

University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire

Divergent Neighbors: Czech and Slovak History and Views in the Post-Communist Transition

Senior History Project

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Introduction

The Czechs and Slovaks are two distinctly divergent historically rooted nations. They have been neighbors since their coming into the region in the 5th century C.E. Their cultures developed separately until they came to live together in a common state during the period after World War I and before World War II. Their attempt at democracy was short lived, as Hitler dismantled and conquered Czechoslovakia in 1938. After World War II, Soviet Communism was installed in Czechoslovakia with far reaching effects on the lives of all who lived within the country. After poor economic performance, a series of reforms that came to be known as Prague Spring brought the promise of changing the fundamental relationship between the people and the state. This came to a crashing halt as Soviet tanks rolled into Prague. The display of military might collapsed the reforms and deposed the leadership of Czechoslovakia. A conservative administration was put into place and life under communism continued until 1989 when massive protests that would not be stopped by repressive government actions toppled the communist regime in mere months.

The World Values Survey data that is used in this project displays that despite living together in one common state for decades on two occasions, the Czechs and Slovaks remain separate in their views. Also, the data is used to show the differences between generations of Slovaks and Czechs, as the events through which the generations lived have had an effect on the formation of their views. All of the survey data was taken in late 1990 and early 1991, just a short time after the fall of communism. This study focuses on the historical events and resulting historical consciousness that was present in the Czech and Slovak Republics just after the fall of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia. It makes sense to limit the data to the only one wave of the World Values Survey because including the 1994 and 1999 surveys would muddle the

ages of the respondents. This would only serve to complicate the data and make direct inferences to the formative events of the past more difficult to pin down in the light of changes that came after the initial transition to democracy in Czechoslovakia.

The first two portions of this study present an overview of the formative events in Czech and Slovak history. Each takes the history of one of the cultures through roughly 15 centuries of events until 1918. The year 1918 stands out because it was at this time that the Czechs and Slovaks began to first live together in a common state. The next sections of this study overview the critical events that led up to the liberation of Czechoslovakia in the Velvet Revolution of 1989. These sections are divided into different phases: the Interwar democratic Czechoslovakia, Czechoslovakia's dismemberment during World War II, and Czechoslovakia under Soviet domination. After these sections set up the distinctive events in Czech and Slovak history the next section displays and analyzes World Values Survey data. The answers to the in the World Values Survey can be directly traced to the historical experiences of the Czech and Slovak peoples.

Formative Events in Slovak History Before 1918

Modern Slovakia is located in Eastern Europe. Its neighbors are the Czech Republic to the northwest, Poland to the north, Austria to the west, the Ukraine to the east, and Hungary to the south. It is home to numerous mountain ranges within the Carpathian Mountains including the High Tatras, the Slovak Ore Mountains, Low Tatras and the Small Carpathians, which are adjoined to the rest of the range in Austria. Overall, mountainous terrain covers 30 percent of the land. About 30 percent of Slovakia is cultivated land, while forests make up more than 40 percent of the land. The Danube River is the major waterway that runs through the country, with numerous smaller rivers as well.¹ The general terrain of Slovakia has allowed the Slovaks to have natural borders with other regions, and has contributed to the present homogeneity of the Slovak lands.

The lands that comprise modern Slovakia were not under permanent inhabitation in the 5th century C.E. In the 5th century, the Slavic tribes that would become the Slovaks moved into the area during one of the last waves of migrations from the east and were spurred into the vacuum created by the fall of the Roman Empire by the marauding forces of Attila the Hun.² The people did not have any known regional political structure until the emergence of the Kingdom of Samo. It was formed in 623 C.E. by a Frankish merchant turned warlord, named Samo, who wished to defend his business of trade between the Byzantine Empire and Frankish lands from a group of people known as the Avars. The kingdom outlasted Frankish attempts to conquer the land. The kingdom died when Samo did in 658 C.E. Historians do not know why

¹ Stanislav J. Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia: The Struggle for Survival* (New York: St. Martin's Griffon, 1995), 11-13.

