who were less interested in politics and displayed less willingness to vote. Interest in politics measured by following political events was the only question where the middle-class representatives were more similar to the lower-class members. An exception to this was the attitude to voter turnout. The percentage of affirmative responses to the question of voter turnout increased with class.

Especially in the case of the higher and middle classes, major differences cannot be found in their view and evaluation of the world. Its existence, but at the same time the unclear outlines of this social formation, which are reflected in the attitudes and opinions of its members, is confirmed by the current questionnaire survey. The question is to what extent the political sphere should treat the concept of the middle class when formulating actual policies. Class stratification, however, is definitely one of the cornerstones of the knowledge about the differences and inequalities between individual members of society, which is basic for current reflections in social sciences and in many debates in the public (political and media) sphere.

Entrepreneurs as Members of the Middle Class

Alena Zemplerová, Lenka Sojková and Jana Šimanová

Introduction

An important and growing segment of the middle class in Czechia consists of small entrepreneurs. They are characterized by the fact that the source of their income and the income of their families and wealth come from their own company. A key feature is that the entrepreneurs do not rely on the state and/or large, multinational companies as employers but build on personal responsibility and a willingness to take entrepreneurial risks which makes them independent in their decision-making (including voter preferences) to a substantial degree. The middle class is primarily formed by small and medium enterprises and the self-employed known as the “small and medium-sized” (SMEs) in the economic literature. In the first part of this chapter, we will describe the entrepreneurs from the point of view of their number, structure and development tendencies. We will summarize the findings in the economic literature concerning the role of SMEs in the economy and their attitudes to the European single market. The objective of the next part of this chapter is to contribute to the debate on middle class voter preferences represented by small entrepreneurs and sole traders from the regional point of view. The third part of this chapter describes the current changes in the structure of work and entrepreneurship in the context of ongoing digitalization.⁶ Finally, we will try to suggest recommendations concerning the relevant policy leading to the development of entrepreneurship and the middle class in Czech society resulting in the stable growth of the economy.

The Importance, Structure and Role of the Entrepreneurial Sector in the Economy

Details on small enterprises and entrepreneurs are inevitably imprecise and their analysis difficult due to their large numbers and relative instability – on average, only each third attempt to enter the market by the new enterprise is successful. Moreover, the crisis or recession strikes the small enterprises most as large companies usually survive the external shocks and are more stable. There is also a problem with their statistical data; the distinction between the registered companies and the companies that are truly active is essential. While an economist would talk about a company, even if such is formed by a single man being the manager, owner and the one who works in it, legally, companies in Czechia are divided into private entrepreneurs (PE) and corporate entities (CE).⁷ In addition, the self-employed persons (SEP) monitored due to tax obligations, payments of social and pension security may carry on business as their full-time employment or may carry out the business activities together with other employment. If one is to obtain,

⁶ The chapter was prepared within an institutional support of the long-term conceptual development of the Faculty of Economics, Technical University of Liberec, in the framework of the project Excellent Research Teams – Regional Development of the Czech Republic in the Context of the Onset of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

⁷ One can carry out business as a corporate entity or private individual (self-employed), this being regulated by the Trade Licensing Act, which they are liable with all their assets. A corporate entity – regulated by the Commercial Code, Ltd. or jsc., are liable up to an amount of the company assets only

however, a clear picture as to the number of the small entrepreneurs in the country and their structure, we need to combine more statistical sources.

The Czech Statistical Office (ČSÚ) registered 2.86 million economic entities (companies – private individuals and corporate entities) at the beginning of 2018. Only 51% of this number were active (ČSÚ 2018),⁸ i.e., half of the registered companies terminated their activities and some other never really started (the registry is not updated). The vast majority of the registered companies are private entrepreneurs. According to the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MPO), approximately 2 million entrepreneurs carrying on business as private individuals called “sole traders”, were registered in the half of 2019 (see Table 1). Private individuals (PI) or entrepreneurs who actually carry out the business activities, account for a mere half of the number total of the registered entrepreneurs, i.e., around 1 million. In addition, slightly more than half of these active entrepreneurs operate “full-time”, with the business activities as the main source of income. The second half carries on business as well but, at the same time, they are employed with the state or with other companies where they pay their social and pension insurance.

The Czech Social Security Administration (ČSSZ), which keeps the records of the self-employed to implement the social insurance law and the employment policy, recorded an increase in actual self-employed entrepreneurs by 20 thousand to 1.01 million in 2018. There is a need, however, to once again distinguish between those self-employed “full-time” – 590 thousand entrepreneurs, i.e., “our” entrepreneurs or the small enterprises. Their number grew by 8 thousand only while the “part-time” entrepreneurs amounted to 421 thousand (their number grew much more – by 12 thousand) (Idnes.cz 2019). The number of sole traders has been growing for the third year in a row in spite of the fact that Czechia has the highest number of self-employed per number of inhabitants. The number of new corporate entities has been growing as well approaching 500 thousand.

Table 1 Number of Individual Entrepreneurs (Sole Traders) and Trade Licenses (TL)⁹

Sex	Entrepreneurs	Trade Licenses
Men	1,300,027	1,962,082
Women	740,720	973,258
Total in CZ	2,040,747	2,935,340

Source: MPO, data as of 2Q 2019

Note: Active and non-active entrepreneurs; some entrepreneurs (private individuals and corporate entities have multiple trade licenses)

Based on the EU definition, and according to the information of the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MPO), the SMEs represent around 1 million economic entities in Czechia of which

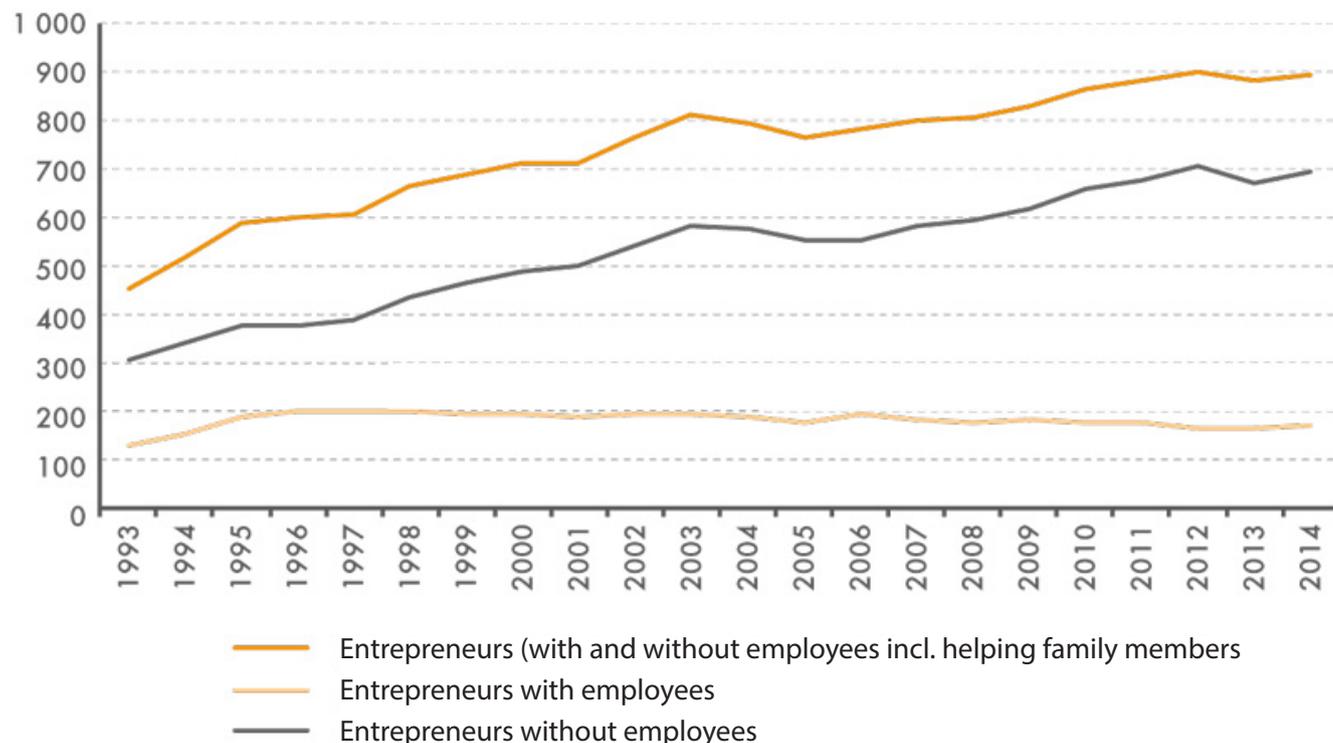
8 Or Český statistický úřad, 2017. Statistická ročenka České republiky – 2017. 22 November 2017. [online]. Available at: <https://www.czso.cz/csu/czso/12-organizacni-struktura-narodniho-hospodarstvi-pn1k17sw8m> (4 September 2019).

9 As of the same date, 2.9 million trade licenses were issued – some entrepreneurs have multiple Tls.

more than half a million are the self-employed private individuals and nearly a half million are corporate businesses. SMEs account for 99.8% of all the active taxable companies. Growth of the entrepreneurial sector is confirmed by the Labour Force Survey of the Czech Statistical Office. From 1993 to 2014, the overall number of entrepreneurs, including the helping family members, increased by more than 440 thousand persons (see Table 2). This is two times more than in the first year of the Labour Force Survey. In contrast, the number of employees decreased by 340 thousand. The number of people working on their account, i.e., the entrepreneurs without employees grew 2.3 times against 1993 (by 385 thousand). Most entrepreneurs in Czechia (almost 60%) work in the construction industry, commerce including motor vehicle repairs, professional, scientific and technical branches and the processing industry. In the field of real estate, for example, the entrepreneurs represent more than half of the labour force, with every second person having the position of an entrepreneur in the professional, scientific and technical branch or in the construction industry.

The Standard Labour Force Survey - LFS allows us to compare the structure of working people based on their position in employment among all the member countries of the European Union. If we compare the age group of 15 – 64-year-old entrepreneurs with and without employees (the self-employed), not taking into account the number of helping family members, then certain features specific for Czechia will manifest themselves: the share of the self-employed below 65 in Czechia was one of the highest in the European Union; in 2014, it amounted to 14.4% total in the EU while the share was 17% in Czechia. In contrast, the share of entrepreneurs with employees is below average in Czechia. The difference, however, in relation to other countries is not all that big. The fact that the involvement of the Czech population in entrepreneurship and self-employment is higher is also confirmed by other studies (Dvouletý 2019). From the point of view of the labour market, it is important to distinguish between the self-employed as private individuals having and not having employees (see e.g. Večerník 2011). As is apparent in the following table, their development differs substantially. While the share of entrepreneurs without employees continues to grow, the share of those with employees has been decreasing.

Graph 1: Change in the Number of Entrepreneurs by Type of Employment (In Thousands, 1993-2014).



Source: Czech Statistical Office, Labour Force Survey

As far as the role of the SMEs and/or entrepreneurs in the economy is concerned, the substantial thing is that beginning entrepreneurs and small enterprises are flexible and able to swiftly react to changes on the market in contrast to large bureaucratic companies and they play a key role in the restructuring of the economy and in the creation of added value. They play a major importance in the creation of innovations and productivity growth. Thanks to the Internet and development of technologies, more and more companies fall into the category of small and medium enterprises being important exporters. Small and medium enterprises substantially participate in foreign trade with approximately 51% for the export and approximately 56% for the import (MPO 2012).¹⁰ Most of the export goes to the single European market. The objective of the European Union is free movement of goods, services, capital and persons on the single internal market of the EU by removing technical, legal and administrative obstacles. Some

¹⁰ Another potential source of information might be the information of the Financial Administration of the Czech Republic (FS ČR) (www.financnisprava.cz) or the Customs Administration of the Czech Republic (CS ČR) (www.celnisprava.cz).

obstacles will still be present, however, on the single market, i.e., the standards and procedures in the electronic trading in the respective EU countries or the rules of recognition of expert qualifications. The national markets of the EU member countries are far from being open to the competition in contrast to what has been declared.

SMEs are important employers and new job creators. From the point of view of the entrepreneurs' role on the labour market and from the point of view of the unemployment issues, the division into the companies formed by individuals not with employees (who nevertheless often employ other self-employed based on invoicing) and those with employees and addressing the obligations and regulations related thereto is important. According to MPO data, SMEs have more than 1.8 million employees. It is apparent that those two groups have differing expectations concerning the role of the state in the economy. Only some of the entrepreneurs may benefit from the European single market. We discuss the labour market in more detail in the second part of the chapter.

