

Editorial

Dear Readers,

We've given this summer double issue a recreational tone and decided to make leisure time and vacation our theme. Almost every department at the Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic that has something to say on this topic has contributed to this double issue.

The first contribution, from the Public Opinion Research Centre, is by Gabriela Šamanová and Jan Červinka and is devoted to the topic of leisure time and how people spend it according to the results of public opinion research. The second article, by Věra Patočková and Jiří Šafr, shows how the population of the Czech Republic does or does not differ from the other 18 European countries in terms of how people spend their leisure time and vacations. The third article, by Vendula Pecková, reminds us how Czechs and Slovaks used to spend their vacation and their recreational time in the 1960s. Romana Trusinová focuses on one form of leisure-time and vacation activity – travel. This is regarded to be one factor of consumption behaviour and the author compares the attitudes of younger and older people, asking also whether young people measure their satisfaction in terms of the number of kilometres they manage to log. In another article Radka Dudová looks at one less common type of leisure-time activity – sex tourism – and examines how sex tourism has been construed and used in Czech media and political debates. In another article that examines leisure-time from a different perspective, Petr Sunega reflects on whether leisure-time expenditures vary according to housing type, which is one important factor of socio-economic stratification. Martina Mysíková then focuses on the theme of material deprivation in relation to vacations and asks how many Czech households are unable to afford a vacation and how other European countries fare in this respect. In the final article, Miroslava Federičová focuses on income inequalities and the poverty rate in the Czech Republic and in comparison with 26 other European countries.

The summer double issue winds up with a review of a book by František Zich (editor) *Sociální potenciál v sociologické reflexi. Sociální potenciál starého průmyslového regionu – případ Mostecká* (Social potential reflected in sociology: the social potential of an old industrial region – the case of the Most region), reviewed by Zdenka Vajdová.

We wish you a good summer and pleasant reading!

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Zářijové vydání Sociowebu pro Vás připravuje tým Národní kontaktní centrum – ženy a věda a bude se věnovat tématu gender a věda.

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Czech and Leisure Time

Keywords: public opinion, leisure time

The Public Opinion Research Centre (CVVM) at the Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic covers the theme of leisure time in its regular surveys. The most recent such survey was conducted at the end of 2009. The respondents contacted were asked to estimate how much leisure time they have on ordinary work days and at the weekend and were presented with an open-ended question asking them to state how they spend their leisure time. The survey also ascertained information on how much time the respondents devote to selected leisure-time activities.

How much leisure time do people have? Table 1 presents an overview of the amount of leisure time that people have in hours. It comes as no surprise that people have the most leisure time on Saturdays and Sundays; around one-quarter of respondents indicated they had 10 to 14 hours of leisure time on these two days, and another quarter said they had between 7 and 9 hours. Another roughly one-quarter indicated that they had 5 to 6 hours of leisure time on these days. On work days one-third of respondents indicated that they had 3 to 4 hours of leisure time, one-quarter said 1 to 2 hours, and one-fifth of respondents said 5 to 6 hours. There was no significant change in the distribution of leisure time from the previous survey conducted on this topic in 2005.

Table 1: Estimated leisure time (%)

	workdays		Saturdays		Sundays	
	2005/12	2009/11	2005/12	2009/11	2005/12	2009/11
0 h.	6	6	2	2	1	1
1 – 2 h.	25	25	6	5	4	3
3 – 4 h.	33	33	15	15	12	11
5 – 6 h.	18	18	25	26	23	23
7 – 9 h.	9	7	22	21	24	24
10 – 14 h.	7	7	25	23	30	29
More than 15 h.	1	2	3	5	4	6

Note: The difference in the columns amounting to 100% consists of the response 'don't know'.

How people spend their leisure time was examined using an open-ended question. Respondents were able to give up to three responses. The leisure-time activity mentioned most was watching television. The second and third most common activities were sports activities and reading. Alongside watching television, reading, and sports activities, people also often spent their leisure time with family and friends, on walks, or taking the dog for a walk. The results of this question in 2009 could be compared to results from 2004 and 2005. In 2009 Czechs spent more leisure time than before at the computer and less time working in the garden. The biggest change was observed in housework, on which 14% of respondents spent their leisure time in 2004, but only 5% in 2005, and this low figure was confirmed in 2009 with just 4%. The question is whether the amount of housework that people perform really decreased or whether there has been a shift in people's perceptions of what constitutes leisure time and whether they feel it includes housework.

Since 1991 how much of their leisure time Czechs spend on particular activities, such as reading, listening to music, hobbies, friends, active sports, culture, and so on, has also been observed. A summary of the results is presented in Tables 2 and 3.

Among the ways in which people spend their leisure time the most common is reading magazines, which 67% of the population over the age of 15 does regularly at least once a week. People also often spend time reading books, but on the whole somewhat less than magazines: 41% of people read books regularly at least once a week, another 44% read more sporadically, and 15% do not read books at all; 23% of citizens go to the public library at least once a month.

A relatively popular leisure-time activity is listening to recordings on cassettes, CDs, or other media, which around one-half (51%) of the Czech population indicates doing at least once a week. Around one-half (51%) of respondents at least occasionally attend pop

concerts, and of them 6% do so regularly, at least once a month. One-quarter of respondents attend classical music concerts at least sometimes, and 3% do so at least once a month.

Almost two-thirds of respondents (64%) go to the cinema at least occasionally and of them 15% do so once a month or more. Just a slightly smaller portion of the population (60%) at least sometimes spend their leisure time attending the theatre, although a rather smaller percentage attend at least one performance a month (8%). Around one-half at least occasionally go to galleries or exhibitions, while 5% do so once a month or more often.

One-third of respondents (33%) in our study regularly take part in sports or exercise once a week or more often, while roughly an equal share (34%) do not do any sports at all. The absolute majority (except for 8%) at least sometimes make nature outings or walks, and one-quarter (26%) do so once a week or more often.

People devote a significant amount of time to improving their qualifications. Almost one-fifth (19%) of respondents in our survey claim to spend time learning a foreign language or another specialised subject at least once a week.

People relatively often spend their leisure time in the company of friends and acquaintances: 47% at least once a week and another 38% at least once a month. Around one-half of the survey participants (54%) go to a restaurant, bar or cafe at least once a month and 23% go once a week or more often.

Hobbies are a very popular leisure-time activity. Around nine out of ten respondents devote their time to hobbies, and just under one-half (49%) engage in their hobbies at least once or more a week and another 29% at least once a month.

Table 2: Leisure-time activities 1991–2009 (1x a week; in %)

	1991	1994	1995	1997	2001	2004	2009
Reading magazines	x	76	73	77	71	70	67
Listening to recordings	58	51	48	56	57	49	51
Hobbies	x	60	58	54	53	47	49
Meeting friends and neighbours	x	51	51	48	42	45	47
Reading books	29	39	41	42	41	43	41
Exercise, sports	X	39	43	33	44	34	33
Nature outings and walks	x	21	22	21	23	23	26
Going to restaurants, bars, cafes	x	17	20	19	17	21	23
Learning languages and other skills	x	24	26	24	29	27	19

Note: The difference for each item amounting to 100% consists of other responses (once a month, once every three months, once a year, not at all), x means that in 1991 the given item was not observed.

Table 3: Leisure-time activities 1991 – 2009 (1x a month or more in %)

	1991	1994	1995	1997	2001	2004	2009
Going to the public library	27	23	24	24	28	25	23
Going to the cinema	34	26	20	19	18	21	16
Going to the theatre	8	7	5	7	8	10	8
Going to pop concerts	9	9	7	10	8	10	6
Going to art galleries and exhibitions	6	5	4	6	5	5	5
Going to classical music concerts	3	4	5	3	5	5	3

Note: The data in the table represent the sum of the responses 'once a week' and 'once a month'. The amount to 100 % for each item consists of the other responses (once every three months, once a year, not at all).

Relatively substantial socio-demographic differences were observed in connection with how people spend their leisure time. Among other things, women were found to spend more time than men reading magazines and books, going to the theatre, exhibitions and public libraries, or attending classical music concerts. Conversely, men more often devoted themselves to hobbies and sports and went more often to restaurants, bars, and cafes. Differences were also observed in how people in different age groups spend their leisure time. Younger people aged around 30 and under more often listen to musical recordings, attend pop concerts, and go to the cinema or restaurants than older people. Younger people more often engage in sports activities and spend more time improving their professional and language skills. People over the age of 60 read books and magazines and devote their time to hobbies more often than young people.

