


# Project Institutes in Czechoslovakia in the 1970s. Creation in the Conditions of a Centrally Planned Economy during the Normalisation Period in Czechoslovakia.

Projektové ústavy Československa 70. rokov 20. storočia. Architektonická tvorba v podmienkach centrálne riadeného hospodárstva obdobia normalizácie v Československu.

Lucia Mlynčeková

 <https://doi.org/10.31577/archandurb.2022.56.1-2.9>

Projektová činnosť, ako aj jej jednotlivé ústavy podliehali centrálne riadenému systému bývalého Československa. Preto sa všetky ekonomické zmeny, jednotlivé etapy, tzv. päťročnice, prirodzene premietali do ich pôsobenia. Dôležitý, ak nie zásadný vplyv mali v tomto smere štátne komisie, ktoré riadili ich existenciu, od samotného vzniku cez fungovanie, mzdové hodnotenia a v neposlednom rade aj samotnú náplň práce. Podstatná bola hlavne Státní komise pro vědeckotechnický a investiční rozvoj, ktorá nahradila v rokoch osemdesiatych dovtedy existujúce Federální ministerstvo pro vědeckotechnický a investiční rozvoj. V sedemdesiatych rokoch bola ich hlavným cieľom celková revízia oprávnení všetkých dovtedy fungujúcich projektových ústavov, čo malo za následok zrušenie niekoľkých tzv. voľne fungujúcich a takisto vznik nových, najmä špecializovaných ústavov. Normalizačné obdobie bolo v tomto smere veľkou zmenou oproti predošlým uvoľnenejším šesťdesiatym rokom, a preto prechod na sedemdesiate roky bol jedným z najväčších míľnikov. Práve táto zmena a jej dopady sú nosnou témou práce, ktorá skúma pozadie fungovania jednotlivých projektových ústavov. V osemdesiatych rokoch sa tiež v oficiálnych dokumentoch čím ďalej tým viac zobrazuje kritická rovina hodnotenia mzdového a celkového ekonomického vývoja, a dokumenty ako „Racionalizácia práce a mzdových sústav“ z roku 1980 či „Katalóg programov pre projektovanie“ z roku 1983 sa stávajú ďalšími krokmi k snahe o reštrukturalizáciu. Tieto sa však v praxi neosvedčili, a tak systém ostáva vo svojej podstate okrem drobných zmien nemenný až do konca osemdesiatych rokov.

Výskum sa zameriava na všetky existujúce ústavy primárne normalizačného obdobia, ich následnú analýzu a hodnotenie. Rozdelenie do troch základných skupín podľa riadiacej organizácie, t. j. krajských, rezortných a družstevných, je dôležitým kľúčom k pochopeniu ich fungovania. Následná konfrontácia s realitou, čiže so skutočnými zadávateľmi a realizátormi, sa však mnohokrát značne líši od pôvodného plánu, a preto prirodzene vzniká otázka, čo bolo dôvodom od takýchto odklonení. Odpovede môžeme nachádzať najmä vo výpovediach pamätníkov, ktorí dokážu pomerne detailne popísať jednotlivé príklady realizácií, a často tým objasňujú skutočné príčiny a procesy skrývajúce sa na pozadí. Konfrontáciou archívnych materiálov a dobových zákonov – v porovnaní s tzv. terénnym výskumom, ktorý sa viazal najmä na spomínané výpovede bývalých zamestnancov – sa podarilo získať odpovede na mnohé hypotézy, kladené na začiatku výskumu. Takisto sú dôležitým zdrojom jednotlivé projekty, ktorých proces a vývoj odzrkadľuje množstvo zaujímavých súvislostí.

Na základe získaných dát sa podarilo pripraviť aj niekoľko grafov štruktúrálnych, časových a geografických vývojov, ktoré jednoduchým spôsobom vyhodnocujú a zároveň ďalej komunikujú výsledky výskumu. Dôležitou súčasťou je online databáza, ktorá obsahuje tak aj kompletný zoznam projektových ústavov existujúcich v sedemdesiatych a osemdesiatych rokoch, jednak ich geografické polohy s možnosťou filtrácie podľa pôsobenia a zriaďovateľa, a taktiež časové zobrazenie postupného vývoja jednotlivých ústavov. Výskum má potenciál slúžiť ako podklad na širšie skúmanie a prípadné detailné priblíženie k jednotlivým vybraným projektovým ústavom či ateliérom. Jeho ambíciou je aj otvoriť širší diskurz k danej problematike a pokúsiť sa prepojiť čiastkové výskumy zaoberajúce sa pozadím architektonickej práce primárne druhej polovice 20. storočia.

The majority of architectural realisations currently standing date from after 1945. In Czechoslovakia, in the period between 1948 and 1989 this production emerged in the context of socialist central planning, to which all architectural, urban, design and construction activity was subjugated. In the background of creative work lay the government bodies making essential decisions related to the assignment of work, its subsequent financial compensation, and no less finally its realisation. Undeniably, the conditions under which architecture is practiced are among the deciding factors of its ensuing quality. The environment in which architects worked during the age of state socialism in Czechoslovakia were highly specific and differed in many ways from those today, yet also displayed a few similarities; nonetheless, they have yet to receive deeper analysis<sup>1</sup>. The present study takes as its goal expanding our knowledge of the working conditions for architects and urban planners, specifically in the decade of the 1970s, in other words after the sharp termination of the reform process by the Warsaw Pact military invasion of 1968, referred to as the era of “normalisation”. Drawing upon archival research, we have succeeded in compiling complete lists of the era’s state design studios or “project institutes” and their economic and personnel data. Analysis of them could serve as the basis for a more thorough awareness of the work of architects, whether individually or in collectives.

The 1966 – 1970 period in Czechoslovakia coincided with the implementation of the Fourth Five-Year Plan<sup>2</sup>, also known as the “Šik economic reforms”, marked by a shift away from the grandiose plans of a strictly centralised economy. However, only a few of the planned reforms were ever brought into practice. The end to the Prague Spring spelled the termination not only of the reforms proposed by Ota Šik and other economists, but indeed all other processes leading towards greater democratisation. The normalisation regime used the subsequent (fifth) Five-Year Plan (1971 – 1975) for renewed massive investments, which understandably had an impact as well on construction. Investments continued in the next period, 1976 – 1980, which continued to drain the state reserves, until the situation required new reforms, known as the “Series of Measures” (*Soubor opatření*)<sup>3</sup>, essentially a repetition of the economic measures of the 1950s. These and other measures sparked a major crisis not only in construction, with one result being the transformation of the Federal Ministry for Technical and Investment Development into the State Commission for Scientific-Technical and Investment Development in 1983.<sup>4</sup> One telling example of one of the largest investments spanning both mentioned Five-Year Plans was the construction of the Palace of Culture, now the Prague Congress Centre. As of 25. 7. 1972, official consent was granted for holding the design competition<sup>5</sup>, while construction began in 1976 and was finished in 1981. The entire process culminated in the precise timing of the building’s opening to allow Congress XVI of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (KSČ) to be held in the newly opened building.<sup>6</sup> The massive funds invested during both mentioned Five-Year Plans had the result of creating many new project institutes, in proportion as it became necessary to provide the capacity to meet these plans. Yet it also led to a far more devastating crisis in construction, as aptly described by

architect Miroslav Masák: “The unrealistic goals, more politically than economically motivated, of our state plan led to an unbalanced economic situation, to a lack of capacities and materials, and to chaos in commercial relations. Central planning required the organisational centralisation of manufacturing and the creation of huge production-economic units.”<sup>7</sup>

In general, our research takes as its goal the analysis of the functioning of project institutes to create a new standpoint for viewing postwar architecture and construction, and to expand our awareness of architectonic production in connection to its political-economic context. Here, it is essential to uncover the structure and pay attention to the mutual links between individual project institutes and ateliers, their employees, or even their individual projects. Clarification of the conditions that genuinely faced the architects, as well as the connection of the various circumstances that influenced architectural practice and creation, could be of assistance in creating a more objective view of postwar architecture and construction in Czechoslovakia as a whole.