New starting enterprises and growing small enterprises represent real or potential competition for large companies dominating the market and having big market power. Over the last few decades, the market concentration has been growing in the sense that a few large enterprises have an ever-increasing share in the market (OECD 2018). In addition, the large enterprises, banks and/or multinational corporations are connected to the public budget and ruling political parties, thanks to their political power and successful lobbying, in the form of support, subsidies, tax reliefs, public contracts and regulatory legislation. Multinational corporations, thanks to transfer prices and other policies, do not tax in the place where they produce or provide services. The SMEs often end up subsidizing the small number of SMEs - their competitors, which receive funding from the government's SME support schemes - but also the large corporations (Zemplerová 2008).

The political choices of the entrepreneurs – including the voter preferences – are influenced by state policies (tax, regulatory, subsidies, etc.) and by strategies of large corporations trying to limit competition using e.g. state subsidies or lobbying in the governmental and political structures in the sense of creating obstacles for the entry of new competitors on the market. When considering the effects of subsidy policies, we should remember that state subsidies and subventions are provided to only a limited number of businesses and they distort the information and signals of the market, which could otherwise lead to right business decisions. The one who got the calculation right loses. The one who received a subsidy usually wins. The failure of the one who got the calculation right was not expected by many and the intervention of the state in the form of free competition distortion spreads in a chain reaction to very far areas of the economy. The market turns into a game played while knowing that an unexpected intervention from above may come at any time and the cards of the market players shall suddenly be redistributed. The reactions of the players include disgust from the game, withdrawal from the game, change of the sports field or acceptance of the game of subsidies (Zemplerová 2006).

In spite of EU efforts to support SMEs, the programmes are often counter-productive. On the one hand, the market opening may have an adverse effect on some traditional entrepreneurs, members of middle-class society, while, on the other hand, it provides opportunities for entrepreneurs to use their knowledge, capabilities and innovative approaches. In any case, the winners should be decided by the market and not by state agencies and their programmes and subsidies.

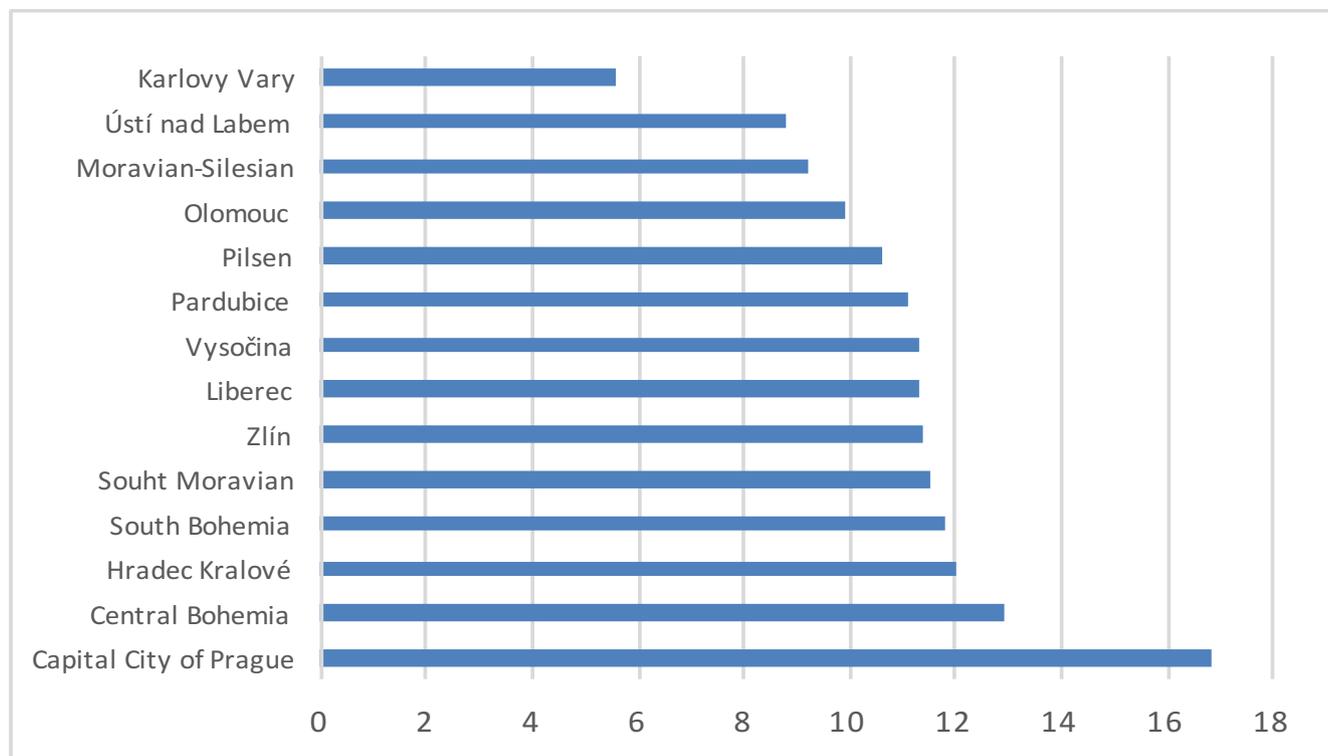
Voter Preferences of Small Entrepreneurs – Analysis on the Municipality Level¹¹

In addition to its importance for the state economy, small enterprises play an important role from the social point of view, i.e., in the sense of positive external effects – a strong middle class with an important entrepreneurial core contributes to the long-term stability of the political system and preservation and/or enhancement of democracy. This view is based on empirical monitoring and scholarly works which suggest that middle class members tend to have attitudes typical of the centre-right and reject extreme political opinions both from the left and right wings of the political spectrum (Matějů 1998; Glassman 1997). The election result in stable developed economies is decided specifically by the middle class formed by a large part of the population in these countries.

Small sole traders, who actively carry on their trade full-time or part-time, account for approximately 12.1% of registered voters. The highest sole traders electoral base is in Prague with 16.84% followed by the Central Bohemia Region with 12.88%. The lowest number of sole traders in relation to the number of registered voters is recorded by the Karlovy Vary Region (5.56%), the Ústí nad Labem Region (8.82%) and the Moravian-Silesian Region (9.21%). For more details, see Graph 2, ČSSZ (2019).

¹¹ The analysis used in this part was performed in cooperation with Mgr. Jiří Šmída, Ph.D. and Ing. Aleš Kocourek, Ph.D. from the Technical University of Liberec.

Graph 2: Share of Active Individual Entrepreneurs (Sole Traders) in the Czech Regions (Registered Voters, %)



Source: Own calculations based on ČSÚ (2019) and ČSSZ (2019) data.

For the purposes of further analysis whose aim is to predict relationships between the intensity of the entrepreneurial activity of small sole traders and the results of the Parliamentary election in municipalities and city districts of statutory cities, two data files were used:¹²

- data coming from tax returns, specifically the tax bases of the private individual income tax pursuant to Section 7 of Act No. 586/1992 Coll. on Private Individuals Income Tax for years 2014-2016 in division by respective municipalities and city districts of statutory cities.
- data on registered voters, valid votes, election participation and number of votes for respective candidate parties in the Parliamentary election in 2017 for respective municipalities, cities and city districts of statutory cities and the results of the 2017 Czech parliamentary election.

¹² Data were obtained during the work on project TAČR TL01000303: “Big Data Exploitation to Evaluate the Social and Economic Position of Inhabitants in the Types of Territories Defined by Regional Development Strategy 2021+”.

A positive correlation was found in these data based on the correlation analysis, i.e., direct linear dependence when the higher entrepreneurial income of the self-employed improves the election result in the case of the following parliamentary parties: Civic Democratic Party (ODS) (the strongest dependence), TOP 09, Czech Pirate Party (ČPS), Majors and the Independent (STAN). Out of nine parliamentary parties, a negative linear dependence between the entrepreneurial income of the self-employed and the election result was found in the case of the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM), Czech Social Democratic Party (ČSSD), Freedom and Direct Democracy Party (SPD) and ANO 2011. The election result of KDU-ČSL cannot be deemed dependent on the entrepreneurial income in the municipality. The correlation analysis results were supported by the analysis of the voting characteristics development for the respective quartiles. The average tax bases of the self-employed for 6,388 municipalities were ranked in descendant order and divided into 4 quartiles where Quartile 1 represents 25% of voters, the inhabitants of the municipalities and city districts with the highest average entrepreneurial income of the self-employed and Quartile 4 represents 25% of voters, the inhabitants of the municipalities with the lowest average entrepreneurial income of the self-employed. The outputs of the analysis in the respective quartiles are summarized in Table 3 and Graph 3.

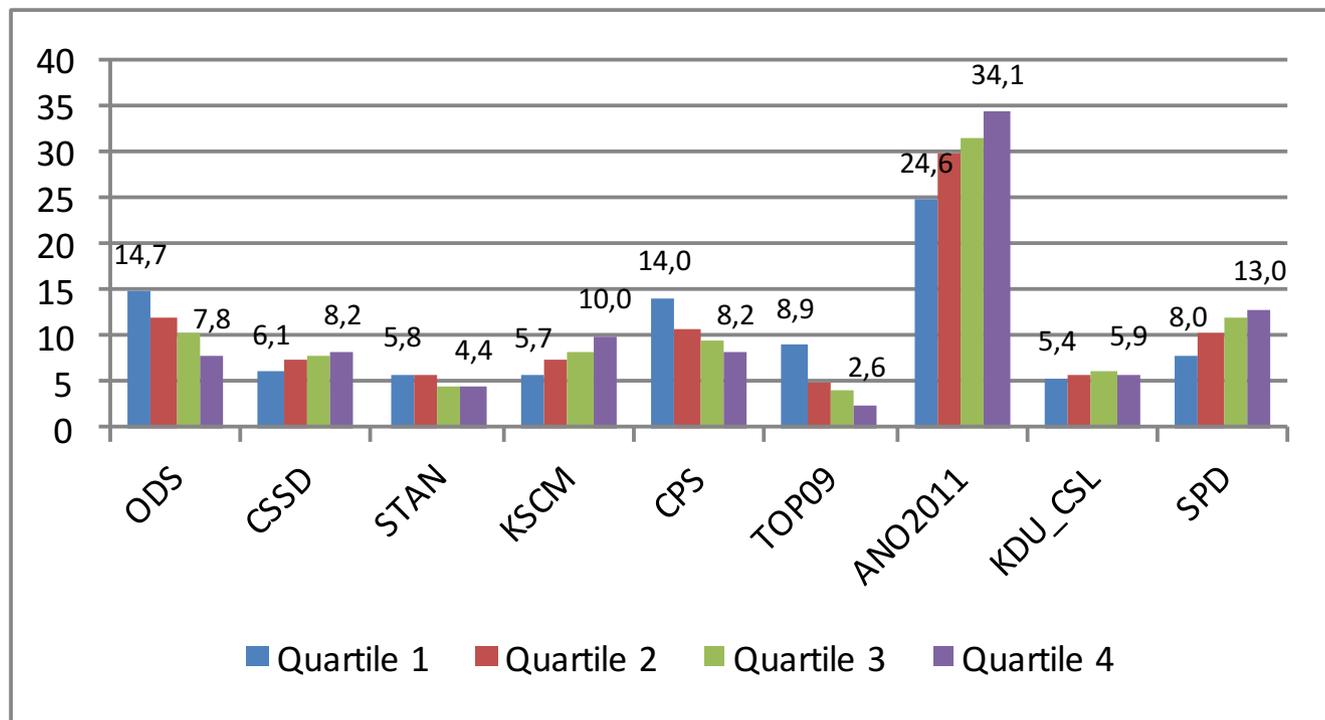
Table 3 Voting Characteristics by Income Quartiles of the Self-Employed (Income by Municipalities/City Districts)

Voters and election participation by income quartiles (descendent)	Quartile 1	Quartile 2	Quartile 3	Quartile 4
Share of votes according to the list of voters (%)	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00
Election participation (%)	66.12	61.73	58.13	55.67
Valid votes total	1,382,134	1,290,005	1,214,806	1,163,320
Number of municipalities/cities/city districts in the given quartile	1,521	983	1,318	2,573

Source: Own calculations based on ČSÚ (2019) and GŘ (2019) data.

Graph 3 indicates that election participation decreases relatively fast with the decreasing income of the self-employed (social status of the inhabitants of the municipalities).

Graph 3: Election Results in % by Income Quartiles of the Self-employed (Bases of the Private Individual Income Tax Pursuant to Section 7 of Act No. 586/1992 Sb. on Private Individual Income Tax)



Source: Own calculations based on ČSÚ (2019) and GŘ (2019)

As expected, the analysis of the entrepreneurial income in the respective quartiles indicated a positive relationship between the level of the entrepreneurial income of the self-employed and the election result for the Civic Democratic Party (ODS), TOP 09 and Czech Pirate Party (ČPS) and then for the Majors and Independents (STAN). A negative correlation was found in contrast between the entrepreneurial income and the election result in the case of the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSCM), Czech Social Democratic Party (ČSSD), Freedom and Direct Democracy Party (SPD) and ANO 2011 Movement – for more details, see Graph 3.