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How We Spend Our Leisure Time and How Long Are Our Holidays – the Czech Republic in a Comparison with Europe

Keywords: leisure time, values, Europe

Leisure time plays a very important role in the lives of people today. Alongside scientists various other professionals, from marketing experts to urban studies experts, are for different reasons also interested in how people spend their leisure time. In this article we focus on selected activities that we spend our leisure time on and one what function these activities fulfil. We will also look at how often we take holiday and whether we spend it away from home. To this end we will draw on the results of an international survey, the ISSP 2007 Leisure Time and Sports. In the questionnaire leisure time was defined in the introduction for respondents as a period of time when the respondent is not performing work, household obligations, or any other activities they are obliged to perform.

What kinds of activities do we engage in during our leisure time? Do we read books more or devote ourselves to physical activities like sports, strength-training, or walks more? In the ISSP 2007 respondents over the age of 18 indicated how often they do the following 13

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activities in their leisure time: watch TV, DVDs, video; go to movies; go shopping; read books; attend cultural events like concerts, theatre, exhibitions, etc.; get together with relatives with whom the respondent does not share a home; get together with friends; play cards or board/table games; listen to music; take part in physical activities like sports, strength-training, walks, etc.; attend sporting events as a spectator; do handicrafts like embroidery, home improvements, etc.; spend time on the internet or the computer.

How often do Czechs engage in these activities compared to people in 18 other European countries is shown in Figure 1. People most often spend time watching television (72% of the Czech population watches every day) or listening to music (44% every day). The most widespread activities – so-called daily activities – include browsing websites or communication via the internet, playing games, or other computer activities (17% in the CR daily) and going shopping (15% daily), reading books (14% daily) and physical activities such as sports or walks (12% daily). Out of the options presented to respondents, which certainly do not exhaust all the possible ways in which people spend their free time, people spent the least time attending sporting events, going to movies, and attending cultural events like concerts, theatre, exhibitions, etc. (for details, see Šafr, Patočková [2010]).

If we make a comparison with the European average in 2007 we find that Czechs spent much more time shopping, more time on handicrafts and home improvements, and very slightly more time reading books. Conversely, they spent much less time in front of the computer and on the internet, played card and board games less, and listened to music less.

If we take into consideration only the ten countries of Western Europe, then on top of the differences mentioned above the Czech population engaged in sports and went to the movies less and spent less time in front of the computer, but they certainly did not lag behind in watching television. It must however also be noted that there are also considerable differences between countries within Europe.

In addition to participating in the particular activities listed, respondents also indicated how often they spend their leisure time on rest and relaxation, studying and developing their skills, or making useful contacts, and also how often they feel bored or rushed during their leisure time or if they find themselves thinking about work.

It is apparent from Figure 2, which again depicts responses from the Czech population and compares them with the average values for 18 European countries, that leisure time most often served as an opportunity for rest and relaxation. Conversely, more active forms of leisure-time activity, like studying and advancing one's skills or making useful contacts, were engaged in much less frequently, with around one-quarter and one-fifth of the adult population,

respectively, devoting time to these activities. With respect to the negative feelings that a person can experience during their leisure time, 35% of respondents in the Czech Republic indicated that they often think about work, 29% said they often feel rushed, and around 5% said that they are often bored during their leisure time. Here again Czechs differ from the European average: they devote less time to education and personal development (in this area the contrast with western countries is more pronounced) and establishing useful contacts. While compared to other Europeans Czechs feel less bored in their leisure time, they continued to feel rushed and think about work outside working hours, which is a trend typical among the populations of post-communist countries.

How long do we go on holiday and how many nights do we spend away from home? Figure 3 shows that more than one-quarter of Europeans do not leave their place of residence either for a holiday or on visits to friends and relatives. In the Czech Republic the figure is under one-third of the adult population. In the CR and the rest of Europe around one-third of the population spends at most ten nights away from home a year.

Although Czechs spend nights away from home somewhat less often than other Europeans, according to findings from the ISSP 2007 they take a holiday more often than other Europeans. A total of 63% of economically active Czechs indicated have free time from work for more than 11 days, while only 51% of Europeans in the observed 18 countries did. The most common length of holiday in the Czech Republic is 11–20 days a year (around one-third of Czechs working took this many days for their holiday), and another 28% of Czechs spent more than 21 days on holiday. Although 36% of other Europeans took more than three weeks of holiday, 30% indicated that they had not had a single day of holiday in the past twelve months. In the Czech Republic only 18% of respondents indicated that they had not had a single day of holiday. (We should add that these results could be somewhat distorted as the survey was not conducted during the same season in every country.)

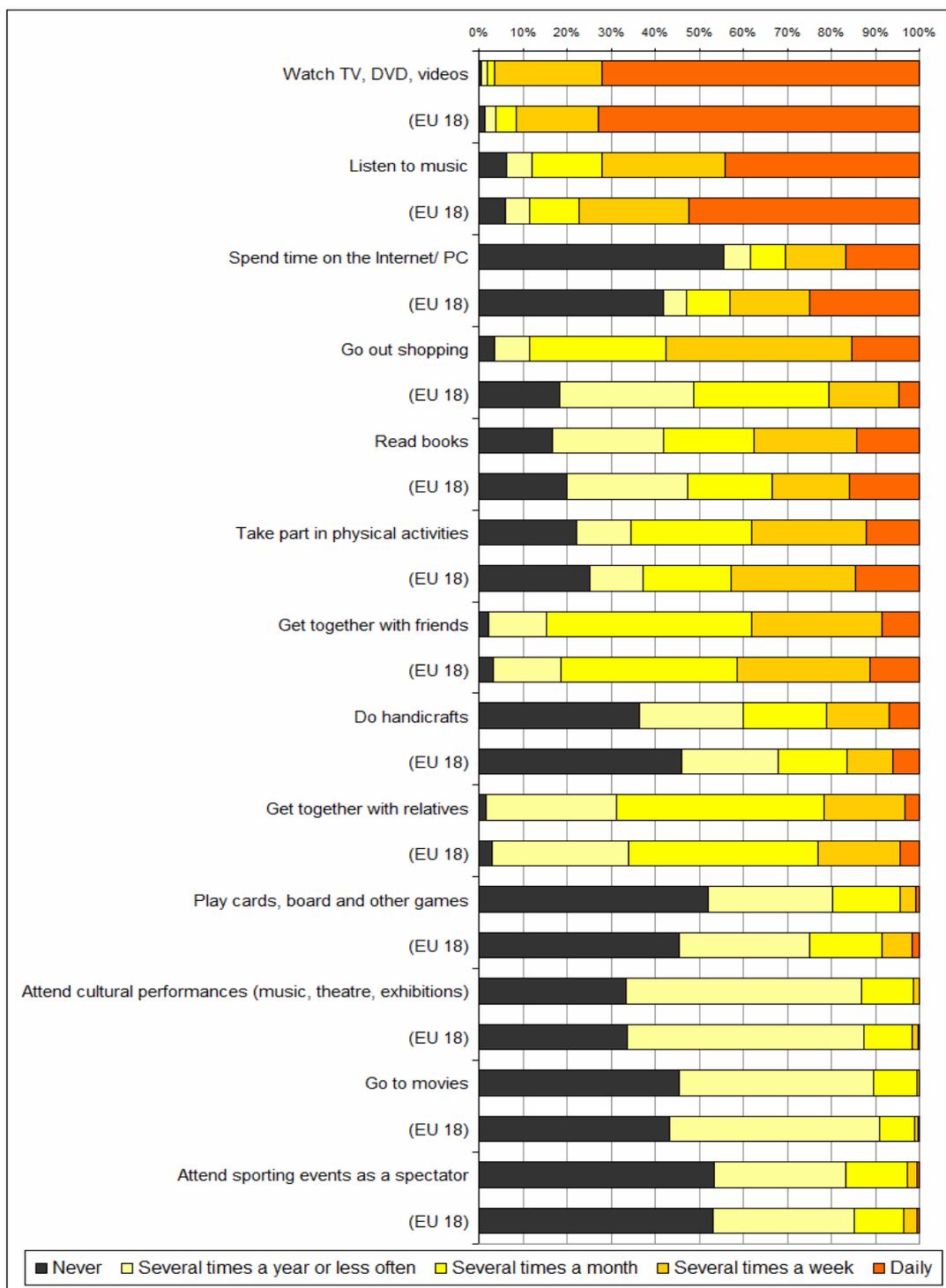
On the whole citizens of Western Europe spend around 14 days or nights away from home and on holiday, which is somewhat more time than citizens of Eastern, post-communist countries (approximately 7 nights away from home and 12 days on holiday). In this respect the Czech Republic is more like the Western European countries (approx. 10 nights and 14 days). It should also be noted however that there are substantial differences between countries, primarily owing to the amount of holidays people are entitled to by law in the given country; in the Czech Republic, for instance, the minimum amount of holiday time is 20 work days.