“Preparation of the plan, oversight of its course and fulfilment, were ensured by the Central Planning Commission, with the executive body formed by the Economic Council as an ancillary body to the cabinet, and in technical terms also the State Planning Office, with necessary information submitted by the State Statistical Office and Supreme Pricing Office. Responsibility for the specific planning work was held by the commissions and expert working groups covering all economic areas.”<sup>8</sup>

For introduction, we view it as important to define what in fact the “project institute” was, and primarily for the moment at the start of the 1970s when the newly created Federal Ministry for Technical and Investment Development issued all project institutes their operating authorisations.<sup>9</sup> Regarded as autonomous project, or project-engineering organisations were those, per Cabinet Directive no. 170/1970, those organisations where the chief subject of activity was building design, and furthermore that the organisation was directly managed as an autonomous entity by: a. the Central Organ of State Administration, b. a National Committee, c. an Intermediate Element of Economic Management (general directorate, association, VJH et al.).<sup>10</sup> It is essential to keep in mind, with respect to this point, why it was important to be an independent project organisation: only in this case was it possible to act as a general project manager, i.e., to ensure the preparation and coordination of project documentation, as well as the supply of services of subcontractors, among which was Article V, i.e., the law indicating the mandatory percentage of the construction budget assigned to artworks. Without the authorisation issued by the Federal Ministry for Technical and Investment Development, none of the project institutes could perform the activities of the said general project manager.

One of the foremost differences in the specification of architectural projection that arose after 1968 can be observed practically at the start of the 1970s, concretely in 1971. It was in this year that Act no. 137/1970 took effect. In comparing the earlier ruling no. 108 from 1966 with Act no. 137/1970, intended as a modification of the original 1966 legislation, we can observe several differences that help us in uncovering the reasons behind several sweeping changes in the overall structuring of

project institutes in the years after 1971. An important shift in the new law was one of the requirements that an organisation had to meet during the procedure of acquiring the previously mentioned authorisation.<sup>11</sup> As of 1966, there existed an exception in the possibilities of approving the request by the relevant central body, which in this year would either have been a government ministry, a Regional National Committee, or any other governing body. This exception consisted of a single limitation regarding the sum of the cost of project work, set at a maximum of 250,000 CSK. In other words, the relevant authorising body could issue authorisation for the activities of the project institution without the “content limitation”, merely on the basis of adhering to the set sum for the work cost. By contrast, the amended law from 1970 allows this exception but only at the condition of stating the specialisation of the work. As such, in the amended law from 1970 there exists a small yet unambiguous change in the formulation of the added Article §4: “Authorisation is awarded to the organisation after examination and evaluation of the facts and data stated in the request, and with an eye to societal need...”, and this in a form directing attention precisely to this question of societal need.<sup>12</sup> This change, among many others in the said act, was a significant factor in why so many project institutes had to end their activities, or if more fortunate transform themselves into an atelier subordinate to another project institute, most often directed by the Regional National Committee.

Subjected to the centrally planned economy were all governing bodies, including the “project elements”, i.e., the project institutes and their ateliers. Each of these institutes primarily worked on the needs of their supervising body, either a “locally relevant” one, i.e., the region or district, or a “nationwide” one assigned to a specific federal ministry. The investor was the actual supervising body, or more precisely its “investment unit”. The preparer of the plans was the project institute and the “realiser”, or the contractor, was the construction and assembly enterprise directed by the same public supervising body. Each of the three main elements in construction (1. investor, 2. contractor, 3. designer) thus were under the authority of a single organisational unit, which was itself an independent organisation with its own budgetary and managerial activity.

Work with archival materials revealed itself in the research process to be one of the key elements for completing the list of project institutes. In practice, two sources were found to be most fruitful: A. Czech National Archive, B. Archive of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. In the Czech National Archive, the key document happened to be the unclassified funds of two institutions, these being the State Commission for Scientific-Technical and Investment Development (SKVTIR – Státní komise pro vědeckotechnický a investiční rozvoj) and the Federal Ministry for Scientific-Technical and Investment Development (FMVTIR – Federální ministerstvo pro vědeckotechnický a investiční rozvoj). Both institutions exist as a single fund, considering that their activities took place in direct succession. As of 26.10.1983, Act no. 114/1983<sup>13</sup> created the SKVTIR to replace the previously operating FMVTIR, which in the events after 1968<sup>14</sup> replaced the “State Commission for Technology”.<sup>15</sup> The primary functional

contents were the following activities: issuing authorisations, defining wages, assigning work, issuing guidelines and instructions. Hence the development of project institutes can be viewed in detail through the specific activities of each three institutions, though here the most significant steps were taken, logically, during the points of transformation: in 1970, then throughout the decade, and finally in 1983. In total, the fund comprises 417 archival containers, i.e., “cartons”, of which a selected 40 were analysed in detail. Each such carton contained from 10 to several hundred documents for examination (from the largest carton, 148 documents were selected for digitalisation). The complete lists we hoped to find occurred several times among the documents, two of which were vital: the “Information on Measures in the Section of Authorisation for Project Activity” and the “Final Report on the Results of Work Rationalisation and Wage Scales in Project and Engineering Organisations and Offices of the Chief Architect”. Another major document was the “Catalogue of Programs for Architectural Design in the CSSR”, which in our research was used as a verification source.

### Revision of Authorisations – 1970

In 1970, the Czechoslovak federal government decided to perform a “revision” of previously issued authorisations to organisations and individuals engaged in architectural design.<sup>16</sup> Through this step, the newly installed ministry updated the declaration by the previous body, claiming to follow in its activities but here reacting primarily to the “deficiencies” arising in the years 1968 and 1969. In practice, though, this action was yet another part of normalisation, through which the ministry hoped to have under direct control all parties engaged in architectural design, particularly the ones created at the end of the 1960s<sup>17</sup>. In this ruling, it explicitly forbids any empowered central governing bodies to issue authorisations for architectural design without prior agreement of the “Federal Ministry for Technical and Investment Development”. In the first half of 1971, this revision was realised, following the guidelines issued by the said ministry. According to these directives, the limitations on the authorisation for architectural practice for autonomous project organisations directed by central government bodies, national committees, or “elements of economic management” should not be the extent of their work, but “only” the orientation of their activities in connection with the qualification requirements of the employees.<sup>18</sup> As of 30.6.1971, this stipulation was used to rescind the authorisation of 497 organisations, with 93 organisations newly registered and 1515 organisations with different primary activities facing significant restrictions. Also important is an examination of the method of registration which the ministry specified in Article III. Information on measures in the area of authorisation for architectural design activities is as follows:

#### Composition of the registration number of the central registry:

The registration number is composed of 4 parts:

##### a/ The character of the organisation is indicated as:

A – autonomous architectural or architectural-engineering organisation

- B – project element
- C – other organisational element
- D – autonomous engineering organisation

**b/ The affiliation of central bodies in terms of organisational hierarchy is indicated as:**

- I – organs of the Czechoslovak federation
- II – organs of the Czech Socialist Republic
- III – organs of the Slovak Socialist Republic

**c/ The central organs of the superior organisation are indicated by a numerical marker from the state statistical registry**

**d/ The organisation number is given by a ranking number of four digits, each one issued separately for each group of the organisation (by character), starting from 0001. For organisations managed by:**

- |                   |                                       |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| federal organs    | the numbers reserved are 0001 to 0999 |
| organs of the CSR | the numbers reserved are 1000 to 2999 |
| organs of the SSR | the numbers reserved are from 3000.   |

