

unemployed to work for themselves by providing them with the necessary infrastructure and resources. The founder of a Polish NGO praised the Employment Express Program for demonstrating how government can work to improve its services. She noted the potential advantages if local, independent organizations and Government worked together.

Two social scientists noted lessons about the role of independent organizations in a civil society. One member saw a need for the development of this sector as a link between people and government. Another participant commented that one person alone cannot achieve results, and that there is therefore a need to work cooperatively, form organizations to articulate arguments and share experiences.

From the government perspective, some participants questioned why the Employment Office in Lodz has not been paying for training offered by the International Women's Foundation. And from the business point of view, it was noted that like since NGO's involve risk, require identification of markets and demand, serve clients, and need credit and resources, they should be encouraged, developed and evaluated as entrepreneurial ventures.

While the meeting in Lodz launched a new area of study, the Group will continue its analysis when looking at Slovak responses and other model programs at its meeting in Bardejov in December.

Marcia Greenberg

STEM

The Centre for Empirical Research

was founded in early spring 1990. Since then it has systematically studied the living conditions, attitudes and value orientation of the Czech and Slovak populations. STEM is an independent, private organization, focusing mainly on the analysis of the political scene and social problems. Here we present in brief some of its findings, in an attempt to illustrate recent developments in the Czech Republic.

According to the STEM's data, the political and economic transformation can be described in terms of several developmental stages.

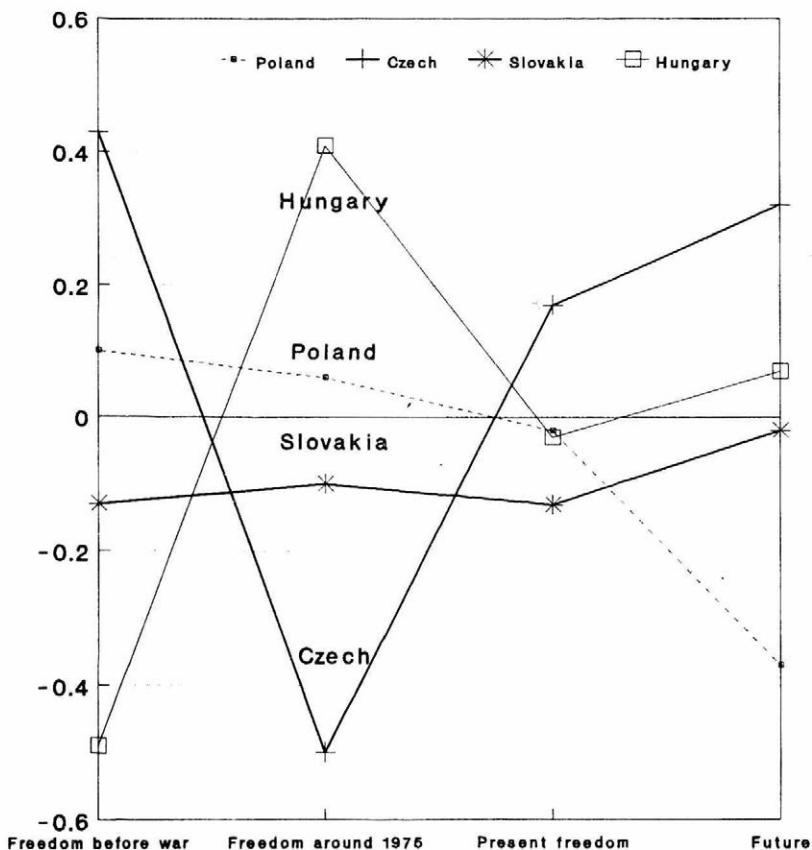
The Period of Revolution Euphoria - as compared to Poland, Hungary and Slovakia - is clear and intense. The fall of the totalitarian system was greeted with vigorous emotional support and strength in the Czech Republic. This fact can be related to the historical development of Czechoslovakia after 1918, as well as to the character of the Communist system after 1948 and after the Russian invasion of 1968. The breakdown of the communist domination occurred relatively late in comparison to neighbouring countries, it was rather sudden, and even spectacular. In its euphoria the population expected that - similar to "Velvet Revolution" - the change of

the system would proceed fast and smoothly, and would be of substantial nature, bringing about a deep and lasting change of the system itself. In the first half of 1990 the people were markedly satisfied with the development of the political situation, but were increasingly impatient with the slow progress in the transformation of economy. STEM's data indicate that the revolutionary momentum on the side of the population has been to a large extent wasted and remained unutilized. At least in their statements the people were prepared to make their own share of personal sacrifice to the radical transformation process, but eventually there appeared to be no real necessity for it. The revolutionary euphoria thus slowly faded and in the press - typically for such a historical situation - one could even have read about "the betrayed revolution".