² *Ibid.*, 16-18.

the kingdom failed after its ruler died; after its demise the Slavs in Slovakia were subjugated under the Avars for a century and a half.³

The Avars ruled over the Slavs without historical record until 796 C.E. The Avars were attacked by the Franks under Charlemagne in 792 C.E. and eventually defeated. The Slavs were under the rule of the Franks until the emergence of the Empire of Great Moravia three centuries after the kingdom of Samo. The kingdom existed for less than three-quarters of a century in the 9th century C.E. but it holds great significance in the oral Slovak tradition. It was made up of the regions known as: Moravia, located in the east of the modern Czech Republic, Nitra, which is modern Slovakia, and Pannonia, an old Roman province that is now in modern Hungary.⁴ This empire is a source of pride for the modern Slovak people. It signifies the quintessential golden age of their past because though short in the larger view of Slovak history, the Slovaks' historical consciousness as a unique people from the Slavs of East Europe as a whole began with the Empire of Great Moravia. This period is also significant because it is the last documented occasion before 1918 when the people of the areas that comprise modern Slovakia were not subjugated under foreign rule.

The modern Slovak people also hold the missionary activities of Saint Cyril and Saint Methodius that occurred during the existence of Great Moravia as a significant part of their national identity. Although first converted to Catholicism by the Franks, these missionaries from Byzantium came to the Slavs upon the request from the Prince of Moravia, Rastislav in 862 C.E. It seems that Rastislav wanted missionaries to teach Christianity in his lands in the language of the Slavic people who dwelt there.⁵ Cyril and Methodius brought an alphabet that allowed the

³ Ibid., 19-21.

⁴ Ibid., 24-26.

⁵ Francis Dvornik, *Byzantine Missions Among the Slavs: SS. Constantine-Cyril and Methodius* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1970), 73-75.

Slavic language to be written down. It was crucial to the development of the future Slavic people to be able to have a written language and to have biblical teachings performed in their own language. The alphabet that captured the Slavic language is known as glagolitic. There is some disagreement among historians on whether it was this glagolitic alphabet, or the Cyrillic alphabet that is used by modern Orthodox Slavs, that was brought to the Slavs during this time.⁶ However, this argument is not the focus here. The point is that these missionaries translated the parts of the scriptures into Slavic languages. This was deemed acceptable by Roman authority and the missionaries spread their works in Great Moravia.⁷ This is where the roots of the Catholic Church's deep tradition in modern Slovakia began and thus it cannot be overlooked.

The death of the Empire of Great Moravia occurred when the migrating Magyar people from the East conquered it in 907. The Magyars are the historical ethnic group that became the modern Hungarians. They migrated into the lands of modern Eastern Europe from the east. The ancestors to the modern German people stopped the Magyar inclusion into Europe at Lechfeld in 955. The peace settlement that followed made the Magyars the permanent settlers of the lands to the south of modern Slovakia. The Magyars were also converted to Christianity after this settlement. With the defeat of the Empire of Great Moravia the Slovaks would live under the rule of the foreigners for around one thousand years.⁸ Sometime between the tenth and fourteenth centuries the Slavs living in the lands of modern Slovakia became a distinct people, the Slovaks. This occurred because they developed their own language. They were not assimilated into Magyar culture.⁹ The Slovaks were not overly oppressed or even locally ruled by the Magyars prior to the Battle of Mohacs in 1526, when the Ottoman Turks defeated the

⁶ Ibid., 100-105.

⁷ Kirschbaum, *A History of the Slovaks: the Struggle for Survival*, 26-33.

⁸ Ibid., 39-42.

⁹ Ibid., 41.

Magyars and drove the center of their kingdom to the city that is modernly known as Bratislava. Before this time the Slovaks were nominally ruled by their own rural nobles and insulated from incursions like the devastation caused by Genghis Khan in 1241. Slovak towns even gained individual rights within the Magyar kingdom.¹⁰

At the Battle of Mohacs in 1526 the Hungarian king was killed and the Habsburgs ascended the throne. Kirschbaum, the author of the only Slovak history presents in the English language, writes, “The Habsburgs were now the sole rulers of Hungary. Their mission: to defend Europe against the Turks, with whom they remained in a state of war until 1606.”¹¹ The Turks made some incursions into Slovak lands before the peace settlement of 1606. During this period, the city that would eventually be called Bratislava became the home of the Hungarian government, and the lands became inhabited more and more with Magyars fleeing lands that the Turks had conquered. These factors along with the increased Germanic presence in Slovak lands lead to a more cohesive Slovak people who were becoming increasingly insular and distinct in culture.¹²

The Counter-Reformation that crushed the Czech nobility in 1620 had a very minor effect on the Slovak social structure comparatively. The Slovak Lutheran Church was born shortly prior to the Counter-Reformation when increased acceptance of Protestantism by the Hungarians led to the legalization of Lutheranism in 1606.¹³ The Counter-Reformation really began after the peace with the Turks in 1606, and reached a strong presence in Slovakia in 1619 following the 1618 defenestration of Habsburg officials in Prague. It brought about an increased cohesion in the Slovak people. Kirschbaum writes, “The most meaningful consequence of the Counter-

¹⁰ Ibid., 49-59.

