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## STATE OF THE FIELD

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# CZECH PUBLIC POLICY AS A SCIENTIFIC DISCIPLINE AND OBJECT OF RESEARCH<sup>1</sup>

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*This article sums up the development of public policy as a scientific discipline and object of research and instruction in the Czech Republic. This is presented within a historical context (examining different stages of the development of Czech social sciences even before it was formalized, and the development of its being constituted since the early 1990s) with due regard for the broader cultural, political and institutional context of its arrival and application. A characteristic is given of the main streams of research and instruction in the field (with references to key literature, its authors and context). This is followed by a reflection of results and specification of development potentials.*

**Keywords:** *history of science, theory of science, public policy, social policy, research, education, Czech Republic*

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## Introduction

This paper analyzes the development of public policy research, the development of the scientific discipline called public policy, and how it is taught in the Czech Republic, by means of historical recapitulation with reference to the various developmental stages. The paper takes into account also a broader cultural, political and institutional context of the development of this field, including the role of various personalities. Forming the institutional framework of the field itself is also discussed. The limitation (and, paradoxically, certain advantage) of the paper is the author's continuing involvement in the process. On the one hand, then, the body of fact and their interpretation are subjective; on the other hand, the author (as an involved observer) was able to record even hard-to-retrieve facts. Consequently, this paper is an invitation both for fresh inputs to be provided and a fresh discussion to ensue.

## Early Twentieth Century

Brilliant brains often beat generations of intellectual stereotype. In the Czech social scientific environment, there were thinkers who, by formulating problems and proposing solutions, laid foundations to something that came to be called, decades later, **public and social policy**. As early as the 1870s, Albín Bráb carried out a brilliant analysis of working conditions in North Bohemia, and as an Austrian-Hungarian minister of agriculture he took part in shaping the economic and social policies of the day. Worthy contributions were doubtless made by the likes of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk with his *Social Problem* and *Humanitarian Ideals*, as well as his broad concept of democracy (Masaryk 1990, 2000). Josef Macek asserted himself as both a national economic expert with a deep insight and social policy theorist, convinced that the world needs to clarify the essence of economic prosperity and its conditions – not only material and technical but also moral and political..., Ferdinand Peroutka with his characteristic of problems of forming Czech statehood in the monograph *Building of a State* (Peroutka 1991) and last but not least, Karel Čapek with his reflections

on politics, public affairs, chronic deficits of citizenship, and man as a *zoon politikon* in the context of Czech society (Čapek 1993). Interestingly, their contributions always coincided with critical episodes of the Czech national community, which either worked to achieve or was in the formative years of asserting its full political emancipation.

*This period of forming public policy is best compared to a baby yet to be born, that makes himself heard although a name has yet to be given to him.*

## Is there light at the end of the tunnel?

The younger Czech experts, let alone their foreign colleagues, know little about communist-era social scientific studies. They naturally focus on the procedures and outcomes of Western science. At the same time, however, the present state of social sciences in the Czech Republic continues to be marked (in both the positive and negative sense of my saying so) by their allegiance to the scientific, moral and partly also institutional legacy of communist rule.

To see the communist era merely as Dark Ages and the unchallenged rule of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia is both anti-historical and lamentably distortive of the true nature of the concurrent social, economic, political and administrative processes. Generally speaking, not only did public-policy issues figure in research but certain political subjects also had a tendency to apply public-policy concepts in political practice.

## The Sixties

The phenomenon of cultural and social transformation, which occurred, in the 1960s, throughout the world, including Czechoslovakia, has yet to be satisfactorily explained. Fact is that there originated and existed parallel political and civic anti-establishment movements in the United States, Western Europe (notably in France and West Germany), and indeed also in the East. Czechoslovakia's short-lived, brutally interrupted political and economic liberalization was a component part of this breakthrough, even though it had its own specific features.

Czechoslovakia's Prague Spring 1968 was ideologically presaged above all by the work of expert teams which, although formed on the soil of official institutions, had begun to extricate themselves since the early sixties from the

highly ideological and intellectually sterile concepts of the official Marxist-Leninist doctrine.

## Main expert teams and their main outputs in the Sixties

**Machonin's Team**, active in the Charles University Institute of Social and Political Sciences (Institute of Marxism-Leninism till 1968) legitimized both solid research in the field of empirical social studies and the concept of society as an evolving, stratified body with differentiated interests of the various classes and with inner tensions determined by the dynamic functional imbalance of its individual component parts.

