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## Attitudes Towards Work And The Market Economy In Bulgaria

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## Attitudes Towards Work And The Market Economy In Bulgaria

### Abstract

[Excerpt] As in the reports on Poland (Ruiz Quintanilla 1992a) and Hungary (Ruiz Quintanilla 1992b), this summary will center on how life has changed in Bulgaria as evaluated by the Bulgarian people. The domain of interest are attitudes and values related to the economy, work and political issues. The focus will be on where progress has been made and where, there has been regression. What are the hopes, intentions and plans for the future? How is the role of the West perceived? What kind of Western Assistance is wanted?

### Keywords

CAHRS, ILR, center, human resource, studies, advance, Bulgaria, economy, work, political, issues, regression, report, intention, plan, West, assistance, research, project, social science, market, labor

### Comments

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**ATTITUDES TOWARDS WORK AND THE  
MARKET ECONOMY IN BULGARIA**

by

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August 17, 1992

# Attitudes Towards Work and the Market Economy in Bulgaria

by

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

## 1. Introduction

With the collapse of the Soviet Union major changes have occurred since 1989 in the former Soviet-Bloc countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Free elections haven taken place in these countries, and new governments with popular mandates strive to introduce radical political and economic changes.

As in the reports on Poland (Ruiz Quintanilla 1992a) and Hungary (Ruiz Quintanilla 1992b), this summary will center on how life has changed in Bulgaria as evaluated by the Bulgarian people. The domain of interest are attitudes and values related to the economy, work and political issues. The focus will be on where progress has been made and where, there has been regression. What are the hopes, intentions and plans for the future? How is the role of the West perceived? What kind of Western Assistance is wanted?

The data reported are based on extensive individual interviews with 1412 Bulgarians which were conducted in April 1992. The respondents included in the study were selected randomly to represent the population within the age-bracket of 16 to 65 years. The study marks the first time that the Western standard approach of a two-step cluster sampling procedure, representative of the Bulgarian

population, has been successfully implemented for a social sciences research project in Bulgaria.

Listening to and understanding the opinions, fears and hopes of the population can be seen as an important first step for officials engaged in policy making. Especially during this period when democratic institutions are established and major economic changes are made, this feedback is needed to evaluate the direct and indirect effects of the strategies undertaken. Therefore, polling plays an important role in this period of transition, when the new democratic institutions allowing people to raise their voice and influence political decisions are not yet fully operative.

To facilitate interpretation of the data, we not only cite frequencies and means representing the population as a whole but concentrate on the opinions of different sub-populations based on age, gender, occupation, and geographical residence. This allows us to develop hypotheses as to the hardships these groups have to experience and to predict resistance to change. Since there is no general social science theory as to which groups are most important to monitor, we must to rely on ad hoc hypotheses derived from expert interviews about the Bulgarian situation since 1989.

What makes the Bulgaria unique as compared to the other Eastern and Central European countries is that during its whole period as a People's Republic (1947-1989) we find scant evidence of any significant opposition movements. The first anti-government demonstrations occurred in Sofia as late as November 1989. Recent political changes have followed a "Perestroika" model. Thus, the former

Bulgarian Communist Party (BPU), now the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) succeeded in getting ahead of the movement and has remained one of the most powerful parties until today, as reflected in the elections of June, 1990, when the BSP won 211 of the 400 seats in the Grand National Assembly, and in the parliamentary elections of October, 1991, when it got 33 percent of the votes.

The relationship between Bulgaria and the Soviet Union is better understood by having some knowledge of their past history. Both the Bulgarians and the Russians (like the Serbians, Ukrainians and some other Slavic groups) use the Cyrillic alphabet, which was in fact developed by two Bulgarian missionary monks. Both periods of foreign occupation of Bulgaria, by the Turks (1393 to 1878) and by the Nazi Germans (1941-1944), ended through the intervention of the Russians.

## 2. Understanding Human Behavior in Periods 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 other's outcomes. 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 trying to increase the inputs of others.

