
European Values Study

Information about the EVS project

The project of the *European Value System* (EVS) has long been well known among the sociological community in this country. The first wave of this research was carried out in 1991 and it brought out some of the first relevant data on a new era in a new society. It managed to capture the initial stage of development of the value system of the 1990s. The data was made available to sociologists for research and publications, but it has had an even more significant role as teaching material for the generation of upcoming sociologists as it has been broadly used for instruction in sociology departments in Prague, Brno and Bratislava. It has been influential both in terms of its content and its methodology. The international and cross-national aspects of the project have ensured its high level of methodology, and thus made it an appropriate model and a good example. In the opinion of this author, the data file created for this project was one of the most influential for the development of the profession in that period. There is thus even more reason to thank its sponsors who made the collection of data and the application of the demanding, internationally acceptable methodological requirements possible.

Now the second wave has arrived – at the end of the difficult and, in terms of development, precipitous decade of the 1990s. Over the course of that period much has changed, even in the value system of the population of the Czech Republic. The possibility to compare and study the development and changes is of high relevance. It also enables an evaluation of the data from 1991. The comparison of both waves is what makes the EVS project particularly valuable and significant.

The tradition of the European Value System project started in 1978. At that time a group of academics, mostly sociologists and theologians from various countries who had originally worked together informally on this topic, set up the foundation of the European Value System Study Group (EVSSG) in Amsterdam, the aim of which was to carry out large, international empirical studies on values. The originally European idea spread rapidly throughout the world (South America, North America, Asia, the Near East, the Middle East, South Africa, Australia). The project was prepared primarily through the systematic collection of all available literature, and later through the help of Focus Groups and in-depth interviews. The pilot study in 1980 was organised as a preparation for the large empirical survey of 1981.

Ten years later, in 1991, our republic joined the project in the second wave of research. This thematic issue is based on the third wave, which was organised in 1999 and co-ordinated by the University of Tilburg.

Thus the EVS project is today able to provide comparable data from three waves of research (in the Czech Republic, data from the last two waves is available), and can offer a view of the development of value orientations over the span of three decades. Above all, it is aimed at the values of work, family, marriage, leisure time, politics and civic involvement, religion and faith, morals, and tolerance.

In 1991, the study was planned and carried out in the Czechoslovak federation by a team in the Department of Sociology at the Faculty of Social Sciences of Charles University (J. Řehák, I. Bártová, J. Kabele). Expenses connected with the research were covered

by the European Bishops' Conference and the Czechoslovak Bishops' Conference. The sample – $n = 3,000$ – represented the whole of the Czech Lands and Slovakia at that time. On the territory of the Czech Republic, $n = 2,110$ respondents were interviewed. The international co-ordinator of the methodology and empirical implementation was the Public Opinion Research Institute in Allensbach.

In 1999, 27 countries participated in the project. In addition to the Czech Republic, the list of countries included Austria, Belgium, Belorussia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Ukraine. The project was co-ordinated by the University in Tilburg (L. Hallman was the co-ordinator).

The Czech participation in the project was supported by the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic (grant no. 403/99/0326), and by the EVSSG foundation. As a result of this support, it was possible to ensure sufficient means for a high quality collection of data and a sufficiently large sample, which enabled a deep analysis and a high degree of precision in population estimates. The research was carried out by two co-ordinating organisations: The Faculty of Social Studies at Masaryk University in Brno (grant co-ordinator – Doc. PhDr. Ladislav Rabušic), and SC&C Ltd., Prague (co-ordinator – Doc. RNDr. Jan Řehák). Both groups participated in the methodological preparation of data collection, which was carried out by the SC&C interviewer network.

As in the previous wave, the project was based on internationally agreed methodology, developed by consensus among the researchers. The methodology was naturally set up to provide the maximum degree of comparability with previous waves. For this reason the project preserved the previous operationalisation of the basic concepts just as they had been used before. Thus the questionnaire copies most of the questions from the previous versions. The Czech project used all the obligatory questions and some optional ones. The Czech team also proposed some useful additions to be introduced into the project, which were accepted.

Both co-ordinators placed high demands and requirements on all aspects of data collection, both on planning and realising the sampling, and on the quality, preparation and control of the survey work. The probability design of the survey sample was based on the SC&C design. The SC&C master sample ensures a degree of representation and provides the sample points; it is founded on a) stratification based on the regions, the size of the locality, and also on a special combination of social, economic, demographic and political indices; b) a multi-level selection of sampling points. The households were selected within these points through a systematic selection of addresses; the member of the household was selected with the aid of Kish tables. This sampling model was originally designed for the international research project SIALS, and was scientifically evaluated by its co-ordinator (Statistics Canada); moreover, it was verified through a detailed methodological control analysis for the collection of data in this project. It has satisfied the most demanding scientific criteria for the sampling model.

The data was collected in the period between March 21 and the beginning of May 1999. A total of 185 interviewers participated in the fieldwork. We have managed to complete 1,908 interviews with respondents, while refusals were recorded in 321 cases, i.e. the proportion of refusals in our conditions was unusually low: 14.5%. Both this and

also the overall positive reception by respondents testify to a large degree to the interest in this issue.

Overview of reasons for refusal:

Reasons for refusal:	number	percentage
1 not in the mood to answer questions	30	9.4
2 too busy	104	32.4
3 no interest in the research	124	38.6
4 no interest in the subject	5	1.6
5 not allowed in the household	1	0.3
6 other reasons	57	17.7
Total	321	100

The Czech data was weighted in order to fit its structure to the proportions of the micro-census of 1997, and was done for each region according to education, age, family status, and economic activity.

The data sets were cleaned by each participating team (including the Czech team). After, for the purpose of common international comparative use, national specificities and national coding of local characteristics were consolidated by the co-ordinator in Tilburg. After the complete data cleaning, the international data sets were released for general scientific use in the spring of 2001. The data are completely available to both the scientific community and students of social sciences. The Czech data have been deposited (along with data from 1991) in the Sociological Archives at the Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic (<http://archiv.soc.cas.cz>), and the international data are to be found in the Zentralarchiv in Cologne n/R. Those who are interested can find a complete overview of the distributions, selected analytic tables, and selected comparative tables, 1991 and 1999, on the SC&C Ltd. website (www.scac.cz). The results of selected Czech analyses are presented in this issue of the *Czech Sociological Review*.

Both co-ordinators of this project believe that the availability of the Czech data in the Sociological Archives of the Institute of Sociology for the use of scientific research and study, and the fact that the basic results are being made available through the internet will have a strong impact on developments in the field of sociology – as strong as the first wave had in the past.

Jan Řehák

