

A BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF CZECH HISTORICAL DEMOGRAPHY^{*)}

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Abstract: The study provides a brief outline of the development of approach to the population history in the Czech lands until the 1950s. Then it deals with the establishment of historical demography as an independent scientific discipline after the Second World War and the reception of its impulses in this country (contacts with French historical demographers, the establishment of the Commission for Historical Demography and its yearbook *Historická demografie* in 1967, with a focus on the questions of population change within the former state plan and after 1989 within grant projects, international cooperation, etc).

Historical demography established itself as an independent scientific discipline after the Second World War, first in France and then in the UK. It produced its most interesting findings between the 1950s and 1970s, when economic and social historians began focusing on historical structures and processes and in this research began making significant use of quantitative methods. Historical demography has had a harder time establishing a dialogue with contemporary, anthropologically oriented history, but it nonetheless remains an important component of historical knowledge, as demographic structures and long-term trends form the vital context of people's behaviour, forming, in a sense, the frame for each individual's unique perception of the world and each individual's independent decisions.

Interest in applying a concerted approach to the study of past demographic phenomena emerged among the ranks of historians and demographers after the Second World War. Demographers were primarily interested in obtaining a deeper understanding of patterns of demographic development, a necessary precondition for successful demographic forecasting. Understanding the significance of knowledge about the nature of demographic phenomena in the past was in both fields accompanied by an awareness of the need for developing a joint method for both fields and sharing 'each other's methodology, and this soon produced some remarkable results. The methodological stimuli that arose out of this close cooperation soon found appeal in the ranks of Czech historiography and demography. However, like in other

^{*)} This article was published in *Demografie*, 2008, 50 (4), p. 268–275. The contents of the journal are published on the website of the Czech Statistical Office at: <http://www.czso.cz/csu/redakce.nsf/i/demografie>

This overview was prepared as part of work on a research project supported by MŠMT ČR MSM 0021620827 České země uprostřed Evropy v minulosti a dnes, conducted at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague, and out of the revision and elaboration of previous studies: Eduard Maur, *Débuts, développement et état actuel de la démographie historique en République tchèque*. In *Prager Wirtschafts- und Sozialhistorische Mitteilungen*, Bd 3, Praha 1996, p. 21–35 and Eduard Maur: *K problematice historické demografie*. *Časopis Matice moravské*, Supplementum I/2001 – Historie a interdisciplinární výzkum, p. 77–86. There is indicated in the literature extensively. In this overview I present only the most important older works and to a greater extent more recent work not included in the cited studies. Other informative work worth mentioning from which to draw information about the development of Czech historical demography are in particular the work of P. Horská, L. Fialová and periodical bibliography published in *Historical Demography*. See Horská, P. – Havránek, J. *Historická demografie do roku 1985*. *Historický časopis SAV* 34, 1986, p. 403–423; Horská, P. *Česká historická demografie*. *Český časopis historický*, 89, 1991, p. 519–542; Fialová, L. *Dějiny obyvatelstva České republiky a francouzští demografové*. In *Francouzská inspirace pro společenskou vědu v českých zemích*, Praha, CEFRES 2003 (Cahiers du CEFRES 29), p. 197–204. See also Fialová, L. – Kačerová, E. – Maur, E. – Matějů, J. – Melkesová, M. – Slabová, I. – Vránová, G. *Výběrová bibliografie české historické demografie za období 2000–1996 (recte 2006)*. In *Historická demografie*, 2007, 31, p. 211–246.

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countries, in this country the interest in the history of its population dates from a much earlier time, starting with the Enlightenment statisticians of the second half of the 18th century. It evolved along two lines: in the field of history and in the field of demography – but unfortunately with little contact between the two.

Czech historians were initially interested in determining the total population of the Czech lands and the changes to population size over time, for example, in connection with the Thirty Years War. In the late 19th century more critical perspectives revised the originally uncritical ideas of František Palacký and other authors, and the range of source materials for the study of population change was expanded, in particular by the inclusion of the use of sources that were initially developed for tax records (the tax rolls created in the period before the Battle of White Mountain and later land registers), but also with the use of other records, such as a census of the population of Bohemia according to religion, taken in 1651, or the so-called salt list dating from 1702. This stage in the study of population growth in Bohemia more or less culminated in 1957 in Otto Plachta's book *Lidnatost a společenská skladba českého státu v 16.–18. století* (Populousness and the social structure of Czech state in the 16th–18th centuries; 1957), smaller-scale works in this area however continue to be published to date.

