
Differences Between the Czech and Slovak Perceptions of the Economic Transformation

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Abstract: All the surveys that have been carried out in the Czech and Slovak Republic since November 1989 present large differences between the Czech and Slovak perceptions of the economic transformation and its consequences. Analyzing the survey data "Transformation of Social Structure" (carried out in October 1991) the author points out that besides differences in the distribution of viewpoints, there are also important differences in the structure of their interrelationships. Different assessments of effective strategies for life success are analyzed. As a sort of counterbalance to hitherto mostly historical interpretations of the divergence in Czech and Slovak survey data, the author states that the dissimilar perceptions of the transformation might stem from their different rates of change toward market economies. Several methodological questions are raised in the conclusion.

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It is evident today that the Czech and Slovak populations differ significantly in their views about the hitherto realized political and economic changes and about the societies' further development. According to the data of most of published research up to now, differences among the Czech and Slovak respondents are striking (e.g. the researches of the Center for Empirical Research, of the Public Opinion Research Institute, and of the Association for Independent Social Analysis; see also [Machonin 1992]). Leaving aside the problems of state legislation (the question whether to preserve the federation, to constitute the confederation or to split the CSFR), it is possible to summarize the observed differences in the statement that Slovak inhabitants are generally less satisfied, have greater fears for the future and accept the character and proceedings of the economic transformation less.

These differences are often interpreted, especially in the mass media, as the Czechs, Moravians, and Silesians belonging to the political right and the Slovaks belonging to the left. In connection with this, we can understand that there was an improvement in living standards during the last 40 years in Slovakia and that the period of so called "Normalization" was less oppressive in Slovakia than in the Czech Republic. The indisputable progress in terms of life standards in Slovakia is allegedly seen there as an outcome of socialist economics, which is considered to be reformable by many inhabitants.

I find such explanations too simple and perhaps also misleading. Undoubtedly, if we reflect upon the different attitudes belonging to the Czech and

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Slovak populations toward the contemporary changes, it is necessary to bear in mind the character of the latest developments. However, it is not possible to neglect the purely contemporary factors. I would take the above mentioned illusory success of the Slovak socialist economy more as a certain catalyst for the influences of factors closely connected with the present day.

Quite a number of the research data (see e.g. [Šanderová 1992]) point to the fact that the Czech and Slovak populations differ not only in their responses to individual questions, i.e. in the distribution of answers, but with also the character of their reciprocal relationships, i.e. in the character of their structures. As an illustration we can view the presented data analysis "Transformation of Social Structure"¹ on the basis of a hypothetical explanation for the different evaluations of the post-November changes in the Czech and Slovak parts of the former CSFR. As a certain counterbalance or supplement to the hitherto prevailing historical interpretation, I stress the influence of the contemporary situation. A brief methodological reflection concludes the article.

I. The problem analyzed

Two batteries of questions, the wording of which (together with the respective analyses results) are analyzed in Chapter II. They were constructed to verify whether people perceive the contemporary changes as aiming at a meritocratic ideal and if yes, on which level. In this sense the data has already been analyzed and interpreted [Matějů, Řeháková 1992].

First, whether relations between individual items of the mentioned batteries form consistent and meaningful configurations reflecting the respondents' notions about strategies which they consider effective for living a successful life and what changes have come about in this respect after November 1989 are investigated. The second issue posed is whether the notions of potentially effective strategies leading to life success are affected by the respondents' satisfaction with the general economic situation of the society, the living standard and social security at the time of the investigation, the estimation for further developments in these regards and whether the changes in our society have brought and continue to bring more or less justice. The wording of these questions as well as the results of the analysis are introduced in Chapter III.

¹) The research project was worked out by a research team in the Institute of Social and Political Sciences of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, and of the Institute of Sociology of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. Financially the investigation was covered by the 20 percent grant of ČSAV (82801 "Social Stratification") and by the funds afforded by the Federal Ministry of Work and Social Affairs. The Center for Empirical Research (STEM) of the Institute of Sociology of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences collected the data in September and October 1991. The sample was carried out from the Register of inhabitants using a combination of quota and random sampling. The final sample includes 2829 persons over the age 18 years (the Czechs form two thirds of the sample, and the Slovaks form one third of it; such a structure agrees with the representation of the republic's population in CSFR). The selection structure as to age and sex agrees with the structure of the basic sample (population over 18 years of age).

