

Velvet Revolutions: Repertoires and Interactions

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The project intention is to contribute to the understanding of the non-violent character of the 1989 democratic revolutions in east central Europe focusing primarily on Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland. The prevailing interpretations stress either the role of ideas coming out of the dissident and opposition circles, or put emphasis on the behavior, internal change and ultimate implosion of the regime power structures. As scholars working on the politics of collective violence argue, however, the prevailing approaches focusing predominantly of ideas or behavior of (non-)violent actions must be supplemented by studying the social interactions of the actors. Therefore, the project focuses on the development of “repertoires of contention” where the repertoires represent the models of interactions, fundamentals of collective memory and converters of collective struggle. It will examine the forming of the repertoires on both sides: the regime as well as the opposition and their mutual increasing communication and interaction towards the end of the nineteen eighties. This development namely resulted in broadening of not only the scope of possible political and social actions on the side of the opposition, but also - importantly - of the sphere of possible political identities (their programmatic sublimations, their potential activation etc.) that later took part in the round-table negotiations and the creation of new political regime. Such investigation comprises two basic areas: first, the internal re-negotiation of the political strategies of both sides: the regime power structures as well as the opposition. Second the representation of the changing strategy in the public realm and their mutual affection.