Alongside the study of the population of Bohemia and Moravia as a whole, the study of population growth in individual Bohemian and Moravian towns also began advancing in the second half of the 19th century. Methodology also gradually progressed in this area of study, which initially derived its population size estimates from the known numbers of houses (W. W. Tomek, Z. Winter), and later from the number of taxpayers (B. Mendl, J. Marek), and increasing attention began to be paid to parallels in Europe. Population estimates were usually closely linked to the study of the social and the socio-occupational structure of individual towns, peaking with the production of numerous such studies in the 1950s and 1960s. Over time, the attention of historians (starting with Pekař's *Kniha o Kosti* – 'The book about Kost'; 1909–1911) turned to locally oriented research on the socio-occupational, property, and later also the demographic structure of the rural population, and they drew mainly on land registers and serf lists from the 17th and 18th centuries. The study of immigration to some towns in the pre-industrial age was also of great interest and had a partly nationalistic subtext to it. A characteristic feature of these studies was the clear absence of influence of demographic theory and demographic methodology, and especially the almost total neglect of the reproduction of the population, that is, specifically those phenomena on which demographers primarily base their interest. Therefore, it is more appropriate to refer to these works as population histories rather than historical demography.

Alongside historians, some demographers also studied population change in the Czech lands, and their approach to the topic was more complex. First mention must be made of Antonín Boháč, who in *Československá vlastivěda* (National history and geography of Czechoslovakia; 1936) published the first overview of population processes in Czechoslovakia from prehistoric to contemporary times. Even he did not avoid committing that same 'sin' we criticised above as committed by historians: he failed fully to take into account historians' findings about the quality of the individual sources he drew on, but notwithstanding this his study was excellent. Mention should also be made of František Dvořák, who following intense archive research published in 1923–1926 data on population conscription in the Czech lands since 1754. Tying in with these pioneering works, in the 1950s Vladimír Srb, Milan Kučera, and Zdeněk Vávra published their works on population processes in the Czech lands in the 19th and 20th centuries, enriching Boháč's overview with more detailed analyses of the reproduction and the application of a wider perspective to diverse economic aspects. The most important historically oriented study by Czech demographers at that time was *Nástin populačního vývoje světa* (An outline of world population processes; 1964) by Zdeněk Pavlík. In it, and in many other studies, Pavlík substantially discussed the theoretical issue of de-

mographic revolution. Later he edited and largely himself wrote the most thorough Czech textbook on demography (1986), in which considerable space was devoted to the history of the population and population thought. Milan Kučera later extended his historical scope to take in the period after 1918.

Czech historians' first contacts with demography occurred in the late 1950s, primarily owing to the broad interest the contemporary young generation took in economic and social history and their efforts to deepen their theoretical foundations and methodology by means of an interdisciplinary approach. The most important outcome of these efforts was Ludmila Kárníková's excellent *Vývoj obyvatelstva v českých zemích 1754–1918* (Population processes in the Czech lands 1754–1918; 1965); unfortunately, the author tragically died before completing her work. The monograph was especially remarkable for its analysis of population processes in different economic-social regions, which led the author to make some interesting conclusions about the reciprocal relationship between social and geographic mobility, economic activity, fertility, mortality, and other aspects of society's development. Similar results were produced by studies from other authors like Jan Havránek and Pavla Horská, who focused on the impact of the Industrial Revolution on Central European society.