¹¹ Ibid., 62.

¹² Ibid., 60-66.

¹³ Ibid., 67-68.

Reformation's significant enrichment of the cultural life of Slovakia was the acceptance and development of religiosity in the population."¹⁴ Kirschbaum expresses her position that from this point on Slovak people were led by the leaders within the Slovak Lutheran and Slovak Catholic churches because of the lack of any real elites in state power positions.¹⁵

The Hungarians eventually rose up to oppose the Habsburg domination of their state and demanded an equal part in the empire. This began in 1848, after the uprising in France caused the ideas of revolution to spread across Europe. The Austrian Habsburgs eventually capitulated, and in 1867 the Austrians agreed to allow the Hungarians to have an equal role in the empire. This was the beginning of the dual monarchical system of the Habsburg Empire, as well as a revival of the attempt by the Hungarians to forcibly assimilate the other cultures living in their state under a process known as Magyarization.¹⁶ The process had begun in earnest in 1790 when the Hungarians were granted their own kingdom within the Austrian Empire. It was based on the assumption that the different peoples within Hungarian lands should be turned into Hungarians culturally, if they were to participate in Magyar government.¹⁷ The renewal that occurred followed was a much more tenacious attempt to eliminate the Slovak culture. Kirschbaum writes,

When Magyarization became official policy, non-Magyars discovered that it was no longer the consequence of personal choice; rather it was a requirement not just for membership in the Hungarian States but above all for participation in its political life. Magyarization was all-pervasive in its application, affecting social and personal relations and exerting moral and existential pressure on individuals. It was the fulfillment of the nation-state equation whose consequences were fully understood by both Magyars and Slovaks. For the former, it meant no political compromise; for the latter, given their history and social and political situation, it meant the search for a new way of survival.¹⁸

¹⁴ Ibid., 72.

¹⁵ Ibid., 73, 78.

¹⁶ Michael G. Roskin, *The Rebirth of East Europe*, 4th ed. (Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall, 2002), 16.

¹⁷ Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia: The Struggle for Survival*, 105-110.

¹⁸ Ibid., 114.

The Magyarization phase that took place in the late 19th century was the changing in the education system for Slovaks. The Hungarians demanded the Magyar be taught in the educational system with the eventual goal of having a uniform language for the Hungarian ruled areas of the Kingdom, and the continued creation of the administrative class. The Slovaks acted out against the process through the codification of their language in order to preserve it. Also, cultural activities, like reading circles, gymnasiums, and plays, provided an outlet for the expression of their culture. The Slovak leader petitioned the Magyar government for a redress to the policies on numerous occasions, but to no avail.¹⁹ The Slovaks were to be under the thumb of Magyar elites and their pervasive culture until the fall of the dual-monarchy in the wake of World War I.

¹⁹ Ibid., 128-138.

Formative Events in Czech History until 1918

The Czech lands are located in the heart of Europe. The historical regions that comprise the Czech lands are Bohemia in the west and Moravia in the east. The modern Czech Republic is surrounded by Germany on its western border, with Poland to the northeast, Slovakia to the southeast, and Austria to the south. The borderlands in with Germany in the west are mountainous. They have provided Bohemia with a natural border with the Germanic lands for centuries.

The Slavic people came to inhabit the Czech lands sometime in the 6th century C.E. The people of Moravia were part of the Great Moravian Empire along with Nitra. After the demise of the empire, the split between the two regions would eventually result in the genesis of the two distinct groups of people, the Czechs and Slovaks. Derek Sayer writes, “Great Moravia collapsed...an event that had two important long-term consequences for Czech History. Slovakia was severed from the Czech lands, a division that was to last for over a thousand years; and the center of gravity of Czech power was definitively shifter westward, from Moravia to Bohemia.”²⁰ This shift was to remain until present times.

