

SKETCHES OF (NON-)RELIABILITY:
CADRE EVALUATION AND CADRE POLITICS
IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, 1948-1989

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In Czechoslovakia, cadre politics had a significant effect upon lives and careers. Not only could it take the form of people being excluded from social life, there also existed a pressure to create for oneself, via the ubiquitous assessments and evaluations, an appropriate profile. Part of each cadre profile was a person's degree of reliability – reliability in a comprehensive sense that included political aspects as well as those of class affiliation. But there was more to the process of forming and evaluating a cadre profile than the pure intention of the communist administration to control societal development and ultimately change society. Moreover, the criteria used for the assessments cannot be regarded as a fixed, unchangeable set. Concrete case histories show that a cadre profile was the result of an often rather difficult social negotiating process functioning via cadre files and assessments. Multiple local, personal and occupational interests had an impact on this negotiating process and could result in the agreed profile being subject to supposedly sudden, at times even repeated changes.