To sum up, the results of the ISSP 2007 – Leisure Time and Sports indicate that Czechs primarily spend their leisure time watching television, listening to music, and, alongside

spending time in front of the computer, they also, much less however, take part in sports, go on walks, and, as a positive piece of news, they also read books. For Czechs leisure time is above all devoted to rest and relaxation, but people still feel the stress of job obligations during this time. From an international comparison it is apparent that Czechs do not differ much from other Europeans in terms of

how they spend their leisure time according to the selected indicators, the main difference being that Czechs spend more time shopping and on handicrafts/home improvements and less time at the computer. In a comparison with the average for 18 European countries Czechs also spend more time on holiday. They also, however, spend less time away from home, whether on holiday or visits.

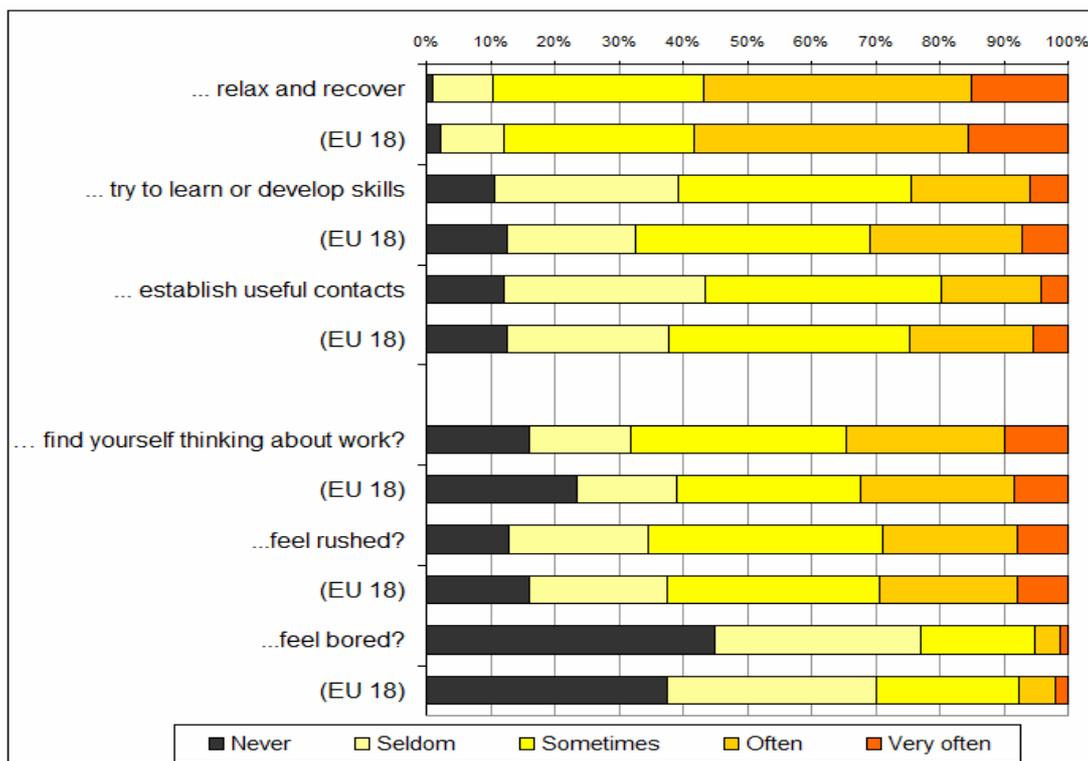
Figure 1. 'How much of your leisure time do you devote to the following activities?' – the Czech Republic and 18 European countries in 2007; row



Source: ISSP 2007, N for EU 18 = 22016, N for the CR = 1180 (listwise, unweighted data).

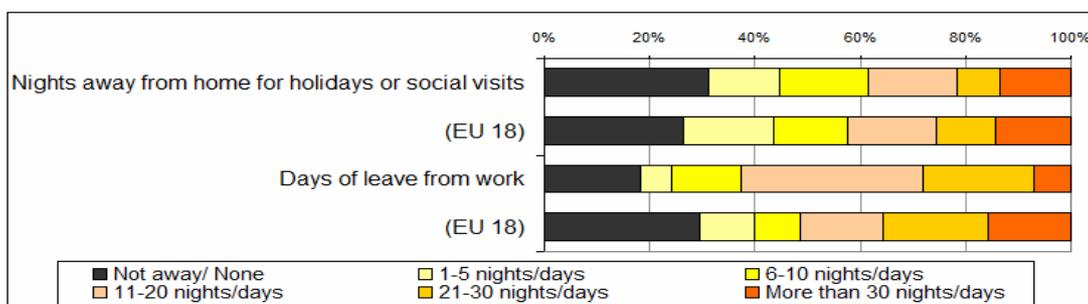
Note: The first row always contains data for the CR, the second row for European countries (18).

Figure 2. 'How often do you spend your leisure time...?' (upper part of the figure) and 'How often in your leisure time do you...?' (lower part of the figure), CR and 18 European countries in 2007; row %



Source: ISSP 2007, N for EU18 = 19272, N for CR = 1173 (listwise, unweighted data).

Figure 3. Holidays and leave in the last 12 months, 'How many nights altogether did you stay away from home for holidays or social visits?' (upper part) and 'How many days of leave from your work, if any, did you take altogether' (lower part), CR and 18 European countries in 2007, row %



Source: ISSP 2007, N for EU18 = 22587 and 15027*, N for CR = 1209 and 816* (listwise, unweighted data).

Note: for leave from work only economic active population.

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Vacation and Recreation in the 1970s according to Public Opinion Research

Keywords: leisure time, public opinion, history

How people spend their vacation is a current topic again. There is a great deal of data on vacation time and recreation, but in my paper I use data from the Public Opinion Research Institute (IVVM), which studied public opinion from the 1960s up to 2001, when it was renamed the Public Opinion Research Centre (CVVM) and became part of the Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. I draw on the final reports issued by IVVM, which are available from the Czech Social Science Data Archive.

The theme of vacation time was included in four surveys in the 1970s: in 1970, 1974, 1975 and 1976. The surveys from 1970 and 1975 are not directly about vacation time, which is the subject of only four questions. The surveys from 1974 and 1976 are both named 'Recreation and Travel' and they focus on weekend trips and vacations. The interpretations of these surveys relate them to each other and point to trends in society. In the 1980s this theme is almost entirely absent from surveys. Ideological themes predominate in their place and overshadow everyday life, and for this reason I have chosen to omit this period.

The surveys first of all looked at the kinds of objects related to travel and recreation that people possessed. In the 1970s 'second housing' was found to be a very popular mode of recreation. During that period 15% of the population owned a cottage or country house, but this figure depended on the place of residence. In municipalities with more than 100 000 inhabitants over 28% of the population owned a cottage or country house, and as the size of the municipality decreased the share of the population that owned recreational property decreased. There were no significant changes in the share of ownership of such property over the course of the 1970s. However, the standard objects possessed by different social groups did change. In the early 1970s it was popular among people with secondary or higher education to own bicycles, motorcycles, and tents; in the mid-1970s cars and cottages or country homes predominated. Possession of such objects always occurred later among people with basic education.

When we look specifically at vacations and recreation, almost 60% of the population of the ČSSR (Czechoslovak Socialist Republic) reported an opportunity to spend recreational time with relatives, friends, and acquaintances. On the whole it was found that the number of weekends spent recreationally this way gradually increased, but the number who spent longer vacations with relatives, friends or acquaintances decreased. Around 30% of the population used social or employment-based

recreational facilities and those who did so were usually labourers or other employees. In 1970 two-thirds of the population of the ČSR (Czech Socialist Republic) had a vacation, while in the SSR (Slovak Socialist Republic) almost one-half of the population did not. This difference was due to differences in living standards in the two regions. In the 1970s people usually spent less than 14 days on vacation. Shorter vacations were more often taken by men, most of them workers and people with lower education. Conversely, people with higher education usually spent more than 14 days on vacation.

