Monothematic Block:
Socio-Political Resilience vis-à-vis the Contemporary World Crises

Introduction

As the first quarter of the 21st century draws to a close, humanity is facing several crises that societies must address. These challenges include the climate crisis, which has far-reaching consequences for individuals, societies, and the entire planet; the political instability (and transformation) of democratic regimes; escalating geopolitical and geo-economic rivalries leading to armed conflicts of varying severity; demographic changes connected with global migration; and many other challenges.[1] Over two decades ago, French philosopher and sociologist Edgar Morin termed this phenomenon a polycrisis, defining it as the "complex intersolidarity of problems, antagonisms, crises, uncontrollable processes, and the general crisis of the planet" (Morin – Kern 1999, 74). The increasing complexity of the contemporary world makes it challenging to comprehend the various mutually reinforcing crises currently unfolding. Philosophy, the social sciences, and the humanities are trying to find answers to these challenges. One of the most promising concepts discussed in recent years in this context is the concept of "resilience" and so-called "resilient thinking." It can be argued that resilience is not merely an attribute of systems (individuals, groups, societies, the world) but rather a specific approach to the world as a whole and a methodology. The resilience approach to the world respects, at a fundamental level, the inherent complexity and intricacy of real phenomena that necessarily limit the possibilities of cognition and governance. Consequently, the decision-making of actors can never be certain and forever given. Resilient thinking could help actors grasp the world's inherent uncertainty and thus better

understand their own individual and group decision-making and subsequent action options, as well as their responsibilities and interdependency.

However, in the research, we can encounter different approaches to the concept of resilience. In some cases, its potential is untapped, and it is used more as a relatively fashionable yet empty label or a mirror term for other concepts and theories (for example, stability, resistance, plasticity). In other cases, resilience can be used as a concept for legitimizing neoliberal policies and ideology through mirroring the individualistic and new management paradigm. A third option, obviously the one that this monothematic bloc "Socio-political Resilience vis-à-vis the Contemporary World Crises" wishes to highlight, is to map resilience as a determinant of a conceptual field that attempts to capture a significant yet hardly visible dimension combining challenges and responsibilities, threats and resources in current societies, as well as supports and obstacles to overcome various types of contemporary crises. This monothematic bloc consists of four contributions to this fascinating topic:

Alice Koubová, in her article, investigates the relation between resilience and democracy. She describes problems of the prevailing theory of democratic resilience focused on securing the "invariant core" of democratic institutions. Instead, she formulates principles of resilience based also on an understanding of democracy as a lived relational environment with social and ethical aspirations. She shows how the neoliberal paradigm distorts the concept of resilience and creates normative double binds that replace regulated democratic conflict.

Ondřej Lánský's paper focuses on exploring issues related to the potential implications of resilience theory for the methodology of contemporary critical theory, emphasizing Axel Honneth's social theory. In this context, he focuses on the challenges to critical theory posed by the limits of knowledge in complex world conditions, which resilience theory highlights significantly. The conceptual field of resilience theory relates to a fundamental category of critical theory: immanent transcendence. The main aim of the text is to show that resilience theory can offer a heightened sensitivity to the assumptions of one's starting points that are involved in shaping ideas about a better future world and life (immanence).

The paper by Lovísa Eiríksdóttir and Josef Pallas takes an interdisciplinary approach to uncertainty and resilience – at the interface between philosophy and an empirical research. Drawing on different philosophical frameworks (from Hannah Arendt to Jonna Bornemark), they define resilience as a transformative process that helps individuals act under uncertain conditions. They then relate

this definition to empirical research conducted among Swedish care workers during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Michael Ungar and Alice Koubová focus on a multisystemic concept of resilience, a concept that operates at the intersection of psychological, familial, community, socio-political and environmental systems. Philosophically, multisystemic resilience rejects the individualist paradigm of the self-sufficient, autonomous individual on three levels: ontological, epistemological and ethical. The article analyzes this complex philosophical challenge, defines five abstract patterns of resilience and shows how they function in various case studies that tackle complex problems as necessarily culturally and socio-politically situated ones.

Alice Koubová, Ondřej Lánský
Guest Editors

Bibliography

MORIN, E. – KERN, A. B. (1999): *Homeland Earth: A Manifesto for the New Millenium*. New York: Hampton Press.