

The Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic in 1994

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The Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic is an independent institution with a focus on theoretically relevant sociological analysis of Czech society. The Institute was established in 1990 as the second sociological institute of the Academy. The first institute led a brief existence from 1965 until 1970 when, with the commencement of the so-called „normalisation“, it was abolished for political reasons. In the following pages we will introduce the Institute's present research programme, its major scientific achievements in the last year, its publications and infrastructure. The information corresponds to the situation as in May 1994.

The research program

The Institute's present research programme centres on the sociological understanding of the post-communist transformation in both its general and country-specific characteristics. The following aspects of this transformation are analysed:

- *Changes in the political system.*
- *Social aspects of the economic transformation.*
- *The transformation of the social structure and the changes in social stratification.*
- *Local and regional aspects of social and political transformation.*

Current research projects

The Institute's program for 1994 comprises thirteen research projects:

1. The institutionalisation of interests: the birth of Czech civil society

The aim of the project is to identify the interests emerging in the Czech society, and the degree of their articulation and representation, to determine divergent or convergent interests, and to identify the

feasibility, within the institutions, of representing them.

Project director: Lubomír Brokl

2. The labour market, income differentiation and social policy during the transformation period

The aim of the project is to conceptualise the relationships between the labour market and social policy within the functioning of households, and to analyse the dynamics of households' adaptive or defensive reactions to economic transformation.

Project director: Jiří Večerník

3. Research on social stratification and the social dynamics of Czech and Slovak society in the period of post-communist transformation

The aim of the project is to assess the specific shape of social stratification in Czech and Slovak society and its historical development. The sociological survey on social stratification and mobility is part of an international comparative research project.

Project director: Pavel Machonin

4. Changing social and economic inequality and social policy in transformation

The project aims at interlinking the authors' research on social and economic inequalities within a single research agenda and to draw temporal and cross-national comparisons of research data.

Project directors: Petr Matějů and Jiří Večerník

5. The recruitment and circulation of elites in the Czech Republic from a comparative perspective

The project aims to conduct a survey of the old and new economic and political elites and to assess the principal factors explaining mobility between them.

Project director: Petr Matějů

6. The position of the female labour force inside and outside the labour market

The aim of the project is to identify the specific attributes of the „women's labour force“, the causes and implications of the gender gap, professional goals, the particularities of specific jobs, qualifications,

income gaps, careers, of equal opportunity, and protectionism.

Project director: Marie Čermáková

7. Industrial relations and the political orientations of employees and entrepreneurs

The project aims to ascertain the relationship between patterns of political orientation and preferred types of organisation, between managerial and participative activities and between the social sources of relevant attitudes and the socio-economic position of the actors.

Project director: Jan Vláčil

8. The political culture of local communities

The main goal of the project is an analytical investigation of the local political culture, political participation, and community power structure during the process of transformation. The investigation is being conducted in several towns in the Czech Republic.

Project director: Zdena Vajdová

9. The Czech borderland within the process of the European integration (social aspects of change of the Czech-German borderland)

The project aims to identify social and cultural changes within those regions of the Czech Republic neighbouring with Germany that are connected with the intensification of cross-border relationships. Investigations will be conducted on either side of the border.

Director of the project: František Zich

10. The deformation of normative and moral structures in pre-November Czechoslovakia as influenced by police repression

The project aims to analyse the social situations of those people exposed to repression by the political police of the communist regime in order to develop a typology of such situations and to investigate their moral aspects.

Project director: Alena Vodáková

11. The demographic behaviour of the population of the Czech Republic during the social changes since 1989

The project aims to analyse the demographic behaviour of the Czech Republic's population in connection with

family development and the transformation of society after 1989.

Project director: Libuše Fialová

12. A monograph on Max Weber

The aim of the project is to write an original Czech study on Max Weber's methodology and on his theoretical system.

Project director: Miloš Havelka

13. LINDA - a method for the numerical and graphic presentation of relationships in a data matrix

The project aims to extend and complete a version of the computer program LINDA for Windows.

Project director: Jan Řehák

Research projects completed in 1993

In 1993, after several years of strenuous work, an editorial group with many external collaborators and headed by Alena Vodáková, completed the *Dictionary of Sociology* (in Czech). Social science concepts, methods, schools and national sociologies are covered in this major encyclopaedic achievement, the first of its kind in Czech literature. The dictionary now seeks a publisher.

A team headed by Petr Matějů completed three years' study on the *changes in social stratification in Czechoslovakia*. Research findings suggested the increasing importance of meritocratic factors in social mobility and, at the same time, the conversion of the political and social capital of the former communist cadres into new economic positions. The findings are underpinned by five surveys conducted during 1991 - 1993, two of them trans-national.

The party system, parliaments and the 1992 Czechoslovak parliamentary elections were studied by a research group supervised by Lubomír Brokl. The project provided a wealth of information on the new political system that emerged in Czechoslovakia after 1989.

Conflict and consensus within the privatisation of Czech enterprises was the subject of a research project completed by Jan Vláčil and Irena Hradecká. An interesting finding was the general absence of deep social conflicts during the privatisation of industrial

enterprises and the ability of the parties involved to accommodate emerging tensions.

In 1993 the Institute supervised an extensive research project, the Czech section of *East Central Europe 2000 project*, its Czech part. A comprehensive complex of forty three analytical and four summarising studies was co-ordinated, all in English, assessing the present situation and the potential future development in the Czech Republic (economic, political, social, regional, in technology, science and education) until the year 2005, *vis-à-vis* the future accession of the country to the European Union. Michal Illner directed this project.