In both cases I analyzed the Czech and the Slovak samples separately, aiming to compare their reciprocal relationships according to the mentioned variables and to offer a more dynamic discussion about the differences between the Czech and Slovak perceptions of the economic transformation.

II. Strategies for life success

My first step was to define, using factor analysis, the basic strategies considered by the respondents as leading to life success. The following two batteries of questions were analyzed:

A: What - according to your opinion - is important for a man to be successful in our country in order to assert himself?

B: What is the change - according to your opinion - in the significance of the mentioned circumstances of life success compared to the situation two years ago.

The respondents were given the following quoted list of items and asked to choose one of these answers:

- 1. not a significant circumstance/change;*
- 2. a circumstance/change of certain significance;*
- 3. a quite important circumstance/change ;*
- 4. the most important circumstance/change.*

Items to questions A and B:

In tables:

To come from a rich family	wealth
To have educated parents	parent's educ.
To have high education	education
To exert one's effort to be prominent	effort
To be gifted or have	abilities
Willingness to work	hard work
To know the right people	connections
To have political contacts	pol. contacts
What race or nationality one is	nationality
What religious confession one is	religion
The locality where one was born	locality
Whether one is a man or a woman	sex
Political beliefs	polit. beliefs
To have good luck	luck
Ability to conform	conformity
Willingness to take risks	risk

The results of factor analyses performed separately for the Slovak and the Czech sample are introduced in Tables 1 and 2 together with Box's M indicating that the structures of the analyzed correlation matrixes significantly differ.

Table 1. Strategies for life success - question A
(Rotated factor matrix - factor loadings)

A: Czech Republic

Factor:	ASCRPTION1	ACHIEVEMENT		
		ARTFULNESS1		SOC.ORIGIN1
wealth		0.17		0.72
parents' educ.	0.16	*)	0.31	0.64
education			0.61	0.41
effort		0.21	0.58	0.21
abilities		0.21	0.72	
hard work		0.17	0.68	-0.32
connections	0.17	0.55		
pol. contacts	0.34	0.33		0.51
nationality	0.65			
religion	0.77			
locality	0.77			
sex	0.54	0.15		
polit. beliefs	0.50	0.21		0.32
luck		0.66		
conformity		0.68		
risk		0.60	0.26	
% of explained variance	19	15	8	7

B: Slovak Republic

Factor:	ASCRPTION1	ACHIEVEMENT		POLITICS1	
		ARTFULNESS		SOC.ORIGIN1	
wealth		0.27	0.16	0.63	
parents' educ.				0.81	
education			0.28	0.70	
effort			0.57	0.30	0.32
abilities			0.80		
hard work		0.18	0.75		-0.23
connections		0.46	0.32		
pol.contacts					0.78
nationality	0.63				0.32
religion	0.75				
locality	0.81				
sex	0.64				0.31
polit.beliefs	0.31				0.68
luck		0.74		0.19	
conformity		0.74			
risk		0.59	0.21		0.26
% of explained variance	20	14	9	8	7

*) factor loading under 0.15.

Box's M = 419.31 significant at < 0.000

A. The situation in October 1991: commentary to Table 1

Factor analysis results from battery A questions are quite similar in the Czech and Slovak samples. Practically the same variables define the factors ASCRIPTION1, ARTFULNESS1 and ACHIEVEMENT1 explaining roughly the same percentage of variance in both samples. A certain similarity can be seen in the fourth factor (SOC.ORIGIN1) which is defined only by the "wealth" and "parent's education" items in the Czech sample, while "education" (meaning education of the person striving for success) more prominently joins these items in the Slovak sample. To reach success in life (in October 1991) is possible, in the opinion of the respondents, partly by means of one's own efforts (achievement), partly on the basis of a favorable family background (social origin), or by other ascriptive items: the benefit of nationality, place of residence, sex, religious confession, political conviction. However, the road to success today also moves through various connections, luck, ability to conform, and willingness to risk (ARTFULNESS1 factor).

