

Sociological Program

The research work of the Sociological Program started shortly after the establishment of CSD. In May 1990, it conducted the first independent pre-election surveys after the democratic changes in Bulgaria. This was an important contribution to democratic institution building and to fostering the public awareness of the evolving new political and economic system.

The first surveys of the Sociological Program provided the foundation for building up a powerful professionally-organized research unit. The Sociological Program gradually started working on contractual basis, making pioneer steps in the research of privatization and economic behavior, political attitudes, value orientations, media and audience research, etc.

1990 – 1993 Highlights:

- Organization of a national interviewer net consisting of approximately 280 interviewers. It is regionally based and consists of 28 regional groups (in all county centers).
- The Sociological Program conducted over 40 quantitative national sample surveys (public opinion and social research), and 15 qualitative surveys. The basic survey methods employed include face to face interviews, telephone interviews, focus group discussions, omnibus surveys, and a computer-based perception analyzer system (quick-tally) for assessment of radio and TV programming, advertising, etc.
- In August 1992, the Sociological Program organized an international seminar on survey methodology and organization in Sandanski, southern Bulgaria. The seminar was attended by pollsters from Hungary, Poland, Russia, Romania, and Bulgaria. The lecturers included Dr. Peter Mohler, Director of ZUMA, Mannheim, Dr. Mary McIntosh, Chief of the European Branch of USIA Office of Research, and the leading US pollsters, Nancy Belden and Gary Lawrence.
- The Sociological Program has established good working relations with institutions including the BBC World Service, USIA Office of Research, International Social Survey Program, RFE/RL Research Institute, Munich, Board for International Broadcasting (USA), Worldnet TV (USA), The World Bank, etc.

The activities of the Sociological Program in 1994 were aimed primarily at:

- developing and implementing marketing surveys;
- improving the skills of research fellows with a view to maintain a national interviewer network, establishing a database of surveys conducted, and implementing novel research techniques;
- providing methodological and technical support to the other CSD programs and to the implementation of specific projects.

The research projects implemented during the year under review fall in several groups:

Audience Research (quantitative surveys)

National Media Omnibus Survey (January - February 1994)

Part of this omnibus survey was contracted with RFE/RL Research Institute, Media & Opinion Research Department. It was based on a nationally representative sample (N = 1019). The method employed was face-to-face interviews and the fieldwork was conducted from January 24 through 30, 1994.

The survey included several measures of radio audiences: listening reach, listening regularity, and yesterday aided recall. In addition, it included audiences of daily and weekly newspapers of national circulation,

attitudes towards economic reforms and mass privatization, and entrepreneurial inclinations. The survey findings were organized in separate volumes containing brief presentation of results and tables.

National Media Omnibus Survey

Part of the survey was contracted with the USIA Office of Research, European Branch. The sampling design for this survey was basically the same as the above survey and the results were based on a nationally representative sample (N = 1090). The method employed was face-to-face interviews and the fieldwork was conducted from April 4 through 10, 1994. The survey included several measures of radio audiences: listening reach, listening regularity, and yesterday aided recall. In addition, it included audiences of daily and weekly newspapers of national circulation, attitudes towards economic reforms and mass privatization, and entrepreneurial inclinations, and issues of foreign policy and national security. The survey results were organized in separate volumes including brief presentations of results and tables.

BBC World Service Audience in Sofia (July - August 1994)

The survey was contracted with BJM Research and Consultancy Ltd., London, UK. It was based on a quota sample of listeners to the BBC World Service in Sofia. It included 199 face-to-face interviews conducted from August 9 through 20, 1994.

Economic Reform Today Readership Survey (October - November)

The survey was contracted with USIA Office of Research, European Branch. The main objective of this mail-in survey was to assess the distribution of Economic Reform Today, a publication of the Center for International Private Enterprise, Washington, and to identify audience opinions about the form and content of the journal. The questionnaires were mailed on November 18, 1994. The sample included 149 readers of Economic Reform Today.

Audience Research (qualitative surveys)

BBC World Service Programming Review

The survey was contracted with Market Behavior Ltd., London, UK. This qualitative survey required the composition of four groups of respondents matching certain social and demographic criteria. Twenty-six respondents were selected and group discussions were held on July 27 and 28, 1994. The main objectives of the survey were to examine the respondents' reactions to different elements of BBC World Service programming and to assess the positioning of BBC World Service in the media environment. The focus groups were recorded or videotaped.