The support of the new regime has been mainly emotional, prevailingly irrational, perhaps even naive.

The euphoric period was defined by a high level of consensus among different groups of the population. This overall feeling of agreement, was then achieved and further facilitated by the existence of broad political movements, with somewhat unclear political profiles. Thus at the beginning of 1990 we could have observed the high level of simi-

Perception of Historical Periods (Deviation from Grand Mean)



STEM, October 1991

#) In all of the four countries the present situations was in 1991 evaluated very high by the majority of population (the best two schoolmarks for freedom are given by 73% in the Czech Republic, 68% in Poland, 63% in Hungary and 60% in Slovakia). The communist regime was on the contrary refused by the majority: the best two schoolmarks were given in 26% of cases in Hungary, 16% in Poland, 14% in Slovakia, and only 7% in the Czech Republic. The prewar regime received best two schoolmarks by 54% in the Czech Republic, 43% in Poland, 33% in Slovakia, and only 23% in Hungary. The distance between perception of prewar Czechoslovakia by the two parts of the republic is clearly apparent.

To contrast the differences, this chart is based on the deviations of the country means from the grand mean. By this measure real differences were for instructive purpose exaggerated.

larity between the Czech and the Slovak Republics. Since April 1990, however, the data has increasingly reflected the trend in the intensive diversification of the attitudes of the citizens of the Czech Republic and of the Slovak republic. By as early as the end of 1990 and even more in 1991 this trend resulted in such a remarkable distance separating the two republics, that - at least as far as public opinion was concerned - we might clearly speak of the two different societies. The period of the revolutionary euphoria ended in the middle of 1990, around the first free elections (June 1990), which in some ways may be termed the anti-communist plebiscite.

The Period of Disillusion - was an inevitable reaction to the preceding period and is reflected in the STEM's data immediately following the June 1990 elections. The space for radical action, opened by general political changes remained unutilized. Instead, the political scene was defined by the domination of procedural problems, by disputes over meager marginal topics. This was a fertile soil for prevailing cabinet policies, which cannot appeal to the general public. The communication flow became rather slow and ineffective, the population to a large extent stayed uninformed about crucial aspects of the transformation. This situation may be attributed to the fact that the result of the elections (53% for Civic Forum) led the political elite to saturation and satisfaction. The interaction of the political elite with the public was weakened and the quality of the dialogue stayed rather poor. Not even the communal elections in November 1990 brought about considerable impulse for the local grassroot political movements and for the growth of civil society.

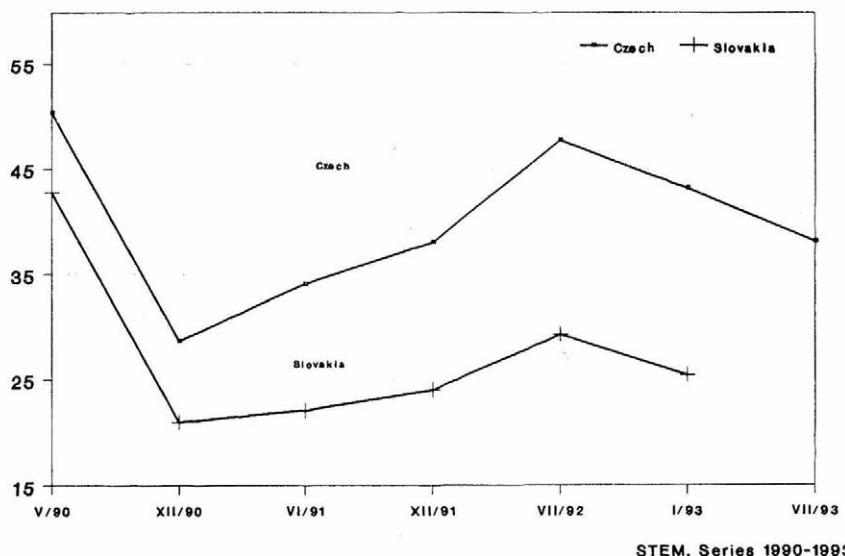
The Interim Period - followed the liberalization of prices after January 1991. At the beginning of 1991 almost 70 per cent of the population expressed the opinion that the economic reform was proceeding too slowly. This was also the reason why the majority was also dissatisfied with the course of the reform. This "economic vacuum" was probably a proper scene for the expansion of the "national" problem. In their attitudes the

population of the Czech republic was prepared for a more dramatic decrease in the standard of living and for far-reaching changes in the way the society functioned. Public opinion showed signs of embarrassment and distress. The lowest point was reached by autumn 1991.