This is the opinion of respondents from both republics. One more factor was extracted only from the Slovak sample which consists of the items "political connections" and "political beliefs" (POL.CONTACTS1). The Slovak respondents therefore can see one more road to life success, which leads through political contacts and not surprisingly coheres with political beliefs. To be exhaustive, it is necessary to add that in the Czech sample the independent strategy of political connections (i.e. the distinct factor saturated by "political" items) was not extracted even in the five-factor result.

B. The post-November 1989 changes: commentary to Table 2

According to the results of the analysis related to the post-November 1989 changes, the differences between the considered samples are more prominent than in the former case which was also analyzed by higher values of Box's M statistics. In both samples we find only the ASCRIPTION2 factor and SOC.ORIGIN2 factor defined especially by "parents' education" and "education" - only in Slovakia was the "wealth" item more prominently applied to this factor.

The most prominent factor for life success in the Czech sample is defined by the same variables as the ACHIEVEMENT1 factor in the former analysis. In addition, however, there is the "risk" item. In comparison with the situation before November 1989, the Czech respondents have added the willingness to risk and abilities. In my opinion, a more fitting denotation of this factor is ENTREPRENEUR. Similarly to the previous analysis, we find the distinct factor ARTFULNESS as well.

The denotation ENTREPRENEUR is also in the Slovak sample, namely for the factor qualified by items defining ACHIEVEMENT1 in the former analysis. In this case even those items defined in the former analysis as the ARTFULNESS1 factor are connected with it. Also, in this analysis, we find the POL.CONTACTS2 factor only in the Slovak sample.

Table 2. Post-November changes - question B
(Rotated factor matrix - factor loadings)

A: Czech Republic

Factor:	ENTREPRENEUR		ARTFULNESS2	
		ASCRPTION2		SOC.ORIGIN2
wealth	*)	0.24		0.42
parents' educ.				0.76
education	0.18			0.74
effort	0.59			0.39
abilities	0.77			0.27
hard work	0.77			0.17
connections			0.63	0.26
pol. contacts	-0.57	0.21	0.50	0.27
nationality	-0.15	0.74		
religion	-0.24	0.72	0.17	
locality		0.85		
sex		0.77		
polit. beliefs	-0.53	0.34	0.44	0.18
luck	0.25		0.67	
conformity			0.76	
risk	0.65		0.39	
% of explained variance	22	18	10	8

B: Slovak Republic

Factor:	ENTREPRENEUR		SOC.ORIGIN2	
		ASCRPTION2		POLITICS2
wealth	0.21	0.19	0.53	
parents' educ.			0.80	
education			0.78	0.17
effort	0.58		0.43	
abilities	0.69		0.27	-0.23
hard work	0.64			-0.28
connections	0.57		0.46	0.37
pol. contacts			0.17	0.82
nationality		0.77		0.22
religion		0.76		0.22
locality		0.83		
sex		0.81		
polit. beliefs		0.37		0.73
luck	0.67			0.26
conformity	0.70			0.27
risk	0.71	0.17		-0.16
% of explained variance	20	14	9	8

*) factor loading under 0.15.

Box's M = 534.21; significant at < 0.000

C. Interpretation of Factors

Similar to the second step in which factor scores representing individual factors are considered, it is necessary to pay more detailed attention to the interpretation of individual factors because this is inevitably projected on the interpretation of the following analyses results.

In all four analyses we find two types of ascriptive factors. Except for the SOC.ORIGIN factors introducing social background status as closely connected with achieved education, there are those factors I call ASCRIPTION introduced by a certain determining or fatalistic variant of the social structure's ascriptive perception. They express the conviction that life success depends on circumstances one cannot, or only with difficulties, change: sex, nationality, place of birth, religious confession, and possibly, political beliefs. Unequal accents on individual components of these two types of factors only differ from sample to sample.

Considering the evaluation of the acquired state in October 1991, in both samples we find, aside from those factors mentioned above, the strategy of achievement (ACHIEVEMENT1 factor). This strategy consists of conformity and willingness to risk and that one should know the right people and have a bit of luck (ARTFULNESS1 factor).

When questioned about what has changed in our country since November 1989, the Czech respondents see a growth in the significance of being enterprising in the traditional conception (greater chances for success than before are supposed with the person who is gifted, hard-working, who wishes to assert himself and is willing to take a risk) on the one hand. However, on the other hand, respondents see a growth in the significance of a certain "fitness" (to be able to conform, to be a little lucky and to know the right people). The Slovak respondents take these two strategies - comparing their significance with the time before November 1989 - as one. Compared with the past it is more important whether one is able, hard-working and willing to take a risk, but at the same time he/she must be lucky, have the ability to conform and know the right people. It is obvious that the Slovak respondents' viewpoint, the enterprising strategy is not so completely "fair" and is growing significantly.