The first historical figure that is remembered in the modern historical consciousness of the Czech people is that of their patron saint Vaclav, also known as Good King Wenceslas. Little real evidence about the life or accomplishments of Vaclav actually exists, but the Czechs hold him in high regard as the shining example of a Bohemian king nonetheless. What is known is that Vaclav’s brother murdered him during Christian mass in either 929 or 935.²¹ It is significant to note the historical myth of Vaclav because Wenceslas Square in Prague is seen as the center of Czech culture, and the crown of the Bohemian kings is known as the crown of

²⁰ Derek Sayer, *The Coasts of Bohemia: A Czech History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 30.

²¹ Ibid.

Wenceslas. The Czechs have used the symbol of Vaclav throughout their history as symbol of their unique culture and their struggle to regain the independence that existed under his reign.²²

Jan Hus is the other historical character of great importance to the historical consciousness of the Czech people. Hus was originator of the Protestant presence in Bohemia. Hus was born around 1370 and became the head of faculty at Prague University. From this position he attempted to reform the vices associated with the Catholic Church, especially the sale of indulgences. Eventually the teachings of Hus came to the attention of the Catholic Church. Derek Sayer writes, "In 1414 Hus was summoned to answer charges of heresy before the Council of Konstanz...On his arrival in Konstanz he was swiftly imprisoned. When he refused to recant before the council, he was burned at the stake on 6 July 1415. His ashes were scraped from the ground and thrown into the Rhine, so that nothing of his should get back to Bohemia."²³ This caused the some of the nobility of Bohemia to rise up against the adherents of Catholicism, and the Hussite Wars ensued. The most dramatic episode of the wars was the 1419 Prague defenestration, when nobles against the persecution of Hussite ideals threw town council members on the side of the Catholic Church out the window of the castle in Prague.²⁴

In the wake of the Hussite wars, the Czech nobility effectively ran Bohemia. In 1526 the nobles elected a Habsburg to their throne. This choice had lasting consequences as Ferdinand I immediately set upon a path of increasing his royal power while curtailing that of the nobility. Eventually Ferdinand was able to remove the power of the nobility to elect the monarch of Bohemia. The feudal state of Bohemia nominally died at this point because the Habsburg

²² Ladislav Holy, *The Little Czech and the Czech Nation: National Identity and the Post-Communist Transformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 33-38.

²³ Sayer, *The Coasts of Bohemia: A Czech History*, 36-37.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 36-42.

Dynasty had emplaced itself on the throne indefinitely.²⁵ The nobility rebelled against the increased pressure that the Counter-Reformation placed on Bohemia in 1618. The second Prague defenestration occurred in 1618; this time Catholic officials were thrown from the window of Prague castle. This sparked the Thirty Years' War in Europe. Counter-Reformation forces crushed the Bohemian army outside of Prague at the Battle of White Mountain on November 8, 1620. This would be the official end to the autonomy of the Bohemians.²⁶

The leaders of the rebellion were executed in Prague. Sayer writes of what followed.

Literal was followed by social decapitation: the indigenous Protestant nobility, burgher estate, and intelligentsia were to all intents and purposes destroyed. The estates of Protestant lords were confiscated on a grand scale, and gifted or sold cheaply to Catholic loyalists. Over three-quarters of the land in the kingdom, Church and crown estates excepted, changed hands in the 1620s. Out of this a largely new – and often foreign aristocracy emerged.²⁷

The Battle of White Mountain is the watershed event in Czech history. It officially ended the independence of the Czech people, and in another sense it ended what they see as their golden age. What followed was a gradual process of Germanization in Czech lands. The Czechs were also forcibly converted to Catholicism.²⁸ The Habsburg Empire ruled the Czechs for the next three hundred years until 1918.

²⁵ Ibid., 42.

²⁶ Ibid., 45.

²⁷ Ibid., 45.

²⁸ Holy, *The Little Czech and the Czech Nation: National Identity and the Post-Communist Social Transition*, 38-39.

