

This work is focused on the economic phenomenon called path dependency, which basically describes how the current economic performance is influenced by the historical evolution. The objective of the work is to examine this principle in changes of property rights in the specific circumstances of the economic and political transition from the centrally planned economy of the communist Czechoslovakia to the capitalist system in the 1990s. The explanation of the principle and its foundation in the theory of the institutional economics, and especially the evolutionary theory of institutions, takes place in the first part. The second part brings the description of the real socialism with the emphasis on its forms of the ownership and the quasi-ownership respectively. To give more specific illustration of the socialist system, the agricultural sector is chosen to be described more precisely. Hence the stress is put on the description of the cooperatives as the major form of a socialist agricultural enterprise. With this theoretical background and with the empirical findings from two former agricultural cooperatives, the main effects of path dependency are delineated in the third part. Finally, the generalization and evaluation of significance of the principle for the economic analysis conclude the study.