The most striking difference between the Czech and the Slovak population remains with the introduction of the items "to have political connections" and "political beliefs," which in both analyses form a distinct factor found only in the Slovak sample. Though (looking at the amount of these items' factor loading for all individual factors) in both samples the items of a "less distinguished" character are in question (they saturate more than one factor), in the Slovak sample these items are more closely related. It seems that considering what is today most important for a successful life, political connections and beliefs are understood as a certain attachment to social origin and other ascriptive advantages in the Czech countries, while in Slovakia political contacts are perceived as an independent strategy whose significance has even increased, in comparison with the past.

III. The strategy for life success and justice and contentment

The following analyses² have been obtained by entering scores of the above described factors as dependent variables (computed by means of regression method), and the answers to the questions quoted below as independent variables:

Do you think that the change in our society has brought more justice, or less justice?
(Question 110)

As far as the near future is concerned (3 to 5 years), do you think that it will bring more justice, or less justice? (Question 111)

Responses: 1. *definitely more*; 2. *rather more*; 3. *rather less*; 4. *definitely less*.

Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the development since November 1989 of:
the general situation in society (Question 121a)
the Czechoslovak economy (Question 121d)
the life standard (Question 121f)
the social security (Question 121g)

Responses: 1. *very satisfied*; 2. *quite satisfied*; 3. *rather dissatisfied*; 4. *very dissatisfied*.

What kind of development do you expect in the near future of:
the general situation in society (Question 122a)
the Czechoslovak economy (Question 122b)
the life standard (Question 122c)
the social security (Question 122d)

Responses: 1. *a fast improvement*; 2. *a gradual improvement*; 3. *small changes*; 4. *a gradual aggravation*; 5. *a fast aggravation*.

It is possible to say that the evaluation of life strategies and of the latest changes in this regard analyzed in the proceeding chapter are strongly connected with both the feeling of satisfaction with the developments and the assessments of justice, i.e. with responses to the above given questions. In the Czech sample, however, there are more significant connections between factors, though not always giving evidence about the same conclusion in the two samples (they differ in the direction or meaning of dependence).

A. Successful life strategies and justice: commentary to Tables 3 and 4

When looking at the correlation matrix given in Table 3, it is obvious that in both samples the conviction that the success of the ARTFULNESS strategy correlates with opinions of justice and its development after November 1989. Those respondents who are of the opinion that changes in our society have brought less justice (and in the near future will bring still less) think that today for life success it is important to be able to conform, to know the right people, etc., and simply "to know the ropes." This relationship is stronger in Slovakia.

²) Analysis of variance (software SPSSX version 4.1).

Table 3. Life success factor and justice (Coefficients eta)

Question No.:	Czech Republic		Slovak Republic	
	110	111	110	111
<i>Factors:</i>				
ASCRPTION1	0.10	0.11	*	
ARTFULNESS1	0.07	0.08	0.12	0.15
ACHIEVEMENT1	0.20	0.20		
SOC.ORIGIN1		0.16		
ENTREPRENEUR	0.12	0.13		
ASCRPTION2			0.10	0.14
ARTFULNESS**	0.14	0.13		
SOC.ORIGIN1				0.10

*) Non-significant at < 0.05.

**) Factor was extracted from the Czech subgroup only.

Table 4. ASCRIPTION factors and justice assessment (Average values of factor scores)

	Czech Republic		Slovak Republic	
	mean	% resp.	mean	% resp.
<i>Question 110 (have changes brought justice?)</i>				
surely more	-0.01	16.8	-0.05	9.5
rather more	-0.06	44.4	0.08	33.1
rather less	-0.00	29.6	0.02	41.2
surely less	0.30	9.2	-0.20	16.1

In the Czech Republic only, these people (i.e. who are skeptical about justice development) consider where one was born, which sex he or she is etc. (a high score of ASCRIPTION1 factor) to be an important condition for life success. In Slovakia, the opinions on justice development are connected with the evaluations of changes in effective life strategies (a significant connection was proved in ASCRIPTION2). Yet the character of dependence here is different from the Czech sample.