In consideration of the discovered territorial context and direct linear dependence of entrepreneurial income and the election result of the centre and centre-right parties (i.e., ODS, TOP 09, ČPS and STAN), a map output was prepared drawing attention to the expected and unexpected results for respective municipalities/city districts and taking into account the status of the sole traders by their entrepreneurial income. The basic presumption is that the election results (i.e., the CZ municipalities divided into quartiles according to the sum of election results of ODS, TOP 09, ČPS and STAN) correspond to the income quartile into which the municipality has been included. This means that the municipality where the entrepreneurial income, recalculated to a registered voter reaches 25% of the highest values, should rank similarly within the overall election result of centre and centre-right parties (i.e., the sum of the election results of ODS, TOP 09, ČPS and STAN). In other words, a municipality in Quartile 1 by income should reach Quartile 1 of the best election results as the sum of the parties which may be defined as centre and centre-right parties. According to the analysis, such cities, city districts and municipalities represent 59% of all the voters (see also Table 3).

Municipalities with an election result which is not expected in the context of the entrepreneurial income for the parliamentary parties, where the level of the entrepreneurial income of the self-employed statistically importantly correlates positively with the election result of the party, may be stratified according to the matrix in Table 4. Data in the matrix body mean the share of all the registered votes in the given category. The quadrant axis indicates the expected results where the election result quartile corresponds to the income quartile; this group is formed by 59% of all the voters. The upper right-hand part of the matrix above the axis means that the centre-right parties achieved a worse result in the municipality than the matching income quartile. The lower left-hand part of the matrix includes the municipalities where the election result was better (i.e., corresponding to the higher quartile than the income status of the municipality).

Table 4. Election Result Matrix in the Context of the Self-employed Income by Quartiles

		Election Quartile			
		1	2	3	4
Income Quartile	1	17.57 %	4.38 %	2.16 %	0.89 %
	2	6.02 %	12.42 %	5.16 %	1.39 %
	3	0.93 %	5.73 %	12.32 %	6.02 %
	4	0.49 %	2.47 %	5.33 %	16.70 %

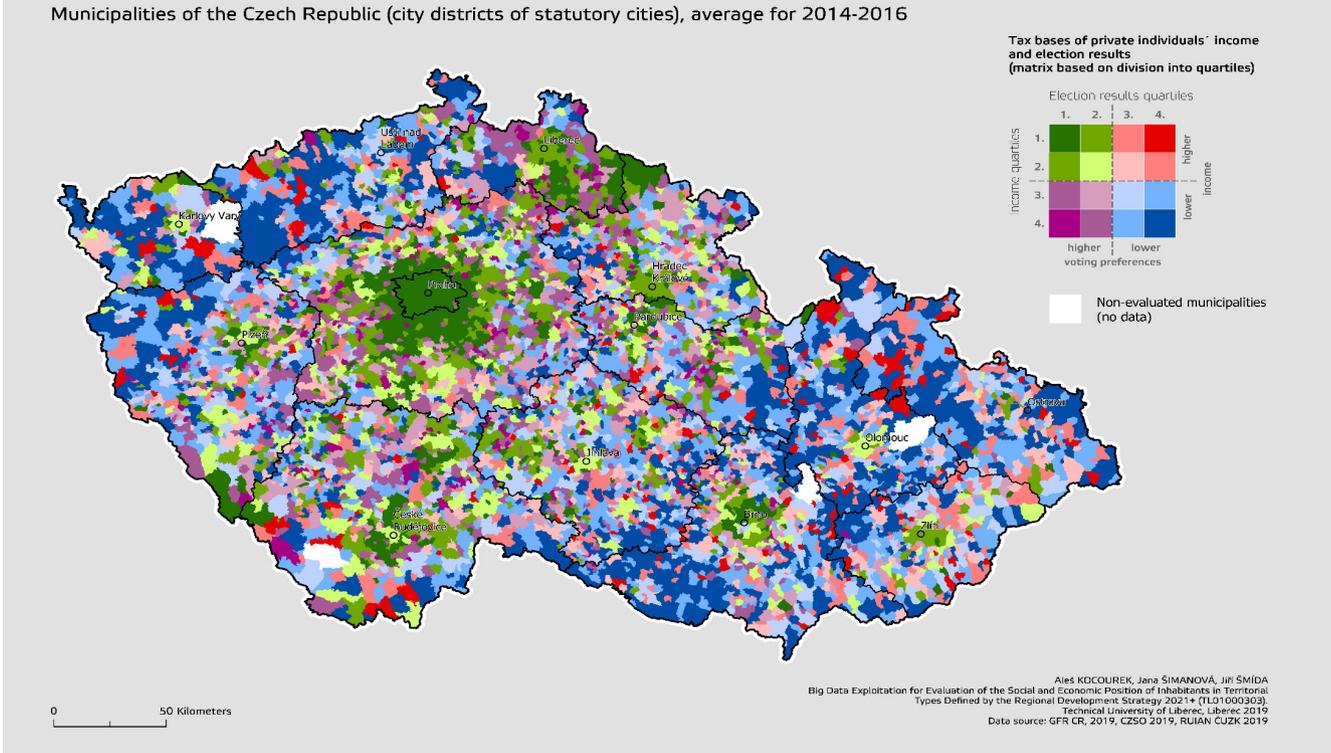
Source: Own calculations based on ČSÚ (2019) and GŘ (2019)

The cartogram in Figure 1 describes the north-west part of Bohemia (represented by the Karlovy Vary and Ústí nad Labem Regions, a major part of the Pilsen Region and the west part of the Liberec Region) and Moravia as the territories confirming the correlation of the lower entrepreneurial income and the lower election results of the centre and centre-right parties. The central part of Czechia represented by Prague and Central Bohemia, Liberec, the South Bohemia regions and the western parts of the Vysočina Region and Pardubice Region represent mainly examples of municipalities with a varying positive level of correlation between the higher income and higher election results of the centre and centre-right parties. The most obvious concordance of the income category (Quartiles 1 and 2) and voter preferences category (Quartiles 1 and 2) is demonstrated in large regional centres represented by Prague and its surroundings reaching to the Central Bohemia Region, in Liberec and its surroundings southwards (following speedway E442), Hradec Králové-Pardubice, Brno, České Budějovice, Pilsen, Zlín, Karlovy Vary and Olomouc. The distinctive groupings of municipalities in a combination of higher income and higher election quartiles may be found in the north of Bohemia in the Krkonoše Mountains (and southwards in the foothills of the Krkonoše Mountains) and in the south-west – Šumava (Bohemian Forest). Municipalities of this nature are also present along the axis Prague-České Budějovice. The regional cities Ostrava and Ústí nad Labem (and their surroundings) represent examples of large regional centres with low income (Quartiles 3 and 4) and low voter preferences for centre- right parties (Quartiles 3 and 4), as expected. Municipalities with lower income but higher voter preferences are present in the larger surroundings of

large regional centres, i.e., the entire Central Bohemia Region or the large surroundings of the regional city of Liberec and both in the south-east direction (Turnov and Semily areas) and westwards. The opposite combination, i.e., the higher income but lower election results of the monitored parties (926 CZ municipalities in total) appeared in the municipalities scattered around the entire Czechia. The most significant differences in the quartile classification of the municipalities (i.e., Income Quartile 1 and Election Result Quartile 4) were recorded in 194 municipalities often located in regions with a minor effect of the near regional or national border (i.e., Novohradsko and Bruntál).

This fact impacts the degree of certainty in the results interpretation. All the income and election results were therefore related to the smallest possible administrative units for which data may be obtained. These are the municipalities and city districts of the statutory cities divided into such districts. Entrepreneurial income was recalculated according to the electoral base of the given territorial unit. It is probable that a small number of entrepreneurs in smaller municipalities may generate, for example, a high income and then the average per one voter distorts the inclusion of such a municipality into the respective category (quartile). It would therefore be necessary to complete the use of the results of the analysis performed in real life by a detailed analysis of the overall social and economic situation of the inhabitants using more data sources and a local survey in the specific cases which were marked as unexpected election results in relation to the income quartile.

Figure 1 Results of the 2017 Parliamentary Election from the Point of Centre and Centre-Right Parties (ODS, TOP09, ČPS and STAN) in the Context of Sole-Trader Income



Changes in the Entrepreneurship Structure in the Context of Digitalization and Industry 4.0¹³

The current so-called post-industrial age has brought to life the “new” middle class described by their effort to capitalize on human capital on the labour market, i.e., top education, specific knowledge, talent and capabilities. This is the main difference from the so-called “old” middle class, which have been trying to capitalize on its own economic capital and production facilities in private ownership. There are two main economic features that may be viewed as features of belonging to the new middle class, i.e., the economic status of the “entrepreneur” or possibly being self-employed and with a higher education, with a secondary school leaving exam as a minimum, but usually with a Bachelor degree and higher, capitalized on in the profession where the professional or creative activity dominates. In spite of the “new” middle class arising in Czechia, the “old” middle class dominates, often performing activities endangered by ongoing digitalization and other features of the current technological changes which will result in significant polarization of the labour market and higher wage differentiation. There is consequently a need to monitor the situation and react with adequate measures.

Changes on the labour market have been on the way since the massive expansion of computers; some authors call this phenomenon directly “the computer revolution” (Frey and Osborne 2013: 12). This results in the strong polarization of the labour market. On the one hand, the employment rate is rising in low-qualification and low-income professions, while on the other hand, in the high-qualification and high-income professions, the employment rate decreases in the middle-class sphere where many professions are routine ones and therefore, prone to be substituted by computers. It can be said that the most endangered professions are those consisting of repeating and well describable activities. This means routine administrative activities or activities described by clear rules, e.g. bookkeeping, statistical processing of numerical data, administrative work, real estate, public administration and defence. Repetition and low creativity are typical features. Professions requiring solutions of new situations and a creative approach, in contrast, are endangered by digitalization the least. The professions which require a specific human approach, e.g. physicians, nurses, managers, retail and wholesale shop assistants, people working in social services, culture, environment protection also belong to those with low risk (Mařík et al. 2016: 141-146). The growing digitalization will bring a demand for system developers, will bring a demand for the creators of all the systems on the labour market in order to secure user comfort, intuitive control and data safety for the consumers. The after-sale support shall grow as well, i.e., the technical and advisory services, etc. The following tendencies may be expected on the labour market in the near future:

13 Industry 4.0 is a term designating the initiative of managers of large European (mainly German and French), American, Japanese and Chinese companies and government officials which should increase demand in society for new, up-to-date consumer and industrial technologies and thus speed the development of robotization and modern, fully automated control systems with maximum independence from human operations. According to the official statements, this is the so-called fourth industrial revolution which has already started and which should include comprehensive digitalization, robotization and automation of most of the current human activities to secure more speed and efficiency of production of more precise, distinctive, reliable and cheaper products, more efficient use of materials and more ecological industry.

Removal of routine and physically hard work – new technologies will bring the removal of physically hard and often life-threatening work endangering health long-term and provoking occupational diseases.

Self-employment – in the near future, a more frequent form of the work which should result in higher dynamics of the employment. It will bring a brand-new rhythm of work; people can work for more employers at the same time. Shorter or part-time work shall increase.

Work at any place – it will no longer be necessary for the employee to be physically present directly in the employer's workplace, work at home or abroad. This will open up opportunities for people who would otherwise have problems commuting to work due to a health disability, living in more isolated localities or taking care of family members.

Decentralization – employees will work within a flatter organizational structure where the management and decision-making are not held in the hands of the head office. This will bring more opportunities for professional development and space for innovative thinking. Such a feature convenes mainly with the young generation's attitude about having a similar notion of work; however, older workers may feel increased pressure on more flexibility as growing mental stress.

Work in project teams – people will work in temporary teams created in order to solve a problem or reach a certain objective. People will cooperate within one and/or more companies and very often with companies located abroad. Relationships between colleagues will be mostly virtual due to the international nature of the teams. The ability to overcome language and culture barriers will become a very important part of qualifications.

