The census problems in the society passing from the totality to the democracy

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Censuses in the Czech

- Long history
- Maybe you remember...
Before 1897

- Some statistical events were conducted before establishing the office
  - 1770 - “census” for military reasons on the Towns of Prague, comprising a list of “men and beasts of draugh”
  - at that time list of houses (land registry numbers) existed
Advanced Population Censuses

- 1857
- 1869
- 1880
- 1890
- 1900
- 1910
- 1921 (CR)
- 1930
- 1950
- 1961
- 1970
- 1980

- 1991
- 2001
1991 - first census after “revolution”

- there was a real problem to persuade people to take part in it
- bad experience with a variety of lists and registers
- a newly regained liberty influenced the results of the census (religion, nationality)
2001

- the first population census in the „democratic“ society where the people fully realized:
  - their rights
  - not their duties
- underestimated change of atmosphere
Problems

- we could not influence all of the problems
- but we could at least eliminate or moderate some of them
- we have been trying - ex post unfortunately - to define the basic problems accompanying the census and to formulate everything we had underestimated:
1) public view of the State activities

- the people began to protect their private lives more
- the State is no more authority for them
- understanding the democracy as the possibility to do what they want
2) Dealing with media

- We were thinking naively that everybody (including the politicians and journalists) would understand the importance and the necessity of the census!!!

→ low budget
Dealing with media

- good reputation - the publicity of the State Office is not a single matter and it takes a lot of time to create a good reputation – not only few months before the “big bang”.
- CZSO strategy = “better not to be seen than if anybody should write about us something bad”
- the well-known journalist rule “good news is no news
- only 1 responsible person
Dealing with media

We didn’t:

- inform in advance about the purpose of the results
- publish the contents of the census forms in advance
- explain the sense of purpose of the birth number
- ...

3) The formation of the OPDP

- OPDP = Office for Personal Data Protection
- This office had to find the platform and to defend (explain) the reasons for its own existence
- The census was exactly the “appropriate” action suitable for them to draw the attention
The law said “the number of live born children”. During the pilot survey the expression “live born” seemed too sensitive, the formulation had been changed for “all children” only. But:

- OPDP decided us to have to liquidate “the number of children from the present or last marriage” because it differed from the law.
4) The changes in the ownership of houses and flats

- “de iure” system, according to the place of the permanent residence
- the flat is occupied → at least one person is permanently registered in it.
- the flat permanently occupied with persons or the families who are there only “temporarily” = non occupied
- → that began the favourite theme for the querying of the results credibility.
5) the declaratory questions during the last censuses

- some changes appeared that were foreseeable and the statistics ought to be prepared to explain them and comment on them
  - religion
  - nationality
And so on....
Did we do at least anything that would be worth following?

- The logo

- Posters – public transport - buses, metro, train...

- Leaflets – information services..., households

- New Year cards

- TV shot, radio advertisement

- Screen saver
... anything that would be worth following?

- **The Internet presentation**
  - system of pages which presents the census in its complexity and the history
  - be as open as we can → preliminary and intermediate results
  - fun
Sčítání lidu, domů a bytů

Průběžné výsledky sčítání lidu, domů a bytů 2001

Vítáme Vás na stránkách sčítání lidu, domů a bytů, které se konalo k 1. březnu roku 2001.

Sčítání lidu (populační census, soupis obyvatelstva) zjišťuje údaje o stavu obyvatelstva k určitému okamžiku. Jedná se o vyčerpávající, tedy uplné sčítání na celém území státu.

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... be worth following?

- Dwellings - we published analysis on this topic – but EX POST
- put it on the internet, sent to newspapers
Results?

- almost all inhabitants of the Czech Republic – the homeless people, foreigners and the problem minorities inclusive (in our estimation we didn’t count less than 1 %)

← we succeeded in getting of the high-quality people for the interviewing

- we are getting well with the processing schedule and the results publishing
Results!

- The first preliminary results appeared on web **three months** after the census,
- than appeared intermediate results,
- next month: the press conference about the definitive results
- publishing...
Message for the next generation?

- to begin with the preparation and the education of the public for the following census immediately after the publishing of the previous census results,
- to explain to all people how are the personal data useful even for them, what can bring to them and that it is correct to tell the truth to the statistics,
- and above all to persuade all about the importance to perform the census.....
We have learned from our mistakes (we hope so!) and in future (if there will be some future!) everything will be prepared better, harmonized more etc.