The respondents who think that the changes have brought less justice, or will bring less of it, differ from all others in terms of the amount of ASCRIPTION factors scored in both samples (ASCRPTION1 in the Czech sample and ASCRIPTION2 in the Slovak one). However, in the Czech sample, the feeling that there is and will be less justice goes hand in hand with the conviction that ascriptive advantages are very important for achieving a successful life. In the Slovak sample it is the opposite: the statement that there is and will be significantly less justice flags the conviction that after November 1989, the significance of ascriptive advantages decreases (see table 4).

It seems that in the Czech sample ascription is seen more as discrimination (the other side of the ascriptive advantages of some people is the discrimination of others), which means an obstacle rather than an effective route to life success. In the Slovak sample, there is obviously a different interpretation of the ASCRPITION2 factor. It can be, for example, the opinion that after November 1989 a rectification of former discrimination occurs. Similarly, those who in the Slovak sample tend to believe that the future will bring more justice, more often feel that the significance of social origin has strengthened (SOC.ORIGIN2).

In the Czech sample we find a greater number of significant connections than in the Slovak one. This leads us to the judgement that the views on the development of justice are bound here with the views of effective life strategies more strongly than in Slovakia. Remarkably strong connections have been proven especially between the ACHIEVEMENT and ENTREPRENEUR factors and especially between the respondents who see in the hitherto changes a contribution to justice, and in the future expect still more of it and those who are convinced that life success today builds on individual efforts and abilities, more than before November 1989. In Slovakia, no relation type of such significance has been proven in any case.

B. Successful life strategies and contentment: commentary to Tables 5 and 6

A number of differences between the Czech and the Slovak samples is also found in the relations between the opinions of the effective life success strategies and contentment (table 5). More prominent important relations were proven again in the Czech sample. Contentment is connected with a high score of ACHIEVEMENT1 factor, which implies a conviction that achievement is today an important instrument for life success. At the same time, in close connection with a high score of ARTFULNESS1 factor we find discontentment and fears for the future in both samples (in the Czech one we find a prominent relation of this type also in connection with the ARTFULNESS2 factor).

In both samples we also find strong and significant correlations between contentment and the ENTREPRENEUR factor. But the meaning (or subjective content) of this relationship in the Czech population is different from that in the Slovak one. In the same way that the Czech concept of a successful enterprising strategy differs from the Slovak one, there differs also the nature of the connection between the evaluation of enterprising strategies and contentment with the reached state or expectations for the future, as far as life standards and social security are concerned (table 6). With the Czech respondents, contentment and positive expectations for the future reflect the conviction that after November, 1989 the ENTREPRENEUR strategy has been of greater importance. But in the Slovak sample, dissatisfaction and expectation of a further aggravation is connected with a high score of the ENTREPRENEUR factor.

And finally, in the Slovak sample discontent and fears for the future are also connected with a higher score of POL.CONTACTS factors. As far as the ACHIEVEMENT factor is concerned, in the Slovak sample no significant relationship has been proven.

Table 5. Life success factors and contentment
(Coefficients eta)*A: Czech Republic*

Question No.:	121A	121D	121F	121G	122A	122D	122F	122G
<i>Factors:</i>								
ASCRPTION1	*)	0.08			0.09	0.09	0.07	
ARTFULNESS1	0.12	0.10	0.09	0.10	0.10	0.09	0.11	0.12
ACHIEVEMENT	0.13	0.17	0.13	0.16	0.14	0.15	0.12	0.13
SOC.ORIGIN1	0.13	0.13	0.15	0.13	0.15	0.17	0.20	0.18
ASCRPTION2						0.09	0.10	
ENTREPRENEUR	0.10	0.11	0.08	0.12	0.10	0.14	0.09	
ARTFULNESS2	0.15	0.17	0.15	0.18	0.14	0.18	0.15	0.14
SOC.ORIGIN2	0.09			0.07				

