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Attitudes Towards Work and the Market Economy in the Czech and Slovak Republics

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Attitudes Towards Work and the Market Economy in the Czech and Slovak Republics

Abstract

[Excerpt] This report is the final in a series of four reports whose main purpose is to present a preliminary overview of attitudes towards work and the market economy in four Eastern and Central European countries (actually five by now, following the division of Czechoslovakia into the Czech and the Slovak republics). The project was initiated by the Bureau of International Labor Affairs of the U.S. Department of Labor in mid-1991 in order to gather information which might assist in designing technical assistance programs appropriate for the new political and economic situation in these countries. Thus, the starting point was to develop a survey design and instrument which could illuminate the transition phase and how it is perceived in the population to conduct the surveys and to report their findings, as soon as possible, so as to allow for modifications in programs being planned or in operation.

Keywords

CAHRS, ILR, center, human resource, studies, advance, Czech, Slovak, republic, economy, work, political, issues, regression, report, intention, plan, assistance, research, project, social science, market, labor, Eastern, Central European

Comments

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**ATTITUDES TOWARDS WORK AND THE MARKET ECONOMY
IN THE CZECH AND SLOVAK REPUBLICS**

by

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Report prepared under DOL grant E-9-K-1-0058

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This paper has not undergone formal review or approval of the faculty of the ILR School. It is intended to make results of Center research, conferences, and projects available to others interested in human resource management in preliminary form to encourage discussion and suggestions.

September 8, 1992

Attitudes Towards Work and the Market Economy in the Czech and Slovak Republics

by

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Report prepared under DOL grant E-9-K-1-0058

1. Introduction

1.1 General Remarks

This report is the final in a series of four reports whose main purpose is to present a preliminary overview of attitudes towards work and the market economy in four Eastern and Central European countries (actually five by now, following the division of Czechoslovakia into the Czech and the Slovak republics). The project was initiated by the Bureau of International Labor Affairs of the U.S. Department of Labor in mid-1991 in order to gather information which might assist in designing technical assistance programs appropriate for the new political and economic situation in these countries. Thus, the starting point was to develop a survey design and instrument which could illuminate the transition phase and how it is perceived in the population to conduct the surveys and to report their findings, as soon as possible, so as to allow for modifications in programs being planned or in operation.

Time constraints necessarily set certain limitations on the study which would have taken a somewhat different form had it been designed purely for scientific interests. Still, established scientific standards were applied to ensure results of a

high quality where possible. The questionnaire incorporated established scales and pre-tested items. In the design phase the questions and domains were discussed with a number of leading Western and Eastern European experts. A careful translation-retranslation procedure was employed using independent translators. Pretests were conducted in each of the countries with samples of diverse age, gender, education, and residence. Special interviewer training sessions were held, and interviewer assistance booklets developed. Using the optimal source available in the country, a representative sample was drawn for the survey. Special procedures were developed to check and double-check the accuracy of the interviews and the coding and data-input procedures (Ruiz Quintanilla 1992d).

Particular care was taken to adapt the questionnaire and survey procedure to distinctive cultural conditions. For example, in the case of the Czech and the Slovak republics, two questionnaires (one in Czech and one in Slovak) were developed, with each interview always conducted by an interviewer from the same republic as the respondent. In short, the study met accepted standards of public opinion polling with respect to questionnaire construction, interviewer training, sampling, and data preparation.

As noted above, a basic requirement of the study agreement was to guarantee rapid feedback to the U.S. Department of Labor. While one would have preferred a more systematic, though time consuming, approach to data analysis that would enlarge on the conclusions drawn, reports were required within a short time period after completion of the field-work. For this general overview of results, we therefore decided to concentrate on selective domains of the interview

and to report the main results as they relate to personal characteristics of the respondents. This serves to clarify how certain opinions, attitudes, and values are distributed throughout the population, and to determine which groups differ or agree most in their views about political and economic transformations.

However, the reader must keep in mind that these reports are written to allow for the timely feedback of the main results and should be seen only as the first step in learning from the research conducted.

1.2 Czechoslovakia

The dramatic changes taking place in Central Europe make life difficult not only for publishers of maps and students of geography. While preparing the Czechoslovakian survey in the spring of 1992 it became apparent that, what had started as a one-country survey might well end up as a two-country study. And, indeed, the election results immediately after the field-work (June 7, 1992) marked the beginning of the end of Czechoslovakia. To adapt the survey to this situation, the Slovak population was over-sampled ($N = 705$) relative to that of the Czechs ($N = 964$) in order to allow for independent analyses of the two republics. Due to the country's recent history, the survey ended up being one of the last conducted in Czechoslovakia, and the present report can be regarded as one of the first comparisons of the attitudes of the Czech and Slovak populations.

In the following section we focus on some prominent attitudes and values preceding the division of the country to make a first assessment of how the populations of the two republics differ and might continue to differ in the future.