### 3. Identification of Equity Concerns in the Bulgarian Society

#### 3.1 Preferred Economic System

Half (50%) of the respondents prefer a free-market economy and a little more than a third (36%) prefer a mixed-market economy. Only eight percent favour a socialist economy and between two percent a communist economic system in Bulgaria (Q87). As in Hungary and Poland (Ruiz Quintanilla 1992a,b) the majority of the respondents in Bulgaria prefer either a free-market economy or a mixed-market economy and only few favor the former system. Only 5 percent of the sample are either uncertain or "don't know".

To determine which societal groups favor which economic system, we examine how the biographical data relate to preferences for each of the system alternatives.

In the case of gender, we find that male respondents (58%) prefer a free-market more than female respondents (46%). Female respondents are more apt to select a socialist economy (12%) than are male respondents (6%) and also are slightly more favourable to a mixed-market system (40% females versus 35% males). Thus, while twice as many female respondents prefer a socialist system as compared to the male, the majority of both gender groups (93% of the males and 86% of the females) prefer either a free-market economy or a mixed-market economy.

In Analyzing age-group differences, we find that it's mainly the prime-age respondents (15 to 44 years old) who favor a free-market economy, while older



ones (45 to 65 years of age) more often select the mixed-market economy. This preference is especially true for the 15 to 24 years old, where we find 65 percent supporting a free-market economy as compared to 37 percent of the 55 to 65 year olds. It is also interesting to note that the oldest age-group (55 to 65 years) are the only group that is over-represented in support for a socialist economy (14%) and a communist economy (3%).

More frequent support for the free-market economy can be found in Sofia (74%), and in larger towns (57%), than in small towns (53%) and villages (42%). In the later case we still find support for a socialist economy (13%) and slightly more respondents preferring a mixed-market economy (44%) than a free-market economy (42%).

More single respondents (61%) than married respondents (49%) are found to prefer a free-market economy.

Which occupational status groups favor the free-market economy? The data show they are mainly students (78%) and those who are employed full-time (56%). Among the unemployed three percent prefer a communist economy. The pensionaires less frequently favor a free-market economy (34%) and a mixed-market economy (49%). In addition, those who are retired are also disproportionally supportive of the socialist alternative (14%).

The data confirm that preference for a free-market model is more common among the better educated. Among the respondents with only a primary or a lower educational level, those selecting a socialist (17%) or a communist (4%) economy

are over-represented and under-represented (37%) in the case of a free-market economy under-represented (37%). Respondents with a basic vocational or partial vocational education do not differ from the over all sample in their choice. Those with a secondary vocational education more frequently prefer a free-market economy (58%) as do respondents with a general secondary education (62%) and a post-secondary education (61%). The same is not true for respondents who have a higher education, who show only slightly greater preference for the free-market economy (58%) than the total Bulgarian sample (52%)

The data confirm that respondents who prefer the communist or the socialist economy place themselves on the extreme left side of a political continuum. Respondents who choose a mixed-market economy put themselves slightly left of the middle in the same scale, and those preferring the free-market economy can be found, to the right of the mid point. Of the respondents located on the extreme left (value 1 or 2 on a ten-point scale), 22 percent favor a free-market alternative compared to 84 percent of the respondents on the extreme right of the scale.

One of the reasons discouraging some Bulgarian respondents from favoring a free-market economy might be the fear that "a free market economy makes only few people rich" (Q88). The table below shows that of the respondents who trust a free-market economy to produce a better standard of living for everybody, 81 percent prefer this economy. On the other hand, of those who believe that a free-market economy will make only a few people rich, only 36 percent prefer this economy, while the majority (50%) prefers a mixed-market economy and 12 percent the socialist economy.

Row Percentages	Q87 Preferred economic system			
Q88 outcome of free-market economy	socialist	free-market	mixed	communist
better living for all	4%	81%	15%	1%
few people rich	12%	36%	50%	2%

### 3.2 Knowledge and Understanding of Market Issues

What images of the different economic models do Bulgarians have? On what beliefs or understandings do they base their expressed preference for a free-market or a mixed-market economy? A better understanding of attitudes towards the different economic models can be gained by considering such issues as privatization, ownership, and the redistribution of income.

In a follow-up question (Q89) the respondents were asked which kinds of businesses they would like to see in private hands. Forty-six percent said that all or most business should be privatized. Eight percent said that no business should become private, and 41 percent want to see only small business in private hands.

