Abstract

This thesis focuses mainly on transformation policy of the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM) and the Czechoslovak People’s Party (ČSL) between 1990 and 1992, in the times of ongoing public discussions on Czechoslovakia abandoning the socialist command economy. It sums up the political development of both parties (focusing on changes in their ideology) and then concentrates on the way each of them attempted to form its own project of economic transformation.

These alternative projects are analyzed through the underlying ideological concepts that reflect the values with which both parties associated the transformation process. For each of these concepts, the political and ideological struggles between party’s fractions that affected its final form are examined. This method is loosely inspired by the so-called conceptual history (Begriffsgeschichte), as it was used in Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe (written by Reinhart Koselleck et al.), while paying attention to certain limitations of applicability of this approach in the field of contemporary history.

The thesis is based on analyses of the parties’ political texts, of both public and internal character, and of various other archive materials. The political texts and programmes are regarded as a space in which the ideas compete with each other, being pushed through by different groups of party members, according to their interests and persuasions. The thesis tries to examine which of these forces were crucial for establishing the final shape of the parties’ programmes and shows e.g. how each party dealt with growing pressure of its local members, who were trying to push through more critical attitudes towards the transformation policy, carried out by the government.

The projects of transformation, formed by ČSL and KSČM, are set into the context of the debates on economic transformation of the early 1990’s, in which several individuals participated, as well as groups of experts. At this point, the thesis aims to revise the prevailing perspective, which regards the transformation debate mainly as the conflict between the proponents of the shock therapy and gradual method, and argues that several other approaches were actually present. In conclusion, the thesis shows that the debate about transformation was orientated not only around the question of the transformation’s speed, but also alongside other conflict lines.