**e/ Example:**

- D–II–328 – 1003
- D – engineering organisation
- II – under the authority of an organ directed by the cabinet of the CSR
- 382 – immediately superior organ / resp. organ superior to the VHJ/
- 1003 – ranking number of organisation.<sup>19</sup>

## Work Rationalisation and Wage Scales – 1980

Another significant activity of the Federal Ministry for Technical and Investment Development was similarly “work rationalisation” and creation of wage scales. A closer view of the goals and particularly the outcome of this activity is shown by the document “Final Report” issued in cooperation with “the group of the Governmental Wage Commission” on 11. 9. 1980.<sup>20</sup> Alongside the statement that the planned rationalisation had been completed with only a few exceptions (specifics not given), it also gave a critical evaluation of the factors that it was unable to influence: among them, the worsening of economic indicators, especially work productivity, a continual disproportion on the level of managerial earnings between larger and smaller units, and most significantly the differences in the average rate classes of employees that could not be justified by differences in qualification or influences in organisational size.<sup>21</sup>

A detailed and clear depiction of the state of average monthly rate classes, salaries and adjustable bonuses, as well as other select indicators is given in the table kept until 31. 12. 1979.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, this diagram gives us another view into all the existing project institutes in connection to their supervising governmental bodies.

## Catalogue of Programs for Architectural Design – 1983

By the start of the 1980s, Czechoslovak science and technology – like many other areas – was suffering a significant crisis, lasting throughout the entire normalisation era.<sup>23</sup> This crisis led to the shift from the status of the body for technical and investment

development from a “Federal Ministry” to that of a “State Commission”, specifically in 1983. Even before this transformation, however, the ministry issued from its department of architectural design a document under the title “Automation of Projecting”. This document was prepared by the Prague Design Institute, published in January 1983, and also provided us, most relevantly, with another full listing of all project institutes.<sup>24</sup>

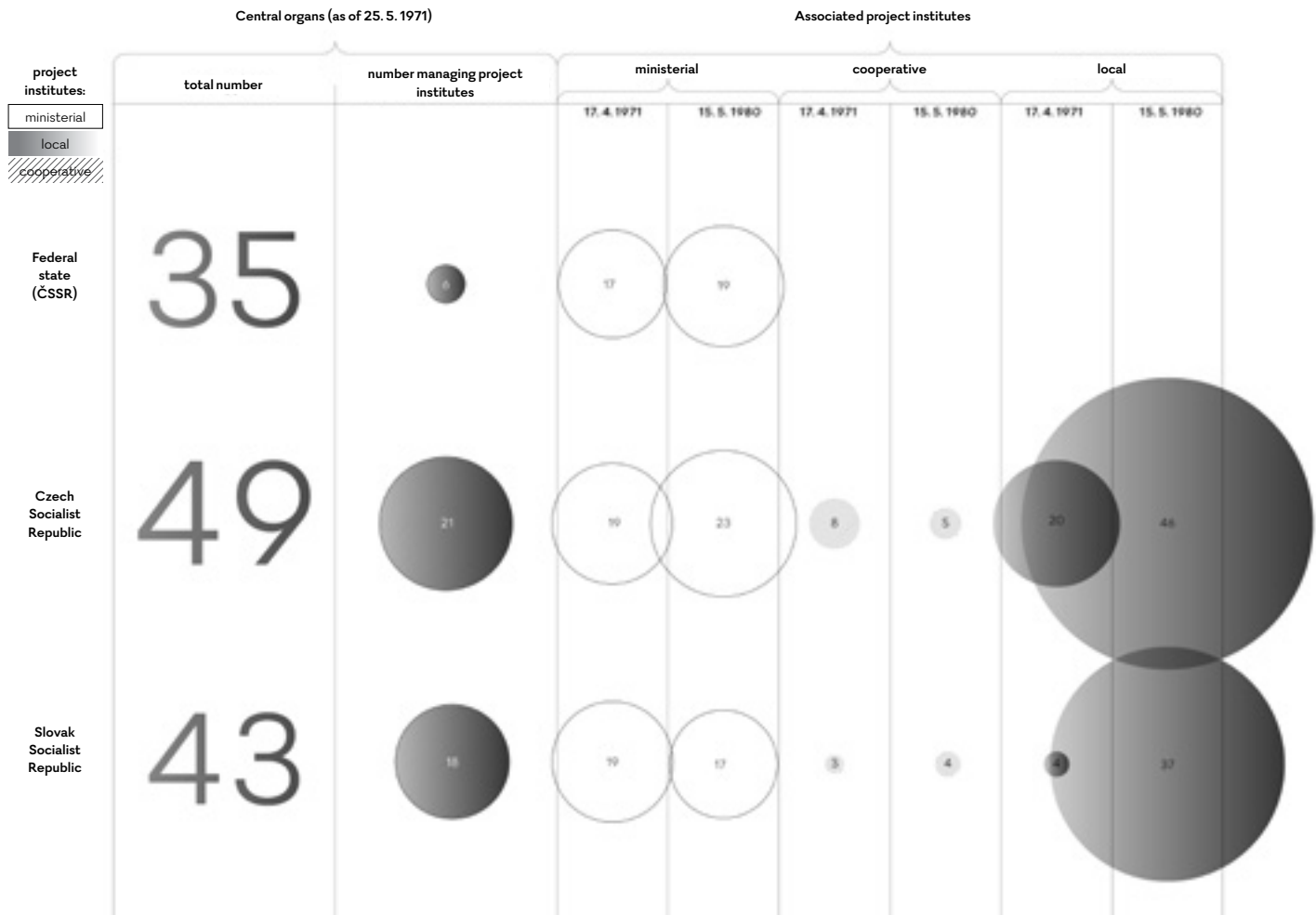
From 1974 up to the end of the 1980s, the system for the operation of project institutes was firmly set, yet the role of the architect in this instance was changed, focusing more on system management than on the actual creation of architecture. Project units functioned essentially like manufacturing ones, particularly regarding their integration under individual ministries. In this period, most project institutes operated in their own new building, or at least in an earlier one adapted for the purpose. Yet the conditions that the designers had for their work at the time were not regarded as optimal. Routine items became hard to acquire, thus significantly degrading the quality of output. Attention began to focus mostly on computing technology, which had as a result the creation of still further project institutes. Simply put, the process of creation was shifted into an industrial form, and in place of a creative character was marked by implemented routines.<sup>25</sup>

## The Structure of Project Institutes

The activities of architectural designers in Czechoslovakia during the normalisation era, yet equally in the following period of its final echoes in the post-1989 years, have been divided into three basic groups according to the type of project institute or the expert activities performed by the designers.<sup>26</sup> The first group – the main one and the largest – is of the project institutes, which form the subject of the present analysis, and can in turn be divided into the categories of regional, ministerial, or cooperative. The second group was of professional activity in non-design work, which could include, e.g., investment and manufacturing, teaching, public administration, and no less importantly research. The third group includes all other activities, such as, e.g., design work for films, theatres, television etc.<sup>27</sup>

## Regionally Managed Project Institutes (e.g., the Stavoprojekt institutes, Regional Project Institutes, Offices of the Chief Architect, etc.)