To test basic knowledge of economic issues among the Bulgarian respondents we look at the relationship between the privatization question (Q89) and the question on economic model preference (Q87). With an understanding of the different economic models, we would expect support for privatization to be higher among the respondents who prefer a free-market economy and lower among

those preferring the mixed economy. Opposition to privatization should be more frequent among respondents, who favor the socialist economy and most frequent among those who prefer the communist economy. The data in the following table confirm our expectations.

Column Percentages	Q87 Preferred economic system			
Q89 what should be privatized?	free-market	mixed	socialist	communist
all business	14%	4%	5%	5%
most business	53%	28%	10%	0%
only small	30%	60%	49%	32%
no business	2%	8%	37%	63%

The majority (64%) of the youngest respondents (15 to 24 years old) favour the privatization of all or most businesses. Nearly as high are the percentages among the 25 to 34 year old (54%) and the 35 to 44 years old (49%). For the older age groups (45-54 years and 55-65 years old), the percentage goes down to 38 and 37 respectively.

In line with this finding positive attitudes towards privatization are mainly found among the full-time employed and the students. Opposition to privatization is more frequent among the retired, the homemakers and the unemployed. Among these we find relative high percentages of respondents preferring no privatization at all (housemaker: 21%; retired: 15% and unemployed: 12%).

A positive relationship exists also with educational level. The higher the formal education a respondent has, the greater the likelihood that he favors privatization of business. The range goes from 44 percent agreeing with the privatization of all or most business among the lowest educational group (incomplete primary) to 71 percent among those with some higher education. Male respondents (52%) tend to agree with privatization of all or most business more frequently than female respondents (45%), and more single respondents (59%) favor privatization compared to married respondents (45%).

Opposition to privatization is more frequent in villages and small towns than in larger (district) towns and the capital city.

Among the respondents who locate themselves on the extreme right side of the political scale positive, attitudes towards privatization are more frequent (78%) than among respondents on the extreme left (31%).

An additional set of questions (Q90\_A - Q90\_D) focuses on the issue of privatization at a more specific or concrete level. These items concern the individual and foreign ownership of large businesses and land parcels. One third of the Bulgarian respondents (33%) support the individual ownership of large business (Q90\_A), while two thirds (64%) oppose this idea. Even stronger is the opposition to the individual ownership of large land parcels (Q90\_B), an idea rejected by 74 percent of the respondents.

Concerning foreign ownership of companies (Q90\_C), we find a little less than half (43%) of the respondents in support, while only 11 percent favour

foreign ownership of real estate and 86 percent oppose it.

Again its mainly respondents who are older (45 and above), less educated, in rural areas, married, and on the political left who more frequently oppose the idea of individually owned businesses and real estate and foreign ownership of business. Opposition to foreign ownership of real estate is widely shared among different societal groups. Only moderate agreement is found among the respondents in Sofia (29%), although more than those in small towns or villages (9-10%), and among respondents on the political right (31%), although more than those on the left (2-6%).

Finally, the ownership issue is considered in relation to the different types of business (Q105). Nearly half (49%) of the Bulgarian respondents agree that all or most restaurants (Q105\_1) should become private, but only 19 percent think privatization should include all or most dental services (Q105\_2) and 18 percent would like to see all or most public transportation in private hands. While 43 percent think that TV-stations should only be state owned, the level of support for state ownership is much higher for secondary schools (74%), postal services (81%), and electric plants (86%). As in the case of other ownership questions, opposition to privatization is more prominent among the elder, the retired and the housekeepers, the less educated, female and married respondents, village residents, and the far political left.

Other issues of importance characterizing the economic life include the distribution of income, taxation, prices, education and health care. What are the Bulgarians expectations and preferences concerning these issues?

Seventy-one percent of the respondents assert that secondary education should be totally free (Q112) and 55 percent say medical care also should be totally free.

Sixty-eight percent of the respondents think that the future economic system should allow people to become rich (Q90\_F) and, therefore, 73 percent agree, that there should be no upper limit for the money one can earn through work (Q114). Only six percent of the Bulgarians say that everybody should have equal earnings (Q115\_1), and most respondents (67%) assert that salaries should be determined by the market (Q90\_E). Still, 52 percent express the view that pay should be state prescribed in all or most cases(Q107). Thus, some state regulation is seen as useful to achieve preferred income ranges around the 1:4 margin (Q115\_2) and to guarantee state prescribed minimum wage levels (Q106), supported by 57 percent. Sixty percent of the Bulgarian respondents also endorse a progressive income tax policy (Q109).