Another step in the process of establishing Czech historical demography and advancing its theoretical foundations came in the 1960s with the formation of contacts abroad, in particular contacts with French representatives of the field. Václav Husa in particular was instrumental in this (until his untimely death in 1965), as well as Pavla Horská, who was mainly involved in fostering cooperation with Louis Henry and Jacques Dupâquier. In 1963 Professor Husa was the first in this country to try to assemble important historians (Ludmila Kárníková, Alena Šubrtová, and others) and demographers (František Fajfr) in a working group concentrating on historical demography; the group was attached to the Department of Czechoslovak History and Archive Studies at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University. However, around that time other academic centres independently began working in the field of historical demography, in particular the History Department at the Pedagogy Faculty in Ostrava, where the new field began to establish itself mainly owing to the initiative of Milan Myška. Following Husa's death, the character of the Prague group changed somewhat, and instead of coordinating tasks, it set itself the goal of focusing mainly on archivists and regional staff to work on specific fixed-scope research tasks and to exchange theoretical experiences. At the initiative of Josef Macek the Historical Demography Committee at the Institute of History of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences was founded in 1967 as a coordination centre and it brought together both Czech and Slovak historians. That same year the Committee began publishing the *Historická demografie* (Historical Demography) yearbook, which is still published today. At that time Czechoslovakia was one of the few countries, headed by France, in which historical demographers had their own journal.

Owing to developments in Czechoslovakia after 1968, the coordination of further research in the field of historical demography became centred at the Czechoslovak (now the Czech) Demographic Society, while following its forced 'reorganisation' in 1975 the Historical Demography Committee essentially ceased to function. The chair of the Committee, Pavla Horská, was forced to leave her post; the yearbook was not published for another decade; and people with absolutely no connection to historical demography were appointed to the Committee. However, individuals interested in historical demography were successfully assembled in an expert group for historical demography under the Czechoslovak Demographic Society, headed by Pavla Horská. The group regularly organised colloquia and discussions involving participation from historians and demographers. They managed in the 1970s to get topics in historical demography included on the National Scientific Research Plan. What was significant about that was this it occurred in connection with demographic and sociological not historical work, as at that time history was subject to much stronger ideological surveillance than other fields.

The activities of the working group attached to the Department of Czechoslovak History also came to a halt, but most of the group's members moved to a newly founded working group for historical demography that was attached to Archive Administration at the Ministry of the Interior; this group was headed by Eliška Čáňová and it became the new base for the research under way as part of the above-mentioned National Scientific Research Plan.

Gradually, and primarily thanks to Ludmila Fialová following her arrival at the Institute of Czechoslovak and World History at the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, the Committee was revived and in 1983 publication of its yearbooks was also renewed. Both centres of research, the Committee and the expert group, began to work closely together, especially in the organisation of social science meetings, which sometimes drew participation from other institutions. A number of these meetings received a strong response, such as *Populační vývoj českých zemí do roku 1914* (Population development in the Czech lands before 1914; 1987), or *Dějiny migrací v českých zemích v novověku* (The history of migration in the Czech lands in the early modern period; 2005), and the international colloquia *Stáří a dějiny* (Old age and history; 1989), *Francouzsko-český dialog o rodině* (French-Czech dialogue on the family; 1992), *Fenomén čelední služby v Evropě v 16.–20. století* (The phenomenon of domestic service in Europe in the 16th–20th centuries; 1996), and *Česko-francouzský dialog o dějinách rodiny* (Czech-French dialogue on the history of the family; 2000). The papers presented at these meetings were published either in special issues of the journal *Historická demografie* or in the *Acta Demographica* (XIII) publishing series. From the second half of the 1970s historical demography courses were successfully added to the curriculum for the professional training of historians and archivists, first in Prague and eventually at other universities. In 1989 new opportunities for international cooperation and new publishing opportunities at home opened up for Czech historical demography. Pavla Horská, the initiator and tireless organiser of all the above-mentioned activities, returned as the head of the Committee, which continues to operate to date. Alongside the traditional institutions devoted to historical demography and training young historical demographers (Faculty of Arts of Charles University in Prague, Ostrava University), others gradually joined in, such as the Faculty of Science of Charles University in Prague (Ludmila Fialová) and the universities in Brno (Zdeněk Háza), in České Budějovice (Josef Grulich), and Pardubice (Alice Velková, Eduard Maur). When the Faculty of Science of Charles University began teaching historical demography the field began acquiring young, professionally trained demographers, while previously it had consisted primarily of historians.

