Research of public administration employees in the Czech Republic

Research of public administrative structures is based on the traditional understanding of officials (public policy analysts in the Anglo-Saxon tradition) as impartial executors of well-defined tasks from their superior political decision-makers. This traditional approach, based on the ideas of Max Weber and others, has, however, been recently challenged by numerous studies pointing out the complex nature of everyday work of public-administrative staff which goes beyond normal routine actions. These studies, particularly the Canadian, Dutch and British ones, together with the theoretical concepts of the role of officials in policy-making processes, stood at the birth of a specific orientation of public-administrative research into the nature of activities of employees of public administration institutions (policy work research).

A research team from the Institute of Sociological Studies FSV CU, led by Dr. Arnošt Veselý, conducted research into the activities of the staff of Czech ministries and regional authorities. Two quantitative surveys were used for the research to identify the activities, tasks and methods of interaction in the everyday activities of these workers. In order to obtain sufficient added value, the survey of the ministerial staff also focused on ascertaining their professional capabilities, values, accountability and politicisation.

The main research results so far known demonstrate the significant diversification of workflow incl. ways of interaction (superiors, colleagues, clients, other offices) in comparison with sparse quantitative data analysis and evaluation. The available records also demonstrate a low level of appointing directly politically engaged people to managerial positions in ministries (except for the positions of deputies). Overall, the research results suggest that thanks to the use of various professional-administrative styles, current public administration employees of the Czech Republic take on some defining features of a professional bureaucracy so far attributed to members of the regulated professions.

Selected outputs