2. Understanding Human Behavior in A Period of Change

The guidelines followed in this report are similar to the ones used in the Polish and Hungarian preliminary analyses and reports. We concentrate on factors influencing the acceptance of change, such as perceived fairness of the change process (procedural fairness), confidence, involvement, support, knowledge, goal congruence and the individual evaluation of change in terms of what the person must give and what is received in return (the input/output relation in equity-theory terms).

The equity model enables us to predict individual resistance to change. Simply stated, the basic idea of equity theory is that individuals evaluate the outcomes of change and that those changes considered favorable will be welcomed, while those seen as unfavorable will be resisted.

Individuals are concerned about their own inputs and outcomes, and the fairness of the trade-off between them. If, as a result of change, the inputs and outcomes shift, the net gain or loss is assessed. If this assessment results in a decline of the net gain, a person will feel distressed and is likely to resist the change. Resistance to change also results when a person perceives an inequity compared to the outcomes achieved by others. Those who perceive an increase in the net gain (of the input/outcome function) and/or in equity are likely to welcome the change.

Resistance to change can be expressed by minimizing one's own inputs and/or the outcomes of others as well as by efforts to increase the inputs of others.

3. Identification of Equity Concerns in the Czechoslovak Society

3.1 Preferred Economic System

What kind of economy do most of the Czechoslovak respondents prefer (Q87)? About half of the Czechoslovak respondents (53%) prefer a free-market economy and a little more than a third (35%) prefer a mixed socialist and free-market economy (in the following referred to as a mixed-market economy). Only nine percent favor a socialist economy and two percent a communist economic system. One percent of the respondents are indecisive about the preferred economy.

Comparing the Czech and the Slovak respondents, we find that preference for a free-market economy is more common in the Czech Republic (60%) than in the Slovak (43%), while a mixed economy (CZ:32%; SL:39%), socialist economy (CZ: 7%; SL:12%), and a communist (CZ:1%; SL:4%) are all favored more among the Slovaks. Thus, while barely eight percent of the Czech respondents prefer either a socialist or the communist economy, the proportion is doubled (16%) among the Slovak.

How do other personal characteristics relate to preferences for each of the alternatives?

As to gender, the free-market economy is more often preferred by male (60%) as compared to female (47%) respondents. Females are more apt to select a mixed-market system (40%) than are male respondents (30%), and are also slightly more favorable to a socialist economy (11% female versus 8% male). Still the majority of both groups (90% of the males and 87% of the females) prefers either a free-

market or a mixed-market economy. There is no significant difference in preference between the married and single respondents.

Another significant relationship exists with regard to age. There is a continuous increase in the percentage choosing a socialist economy over the age range starting from 4 percent among the prime-age respondents (18 to 24 years old) and rising to 19 percent among the oldest (over 66 years old). Similarly, more of the youngest prefer a free-market economy (62%) than the oldest (41%). The greatest difference in preference for a mixed-market economy is found among the second youngest group (25 to 34 years old), with 31 percent preferring this economy, and the second oldest group (55 to 65 years old) with 40 percent. Still, the figures show that while a free-market economy is more often a prominent choice among younger respondents and a socialist economy among the older ones, age is less related to preference for a mixed-market economy.

Some interesting results emerge when comparing the occupational status groups. The highest percentage favoring a free-market economy is found among the full-time employed (58%) and the lowest among the retired (41%). But the reverse is true regarding a socialist economy, chosen by 15 percent of the retired and only 6 percent of the full-time employed. Finally, it may be noted, that more of the unemployed and the part-time workers (7%) prefer a communist economy, compared to only three percent of the retired and about one percent of the other occupational status groups (full-time working, students, homemakers).

City residents more often prefer a free-market economy (58%) than village

residents (50%), while the reverse is true for the socialist economy (6% of the city residents compared to 12% of the village residents). Respondents living in small towns show values in between. There is no significant relation between size of community respondents live in and preference for a mixed-market economy.

While 27 percent of the respondents with only a primary or lower educational level prefer a socialist economy, the percentage drops to three percent among the higher educated. The greatest preference for a free-market economy is found among those with general secondary education (58%) and the lowest again among those who did not complete their primary education (30%).

As expected, preference one of the economic models is highly related to the political self-evaluation. Respondents on the extreme left side of the political continuum prefer the socialist economy (46%), those moderately left to the mid-point of the scale prefer the mixed-market economy (40% to 48%), and those between the mid point and the right extreme prefer a free-market economy (54% to 87%).

A free-market economy is preferred by 70 percent of the respondents in the highest income group (more than CKS 5500) as compared to 40 percent of those in the lowest income group (less than CKS 2000). The reverse is true for the socialist economy, which attracts 15 percent of the lowest income group as compared to less than one percent of the highest income group. Again, the differences are less marked among respondents preferring a mixed-market economy, where we find 40 percent of the lowest income group and 28 percent of the highest income group.