B: Slovak Republic

Question No.:	121A	121D	121F	121G	122A	122D	122F	122G
<i>Factors:</i>								
ASCRPTION1					0.11		0.13	
ARTFULNESS1	0.10	0.13	0.15	0.14	0.10		0.11	
ACHIEVEMENT								
SOC.ORIGIN1						0.11		
POLITICS1						0.13		
ASCRPTION2			0.12	0.08	0.11			
ENTREPRENEUR		0.11			0.13	0.15	0.19	0.17
SOC.ORIGIN2							0.12	0.11
POLITICS2		0.10	0.12	0.10	0.10	0.10		

*) Non-significant at < 0.05 .**IV. Interpretation of the discovered differences**

Summarizing the established differences in the answers of the Czech and the Slovak respondents we can assert that the consequences of the changes are not (or to be exact: in October 1989 were not) perceived in the same way.

The respondents in both republics have agreed that ACHIEVEMENT (to be gifted and hard working) is a successful strategy and ARTFULNESS (to know the ropes) leads to one's goals. In this respect also various ascriptive advantages are regarded as powerful. In the Czech sample, however, the respondents mentioned the achievement strategy more often, while in Slovakia the ascriptive advantages and knowing the ropes were mentioned more frequently.³

³) The analysis of the questions concerning the state in September 1991 and dealing with the Czech and Slovak respondents together, the result of which I do not present here for reasons of space, have shown that in the ASCRPTION and ARTFULNESS factors the Slovak respondents score more, while the Czechs score significantly more in ACHIEVEMENT1 factor.

Table 6. ENTREPRENEUR factor and current changes assessment
(Average values of factor score)

	Czech Republic		Slovak Republic	
	mean	% resp.	mean	% resp.
<i>Question 121D (contentment with economy)</i>				
very satisfied	0.19	1.9	-0.09	0.4
quite satisfied	0.12	26.5	0.25	8.6
rather dissatisfied	0.01	49.6	-0.10	51.2
very dissatis.	-0.18	22.0	0.06	49.0
<i>Question 122A (future: in general)</i>				
fast improvement	0.10	1.7	0.34	1.3
gradual improvement	0.07	51.2	-0.02	33.2
small changes	-0.02	36.7	-0.05	46.0
gradual aggravation	-0.28	9.4	0.04	17.9
fast aggravation	-0.26	1.0	0.96	1.0
<i>Question 122D (future: economy)</i>				
fast improvement	0.27	2.9	0.67	2.9
gradual improvement	0.09	47.1	0.05	28.1
small changes	-0.05	31.0	-0.10	34.5
gradual aggravation	-0.13	16.0	-0.04	32.0
fast aggravation	0.59	4.5	-0.57	3.0
<i>Question 122F (future: life standard)</i>				
fast improvement	0.11	1.7	-0.62	1.5
gradual improvement	0.11	39.3	0.01	23.0
small changes	-0.03	32.1	-0.06	31.8
gradual aggravation	-0.11	24.2	-0.03	39.3
fast aggravation	-0.18	2.8	0.82	4.4
<i>Question 122G (future: social security)</i>				
fast improvement	0.05	1.6	-1.33	0.3
gradual improvement	0.06	32.3	-0.09	18.3
small changes	-0.03	34.6	-0.01	31.9
gradual aggravation	-0.08	27.0	-0.04	41.9
fast aggravation	-0.19	4.5	0.55	7.6

There is a still a more prominent difference between the Czech and Slovak respondents' opinions about the quality of change since November 1989. The questioned persons in the Czech Republic find both positive and negative sides of the development. In their opinion, the entrepreneur strategy's significance has increased, namely in an almost idealistic conception, yet also based on various connections, and the like. The respondents in Slovakia have seen only negative changes. The effort to assert oneself and willingness to work hard stopped being sufficient. One must also have useful connections and a bit of luck. The people in Slovakia probably quite often connect strategy building with acquaintances in the political world and they consider it negative for further economic development.

In other words, although the people in the Czech Republic are aware of the complexity of problems involved with the transformation (which is beneficial not

only to those who are skillful and competent, but also to those who can make use of the often not so clear arrangements), they recognized an improved situation (to the higher significance of achievement) before anything else. The people in Slovakia, on the other hand, tend to see the significance of strengthening non-achievement strategies only.