Fifty-five percent agree that the state, should prescribe prices (Q108), while nine percent oppose this state intervention and believe that prices should be determined by market forces.

### 3.3 Western Assistance

Half of the respondents (51 %) believe that U.S. assistance to Bulgaria (Q93) has been little (36%) or none (15%). An additional eight percent said that they cannot judge this. A little more favorable are perceptions of the political attention of the U.S. (Q94), with 53 percent rating it as a lot (18%) or some (35%) and 61 percent believing that the U.S. continued its involvement after the communist were ousted (Q95).

All four types of Western assistance mentioned by the interviewers are seen as very important by many of the respondents. Eighty-five percent rate the supply of advanced technologies (Q92\_D) as very important for the Bulgarian future. Western assistance in the form of technical knowledge (Q92\_A) is seen as important by 75 percent, business assistance (Q92\_B) by 72 percent, and educational assistance (Q92\_C) by 69 percent.

Asked how the Bulgarian economy might be improved immediately, 75 percent of the respondents urged the fast implementation of free-market policies (Q91\_A) and the removal of nomenclatura from management (69%). In addition, 65 percent think that Western economic aid should be increased (Q91\_C) and 62 percent would like to bring in more Western specialists (Q91\_E). Only 39 percent believe that cutting government spending will improve the Bulgarian economy (Q91\_B).

How do the Bulgarians feel about getting Western help to develop their media, parliament, judiciary system or party system? Would they like to receive more Western help to develop these core institutions of a democracy or do they



fear Western influences? On most of the items, each of the opinions is shared by about half of the Bulgarian population. While 48 percent favour Western help to develop the media (Q96\_B), 44 percent oppose this idea. While 47 percent support Western help to develop the parliament (Q96\_C), 45 percent are against it. And while 44 percent would accept Western help to develop the judiciary system, 49 percent reject such help. The strongest opposition is found regarding the development of the party system, with 64 percent opposing Western help here.

### 3.4 Economic Situation of the Country

Only 10 percent of the Bulgarian respondents see any improvement in the country's economic situation, while 76 percent believe that the situation has gotten worse since 1989 (Q99). Concerning the upcoming year, 31 percent believe the economic situation will improve during this period, while 40 percent believe it will get worse (Q100). Twenty-six percent expect no change.

Who are the Bulgarians with the positive view on the recent and future economic developments of the country? They are in the youngest age group (15-24) and mainly the students and the unmarried, the higher educated, respondents especially from Sofia, and those on the right of the political scale. The more pessimistic outlook is shared by respondents in the two older age groups (45 to 54 and 55 to 65), the retired, unemployed and part-time workers, the married, those living in villages, and ones who locate themselves on the extreme political left.

### 3.5 Personal Economic Situation

Evaluating their current personal economic situation compared to 1989 (Q97), most of the respondents (61%) see it as unchanged. Only ten percent see an improvement, while 28 percent say that it has gotten worse. While the two youngest age groups (15 to 24 and 25 to 34 years old) tend to see more change - either an improvement or worsening of the situation - compared to the total sample, the 55 to 65 years olds most commonly see no change (76%). The same is true for the students and respondents living in Sofia who are over-represented in both the categories of "improvements" and "worse situation", while the retired and rural respondents disproportionately report that their economic situation did not change.

As to the biggest problem one has to face in the near future, 36 percent cite unemployment, followed by 28% reporting inflation and 24 percent salary. While the unemployment is the major problem mentioned by the younger (15-24 and 25 - 34) respondents, salary and inflation-related problems are prominent among the older age groups (45 and older). Again we also find regional differences, with inflation mentioned as most important problem by 34 percent of the respondents in the capital Sofia, and only 20 percent choosing unemployment. Among those living outside Sofia, unemployment is cited most frequently. Especially among respondents living in small communities the unemployment threat is very frequent. Forty-four percent of these mention unemployment as a main problem to be faced in the future as compared to 36 percent in the total Bulgarian sample.