**Main output:** Machonin, Pavel et al. 1969. Československá společnost. Sociologická analýza sociální stratifikace (*Czechoslovak Society. A sociological analysis of social stratification*). Bratislava: Epocha.

**Richta's Team**, active in the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, outlined a comprehensive hypothesis of societal changes determined by the growing importance of knowledge and its application in society's life. The team weaned itself of one of the Marxist-Leninist clichés about the base (material production) determining the superstructure (system of society's values and culture).

**Main output:** Richta, Radovan et al. 1966 (reissued in 1967, 1969). Civilizace na rozcestí: společenské a lidské souvislosti vědeckotechnické revoluce (*Civilization at the Crossroads: Societal and human implications of scientific and technical revolution*). Praha: Svoboda.

**Ota Šik** was director of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences' Economic Institute from 1961. Against the background of protracted crises and growing inefficiency of the centrally planned economy he studied – and proposed, within the politically constricted environment of one party rule – a broader use of the regulatory potential of the market. He coined the phrase “third road”.

**Main output:** Šik, Ota. 1967. Plán a trh za socialismu (*Planning and Market in Socialism*). Praha.

**Zdeněk Mlynář** headed in the 1960s, in his capacity of staff employee of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences' Institute of State and Law, an interdisciplinary team dealing with the questions of development of

the socialist political system. His main theme was extending possibilities for popular participation in the running of society. His team eventually recognized the need of pluralizing the political system of the day.

**Main output:** Mlynář, Zdeněk. 1964. *Stát a člověk: úvahy o politickém řízení za socialismu (State and Man: Reflections on political management in socialism)*. Praha: Svobodné Slovo.

In addition to the outputs of these teams, there sprang, in the late 1960s, many other offshoots of freer scientific reflection of various public policy problems of the Czechoslovak society of the day.<sup>3</sup> Significantly, these remarkable attempts to break through the rigid ruling ideology relied on the (temporary, situational and tactical) legitimacy of expertise, sought a multidisciplinary projection of new analyses, and were biased in favor of practical application of their findings.

Czechoslovakia's occupation in August 1968 and the subsequent "normalization" drive led to the dispersion of these teams and ruthless political purges. Apart from a massive external and internal emigration and examples of opportunistic accommodation or even aiding and abetting the stuffy new environment (Radovan Richta), only modest enclaves were surviving, especially in the field of empirical research of fringe public policy issues, not being allowed to gradually extend the scope of their activities and gain more breathing space until the 1980s.

*This period of forming public policy is best compared to a stillborn baby.*

## The Eighties

The communist regime was not homogenous. Even the so-called "society of real socialism" (including its political establishment) pursued differentiated inter-

3 A group of Prague Military Academy researchers (Vojtěch Mencl, Miroslav Purkrábek, Zdeněk Novák, Milan Ždímal, Antonín Rašek and others) laid foundations to a new approach to military science and sociology. Many works by western military experts were translated into Czech, dozens of theoretical papers were processed, and research was made of the problems of war and peace, social status of servicemen and officers, their academic interests, leisure activities etc. These efforts resulted in a memorandum demanding greater autonomy of the Warsaw Pact member states over military decisions. The text was one of the reasons why Warsaw Pact troops seized the Military Academy even before taking the army general headquarters and the defense ministry building.

ests. Moreover, scientists profited from the official Marxist-Leninist ideological proclamations about the management of society bearing a scientific character and being therefore based on the practical application of scientific findings.

In practice, research institutions were active not only within the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences but also at universities (albeit in a very limited scope) and government-controlled research institutes reporting to the various government ministries (e.g. the Construction and Architecture Research Institute, Living Standards Research Institute, Social Development and Labor Research Institute, Institute of Social Medicine and Organization of Health Services, Institute of Scientific and Technical Research, TERPLAN, Research Institute of Engineering Technologies and Economics, Research Institute of Agricultural Economy, you name them all). The social associations within the National Front also established their research facilities; I spent my novice years in the Department of Comprehensive Modelling of Sportpropag, an establishment run by the Czechoslovak Physical Training Association.