A question now arises: Why is there such a prominent disparity between Czech and Slovak assessments of the current changes? In my opinion, the most logical answer is: different things have occurred in each republic. In my introduction to this study I mentioned the fact that the Slovak inhabitants - compared with the Czech ones - are allegedly "disposed" as Leftist. This characteristic is, among other things, deduced from the finding that the Slovak respondents assess the former regime more positively than the Czech respondents. But even if a considerable part of the Slovaks hold the opinion that life was better in the former regime (see [Lépe 1992]), it does not necessarily signify that they consider the socialist economy better than the market economy. Strictly speaking, this estimation does not mean anything for a number of people other than the fact, that "what was" is better than "what is now" (namely what was in October 1991).

A lot of statistical data and information in mass media lead to the conclusion that there has been a smaller shift towards the market economy in Slovakia than in the Czech Republic. The state's influence has been weakened concerning former social protections (namely job security) but private enterprise has been developing slowly and the influx of foreign capital has also been slow. In short, a competitive milieu has not been developed in Slovakia (or has been developing much less than in the Czech Republic). The novelty which people in Slovakia meet daily, be it directly or by means of a mediator, is rather a loss of job security than any marks of market economy development (which is more evident in the Czech lands).

The result of the above mentioned analyses suggest that as far as strategies for life success are concerned, everything in Slovakia has more or less remained in the past, if there has not been a shift to the worse. In "real" socialism, life success depends on such factors which one cannot influence. It is still impossible to reach life success without connections, even if one is competent and hard working. Further, the importance of political connections for life strategies (so typical of the recent past) has been increasing.

I do not assume the Slovak population to be dreaming of a return to socialism. They are only more dissatisfied with the contemporary state of things, because they are facing uncertainty without seeing any suggestion of positive development. Under such conditions, it is not surprising that a number of people have arrived (possibly rather implicitly) at the following conclusion: it is better to have any form of state paternalism than a socialist regime without job security. With this in mind, I fully agree with the opinion [Tymowsky, Petrusek 1992] that it is more suitable to evaluate the differences between the attitudes of the Czech and Slovak respondents, let us say between the inhabitants of the individual republics, on the scale of liberalism - paternalism than on the scale of Right-Left. I hold that the whole problem of Czech-Slovak divergence need not be that the "Czech

reform" does not fit the "Slovak specificity", but rather that the reform has been performed inconsistently, or only as a hint, in Slovakia.

V. Methodological skepticism

The explanation for the dissimilar results of the presented analyses, however, can be more prosaic. It can be, for instance, argued that the structure of the questionnaire and the wording of the questions were made to the Czech population's reference. No significant differences between the pattern of the Czech and the Slovak respondents' experience and way of thinking were assumed. Nevertheless, the chosen context could have been more obscure for the Slovak respondents than for the respondents in the Czech Lands. Questions about the state-legislature establishment could more likely be stimulating for the Slovak population even if there were not any other problems. I am inclined to this hypothesis because there is a lower coherence of opinions on effective life success strategies on the one hand, and of contentment and opinions on justice, on the other hand, in the Slovak sample than in the Czech one.

The dissimilar results can also be a consequence of the fact that individual items in the analyzed batteries are interpreted differently in the Czech and the Slovak Republics. The ASCRIPTION factors can serve as an example of divergent approaches to the same problem (see the commentary to table 4). Neither are we sure whether life success is viewed as the same thing by both the Czech and Slovak populations (whether in this respect there is not a less striking but systemic difference).

Finally, there is the question whether it is altogether possible to draw a more general conclusion on the basis of attitude questions. The expression of contentment, or the evaluating of changes, etc., are undoubtedly influenced by the political climate changing every day. The hypothesis (interpretation) introduced in the previous chapter could then be supported or rejected only by means of checking whether in October 1991 Slovakia was really closer to "real socialism" than the Czech Republic.

Lastly, the conclusions based on multidimensional analyses without differentiating between Czech and Slovak data should be undoubtedly questioned. The subjects of observation could be, in a number of cases, artificially structured Czechoslovaks, whose opinions agree by two thirds with the experiences and feelings of Czech respondents and by one third with Slovak respondents, while the patterns of these experiences and feelings are not always compatible. It is therefore unrealistic to analyze them within a uniform analytical and interpretative framework.

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I'D REALLY LIKE TO TELL YOU MY OPINION, BUT I DON'T WANT TO CAUSE A GOVERNMENTAL CRISIS...