The authors did not arrive at the same conclusions in the question of disappearing and newly created jobs. While some sources claim that digitalization and Industry 4.0 will create more jobs than those which would cease to exist, other sources arrived at the conclusion that up to 47% jobs are endangered. This figure arises from the study of Frey and Osborne (2013) who came up with a new methodology to forecast the probability of computerization of occupations in the sense of automation of the occupation with the use of a computer. The disadvantage of this and other similar studies based on occupations (an occupation-based approach) is that they expect that a certain occupation would or would not cease to exist as a whole. They do not investigate, however, the automation of the respective work tasks. This approach may therefore result in overrating of the occupation automation because even the occupations marked as highly endangered contain a wide range of tasks difficult to automate and the need for human work would thus be preserved. A certain reaction to this study is the study of the German economists, Melanie Arntze, Terry Gregor and Ulrich Zierahn (2016), on the impacts of automation and robotization on the labour market. The authors

do not work with occupations in the study but use respective work tasks (a task-based approach) and arrive at the conclusion that work tasks are endangered by automation more than jobs. A study prepared by the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic (OSTEU 2015) provides relatively adverse conclusions for the Czech economy as it is based on a methodology investigating the impact on jobs as a whole (the ratio of endangered and newly created jobs - 5:2). The OECD study (Employment Outlook 2016) is more favourable, in contrast, estimating that the automation will strongly endanger 10% of jobs and bring substantial changes in the activities performed in 35% of the jobs in Czechia in the next 20 years. If such an estimate is related to the number of employees, approximately 408 thousand jobs will be in danger and 1.4 million jobs will witness substantial changes. This needs to be considered, as well, as it is impossible to ignore a number of obstacles hindering the dissemination and application of technologies, i.e., insufficient investment, insufficient capital, investment trends in the areas of research and development, governmental regulations, insufficient capabilities or social resistance which means that the impact on the labour market would be lower in reality over the next few years.

Most of the sources agree that digitalization and Industry 4.0 will lead to strong polarization of the labour market and higher wage differentiation. The result will be further weakening of the middle class. This tendency may be enhanced by the transfer of the medium qualified labour force from the industrial branches to equally qualified jobs created in the services sector which are typically related to lower wages. In practice, the far extremes of the labour market will grow stronger – low-income occupations with very low qualifications for various auxiliary work and, on the other hand, high-income and high-qualification creative occupations where the income will continue to grow significantly. There is the possibility that the summary of the changes will result in a decreasing wage amount total in the economy. Today's group of low-income workers will be forced to find jobs in still lower occupations or be pushed out of the labour market completely. In contrast, high-income groups will witness a significant growth in wages due to the demand for such workers exceeding the offerings (Mařík et al. 2016).

It is obvious that people need to prepare for new roles in their work lives. Massive customization, high autonomy of manufacturing, logistic, sale and after-sale processes will push humans out of direct participation in the manufacturing process. The role of humans is changing from direct participation in the manufacturing process to the role of a supervisor (Mařík et al. 2016). This is not a simple replacement of people by machines, although it will finally come about up to a certain level. It will be important to find new positions in the new conditions provided by the use of scientific and technical progress for a large part of the labour force which currently forms the largest part – the core of the middle class. Thus, suitable support should be established for self-employment mentioned above, which will spread into a growing range of activities and occupations in comparison with today. There will be a great deal of space for creative and dynamic people in small cooperating units, i.e., in small and medium enterprises interconnected into the cooperating networks, etc.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship is the key to economic growth, political stability and the prosperity of society. Each government and party should support entrepreneurship and pursue the removal of barriers for entrepreneurial activities. The growing SMEs sector requires the fulfilment of certain prerequisites: free pricing, free access to goods and services, space for entrepreneurship, the existence of basic services for the company such as accountants and lawyers and possibly qualified and competent advisory services for small enterprises, a good infrastructure including well-functioning telecommunications, information channels, functional courts and a banking system. Economic barriers include the tax burden, possibilities of profit reinvestment, availability of loans and a qualified labour force. Taxes which need to be paid by the entrepreneur affect the immediate short-term motivation to carry out business because they reduce profit and long-term possibilities of funding growth by reinvesting revenues.

In spite of a certain efficiency of fiscal and financial tools to support the companies, one cannot clearly demonstrate whether discrimination arising from preferring certain segments of the economy results in damage (lost opportunities, necessary redistribution of funds, etc.) exceeding the possible benefit from the support tools in relation to the preferred segment of the economy. What is an absolutely key factor, however, for decisions of any investor, big or small, domestic or foreign, is macroeconomic stability. Small and weak enterprises suffer during fluctuations of the economy and inflation more than large and strong enterprises. The impact of the crisis on the SMEs is always more significant than in the case of large monopoly and/or oligopoly corporations. A stable environment and a lack of support for the big is sufficient motivation for good performance of entrepreneurs (Zemlinerová 2000).

As a result of technological development, it is expected that self-employment will grow in more and more activities and professions. It is important to think about a way of providing suitable support for this tendency or removing obstacles which might hinder such development. There will be great space for creative and dynamic people in small cooperating units, i.e., in the small and medium enterprises interconnected in the cooperating networks, etc. The system of education should be ready to support creativity and the entrepreneurial spirit of individuals. There is a need to increase quality of education and support critical thinking skills; new technologies are only used by some entrepreneurs, secondary vocational education (small sole traders and craftsmen do not use digital tools) (Asociace malých a středních podniků a živnostníků ČR 2019). This support should be on the level of the single European market, domestic market and also on the level of the self-government units – municipalities. In the same manner in which the entrepreneurial sector of small and medium enterprises fulfilled its role in transformation from the centrally planned economy to the market economy, it may play a similar role in the age of commencement and progress of digitalization and Industry 4.0. Small and medium enterprises are considered the main force in reconstruction as they are able to react swiftly to changes in internal and external economic conditions. Entrepreneurship in its new form will maintain a substantial share in the employment rate, manufacturing, taxes, offerings of consumer goods and mainly in innovations and/or introduction of new technologies.

New technologies have only been used, however, by part of the entrepreneurs in this country as only some of them had the opportunity to receive an adequate education. The role of the state in the economy (measured by tax-to-GDP ratio, share in the GDP, etc) continues to grow hand in hand with growing demands on the income side of public budgets and pressure to increase taxes. An important requirement therefore involves reducing the role of the state in the economy over a short time span at the expense of other middle-class segments, namely bureaucracy (reform). There is also a need to reduce bureaucratic procedures and legislation in the new legislation prepared in improved quality and the verification and evaluation of current laws to make them more friendly to the SMEs (MPO 2017).

When considering suitable policy toward small entrepreneurs, it is important to distinguish between the types of entrepreneurial activity. There is a major difference between the traditional entrepreneurial activities with local markets and the fast growing so-called “knowledge” entrepreneurial entities expanding on the foreign markets. The latter companies are the fastest growing area of developed economies; they are important for the creation of added value, jobs and productivity growth. Growth is related to a demand for special knowledge, outsourcing and internationalization of services. Recognition of this segment is key for the preparation of policies.

The Middle Class and Changes in Voting Behaviour¹⁴

Jakub Charvát and Pavel Maškarinec

Introduction

Modern democracies are inconceivable without of political parties. This is because political parties are among the most significant participants in political representation in modern representative democracies. In addition, several authors agree that the current politics cannot be comprehended without understanding party politics, as the quality of democracy is in many aspects dependent on the very characteristics of the political party system. Political party systems are not static institutions; in fact, they are in a state of constant variability (Norris and Evans 1999: xvi), which is why they continue to change in various extents and directions. The political partisanship as such has been going through a significant qualitative transformation over the recent years (Krouwel 2012), whereas altered dynamics in its development have been monitored since 2010 in Czechia (see Charvát and Just 2016).

It therefore seems important to focus on an analysis of the transformation of the voting behaviour of Czech voters (in terms of discontinuity) in the last decade. Regarding the central topic of this publication, the presented chapter preferentially aims at the voting behaviour of the middle class and its segments. This is because the members of the middle class are among the politically most active citizens, including their participation in (all types of) elections, and have the most significant impact on election results and the determination of their winners and losers (cf. Linek and Lyons 2007; Vlachová and Řeháková 2007). A brief introduction to the transformation of the Czech political party system after 2010 is followed by an analysis of the changing middle-class voting behaviour. We then argue that the mobilisation of economic, ethnic and political grievances significantly contributed to the rise of new Czech political parties.

Changes in the Czech Political Party System since 2010

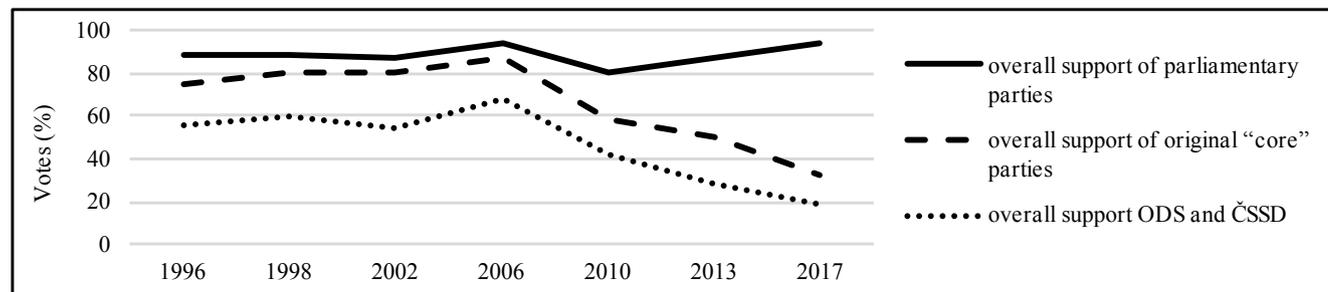
Many domestic and foreign experts in the first decade of the twenty-first century have described the Czech party system as more or less structured, settled, relatively stable and manifesting a low degree of electoral volatility, and consequently, one of the most stable areas in post-communist Europe. However, the 2010 and 2013 parliamentary elections and the subsequent political development indicated that it was “only” a kind of fragile stability (Deegan-Krause and Haughton 2010) and temporary stability (Linek and Lyons 2013). And thus, some authors even talk about an electoral or political earthquake (Haughton, Novotná and Deegan-Krause 2011; Hanley 2012; Haughton and Deegan-Krause 2015; Klíma 2015).

The Czech party system appeared to be structured and largely stabilized prior to 2010, at least in terms

¹⁴ This study was prepared as part of a grant project supported by the Internal Grant Agency of Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem, Grant No. UJEP-IGA-TC-2019-63-03-2, “Eurocepticism and Populism in the 2019 European Parliament Elections”.

of the continuity and stability of the main political parties and their identities, while demonstrating a high degree of nationalization of their electoral support (Stauber 2017). The “core” of the party system was formed by Občanská demokratická strana (Civic Democratic Party, ODS), Česká strana sociálně demokratická (Czech Social Democratic Party, ČSSD), Křesťanská a demokratická unie – Československá strana lidová (Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People’s Party, KDU-ČSL) and Komunistická strana Čech a Moravy (Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia, KSČM). Some aspects of instability also appeared in the background, mainly in the area of the so-called “liberal centre” where several smaller parties were alternating, that is, Občanská demokratická aliance (Civic Democratic Alliance, ODA), Unie svobody (Union of Freedom, US), Unie svobody – Demokratická unie (Union of Freedom – Democratic Union, US-DEU), Strana zelených (Green Party, SZ) and TOP 09 as of 2010. The ideological affinity of their programs and similarity of voters were also a certain aspect of stability (Haughton, Novotná and Deegan-Krause 2011). The established parties have been losing their former voters, however, since the 2010 parliamentary elections (see Graph 1).

Graph 1 Overall Electoral Support for the Established Political Parties in the Parliamentary Elections since 1996



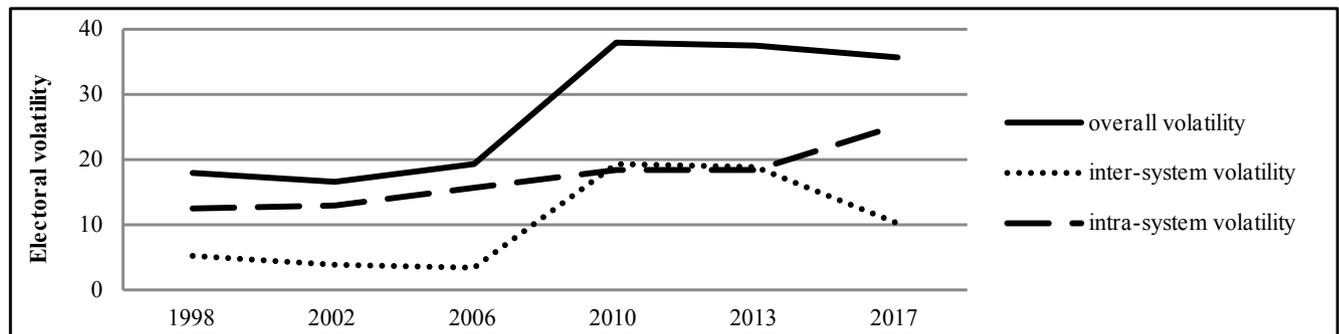
Data source: volby.cz.