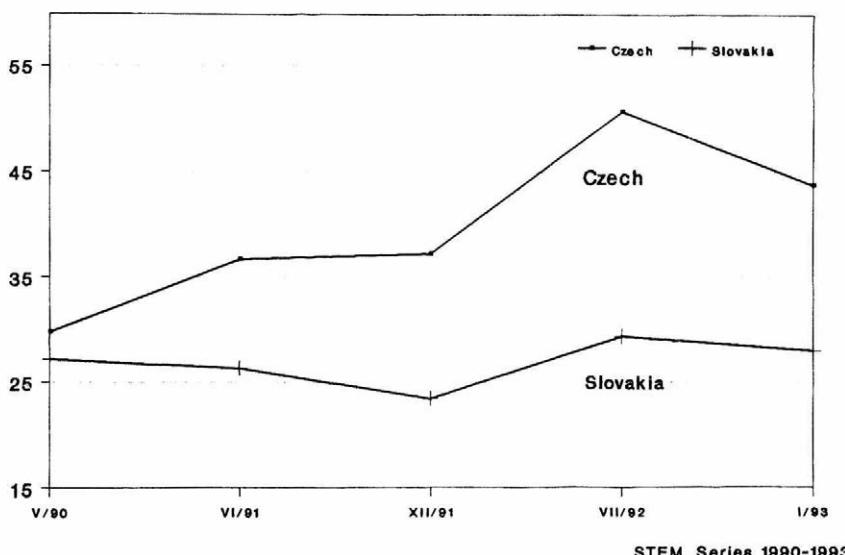
The STEM's data from this period shows the prevailing general, "abstract" support of the new regime. Detailed analysis of these attitudes would, however, reveal a somewhat more complicated picture. Out of a series of data we may hypothesize that the groups of active supporters and active opponents of the new regime were almost equally numerous, each of them being formed by 15-20 per cent of the population. The supporters were mainly of the middle age generation, the opponents mainly older people. It is important to notice that the massive support for the new regime was in fact formed by a large group of population, estimated at some 40 per cent, whose attitude towards the new regime was in fact "lukewarm", conditioned by different circumstances. These supporters were rather passive, more or less continuing their habits and stereotypes from the "ancien regime". The remaining part of the population (around one quarter of the total) is formed by people who are not interested in politics or public affairs and who have no clear opinion on the transformation.

The Period of Political Crystallization - apparent in the STEM data was in the Czech Republic since the beginning of 1992. We may conceive this period as a positive overcoming of a relative disintegration of the preceding two periods. Both the political institutions and their acting representatives became more transparent to the general public. Political parties acquired clearer profiles. Public opinion became more differentiated and realistic - an important precondition for the appropriate functioning of the democratic system. The passive part of the population retreated from public life and quite normally did not want to be mixed with politics. The active part of the population found closer ties to existing, more distinct political parties. The illusions of the previous time seemed to be lost, and critical appraisal, or

Secure Feeling for the Future (Percentage - "Yes")



Right wing political orientation (Percentage "Right")



"pragmatic" approach, as it is usually officially labeled, was winning ground. Realistic expectations were relatively modest: almost half of the population expected that the process of economic transformation, before an acceptable standard of living was reached, was going to last ten years or more. The year 1992 was characterized by general relief and contentment, the situation did not bring about dramatic events and turning points. Political institutions started functioning on a routine basis, which on the one hand brought about more bureaucratic effectiveness, on the other hand the danger of rigidity and - with regard to the public-elite interaction - of certain exclusiveness.

The Period of Diversification - is an operational label for the present period, which began in the summer of 1993. The optimism and relief of the preceding period was vanishing. The period was characterized by a certain weariness, the temporary stability and contentedness slowly being replaced by differentiated ambitions and fears of different groups of population. It is a more complicated period, with the signs of a starker polarization of the political scene. Interest groups were expressing their opposing interests and pushing forward their contradicting requirements. In November 1993 we can see the emerging diversity as only a latent tension. The data do not indicate a possible outburst of a radical political action, the willingness to political protest was relatively low. We can expect that the diversity will grow as a result of the gradual release of legal and factual obstacles to bankruptcies, to the liberation of the labour market and to the cost of housing and energy. This will confront the prevailing ideological concepts in evaluating political progress with the practical consequences of the material deprivation of large groups of the population.