In the 1970s nature was the most popular vacation destination: 36% of the population favoured vacations in the woods or by the water and 11% in the mountains. The survey from 1976 showed that young people especially were drawn to nature, while older people tended to travel more to towns and spas and favoured visiting monuments. At that time it was rare to travel abroad and only 8% of the population took their vacation outside the country, but over the course of the 1970s this share grew slightly. Seaside vacations established themselves as a foreign destination. In 1976, 13% of the population spent their vacation at home, at their place of residence, and often they used their free time for other than relaxation purposes. People most often spent their vacation time with their family. In 1973 around 20% of the population used the services of a travel agency. Most vacations cost within the range of 500 Czk to 1 000 Czk. Approximately 30% of the population spent more than 1 000 Czk on their vacation.

The surveys also showed that not everyone in the population went on vacation. In 1973, 11% of people did not have a vacation. In terms of their socio-demographic characteristics, most of these people were senior citizens and farmers. The 1976 survey added some women to these groups. The time of the vacation was influenced by a person's social class and employment. Farmers could not go on vacation whenever they wanted as their work depended on the seasons. The SSR had a larger population of farmers, which is why there are differences between vacations in the ČSR and the SSR when the surveys are compared. Those people who took a vacation nonetheless assessed it positively. In 1970, 70% of the population were satisfied with the vacation they had taken.

Selected tables from earlier IVVM's public opinion polls are publicly available on the web site of Czech Social Science Data Archive (archiv.soc.cas.cz).

Sources:

Závěrečné zprávy z výzkumů IVVM číslo [Final Reports from the IVVM, nos.] 70-13, 74-1, 75-4, 76-4.

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Do Young People Measure Happiness by the Number of Kilometres Logged?

Keywords: leisure time, values, theory

This article examines travel as a form of consumption behaviour. It begins by presenting some of the ideas outlined in Gilles Lipovetsky's *Le bonheur paradoxal*. Then, using tourism statistics and statements of young people recorded in a qualitative study, it looks at how much Lipovetsky's ideas can be inspirational for interpreting the attitudes of young Czechs towards travel.

In his book Lipovetsky describes the evolution of the significance and methods of consumption in western states. He distinguishes three stages. The first stretched from around the year 1800 up to the Second World War. Technical progress and inventions like the railroad, the telegraph, and manufacturing machinery made possible production on a mass scale, in a short time, and at low cost. This increased the availability of goods of every kind (but for the time being only for the middle and upper classes) and gave rise to a consumption society, a society whose members find shopping and the continuous consumption of goods and services to be a basic means to happiness.

The second stage dates from 1950 to 1980. A society of genuinely mass consumption emerged and that in turn generated economic growth. Almost everyone began to own products like cars and household appliances and anyone who could not afford them could borrow money to buy them. Comfort and material wellbeing became synonymous with happiness. Having a bigger house, a more luxurious car, keeping up with modern trends – these things became the common purpose in life.

This period was followed by the current, third stage, in which emotional consumption prevails. Today, people continue to hunger after their own wellbeing, but this is slowly coming to be a given, and things themselves are losing their value. More valuable now are various kinds of experiences. The goal of people is 'to make themselves happy', and understandably to do so by shopping, whether this means buying a

classical music CD or a relaxing massage. Hyper-consumers (as Lipovetsky calls contemporary humanity) want to get pleasure, sensations, adventure, and a sense of happiness out of the things and services that they buy.

An entire industry geared towards providing experiences has emerged, producing entertainment parks, tours through ten countries in five days, and activities like spending the night in an igloo or letting themselves be the butt of insults in a mediaeval alehouse. The purpose of life is no longer the accumulation of *things* but the accumulation of *experiences*. Whether such an arrangement is 'good' or 'bad' is a question of course that everyone has to answer for themselves. Regardless, a very popular way of purchasing a nice experience is to take a vacation.

Understandably, the third stage of consumption emerged in the Czech Republic later than in the West. According to the Czech Statistical Office traveling continues to grow in popularity among the Czech population. While in 1998 Czechs took a total of 7.5 million vacations lasting longer than three nights, in 2008 the figure was 9.9 million. In particular there was an increase in the number of vacations taken abroad, rising from 2.1 million to 5 million.

Where do Czechs stand in comparison with other European travellers? According to Eurostat, in 2006 every Czech spent an average of 16.9 nights on vacation (see Table 1). The average in the European Union was 20.5 nights; so Czechs travel slightly less. Of more interest, however, is a comparison of tourism habits by age. Young Czechs aged 15-24 travel most out of all Czechs and spend an above-average amount of time traveling even compared to other Europeans. Conversely, the generations of their parents and grandparents travel less. Czechs over the age of 45 travel much less than the average observed in other EU countries and in fact the least out of all the states in this comparison [1].

The differing relationship that younger and older Czechs have to travel can be viewed as one feature of a generation gap. This was demonstrated in a qualitative study of the attitudes of young people towards seniors, which was conducted in 2010 in the form of in-depth interviews. Ten respondents between the ages of 19 and 28 took part in the study and travel came up spontaneously as a theme in most of the interviews.

Table 1. Average number of nights spent per tourist per year on vacation (only vacations longer than three nights are taken into account)

		Age			
	Total	15-24	25-44	45-64	65 and over
EU-27	20.5	19.0	19.1	21.1	24.3
Czech Republic	16.9	20.2	17.2	14.7	14.9

The interviews revealed that travel is one of the priorities of young people and the fact that older people do not travel is one thing that young people criticise them for. The desire of young people to travel takes the place, in their opinion, the desire to own property, which is more typical of the generation of their parents and grandparents. As one respondent said:

'We're [respondent and her boyfriend] just the kind of people who prefer to put it [money] into travel and having experiences than, say, into a flat. You know, we don't have to have a car, we can drive an old beat-up car, but we'd rather put our money into travel. Because we prefer that experience. But I think that we're kind of an exception in this. That the generation of our parents definitely isn't like this.'

That young Czechs prefer traveling more than older Czechs is something the respondents agreed on. They also agreed that the reason is the different priorities of young and older people. As another respondent indicated, when comparing priorities of the past and today:

'The family had other priorities, which was partly because of the times – saving money and working. I have an education and interests. They in particular [older people] are definitely not into travelling. I like it. But they weren't like that.'

According to young people, the reasons that older people are less interested in travelling are their financial concerns, an overall lack of interest in experiencing something new, or a fear of traveling. But according to young people that fear is not due to the fact that older people, having lived under the previous political regime, are unused to travel. And if a senior today does travel, he or she immediately becomes much more appealing to young people, as for instance, another respondent explains:

'Like my friend's grandmother, twice a year she goes on vacation to the seaside and to a spa and she rides her bike with friends and she's just always active. I like that and those are the kind of people you can get along with.'

The results of this study cannot be generalised, but the qualitative research suggested that young Czechs can be regarded as the hyper-consumers described by Lipovetsky. The respondents spoke of how they enjoy accumulating experiences and have no problem with spending money on travel. In the eyes of young people, older people seem anchored in the second stage of the evolution of a consumption society; the values of older Czechs are viewed as more material and do not match young people's notions of a desirable lifestyle.

In conclusion it may be asked: will today's young Czechs continue to travel once they are older? And will their grandchildren appreciate them for it, or will priorities have shifted again? We can close by quoting one respondent:

'So I'm trying to study hard and I hope it will be for something. And I'd really like to be able to tell my grandchildren, if I have any, about some place that they've not yet been and that will

seem interesting to them. But then the question is what it'll be like when I'm a senior, whether it'll be interesting to them at all. Maybe something else entirely will be interesting. What's valued is now changing so fast.'

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[1] The countries with available information on traveling by age and included in the comparison were: Czech Republic, Finland, France, Italy, Lithuania, Latvia, Luxembourg, Hungary, Germany, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Greece, Slovenia, Spain, and the UK.

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Sex Tourism in the Czech Republic: It's Not Us, It's Them!