While some authors talk about the electoral (political) earthquake in connection with the 2010 parliamentary elections, the concept of electoral volatility, i.e., the approach to analyse the party system stability at the aggregate level (in terms of stability of electoral support), may be considered a seismograph of any election changes. The overall electoral volatility consists of two components: intra-system (within-system) volatility to be used to measure shifts in electoral support between ongoing political parties, and inter-system (extra-system) volatility to capture transfers of support resulting from new parties entering the voting arena and, in contrast, some of the old parties leaving the voting area (for more details see Powell and Tucker 2014; Mainwaring, Gervasoni and España-Najera 2017; Charvát and Just

2016: 20–31). The occurrence of an adequate level of intra-system volatility can be considered healthy for democratic systems as shifting of electoral support between established parties is a prerequisite for government alternation. An increase in intra-system volatility values reflects temporary shifts of votes within the existing party system, while not necessarily signalling its transformation. Conversely, a higher level of inter-system volatility is linked to instability as it reflects voter dissatisfaction with the composition and functioning of the original party system as well as their decision to shift their support to new candidates. The entry of a new actor(s) into the system, sometimes even intensified by the departure of the established party(ies), then necessarily changes the existing interactions among political actors and distorts the existing balance.

There were no significant fluctuations in the electoral volatility values in Czechia before 2010. The overall volatility was mainly caused by “an overflow” of voters among the established parties (intra-system volatility) which has steadily increased since 1998, but not very dynamically. The influence of the new parties, however, on the overall volatility was rather small. Before 2010, the Czech party system can consequently be referred to as more or less stable, especially in terms of organizational stability, the electoral support of each party and the patterns of electoral behaviour. The breaking point in the trends came about the 2010 elections. Although intra-system volatility continually increased in 2010, the rapid increase in inter-system volatility seems to be much more substantial in the systemic point of view; the inter-system volatility increased more than five times in comparison with the 2002 and 2006 elections which means it surpassed the values of intra-system volatility.

Graph 2 Electoral Volatility in Parliamentary Elections since 1998



Data source: volby.cz.

The former voters of established parties began to look for new alternatives outside the original “core”. Thus, new political parties and movements emerged, especially TOP 09 and Věci veřejné (Public Affairs)

in 2010, and ANO 2011 and Úsvit přímé demokracie Tomia Okamury (Dawn of Direct Democracy of Tomio Okamura)¹⁵ in 2013. As a result, the overall volatility doubles up as compared to 1998 and 2006. Some “normalisation” can only be seen in the most recent in the 2017 parliamentary elections when the inter-system volatility decreased, although the values were still rather high. There was also a significant increase of the intra-system volatility reaching unusually high values. The electoral support thus continually regroups, while being stronger within the established political parties (see Graph 2).

The Middle Class and Its Voting Behaviour

In modern Czech history, class-oriented interests traditionally played an important role in electoral behaviour, both in relation to turnout and to electoral support. It was possible to observe the tendencies of higher voter turnout and support for centre-right parties in case of increasing education and professional skills up until 2010. The main centre-right party (ODS) was mostly elected by the upper middle-class. As regards citizens with lower education and professional qualifications, both lower interest in political affairs, as well as lower participation in the elections, were generally observed; if these citizens participated in the elections, they supported the left-wing political parties much more (Vlachová and Řeháková 2007; Vlachová 2009; Linek and Lyons 2013). Even in the 2010 parliamentary elections, the middle class and the Czech electorate were generally relatively clearly divided along the socio-economic axis into two basic political groups, i.e., the centre-left and centre-right voters.

The transformation of the Czech party politics since 2010 was caused by the electoral volatility of the middle-class voters. In the first stage around the 2013 parliamentary elections, dissatisfaction with the political elites was manifested by some centre-right voters moving from ODS and partly from TOP 09 to ANO 2011 (Gregor 2014). In the 2017 parliamentary elections, they were followed by leftist voters who also moved their support to the same political party (ANO 2011). ANO 2011’s ability to attract voters both on the right and left side of the political centre is confirmed by the results of our survey *Study of Middle Class’ Attitudes towards the EU and its Influence on European Issues* (2019) as described in the introductory chapter of this publication. The middle class was divided into six attitudinal segments (*Politically passive, Tested workers, Ageing authoritarians, Defenders, Ambivalent* and *Young liberals*) who differed in their political attitudes, electoral activities and economic situation, as well as in their age and education. Yet, only one of these segments, e.g. the *Young liberals*, did not perceive the ANO 2011 party among the parties with the strongest electoral support. The highest electoral support among the *Young liberals* is given to Pirates, followed by ODS, TOP 09 and STAN. The two small centre-right parties received the highest support in this segment, unlike ODS and the third small centre-right party, KDU-ČSL, which drew most support from the *Ambivalent*. In other segments, ANO 2011 was among the most popular parties with the support of more than a quarter of the voters from each segment.

15 In 2015, two Members of the Parliament, Tomio Okamura and Radim Fiala (Úsvit přímé demokracie), founded the political movement entitled Svoboda a přímá demokracie (Freedom and Direct Democracy).

Regarding the *Ageing authoritarians*, ANO 2011 had the support of 41% of those who declared their willingness to vote. Only in the segment of *Defenders*, ANO 2011 was passed over by SPD (Freedom and Direct Democracy) with the support of 24% of those who wanted to vote. ANO 2011 was supported by about a fifth of voters from this segment.

While converting the results of the analysis into the social class structure, it is apparent that ANO 2011 has the greatest support in six out of seven classes (*Wealthy professionals*, *Traditional middle class*, *Skilled workers*, *Urban poor*, *Working class* and *Lower class*). Only the *Young digital elite* prefers Pirates over ANO 2011, with its proportion in Czechia being relatively small, accounting for about 5% of the population. The centre-right pro-European parties (KDU-ČSL, STAN and TOP 09) had the highest support among *Wealthy professionals* and *Traditional middle class*, similar to eurosceptic ODS, which though had more support in these segments than the three smaller parties.

Mobilization of Grievance as a Factor of Success for New Political Parties

Such fundamental changes in voter behaviour which resulted in the significant transformation of the Czech party system usually do not arise without any external cause. They often arise from more fundamental social changes that cause voters feelings of dissatisfaction or grievance (cf. Ivarsflaten 2008). The existing literature deals with grievance mobilization. The grievance theory distinguishes between three separate models used by political parties to mobilize their electorate: (1) grievances as a result of economic change; (2) grievances caused by increase in immigration (and ethnic grievances); (3) grievances resulting from political elitism and corruption (see Snow 2004; Ivarsflaten 2008; Crossley 2012; Kriesi 2012; Beissinger and Sasse 2014; Maškarinec and Bláha 2014). It is believed that any harm or injustice becomes a grievance in the eyes of voters once perceived as such; economic or statistical indicators alone are not enough to identify grievances.

Regarding the model of grievances that are directly related to economic changes (which is in all probability the most commonly used model of grievances), saving measures and reform efforts of the ruling government are often taken as a significant impulse for public outrage and voter mobilization (but also purely protest mobilization). The most important impulse to mobilize economic grievance is (rising) unemployment, or government steps resulting in a rise in unemployment and are understood as such by voters (Kriesi 2012).

In the Czech environment, economic grievances are closely related to the transition from a centrally planned economy to a free market and the related privatization in the early 1990s. Among other things, these processes resulted in the emergence of a new structure of society, an increase in social inequalities and division of society into so-called winners who profited from the transformation and others, so-called losers (Hloušek and Kopeček 2008). As it is apparent from the survey data, a clearly negative trend in the assessment of the economic situation by citizens can be seen, which started approximately

in 2009. The economic situation of the country was assessed as the worst in 2010 and 2013 when the assessment of the economic situation was significantly more negative compared to the elections of 2006 and 2002. Analogically, citizens negatively assessed the expected development of the economic situation and material living conditions of households. A certain turn-over toward more a positive assessment has been observed, however, since the end of 2015. Before the 2017 parliamentary elections, most people (51.9%) believed that the living standard of their households is good, which means an increase of about 10 percentage points compared to the situation before the 2013 elections (CVVM 2014, 2017).

Another model of grievance mobilization is related to the issue of immigration. The rise of the new political parties (especially those of extreme right populists) in Western Europe occurred at a time when there was significant immigration or a significant rise in terms of its timing. It was additionally quite difficult to employ the immigrants in most Western countries, with their unemployment rate being much higher than that in the rest of the population. This resulted in the emergence of antagonism between the immigrants and the original inhabitants. This was further intensified by cultural conflicts and the unwillingness of the “old inhabitants” to accept the newly arrived minority (Ivarsflaten 2008).

However, the application of this model of grievance mobilization is problematic in the Czech environment. The issue of immigration was a rather marginal problem (due to only a limited number of foreigners in Czechia compared to Western Europe).¹⁶ Most established parties did not use it in their election campaigns for a long time. Mobilization of this issue is more visibly linked to the activities of Úsvit přímé demokracie and its leader Tomio Okamura. The issue of immigration was one of the main topics in the 2014 European Parliamentary elections, including the issue of taking motifs from the campaigns of Western European populist extreme right parties (Hynčica, Maškarinec and Novotný 2016: 62–64), followed by the 2017 parliamentary elections (Krčál and Naxera 2018). Although the number of immigrants in Czechia was marginal in comparison with other countries, the entire situation helped those parties who emphasized the national issues.

The mobilization of immigration is thus associated with a rather smaller number of foreigners in Czechia, which was not even changed by the recent migration crisis. It is possible to apply in Czechia the original model of grievance mobilization but another dimension should be added, which is the relationship of the Czech population to the Roma, towards which the Czech population has much more negative attitudes than towards most foreigners (perhaps except for the Muslims which are of only a limited number in the country).¹⁷ The Roma are not foreigners, therefore we talk (in this case) about the mobilization of an ethnic grievance rather than the mobilization of immigration. In the context of ignoring the Roma

16 As of 31 August 2018, 5.15% of foreigners lived in Czechia, of which the largest groups were Ukrainians (23.27%), Slovaks (20.70%), Vietnamese (10.83%), Russians (6.74%), Poles and Germans (3.77%); no other group formed more than 3% of the population (Czech Statistical Office 2019).

17 The number of Muslims in Czechia reached the approximate level of 0.2%, compared to the EU where approximately 4.9% of Muslims live on average (PRC 2017).

issues by established parties, one can assume that dissatisfied voters began to look for an alternative in new parties that work much more openly with anti-immigration or ethnic rhetoric. This was particularly apparent in the structurally affected regions where the gains of these parties were above average (Havlík and Voda 2016; Maškarinec 2017).

The last model of grievance is the resentment of citizens to political elitism and corruption. In the conditions of Czech society, the common denominator of the first decade of post-Communist development, i.e., the so-called “era of innocence” (Kopeček 2010), is an illusion of new, clean and unspoiled politics and self-saving democracy as a flawless political order replacing real socialism. “Betrayal” of this dream, caused mainly by the events of 1997 and 1998 and by the subsequent development (especially the so-called Sarajevo assassination in ODS in autumn 1997,¹⁸ the financial scandals of the government parties, the opposition treaty period in 1998–2002). The term “Opposition Treaty” became known for the “Treaty to Establish a Stable Political Environment in the Czech Republic Concluded between the Czech Social Democratic Party and the Civic Democratic Party” after early elections in 1998 where ODS pledged to support the establishment of the minority government of ČSSD led by Miloš Zeman, the chairman of ČSSD. ODS received, in exchange, the positions of chairmen of both parliamentary chambers, other important positions in parliamentary bodies and a share in the decision-making process. According to the Treaty, the stability of the political system was to be achieved by a combination of constitutional and political reforms (especially electoral reform) which were intended to weaken the importance of other political actors outside ODS and ČSSD, whether it was for other political parties or the President of the Republic; as well as by party patronage controlled by these two parties and related elimination of political competition at the parliamentary level, etc., however, led the citizens to lose interest in politics and also resulted in the belief that this is only a tangle of backstage intrigue. Even after the end of the Opposition Treaty, however, this view of politics has not been fully corrected (Linek 2010).

Leaving aside the political grievances, it has to be said that the effort to explain the success of new parties in Czechia after 2010 by analysing economic and ethnic grievances, which implies a direct link between protest behaviour and dissatisfaction and grievance perceived by citizens, displayed an interesting development.¹⁹ While the hypotheses related to the effect of mobilization theories of grievances were not

18 The phrase “Sarajevo Assassination” is used to designate the unsuccessful attempt at a putsch in the ODS party in autumn 1997. During 1997, there was increasing tension in ODS between the party’s management and its critics, culminating in November 1997 when Václav Klaus (the party’s chairman), who was on a business trip in Sarajevo at that time, was urged by the media together with Ivan Pilip and Jan Ruml to resign from his political functions. President Havel also joined this call, indirectly calling on the government to resign. In response, the ministers of KDU–ČSL party also resigned, which started the disintegration of the government. They were subsequently followed by the ministers of ODA and even chairman Klaus announced his resignation. As a response to these events, an extraordinary ODS congress was convened and Václav Klaus was confirmed as party chairman (for more details see Charvát 2012: 283–284).