Created for the purpose of designing primarily mass housing and public facilities, several regionally affiliated project institutes operated under the governance of the relevant regional national committee. In practice, this policy implied the creation of minimally one project institute in each of Czechoslovakia’s regions. With regard to this point, it is necessary to pay attention to the reform of territorial divisions within Czechoslovakia from 1960<sup>28</sup>, and from that point onward, this regional division remained unchanged, except for brief transitional periods<sup>29</sup>, up until 1990. It was in these project institutes that the great majority of architects worked. We can also classify among them all design sections where the main authority was the relevant Regional National Committee<sup>30</sup>: primarily the various ateliers of Stavoprojekt and the official Regional Project Institutes<sup>31</sup>, but



**THE STRUCTURE OF PROJECT INSTITUTES**

ŠTRUKTÚRA PROJEKTOVÝCH ÚSTAVOV

Author Autorka: Lucia Mlynčeková

also the various chief architects' offices. Yet while in 1971, all Stavoprojekt ateliers within Slovakia were administered by the Ministry of Construction and Technology<sup>32</sup>, it was during the 1970s that they were switched to the supervision of the Regional National Committees.<sup>33</sup> A special position, in this aspect, was held by Prague, where the project offices were directed by the National Committee of the City of Prague, as well as Brno, which for a time had its own National Committee, while similarly Bratislava tried to establish an identical trajectory within Slovakia.<sup>34</sup>

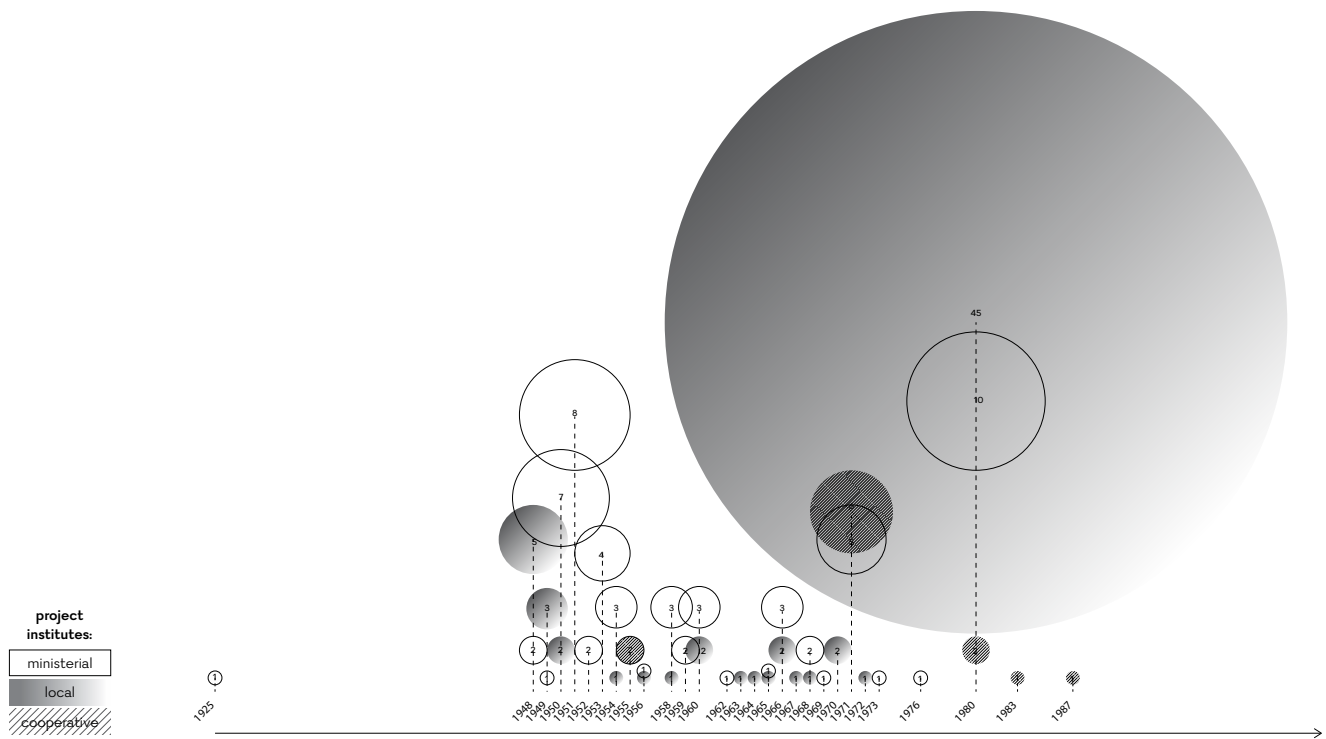
**Ministerial Project Institutes**

For a good overview of the ministerial project institutes, it is important to have a good orientation in the actual cabinet ministries. Unlike the turbulent and frequently changing situation of the 1950s, their structure in the late 1970s was fixed, essentially transformed after the events of 1968 into a form that lasted until 1989.<sup>35</sup> Ministries each had their own project institutes, where the work commissions were based on the specific orientation

of the given ministry. For architectural design in manufacturing-based ministries, it was necessary for the architect to know all the technological procedures and requirements of the manufacturing type, as well as to approach the projects with a significant level of creativity, since here standardisation could only be applied minimally. In fact, it was this greater leeway for creativity in designing atypical elements or structures that attracted architects to work for ministerial project institutes. "Hospital operations of such size, e.g., Motol, Na Homolce, Na Bulovce and others, cannot be created as a standard object, it needs to be original and absolutely atypical, the outcome of an authorial creative process and unquestionably inscribed with the era of its creation, for instance in its materials."<sup>36</sup> Forming a special category were the design sections of the Construction Ministry, where the assignments involved designing significant manufacturing enterprises to meet the main goals of post-war construction in general.

**Cooperative Project Institutes**

Despite the many changes in the operation and effect of cooperative institutions in the era of postwar state-socialist centralisation, cooperatives managed, at least partially, to remain in



operation, even in the sphere of architectural design. Both in the Czech and Slovak socialist republic there existed three cooperative alliances, each of which had its own project institute.<sup>37</sup> These were: A. the Alliance of Manufacturing Cooperatives with its Czech project institute (ČSVD), and a Slovak counterpart (SZVD) in Bratislava. Intriguingly, at the start of the 1970s several project institutes operated on the Czech side under the direction of this cooperative, such as Ateliér A-13<sup>38</sup>, but were later closed, merged into the single joint project institute ČSVD, or assigned to other project institutes. Another was B. the Alliance of Consumer Cooperatives with its single project institute “Retail Project” (*Obchodný projekt*) and finally C. the Alliance of Housing Cooperatives with its project institute Drupos.<sup>39</sup> Starting in 1980, though, there existed another (exclusively Czech) project institute, created by a newly formed cooperative: Armprojekt, directed by Svazarm (*Svaz pro spolupráci s armádou*- Alliance for Cooperation with the Army), as well as Sportprojekt, managed by the Czech Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Alliance of Physical Training and Sports (ČÚV ČSTV).