Keywords: sex, politics

Different people have different ideas about what constitutes a pleasant vacation. Alongside ordinary tourism, which many Europeans engage in, there are also other forms of leisure-time travel. This article focuses on the specific issue of sex tourism and especially how 'sex tourism' has been construed and used in the discourse of media and political debates on prostitution in the Czech Republic.

Sex tourism has been an issue of discussion surprisingly since the late 1960s. Although since 1945 prostitution could be and was prosecuted as a form of work evasion and since 1956 as the crime of parasitism, it was already apparent in

the late 1950s that, despite the ideological assumptions of communism, prostitution could not be entirely eradicated even in socialist society. In the second half of the 1960s the Institute of Criminology under the Czechoslovak General Prosecutor's Office began to address prostitution as part of a large study of social pathology. The main reason for launching the study was the rise in prostitution in connection with the partial opening of the borders and the consequent increase in the number of foreign tourists visiting Czechoslovakia and especially Prague. 'Sex tourism' claims fit the discursive strategy of party ideologists, according to whom prostitution was a phenomenon imported from without, from the morally corrupt capitalist West. Prostitution was considered to be external to the socialist state: the causes were seen to lie in the survival of bourgeois morals and the motivation in the luxury Western goods and of the nationality of a number of its clients. Many of the prostitutes' clients were foreigners who could pay with the 'hard' western currency, and the motivation of the prostitutes was to acquire Western consumption goods, unavailable in shops in Czechoslovakia. Prostitution was seen as contrary to and a threat to socialist society (Osmančík and Vacková 1969).

In post-1989 legislation, brothels continued to be illegal, as did some other phenomena connected with prostitution (e.g. pimping). Prostitution was not treated explicitly in the legislation and the abolitionist regime persisted. Since 1993 several (unsuccessful) attempts to regulate prostitution have emerged. The draft bills (from 1993, 1994, 1999, 2005 and 2008) defined prostitution as a specific economic activity and aimed to introduce compulsory registration and control of prostitutes (together with the taxation of their incomes). The draft bills differed from each other, but all were characterised by incongruent arguments on prostitution as such and by the failure to recognise sex-workers as full citizens deserving rights and protection without stigmatisation.

After the frontiers of Czechoslovakia were opened in 1989 and the communist legislation outlawing prostitution was abolished in 1990, the number of prostitutes grew massively. In 1976, the number of prostitutes in Prague was estimated at 12 000 by the Research Institute of Criminology (VÚK 1976). In 1994, the same institute estimated that there were 25 000 regular sex workers and about 7 000 women working only occasionally as sex workers (Trávníčková, Osmančík, Scheinost et al. 1995: 65).

The rise of prostitution was located mainly in the border regions of the Czech Republic and along international traffic routes (e.g. the district of Teplice) and in towns with flourishing tourism (Prague). This was explained as being due to the fact that most of the clients were foreigners, mainly from Western Germany. According to the press, the explosion of prostitution in the early 1990s was the result of growing tourism, especially sex tourism, which began flourishing, especially in the border regions, and also the

result of the low exchange rate on the Czech crown in the early 1990s (Trávníčková, Osmančík, Scheinost et al. 1995).

The scope of the issue (and especially the visible side of the sex trade, i.e. street prostitution) earned the Czech Republic a bad reputation in the international and mainly European context. According to a report by the Institute of Criminology and Social Prevention (IKSP 2004), the Czech Republic started to be viewed as a country where sexual services are offered freely. As an illustration, the report quoted a Resolution of the European Parliament for the Czech Republic dating from 4/10/2000: 'The Czech Republic should focus primarily on the issue of sex tourism, children's prostitution and trafficking of women in the border regions of the Czech Republic and Germany.'

Czech political representatives were aware of the bad reputation these issues were causing. In response they tried to shift the responsibility from the Czech Republic by also including the other part of the business, the clients of prostitutes, in the debate: 'We must point out that the problem of prostitution in the border areas is far from being an exclusively Czech affair. Most of the prostitutes' clients come from the other side of the border.' (IKSP 2004: 31)

The nationality of prostitutes' clients was mentioned in most of the Parliamentary debates on prostitution that took place in the 1990s. In fact, this was almost the only context in which the clients of prostitutes were mentioned at all in the public debate. In the first governmental report on prostitution (MVČR 1993) there is only one short phrase about the clients: 'The majority of the clients – customers for all kind of sexual services are foreigners, mostly the citizens of Germany.' (p. 7) In a subsequent report (MVČR 1999), the clients were presented as mostly citizens of Germany and Austria; in big towns such as Prague and Brno they were tourists coming from Western Europe.

The representatives of the municipalities also referred to the nationality of the 'sex tourists' when confronted with criticism from international institutions: 'Our country is often criticised for letting prostitution flourish. This "trade" is nonetheless supported exclusively by clients coming from Germany. We want our neighbours to be aware of this', said Petr Pípal, mayor of Dubí, a town affected by cross-border street prostitution [1], to journalists in 2007. Several campaigns by municipalities against prostitution directly targeted German clients – e.g. with the distribution of leaflets about STDs to Germans coming across the border (Matoušek 2004: 64) or the installation of cameras in front of erotic clubs and on the streets in Dubí, Cheb and Chomutov.

The stereotype of the 'western tourist, who is sought for and who comes to the Czech Republic in order to fulfil his sexual tastes that he cannot fulfil in his own country' (Matoušek 2004: 63) is still very persistent in the Czech public opinion. Nonetheless, according to the organisation Rozkoš bez rizika (Pleasure without Risks), the

percentage of Czech clients using the services of sex workers is growing and has now reached about 30%; in some clubs in the suburbs of Prague and in smaller towns they make up more than 60% (Malinová 2008). The discourse of clients from western countries has been of practical use to the public authorities. It served as a means to shift the guilt and to turn attention from 'us', our country, to 'them' – other countries. The 'sex tourism' thus played a significant role in the framing of prostitution as something external to the Czech society. This framing was further strengthened by the construction of prostitutes as minority or ethnically different women and migrants.

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[1] http://zpravy.idnes.cz/kamery-u-nevestincu-obhajime-veri-starosta-dubi-ft7/domaci.asp?c=A070709_164305_domaci_hos>

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Do Leisure-time Expenditures Differ by Housing Type?

Keywords: leisure time, inequalities, housing

In advanced countries housing is often an important factor in the socio-economic stratification of households (see e.g. Rex & Moore 1967, Somerville 2005). In other words, housing consumption is significantly related to different statuses of households in society and vice versa (the effect works in both directions). In the Czech Republic, like in other post-communist countries, (Donner 2006, Hegedüs, Struyk eds. 2006, Lux ed. 2003), where up until 1990 housing was deliberately uniform, pronounced differentiating trends emerged during the transformation period and brought the country closer to the situation in advanced countries.

The study most influential in moving the investigation of the class and stratification structure of society into the field of housing was that of Rex and Moore (1967), who began to use the term 'housing class'. The conclusion of this publication was that the quality and type of occupied housing is not just a result of social inequalities (measured, for instance, with the aid of stratification and class concepts) but that housing itself generates these social inequalities. Inspired by Rex and Moore's concept, Kostelecký (2005), for instance, investigated the links between respondents' attitudes on housing and 'classes of housing' using data from the survey 'Housing Attitudes in the Czech Republic 2001'. He concluded that belonging to a certain 'housing class' (classes were defined simply according to the legal occupancy status: 1. owner-occupancy, 2. cooperative, 3. rental, 4. other legal form of occupancy, including subletting and various forms of temporary housing such as dormitories etc.) has a statistically significant (after controlling for other variables such as income, housing costs, age, or education) effect on the general evaluation of the housing market situation in the CR, people's satisfaction with the housing they live in, ideas about the role of the state in the area of housing, and the evaluation of specific tools of the state applied in the area of housing (Kostelecký 2005: 268).