In the 1980s, the more pragmatic communist establishment circles around Prime Minister Lubomír Štrougal grew strong enough to program social science research. They established a State Economic Research Program masterminded by Professor Zdeněk Kolář (who was "crossed out" from the Party ranks in the early 1970s). Not without a reason, this program was said to provide livelihood to many politically suspicious intellectuals. Consultative agencies were set up to procure public funds for research teams (such as the Pardubice Technology Center of the Czechoslovak Scientific and Technological Society).

Public discussions were part of a slowly changing societal atmosphere. From the second half of the 1970s, there existed the Sportpropag Department of Comprehensive Modeling, led by Miloš Zeman;<sup>4</sup> other possibilities were offered by the Czechoslovak Scientific and Technological Society and learned societies attached to the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, e.g. the Ecological Section of the Biological Society, which organized environmentally directed debates for people dissatisfied with the price society paid for maximizing material production at the expense of the environment and human health. Economists were the main participants of public debates organized by Václav Klaus at the Czechoslovak National Bank. I refrain from including in my survey the research activities organized by the then Forecasting Institute of the Academy of Sciences, although its staff was relatively free to outline issues and their solutions, and

4 This department was disbanded in the spring of 1984, for political reasons. It had published an anthology on the methodology of social sciences, which was openly critical of the condition and state of the pro-regime Czechoslovak science. (Metodologické problémy společenského výzkumu budoucnosti 1982/83)

many of them later became public figures. Summary outputs of this institution (including practical recommendations to the party leadership) were subjected to consistent ideological censorship of its director, Waltr Komárek.

## Main public policy research themes in the Eighties

### **Yvonne Strecková and research of branches of human development**

The workshop of this political economist at the Faculty of Law of Brno's Masaryk University (then J. E. Purkyně University) hatched the professional careers of many contemporary professors of public economy and public administration. It was obvious that the specific features of the national economic branches that do not generate material estates but services, and especially the changed quality of people (education, health care, arts and culture, physical education and sports, and social care) cannot be properly investigated in terms of the classic Marxist political economy. The research program she coordinated in the 1980s was called *Development of the socioeconomic complex of the development of humanity and perfection of its management system*.

### **Miroslav Purkrábek and associates (Lubomír Kružík, Ctibor Drbal, Jaromír Štěpán, Martin Potůček and others) and research of health care and the organization of health care services**

Professor Vilibald Bílek, director of the Institute of Social Medicine and Organization of Health Services, did not see eye to eye with Health Minister Jaroslav Prokopec. His aversion opened new vistas for critically oriented, sociologically, economically and legally supported research of the running, management and financing of the Czech health care system that ensued in an overall forecast of the development of health care, identifying various bottlenecks and developmental problems. (Kružík and Potůček 1985, 97; Potůček 1988a, 175; 1988b, 375, 470, 522)

### **Martin Potůček's team studying the processes of cultivation and assertion of the human potential in the process of social reproduction**

The position of a human being and the conditions that shaped man and were interfered with by man by virtue of his dispositions and leanings was the topic of an interdisciplinary research project framed and

sanctioned by the State Program of Economic Research, conducted by a team of more than 20 experts from various institutions, operating mainly in the "gray zone" of the social sciences of the day. The project developed and asserted an original concept of human potential with an ambition to suggest a change of public political practice mainly, but not only, in the field of human development – a concept akin to the human capital concept developed in the West much later. By analogy, the social participation concept was very close to the concept of social capital as applied later. (Potůček 1988c, 175; 1989, 325; 1991, 115)

### **Josef Alan's Team and the Family Policy Concept**

By the late 1980s, the slow process of emancipation of the social sciences from the straitjacket of political and ideological surveillance led to the forming of teams focusing on selected issues of the functioning of social systems, their impact on the people's lives, and the search of alternative solutions. A team led by Josef Alan was active in the Prague branch of the Research Institute of Social Development and Labor. His team formulated an alternative decentralized and individualized concept of family support. However, before it could be discussed in the structures of the then Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the events of November 1989 changed everything. (Alan et al. 1988)

Those were but a few examples of *sui generis* public policy research themes tackled in the Czechoslovakia of the late 1970s and 1980s. Many other topics of a similar character were tackled here, there and everywhere, and the list of their authors and outcomes is too vast. A more detailed account of the development conditions and state of social studies of the period was provided by a roundtable organized by Sociologický časopis – see Česká sociologie (2004).