One of the considerations discouraging respondents from favoring a free-market economy, which was identified among the Bulgarians (Ruiz Quintanilla 1992c), was the fear that "a free market economy only makes a few people rich" (Q88). The table below shows that the same explanation holds true in Czechoslovakia. Of the respondents who trust a free-market economy to produce a better standard of living for everybody, 80 percent prefer this economy. On the other hand, for those who believe that a free-market economy will make only few people rich, only 37 percent choose this option, while almost half (46 %) prefer a mixed-market economy and 14 percent a socialist one.

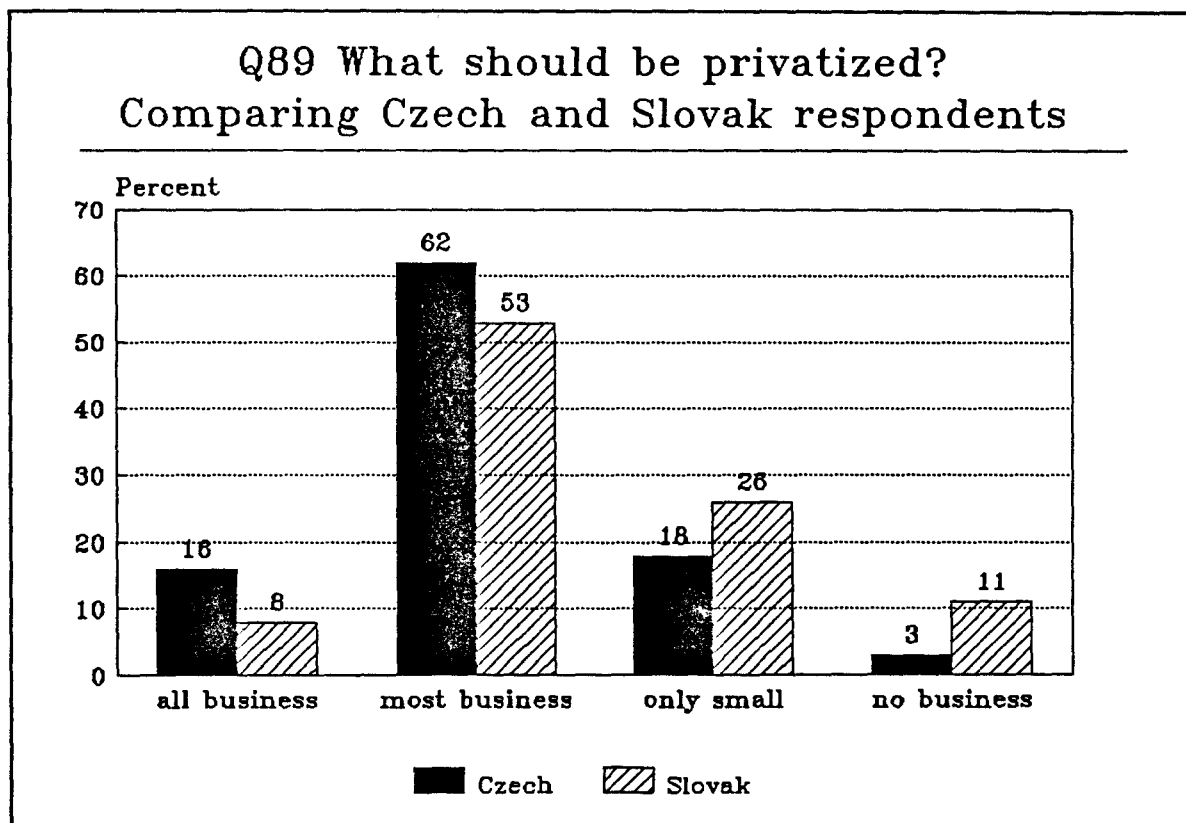
| Row Percentages | Q87 Preferred economic system | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|-------|-----------|
| Q88 outcome of free-market economy | socialist | free-market | mixed | communist |
| better living for all | 2% | 80% | 17% | 1% |
| few people rich | 14% | 37% | 46% | 3% |

3.2 Knowledge and Understanding of Market Issues

What beliefs or understandings underlie support for or opposition to a free-market economy? What images of the different economic models are utilized? What criteria are applied? To answer these questions, issues of privatization, ownership, and the redistribution of income were addressed during the interviews.

The respondents were asked which kind of business they would like to see in private hands (Q89). Sixty-one percent said that all or most business should be privatized. Seven percent said that no business should become private, and 21

percent want to see only small businesses in private hands. The following figure compares opinions regarding privatization of the Czech and the Slovak respondents. Although more than half of the respondents in both republics (CZ: 62% and SL: 53%) support the privatization of most businesses, the result clearly illustrates the higher percentages of Slovak respondents who want to see only small businesses or no business at all in private hands. While these opponents of privatization represent 21 percent of the Czech sample, they constitute 37 percent of the Slovak sample.