### Development of the Prague Project Institutes

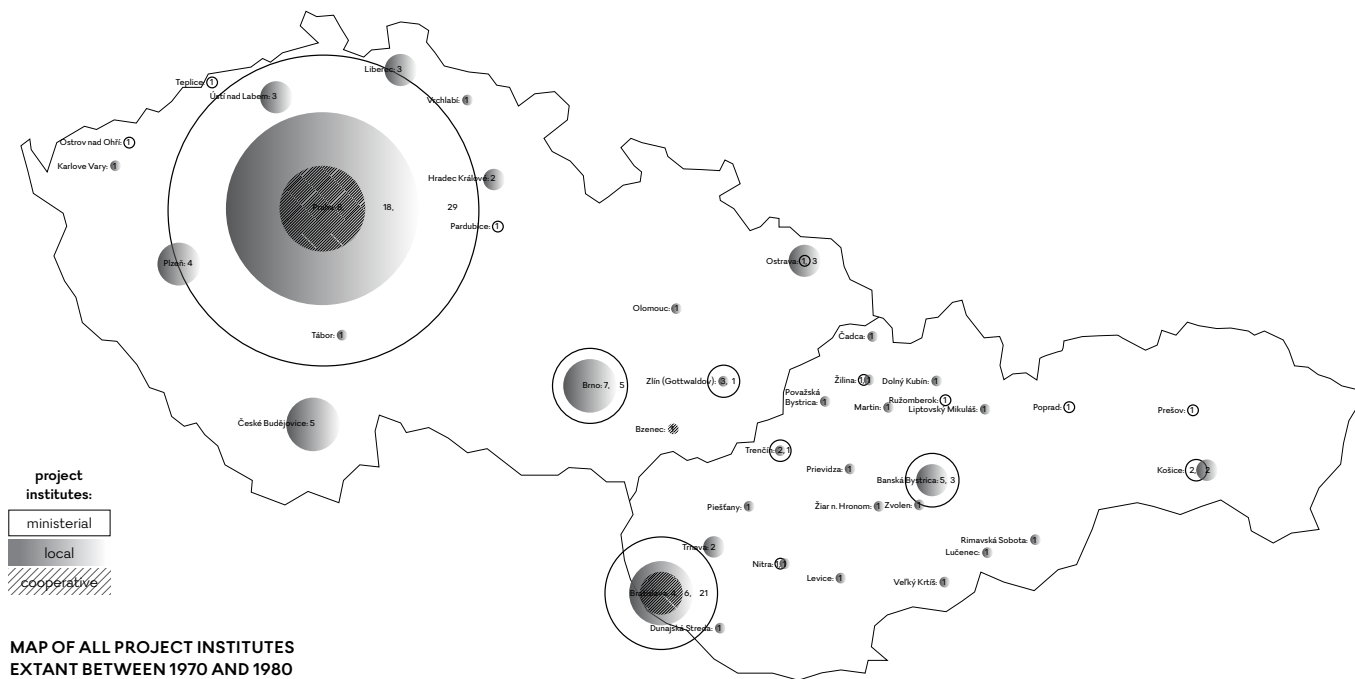
An exclusive position was held by Prague, where alongside two project institutes for housing construction and public facilities, PŮ VHMP (*Projektový ústav výstavby hlavního města Praha* – Project Institute of Construction for the City of Prague) and PPŮ (*Pražský projektový ústav* – Prague Project Institute) there existed several specifically focused institutes, such as SÚRPMO (*Státní ústav pro rekonstrukci památkových měst a objektů* – State Institute for

### THE CHRONOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF PROJECT INSTITUTES

CHRONOLOGICKÝ VÝVOJ PROJEKTOVÝCH ÚSTAVŮV

Author Autorka: Lucia Mlynčková

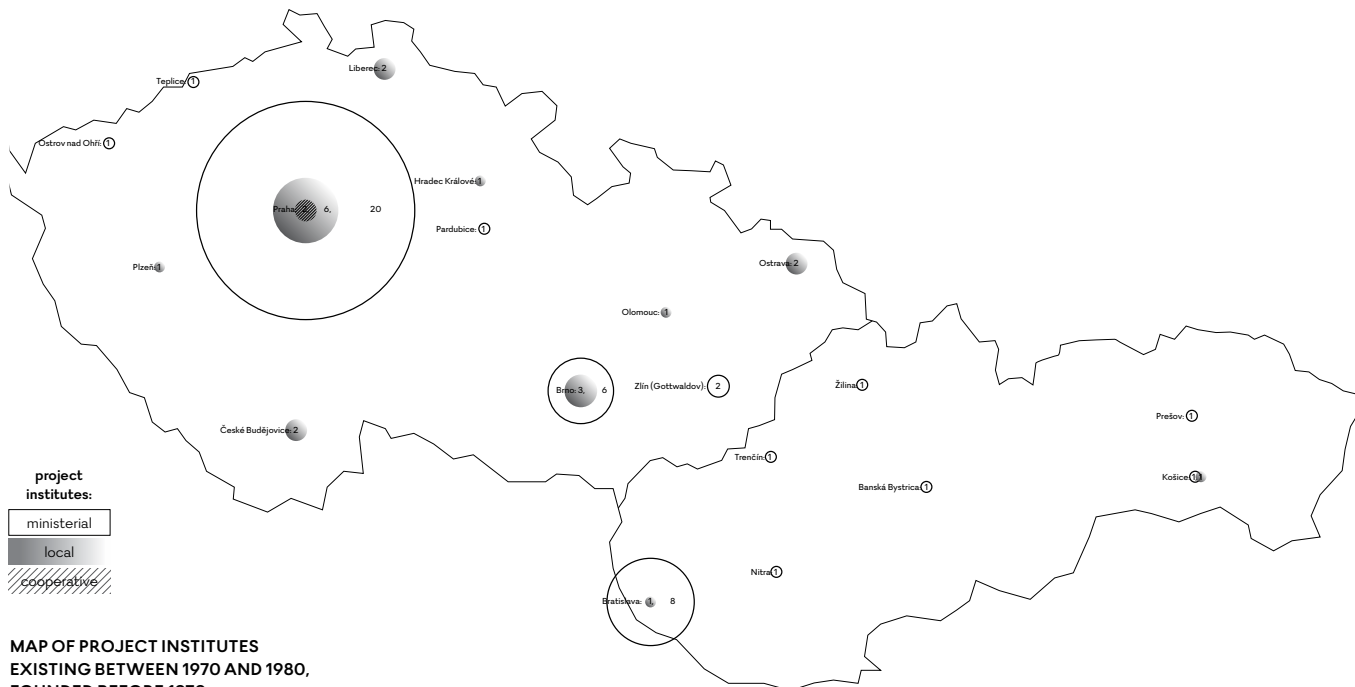
Reconstruction of Heritage Towns and Buildings), PŮDIS (*Projektový ústav dopravních a inženýrských staveb* – Project Institute for Transport and Engineering Structures), METROPROJEKT (for the Prague metro) and INTERPROJEKT (for industrial construction). Likewise, as in many other Czech and Slovak cities, the 1970s saw the creation in Prague of the Office of the Chief Architect, though created at the same time as the closing of the now-famous Alliance of Project Ateliers (*Sdružení projektových ateliérů*).<sup>40</sup> “PŮ VHMP as a whole was a very interesting project institute. It appeared after 1970 as part of the investment and realisation branch of Prague Construction and brought together several already noteworthy architects – [Věra and Vladimír] Machonin, [Alena and Jan] Šrámek, [Karel] Prager, [Karel] Filsak and others – all originally from the Alliance of Project Ateliers. At PŮ VHMP, they were joined by others – for instance [Ivo] Oberstein or Steinbach, who came there from the Regional Project Institute (KPŮ)... But the situation in the PPŮ was different from the relatively liberal PŮ VHMP. There, already politics had begun to play a more important role...”<sup>41</sup>