A paper by Lux et al. (Lux et al. 2011) investigated the relationship between social inequalities (measured with the ISEI – the International Socioeconomic Index of Occupational Status – of the household head) and inequalities in the area of housing (measured with various indicators) in the CR in 1999–2008 on data from the Household Budget Survey (HBS) conducted by the Czech Statistical Office (CSO). A statistically significant relationship was shown to exist between social stratification (the ISEI of the household head) and all four dimensions of inequality in the area of housing, but this relationship was very weak. In addition, the study did not confirm that rising

social inequalities in societies in transformation over time (the dynamic dimension of the analysis) also led to an increase in inequalities in the area of housing, which would correspond to the 'standard' development in advanced countries. According to the authors, the Czech Republic's housing policy was the reason for this specific development (the levelling of differences that was the result of the long period of rent regulation, the privatisation of the housing stock, and so on). The authors note that the assumptions of the 'classic theory of social stratification', according to which increasing differences in the socio-economic status of households should also become apparent in housing, were thus not fulfilled. Owing to the policy of the state, stronger social differentiation in the area of housing was thus to some degree deferred to the future.

The aim of this article is much more modest than that of the works cited above. If a significant connection exists in advanced countries between 'general' social stratification and inequalities in the area of housing (where a weak connection was also found for the CR), is there a connection between housing and average leisure-time expenditure in the Czech Republic? In other words, the aim of this article is to test the hypothesis of whether there are statistically significant differences in average leisure-time expenditures according to housing type.

The dataset used in the analysis was from the HBS 2009, which, after excluding a supplementary set of households (families with children and minimum income, the share of which did not correspond to the share in the population), amounted to 2901 households. The HBS observes household expenditures and provides information on their expenditure amounts and structure of consumption. The HBS is basically the only source of information on household expenditures in relation to incomes. The respondent households in the HBS are selected using the quota sampling method. The unit of selection and the reporting unit is an economic household, i.e. a set of individuals living together who share in expenditures (on food, household needs, maintenance, etc.). Since 2006 the basic selection characteristic has been the economic activity and occupational status of the household head. The household head is always the man, in incomplete households usually the parent. In non-family households the household head is the person with the highest income. Other selection criteria include: net income per household member, the number of dependent children for employee households and self-employed households; pension income per household member and number of members (in single-member households also the sex of the person) for households of seniors with no economically active members; municipality size and type of housing (ČSÚ 2011: 1-2).

The method used for testing was a simple dispersion analysis (One-Way ANOVA statistical SW SPSS, Scheffe test), where a comparison is

made of the statistical significance of the differences in the average share of expenditures on leisure time out of total consumption expenditures in relation to categories or classes of households determined by type of housing occupancy (rental, cooperative, owner-occupancy, and homeownership). Clearly, a number of factors can have an influence on the share of expenditures on leisure time out of total household expenditures – factors such as the economic status of household members, the size (number of members) of the household, the number of children, the amount of income, the age and education of the household head, etc. The significance of the type of occupancy as a differentiating factor should therefore be controlled for in relation to these other variables. Otherwise the type of housing occupancy could simply serve as a 'proxy' factor, which at first glance seems to have a significant differentiating effect on the share of leisure-time expenditures, but in reality it is, for instance, household income, or the number of children, or the age of the household head that determine the differences in relative leisure-time expenditures. In addition, it is possible to imagine an even more detailed categorisation of types of housing occupancy, as relative leisure-time expenditures may differ among tenants who pay market rent and tenants who pay regulated rent. Similarly, relative leisure-time expenditures of people who own their housing but are still paying off their mortgage (or any other credit) acquired to purchase the housing may differ from those who have already paid off their debt. Given the limited scope of this article, however, this kind of complex analysis was not conducted.

Figure 1 shows the average relative leisure-time expenditures for households categorised according to type of housing occupancy. The vertical line in the figure indicates the distance between the upper and lower lines of the 95% confidence interval for the average, the horizontal mark cutting across the line shows the value of the average (indicated in the description). It is clear from the figure that generally the differences in relative leisure-time expenditures for households with different types of housing occupancy are rather small. On average cooperative households had relatively the biggest leisure-time expenditures in 2009 (11.4% of their total expenditures), followed by households living in owner-occupied flats (10.8%), households of tenants (10.4%), and households living in their own home (10.1%). It is also apparent from the figure that the only two confidence intervals for the average that do not overlap are the confidence intervals for cooperative households and for households living in their own homes. Only in these two groups of households are there statistically significant differences in the average relative leisure-time expenditures, which was also confirmed by the Scheffe test.

Although the above findings must be taken with some reservation given the simplicity of the analysis described above, it seems that the type of housing occupancy plays only a very small

role in terms of relative leisure-time expenditures. Relative leisure-time expenditures differ very little by type of housing occupancy and a statistically significant difference was observed only for cooperative households and homeowner households. The hypothesis proposed above could therefore not be confirmed.

Figure 1: Share of relative leisure-time expenditures by type of housing occupancy



Source: FBS 2009, author's calculations.

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Forty Percent of Czech Households Cannot Afford a Week's Holiday!

Material Deprivation in the Czech Republic and European Countries

Keywords: inequalities, Europe, leisure time

Living conditions have awakened a greater interest by the European Union in social policy during the last decade. Common indicators were adopted in 2001 and include mainly income-based indicators of poverty and inequality. However, these indicators do not sufficiently reveal the differences among EU members, especially since the enlargements in 2004 and 2007 (European Commission, 2010). Therefore, a measure of material (and housing) deprivation was included among the range of social indicators in 2009.

Income-based indicators measured poverty only indirectly and focused on the financial resources that might not be sufficient to meet individuals' potential needs. Conversely, material deprivation was suggested as a way of quantifying poverty directly, that is, to capture the unmet need to possess basic items because of insufficient financial resources. The construction of material deprivation indices is based on following nine items (European Commission, 2010) indicating the ability to:

1. face unexpected expenses;
2. take a one-week annual holiday away from home;
3. cover payment arrears (mortgage or rent, utility bills, or hire purchase instalments);
4. eat a meal with meat, chicken or fish every second day;
5. keep the home warm enough;
6. have a washing machine;
7. have a colour TV;
8. have a telephone;
9. have a personal car.

Table 1 Selected items of material deprivation, households, 2008

	Holiday		of which:						Holiday		of which:					
	no	rank	rank	Meat	rank	Car	rank	Expenses	rank	rank	Meat	rank	Car	rank	Expenses	
	%	%	yes	%	yes	%	yes	%	yes	%	no	%	no	%	no	
DK	1	11.5	7	85.9	22	67.4	12	27.9	1	88.5	5	0.7	17	9.0	19	21.9
LU	2	12.0	5	88.4	5	85.4	16	24.7	2	88.0	4	0.6	1	0.4	9	12.1
SE	3	12.0	10	83.9	8	83.8	11	28.9	3	88.0	11	1.0	9	3.1	12	14.7
NL	4	16.4	4	89.8	12	78.5	10	29.6	4	83.6	10	1.0	13	4.6	11	12.6
FI	5	18.9	13	82.9	21	68.2	17	23.4	5	81.1	14	1.1	18	9.0	20	22.6
UK	6	23.5	11	83.4	7	83.9	21	19.5	6	76.5	7	0.9	6	1.8	8	12.0
DE	7	26.3	19	64.2	10	82.7	22	17.9	7	73.7	20	4.7	12	3.9	18	21.0
BE	8	28.0	14	81.7	13	77.9	8	33.7	8	72.0	13	1.0	8	2.9	5	9.0
AT	9	28.2	21	61.6	14	77.1	9	30.1	9	71.8	22	5.7	10	3.7	14	15.3
IE	10	30.8	3	90.5	17	75.0	20	19.8	10	69.2	3	0.5	11	3.8	21	23.8
LT	11	31.9	23	55.3	11	79.5	19	19.9	11	68.1	25	12.0	19	9.5	22	25.9
SI	12	33.3	17	65.8	4	87.3	23	17.6	12	66.7	19	4.4	4	1.2	23	29.7
ES	13	33.5	1	95.0	3	90.1	6	39.0	13	66.5	2	0.4	7	2.7	7	11.5
IT	14	39.4	12	83.0	2	92.4	7	38.1	14	60.6	16	1.7	3	1.2	10	12.5
CZ	15	40.2	16	72.5	15	76.7	13	27.1	15	59.8	18	3.9	14	4.9	17	17.5
EE	16	45.7	8	85.6	20	69.0	2	58.0	16	54.3	1	0.0	20	9.9	2	6.4
CY	17	47.2	6	86.9	1	96.7	14	27.0	17	52.8	9	1.0	2	1.0	16	16.2
GR	18	50.5	9	85.3	9	83.5	3	47.4	18	49.5	12	1.0	15	5.4	4	8.2
LV	19	56.7	22	57.4	23	63.5	24	17.4	19	43.3	23	7.4	24	15.6	24	32.7
SK	20	59.0	24	51.6	19	69.7	5	40.6	20	41.0	24	7.7	22	11.4	13	15.0
PL	21	62.5	18	65.7	16	76.2	15	24.9	21	37.5	17	2.4	16	8.4	15	15.8
PT	22	64.8	2	93.6	6	84.5	1	58.9	22	35.2	6	0.7	5	1.7	1	4.0
BG	23	66.7	25	42.2	24	62.9	25	7.9	23	33.3	8	0.9	23	12.6	6	11.3
HU	24	66.9	20	61.7	18	72.8	18	20.4	24	33.1	21	5.5	21	11.0	25	40.2
RO	25	76.0	15	73.0	25	48.0	4	46.1	25	24.0	15	1.6	25	21.7	3	6.6

Source: EUSILC UDB 2008 – version 3 of March 2011. Author's computations.