19 The data aggregated to the level of 205 administrative districts of municipalities with extended powers and the City of Prague. Multiple linear regression (OLS) method was chosen for analysis. The proportion of votes of political parties at the

very successful in the 2010 and 2013 elections, both in terms of the direction of the individual variables and the explanatory capacities of regression models (more by Maškarinec and Bláha 2014), the 2017 elections brought about a significant breaking-point where the explanatory capacity of the regression models increased significantly (see Table 1).

Table 1 Determinants of Electoral Support for Selected New Parties (OLS)

	VV (2010)	Úsvit (2013)	SPD (2017)	ANO 2011 (2013)	ANO 2011 (2017)
Unemployed	-0.065 (0.060)	0.167 (0.069)	0.336 (0.079)	0.028 (0.104)	0.333 (0.126)
Entrepreneurs	0.024 (0.010)	0.031 (0.010)	-0.050 (0.011)	0.059 (0.015)	-0.092 (0.018)
Foreigners	-0.075 (0.061)	-0.300 (0.065)	-0.205 (0.071)	0.261 (0.098)	0.140 (0.113)
Roma population	0.489 (0.132)	-0.057 (0.144)	-0.104 (0.164)	0.611 (0.217)	0.224 (0.260)
University graduates	-0.118 (0.048)	-0.132 (0.051)	-0.025 (0.054)	-0.138 (0.076)	-0.590 (0.085)
Post-productive persons	-0.287 (0.080)	-0.181 (0.086)	-0.311 (0.095)	-0.255 (0.129)	-0.226 (0.151)
Urbanization	0.017 (0.006)	0.018 (0.007)	0.006 (0.007)	0.013 (0.010)	0.042 (0.011)
Constant	14.142 (1.622)	7.570 (1.700)	19.707 (1.784)	16.775 (2.561)	44.837 (2.838)
N	206	206	206	206	206
Adjusted R²	0.161	0.193	0.399	0.158	0.552

Data source: ČSÚ (Czech Statistical Office) – Public Database, GAC 2006, SLDB 2011; own calculation.

Note: non-standardized regression coefficients, standard deviations in parentheses; coefficients statistically significant at $p < 0.05$ are highlighted in bold.

selected level of aggregation is a dependent variable. *Unemployment* (the registered unemployment rate) and *entrepreneurs* (the number of private entrepreneurs per 1 thousand inhabitants) entered the model of economic grievance mobilization. The variables of *foreigners* (proportion of foreigners with a long-term stay) and *Roma population* (proportion of Roma population living in socially excluded localities) are part of the model of immigration mobilization. Several control variables were used to assess other effects. The educational structure is represented by the variable of *university graduates* (proportion of the population with completed university education). The influence of age is linked to the variable of *post-productive persons* (proportion of the population at the age of 65+) and the contextual variable characterizing the status of regional populations is *urbanization* (proportion of inhabitants in municipalities with 5 thousand + inhabitants).

Both successes, i.e., ANO 2011 and SPD, were strongly linked to regions with higher rates of unemployment and a lower number of entrepreneurs, which, coupled with the persisting lower support among the university-educated population, suggests the confirmation of the mobilization of the population perceiving economic grievances, associated with increased social inequalities and division of society into those who feel an inability to sufficiently profit from the economic and social transformation of the Czech society after 1990 and its benefits. Indicators of ethnic and immigration grievances were significantly different in the case of the ANO 2011 and SPD. Lower support for the SPD (as was the case of its predecessor, Úsvit) can be seen in regions with a higher number of the Roma and foreigners. The opposite applies to ANO 2011 even though the strength of these two variables has declined compared with 2013. The strongest determinants of ANO 2011 electoral support are the variables university graduates and the unemployed, i.e., the socio-economic variables. We observe a positive but a relatively weak relationship between the success of ANO 2011 and the more urbanized regions (Maškarinec and Novotný 2019).

The 2017 parliamentary elections meant a return to the period before reconstruction of the Czech party system which began at the latest in the 2010 elections, when the structural characteristics of regions were largely explaining the interregional support of individual parties (cf. Kouba 2007; Pink and Voda 2012; Bernard and Kostelecký 2014; Maškarinec 2017). There is still the question, however, of whether the entry of SPD and ANO 2011 into the areas, characterized by previously higher support for leftist parties, would be long-lasting, and at the same time, what were the main reasons why voters largely abandoned ČSSD and KSČM as the historically strongest left-wing parties and whether the reason was the “populist” appeal of ANO 2011 and SPD. This would require, however, working with individual survey data. This would also help answer the question of whether the votes for VV, ANO 2011, Úsvit or SPD could be attributed to the dimension of political grievances.

It is also interesting to note that, despite a significant change in the number and strength of the individual parties, a relatively high level of nationalization of spatial electoral support of Czech parties was maintained after three electoral earthquakes. Established and new political parties did not differ significantly in this aspect, whereas the level of nationalization of support for ANO 2011 and Úsvit or SPD was one of the highest (see Table 2).

Table 2: Score of Party-Based Nationalization (PNS) for Major Political Parties, 2006-2017

	2006	2010	2013	2017
ČSSD	0.931	0.909	0.910	0.888
ODS	0.897	0.903	0.853	0.864
KSČM	0.871	0.868	0.877	0.866
KDU–ČSL	0.703	0.616	0.683	0.652
SZ	0.867	0.842	0.843	0.859
TOP 09		0.854	0.799	0.785
VV		0.922		
Piráti		0.859	0.882	0.887
ANO 2011			0.924	0.927
Úsvit/SPD			0.881	0.891
STAN				0.716

Note: The PNS rates are to be measured using the Gini coefficient (see Jones and Mainwaring 2003). The data are to be aggregated to the level of 205 administrative districts of municipalities with extended powers and the City of Prague.

Finally, the grievances arising from political elitism and corruption, the dissatisfaction with established parties and elites also led to the rise of new parties in (not only) Czech politics (Klíma 2015; Hanley and Sikk 2016; Charvát and Just 2016). According to the Corruption Perception Index (CPI), published annually by Transparency International NGO, the CPI began to increase in Czechia from 2009 (the situation was improving around 2013); the index shows relatively high values in 2010, being comparable to the situation in developing countries.

Shortly before 2010, topics such as corruption, clientelism or party patronage came to the forefront of Czech political discourse and the general media agenda. This topic was often linked to the activities of established parties and the existing political elites. Strong anti-corruption and anti-clientelistic rhetoric was also strengthened by the emancipation of the police and prosecutor’s offices, as well as by intensified activity of investigative journalists and by the emergence of various civic activities and initiatives, such as “Rekonstrukce státu” [Reconstruction of the State], “Nadační fond proti korupci” [Endowment Fund Against Corruption], “Oživení” [Recovery], “Vraťte nám stát” [Give the State back to us], “Protikorupční akademický klub transparentnosti” [Anti-Corruption Academic Transparency Club] etc. (Charvát and Just 2016). All of this contributed to detection and media coverage of a number of corruption cases

closely related to political parties that were in power in previous periods. These are not only the political parties that were in power in the period immediately preceding 2010 but in general, it concerns all parties that have been in the government since 1990.

In addition to the frequent association of corruption with established parties and the existing political elites, the negative perception of politics was further intensified by the chronic inefficiency of the Czech governments (Havlík and Hloušek 2014). The premature collapse of Topolánek's government due to a vote of no confidence during the Czech EU presidency in March 2009, deepened voter frustration arising from established parties. Moreover, the newly established Fischer government (Hloušek and Kopeček 2014; Brunclík 2016) was much more popular than the previous party governments, which generated the impression that politics may be different from what has been done thus far by the established parties and that it can be done without conflicts and confrontations. The above-mentioned facts significantly contributed to a sharp increase in civic dissatisfaction and a loss of confidence of the Czech public in political institutions, including political parties, and democracy in general (Linek 2010; Štefek 2012).

It is no coincidence that most of the new successful parties profiled themselves as anti-corruption (Bågenholm 2013) and/or anti-establishment reform parties (Hanley and Sikk 2016; cf. Abedi 2004), which resulted in the onset of centrist technocratic populism (Havlík 2019). It is worth mentioning that the so-called third generation of parties (Kopeček and Svačinová 2015) is characterized by an effort to underline its anti-establishment profile. These were the entities established shortly before the 2013 parliamentary elections (especially ANO 2011 and Úsvit).²⁰ These are also characterized by their anti-party sentiment. Both ANO 2011 and Úsvit decided to make the most of the general criticism of party politics, so the leaders of both parties emphasized that they were not political parties but political movements, and this despite the fact that they do not correspond to the classical model of a social movement in terms of their organisation, and despite the fact that they resemble a political party in many aspects.²¹

20 According to Kopeček and Svačinová (2015), the first generation is represented by the parties whose roots date back to the times of mass parties KSČM or KDU-ČSL. Although ČSSD has deep historical roots, its modern face goes back to the 1990s, similarly to ODS. Both parties could be considered typical representatives of the second generation. The intergenerational case (between the second and third generations) is represented by TOP 09; this party is distinguished from the third generation mainly by the fact that the party included in its structures a group of regional Christian-democratic politicians who left KDU-ČSL to become members of TOP 09

21 ANO 2011 and Úsvit took advantage of the specificity of the legal regulation of organising political parties in Czechia which allows political entities to formally register as political movements while operating under the same conditions as the parties. In the case of Úsvit, in particular, the term “movement” was paradoxical indeed; Úsvit had nine members in total, creating a unique situation where Úsvit had a higher number of parliamentary seats (14 seats in 2013) than members (ANO 2011 has thousands of members).

Conclusion

Whereas the 2010 to 2017 parliamentary elections are interpreted as an earthquake and whereas the consequences of the earthquake include long-term or permanent changes in the shape and nature of the surrounding landscape, there arises the question of how these electoral earthquakes changed the Czech party landscape. The present chapter attempted to answer this question paying attention to changes in voter behaviour. Their most significant manifestations included erosion of electoral support for the established parties which formed the core of the party system before 2010. The increase in overall electoral volatility was primarily caused by the increasing rate of inter-system volatility where the voters inclined more towards new political parties. ANO 2011 took the greatest advantage of these shifts in electoral support, it has been the political party being able to effectively mobilize economic, political and (partly) ethnic grievances. Due to this successful strategy, ANO 2011 was able to obtain the highest electoral support among a large number of middle-class voters across individual segments. The only exception in this sense was the liberal-minded *Young digital elite* who showed a preference for the Pirates over ANO 2011.

A Life Less Ordinary? The Middle in This Age of Discontent

Eoin Drea

Why Middle Class Discontent Matters

Traditionally, the concept of the middle class has been viewed solely through the lens of income levels. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines a middle class of households with income between 75% and 200% of the median national level (OECD 2019).²² However, across most OECD member states middle class incomes have stagnated over the past three decades. Within the United States, the median income of middle class households in 2016 was the same as in 2000, a reflection of the lingering effects of the Great Recession and an earlier recession in 2001 (Pew 2018).

Within Europe, the situation is a little more nuanced. While countries such as Ireland and Poland have continued to increase the proportion of the middle class relative to their total population, the issue of stagnant income growth remains a significant issue. For example, a major study covering nine European countries highlighted that only in Bulgaria and Poland did median disposable income rise between 2007 and 2015 (Siegmann and Schafer 2018). In most Western European countries, including Germany, the increase in median incomes has been close to zero over this period.

Why does this matter? Put simply, the middle classes are essential in providing the underpinnings of stable social and political institutions (Fukuyama 2011). The middle classes are a key economic driver of the global economy and an underlying pool of both consumption and demand (Pressman 2007).

Within a political context, the rise of greater instability – such as the rise of populist parties in Europe – can be viewed as a symptom of middle class decline (OECD 2016). The increase in the appeal of anti-immigration or anti-globalisation parties can arise as a result of a stagnant or shrinking middle class. This in turn creates a sense of disillusionment which turns voters towards more radical, anti-establishment parties (Bettiza 2010).

The middle class lifestyle is a framework for societal and political stability. This model - based generally on the goals of a good education, stable job, secure property rights, decent pension – is underpinned by an aspiration of a better life, particularly for the next generation (Drea 2018). It is the model that has been the bedrock of the appeal of centrist political parties since the beginnings of the current European integration process in the 1950s. It is “a middle-class lifestyle sustaining a middle ground politics” (O’Toole 2019). However, as politics in countries as diverse as Italy, the Netherlands and Czechia demonstrate, middle class dissatisfaction can have a direct impact on parliamentary democracies. This can, at least in part, be viewed as representing the alienation of middle class voters from traditional

²² A median household income refers to the income level earned by a given household where half of the homes earn more and half earn less. It’s used instead of the average or mean household income because it can give a more accurate picture of actual economic status.

political parties. This, in turn, forms an important part of the even wider process whereby new political movements are explicitly seeking to challenge the existing *status quo* in political affairs.