The questions on privatization (Q89) and on the preferred economy (Q87) can also be used to examine respondents' perceptions of economic issues. Given

a reasonable understanding of the different economic models, we would expect support for privatization to be higher among those who prefer a free-market economy than those preferring a mixed-economy or a socialist economy. On the other hand those who favor a socialist economy should be more common among those opposed to privatization. This hypotheses is generally confirmed by the data in the following table, although it is unclear why 3 percent of the respondents who prefer a free-market economy, also say that no business should be privatized.

| Column Percentages | Q87 Preferred economic system | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------|-----------|-----------|
| Q89 what should be privatized? | free-market | mixed | socialist | communist |
| all business | 16% | 6% | 6% | 10% |
| most business | 57% | 38% | 12% | 20% |
| only small | 27% | 51% | 52% | 35% |
| no business | 3% | 5% | 31% | 35% |

As it was the case regarding preference for a free-market economy, it is mainly the younger age groups who express the belief that all or most businesses should be privatized (77 percent of the under 24-year old and 83 percent of the 25 to 34 year old) compared to 63 percent of the oldest two age groups (55 to 65 years and 66 and older). Privatization of businesses also is mainly favored by the full-time employed (77% support the privatization of all or most businesses) and most frequently opposed among the retired (40% would like to see only small or no business in private hands).

While respondents at higher education levels have a favorable view of the

privatization of business (85% would like to see all or most business in private hands), this is true only for 48% of those who did not complete their primary education. Thirty percent of the latter say that no business belongs in private hands.

Opposition to privatization, expressed by the opinion that only small or no businesses should be private, is found among a third of the residents of villages (34%) as compared to a fifth of those living in big towns (20%).

No significant gender or family status (i.e. single versus married) differences are found in opinions on privatization. However, we do find a strong relationship between political self-evaluations and attitudes towards privatization. While 31 percent of those at the extreme right end of the scale would like to see all business in private hands, this is only true of 7 percent of the respondents who locate themselves on the extreme left. Similarly, 25 percent of the latter say that no business belongs into private hands compared to only 5 percent of the ones on the extreme right.

Finally, we find that respondents with a higher employment income tend to prefer privatization of businesses more frequently. Eighty-three percent of this income group (more than CKS 5500) welcome privatization as compared to 64 percent of the lowest income group (less than CKS 2000).

An additional set of questions (Q90_A - Q90_D) further explores the issue of privatization. Here the focus is on individual and foreign ownership of large businesses and land parcels. Nearly half of the respondents in both republics (44%)

support individual ownership of large businesses (Q90_A) while 55 percent oppose it. The agreement is a little less in the case of individual ownership of large parcels of land (Q90_B), which is accepted by about one third (36%) of the respondents and opposed by 63 percent. Critical is the matter of foreign ownership. Only 32 percent accept foreign ownership of companies (Q90_C) and an even smaller number (21 %) think that real estate should be owned by foreigners (Q90_D).

A comparison of the Czech and the Slovak respondents reveals that opposition to foreign and individual ownership is more frequent among the Slovaks. While 47 percent of the Czechs oppose individual ownership of large businesses, this is true of 67 percent of the Slovaks. Similarly, 54 percent of the Czechs don't want large parcels of land be owned by individuals compared to 75 percent of the Slovak respondents. And, while 61 percent of the Czechs oppose foreign ownership of companies, 78 percent of the Slovak express opposition. Finally, the 74 percent of the Czechs opposing foreign ownership of real estate are more than matched by the 85 percent of the Slovaks who express this opinion.

As in the case of economic issues, opposition to individual and foreign ownership of real estate and companies is more frequent among the older, retired, less educated, rural residents, political left oriented, lower income groups.

Other issues central to the economic life of a state concern the distribution of income, taxation, prices, education, and health care. What are the expectations and preferences of the Czech and the Slovak regarding these issues?

In the past 30 years, since the "wage revolution" at the beginning of the 1950s, Czechoslovakia's income distribution, has remained largely stable and has displayed an exceptionally small range of inequality for both personal earnings, and the distribution of household per capita income compared to both Western and Eastern European countries. Given this past experience, it is interesting to see how respondents in Czechoslovakia feel about earning equality and allowing people to become rich.

Fifty-nine percent of the total sample, 71 percent in the Czech Republic but only 43 percent of the Slovaks agree, that the future economic system should allow people to do well in business and become rich (Q90_F). Thus, the majority of the Slovaks (56%) oppose this idea. What kind of income range is preferred (Q115)? Only a few (3%) say that everybody should earn equally. Forty-four percent think there should be some differences in the money one can earn, and 53 percent think there should be no upper limits at all. Fewer Slovaks (48%) prefer no upper limits in income as compared to the Czech respondents (57%). While 23 percent of the respondents express that they favor a ratio between 1:2 and 1:5 between the lowest and highest incomes (Q115_2), 13 percent think the ratio should be much larger, between 1:6 and 1:10.