**MAP OF ALL PROJECT INSTITUTES  
EXTANT BETWEEN 1970 AND 1980**

MAPA VŠETKÝCH PROJEKTOVÝCH  
ÚSTAVOV EXISTUJÍCICH MEDZI  
ROKMI 1970 A 1980

**Author** Autorka: Lucia Mlynčeková



**MAP OF PROJECT INSTITUTES  
EXISTING BETWEEN 1970 AND 1980,  
FOUNDED BEFORE 1970**

MAPA PROJEKTOVÝCH ÚSTAVOV  
EXISTUJÍCICH MEDZI ROKMI 1970  
A 1980, VZNIKAJÚCICH DO R. 1970

**Author** Autorka: Lucia Mlynčeková



**MAP OF PROJECT INSTITUTES EXISTING BETWEEN 1970 AND 1980, FOUNDED AFTER 1970**

MAPA PROJEKTOVÝCH ÚSTAVOV EXISTUJÚCICH MEDZI ROKMI 1970 A 1980, VZNIKAJÚCICH PO R. 1970

Author Autorka: Lucia Mlynčeková

## The Chronological Development of Project Institutes

From the list of all registered project institutes from the 1970s, we can discern several interesting changes.<sup>42</sup> In roughly 90% of all cases, it was possible to use their annual reports to establish a precise timeframe for their existence, thus creating a chronological axis revealing the number of project institutes emerging successively from 1948 to 1987<sup>43</sup>. From this, we see as unquestionably the largest shift the one occurring in 1980, when a sizeable number of locally affiliated project institutes were formed under the direction of the Regional National Committees. In Slovakia, a full 23 were created, even in relatively small settlements such as Veľký Krtíš, Čadca, or the “Bratislava-countryside” district of the city. On the Czech side, the figure was roughly 18. In nearly all the cases in Slovakia, the institution was an Office of Chief Architect<sup>44</sup>, while the Czech situation saw additional titles, e.g., “Institute of Transport Engineering”. Another notable change can be observed in Slovakia in 1979, when a relatively large number of project institutes directed by the Ministry of Construction and Technology were shifted to the relevant Regional National Committees. This occurred for all Stavoprojekt offices extant at the time: in Banská Bystrica, Žilina, Prešov and Nitra. Also placed under the Regional National Committees was Stavoinvesta, in this case in Banská Bystrica and Bratislava.<sup>45</sup> Overall, the greatest growth on this axis took place between the 1970s and 1980s, indeed far greater than in the 1950s, even despite the closing or merging of many project institutes created in the 1960s, such as the famous SIAL in Liberec, forced in the early 1970s to join officially with Stavoprojekt.<sup>46</sup>

## Geographic Development of Project Institutes

The geographic distribution of project institutes in existence in the normalisation years clearly demonstrates the strong prevalence of Prague institutes, or at least those headquartered in Prague. Among them are not only the project institutes of federal institutions, but also those of the Czech Socialist Republic. In total, the largest number of these project institutes, i.e., the ministerial ones, in a single location is naturally found in the federal capitol. Eight of those administered federally were in Prague, out of a total of 20, hence most of the federal institutes were outside the city. Contrastingly, the ministerial institutes on the national level situated in Prague numbered 16 from a total of 28. Interestingly, the cooperative project institutes were all headquartered – with the sole exception of INGPROS Bzenec – in Prague. Likewise, the largest number of locally administered project institutes in a single city were found in Prague: 18. České Budějovice, Brno, Plzeň, Ústí nad Labem, Liberec, Ostrava and Hradec Králové all had more than one locally administered project institute, focusing not only on housing and public facilities, but also e.g., on urban planning and transport structures.

A similar case applied in the capitol of the Slovak Socialist Republic, as the seat of the most ministerial project institutes: here, only 4 were active on the federal level, yet on the national level there were 19. Bratislava was also the only Slovak city to have cooperative project institutes, numbering 4. Locally administered project institutes reached the figure of 6, though it is not certain whether there is a mistake in the record from 1980<sup>47</sup> showing the existence of Stavoprojekt both administered by the Municipal Committee of Bratislava and by the Slovak Regional National Committee. In the remaining cities of the Slovak Socialist Republic, we find primarily locally managed project institutes, which were shown in the previous graph of



the chronological axis, demonstrating that the great majority were founded at the end of the 1970s.

The difference between the project institutes existing in 1970 (respectively 1971) and those created precisely because of the political-economic changes of normalisation, gives the opportunity to observe an interesting difference not only in type but also in geographic distribution. Unlike the earlier project institutes, those created after 1970 were primarily locally administered ones, mostly Office of the Chief Architect. The greatest difference is shown in the growth after 1976, though here the findings are most likely a reaction to the new declaration by the Federal Ministry for Technical and Investment Development.<sup>48</sup> And this declaration was unique in its extent among those issued by the ministry after 1970<sup>49</sup>. Here, a new definition was given not only of the authorisation of organisations and their branches to undertake architectural design, but also permission of design work for individuals. In this section, there is explicit statement of what conditions are necessary for individual designers to prepare project documentation: either (a) by an individual, for a specific building where the complete construction costs do not exceed 500,000 Kčs, or (b) a National Committee, if the construction costs do not exceed 2,000,000 Kčs, or occasionally (c) a cooperative if the costs do not exceed 4,000,000 Kčs. Understandably, there are other stipulations that define the precise working framework, methods of contractual agreement, and professional qualifications placed on authors of project documentation. Additionally, the same year saw the issuing of a new Construction Act, which in Slovakia essentially remains in force even at present.<sup>50</sup> Specified here, among other items, is the type of organisation capable of performing project and engineering work: with authorisation by central government bodies, Regional National Committees, or even the National Committees of the

two capitols, i.e., Prague and Bratislava. The National Committees were also ranked among those bodies entrusted with preparing zoning and planning documentation. Specified here is the requirement that if the urban planning body is the relevant National Committee, it should undertake all tasks connected to land-use realisation by its specific branch.<sup>51</sup>

## Conclusion / <http://projektaky.sk/>

The present study puts forth a basic categorisation, periodisation and interpretation of the first ever complete listing of all extant project institutes in post-war Czechoslovakia, specifically the 1971 – 1980 period, acquired from the archivally unclassified fund of the State Commission for Scientific-Technical and Investment Development, via online database. It presents the extracted data in three primary visualisations: 1) listing, 2) map, and 3) chronological axis.<sup>52</sup> A further contribution is the open form, allowing the possibility of building on the findings in future research. The graphs accompanying the article illustrate the most significant data acquired directly from the archival materials, which have previously been inaccessible. As such, the research fills a significant gap in the topic of Czechoslovak post-war architecture and brings together still open questions in this area.

MGR. ART. LUCIA MLYNČEKOVÁ

CZECH TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY  
IN PRAGUE  
FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE

Thákurova 9

166 34 Praha 6 – Dejvice

Czech Republic

[l.mlynckova@gmail.com](mailto:l.mlynckova@gmail.com)

1 The theme of architectural design under socialism has been partially addressed mainly as part of wider monograph works on the said period, among which the most significant are e.g.: SOMMER, Vítězslav, 2019. *Rídit socialismus jako firmu*. Praha: Nakladatelství Lidových novin, 296 p.; GJURIČOVÁ, Adéla, KOPEČEK, Michal, ROUBAL, Petr, SPURNÝ, Matěj and VILÍMEK, Tomáš, 2019. *Architekti dlouhé změny*. Praha: Argo, 368 p.; MITÁŠOVÁ, Monika and ŠEVČÍK, Jiří (eds.), 2013. *Česká a slovenská architektura 1971 – 2011: texty, rozhovory, dokumenty*. Praha: Akademie výtvarných umění, 956 p.; GUZIK, Hubert, DVOŘÁKOVÁ, Dita and ZIKMUND, Jan, 2019. *Architektura v přelomu, 1945 – 1948, 1989 – 1992*. Praha: Vydavatelství ČVUT, 239 p.; MORAVČÍKOVÁ, Henrieta and VORLÍK, Petr, 2019. *ICONIC RUINS? Post-war Socialist Architecture in the Visegrad Countries*. Praha: Czech centres, 119 p.; KOVÁCS, Dániel, 2021. *Otherity – Reconditioning Our Modern Heritage*. Budapest: Ludwig Múzeum – Kortárs Művészeti Múzeum, Budapest, 200 p.; ELMAN ZARECOR, Kimberly, 2011. *Manufacturing a Socialist Modernity: Housing in Czechoslovakia 1945 – 1960*.

Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 480 p.; ZIKMUND, Jan, 2020. *Hledání univerzality, Kontexty průmyslové architektury v Československu 1945 – 1992*. Praha: Česká technika – nakladatelství ČVUT, 207 p.; and many others.