RFE Bulgarian Service Programming Evaluation

The survey was contracted with the Board for International Broadcasting, Washington, D.C. The major objective of this qualitative survey was to obtain Sofia listeners' assessments of the different elements of RFE Bulgarian Service programming. The method employed was focus group discussions. A total of 34 respondents meeting different social and demographic criteria, divided into four groups, were recruited. Group discussions were conducted on October 15 and 16, 1994.

Marketing Research

New "Always" and Fanta TV Commercials

The survey was contracted with Coca-Cola Services Bulgaria Ltd. The main objective of this qualitative survey was to select the Coca-Cola and Fanta commercials to be broadcast on TV in Bulgaria. The method employed was focus group discussions. The main issues discussed, in addition to the testing of commercials, were consumer patterns related to use of soft drinks, product image and overall consumer patterns. Respondents participating in the survey (N = 79) were organized in 8 groups and discussions were conducted between June 23 and 26, 1994.

Reuters' Clients

The survey was contracted with Reuters Bulgaria. The main objectives of the survey were to explore attitudes towards different elements of the services provided by Reuters (sales, customer support, technical support,

training, etc.), to assess clients' overall satisfaction with the services and their perception of Reuters as a company and a business partner. The survey covered 114 respondents selected from 64 organizations subscribing to Reuters' electronic services. The fieldwork was conducted between December 1 and 10, 1994. An analytical report and survey results were provided to the contractor.

Ad-Hoc Social Research

At-Risk Groups and Social Problems in Bulgaria

This research project is part of a package of surveys commissioned by the World Bank. For this project CSD worked as a subcontractor of Lahti Research and Training Center, University of Helsinki, Finland. The main objective was to supply background information about at-risk groups in Bulgarian society, including:

- identification of groups with long-standing and newly emerging poverty problems who are particularly affected by the transition, and the major trends in categories of poverty intensification;
- description and analysis of the processes by which poverty is intensified as a result of the transition (both in terms of changes in the economy and in the allocation of state benefits);
- development of an understanding of the survival strategies adopted by different groups affected by formal and informal economic behavior, social networking, and maintenance

of successful dependency relationships with the state;

- development of distinctions between such groups in terms of potential official policy responses such as continued, but targeted welfare, developmental investment in particular programs, monitoring and controlling the opportunities for crime;
- identification of the non-state institutions (e.g. the family, volunteer associations, trade unions) through which survival is made possible in the context of the breakdown of state, factory and cooperative organizations.

The survey design employed several research techniques, including quantitative survey of clients of Social Assistance Offices and Labor Offices (August 1994), focus group discussions with experts and representatives of risk groups (August - September 1994) and in-depth interviews with selected representatives of high-risk groups (August 1994).

Apart from the analytical report of survey findings which was presented to the contractor, the survey results were presented at a seminar organized by the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, CSD, and Lahti Research and Training Center.

The Day after the Elections

This qualitative survey had experimental purposes in view of the upcoming elections. The main objective was to provide qualitative, prognostic

information about electoral behavior. The survey included designing pre-election and post-election situations for participants and a follow-up of the participants' reactions to the experimental situations. The number of participants in the experiment was 25. The fieldwork was conducted on December 12, 1994. Survey findings were summarized in an analytical report.

Your Opinion about Politics, the Economy and Mass Media (April - May 1994)

The survey was contracted with RFE/RL Research Institute, Media & Opinion Research Department. This was a quantitative survey based on a nationally representative sample (N = 2120). The method employed was face-to-face interviews and the fieldwork was conducted from May 1 through 10, 1994. The survey included several measures of audiences of foreign radio stations, and daily and weekly newspapers with national circulation. Several questionnaire blocks were designed to identify political attitudes, opinions on economic reforms and social organization.

Your Opinion about Politics, the Economy and Mass Media (November-December 1994)

The survey was contracted with the USIA Office of Research, European Branch. This was a quantitative national sample (N = 1119) survey of political and economic attitudes of the Bulgarian population (18 and over). The main objective of the survey was to explore electoral attitudes and orientations and to assess relationships between these orientations and general perception of the elements of current social organization. Fieldwork was conducted between November 30 and December 7, 1994.

Elite and the Changes in Bulgaria

The survey was contracted with RFE/RL Research Institute, Media & Opinion Research Department. This survey was part of a long-term comparative international project on social, economic and political attitudes and social forecasting. The method employed was face-to-face interviews of 410 representatives of different elite segments (politics, state officials, military, business, mass media, science, art, and religion). Fieldwork was conducted in October and November 1994.