Thanks to the systematic efforts of a small circle of workers assembled around the Committee and the Society, as well as other individuals, over the past four decades historical demography has established itself firmly on the pages of Czech scholarly periodicals. In addition to the journal *Historická demografie*, whose regular publication, high quality of content, and good graphic style is due to the work of its devoted editor, Ludmila Fialová, we can also find historical demography on the pages of *Demografie*, *Sborník pedagogické fakulty v Ostravě* (Yearbook of the Pedagogical Faculty in Ostrava) (today the Faculty of Arts of Ostrava University), *Sborník archivních prací* (Yearbook of Archive Studies), *Archivní časopis* (Archive Journal), *Slezský sborník* (Silesian Yearbook), *Acta demographica* and *Acta Universitatis Carolinae*, and in some regional periodicals like the *Jihočeský sborník historický* (South Bohemian Historical Yearbook). The studies printed on these pages deal with several basic issues. Primary attention, especially in the early stages, was devoted to documenting and criticising sources stemming from the pre-statistics period and the potential usefulness of such sources (Eliška Čáňová, Josef Křivka, Eduard Maur, Vladimír Srb, and later Petra Berrová, etc.). Methodological issues have also been the subject of lively discussion, with the main emphasis put on drawing inspiration from French and British historical demography. Czech paleodemography became very successful (Milan Stloukal) and was able to take ad-

vantage of a unique opportunity to make use of extensive archaeological finds dating from the period of the Great Moravian Empire. Research on population and the social and ethnic structure of towns continued, and the findings from this research were recently summarised by František Šmahel and František Hoffman. At the same comments were also formulated on the limits to the methods used to date and on the possibilities offered by new methodological approaches, in particular prosopography (Jaroslav Čechura, Martin Nodl). Attention turned anew to the study of medieval mortality, in particular the demographic crises of the 14th and early 15th centuries, a topic long overlooked by Czech historians, although one that has played an important role in European discussions explaining the so-called crisis of the late Middle Ages. In the search for the preconditions of the Hussite Revolution, the thesis of this author was followed up on by František Šmahel and Petr Čornej, while younger authors (J. Čechura, M. Nodl) have taken a more critical view of the influence of this crisis. It is regrettable that Antonín Kostlan's dissertation on Czech agrarian development in the 15th and 16th centuries has never been published. It documents in great detail the impact of the depopulation of the Czech lands in the 15th century and the subsequent population increase in the next century.

In research on the early modern age the attention of historical demographers has concentrated mainly on the 17th and 18th centuries, which are especially rich in sources. Owing to the more modest number of sources available, the period before the Battle of White Mountain has been insufficiently studied. Between 1600 and 1800 the study of demographic structures and population dynamics, especially various aspects of the natural increase of the population, previously overlooked, began to develop. Study especially focused on the effects of the Thirty Years War on the demographic structure of Bohemia and the further development of its population after 1648, including the impact of demographic changes on feudal relationships. Natality and Mortality were studied mainly by using local micro-studies, with which it was possible to analyse the given issue in greater depth than when using data for the entire country. These studies drew mainly on parish registers and population lists for individual demesnes or parishes. Such research was conducted partly within the framework of the above-mentioned National Scientific Research Plan and partly outside it. The first outcome of the coordinated research was the aggregation of data on natality, mortality and nuptiality for the period between 1650 and 1850 based on registers from 15 parishes in Bohemia and Moravia, the results of which were published in 1981. From this it was possible to make a detailed examination of the links between the economy, the population, and demographic crises. This research was followed by a study of register data using the Henry method of family reconstitution. From the data collected so far the results for four localities have been published (Domažlice, Budyně nad Ohří, Jablonec nad Nisou, Břevnov; Broumov is still in progress), and later a reconstruction for Brno and its surrounding area was created outside the framework of this research (P. Brabcová).

In the 1990s Ludmila Fialová was behind the revival of a project applying aggregate techniques on exploitation of parish register data. From this it is not possible to make as thorough an analysis as with reconstitution, but it is less time-consuming and thus more productive. The original project was enriched with the introduction of methodological innovations introduced in the 1970s by the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure and was coordinated by INED in Paris. In the first stage, the registers from 44 Bohemian and Moravian parishes were studied; in the next stage 170 register districts evenly distributed throughout the territory of the current Czech Republic were studied. The results of the research were published in the monograph *Přirozená měna obyvatelstva českých zemí v 17. a 18. století* (Natural population increase in the Czech lands in the 17th and 18th centuries; 1999), which was prepared cooperatively by Lumír Dokoupil, Ludmila Fialová, Eduard Maur, and Ludmila Nesládková. In addition to extending the level of knowledge about natal-