Of all respondents, 75 percent think that salaries should be determined by the market (Q90_E). But this view was expressed by more Czech respondents (83%) than Slovaks (64%). As to the lowest income, 50 percent think that minimum wages should be set by the state (Q106), and here Czech and the Slovak respondents did not differ. But there are different opinions as to whether, in addition to a minimum wage level, the state should prescribe pay (Q107). While

26 percent of the Czechs believe a state prescription of pay is needed for every or most cases, 39 percent of the Slovak express this view.

While 66 percent of the Czechs think that secondary education should be totally or mostly free (Q112), 85 percent of the Slovak hold this view. Similar results were found regarding medical care (Q113), which 71 percent of the Czechs believe should be totally or mostly free and 88 percent of the Slovaks.

Finally, 56 percent of the respondents in both republics support a progressive taxation of earnings (Q109).

3.3 Western Assistance

While over half of the Slovak respondents (60%) say that the U.S. has given little if any assistance to their country (Q93), less than a half (42%) of the Czechs express this view. Somewhat more favorable are perceptions of political attention by the U.S. (Q94), with 71 percent of the Czech (Slovak: 59%) rating it as a lot (CZ:14%, SL:16%) or some attention (CZ:57%, SL:44%). Similarly, 76 percent of the Czechs and 57 percent of the Slovaks believe that the U.S. continued its involvement after the communists were ousted (Q95).

All four types of Western assistance discussed in the interview are seen as very important by many respondents, with an average of 10 percent more agreement among the Czech respondents than the Slovaks. In the total sample, 89 percent rate the supply of advanced technologies (Q92_D) as very important for the country's future. Western assistance in the form of technical knowledge (Q92_A) is seen as important by 80 percent, business assistance (Q92_B) by 79 percent, and educational assistance (Q92_C) by 63 percent.

Asked what measures are needed to improve the country's economy as soon as possible, 85 percent of the Czechs but only 64 percent of the Slovaks cite the fast implementation of free-market policies (Q91_A). Similarly, 83 percent of the Czechs compared to 65 percent of the Slovaks suggest the removal of nomenclatura from management, and 79 percent of the Czechs and 64 percent of the Slovaks would like to bring in more Western specialists (Q91_E). Finally, 67 percent of the Czechs and 64 percent of the Slovaks think that increased Western economic help will improve the economy. Thus, while all measures are seen as of similar importance among the Slovak respondents (with about 60% agreeing with

every alternative), we find clear priority differences in the Czech republic, ranging from implementing free-market policies and removing nomenclatura as the most important to increasing Western economic aid and cutting government spending (Q91_B) as least important.

How do Czechs and Slovaks feel about getting Western help to develop their media, parliament, judiciary system, or party system? Would they like to receive Western help in developing these core institutions of a democracy or do they fear Western influence? We find comparable opposition among the Czechs (82%) and Slovaks (83%) to the idea of Western help for party development (Q96_A). Less but still strong agreement is found regarding parliamentary development (Q96_C), which is opposed by 65 percent of the Czechs and 72 percent of the Slovaks, and helping to develop the judiciary system (Q96_D), which is rejected by 62 percent of the Czechs and 72 percent of the Slovaks. Only in the development of the media respondents are receptive to Western help (44 percent of the Czechs and 42 percent of the Slovaks).

3.4 Economic Situation of the Country

Twenty-five percent of the Czechs as compared to only seven percent of the Slovaks see any improvement in the country's economic situation. Fully 53 percent of the Czechs and 79 percent of the Slovaks believe that the situation has gotten worse since 1989 (Q99). Concerning the upcoming year, 34 percent of the Czech, but only 17 percent of the Slovak respondents believe that the economic situation will improve during this period, while 18 percent of the Czechs and 37 percent of the Slovaks think it will get worse (Q100). Forty-eight percent of the Czechs and

45 percent of the Slovaks expect no change in the economic situation in the near future.

3.5 Personal Economic Situation

How do respondents evaluate their current personal economic situation in relation to what it was in 1989 (Q97)? Fifty percent of the Czech respondents and 61 percent of the Slovaks judge it to be worse, and only 20 percent of the Czechs and 11 percent of the Slovaks say it had improved. It is mainly the two youngest age groups (up to 24 years and between 25 and 34 years old), full-time employed, better educated, city inhabitants, and unmarried respondents who say that they are now better off. A strong relationship also exists with political self-evaluations and current income, with the political right and higher earning groups seeing their personal economic situation as having improved.

