



## **ERIS Web Journal 1/2014**

### **Project VEDTYM at the Faculty of Social Studies of the University of Ostrava in Ostrava**

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*The Project of Enlargement and Development of the Research Team of the University of Ostrava, the Faculty of Social Studies (VEDTYM) CZ.1.07/2.3.00/20.0080 is a three-year project implemented at the Faculty of Social Studies of the University of Ostrava in Ostrava during the period from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2011 to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2014 and is co-financed by the European Social Fund and the state budget of the Czech Republic. The project aimed at making good use of the existing experience in scientific research activities of the current so-called “senior” team of workers of the FSS UO, at contributing to its strengthening (among others by inviting a significant foreign expert with rich experience in managing international research teams), at enlarging the current “senior” team by new recruits from young researchers and students of PhD studies and subsequently at maintaining the newly acquired quality of a top expert team with regard to the issue of social impacts of modernization processes, new social risks (or social exclusion) in future publication and project endeavours of the faculty’s workers. Implementation of the main project objectives has contributed not only to involvement of members of the research team into scientific-research subprojects (dedicated to an analysis of different forms of social exclusion, such as socio-spatial segregation, social exclusion of selected population groups – seniors, the homeless, families threatened by poverty, etc.), supporting and extending the scientific capacity of the team at the FSS UO, but also to strengthening the ties of intersectoral mobility, particularly mobility between research institutions, the private and public sector.*

The position of a foreign expert in the project was assumed by prof. Dr. Detlef Heinrich Baum, Dr. h.c. – a German sociologist, professionally focusing on issues of social policy, social structure, social inequality, community studies and town sociology. In the course of the project, Professor Baum has been significantly contributing to fulfilment of one of the fundamental project objectives: “supporting and strengthening the scientific research team at the FSS UO through involvement of a foreign expert”, and that is by consistent professional training, especially of the young generation of researchers in the field of research methodology, which included (1) leading several dozens of Research Afternoons where prominent Czech and foreign experts presented main topics from the field of methodology of social sciences and methodology of social work, (2) leading several dozens of Doctoral Colloquia allowing doctoral students to discuss the partial outputs of their research activities with their colleagues-students and professionals, (3) professional guarantee for the International Spring School of Social Work – an annual event for students pursuing their master’s and PhD degrees at European partner universities of ERIS and accompanied by a meeting of experts, presentations of students’ papers, obtaining feedback from academics from European countries, and mainly by strengthening research competences within the Spring School Methodological Block and (4) expert consultation (individual and group) for both younger team members and students of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, including consultations regarding journal articles by the research team members.

Depending on the research activities, the project implementation team is divided into sub-teams with the working titles: a sub-team “Socio-spatial Segregation - a Comparison of 2 European Cities”, “Poverty in Old Age (Poor Seniors)” and a sub-team “Poverty in Families (Families, Families Threatened by Poverty)”.

An integral part of professional training in the field of research methodology is a publication entitled *Research Methods in Social Work* (BAUM, D., GOJOVÁ, A. (Eds.). *Research Methods in Social Work*. Ostrava: FSS UO, 2014. 356 p. ISBN 978-80 -7464-390-3) and its subsequent application when teaching the course of *Methodology of Social Sciences and Social Work* within the study plan of PhD studies in the study programme of *Social Policy and Social Work*, the field of study of *Social Work*. The main aim of the publication is to develop knowledge competences and research skills of researchers. There is a number of publications devoted to issues of methodology of social sciences and issues of methodology of social work, yet this publication distinguishes itself not only by cooperation of the research team of the FSS UO with foreign experts from Germany and Great Britain, but also by involvement of members of both teams (“senior” and “junior”) into methodological reflection of the implemented research activities, i.e. the publication shows how “we teach research through research” using specialized methodological background and subsequent methodological reflections of each research step. The book consists of chapters on general issues of research methodology in social sciences and especially in social work (Chapters 1 to 8) and it also presents methodological procedures and research results of the three project sub-teams: *Socio-spatial Segregation in the Comparison of two Cities - Ostrava and Halle* (Chapter 9); *Research on Poverty in Old Age* (Chapter 10); *Ways of Coping with Poverty and Poverty Threat in Households of Families with Minor Children* (Chapter 11).

The topic of social exclusion has become the main research topic of the whole project team. There is a publication by prof. J. Keller (KELLER, J. Exclusion as a Social Problem and a Methodological Question. Ostrava: FSS UO, 2014. 60 p. ISBN 978-80-7464-490-0). A sub-analysis deals with the theoretical background of the problem of social exclusion. The author refers to methodological “pro et contra” of various types of social constructivism embracing a partial - but at the same time extreme - manifestation of social exclusion consisting in the phenomenon of homelessness. The presented study has two parts. Its first part deals with social exclusion from the perspective of development of the contemporary society transiting from industrial to post-industrial society. The author investigates where this concept emerged and in what context it began to be used. He primarily concentrates on the search for causes of social exclusion. But he also pays attention to different types and stages of social exclusion. More generally, he addresses the issue of social exclusion with regard to theories of society and theories of social structure. The study is based solely on French specialized literature. It is due to the fact that the term “social exclusion” is closely associated exactly with French sociology. It corresponds with the spirit of the discipline which already since the Durkheim’s time has been laying great emphasis on social integrity on the macro-social level and on existence of a social bond on the level of interpersonal relations. Social exclusion presents an equal threat to both of them. The attention of the second part focuses on some methodological aspects of the process of social exclusion and its prehension. The phenomenon of social exclusion and its extreme manifestation – homelessness – is used to analyze the possibilities and limits of social constructionism. In this context, several types of social constructivism are distinguished. It is pointed out to what extent these different types allow an original view of social reality, but to numerous risks burdening the social constructionism approach, too.