ity, mortality and nuptiality, it contributed to a more accurate estimate of the development of the size of the population of the Czech lands. The last-mentioned author later returned to this subject in a separate monograph focusing on Southern Moravia, which, alongside findings from register research, took a special look at population development among the Jewish population. The research showed that before the onset of the demographic transition, the demographic regime in the Czech lands basically resembled that in other countries in the Western part of Europe. A similar study, independent of this research, was conducted on Moravian parishes by a group centred at the Faculty of Science of Olomouc University. The findings from this research, organised by the anthropologist Václav Hajn, were for the most part published in the Brno-based periodical *Anthropologie*.

After 1989 Czech historical demographers expanded their contacts to include cooperation with Austrian historians; the object of cooperation was the study of the family and a more in-depth study of social structures. The joint Austrian-Czech research project, initiated by the Viennese professor Michael Mitterauer, was conducted under the title *Soziale Strukturen in Böhmen* in 1993–1999 (from 1996 British and German historians also participated in the project). The research mainly studied cadastral records from the 17th and 18th centuries, population lists, and land registers. The study focused dually on the development of the social structure in selected localities and on special issues like the family and the household in the Czech lands (e.g. in relation to birth right), menial services, and so on. It confirmed and amplified existing notions of the continuously growing social differentiation in the Czech countryside during the early modern period and traced its relationship to population growth on the one hand and proto-industrial development on the other, and at the same time it revealed some theories regularly espoused in foreign literature to be baseless; for instance, on the dependence of family formation on home ownership in traditional society. The project injected Czech historical-demographic research with new methodological impulses that involved expanding quantitative studies, which had thus far interpreted the individual as just an anonymous member of a given population, and emphasising qualitative analysis, and examining demographic processes as the outcome of action by individual, independently acting subjects whose actions are not just socially and economically determined but also, and often-times primarily, culturally determined. This research resulted in the publication of two anthologies and a series of studies, published mainly on the pages of *Historická demografie*, but also in foreign periodicals, which significantly contributed to extending the depth of knowledge of Czech historical demography abroad.

In addition to this project, studies were also developed on the social and socio-occupational structure of Czech towns in the early modern period and on urbanisation in Bohemia. Adding to earlier, valuable studies by Petr Jančárek on mining towns in the Czech Ore Mountains in the 16th century (1971) and by Alois Míka, Rostislav Nový, and Pavel Bělina on Czech towns using data from the Theresian cadastre (the updated assessment rolls) was this author's study on the size structure of Czech towns and changes to them over time, also based on land rolls, and an important monograph by Jaroslav Miller that situated the urbanisation of Bohemian towns and urban migration in the wider Central European context (2006). Irena Korbelařová's monograph on towns in the Těšín region focuses on a later period, the 18th century. Systematic archive research on Moravian serf lists was conducted at Brno university by Zdeněk Háza.

With regard to the 19th century, for a long time historical demographers were attracted to the new industrial regions, especially the coal-mining region around Ostrava. Milan Myška, Lumír Dokoupil, Ludmila Nesládková, Blanka Pitronová, and other authors from Ostrava or Opava mainly studied the migration of labourers, the formation of new demographic structures, and new population dynamics, as well as the formation of labourer families. They also intensively studied general issues connected with the demographic transition. Pavla Horská

and Ludmila Fialová situated Czech population processes in a wider European context. Methods tested in the study of the early modern age (especially using aggregate techniques on exploitation of parish registers on a local scale) and applied in research on natality and mortality even after 1800 were also gradually applied to the study of the 19th century, but efforts were also undertaken to study the transforming family and household. Significant findings were then produced by the use of censuses.

The ethnic structure of the Czech lands from the 16th to the 20th centuries was also the attention of research, and there were strong political motivations for this in the early stages of its study. The early studies by Kamil Krofa and František Roubík were followed in the 1970s by an important study by Alois Míka on the ethnic structure of Bohemia before 1620 and after the Thirty Years War, which summarised earlier regional literature. Vlastimil Häuffer prepared a study describing the development of the ethnic structure between 1880 and 1945 using modern population censuses. However, the findings from these studies ought yet to be verified using more detailed local studies, which at present we still lack.