Notes: The answers correspond to the following questions. Holiday: Can your whole household afford to go for a week's annual holiday, away from home? Meat: Can your household afford a meal with meat, chicken, fish (or vegetarian equivalent) every second day? Car: Does your household have a car/van for private use? 'Yes' includes having a car as well as other reasons for not having a car while 'no' means cannot afford (i.e. material deprivation). Expenses: Can your household afford an unexpected required expense X (the amount differs across countries) and pay through its own resources? The amount was 7500 CZK in the Czech Republic in 2008

Countries are ranked according to the best performance in terms of deprivation (e.g. country with the lowest share of households that cannot afford a holiday is ranked first; country with the highest share of households that can afford meat is ranked first).

Material deprivation is measured in two ways: first, as the deprivation rate, which is the share of individuals whose household cannot afford at least three of these nine items; second, as the intensity of deprivation, which is the mean number of lacked items.

The importance of including material deprivation among other poverty indicators is stressed in a study by the European Commission (2010). The Czech Republic is one of the countries with the lowest at-risk-of-poverty rate [1] (10%, as in the Netherlands, while the EU-average is 16%). Conversely, the Czech Republic has an EU-average performance on deprivation rate (roughly 16%) [2].

Not only the total deprivation rate or the intensity of deprivation warrant mentioning. The

composition of the deprived items in particular households is also worth noting: 19% of Czechs experienced an 'enforced lack' of one item while only 1% cannot afford at least six items (European Commission, 2010). There is a variety of household preferences about which of the included items households afford and which they cannot afford. Table 1 shows material deprivation in relation to selected items with the focus on holiday. A total of 40% of Czech households cannot afford to pay for a week's holiday away from home, which ranks the Czech Republic 15th in the EU (excluding Malta and France). Not surprisingly, the new EU member states [3] are located in the bottom part of Table 1.

The share of Czech households that cannot afford a one-week holiday is much higher for some types of households. The situation is the worst among single-parent households – 60% of them cannot afford a holiday. It is not only single parents who feel they lack the money for holiday: one-half of singles and nearly the same share of two-adult households with three or more children cannot afford a holiday.

Although 40% of Czech households cannot afford a holiday, roughly three-quarters of them can afford to eat meat every second day and have a car for private use, but only 27% are able to cope with unexpected expenses. At the opposite end, 60% of Czech households can afford a holiday, whereas 4% of them cannot afford meat, 5% have no car and 18% are unable to cope with unexpected expenses. These figures rank the Czech Republic again slightly below the EU average in performance on item deprivation (rank between 13 and 18, see Table 1).

Item deprivation varies significantly among countries. The rank of the countries according to their performance on item deprivation shows a relative consistency in the Czech Republic. Conversely, Portugal, for instance, is a country where a high share of households cannot afford a holiday but a relatively high share of them can afford meat and a car, and, moreover, it has the largest share of households who can cope with unexpected expenses. This suggests that many Portuguese households sacrifice a holiday rather than not being prepared for unexpected circumstances. Similarly, among the relatively small share of those who can afford a holiday there is a small percentage of households who cannot afford meat, do not have a car and cannot face unexpected expenses. Generally, Portugal performs well on meat, car and unexpected expenses but not well on the holiday item.

On the other hand, the share of households that cannot afford a holiday is relatively small in Finland. However, Finland performs much worse on deprivation on car and unexpected expenses in international comparison: only 68% of holiday-deprived households have a car and 23% can cope with unexpected expenses. Conversely, 9% of those who can afford a holiday do not have a car and even 23% cannot afford to pay for unexpected expenses. It seems that Finland (and similarly in Denmark) performs well on holiday deprivation but much worse on the other analysed items.

Generally, item deprivation is highest for holiday and unexpected expenses (out of all nine measured items) in all countries. While the figures are balanced in the Czech Republic, the material item deprivations for holiday and unexpected expenses differ greatly in some countries. Deprivation for unexpected expenses is substantially higher than it is for holidays in Denmark, Finland, Slovenia, Germany, Lithuania, and Sweden. Apparently, these households prefer a holiday over saving for unexpected situations. The opposite is true in

Portugal, Romania, Estonia, and Greece, where it appears that many households prefer to sacrifice a holiday rather than not being prepared for unexpected circumstances.

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[1] The at-risk-of-poverty rate is calculated as the percentage of individuals whose household equivalised income is below the threshold set at 60% of the national household equivalised median income.

[2] The data from the European Commission (2010) are drawn from the EU-SILC 2007.

[3] Countries that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007.

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Analysis of Income Inequalities [1]

Keywords: inequalities, Europe, labour market

Since the fall of the Iron Curtain and the establishment of democracy income inequalities and poverty rates have become subjects of discussion in both the Czech Republic and other former communist countries. The theme of income inequalities is important not just for sociologists and economists but also for politicians, especially in connection with putting the right social system in place in the country. Income policy (minimum wage settings) and various social transfers (support in unemployment, retirement pensions, the child allowance, etc.) have an impact not just on curbing poverty in the country but also on income inequality among individuals and households.

Numerous authors in Europe and around the world have already examined this issue. An interesting period in the development of this discussion was during the fall of communism and the transition from a centrally planned to a market economy, when it was assumed that the former communist countries would experience a sharp rise in income inequalities. Contrary to these assumptions, Garner and Terrell (1998) showed that in the Czech Republic and Slovakia the transition to a market economy did not cause increased income inequalities in 1989 – 1993 and in 1993 these two countries moreover

had among the lowest levels of income inequality in the world. A slight and almost

negligible increase in income inequalities was also recorded during this period by Večerník (1995). In a later study, however, Večerník (2010) showed that income inequalities had actually risen in the Czech Republic between 1989 and 2007. Nevertheless, as Atkinson (2008) explains, the rise in income inequalities was recorded not just in the countries undergoing economic transformation but also in the other OECD countries.

In this study we will take a closer look at wage inequalities in 26 European countries in 2007 and attempt to explain these inequalities by examining the distribution of inequalities across different categories of workers (by sex and highest attained level of education). The source of data for this study, like in the study by Večerník (2010), is the EU-SILC database for 2007.

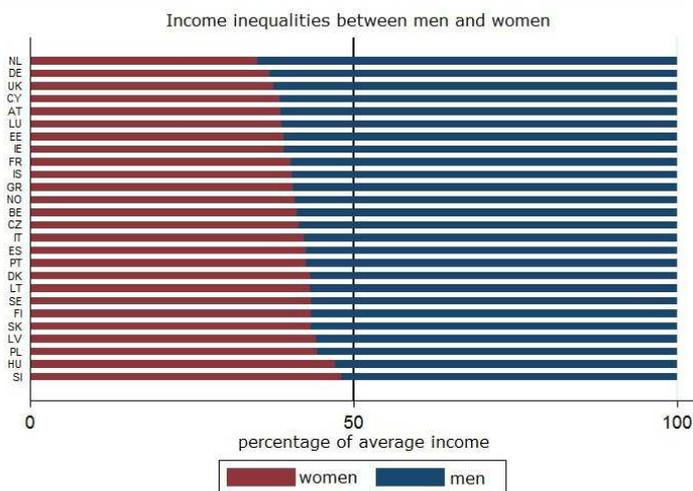
According to Atkinson's classification (2008) of data suitable for selection as an income variable wages and wage inequalities of individuals were calculated using annual gross incomes of individuals in euro, including bonuses and social benefits, namely the retirement pension, widow's/widower's pension, orphan's pension, health and disability benefits, and student stipends. Also entered into the analysis are wages of employed persons (full or part time) between the ages of 18 and 65, excluding self-employed persons if the self-employment activity is their primary employment. Thanks to the broad scope of the EU-SILC database it was possible to focus on the gross income of individuals and divide individuals into various groups by sex, highest attained level of education, and profession.