As to the biggest problem being faced in the near future (Q98), the main difference between the Czechs and Slovaks is that while inflation is mentioned by 31 percent as most important problem in the Czech republic, it is only the second most important in Slovakia (25%). The later mentioned salary related problems (36%) first, which is ranked second in importance by the Czechs. Respondents in both republics refer to other problems as third in importance (CZ:30% ,SL:24%). From a qualitative analysis of the interviews, it can be concluded that a high percentage of these 'other' problems fall into two domains. One is the future relationship between the two republics and the other concerns safety issues like criminality and drugs. Finally unemployment was cited nearly three times as frequently by the Slovaks (15%) as by the Czechs (6%).

3.6 Unemployment

Thoughts as to how much unemployment the country can bear (Q110) reflect the difference in the unemployment rates of the two republics at the time of the interview, with the Slovak rate being about three times as high (about 7% unemployment in May 1992) as the Czech rate. Thus, 61 percent of the Slovaks felt that unemployment should be lower than it was at the time of the interview as compared to 35 percent of the Czechs. Only 15 percent of the Slovaks and 34 percent of the Czechs believe that their republics could bear higher unemployment without being confronted with serious societal tensions. Still, most of the respondents see it as unlikely that they personally will experience unemployment in the near future (Q84_B). Eighty-five percent of the Czech and 52 percent of the Slovak think that it is impossible or unlikely that they themselves might become unemployed within in the next two years. Compared to the results from the Bulgarian, Polish and Hungarian surveys (Ruiz Quintanilla 1992a,b,c), unemployment is seen as a less likely event to be confronted with in the near future by both the Czech and the Slovak respondents.

Probably because of this view that unemployment is not going to affect themselves, most respondents reject the idea of preserving inefficient work places in order to avoid unemployment (Q116). Seventy-four percent of the Czechs and 60 percent of the Slovaks oppose such action, and 80 percent of the Czechs and 78 percent of the Slovaks agree that inefficient workers should be fired (Q119). Similarly, 59 percent of the Czech respondents and 41 percent of the Slovaks agree that unemployment benefits should be kept low in order to encourage people to look for jobs (Q117), and 53 percent of the Czech and 41 percent of the Slovak share the view that unemployment can serve to encourage positive attitudes toward

work.

Who is blamed for unemployment (Q124)? Respondents in both republics agree that the unemployed should mainly be seen as victims of the economic situation. While the Czechs see as a second important cause the individual's own behavior, such as unreliability, this cause was the most insignificant among the Slovaks. They saw wrong politics as the second most important cause (third in the case of the Czech respondents), and former employers as third in importance. The Czechs attribute some responsibility to wrong qualifications and give the least blame to former employers. As noted Slovaks considered the individual himself, his behavior or possible non useful qualifications as least important reasons for unemployment.

Compared to Hungarian (24%), Bulgarian (41%) and Polish respondents (44%), the Czechs more frequently do believe that the future of their working lives lies in their own hands (Q120). Sixty-two percent of the Czechs say that they can influence their future working life to a large (39%) or very large (22%) degree. In the Slovak republic, the corresponding proportions are 31 percent for a large degree and 14 percent for very large degree.

3.7 Future Outlook and Behavior Intentions

Sixty percent of the Czech and 74 percent of the Slovak respondents express concern that it will be very difficult or difficult to find a new job comparable to the ones they have now (Q31). Therefore, only 15 percent of the respondents indicate an intention to change their job within the next year.

About one out of five respondents (22%) would be willing to undergo retraining (Q33_1) if it would improve their employment situation by offering better income, more security, or better working conditions. An additional 64 percent of the Czechs and 57 percent of the Slovaks would accept retraining if forced to economically. Only 14 percent of the Czechs and 21 percent of the Slovaks were generally opposed to retraining.

Most of the respondents trust in the value of their current skills for future employment. Seventy-four percent say believe that their skills will be useful (53%) or very useful (21%) for employment prospects over the next five years. Only 25 percent think their skills are not useful (12%) or only somewhat useful (14%). While there are no differences in this estimation of own skills between the Czechs and Slovaks, the trust in their skills expressed by 74 percent of the respondents is greater than that of the Hungarians (59%), Bulgarians (62%) and, although to a lesser extent the Poles (68%) (Ruiz Quintanilla 1992a,b,c).

Asked about the likelihood that any of eight different events might happen in the near future (Q84), the respondents identified as the most probable event "the company changing ownership". This was followed by "becoming unemployed", "poorer work relations", "increased standard of living", and "improvement in

working conditions", "difficulties to cope with work demands", and "changing the occupation" with about the same probability. Seen as less probable were "starting an own business" and "moving to a different region of the country". The only clear difference between the Czech and the Slovak republics was the greater probability of "becoming unemployed" in Slovakia.

The only two events on the list desired by most of the respondents were "an increased standard of living" and "an improvement in the working conditions". Most disliked were in order of negative evaluation were "becoming unemployed", "poorer work relations", "difficulties to cope with work demands", and "moving to a different region". Somewhere in between, although more on the dislike side of the scale, were "changing occupation", starting an own business", and "company changing ownership".