*This period of forming public policy is best compared to advanced pregnancy.*

## Freedom at last

As public policies boiled under the lid of the totalitarian kettle, the Civic Forum Program Commission briefly savored its moments of glory, from November 1989 to June 1990. The experts tackling various research tasks, perfecting their tools and honing their craft in these discussions, albeit without hope to put them in practice, had instantly seen a "window of opportunity" open wide

and furnished the newborn political entity with a wealth of various program documents, addressing miscellaneous spheres. Josef Vavroušek headed this commission until his appointment as the Federal Minister of the Environment, being succeeded by Daniel Kroupa. The commission formulated the Civic Forum's political manifesto for the first free elections in June 1990, edited (but not written, contrary to his later assertions) by Miloš Zeman<sup>5</sup>. (Election Program – Volební program Občanského fóra 1990)

Other program documents saw light. Within a short period of five months, a Draft Reform of Health Care was outlined and published, even before the elections, by a Ministry of Health and Social Affairs Reform Task Group (SKUPR), made up of experts within the Civic Forum of Health Workers. This document served as the basis of the first moves to transform the Czech health care system after November 1989. As early as 1990, the defense ministry established its Military Institute of Social Research to study the social conditions of servicemen. In the same year, an Institute of Strategic Studies was established to prepare a reform of the armed forces.

After 1989, our field was allowed to freely develop in the *lege artis* fashion. This was made easier by two principal circumstances: suddenly there disappeared the personnel, political and ideological surveillance of the field of social sciences while new possibilities opened for the study and application of Western findings and making productive contacts with the West.<sup>6</sup>

## The Nineties

Even though many public policy themes were explored in the Czech Lands from the 1960s, there cannot really be any talk about public policy as a scientific field until the early 1990s. If we look around the world, we will see that its origins in the United States, the country that gave birth to this discipline, its beginnings date from about the second half of the 1960s when, germinating within the realm of other scientific fields (most notably, public administration and law), it slowly started its process of emancipation (which is far from complete at the date of this writing).

The event which finally initiated the establishment of this field in the Czech Republic was my study trip to the United States in the autumn of 1992, under

5 He later served as chairman of the Czech Social Democratic Party (1992–2000) and prime minister of the Czech Republic.

6 Until the collapse of the communist regime, the Czech social sciences, unlike their Polish or Hungarian counterparts, were effectively prevented from establishing any meaningful contacts and cooperation with their Western partners.

the auspices of the Philadelphia-based Eisenhower Exchange Fellowships Foundation. I was able to study its current status in the U.S.A. I visited key universities (Cf. Annex A), think tanks (Urban Institute, Brookings Institute), central research institutions (General Accounting Office, National Institute of Health), and the U.S. Association of Public Policy Schools. I also attended an annual conference of the American Public Policy Association.

Having returned to Czechoslovakia, which was about to split up in two, I knew that **many of the Czech social science programs conducted thus far were in fact public policy research projects and public policy proposals without being perceived and described as that**. But I was sure this field deserved expansion as it possessed huge untapped potentials of development and practical assertion.

From the spring of 1990 I was active in the newly established Faculty of Social Sciences of Prague's Charles University (FSV UK). It was less rigid than other academic institutions, slowly weaning themselves of their "real socialist" stereotypes. That was why I decided to unfurl my plans there. However, it was necessary to settle with the largely European-anchored Continental tradition of teaching social policy.<sup>7</sup> A narrow bias in favor of public policy would have hampered the access to many useful sources of knowledge and methodological experience from practical research and instruction in this field. However, it was obvious at the same time that the strongest innovative impulses were coming from the United States. It was therefore decided to call the field **Public and Social Policy**, under the proviso that it would tap findings from both the strong European and Czech cognitive traditions harking back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century – cf. Engliš's slim but important volume, *Social Policy* (Engliš 1916) – and new ideas coming over across the Atlantic Ocean.