2 The Five-Year Plan (*pětiročníka / pětiletka*) was the basic tool for reviving the war-damaged economy as well as a central component of the Communist regime. There is a considerable body of literature investigating the Czechoslovak economy in the post-war era, several examples of which are available at: <http://www.totalita.cz/ost/zdroje.php>, along with a briefer explanation from the same source at: <http://www.totalita.cz/vysvetlivky/petiletky.php>; for more in-depth analyses particularly in relation to architecture and construction note e.g.: Sommer, V., 2019, POČET STRÁN; Gjuričová, A., Kopeček, M., Roubal, P., Spurný, M. and Vilímek, T., 2019, POČET STRÁN.

3 TOMEK, Prokop. *Pětiletky – plánování ekonomiky*. [online] [Accessed 19 May 2022]. Available at: <http://www.totalita.cz/vysvetlivky/petiletky.php>

4 A. Státní komise pro vědeckotechnický a investiční rozvoj. Czech National Archive, unclassified fund.

B. *Vznikla Státní komise pro vědeckotechnický a investiční rozvoj v čele s Jaromírem Obzinou*. [online] [Accessed 20 May 2022]. Available at: <https://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/10195164142-vypravej/bonus/8205/>

5 *Odbor projektování, projektová soutěž na Kongresovou halu*, package no. 250A, Státní komise pro vědeckotechnický a investiční rozvoj. Czech National Archive, unclassified fund.

6 *V Praze byl otevřen Palác kultury*. [online] [Accessed 20 May 2022]. Available at: <https://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/10195164142-vypravej/13547-vestopach-doby/8159-v-praze-byl-otevren-palac-kultury/>

7 MASÁK, Miroslav, 2013. O Stavu Československé architektury. In: Ševčík, J. and Mitášová, M. (eds.). *Česká a Slovenská architektura 1971 – 2011*. Praha: Akademie výtvarných umění, 954 p.

8 ZIKMUND, Jan, 2020. V plánu. In: Zikmund, J. (ed.). *Hledání univerza-*

*lity, Kontexty průmyslové architektury v Československu 1945 – 1992*. Praha: ČVUT, p. 208.

9 Vyhlaška Federálního výboru pro technický a investiční rozvoj, kterou se mění a doplňuje vyhláška Státní komise pro techniku č. 108/1966 Sb., o oprávnění projektové činnosti č. 137/1970 Sb. Source: Sběrka zákonů a Sběrka mezinárodních smluv. [online] 1970 [Accessed 7 Sep. 2021]. Available at: [https://aplikace.mvcr.cz/sbirka-zakonu/SearchResult.aspx?q=36/1966&typeLaw=zakone-what=Cislo\\_zakona\\_smlouvy](https://aplikace.mvcr.cz/sbirka-zakonu/SearchResult.aspx?q=36/1966&typeLaw=zakone-what=Cislo_zakona_smlouvy)

10 Státní komise pro vědeckotechnický a investiční rozvoj. Unclassified fund.

11 Odst. (2), §3 Postup při udělování oprávnění, Vyhlaška Federálního výboru pro technický a investiční rozvoj, kterou se mění a doplňuje vyhláška Státní komise pro techniku č. 108/1966 Sb., o oprávnění projektové činnosti č. 137/1970 Sb., source: Sběrka zákonů a Sběrka mezinárodních smluv. [online] 1970 [cit. 7. 9. 2021]. Available at: <https://aplikace.mvcr.cz/sbirka-zakonu/>

