

**Institute of Sociology of the
Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences,
Prague**

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The Institute of Sociology of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences was reestablished in February 1990, after twenty years of very limited autonomy of sociological research during the period of the so-called "normalization" after 1968. The original Institute of Sociology, established in 1965, was abolished in 1970 for political reasons. The continuity of research in sociology, which flourished between the two world wars, was disrupted and this discipline was one of the country's most damaged humanities.

I. Scholarly Program

The most important feature of the Institute of Sociology as an institution with a theoretical focus in the field of sociology is its long-term program, which aims to contribute - along with our universities - to the development and reconsolidation of this field.

The integrating axes of research projects in the next several years, including international comparative research projects, will be the sociological understanding of the "post-communist" transformation, in both its general and country-specific characteristics. The building of a middle-range sociological theory of the transition toward a pluralistic type of society and a general theory of the formation of post-industrial society will be supported by the following long-term research projects:

a) *A sociological theory of the development of the political system, changes in power structures and political behavior.* This research project uses empirical analysis of the movement of Czechoslovak society from a politically totalitarian system toward a democratic system. It is supported by

analysis of the development of the political culture, the structure of power elites and the formation of political parties. Power mechanisms, from the standpoint of the articulation and assertion of specific interests, will also be analyzed. Current research examines all phases of the parliamentary elections - their preparation, running and results.

Foreign cooperation: University of Pittsburgh, Sociology Department.

Director of the research project: Lubomír Brokl.

b) *Social aspects of economic transformation, problems of the emerging labor market, strategy of social policy.* This project also focuses on the analysis of earnings and income distribution, poverty, coping strategies of households and broader questions of the introduction of market-oriented principles into the Czechoslovak economy. The research team is cooperating with the Bureau of Statistics for using microdata on incomes and expenditures and with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs for preparing expertises on current problems. Data for the special survey on "Economic Expectations and Attitudes of the Population" are gathered bi-annually.

Foreign cooperation: Luxembourg Income Study; The Institute of Fiscal Studies, London; Erasmus University, Rotterdam.

Director of the research project: Jiří Večerník.

c) *Transformation of the social structure and changes in social stratification during the transition period.* This research project focuses on the analysis of the development of educational, occupational and economic inequality during the period of transition, on the perception of changes in inequality and stratification, on the analysis of the role of the family and schools in the process of the revitalization of meritocratic principles, etc. A large international comparative research project will start in 1992 on changes in social stratification after 1989 in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland.

Foreign cooperation: University of California in Los Angeles; University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Director of the research project: Petr Matějů.

d) *Changes in local communities, regional structures and changes in the functioning of municipal systems as a result of political, economic, constitutional and executive changes.* Major questions addressed in this project include: analysis of the new local government and of other institutions of local democracy; clarification of local interests and local self-identification; and new expressions of localism and regionalism and their political representation as a result of the establishment of self-rule, economic transformation and overall political decentralization.

Foreign cooperation: University of Amsterdam; Norwegian Council for Applied Social Research.

Director of the research project: Michal Illner.

e) *Women in the Social Structure.* The research project focuses on the formation of new paradigms in the nineties and their effect on political development, the working system, educational culture and the family. The investigation, covering both republics, established a network of female respondents willing to cooperate in the implementation of further projects, including longitudinal research. Preliminary results' signal that women have a significant incentive for personal and group self-development in the creation of their own political élite, new leading personalities and inspiring ideas. In the future, the results of this work are envisaged to be used pedagogically, including the creation of a program to study problems of gender and feminism.

Foreign cooperation: George Washington University, Institute for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies.

Director of the research project: Marie Čermáková.

f) *Revival of private enterprise.* The main questions being studied in the initial phase are the social and motivational background and mechanisms of recruitment of the new entrepreneurial generation, its social and psychological profile and the changing

economic and social role of small- and middle-scale private business.

Director of the research project: Jana Vítečková.

Within the Institute there also operates a small group of demographers who focus on the historical analysis of demographic development in the Czech lands. *The research project is directed by Ludmila Fialová.* It cooperates with the INED in Paris and is responsible for publishing the yearbook *Historical Demography*.

The Institute is also taking part in the general reconstruction of the discipline, particularly with its long-term project of the publication of an extensive *sociological dictionary*.

Director of the project: Alena Vodáková.

The Institute of Sociology also pursues short-term goals, that is, expert activity for various state organs, for example the Parliament, the Czechoslovak National Council, advisers to the president of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic, and individual government ministries. Institute staff members are also on various expert committees and take part in solving topical problems.

II. Research facilities

The Institute has access to a nationwide interview network that enables it to carry out representative sociological surveys. In order to make nationwide random samples for its surveys, the Institute contracted the Central Register of Population to provide necessary sampling information.

As a member of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, the Institute has free access to the Academic Computer Center (ACC), equipped with a IBM 4361 mainframe computer. The ACC also serves as a local node for BITNET/EARN academic communication. In fact it was the Institute of Sociology that initiated the connection of Czechoslovakia to academic communication networks in the spring of 1990, when political obstacles disappeared. The Institute of Sociology was among the first Institutes of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences that had access to international academic communication networks.

At present, the Institute has remote terminals to the ACC. The Institute also coordinates the academic license for major statistical software (SPSS) and provides consultation to users from other research institutes.

In the spring of 1991 the Institute received a significant grant from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund to establish a Center for Environmental and Social Studies (CESS), which is functioning within the Institute in close cooperation with Institute's library and study center.

III. Educational Activity and Publications

The Institute is also taking part in the reconstruction of sociological education which includes: 1. the building of a continuing system of sociological education in the form of post-graduate study; and 2. cooperation with institutions of higher education in the form of pedagogic activity by Institute staff at these schools, the participation of students in the Institute is research projects and cooperation in the preparation of textbooks and other written educational materials.

The Czechoslovak Sociological Review (Sociologický časopis) has been the major journal of Czechoslovak sociologists since 1965, when it was established. It is published bimonthly with typically 140 pages per issue. Since 1990 it has been published exclusively by the Institute of Sociology, which receives significant financial support for its publishing activities from the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. All articles have an abstract and summary in English. The profile and content of the journal have changed significantly since 1989 under the new editorial leadership of Jiří Večerník. The last few volumes have been devoted to the major problems of the

transformation of Czechoslovak society (social stratification, poverty and social policy, elections and political culture, etc.). Beginning in 1992 the Institute will publish two special issues of this journal per year in English.

In the fall of 1989 the Institute began producing two series of working papers, one in Czech, one in English. Working papers are distributed free on request. In the fall of 1991 the Institute began publishing a bulletin, "Data & Facts", in which the most important results from new sociological surveys are presented. The bulletin is sent to professionals in the press, media and state institutions.

IV. Organizational Structure of the Institute

The Institute employs about fifty people, of which about 35 are scholars engaged in research (these figures describe the situation in the spring of 1992). The scientific work of the Institute is organized in temporary research teams. The teams are formed with the purpose of taking part in specific research projects of a limited duration, usually two to three years. Projects and team members are selected via an open interview process. Teams have considerable independence in selecting work methods and tools. Since the spring of 1989, several research projects have been financed through the internal grant system of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences.

With the director of the Institute, the Institute's scientific board, which selects a chairman from its members, decides fundamental principles related to the Institute's scientific activities and its organizational matters.

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General Information

The Institute of Social and Political Sciences was reestablished in 1990 after a twenty-year interruption as a part of the new Faculty of Social Sciences of Charles University, Prague. Institute members are engaged in