Such middle class discontent also brings into focus clear societal divisions which have emerged over the past decade. In terms of geography (urban v rural), technology (savvy v lacking skills), demographics (generational inequality), employment status (permanent contract v more precarious work) and societal values (open v closed). It is impossible to discuss any of these issues, or to attempt to identify prevailing European trends, without first acknowledging the centrality of the middle classes to the cleavages increasingly being witnessed in this age of discontent.

New Members, Old Problems?

In the aftermath of the past decade of crises, it has become commonplace to label national differences at EU level as representing an East versus West divide. However, at least when it comes to the middle classes, the research from Czechia indicates no fundamental geographical division. Rather, there exists a similar pattern of middle class unease resulting from a shared disappointment on multiple levels. Disappointments that differ in their focus depending both on the unique national characteristics of the state involved and its relative level of economic and social development.

For example, in France, the emergence of the *gilets jaunes* (yellow vest) movement highlights how long held concerns regarding the rural-urban divide, taxation and the provision (or lack of) of local services can give rise to a much deeper groundswell of discontent. In part, the well-established post-war social models of most Western European countries have mitigated the worst impacts of the recent crises (Darvos and Wolff 2016). But, in the long term, these socio-economic safety nets have also contributed to the current malaise. Combined with issues such as marginal income growth, lingering unemployment and a feeling of insecurity caused by both technological change and global trade, a pervasive sense of frustration has seeped both upwards (into the middle class) and downwards (towards lower paid families).

Such feelings are not limited to France. Ireland, the UK, Spain, Belgium, Netherlands and many other countries have experienced movements protesting the perceived stagnation of the middle classes. This in turn, if given the correct political conditions, can fuel a surge in support for more populist political parties from both sides of the political spectrum. From a macro perspective, at least three common characteristics across all these countries are evident.

First, a feeling that inequalities are increasing at all levels, but particularly in an economic, geographical and age-related context. Second, is the belief that middle class families are having to work harder and harder just to stand still. In effect, highlighting that it is getting more and more difficult to achieve social mobility and to ensure a higher standard of living for the next generation. This issue shows how the aspirational element of traditional middle class families is decreasing. Third, is the increased feeling of

insecurity, particularly with regard to economic circumstances. For example, in the UK, research has shown that nearly two thirds of professional, junior managerial and administrative workers would find it hard to pay an unexpected bill of £500 or more (YouGov/Times 2016). This issue is generally associated with issues such as technological change, housing and globalisation.

Within Czechia, the economic context remains strong and will likely remain so in the medium term. Notwithstanding fears of a wider global slowdown, growth in Czechia will remain close to 3% in 2020 with the economy at full employment (European Commission 2019). This strong economic performance highlights that the issue of middle-class dissatisfaction, particularly with more traditional, centre-right political parties, is not solely an economic issue.

Interestingly, the past two decades have seen much of Central and Eastern Europe adopt a distinctly pro-market, liberal economic model supported by the EU. However, this economic liberalisation – as welcome as it is needed – has not answered the fundamental questions about what kind of society should this prosperity give rise to. In the West, with a longer history of market growth, this issue emerges as a middle class malaise, a dissatisfaction with declining mobility and a growing acceptance that our children’s generation will lack the income, occupational and property security enjoyed by all post-war generations. In a sense, the expectations of a better life for our children (the “*expectations dilemma*”) has been replaced by a fear of the future, underpinned by outdated social market economic models from the 1950s.

This history of Central and Eastern Europe dictates a differing focus. Here, unresolved societal questions have again given rise to an expectation’s dilemma, albeit with a different tenor. Here a strong economic context provides a level of discontent based on the perception of falling behind other sections of society. A feeling that Czechia should be converging quicker with older EU member states. A perception that EU membership has not delivered the societal benefits that many initially hoped for. In fact, one could argue that the rapid economic progress enjoyed by countries such as Czechia has brought into sharper focus longer-standing divisions in society. Clear divisions between those you have benefitted from economic growth (“*winner*s”) and those perceived as having missed out (“*loser*s”).

The context of middle class dissatisfaction can appear very different in, for example, France and Czechia. However, a more subtle analysis highlights that underpinning both examples is a deep sense of insecurity. A perception that we should be doing better. A belief that overall inequalities are increasing (aided by technological change and globalisation). A view that traditional political parties, particularly on the centre-right and centre-left, have forgotten large sections of society and have lost the ability to deliver the ingredients necessary for a middle class lifestyle. These are problems viewed by many who see the challenges facing their children in establishing successful lives today.

Can the Centre Deliver a Middle-Class Lifestyle?

All across Europe centrist political parties are searching for the means to hold the middle-ground against populists on both the left and right. In reality many centrist parties have sought to tack towards the direction of the populist gale in order to attempt to maintain their position with the electorate. But such an approach misreads the real motivations behind voters attracted to populist parties. It is not rational economic arguments that sway voters towards embracing populist rhetoric, but rather it is more emotive, and perception driven policies which places “their” worries as an important national question.

Here it is important to understand that populist parties are fluid in their interpretation of national challenges. The Alternative for Germany (AfD) was initially established out of opposition to the Germany governments position on the Eurozone crisis. It subsequently embraced the issue of migration as a tool to increase its popularity. Similarly, Marine Le Pen’s (National Rally) policy to hold a referendum on leaving the Euro before the 2014 European elections was subsequently dropped as public support for the single currency remained relatively constant during the Greek crisis.

In this context, the embrace of populist positions by traditional centre-right parties will have no long-term benefit. The populists will subsequently pivot to other issues in which they see greater electoral benefit, while more centrist voters will feel alienated by the embrace of more extreme positions. In either outcome, traditional political parties will be exposed.

For those centrist politicians, the key question should be about how to re-establish a pathway towards an aspirational middle class lifestyle. The objective must be to deliver on: “The great promise was that, if you can just get a good education, you will enjoy a secure middle-class lifestyle and be better off than your parents. Broadly, our hyper capitalist societies have managed the first part but failed on the second” (O’Toole 2019).

Restoring an Aspirational Middle Class

So, what should centre-right political parties focus on in order to strengthen and rejuvenate the middle classes? Firstly, it is important to acknowledge that there is no one size fits all policy that can easily remedy the obvious challenges. Each member state is characterised by specific national priorities which largely determines the policy options available. Secondly, and here is where the East-West debate becomes relevant, the appropriate response in older member states should be different from that required in countries such as Czechia.

Older member states are largely defined by low (and slowing) economic growth and a broad sense of middle class stagnation. These states generally possess well developed social security support systems. However, these are structures developed in the 1950s and do not reflect the realities of the 21st century in terms of worker mobility, non-standard working and pension portability. Member states, such as Italy, France and Spain, are also burdened by relatively high public debt levels and often do not have the required fiscal space to undertake wholesale structural reforms programmes.

For countries such as these the primary response of centre-right parties should be economic in the short-term. The purpose should be to reduce the burden of taxation on working families, to reinvigorate the economic base and to ensure that middle-class workers feel a pathway to increased social mobility and job security. This is a multi-faceted challenge which requires, among other policies, significant tax and social security reform, educational modernisation and a significantly greater focus on issues such as gender equality and childcare.

In a way the challenge is twofold. In the short term the goal should be to provide solutions to the every day problems facing working families. In this context, lowering the tax burden for average earnings, ensuring affordable, accessible and high-quality childcare provision and providing sufficient educational and retraining opportunities for all those seeking employment. However, in the longer term the much more significant challenge relates to recalibrating the taxation, social security and education models to better fit the realities of working life today. It is only through a fundamental deep reform process can the levels of discontent evidenced in France, and other countries, be truly addressed. In both periods a focus on mainstreaming policies that combat climate change are an absolute prerequisite.

In newer EU member states, such as Czechia the challenge is of a much more socio-economic type. In this context, the objective is not to pursue economic growth to the detriment of social cohesion. Rather, the focus should be on delivering on middle-class expectations of a healthy, inclusive society. Centre-right parties must utilise the positive economic climate to support middle class families in their everyday lives. Issues such as childcare, gender equality (due to the prevalence of the dual earner model), property security and occupational equality are essential in helping to stabilise working families in this age of huge technological change.

In every EU member state centre-right political parties also need to combat the expectations dilemma at both ends of the demographic spectrum. Italy provides a clear example of how this problem is fuelling discontent with mainstream political parties. For the young, there is a clear understanding of how serious the problems are due to the difficulty in finding secure employment and the resultant delays in establishing independent family units. They understand that they will probably not enjoy the employment or retirement security available to their parents. However, their parents' generation find it hard to understand that those privileges (which they take for granted) and now impossible to sustain for younger generations (Bitetti and Morganti 2018).

Conclusion

For the centre-right, the key challenge is to ensure that the traditional aspirations of the middle class – job, children's education, property rights and secure retirement – can continue to be achieved in a landscape increasingly pockmarked by employment and financial uncertainty.

As Czechia shows, this concept of middle class unrest, is not just a Western, or Southern European

phenomenon. In reality, it represents a much deeper distrust of the traditional political system owing to a widening of inequalities in society. These inequalities are often based on age, location, gender and occupational status. The example of Czechia is also important because it highlights that the restoration of middle class mobility relates to more than just income levels and economics. Ultimately, it is about building a society which can foster a better, more stable environment for our children's generation and beyond.

For centre-right political parties there are no easy answers. There is not one single policy that can immediately return stability and security to the middle sections of society. However, as this chapter has highlighted, a mixture of economic and social changes are required to enable hard working middle class families to maintain and improve their position in society. Although the type of policy mix should be based at a national level reflecting domestic preferences and priorities there is a political imperative to initially focus on policies that can bring clear benefits to working families. Therefore, issues such as childcare, education, gender equality, access to affordable property and tax reform should play a central role in developing a new middle class narrative.

In a way, the middle class discontent in countries such as Czechia highlight its impressive economic performance over the past two decades. It is hard to develop an economy that can grow sustainably. But it is even harder to develop a society in which the dividend of that economic growth are distributed effectively. That is the much harder challenge for Czechia in the longer term. For it is only in building both a strong economy and a strong society that citizens will really have the confidence to live a life less ordinary.

Conclusion

Lucie Tungul and Jaroslav Poláček

The process of European integration has considerably accelerated in the last thirty years, as Czechia has embarked on the path of democratisation. Europe is a civilisation phenomenon, an interdependent society, but also a place of great political, cultural and economic differences. The EU is a symbol of trying to find common solutions to various problems in order to create an inclusive society based on solidarity instead of conflict. The EU seeks long-term economic and political stability by increasing cohesion and reducing economic and social poverty at the time when the gap between the rich and the poor²³ is widening. Part of this process is a growing awareness that the traditional concept of the middle class, which has been the basis of the national political and economic system since the end of World War II as well as the backbone of European integration, has changed. The middle class was a bearer of the concept of responsible citizenship, of a strong local and European identity based on shared values of a liberal democracy, a responsible market economy, and of a sense of belonging to the local community, the national state and the European project.

Despite many national specific features, the European middle class is facing many identical problems. It is forced to cope with different cultures, history and traditions. Human society and coexistence are governed by rules which have been mostly created by previous generations, which provide stability and predictability, but which can also be problematic with regard to the adaptation to new challenges and the search for a balance between the stability of traditions and values and the flexible response to new problems. The European Union addresses a wide range of issues that directly affect the middle class, such as the single market, education, employment, information technology and environmental protection. All these issues are crucial for the contemporary middle class although its traditional leaders often differ in their attitudes towards how to respond to these problems adequately. There is also a strong polarisation and, according to some, even a middle class disintegration.

The developments after 1989 influenced the values of Czech society and also significantly influenced the direction of the Czech middle class. When it was renewed, there were more possibilities for becoming a part of the middle class, new opportunities, greater application of higher qualifications, new technologies, but also problems such as those of adjusting to the changes in the labour market. Due to the boom of private entrepreneurship and thanks to their increased focus on services in the economy, small business entrepreneurs played a crucial role in the transformation of the Czech middle class after 1989. Small

23 The distribution of capital slowly changes from a normal distribution (bell-shaped curve) to an exponential curve - the poor are getting poorer and the rich are getting richer. New technologies brought changes, which increase profits and productivity but many people are excluded from this process by the nature of their profession. They will face lower standards of living and unemployment in the future. For more, see for example Brynjolfsson, E., McAfee, A., 2014. *The Second Machine Age: Work, Progress, and Prosperity in a Time of b'Brilliant Technologies*. New York: W W Norton.

and medium-sized enterprises are an example of how the definition of the middle class has become more dynamic, with income being one of the key variables but including other important factors such as occupational prestige and cultural capital.

Our publication demonstrates why the middle class is important today, pointing out its influence and impact on the country's economic and political structure, in spite of the changes it has undergone and is still going through. We were interested in the definition of the middle class and in the question as to whether significant differences can be seen within the middle class and between its individual segments according to political mentality, their concerns and motivation. We were interested in attitudes to political engagement and European integration. Despite the problematic definition of the middle class, this concept has proved to be useful for a better understanding of Czech society and helps us grasp the nature and sources of inequality in Czech society that have an impact on all three spheres: political, economic and social.