Czech historiography neglected the study of migration for a relatively long time. While there were many local studies on immigration to towns in the early modern period, a more theoretical approach and comparison were lacking. An important and only recent published study by Miller situated the phenomenon of migration to towns in the Czech lands in the 16th and 17th centuries in the wider context of Central Europe. At the same time, study began to focus on the migration of rural population, which led to a significant revision of ideas about 'ties to the land' during the period that Marxist historiography had come to refer to as the period of the 'second serfdom'. Special attention was devoted to emigration from the Czech lands overseas or elsewhere during the 19th century and partly also in the 20th century. However, this research focused more on cultural and political issues, not on demographic ones.

The last systematically studied area in recent decades is the history of demographic theory, demographic policies, and demographic thought. Alongside various smaller studies by different authors this interest primarily led to two large summary works on the history of European population theory and Czech demographic thought by Alena Šubrtová, who also wrote an important monograph on major figures in Czech demography (F. Fajfr, A. Boháč). Readers can learn more about the main theories in her studies from the above-cited demography textbook by Zdeněk Pavlík.

For decades research work has been accompanied by systematic editorial work, as a result of which a large number of primary sources have been made available for the needs of demographic analysis. The most important editorial undertakings in the interwar period included the publication of the confessional lists of the Prague archdiocese dating from 1671–1725 by J. V. Šimák, and after 1945 editions of older Bohemian, Moravian and Silesian land rolls were published: Bohemia (1654) and Moravian tax rolls, the Silesian Carolinian cadastre (1738), and the Bohemian and Moravian Theresian cadastre (1757). Although the first volumes of the tax rolls series, making available the earliest Bohemian cadastre in full, had already come out by the late 1940s, the series has not yet been completed, and although the series of other cadastres are just an excerpt of a much larger body of material, they represent the primary foundation for research on the social structure of the Czech lands in the early modern period. Tax roll data can be usefully combined with data from the population census in Bohemia by religious faith in 1651, which was recently made available in a twenty-two volume series prepared by staff at the National Archives in Prague. However, other lists have also been published, like the oldest confessional lists of the Prague archdiocese (E. Čáňová) or a list of Jews in Bohemia and Moravia from 1794. A new edition of data on conscription from 1754, which from 1828 are complemented with data on natality and mortality, was prepared by Václav Sekera (1978). Together with other, smaller-scale series (esp. tax registers, but also one of the Prague parish registers and the list of tenants in the Old Town in Prague in

1608, the so-called salt list of 1702), the above-mentioned series provides much better access to the demographic data housed in the country's archives.

As the discussion above reveals, today historical demography has available to it a dense network of local studies prepared using the same methodology, which allows for their comparisons with each other and with results from abroad, and thus creates good preconditions for summary analyses of population processes in the Czech lands. Czech readers already have several such summaries at their disposal. Alongside Antonín Boháč's early endeavour from 1936, mentioned above, there is also J. Stříteský's study from 1971, concentrating mainly on the 19th and 20th centuries and focusing on health issues, as well as a brief summary included in Pavlík's demography textbook and Vladimír Srb's summary, which is also especially useful for the 19th-20th centuries. Several summaries written by groups of authors have been created in recent decades at the initiative of Pavla Horská. The popular science work *Dětství, rodina a stáří v dějinách Evropy* (Childhood, the family and old age in the history of Europe), acquaints the Czech public with the main findings of European historical-demographic research. *Dějiny obyvatelstva českých zemí* (The history of the population of the Czech lands; 1996, 1998), which was published in two editions is an attempt at an overall summary that is also intended for the wider public. Unfortunately it is not accompanied by notes, but it draws substantially from the results of the above-cited studies. A special theme, the history of the urbanisation of the Czech lands, was the subject of a summary by E. Maur, P. Horská, and J. Musil titled *Zrod velkoměsta* (The birth of the city). Rather than summaries of development since earliest times to the present, in the near future historical-demographic research is likely to concentrate on monographs dealing complexly with a fixed historical period or certain basic problems, as intimated by a monograph on natural increase published in 1999 or the above-mentioned study by Miller. Especially desirable would be a deeper comparative perspective, situating Czech development in the wider Central European and Europe-wide context.

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