A sub-analysis (monograph) will be translated into English, published in electronic form and will be made available on the project website.

([http://projekty.osu.cz/vedtym/9\\_publicace.html](http://projekty.osu.cz/vedtym/9_publicace.html))

The other three sub-analyses of project sub-teams elaborate partial forms of social exclusion: (1) socio-spatial segregation (based on a comparison of the two cities in the Czech Republic and Germany) and social exclusion of selected population groups - in concreto (2) families threatened by poverty or poor families, and (3) seniors threatened by poverty with an emphasis on the aspect of housing. Each sub-analysis presents research procedures of the sub-team along with research outcomes and conclusions.

In the sub-team of Socio-spatial Segregation - a Comparison of 2 European Cities, a sub-analysis by prof. Baum, Dr. Vondroušová and Mgr. Ing. Tichá (BAUM, D. H., VONDROUŠOVÁ, K., TICHÁ, I. Characteristics of Socio-spatial Segregation in the Comparison of Two Cities (Halle - Ostrava). Ostrava: UO, 2014. 74 p. ISBN 978-80-7464-491-7) presents research and evaluation of the process of socio-spatial segregation taking place in post-socialist cities using the example of Ostrava in the Czech Republic and Halle (Saale) in Germany. The core is elaboration of a comparative case study focusing on the description and evaluation of selected indicators of socio-spatial segregation, comparison of

identified segregated localities and approaches to their solution. The text contains a comparison of logics and dynamics of the process of socio-spatial segregation of population in the residential areas of both selected European cities. In Ostrava, as well as in Halle, it is possible to identify localities with socio-demographic differences which lead to certain forms of socio-spatial segregation in these cities. On the basis of external factors (national and legislative specifics), socio-spatial segregation in both cities gains different characteristics, as described in the research results.

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In the sub-team of Poverty in Old Age (Poor Seniors) a sub-analysis by doc. Sýkorová, Mgr. Nytra and Mgr. Ing. Tichá (SÝKOROVÁ, D., NYTRA, G., TICHÁ, I. Living in the Context of Poverty and Old Age. Ostrava: FSS UO, 2014. 70 p. ISBN 978-80-7464-493-1) deals with the topic of housing of seniors in connection with the threat of poverty or poverty in old age, or social exclusion. Exactly seniors belong to the groups particularly threatened by poverty as well as exclusion from housing. The authors anchor the topic in the context of the crisis of welfare states, the global economic crisis, socio-economic transformation in the Czech Republic. They deal with housing – poverty – old age as part of the discourse on demographic ageing, on urban change (post-socialist transformation of town), too. The focus of the book is presentation and discussion of the research results based on a qualitative approach, in which PhD students of social work and young up-and-coming researchers participated within the VEDTYM project.

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In the sub-team of Poverty in Families (Families, Families Threatened by Poverty), the goal is a monograph by the authors' collective of the sub-team (GOJOVÁ, A., GOJOVÁ, V., ŠPILÁČKOVÁ, M. (Eds.) On the Ways of Coping with Poverty from the Perspective of Families – Incentives for Social Work. Ostrava: UO, 2014. 136 p. ISBN 978-80-7464-492-4) analyzing the ways by which families cope with the situation of poverty or threat of poverty. The first part of the text is devoted to description of the theoretical bases, it is focused on conceptualization of the notion of poverty in relation to families with minor children. Stages of social disqualification and ways of coping with poverty and threat of poverty are analyzed. The second part presents the research results aimed at analyzing the life situation of households of families with minor children at various stages of social disqualification (i.e. at the stage of poverty or threat of poverty) and the ways by which they cope with these situations. The objective of the research is to obtain information and background data for development or modification of social work with families with minor children living in poverty or being threatened by it.

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The team members participated not only in preparation of monographs, but also in preparation of scientific articles in peer-reviewed journals and preparation of articles in institutional and conference anthologies. As part of the annual International Spring School of Social Work, after its termination, an Anthology of the Spring School of Social Work was released, containing papers by doctoral students of the Faculty of Social Studies. More at [http://projekty.osu.cz/vedtym/9\\_publicace.html](http://projekty.osu.cz/vedtym/9_publicace.html). A GIS training took place during the project. The activity constituted an important component of the development of the scientific research team in the project, leading to increased awareness of applicability of the GIS technologies in social sciences, and it introduced the team members and PhD students to specific methods, analyses and functions of the ArcGIS geographical information system, applied in socio-spatial analyzes. After the training sessions, GIS experts prepared a “Manual of GIS Workflows in the Field of Social Research and Social Work” which serves its users as a methodological guide for evaluation of socio-demographic and socio-economic data. (KRTIČKA, L., ADAMEC, M., BEDNÁŘ, P. Manual of GIS Workflows in the Field of Social Research and Social Work. Ostrava: UO, 2012. 147 p. ISBN 978-80-74-64-155-8. [On-line]. Available at the address: [http://projekty.osu.cz/vedtym/dok/publicace/manual\\_prac\\_postupu-gis.pdf](http://projekty.osu.cz/vedtym/dok/publicace/manual_prac_postupu-gis.pdf)).

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