### 3.6 Unemployment

Asked to indicate how much unemployment Bulgaria could bear (Q110), 26 percent of the respondents said no unemployment at all and 40 percent said it should be less than the current level. Only eight percent of the Bulgarian respondents believe that the country can accept the current unemployment rate. Note that Bulgaria had an unemployment rate of approximately 13 percent during the survey period (mid April 1992).

As mentioned above, the threat of becoming unemployed is a serious concern of most Bulgarians. This is also reflected in the answers to the question about the likelihood to become unemployed. In addition to the 15 percent who had just experienced a job loss, 27 percent are pretty sure that they will become unemployed within the next two years. Only 23 percent see this as impossible (12%) or very unlikely (12%), while for the rest of the sample (34%) the probability of becoming unemployed lies somewhere between likely and less likely.

Under these conditions attitudes regarding the to preservation of inefficient work places in order to avoid unemployment (Q116) are mixed. Thirty-one percent agree with this praxis, 43 percent disagree, and 23 percent are indifferent. On the other hand, if it is the individual rather than the organization who is inefficient, high agreement is found. Thus, 75 percent agree that inefficient workers should be fired (Q119), and only seven percent disagree.

Regarding the question as to whether low unemployment benefits are a good means to encourage people to look for a job (Q117), only 22 percent agree with this view, while nearly half of the sample (49%) disagrees. A similar result was

obtained concerning the statement that unemployment is a good way of encouraging positive attitudes towards work (Q118). Here 31 percent agree or strongly agree and 45 percent disagree or strongly disagree.

Who is to blame for unemployment (Q124)? In order of importance, the most frequent view is that the unemployed are victims of the economic situation, followed by the opinion that they are victims of wrong politics. Less often mentioned are the beliefs that the unemployed are victims of their former employers, their own lack of qualifications, and their own behavior. Expressed as proportions, 69 percent of the respondents believe that the two most important causes of unemployment lie beyond individual responsibilities, i.e. the economic situation (40%) and wrong politics (29%). Individual reasons like the lack of qualifications (4%) and one's own behavior (10%) are much less frequently mentioned. The same is true in attributing responsibility to the former employers, which was ranked as best characterization by nine percent of the respondents. This general attitude (i.e. locus of control) is confirmed by the answers to the question (Q86\_B) asking respondents about the principal source of responsibility for unemployment. While only ten percent considered the respondent's own responsibility, 76 percent would blame other persons or groups and 14 percent would consider the event as fate or bad luck.

This feeling of not being in control or having little power is also reflected in the answers to the question about the extent to which respondents think their future working life lies in their own hands (Q120). More than half of the sample (57%) answered to a very small (21%) or a small degree (36%), while 41 percent believe they can influence their future working life to a large (29%) or very large

(12%) degree.