Most of the nine alternatives posed about the kinds of work preferred by the respondent (Q83) were evaluated as neutral or less liked. Clearly on the dislike side of the scale were mining, assembly line and secretarial work. In a relatively neutral position were work out of the city and work in the city, although the first was seen as a little more favorable and physical work as a little more favorable than sales work. Finally, self-employed work was evaluated as neither liked nor disliked.

4. Work Related Attitudes and Values

4.1 Important Work Goals

How important is it for the Czech and Slovak respondents to achieve certain work goals? How powerful are these goals as motivator? During the interview the respondents were asked to rank the importance of each of 16 work goals in their own working life. The combined labor-force sample ranked "good pay" and "job security" as first in importance (column 3 in the following table), followed by "recognition", "good interpersonal relations" and "good relations with supervisors". Between very important and important are "societal contribution", "interesting work", "autonomy". Having some importance are "opportunities to learn new things", "good match between job requirements and individual abilities", "convenient working hours", "good physical conditions", and "an influential position". Rated as of little importance were "variety" and "promotion and upgrading opportunities".

Columns one and two of the following table compare the work values of respondents living in the Czech and the Slovak Republics. Looking at the rank order of the goals, first we do not find significant differences between the Czechs and the Slovaks, except in the case of "autonomy", which is rated lower in importance in the Slovak Republic. To identify Czech-Slovak differences, we have to compare their mean ratings. Here we can observe six significant mean differences between the two republics (indicated by the small arrows in the table). Compared to the Slovak respondents, the Czech respondents give lower importance ranks to "pay", "benefits", and "promotion opportunities" and higher ones to "relation to co-workers", "autonomy", and "variety" as compared to the Slovak respondents.

Table Importance of Work Goals (Q71-72 Mean-Ranks)

| WORK GOAL | CZECH total Sample N= 950 | SLOVAK total Sample N= 680 | Combined Labor-Force Sample N= 1097 |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| PAY | 11.3 ↓ | 11.9 ↑ | 11.7 |
| SECURITY | 11.4 | 11.7 | 11.7 |
| RECOGNITION | 11.1 | 11.5 | 11.3 |
| RELATION TO CO- WORKERS | 11.5 ↑ | 10.9 ↓ | 11.3 |
| RELATIONS TO SUPERVISOR | 11.4 | 11.2 | 11.3 |
| CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY | 11.0 | 11.2 | 10.9 |
| INTERESTING WORK | 10.9 | 10.6 | 10.6 |
| AUTONOMY | 9.3 | 8.4 | 9.0 |
| LEARN | 8.5 ↑ | 8.6 ↓ | 8.5 |
| MATCH | 8.6 | 8.4 | 8.5 |
| CONVENIENT HOURS | 8.0 | 8.2 | 8.1 |
| PHYSICAL CONDITIONS | 7.7 | 8.1 | 7.9 |
| BENEFITS | 6.7 ↓ | 7.5 ↑ | 7.0 |
| INFLUENTIAL POSITION | 5.9 | 6.2 | 6.0 |
| VARIETY | 6.2 ↑ | 5.6 ↓ | 5.9 |
| PROMOTION | 4.3 ↓ | 4.9 ↑ | 4.5 |

If we analyze the goals more closely, we see that all the items which are ranked lower by the Czechs and higher by the Slovaks can be considered as belonging to an economic dimension. Better pay, better benefits, and the opportunity for promotion all represent economic progress which may be connected to the job itself but, more importantly, serve external needs. These are often termed extrinsic goals. On the other hand, those ranked higher by the Czechs and lower by the Slovaks can be considered as expressive and social goals. While "good relations to co-workers" is a social goal, "autonomy" and "variety" are goals which are closely related to the task fulfillment itself and thus serve as incentives in the work situation itself.

In summary, a first comparison of the work goal preferences of the Czech and Slovak respondents leads to the conclusion that in the current situation motivational strategies utilizing economic or extrinsic motivator seem more promising in the Slovak Republic, while Czech organizations would be well advised also employ work design strategies to motivate their employees on the job.

4.2 Work Centrality

The relative importance of work in the life of an individual was assessed by having the respondents distribute 100 points among five life domains: family, work, leisure, religion and community. The points assigned can best be interpreted as percentages. If a respondent assigns 100 points to an area, it means that this life domain is of exclusive importance to that person. Similarly, 50 points would mean that half of the individual's attention is focused on that area. The total sample (including students, the unemployed and pensioners) ranked family first in importance (CZ: 44, SL: 40 points) and work second (CZ: 28.3, SL: 30 points), followed by leisure (CZ: 21.5, SL: 18.5 points). Religion received 7.8 points and community activities 4.3 points in the Slovak republic, while the Czech respondents assigned community 3.5 points and religious activities 2.5 points.