A succession of necessary but difficult steps followed. It was necessary to prepare and implement a master's and doctoral study program, to establish a systematic program of research of public policy in the Czech Republic, and to adjust the organizational structure of the Faculty of Social Sciences. The first application for accreditation of the master's public and social policy program, filed in the autumn of 1992, was easily dismissed by the Accreditation Commission of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Physical Training. It was rejected as something that unduly widens the sum of accredited and established fields of study. However, one of the commission members, Ladislav Tondl was keen to listen. Having studied the theory and methodology of science, philosophy, logic

7 I was strongly informed by this intellectual tradition during my master studies within the European Social Policy Program at the Department of Social Policy and Administration of the London School of Economics and Political Science in the academic year 1990/1991.

and sociology, he understood the relevance of this field of science as well as its relevance for the solution of the practical tasks of the newly born Czech Republic. Having discussed the issue with him, slightly reworking the proposal and filing a new explanation, the application was passed by the relevant committee. Following a re-organization of the faculty in 1993, the newly established Institute of Sociological Studies transformed its social policy department into the Department of Public and Social Policy (KVSP). It became the institutional core of instruction and research in the field. The first master study hopefuls were admitted in the academic year 1993/1994.<sup>8</sup> The accreditation of the doctoral program of public and social policy and the commencement of doctoral studies followed in academic year 1996/1997.

It is safe to say that the umbilical cord between public policy and sociology, the union that owes its existence to my being a sociologist by education and my presence at the department of sociology when the field was new, has left indelible marks on the Czech public policy school. However, in addition to teaching social science matters, we were also able to use the relevant offer of other institutes within the Faculty (economy, political science). Instruction was based on courses in public policy, social policy, public administration, public economics, and law; students later requested the inclusion of research of analytical and policy-making methods. Gradually the offer of special courses expanded in various fields of application. Public policy education in the United States inspired us to introduce obligatory internships in the public or civic sector and to ease the conditions of enrollment in master and doctoral programs. We consider practical experience in a profession close to our field and/or a measure of life experience plus interest in the given field equal to previous formal education within the same realm. Our master program accepts applicants with full university education in other (not necessarily social science) fields; doctoral students need to prove their career if coming from other fields of study. We have 202 master graduates and another 90 students are in the pipeline, whereas 21 students have completed their doctoral study programs, and 43 students are aiming to achieve that.<sup>9</sup>

The late Miroslav Purkrabek took up the task of coordinating the research of public policies. In two three-year cycles, supported by the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic, he and his co-workers from his department and other invited experts developed a broadly-based empirical research probe into the im-

portant aspects of formulating and implementing public policies in the Czech Republic in the 1990s as a political process on the central level. The outcomes of the period's only research were published by FSV UK in ten anthologies in the Public and Social Policy series during 1994–1999 (see Annex B). The Czech public policy in social practice preferred economic development to the other spheres of society's life, especially the civic sector, adhered to centralized management, while underestimating the role of expert analyses and underrating the role of the ethical and value-based foundations of social life (Potůček 1996b, 192).

The first textbook in the field was published after the commencement of master-level instruction by the Institute of Sociological Studies (Potůček et al. 1996a). A leading Czech environmentalist, late Josef Vavroušek, shared in the study after leaving the federal government after the 1992 elections and joining our department.

*This period of forming public policy is best compared to a child in his early years.*

## A new millennium begins

Contrary to the previous predictions, the Department of Public and Social Policies and its associates took another ten years to write a textbook (Potůček et al. 2005a). Their product was a continuation of an international public policy textbook for Central and East Europe, published two years earlier with contributions by several members of the Department (Jenei et al. 2003). However, the original English version was largely updated and adjusted to Czech usage. The textbook offered a more focused definition of our field:

*“Public policy shall be determined as the discipline that works through and applies the explanation frameworks of sociology, economics, political sciences, law, the theory of management, as well as other fields, for the sake of analyzing and forecasting the processes of shaping and asserting public interests associated with the solution of differentiated social problems. Public policy is chiefly involved in the institutional mediation of these processes by the public, civic, and partly also commercial sector, in a way usable for political practice.”* (Potůček et al. 2005a, 21)

The Center of Social and Economic Strategies (CESES) of the Charles University Faculty of Social Sciences, established in 2000, has created preconditions for a more intensive research of the Czech public policy. Being an interdisciplinary center of development of the theory and practice of summary

8 There were five of them: Eva Budzinská (Keneally), Martin Dlouhý, Miriam Kotrusová (Laššáková), Jiří Remr, and Donna Vozar – three Czechs, a Slovak, and an American.

9 Data from July 2007.

forecasting of visions and strategies for the Czech state and society, it has provided fertile ground for interdisciplinary socio-scientific research and the development of its methodological dimension, pursuing the ambition of providing a relevant background for the strategic management of the country. CESES has since its inception produced a great number of partial research reports and summary studies, organized many conferences and promotional events, and successfully joined the European research space.