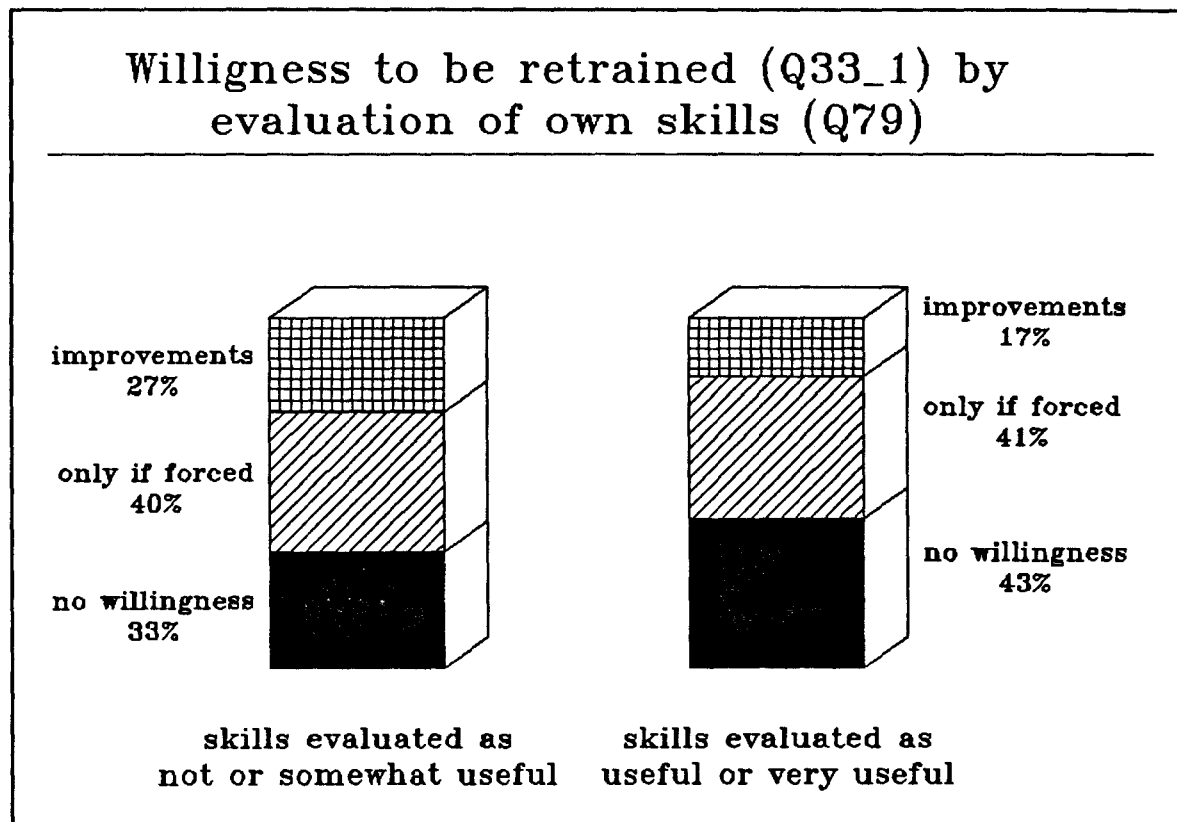
### 3.7 Future Outlook and Behavior Intentions

A substantial majority of the respondents (88%) say that it will be either very difficult (58%) or difficult (29%) to find another job similar to their current one (Q31). Only 13 percent think this will be easy (9%) or very easy (4%). Therefore, only a few (12%) intend to change their main job within the next twelve month (Q32). Finding a similar job like the current one is seen more frequently as very difficult by the 45 to 54 year olds, by female respondents, and by those living in rural areas. There is no relation between a respondents education and his estimation of the difficulty in finding a comparable job.

Forty percent of the Bulgarian respondents generally oppose the idea of undergoing retraining (Q33\_1), and another 40 percent say they would be willing to undergo retraining only if forced to by the economic situation. Twenty percent would base their decisions on achieving certain conditions, such as a better income (12%), more security (1%), better working conditions (1%), or more interesting work (1%).

Estimating the utility of their current skills for future employment prospects (Q79), 15 percent feel that their skills are not useful and 23 percent believe they might be somewhat useful. Sixty-two percent evaluate their current skills as useful (40%) or very useful (21%) for future employment. The following table illustrates how Bulgarian respondents perceive retraining as a way to improve their skills. If this is the case, we would expect the respondents evaluating their skills as not

useful or somewhat useful to show a greater willingness to be retrained as compared to others who evaluate their current skills as useful or very useful.



As the data show, there are some differences in the expected direction, although the magnitude of the differences in willingness to voluntarily undergo training, between those with useful skills (17%) and those with less useful skills (27%) demonstrates that there is a need for better promotion of the need for and value of training and retraining.

Asked about the likelihood that any of eight different events might happen

in the near future, the respondents identified as the most probable events "becoming unemployed" and "the company changing ownership". Next in the order of likelihood the respondents listed "improvement in working conditions", "difficulties coping with work demands", "changing the occupation", "increased standard of living", and "poorer work relations". Less likely seen were "starting an own business" and "moving to a different region in the country".

Among these events, an improvement in working conditions and an increase in living standards are the most desired. The event rated as most probable, "becoming unemployed" ,is also the most feared and disliked. Disliked also are poorer work relations, difficulties coping with work demands, and moving to a different region of the country. Changing occupations and ownership changes of the company are evaluated as somewhat neutral, while starting one's own business is a little more on the liking-side of the scale.

