

Crisis transition (or post-modernisation), crime and structural violence - criminological aspects

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The word "transition" denotes transition from the »socialist« system to a market capitalist social formation (and in broader terms also the democratisation of non-socialist regimes, for instance in South Africa and in former Latin America dictatorships). This designation often refers also to the transformation of modern industrial capitalist societies, i.e., to complex processes described – by the lack of a more inventive label – by the attribute "post-modern". The central focus of the paper is the current post-socialist transformations (of institutions and people), that could be (at least retrospectively and partly metaphorically) interpreted as collective and, above all, complex (self-)sanctioning of revolutionary and "totalitarian" Evil. The transition most often appears in the criminological perspective as a historical period marked by a substantial increase in criminal (and in general illegal) behaviour (especially of more or less "conventional" – or "socially normal" – actors); this turbulent period is, on the other hand, characterised by a progressive crisis of the criminal justice system (which drifts, it seems, in a kind of a "floating" state, without any clear "working philosophy" and solid support of social cultural-moral value "substance" and the informal control mechanisms connected with it). In dealing with crime (and, of course, with the considerably weakened mechanisms of formal control), it must not however be overlooked that one of the most important features of transition societies is a rise of "structural violence", manifested by an extensive and intensive expansion of workload, intimidation, extortion and exploitation of the sellers of "labour", socio-economic instability (or insecurity), various forms of legalized and (ideologically) normalized theft or deception, unjust or ethically unacceptable (re)distribution of material wealth and incomes, media (and often also school) encouragement of stupidity, the shrinking of the "public sphere" and also the "sphere of privacy"...

Key words: socio-economic transition, countries in transition, post-socialist societies, capitalism, crime, illegal behaviour, criminal justice, structural violence

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