For our purpose, more interesting than the evaluation of the total sample, is that of the active population, respondents who currently work full-time or part-time or recently became unemployed (thus excluding pensioners, students and homemakers). The following table compares these data for the Czech and the Slovak sub-samples with data from a representative sample surveyed in the U.S.A. in 1989 (England 1991). Looking first only at the rank order, we find the same order of importance in all countries with the just mentioned exception of the Czech sample, who ranked community as a little more important than religious activities (Ruiz Quintanilla & Slejska 1992). Still, all ratings except that of the work domain differ significantly between the Czech and the Slovak samples. Comparing the two republics, the Czechs evaluate the family and leisure domains as more important, while the Slovaks give more emphasis to religious and community activities (Ruiz Quintanilla 1992d).

 Q68 Points given to life areas to express their importance at the present time

| | <u>TOTAL SAMPLE</u> | | <u>LABOR FORCE SAMPLE</u> | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|--------|---------------------------|--------|------|
| | Czech | Slovak | Czech | Slovak | USA |
| N | 957 | 698 | 630 | 475 | 1002 |
| Percentage of Sample | 100% | 100% | 65.8% | 68.1% | 100% |
| <hr/> | | | | | |
| FAMILY | 44.0 | 40.0 | 44.2 | 39.0 | 39.5 |
| WORK | 28.3 | 30.0 | 30.7 | 32.2 | 21.7 |
| LEISURE | 21.5 | 18.5 | 21.9 | 19.8 | 15.2 |
| RELIGION | 2.5 | 7.8 | 1.5 | 5.2 | 15.1 |
| COMMUNITY | 3.5 | 4.3 | 3.1 | 4.1 | 8.6 |

Finally, when comparing the Czech and Slovak respondents to the American sample, we find that the Czechs put more emphasis on family than do either the Slovaks or the Americans. While both work and leisure are seen as more important by the Czech and the Slovak than the American respondents, religious and community activities assume more importance in the U.S. If we translate these relative importance ratings into willingness to engage in various domains, the Czechs would reserve five percent of their attention to religious and community activities, the Slovak 9 percent and the American respondents fully 24 percent.

5. Conclusions

Most of this report has focussed on comparisons of specific societal groups and the Czech and the Slovak populations. What emerges can be summarized as follows: The results survey presented establish that the attitudes favorable to the current shift towards a free-market economy and democratization of the country are more frequently found among the younger, the better educated and the city residents, and are more common among the Czechs than the Slovaks. These differences were regarding the preferred economic system, attitudes towards privatization and foreign ownership. The distribution of income and price control, taxation, and western assistance. Similarly these groups tend to see the current and future economic situation of the country and their personal economic situation as less deleterious or already starting to improve.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the younger, better educated urban citizens are already supportive of current developments. This, then raises the question as what needs to be done to broaden this foundation of support. Clearly it is important to consider others than the easy reachable young, well educated urban population. It may be wise to concentrate attention on rural areas and on disadvantaged groups. For example, the importance of programs which reduce the hardships for older and retired persons should not be underestimated in a society where family relations are still valued highly. Encouraging attitude changes among older citizens might well have an important multiplier effect in influencing other age groups.

An additional problem might emerge from the division of the country into

two independent republics. As our data illustrate, support for current policies is found more commonly among the Czechs than the Slovaks. It is not easy to foresee what will happen now as the relation between the two republics weakens.

Both republics have not yet been fully impacted by the problem of unemployment. Unemployment ranged from three percent in the Czech Republic to seven percent in the Slovak republic as the survey's field work was conducted (May 1992). The privatization of former state companies had just begun and the restructuring of firms, resulting in lay-offs, was still limited. While people had begun to feel uneasy about the unemployment rates reported in the media, not many respondents felt that they themselves might become unemployed. On the other hand, the respondents are aware of the relationship between upcoming changes in company ownership and unemployment. Thus, what has been a largely impersonal reaction to the unemployment problem can be expected to become a much more personal one as this report is being written.

Fortunately, there is still time in both republics to prepare to cope with the problem of unemployment. Vital at this time are policy decisions that can reduce economic strains by creating a safety net for the unemployed and reducing the risk of unemployment through job training and education. Prophylactic measures such as instructing people what to do when becoming unemployed, establishing job-search networks, and offering counseling during unemployment would also be of value.

Finally, the survey results reflect some differences in the work-related goals sought by the Czechs and the Slovaks. While residents of the two republics share

the same rank-ordering of goals, it is interesting to discuss the different emphases they put on certain goals. The Czechs for example, have a more expressive orientation and the Slovaks a more economic one. Social sciences research has generally confirmed that expressive motives become more prominent when basic economic needs are fulfilled. This difference might well reflect differences in the work-quality and the economic situations of the two republics.

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