Of the nine alternatives offered in the question about the kind of work preferred (Q83), none are equally popular among all Bulgarian respondents. Higher agreement is found on the negative side of the scale, with most respondents disliking mining and assembly line work. In addition more respondents prefer working in a city to working outside a city. Physical work is located in the middle position, neither very much liked nor disliked, and both sales and secretarial work are a little less liked than is physical work.

## 4. Work Related Attitudes and Values

### 4.1 Important Work Goals

How important is it for the Bulgarian respondents to achieve certain work goals? How powerful are these goals as motivators? During the interview the respondents were asked to rank how important each of 16 work goals is for their own working life. The total sample ranked "good pay", "job security", and "recognition" as the first three in importance. Although some distance behind, also seen as important were "societal contribution", "good benefits", "good interpersonal relations", interesting work", "a good match between job requirements and individual abilities", "good relations with the supervisor", "good physical conditions", convenient working hours", "autonomy" and "a lot of opportunity to learn new things". Rated last in importance were "variety", "an influential position", and, finally, "promotion and upgrading opportunities".

Columns two to four of the following table compare the work values of respondents living in the capital Sofia, in Bulgarian towns, and in villages. Looking at the mean values we find that pay, security, benefits, relation to supervisors, and convenient hours are rated higher in importance by respondents living in villages. Bulgarians from Sofia stress recognition, contribution to society, interesting work, autonomy, learning possibilities, variety, and an influential position to a larger degree than do those living in towns or villages. In general, we find that the importance of interesting work, autonomy, learning possibilities, variety, and influential position increases with the size of the community the respondent lives in.



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

WORK GOAL	TOTAL SAMPLE	SOFIA	TOWN	VILLAGE
PAY	12.0	11.1	11.8	12.7
SECURITY	11.7	11.4	11.5	12.0
RECOGNITION	11.0	12.3	10.5	11.7
CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY	9.8	10.3	9.7	9.9
BENEFITS	9.7	9.2	9.3	10.6
RELATION TO CO-WORKERS	9.4	9.5	9.4	9.4
INTERESTING WORK	9.4	10.7	9.7	8.5
MATCH	9.4	9.5	9.5	9.1
RELATIONS TO SUPERVISOR	9.3	9.4	9.1	9.5
PHYSICAL CONDITIONS	8.8	8.2	8.9	8.6
CONVENIENT HOURS	8.4	8.5	8.3	8.6
AUTONOMY	8.2	9.2	8.2	7.9
LEARN	7.9	9.5	8.3	6.8
VARIETY	7.6	8.8	7.6	7.2
INFLUENTIAL POSITION	7.6	9.1	7.9	6.8
PROMOTION	6.7	6.9	6.9	6.3

## 4.2 Work Centrality

The relative importance that working has in the life of an individual was assessed by having the respondents distribute 100 points according to the importance of each of five life domains: family, work, leisure, religion and community. The points given can be interpreted as percentages. If a respondent assigns 100 points to an area, it means that this life area 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 Bulgarian sample (including students, the unemployed and pensioners) ranked family (45.4 points) first in importance and work (31.4 points) second, followed by leisure (15.5 points), religion (4.3 points), and community (3.4 points).

The following table presents these findings for the portion of the Bulgarian sample who are currently employed, thus a part of the Bulgarian labor force, together with comparable data from the labor forces of Hungary, Poland and from a representative sample conducted in the U.S.A. in 1989 (England 1991). Looking first at the rank order, we find no difference among the labor forces in the four countries. In all countries family is rated highest, followed by work, leisure, religion, and community. Still, there are significant differences in the relative importance of the single life domains across countries. Family is seen as more important by Hungarians than by Bulgarians, the Poles, and Americans. Similarly, work is seen as a more important domain in Bulgaria than in Poland, Hungary, and the U.S.A. While leisure is judged to be of similar importance in all four countries, religious activities are assigned greater importance in the U.S.A. and Poland than in Hungary and Bulgaria. Finally, community activities are rated lower in importance in all three Eastern and Central European countries than in

the United States.