### Examples of CESES research projects<sup>10</sup>

#### Visions and strategies of the development of Czech society

We are preoccupied with the systematic identification and analysis of key questions of modernizing the Czech society, and its developmental barriers and development opportunities. CESES concentrates on processing partial and comprehensive visions and strategies of the social, economic and political development of the Czech Republic in a broader global, international, security and environmental context in relation to their assertion within the European Union. To this end, analyses and scenarios make it easier to articulate national interests with a view to the priorities of the Czech state. The component part of the implementation of this project is the development of methods of investigating the possible futures and the application of tools of strategic management (Vision – Vize rozvoje České republiky do roku 2015 2001; Guide – Průvodce krajinou priorit pro Českou republiku 2002; Potůček et al. 2003a; Potůček et al. 2005b).

#### Social and cultural cohesion in a differentiated society

This project is focused on the current state, changes and prospects for the development of social and cultural cohesion of Czech society with the aim of suggesting a realistic strategy of boosting cohesion both on the macro level, i.e. state level and on the mezzo and micro levels of society.

#### Systematic development of the methodology of forecasting

This involves the systematic monitoring, experimental verification, development and evaluation of internationally applied forecasting methods and processes, and the development of new methods as well as

their inclusion in the complex of forecasting methodologies and the practice of examining the future development of the Czech Republic (Potůček 2005; Nováček, Potůček, and Slintáková 2004; Potůček and Slintáková 2005).

#### Comparative research of nonprofit sector

The second and third stage of the Johns Hopkins University project examined the basic parameters of nonprofit sectors in more than 20 countries. CESES, as the national coordinator, has worked out a national report to be published in a third-stage bulletin at the end of 2007.

#### Europe's third sector policy

The research cooperation between eight "old" EU Member Countries and the Czech Republic was aimed at analyzing the impact of EU policies on the public policies of the various countries in regard of the third sector. In addition to working out a "national chapter" for the Czech Republic, CESES also coordinated the provision of case studies in third sector public policy on behalf of all participating countries.

#### Millennium Development Goals for the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic's National Report was jointly commissioned by the UNDP Regional Center for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. It was conceived as part of a regional report including national reports for the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia and Slovakia, together with regional comparisons. The purpose of these reports was to stimulate public interest in the UN Millennium Development Goals of these countries (Potůček et al. 2004).

#### Report on Human Development 2003

The aim of the project was to prepare, in conjunction with the International Labor Organization and the UNDP, a Report on Human Development 2003 in the Czech Republic and present it as a background text for a national conference on the social and economic development in the past decade (Potůček et al. 2003b).

The Institute of Health Policy and Economics, the Research Institute of Labor and Social Affairs, and the Department of Public and Social Policy of the Charles University Faculty of Social Sciences were also involved in the research of health and social services and corresponding policies.

<sup>10</sup> <http://ceses.cuni.cz> 

*This period of forming public policy is best compared to a person coming of age.*

## Other teaching institutions in the Czech Republic

Instruction in the field was gradually introduced by other Czech institutions of higher learning (mainly in the form of specialized courses). Thus, the Economic Administration Faculty of Masaryk University in Brno offers a course in public and social policy to doctoral students in the field of public economy. Ostrava's Mining University has included an obligatory public policy and administration course in its master program of public economics and management, similarly as Palacký University in Olomouc included this course in its international development study program. Prague's New Anglo-American College will open a public policy masters program in the academic year 2007/2008; instruction will be in English.

## International cooperation

Cooperation within the post-communist world began with establishing ties with the Budapest University of Economics, which was the first in the region to offer a masters course in public policy. With the support of the nongovernmental organization, the Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe (NISPAcee)<sup>11</sup>, but mainly through interaction with our colleagues from Hungary, the United States and Slovakia, the first textbook in this field was published, focused on the region's issues. Contacts have been forged since the early 1990s with our Slovak colleagues (mainly those active in the not-for-profit Institute of Public Affairs and in the recently established Institute of Public Policy of the Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences of Comenius University in Bratislava).

Cooperation with the United States has been chiefly developed through interaction with the School of Public Health of the University of California in Berkeley by means of research and teaching grants enabling talented researchers with complete doctoral education to spend a time at the university. Similar contacts were made with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government, the University of Georgia in Athens, and George Mason University in Fairfax. We have established long-term cooperation with many West European institutions, including the Department of Social Policy and Applied Social Research at Oxford Uni-

versity in Britain, the Konstanz Universität and the Wissenschaftszentrum für Sozialforschung in Berlin, Germany, and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions in Dublin, Ireland.