- SearchResult.aspx?q=36/1960e-typeLaw=zakone-what=Cislo\_zakona\_smlouvy
- 12** Vyhláška Federálního výboru pro technický a investiční rozvoj, kterou se mění a doplňuje vyhláška Státní komise pro techniku č. 108/1966 Sb., o oprávnění projektové činnosti č. 137/1970 Sb., source: Sběrka zákonů a Sběrka mezinárodních smluv. [online] [Accessed 7 Sep. 2021]. Available at: [https://aplikace.mvcr.cz/sbirka-zakonu/SearchResult.aspx?q=36/1960e-typeLaw=zakone-what=Cislo\\_zakona\\_smlouvy](https://aplikace.mvcr.cz/sbirka-zakonu/SearchResult.aspx?q=36/1960e-typeLaw=zakone-what=Cislo_zakona_smlouvy)
- 13** Zákon o zřízení Státní komise pro vědeckotechnický a investiční rozvoj č. 114/1983 Sb., source: Sběrka zákonů a Sběrka mezinárodních smluv. [online] 1983 [Accessed 7 Sep. 2021]. Available at: [https://aplikace.mvcr.cz/sbirka-zakonu/SearchResult.aspx?q=36/1960e-typeLaw=zakone-what=Cislo\\_zakona\\_smlouvy](https://aplikace.mvcr.cz/sbirka-zakonu/SearchResult.aspx?q=36/1960e-typeLaw=zakone-what=Cislo_zakona_smlouvy)
- 14** Zákon o zřízení Státní komise pro vědeckotechnický a investiční rozvoj č. 114/1983 Sb., source: Sběrka zákonů a Sběrka mezinárodních smluv. [online] 1983 [Accessed 7 Sep. 2021].
- 15** Zákon o zřízení Státní komise pro vědeckotechnický a investiční rozvoj č. 137/1970 Sb., source: Sběrka zákonů a Sběrka mezinárodních smluv. [online] 1970 [Accessed 7 Sep. 2021]. Available at: [https://aplikace.mvcr.cz/sbirka-zakonu/SearchResult.aspx?q=36/1960e-typeLaw=zakone-what=Cislo\\_zakona\\_smlouvy](https://aplikace.mvcr.cz/sbirka-zakonu/SearchResult.aspx?q=36/1960e-typeLaw=zakone-what=Cislo_zakona_smlouvy)
- 16** Zákon o zřízení Státní komise pro vědeckotechnický a investiční rozvoj č. 137/1970 Sb., source: Sběrka zákonů a Sběrka mezinárodních smluv. [online] 1970 [Accessed 7 Sep. 2021].
- 17** One of these ateliers was also founded by architect Štefan Svetko. Rtv.s. sk. IKONY (Štefan Svetko). [online] 2020 [Published 5 Oct. 2020]. Available at: <https://www.rtv.s.sk/televizia/archiv/16250/244358>
- 18** Czech National Archive, Státní komise pro vědeckotechnický a investiční rozvoj, inv. no. 273, Oprávnění a registrace 1971 – 1972. Unclassified fund.
- 19** Czech National Archive, Státní komise pro vědeckotechnický a investiční rozvoj, inv. no. 273, Oprávnění a registrace 1971 – 1972.
- 20** Czech National Archive, Státní komise pro vědeckotechnický a investiční rozvoj, inv. no. 273, Projektování – mzdový vývoj 1976, 1977, 1980. Unclassified fund.
- 21** Czech National Archive, Státní komise pro vědeckotechnický a investiční rozvoj, inv. no. 273, Projektování – mzdový vývoj 1976, 1977, 1980.
- 22** Czech National Archive, Státní komise pro vědeckotechnický a investiční rozvoj, inv. no. 273, Projektování – mzdový vývoj 1976, 1977, 1980.
- 23** Česká televize, *Vyprávěj. Vznikla Státní komise pro vědeckotechnický a investiční rozvoj v čele s Jaromírem Obzinou*, [online] 2014 [Published 25 Mar. 2014], (originally broadcast by Czechoslovak Television, 28.1.1984) [Accessed 7 Sep. 2021]. Available at: <https://www.ceska-televize.cz/porady/10195164142-vypravej/bonus/8205/>
- 24** Czech National Archive, Státní komise pro vědeckotechnický a investiční rozvoj, inv. no. 413, Katalog programů pro projektovní v ČSSR. Unclassified fund.
- 25** KOHLMAYER, Václav, 1989. Místo architektonické tvorby v projektovém procesu. *Projekt*. 30(6), p. 2.
- 26** PÁŠEK, Karel, 1983. Podmínky tvůrčí praxe architektů v projektových organizacích a složkách. In: *Architektura nové výstavby občanské, bytové a průmyslové: 1. díl*. Praha: Dům techniky ČSVTS, p. 233.
- 27** ZIKMUND, Jan, 2020. Ostrovy. In: Zikmund, J. (ed.). *Hledání univerzality, Kontexty průmyslové architektury v Československu 1945 – 1992*. Praha: ČVUT, p. 208.
- 28** Zákon o územním členění státu č. 36/1960 Sb., source: Sběrka zákonů a Sběrka mezinárodních smluv. [online] 1960 [Accessed 7 Sep. 2021]. Available at: [https://aplikace.mvcr.cz/sbirka-zakonu/SearchResult.aspx?q=36/1960e-typeLaw=zakone-what=Cislo\\_zakona\\_smlouvy](https://aplikace.mvcr.cz/sbirka-zakonu/SearchResult.aspx?q=36/1960e-typeLaw=zakone-what=Cislo_zakona_smlouvy)
- 29** For a brief period, Act no. 71/1969 divided Slovakia into 37 districts with the city of Bratislava as an independent territorial unit, yet Act no. 131/1970 subsequently reestablished the regions (West Slovakia, Central Slovakia, East Slovakia), though with Bratislava remaining autonomous.
- 30** Czech National Archive, Státní komise pro vědeckotechnický a investiční rozvoj, inv. no. 273, Projektování – mzdový vývoj 1976, 1977, 1980. Unclassified fund.
- 31** This transformation is partially explained by Jaroslav Pokorný in the article: POKORNÝ, Jaroslav. 1968. Jaroslav Pokorný \*27.1.1908. *Architektúra ČSR*. 28(9 – 10), p. 646.
- 32** Czech National Archive, Státní komise pro vědeckotechnický a investiční rozvoj, inv. no. 230, Ekonomie projektové činnosti 1971 – 1972. Unclassified fund.
- 33** Czech National Archive, Státní komise pro vědeckotechnický a investiční rozvoj, inv. no. 273, Projektování – mzdový vývoj 1976, 1977, 1980. Unclassified fund.
- 34** Czech National Archive, Státní komise pro vědeckotechnický a investiční rozvoj, inv. no. 273, Projektování – mzdový vývoj 1976, 1977, 1980. Unclassified fund.
- 35** Act no. 2/1969 defined 17 ministries, which were later in 1970 addressed by Act no. 147/1970, which removed 4 of them: the Ministry of Planning, the Ministry of Youth and Physical Training, the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications. However, the Czech Transport Ministry is still present in the document (Czech National Archive, Státní komise pro vědeckotechnický a investiční rozvoj, inv. no. 230, unclassified fund) “Ekonomie projektové činnosti 1971 – 1972” as one of the governing bodies of state administration.
- 36** KUTNAR, Petr and JEŽKOVÁ, Jana, 2020. Stavby velkých pražských nemocnic vznikaly jako absolutní atyp. In: Vorlík, P. (ed.). *Rozhovory*. Praha: ČVUT, p. 122.
- 37** Czech National Archive, Státní komise pro vědeckotechnický a investiční rozvoj, inv. no. 229, Zpřesněný přehled ústředních orgánů a skupin společenských organizací a jejich číselných kódů dle Jednotného číselníku organizací v ČSSR – stav k 1. lednu 1971. Unclassified fund.
- 38** COSA.CZ. Postmoderní stavby Petra Keila. [online] 2019 [Accessed 28 Dec. 2019]. Available at: <https://cosa.tv/postmoderni-stavby-petra-keila/>
- 39** Pašek, K., 1983, p. 71.
- 40** Czech National Archive, Státní komise pro vědeckotechnický a investiční rozvoj. Unclassified fund.
- 41** Interview with Ing. arch. Vratislav Danda, Prague, 14 Jul. 2021.
- 42** Czech National Archive, Státní komise pro vědeckotechnický a investiční rozvoj, i. č. 273, Projektování – mzdový vývoj 1976, 1977, 1980. Unclassified fund.
- 43** The exception was Centroprojekt Zlín (Gottwaldov), created in 1925, source: KUBEČKA, Vladimír et al., 1975. *Centroprojekt Gottwaldov, 1925 – 1975*. Gottwaldov.
- 44** The one exception was Banská Bystrica – Regional Central Heritage Protection OP B. Bystrica, source: Czech National Archive, Státní komise pro vědeckotechnický a investiční rozvoj, i. č. 273, Projektování – mzdový vývoj 1976, 1977, 1980. Unclassified fund.
- 45** Czech National Archive, Státní komise pro vědeckotechnický a investiční rozvoj, i. č. 273, Projektování – mzdový vývoj 1976, 1977, 1980. Unclassified fund.
- 46** Historie SIALu. [online] 2021 [Accessed 26 Apr. 2022]. Available at: <https://www.sial.cz/historie/>
- 47** Czech National Archive, Státní komise pro vědeckotechnický a investiční rozvoj, i. č. 273, Projektování – mzdový vývoj 1976, 1977, 1980. Unclassified fund.
- 48** Vyhláška č. 88/1976 Sb., Federálního ministerstva pro technický a investiční rozvoj, ze dne 18. července 1976 o oprávnění k projektové činnosti, source: Sběrka zákonů a Sběrka mezinárodních smluv Ministerstva vnitra ČR. [online] 1976 [Accessed 26 Apr. 2022]. Available at: <https://aplikace.mvcr.cz/sbirka-zakonu/SearchResult.aspx?q=1976e-typeLaw=zakone-what=Roke-stranka=2>
- 49** Vyhláška č. 137/1970 Sb., Federálního ministerstva pro technický a investiční rozvoj, ze dne 22. prosince 1970, kterou se mění a doplňuje vyhláška č. 108/1966 Sb. o oprávnění k projektové činnosti, source: Sběrka zákonů a Sběrka mezinárodních smluv Ministerstva vnitra ČR. [online] 1966 [Accessed 26 Apr. 2022]. Available at: [https://aplikace.mvcr.cz/sbirka-zakonu/SearchResult.aspx?q=137/1970e-typeLaw=zakone-what=Cislo\\_zakona\\_smlouvy](https://aplikace.mvcr.cz/sbirka-zakonu/SearchResult.aspx?q=137/1970e-typeLaw=zakone-what=Cislo_zakona_smlouvy)
- 50** Zákon č. 50/1976 Sb., Federálního ministerstva pro technický a investiční rozvoj, ze dne 27. dubna 1976 o oprávnění k projektové činnosti, source: Sběrka zákonů a Sběrka mezinárodních smluv Ministerstva vnitra ČR. [online] [Accessed 26 Apr. 2022]. Available at: [https://aplikace.mvcr.cz/sbirka-zakonu/SearchResult.aspx?q=50/1976e-typeLaw=zakone-what=Cislo\\_zakona\\_smlouvy](https://aplikace.mvcr.cz/sbirka-zakonu/SearchResult.aspx?q=50/1976e-typeLaw=zakone-what=Cislo_zakona_smlouvy)
- 51** Zákon č. 50/1976 Sb., Federálního ministerstva pro technický a investiční rozvoj, ze dne 27. dubna 1976 o oprávnění k projektové činnosti.
- 52** The online database is accessible at: <http://projektaky.sk/>, created 2019 – 2021 at the Department of Architectural Theory and History, Faculty of Architecture, Czech Technical University in Prague. Participating in its compilation were: Mgr. art. Lucia Mlynčková (main author and website designer), prof. Ing. arch. Petr Vorlík, Ph.D. (advisor and consultant), Mgr. Peter Szalay, Ph.D. (specialised advisor and consultant), Mgr. Jan Zikmund, Ph.D. (consultant), Marek Badinský (technical and content assistance), Michal Horňák (development).