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

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	B U L G A R I A		HUNGARY	POLAND	U.S.A
	total	working	working	working	working
	Sample	Sample	Sample	Sample	Sample
N	1341	754	827	596	1002
Percentage of Sample	100%	71%	58%	55%	100%
<hr/>					
FAMILY	45.4	41.9	47.7	39.6	39.5
WORK	31.4	35.7	25.5	29.8	21.7
LEISURE	15.5	15.3	15.3	16.5	15.2
RELIGION	4.3	3.4	6.7	11.0	15.1
COMMUNITY	3.4	3.7	5.0	3.2	8.6

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## 5. Conclusions

In examining Bulgaria's history, it appears that, compared to Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland, there is less of a tradition that might facilitate the introduction of ongoing political and economic changes. As previously mentioned, democratic developments cannot be based on any significant opposition movements, but the ones which arose since 1989. Although several political parties have been founded following the amendments to the Bulgarian constitution which legalized the right of citizen to form independent groups, the most powerful parties in both elections (June, 1990 and October, 1991) turned out to be the Bulgarian Socialist Party (the former Bulgarian Communist Party) and the Union of Democratic Forces (established by dissidents and independent groups). This left the country in a bipolar political situation, making it difficult to achieve a national consensus on political or practical measures. It is important to recognize that the goal of steering Bulgaria towards a market economy is favored by both political powers. But the main difference between the two lies in the strategy for its achievement and how to avoid unfavorable consequences during the transition process.

Thus, as in Hungary and Poland, the majority of the Bulgarian respondents prefer either a free-market or a mixed-market economy. But this preference does not lead to obvious conclusions, since their understanding of the term "free-market economy" is uncertain. It could be, for example, that the specific implications of this kind of economy for the privatization of business are not well understood. Thus, we examined the relationship between preference for a free-market model and opinions regarding the privatization of businesses. As expected of respondents who have some economic knowledge, the choice of a free-market model is closely related to favorable opinions of privatization. This finding confirms that most Bulgarians do understand the major role

that business privatization plays in the development of a free-market.

One of the reasons dissuading Bulgarian respondents from supporting a free-market economy is their concern that "a free market economy makes only few people rich". This opinion proved to be a strong predictor for the rejection of a free-market economy.

However, the data show that there is appreciation for and acceptance of Western assistance, especially for supplies of advanced technologies, technical knowledge, business assistance, and educational aid.

What other major concerns did Bulgarians express? They voiced strong opposition to individual ownership of large land parcels and large business, and even stronger opposition to foreign ownerships of land parcels. One explanation for this can be found in looking at Bulgaria's long history of foreign occupation and the fact that it's territory is rather small (about the size of Tennessee). Given an area of about 42,823 square miles, allowing 1.92 square miles to be owned by one individual, as asked in the question, is clearly of major consequence. In addition, it's 500 years of existence as a Turkish province still makes many Bulgarians feel rather uneasy about foreign ownership of land. Another matter of concern is the provision of Western assistance for the development of the media, the parliament, and the judiciary system. Fully half of the respondents opposed such Western influence at this stage of their political development.

Looking at various societal groups, we find that it is mainly the older, less educated, and rural residents who have concern about a free-market or mixed-market economy and who disagree most with the privatization of businesses. In addition to these groups, we also find opposition among the respondents who are not participating in the

official labor market (housemaker, retired, unemployed) and, as could be expected, among respondents on the extreme left of the political continuum.

Most of Bulgarian respondents, with the exception of the capital's younger and higher educated ones, have a rather pessimistic view about the economic state of their country and its future prospects. The largest problem envisioned and feared is unemployment. Only 25 percent of all respondents see unemployment as impossible or very unlikely within the next year, and most cite the economic condition of the country and "wrong politics" as the major cause of unemployment. In this context, "good pay" and "job security" are work goals of major concern. Although there is some awareness that current skills might not be too useful for future employment, willingness to undergo retraining is quite limited.

What survival strategies do Bulgarians see during this period of economic crisis? Two closely related behavior patterns seem to be prominent:

- a reduced consumption in the official economy, and
- the increased use of goods produced in one's own household

What we find in Bulgaria today is that habitual attitudes and behavior patterns remain dominant and that new ways of doing things are not sufficiently enough encouraged yet. While, our understanding of how to establish conditions to encourage learning and the use of new strategies is still incomplete, the data and analyses presented in this report provide useful insights about the beliefs, attitudes and fears reinforcing reliance on old behavior patterns and hindering the creation of new ones.

## Literature

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