## Reflection of the current state of our field in the Czech Republic

Our field has transformed over years into a shape bearing certain telltale features. Let me mention above all the comprehensive analysis of problems, threats and development opportunities of the Czech Republic and its population, which could serve as the basis of identification of its strategic choices. Qualitative and quantitative methods are combined (research of value orientations and activities of the general public and elites, analyses of national and international statistical data, proposals of systems of indicators, analyses of institutional frameworks and policy documents). This is associated with the perfection of the concept of strategic governance including the study of interferences of the regulatory function of the market, state and civic sector (Potůček 1997; Potůček 1999; Potůček 2005a; Potůček and Rašek 2007). A number of sector analyses and policy proposals have been made in the field of security, education, health care etc. Special attention was paid to the specific features of the civic sector (Frič 2000; Frič and Goulli 2001; Frič 2004; Frič, Goulli, and Vyskočilová 2004; Frič 2005; Potůček 2006). Considerable attention has lately been paid to developing theoretical (Frič and Potůček 2004; Mašková and Potůček 2007) and methodological (Potůček, Veselý and Nekola 2004; Potůček 2005c; Veselý and Nekola 2007) foundations of the field. There has been no shortage, lately, of principal project solutions financed by Czech public funds. Our field is also doing well in the European research environment (participation in the *Sixth European Union Framework Program*). Young experts receive training, key research projects are being implemented, research papers are published in Czech and English, and you are now reading the first issue of a new specialist journal.

Having entered the public domain, CESES has provided a wealth of points to ponder and implement for both political leaders and the broader scientific and general public. With a few rare exceptions, however, this interaction has thus far consisted largely of one-off projects (although some were top level and involved seminars with members of the government) that have no lasting impact on the formation of real public policy. Huge untapped reserves exist also in the media publicity of public policy research issues.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.nispa.sk>



It is safe to say, though, that the field of public policy has taken root in the Czech Republic. It is therefore quite legitimate to discuss its deficits and new developmental options.

I believe that the interaction between public policy and sociology is robust, productive and inspiring. It asserts itself not only by the development of theoretical foundations and methodical instruments of the field but also by a wealth of specific empirical projects. The field's representatives and political analysts jointly participated in the latest conferences of the Czech Political Sciences Association. Economics' contributions are quite apparent above all in the application of its sub-disciplines such as public economy or institutional economy. Nevertheless, cooperation with economists and political scientists has its limitations given chiefly by different approaches to interdisciplinary interaction.

An improvement of academic instruction stands out as an important goal. Its need comes to the fore both because of the commencement, in the academic year 2007/2008, of an in-service master study program for professionals wanting to complete their education in our field and because of the possibility of opening a master study program in English. There is an opportunity to use the outcomes of a current survey of public and social policy graduates' practical experiences, many of which stem from the Czech Republic's membership in the European Union, to adapt the contents of this education in the future.

I am positive that the field has come of age, in spite of its numerous shortcomings and offers an ever more attractive environment for the assertion of talents and stamina of the up and coming generation of researchers, teachers, as well as practitioners.

The establishment of the *Central European Journal of Public Policy* is good evidence of that. Let me wish it good winds – and *bon voyage!*

*The upcoming stage of shaping public policies in the Czech Republic could be described (with a measure of historic optimism) as a period of early adulthood.*

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## ANNEX A: U.S. UNIVERSITIES VISITED IN 1992

- Harvard University at Boston, John Fitzgerald Kennedy School of Government, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- George Mason University, Fairfax
- Chicago University, the Irving B. Harris Graduate School of Public Policy Studies and School of Social Service Administration
- Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Institute for Policy Studies
- New School for Social Research in New York
- Princeton University, Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs
- Stanford University

- University of California at Berkeley, School of Public Policy and School of Public Health
- University of California at Los Angeles
- University of Michigan, Institute of Public Policy Studies
- University of Minnesota, Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs
- University of Pittsburgh, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs

## ANNEX B: VOLUMES IN THE PUBLIC AND SOCIAL POLICY SERIES, CHRONOLOGICALLY ORDERED. PRAGUE, ISS FSV UK 1994–1999.

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