

Mendelova univerzita v Brně

Dušan Janák a kolektiv

# ČESKÁ SPOLEČNOST POODHALENA

Důležitá fakta o našem životě  
v první čtvrtině 21. století

2024

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ISBN 978-80-7509-973-0 (tisk)

ISBN 978-80-7509-974-7 (online ; pdf)

<https://doi.org/10.11118/978-80-7509-974-7>



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## **ABSTRAKT**

Kniha přináší přehled důležitých fakt o současném životě české společnosti. Pokrývá sedm tematických okruhů, na každý z nich je zaměřena jedna kapitola. První kapitola přináší přehled toho, jak se kvalita života měří. Kapitola věnovaná stavu české populace přibližuje základní informace o obyvatelstvu a vysvětluje hlavní souvislosti rodinného chování a trendů migrací. Porodnost a migrace jsou dva elementární způsoby populační obměny, které působí jako propojené nádoby a nelze je sledovat odděleně. Kapitola věnovaná zdraví se věnuje nejen aspektům zdraví obyvatel, ale také zdravému životnímu prostředí. Námětem další kapitoly je sociální struktura odvozená z trhu práce a souvislosti rozdělení práce se sociálními nerovnostmi, které následuje téma vzdělání a jeho vliv na vznik nerovností. Kapitola věnovaná politice se zaměřuje na aspekty kvality demokratické politiky založené na participaci občanů ve věcech veřejných. Knihu uzavírá téma kriminality v České republice.

**Klíčová slova:**

česká společnost, kvalita života, populace, migrace, sociální struktura, zdraví, životní prostředí, sociální nerovnost, vzdělání, občanská participace, kriminalita, politické preference

## **ABSTRACT**

The book provides an overview of important facts about the contemporary life of Czech society. It covers seven thematic areas, each of which is the focus of one chapter. The first chapter provides an overview of how quality of life is measured. The chapter on the state of the Czech population presents basic information about the population and explains the main context of family behaviour and migration trends. Fertility and migration are two elementary modes of population change that act as interconnected vessels and cannot be observed in isolation. The chapter on health focuses not only on aspects of population health but also on a healthy environment. The theme of the next chapter is the social structure derived from the labour market and the links between the division of labour and social inequalities, followed by the topic of education and its impact on the emergence of inequalities. The chapter on politics focuses on the quality aspects of democratic politics based on citizen participation in public affairs. The book concludes with the topic of crime in the Czech Republic.

**Keywords:**

Czech society, quality of life, population, migration, social structure, health, environment, social inequalities, education, citizen participation, crime, political preferences



# SUMMARY

## CZECH SOCIETY REVEALED:

### Important facts about our lives in the first quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century

The book provides an overview of important facts about the contemporary life of Czech society. It covers seven thematic areas, each of which is the focus of one chapter. The first chapter provides an overview of how quality of life is measured. The chapter on the state of the Czech population presents basic information about the population and explains the main context of family behaviour and migration trends. Fertility and migration are two elementary modes of population change that act as interconnected vessels and cannot be observed in isolation. The chapter on health focuses not only on aspects of population health but also on a healthy environment. The theme of the next chapter is the social structure derived from the labour market and the links between the division of labour and social inequalities, followed by the topic of education and its impact on the emergence of inequalities. The chapter on politics focuses on the quality aspects of democratic politics based on citizen participation in public affairs. The book concludes with the topic of crime in the Czech Republic.

Despite the global population growth, Czech society, along with other European societies, is declining in terms of natural turnover and ageing at the same time. This is related both to the fact that families are having fewer children and to the increase in life expectancy. It is not just that the weak younger age cohorts will not bring enough tax money into the pay-as-you-go pension system, but that there may be a „lack of arms“ to cater for the older age cohorts and the jobs they vacate after retirement.

The reason for population ageing is increasing life expectancy. Eternal life, or at least longevity, is the great lure that stirs the deep structures within man. Who would want to die young? A society where people live to a long age is automatically and rightly perceived as a place with a higher quality of life, as opposed to a society where people die early. Although life expectancy is increasing in the Czech Republic too, it is mainly at the expense of a longer life in sickness. This is due, among other things, to the high proportion of overweight and obese children and adults in Czech society and the high prevalence of risk factors related to unhealthy lifestyles associated with poor eating habits, low physical activity, substance abuse, etc.

Just as we want to have healthy bodies, we also want to have a healthy environment. The concept of environmental health shows that the former is not possible without the latter. It is easier to live in a healthy environment. Taken to the extreme, it is impossible to live at all in a significantly devastated environment.