Wage inequalities are most often observed using the GINI coefficient (in the range from 0 to 1) and a 90 : 10 ratio of the income percentile, which represents a comparison of a wage level earned by the 10 per cent of employees with the highest wages and the 10 per cent of employees with the lowest wages. Table 1 presents selected countries and their indicators of wage inequalities and their ranking in wage inequalities among the 26 European states under observation.

Tab. 1: Indicators of income inequalities for selected countries

P90/P10 ranking	Country	P90/P10	P80/P20	GINI ranking	GINI coefficient	Number of individuals
1	Denmark	3,02	1,86	1	0,26	2 173 779
2	Czech Republic	3,42	2,20	5	0,28	3 814 078
3	Slovakia	3,62	2,16	2	0,26	2 199 646
5	Norway	3,79	2,06	3	0,28	1 968 270
6	Finland	4,08	2,11	7	0,29	1 957 585
7	Sweden	4,18	2,07	4	0,28	3 793 254
17	Lithuania	6,08	3,26	17	0,37	1 407 632
19	Latvia	6,22	3,22	20	0,37	925 218
22	Portugal	6,85	3,01	26	0,43	3 850 583
23	Ireland	7,76	3,77	24	0,39	1 466 966
24	Poland	9,15	3,30	23	0,38	12 403 315
25	Germany	10,20	3,82	19	0,37	31 529 261
26	Greece	12,48	3,61	25	0,40	3 039 577

Fig. 1: Distribution of average wages of men and women (100% represents the sum of men's and women's wages)

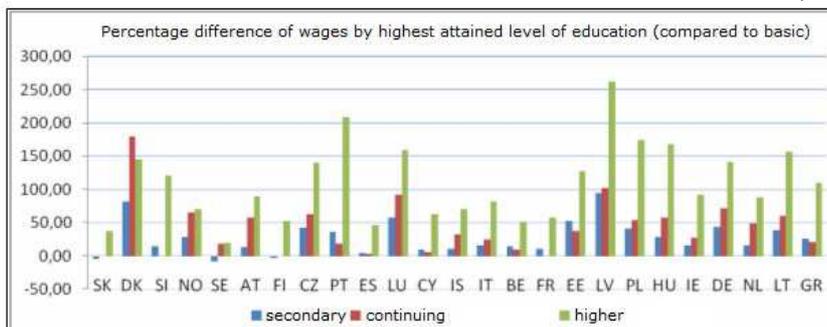


By calculating total wage inequalities with the GINI coefficient and the 90 : 10 income percentile ratio it is possible to identify the countries with the least inequalities, among which rank mainly the Nordic countries (Denmark, Norway, Finland, and Sweden), but also the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The high ranking of Finland and Sweden was confirmed by the low diversification of average wages among workers with different attained levels of education (Fig. 2). Conversely, when analysing wage inequalities by sex (Fig. 1), Denmark, which has the lowest wage differentiation of all countries, has the biggest differences between

inequalities among men and women, where there is a jump of as much of 7 hundredths of the GINI coefficient (with higher wage inequalities among men). The biggest differences between the average wages of men and women are in the Netherlands, where men earn on average as much as 80 per cent more than women. Conversely, the greatest wage equality between men and women is in Slovenia, where wage inequality overall is low (Fig. 1).

At the opposite end are the countries with the greatest wage inequality – Ireland, Portugal, Germany, Poland and Greece. Albrecht and Albrecht (2007) claim that in countries with high wage inequality it is difficult for the poorest citizens to attain a better living standard. Their living standard is determined more by family background than by effort and ability. In the case of the countries observed in this study we found that although Ireland has among the greatest wage inequalities, the differences between the average wages of people with different attained levels of education are actually among the smallest in Ireland (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2: Percentage comparison of wages by highest attained level of education to basic education



Source: SILC 2007

Wage inequalities in former communist countries vary considerably. At one end wage inequalities are relatively small in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, while a slight rise can be observed in Hungary, and there are big wage inequalities in Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia. In the Czech Republic and Slovakia we can explain this trend through the expansion of the distribution of income inequality, but only at the top end. A sharp rise of interest in higher education increases the size of the highly paid workforce and thus does not increase the differences in incomes between the ends of the distribution. Conversely, Latvia has exhibited the biggest increase in wages along the educational hierarchy, where a university educated worker earns on average three times as much as a worker with basic education. Hungary also occupies a middle position in wage inequalities according to the highest attained level of education and in the case of differences between the average wages of men and women Hungary ranks among the countries with the smallest gender wage inequalities.

Our study shows that even in 2007 the Czech Republic and Slovakia had among the smallest wage inequalities in Europe, despite the transition from a centrally planned to a market economy. Other former communist countries (Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Hungary) are in the other half of the distribution of countries – the countries with the biggest wage inequalities. The different development can be explained through the strong interest in higher education in the Czech Republic and Slovakia after 2004 and well-targeted social policy to combat deepening wage inequalities.

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Information on a publication and research

Zich, František, editor, 2010. 'Sociální potenciál v sociologické reflexi. Sociální potenciál starého průmyslového regionu – případ Mostecka.' (Social Potential in Sociological Reflection: The Social Potential of an Old Industrial Region – the Case of the Most Region) Acta Universitatis Purkynianae 162, Studia Sociologica, Ústí nad Labem: UJEP

In 2008–2010 a research project was conducted at the Faculty of Social and Economic Studies at Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem. The project was titled 'The State and Activation of the Social Potential of Old Industrial Regions' and it was supported by the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic, and the project's principal investigator was František Zich, currently also the editor of the majority of publications that have emerged out of the project. The most important such publication is an edited monograph, which is the subject of this text. Both the project and the publication are noteworthy for the findings resulting from the analytical stage of the project and for the innovative conceptual approach used. It compares the old industrial region of Most, specifically the districts of Most and Chomutov, to the South Bohemian region of Tábor, specifically the districts of Písek and Tábor. The data for the research are drawn from a questionnaire survey conducted among the populations of these two regions.

The innovative conceptual approach applied in the project was developed out of the project investigators' critical reflections on the concept of 'social capital' and a comparison of empirical findings and social capital. They concluded that it is necessary to distinguish between possibility and the fulfilment of possibility: potential and capital. Here I shall quote from the first, theoretical chapter of the publication (p. 18), which substantiates the distinction and defines these two concepts: 'Capital is associated with action, potential is the precondition for its realisation. Making this distinction between potential and capital we can say that it applies to all forms of capital, i.e. every form of capital, human, cultural, economic, regional, and so on, has its potential (in this sense each potential is broader than capital). Potential and capital are in a complementary relationship.' The concept of social capital can take as many different forms as there are ambitions lodged in it. The distinction between potential and capital reveals an effort to give more specific use to the

concept. I believe, alongside others for whom the concept of social capital represented the promise of surmounting the dilemma of individual vs. society, that choosing the term 'social capital' for the social phenomenon it is supposed to represent was not a good choice. I am not sure that the distinction between possibility and its fulfilment, potential and social capital, is a starting point.

The results of the research are presented in several chapters. Social potential and its related aspects – social networks, trust, social responsibility, and solidarity – are the subject of two chapters. The issue of social work, understood as institutionally providing for socially deprived individuals, is the subject of the next chapter. Space is devoted to the problem of job opportunities and employment in the North Bohemian region. The final subject in the book is the innovative behaviour of populations and institutions in both of the studied regions.

The publication certainly presents interesting findings based on good empirical research and the provocative use of the concept of social capital in the interpretations warrants attention. However, I cannot help but recall another publication, Petr Pavlínek's doctoral study, which, using the example and thorough knowledge of the old industrial region of the district of Most, attempted to interpret the complex changes that occurred in Central Europe after 1990. Pavlínek's book (Pavlínek, P., 1997. Economic Restructuring and Local Environmental Management in the Czech Republic. New York, The Edwin Mellen Press) perhaps ought not to have been absent from the list of references, because there are not after all too many works focusing on the Most region.

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