Historical demography was enriched by a valuable *data base on population development in Czech lands from the 16th to the 19th century* compiled under the supervision of Ludmila Fialová.

Jan Řehák and Pavel Mánek prepared a *monograph on causal models in the social sciences*, soon to be published, and proceeded with the further development of the PC program, LINDA.

A significant part of the Institute's research activity comprised of *policy-oriented studies*: The Centre for Environmental and Social Studies, a relatively autonomous unit within the Institute, which operates on a grant from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, completed a report concerning *social aspects of urban renewal in Teplice*, a city in north Bohemia. The study, prepared with the assistance of mostly British urban researchers, was presented both to the municipal authority and civic organisations along with policy recommendations. Lubomír Kotačka was responsible for the project. In much the same vein, another regional expertise dealt with *ethnic relations (mostly the problems of Gypsies) in north Bohemia*. This project was directed by František Zich.

A series of projects was completed and research reports provided for the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic, dealing with *social policy problems: the regional differentiation of social problems in the Czech Republic* was analysed by Tomáš Kostelecký, Marie Čermáková researched the *social situation of Czech families*, Jan Vlášil

and Irena Hradecká *social and wage problems in small and medium private businesses*, Jiří Večerník the *labour market and wage control*.

Publications

Two professional journals - *Sociologický časopis* (The Journal of Sociology, a quarterly in Czech, founded in 1965) and, since fall 1992, the *Czech Sociological Review* (a biannual) are published by the Institute. They constitute the main professional journals for Czech sociologists, the latter being the only Czech sociological periodical available in any foreign language. Several recent issues of the two publications were monothematic, focusing on the split of Czechoslovakia, issues of social policy, social stratification, while others presented contributions made by particular sociological institutions. At the beginning of 1994 there was a change of the editor-in-chief: after four years in this position Jiří Večerník, who created the present format of both journals, resigned and was replaced by Miloš Havelka.

The Institute's bulletin *Data & Fakta* (Data & Facts, in Czech, ten issues annually since 1994) provides brief reports on new data coming out of the Institute's research projects. Recent issues dealt with the regional differences in social problems, the attitudes of the Czech population in a border region toward the Germans, the attitudes toward local politics and with attitudes toward the trade-unions. The bulletin is distributed mostly among media and decision-makers. Jitka Stehlíková is its editor.

Working Papers (printed in English) or their Czech version *Pracovní texty* is an irregular series of papers, research reports and larger studies of the Institute's members and teams, submitted mostly for discussion in the professional community inside and outside the Institute. Marie Čermáková chairs the editorial board.

Annually, the Institute publishes the *Yearbook of Historical Demography* edited by the Committee for Historical Demography, an inter-institutional body of demographers. The Institute also sponsors the periodical *Sociologické aktuality* (Sociological News, in Czech, ten issues per year) - an independent

journal addressing current social problems and reporting on events within the sociological community in a manner accessible to the general public.

Educational activities, seminars, conferences

The Institute is a non-university research institution. However, its staff is involved in teaching at institutions of higher learning (Charles University in Prague and other tertiary schools), and students participate in the Institute's research projects. Within the framework of the Institute there is a committee which evaluates the doctoral dissertations in sociology.

Since the beginning of 1994 the Institute has organised regular seminars for both internal and external participants where research findings and projects are presented and discussed. Two international conferences organised or co-organised by the Institute are scheduled for 1994: one on social and political development in the four countries of the Visegrad group and the other on new legislature in Central Europe.

Cooperation

It is the Institute's policy to participate in cross-national comparative research projects. In 1994 the Institute is taking part in the projects *Social Stratification in Eastern Europe After 1989*, *Luxembourg Income Study*, *Social Costs of Economic Transformation*, *Local Democracy and Innovation*, *East Central Europe 2000*, *Demographic development in the Czech Republic and in France*, and the *International Social Survey Program (ISSP)*.

The Institute encourages the participation of foreign scholars and university students in its research activities. In 1994 the Institute is hosting a number of foreign students and scholars for longer or shorter time periods. In 1993 the Institute established a more permanent co-operation with a National University in Buenos Aires which entails the supervision of its East European Studies program.

At home, the Institute co-operates with the universities (joint research), with the

Czech Statistical Office, with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic and with several municipal authorities. On various occasions the Institute has provided expertise and consultation for governmental bodies and for the Czech Parliament.

Staff and organizational structure of the Institute

The Institute currently employs 49 people (including 2 part-time and 5 students) of whom 38 are engaged in research. The research section of the Institute comprises temporary research teams which are established with the purpose of taking part in specific research projects of a limited duration of usually two to three years. The teams have considerable autonomy in selecting work methods and tools and in using research grants. One of the teams is located outside Prague in the northern Bohemian regional centre, Ústí nad Labem.

Technical Facilities

The Institute is equipped with technical facilities for data storage, processing and transmission. Hardware includes personal computers, mutually connected to an internal network and externally linked to INTERNET, as well as an optical disk. Acquisition of a UNIX workstation is planned for 1994. Software includes several versions of SPSS as well as other programs for data analysis, data bases and graphics. MS WORD programs are mostly used for word processing. The Institute is the Czech national co-ordinator of the academic license for major statistical software SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) and provides consultation to users from other research and pedagogical institutions.

The Institute has a printery which produces its publications, except for the two professional journals mentioned above, and provides everyday printing and copying services for Institute's teams and members. The program for desk-top editing is available and is used in the preparation the publications.