Interpersonal trust is considered by many sociologists to be the foundation of social relationships. The values of declared trust in Czech society are governed by the logic of Czech saying that „the shirt is closer than the coat“. People trust most their own family and least strangers and people they have known for a while. This is probably quite easy to understand. Interestingly, we don't need much of that trust to hold the social fabric together. The results of long-term research show that a relatively low

level of trust is enough. Or perhaps a high level of trust in close people is enough to make the system of less personal relationships of representative democracy and anonymous modern societies work without fatal collapse.

The same is true of engagement in public affairs. A democratic political system is based on citizen participation in political processes. It may not be at an all-time high in the Czech Republic, but it does not seem to be necessary. Excessive involvement in public affairs would probably lead to the emptying of the private sphere, just as an excessive obsession with employment and working life can lead to the destruction of family happiness. Rather, a certain level of civic engagement needs to be maintained.

If we do not count the narrow strata of the „top ten thousand“ richest and the „bottom ten thousand“ poorest (which will be more like twenty thousand), the scissors between the poor and the rich in the majority society are not dramatically open. Although most of the population is in the lower middle class, we have a solid upper middle class that is on the whole more numerous than the lowest (the so-called deprived). There is also a shift in the proportions of employment positions towards service and well-paid positions, while heavy manual work is declining. On the other hand, the fairness of the distribution of people into social classes is questionable. While we are not inevitably predisposed, research shows that class positions are passed down from generation to generation with surprising persistence.

We have known for a long time that one of the important mechanisms of class reproduction is educational reproduction. Children of college-educated partners have statistically significantly higher chances of higher education than children of parents with primary education or a high school diploma. Educational attainment is one of the key variables for getting a job. Higher education in the Czech Republic has so far correlated quite well with higher income, although it is not a given. Secondary education is more important for employment in the labour market and is thus indirectly an important factor for social inclusion.

One of the fundamental dilemmas in efforts to develop quality education lies in the contradiction between qualitative and quantitative perspectives. The current conception of quality education focuses unilaterally on quantifying indicators that are supposed to show the quality of education in a measurable way (e.g., number of students with high school diplomas, number of students in higher education). This contradiction is suffered by most OECD or EU countries and is the paradigm of today's approach to education. The correlation between the number of students and the quality of education does not correspond in all circumstances; if there are few students or, on the contrary, if everyone is studying the same subjects, then the question is to what extent the consequences of such an approach will affect the quality of education in the future (transfer of knowledge abroad, lack of teachers in a given field). Quality education is the result of a number of social processes (e.g. demand for certain types of education that changes over time, the strength of motivation and emphasis on self-development of students, social and demographic factors). Conversely, a one-sided emphasis on promoting a particular type of education for short-term economic gain may result in a shortage of educated people in certain areas in the future (e.g. practical apprenticeships, shortages of medical practitioners). A reduced approach to the quality of education with regard to the short-term quantitative needs of the economy may ultimately prove to be a factor that reduces the quality of life of society as a whole.

Reflection on quality of life cannot be done without knowledge of safety. The need for security also relates to the quality of life, not only of individuals, but also of variously defined social groups and society in general. The issues of security, crime and punishment are issues that affect not only the perpetrators of crime, but also their victims and other social institutions (the police, the judiciary, the prison system, etc.). The chapter titled Crime and Punishment introduced the basic terminology of criminology and penology, presented trends in selected crimes and discussed the difficulties related to statistical data on the total amount of crime (registered/latent). The quality of life is significantly affected by criminal activity both for offenders (e.g. their stay in prison) and for their victims, who are often victimized, damaged psychologically, physically or materially. The level of crime also affects the social climate, trust in the institutions of the state (police, justice) and the quality of life of a particular state. The Czech Republic is perceived as a safe state with a balanced security policy in terms of repressive and preventive procedures.

Název: Česká společnost poodhalena:  
Důležitá fakta o našem životě v první čtvrtině 21. století

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Jazyková korektura: Ivana Šelešovská  
Grafické zpracování: Petra Černohlávková  
Tisk: Vydavatelství Mendelovy univerzity v Brně, Zemědělská 1,  
613 00 Brno

Vydání: první, 2024  
Počet stran: 186  
Náklad: 150 ks

ISBN 978-80-7509-973-0 (tisk)  
ISBN 978-80-7509-974-7 (online ; pdf)  
<https://doi.org/10.11118/978-80-7509-974-7>

## Poznámky

