

Hynek Jeřábek: Paul Lazarsfeld's Research Methodology -- Biography, Methods, Famous Projects

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role in the analysis, the authors give no indication of how they recorded and analysed these rumours. Thus they inadvertently situate themselves as neutral observers exercising a 'view from nowhere' – a perspective long criticised in anthropology.

Many of the studies in this volume provide valuable and well-researched insights into Central and Eastern European societies. However, attention to emotions would be more beneficial if treated as a sensitising device, which would indeed be enriching for (not just) anthropological accounts, rather than being treated as the primary tool and/or object of exploration. In sum, the overarching focus on emotions wrapped in 'post-socialist packaging' blurs more than it reveals.

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Hynek Jeřábek: *Paul Lazarsfeld's Research Methodology – Biography, Methods, Famous Projects*

Prague 2006: The Karolinum Press, 136 pp.

This book focuses on the life and works of Paul Lazarsfeld, who was one of the founders of many of the methods that are today taken for granted in the empirical social sciences. It is divided into four parts dealing with, respectively, Lazarsfeld's research biography, his methodological innovations, his famous research projects and some of his main findings. The first chapter divides Lazarsfeld's life into different main stages, starting with his life in Vienna, moving on to his early years in the United States, and ending with the Columbia years. There follow two general sections on Lazarsfeld's organisational work in science and critics and the reaction to his sociology. Opening with his birth in Vienna on 13 February 1901, the chapter follows Lazarsfeld through the various posts of his career, from his first job as a mathematics teacher to his last title

as Professor Emeritus at the University of Pittsburgh. It simultaneously tells the stories of the different research centres he established: the *Wirtschaftspsychologische Forschungsstelle* in Vienna (Research Centre of Economic Psychology), the Newark University Research Center in New Jersey, the Office of Radio Research at Princeton University and its transformation to the Bureau of Applied Social Sciences at Columbia University. The author highlights the fact that these institutes dealt with entirely new topics, such as market research, communications research, and altogether new forms of research methodology. Further, the chapter presents the publications and the projects Lazarsfeld implemented over time. Attention is also devoted to some of the main critics of Lazarsfeld's sociology, including T. Adorno and his labelling of Lazarsfeld's work as 'administrative research', C.W. Mills' criticism of 'abstract empiricism', and T.N. Clark's attack on the negation of the individuality of the researchers involved in the 'Columbia Sociology Machine'.

The second chapter looks at Lazarsfeld's contributions to the field of sociology, such as reason analysis – the method he developed for revealing the model of decision-making processes – and the 'programme analyser', the focused interview, and panel analysis. Considerable space is devoted to survey analysis and the principles of the elaboration model. In a discussion of latent structure analysis, the basic concepts behind it – response pattern, probability, property space, principle of local independence, accounting equations and trace lines – are all outlined and described, as is the concept of trace lines as the core idea of this method. The section on mathematical sociology highlights how Lazarsfeld developed not only the mathematical background to latent structure analysis but also the model of the dichotomic cube and the 16-fold table, all of which examine the effect of dichotomous variables on depend-

ent variables. This discussion also mentions the work that Lazarsfeld published on methodology, including 'The Language of Social Research', 'Méthodes de la sociologie', and 'Continuities in the Language of Social Research', representing the 'Columbia strategy of social research'.

The third chapter revisits Lazarsfeld's famous study of unemployment in Marienthal, the RAVAG study, the Princeton radio project, and the People's Choice study. All these projects are provided with their historical contexts; for example, the fact that 'Marienthal' was inspired by a study that Charles Booth had carried out on London and its inhabitants and by the Lynds' 'Middletown' study. The section devoted to Marienthal includes a description of all eleven methods used in the study – relating to consumption, health, book borrowing, and membership in associations – and discusses their results, and it especially looks at the study's measurement of walking speed and the perception of time. More space is devoted to the study's main outcome, which produced a typology of four family types: resigned, unbroken, desperate, and apathetic. The section on the People's Choice study includes a short description of the panel analysis method introduced in Chapter Two and goes on to discuss the concept of opinion leaders and the hypothesis of the two-step flow of information (information spread from the media to the opinion leader and in the second step to the people connected to the opinion leader), the concept of the political predispositions of voters, different types of voters, and distinct mechanisms of influence that can change voter preferences, such as the activation effect, reinforcement, and conversion.

The main asset of the monograph is that it offers a concise but detailed overview over the life of Paul Lazarsfeld and his contribution to the social sciences; in a tradition started by the students and successors of Lazarsfeld – research on Lazarsfeld's

life and work. The book does not claim to be an exhaustive study of Lazarsfeld. The author has simply presented what he perceives to be Lazarsfeld's key contributions. This leaves some gaps. There is no mention here of Lazarsfeld's role in cooperation with Oskar Morgenstern in foundation in 1963 the Institute of Higher Studies in Vienna, which is now a leading institution of economic forecasting in Austria. The monograph tends to shy away from expressing any criticism of Lazarsfeld's work. For example, in the discussion of the Marienthal study, it is mentioned that the researchers became involved in the life in the village and implemented assistance projects, such as taking up clothing drive in Vienna, or, from one member of the team, offering free medical advice. But that was a clear violation of the methodological principle established by Lazarsfeld and his team itself that researchers must use non-influential (non-intervening) methods. The researchers' assistance in the town may have influenced the studied population and led to biased outcomes, and that issue should have been addressed in more detail. Also, since the book just reviews the methods developed by Lazarsfeld and his colleagues and the criticism of them expressed by other authors in the past, it does not address any new criticism and thus makes no contribution to current debates on methodology. Consequently, the book's main contribution is to historical sociology, and it is successful in its aim of introducing Lazarsfeld's methods to scientists and students. In sum, the author manages to present the rudiments of what are sometimes very difficult methods in a clear and coherent way and additionally to embed these methods in their historical background. The outcome is a valuable textbook that can be recommended not just to students but also to scientists interested in Lazarsfeld's methodology.

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