The economic dimension of our analysis focused on small entrepreneurs as major participants in the Czech economy, who played an important role in the restructuring of the economy but who are also crucial for its growth and further development, including foreign trade, where they focus most on the European single market. According to Zemplerová et al., the middle class with a strong business core is an important component of a stable political system.²⁴ Similarly to Charvát and Maškarinec, who concluded in this publication that municipalities with a lower number of entrepreneurs and higher unemployment show higher successes of the populist parties ANO 2011 and SPD, the authors Zemplerová et al. have demonstrated that centre and centre-right democratic parties have the greatest support in the regions with a higher proportion of self-employed people with higher incomes. They draw attention, however, to the weaknesses of the income-oriented approach and confirm the need for a more comprehensive assessment of the socio-economic situation of the population, as it is shown in the next part of their chapter on digitalisation.

With regard to the challenges of digitalisation and industry 4.0,²⁵ the authors mention the advent of a new middle class that enhances human capital and is characterised by higher education, entrepreneurship and engagement in specialised or creative activities. Although its number is not small within the middle class and is gradually increasing (its importance is also demonstrated by our segmentation), Czechia is still dominated by the old middle class focused mainly on economic capital. It is also most endangered by digitalisation in its broad sense and, according to the authors, there will be a need to monitor this situation (labour market polarisation and higher wage differentiation) and prepare for it in the form of adequate responses, especially with regard to the fact that the middle class is not subjectively aware

24 In his chapter, Drea also combined a strong middle class with economic growth and political stability.

25 For the reflection on the future of working in the digital age, see Turk, Ž, 2019. A Conservative or a Progressive Future of Work? In: Tungul, L., ed. *The Czech Centre-Right Solutions to the Political Challenges of 2019*. [online]. Available at: <http://www.top-az.eu/files/downloads/topaz-pravicova-reseni-politicky-ch-vyzev-pro-rok-2019.pdf> (4 September 2019).

of this threat as the chapter by Kudrnáč and Škodová indicates. The new possibilities presented by the authors, such as self-employment, “work from anywhere”, decentralisation, and work in project teams, must be better reflected in the legislative and working environment of Czechia, which requires sufficient political will. In the case of adequate and timely responses, the political representation could prepare for the Czech middle class an environment that responds to its main concerns by strengthening social mobility, labour market flexibility, facilitating the way to homeownership, and by a modern family policy that enables a balance between family and working life, thereby increasing the quality of life of the middle class.²⁶ For the needs of the middle class, the authors primarily propose the support of self-employment and the support of small and medium-sized companies, which requires a stable economic (and political) environment and an appropriate education system.

A large part of the Czech middle class engages in public affairs and participates in shaping policies that affect their present and future life. It is also essential as regards investing in human capital, including education and housing. The political dimension of the middle class is crucial for the political stability of the system since “combating further downsizing and polarisation of the middle class is essential for combating the rise of nationalism, protectionism, and populism in the next European elections” (Movarelli 2019). A growing number of people with a good level of education and belonging to the so-called middle class share populist views, as was discussed in the chapter by Charvát and Maškarinec in the context of intra-system and extra-system volatility that increased in Czechia after 2010; the intra-system volatility also maintained its high level after 2017. They have shown that, as almost everywhere else in Europe (see Drea), the middle class is divided and that people belonging to the middle and upper classes often choose those political groups that move on the edge of populism. As was apparent in Charvát and Maškarinec, ANO 2011 did not have the highest electoral support only in the segments of *Young liberals/Young digital elite* (dominant in these sectors were the Pirates, ODS, TOP 09, and STAN). The left-right division seems to be losing its importance as concerns understanding the electoral behaviour of the Czech middle class, which was historically closest to the moderate right. According to Charvát and Maškarinec, these developments are associated with the mobilisation of grievances: economic (privatisation, austerity, reforms), migration, ethnic injustice (Roma), and political elitism and corruption. The authors argue that the dissatisfaction is related to the poor performance of the Czech governments, the impression that caretaker governments are less conflicting, and to a loss of confidence in political institutions. All these factors resulted in the rise of technocratic populism as it is best represented by ANO 2011. The authors claim that this party best managed to mobilise the above-mentioned grievances across almost all segments, including the middle class.

As in other countries, part of the middle class in Czechia has a prevalent feeling of losing identity with

26 For example, see Kalíšková, K., 2019. The Current Structure of the Czech Family Policy and Its Impact on Families and Employment. In: Tungul, L. ed., 2019. *The Czech Centre-Right Solutions to the Political Challenges of 2019*. [online]. Available at: <http://www.top-az.eu/files/downloads/topaz-pravicova-reseni-politickych-vyzev-pro-rok-2019.pdf> (5 September 2019).

the elite social stratum. The emotion was compounded by the migration crisis, which only escalated the latent feeling of injustice and incomprehensibility of politics. It can be argued that the feeling of job security (stable and sufficient income) continues to diminish and the cost of living increases. In his chapter, Eoin Drea also mentions the dangers of advancing antisystemic parties as a result of the growing disillusion of the middle class. He claims that the stability of the political and social system is framed by the middle-class lifestyle but is also based on the belief in a better future. Drea states that the promotion of these values has been associated with centre-right parties, but they have not been able to adequately respond to the growing feelings of insecurity caused by globalisation and technological change. In the last decade, the discontent of the middle class has resulted in the emergence of clear conflict lines, in which the middle class plays an important role. Drea suggests that the centre-right parties focus on socio-economic issues and promote an inclusive society, i.e., support the daily needs of the middle class of the young, middle and older generations.

Drea also noted that, while many challenges are similar with regard to the new and old member countries, as in both the middle class faces a deep feeling of insecurity, their origins and delimitation are distinct thus different strategies need to be applied to reflect this reality. In the Czech environment, rapid liberalisation has highlighted the significant inequalities between the “winners” and “losers” of globalisation and technological development and has failed to meet the expectations of the rapid convergence with the West, which many people had hoped for. The middle class, which was at the core of the EU project’s support, is now alienated from the European project and a significant part of the middle class supports the parties whose campaign is aimed against the EU and whose primary rhetoric promises the protection of national interests (from the EU). In the case of Czechia, according to Drea, there is a need to promote a suitable economic and social policy that would create a long-term strong economy complemented by a strong society.

In further research, therefore, it would be useful to focus on examining other divisions within the middle class and researching the value, psychographic, and political scales which would enable us to see which parts of the middle class are inclined towards populists and by what they feel threatened. In this respect, it would be useful to compare topics and determine which are crucial to the respective segments (i.e., those that would lead to the decision not to vote or change the preferred party or group of parties), which indicates the firmness of the choice. The next area will include research on the question of the motivators for these segments, which would lead them to second-order elections, including not only European but also regional elections in Czechia. The aim of the research would also be to find the correlations that could contribute to a more precise targeting of communication on social networks. This is important for establishing the dialogue between segments that we consider critical.

We live in a globalised world, where we are exposed to influences from around the world, but we also face the inability to sort and process this information effectively and find our place in a society where

we would feel safe and satisfied. Uncertainty is also caused by the property market as it is becoming increasingly difficult for the young middle class to gain access to their own housing, which is one of the key characteristics of the middle class, and by the industry 4.0 and the associated robotisation and automation. Increasing numbers of people are questioning the ability of national and multinational institutions to improve society and are looking for alternative solutions. The centre-right parties should fight negativism and the feeling of an inability to influence the present and future. They should offer reforms but also seek a broad consensus based on democratic debate and the involvement of critical voices. All our chapters have mentioned the causes, consequences, or manifestations of the dissatisfaction with the political development and the polarisation of society within the Czech and European middle class. Strengthening democratic elements, even at the expense of efficiency and profitability, is the only way to strengthen society and the middle class and respond to its changing dynamics.

Annex 1: Sample Structure (N=1271)



Series 1 Point "65+ years old"
Value: 19%

Annex 2: Methodology of Data Analysis

METHOD	<p>For the class division of the Czech population, we used the latent class model, according to the methodology developed by Savage et al. 2013 (https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0038038513481128).</p>
VARIABLES	<p>We used 5 variables from 3 dimensions (social capital, cultural capital and economic capital). Social capital was measured as the number of contacts with prestigious professions. Two types of cultural capital were distinguished: traditional cultural (cultural events etc.) and digital capital (presence on social media, on the internet etc.).</p> <p>Economic capital was measured in two ways: net income and total estimated wealth.</p> <p>The indicators of social and cultural capital were identified by factor analysis (and factor scores used subsequently). All 5 resulting variables were divided into three levels indicating low, moderate and high levels of each type of capital.</p>
MODEL SELECTION	<p>For estimation of LCA model R package poLCA was used (https://cran.r-project.org/web/packages/poLCA/poLCA.pdf). For model selection we used information criteria AIC and BIC which favour models with six and seven classes. Due to interpretation reasons we selected a model with 7 classes. The entropy for the chosen model was 0.79 which suggests sufficient distinction between classes.</p>

Annex 3: Middle Class Definition

The definition of the middle class comprises of three types of capital and builds upon the model of social class structure (Savage et al. 2013). Respondents were divided by three dimensions – **social capital, cultural capital, economic capital**.

Each dimension was assigned values between 0 – 100 based on a score of selected questions. We calculated the average of each score and the average produced a total score. Respondents placed between 50% - 90% of the total score deviation belong to the middle class. The definition of the middle class also meets the condition of “minimal capital” – none of the three capitals (social, cultural, economic) can be lower than 20.

Social capital	
score_1 Number of contacts	Q24. How many people working in the following professions do you know personally? [Doctor; Teacher; Judge; Software developer; Journalist; Mayor]
Economic capital	
score_1 Net monthly income	Q32. What is your monthly net income?
score_2 Value of property	Q33. Taking into consideration your property, to which of the following categories do you belong to? (e.g. savings, owned (without any debt) property)?
Culture capital	
score_1 Number of books owned	Q25. How many books do you estimate having at home - professional, factual, historical or similar focus?
score_2 Language skills	Q26. How well can you speak English, German or French – at least one foreign language?
score_3 Culture events	Q28. How often do you do the following activities in your free time? [Visiting cultural events (theatre, concert, museum, gallery)]

Annex 4: Methodology of Segmentation

Segmentation was constructed on the basis of **cluster analysis using Ward's method**.

In the cluster analysis, the following variables were used:

Q09. Now we will talk about your worldviews. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Authoritarianism	A strong leader is crucial for Czechia - even if he/she does not always act according to the established rules.
Authoritarianism	Our society will fall apart if we do not establish strict laws and rules.
Conservatism	Gays and lesbians can have their rights but marriage is possible only between a man and a woman.
Conservatism	Minorities should always adapt to the Czech customs and traditions.
Populism	People - not the politicians - should decide about the most important issues in the society.
Populism	The elites are in general disappointing and betrayed the interests of the ordinary people.
Satisfaction	I am satisfied with my life.
Satisfaction	I am satisfied with the development of our society.

Q10. Now we will talk about the public life. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

November	I am satisfied with the development in the society after November 1989.
November	During the last 30 years, the politicians and leaders ruined many things.
Trust	The current politics is full of corruption and fraud.
Trust	I do not trust the majority of political institutions such as the Government or the Parliament.
Christianity	The Christian principles and the Ten Commandments are still valid.
Christianity	Even a non-believer can find answers to the current questions in the Bible.

Left-right	The rich should pay more taxes from their income and possessions.
Left-right	The free market should almost never be limited by any state regulations.
Material/indi	The most important aspect of life is financial security - other aspects are not that important.
Material/indi	In our society, people should first of all take care of themselves.

Q11. Now we will talk about international politics and globalization. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Globalization	People like me benefit from globalization and modern trends in the society.
Globalization	The development of current society cannot be foreseen which makes me feel uncertain.
Immigration	The Czech culture is strongly endangered by immigrants.
Immigration	The immigrants can endanger Czech economy and the welfare state.
Foreign countries	I consider the European Union beneficial.
Foreign countries	Czechia belongs to the West.
Nationalism	Our nation must take care of itself - nobody else will help us.
Nationalism	Our Czech culture is better than most other cultures.
Interest in politics	I follow domestic politics and events almost every day.
Interest in politics	I am interested in international events.

Q18. Would you take part in parliamentary elections if they were held today?

Q19. What is your attitude to the political parties/movements listed below when it comes to parliamentary elections? [Main preferred party/movement – would be acceptable]

Q34. Have you had any experience with the following events in the last 10 years?[You are/were in a distraintment process; Friend/family member is/was in a distraintment process; Loss of job; Change of working conditions (worse); Loss of housing; Economic problems in the region where I live; Serious injury or long-term illness; Change of financial situation (worse)]

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