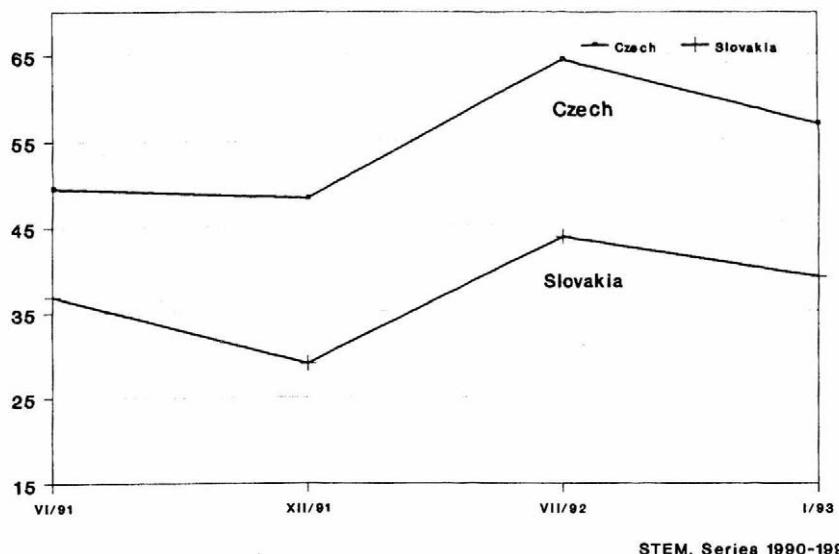
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If we want to understand and interpret the attitudes of the Czech population towards the recent political and economic development properly we have to take the different levels of the subjective evaluation of the situation and the change into account. General

and abstract attitudes are quite clearly in favour of an open pluralistic society, based on individual freedom and the market economy (without adjectives). The general pro-reform attitudes are very stable, forming the basic pillar of support for the new regime. These general manifestations are strongly confronted with the specific attitudes in different facets of social life. Here we can observe ambiguity, uncertainty, and a higher degree of variance and contradiction. The subjective evaluations on general and specific levels of the majority of population show an unexpectedly high level of inconsistency. In spite of the high general appraisal of the new regime we are faced with strong reservations to dismantling the socialist, solidaristic and collectivistic principles in organization of the society. The data indicate that socialism probably had deeper roots than has been admitted and even suspected. The main problem area may be identified in the relation of the citizen vs. state, and in the welfare provision in general.

In a way we may speak of a dualistic "schizophrenic" vision of the world, where a generally positive evaluation of the transformation is combined with negative evaluation in most of the specific areas of social life (interpersonal relations, education, health care, family, leisure, standard of living). Moreover, the detailed analysis shows that general attitudes are not related to the characteristics of socio-demographic position of the individual or household, which indicates they are not derived from real practice. This is also true to a large extent for specific attitudes. Indirectly it points to the fact that for a large part of the population the change of the system is defined mainly ideologically. Also the support for the new regime is based on ideology, i.e. relies on big ideas, on historical tradition, on concepts of national unity etc. It is more oriented towards future promise than towards solving today's problems. It is a question of how much such a vision can contribute to the growth of the meritocratic principles in social organization, how it can stimulate individual efforts, personal initiative and responsibility. We may ask whether such a perspective is

Succes in Building up Democracy (Percentage "Yes")



STEM, Series 1990-1993

coherent with the idea that plurality, diversity and even conflict are the crucial factors in the systemic change. To conclude, we should be aware of the fact that the impressive

support of the new regime, apparent from the STEM's data, may in fact later turn out to be rather frail, volatile, and vulnerable.

Jan Hartl

Regional differences: where is more social protection requested?

It should come as no surprise that economically and socially European countries (not to speak of Eastern European and the Balkan countries) differ considerably. People's perceptions and expectations of the welfare state also differ. It is not easy to compare them in a setting of rapid change and continuing territorial divisions. Nevertheless, some features are not changing so rapidly: the cultural level and mentality of the nations, their hidden social structures, the degree of their internalized communist experience, etc. The consequences of a long-term crisis in Poland are not the same as those of the gradual abandonment of communism in Hungary. Similarly, the lively spirit of capitalism in the Czech Republic and the former backward-

ness of Slovakia can still be traced, as comparative survey data shows.

In order to describe some of these disparities, we will use the survey *The Dismantling of the Safety Net and Its Political Consequences*, which was coordinated and financed by the Institute of East West Security Studies in New York. The field work took place in October of 1991 and from this four national analytical files were created: for the Czech Republic (1187 respondents), Slovakia (817 respondents), Hungary (1500 respondents) and Poland (1491 respondents). Here we will use the multinational data file which contains information on 4995 adults. In this survey, many questions concerning the welfare state were answered and the various responses have been organized into distinct factor analysis clusters (Table 1):