Interwar Czechoslovakia

The Austrian-Hungarian Empire was dismantled in the peace agreements following World War I. The idealism of American President Woodrow Wilson was enumerated in his “Fourteen Points.” Point number ten relates directly to the Czech and Slovak lands. Michael G. Roskin relates, “X. The people of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development.”²⁹ The ideal of self-determination allowed the elites from the Czech and Slovak lands to press for their own joint state. Rick Fawn writes,

The 30 May 1918 Pittsburgh Agreement called for the union of the Czechs and Slovaks in their own independent state. The Agreement intimated that the Slovaks would enjoy autonomy in the new state. The justifications for the creation of Czechoslovakia were ambiguous, and that ambiguity was a harbinger for the viability and durability of the county, particularly as it replicated the multiethnic nature of the Austro-Hungarian empire from which it had extricated itself.³⁰

Tomas Masaryk and Eduard Benes were the key Czech intellectuals behind the new state; while Milan Stefanik was the key Slovak leader. They had campaigned abroad for support in their separation from the defunct empire. There would be difficulties in the new state as Carol Skalnik Leff points out,

There was no such thing as an ethnic Czechoslovak, no such language as Czechoslovak. However, many Czechs and even some Slovaks hoped that a common Czechoslovak identity would evolve over time – not an ethnic merger perhaps, but at least a sense of shared destiny and values that would give some cohesion to the state. This hope, however, and the ideology of “Czechoslovakism” that lay behind it, was the source of endless conflict from the very inception of the state. Nationally assertive Slovaks wanted no part of a merged identity.³¹

The Hungarians had attempted to eliminate Slovak culture, so it is easy to ascertain the reasoning behind their apprehension over their position in the new state. The Czechs tried to assure the

²⁹ Roskin, *The Rebirth of East Europe*, 24.

³⁰ Rick Fawn, *The Czech Republic: A Nation of Velvet* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 2000), 1.

³¹ Carol Skalnik Leff, *The Czech and Slovak Republics: Nation Versus State*, Nations of the Modern World: Europe (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), 24.

Slovaks that they along with the Czechs would be the majority group in power in the new state.

Holy writes,

Thus, although building on a strong sense Czechoslovak nation or of the Czechs and the Slovaks as two branches of one nation was primarily determined by pragmatic considerations of the Czech, and also some Slovak, political elites both before and after the creation of Czechoslovakia. The idea that the Slovaks did not constitute a separate nation from the Czechs – that they spoke a language which was only a dialect of Czech or, bluntly expressed, were Czechs speaking Slovak – forms the basis of the ideology of Czechoslovakism which became the official state doctrine of the new republic... As a branch of one Czechoslovak nation, the Slovaks were part of the state-forming nation and not an ethnic minority like the Germans, Hungarians, Ukrainians, or Poles.³²

The new state would include a unitary government based in Prague that was supposed to be representative of this concept.

The Slovaks and Czechs had very different roles within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This led to very large discrepancies in how developed the Czechs and Slovaks were in 1918. The Czechs were as well educated as the Austrians, and had a much more industrialized land than the Slovaks.³³ Despite the discrepancies, the new state was standing on very firm ground compared to the other parts of the former empire. Leff writes, “Not only were the Czech lands the most economically developed part of imperial Austria, but even less-developed Slovakia was still the most industrialized part of Hungary; together they siphoned off only one fourth of the population of the former empire, but over two-thirds of its industrial base.”³⁴ The education level of the Slovaks was far behind that of the Czechs. Magyarization had left the Slovaks with few leaders to be put in administrative positions in the new country. The Czechs filled almost all of the administrative positions within the new state.³⁵ Ladislav Holy elaborates,

The dominant role of the Czechs in public administration, education, health service, and the administration of justice in the new state was at first a necessity resulting from the

³² Holy, *The Little Czech and the Czech Nation: National Identity and the Post-Communist Transformation*, 97-98.

³³ Roskin, *The Rebirth of East Europe*, 29.

³⁴ Skalník Leff, *The Czech and Slovak Republics: Nation Versus State*, 35.

³⁵ Fawn, *The Czech Republic: A Nation of Velvet*, 3-5.

different levels of development reached in Slovakia and in Czech lands before World War I. Especially after the federalization of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1867...The Magyarisation of the Slovaks culminated just before the outbreak of World War I...According to some estimates, by 1918 there were only ten Slovak doctors and twelve high school-teachers.³⁶

The educational discrepancy between the Czechs and Slovaks was narrowed by the new educational system. This along with the reemergence of Slovak cultural consciousness had consequences that destabilized the Slovak acceptance of their position being lower than that of the Czechs in the political arena. Fawn writes,

The comprehensive education system in Slovakia, often run by Czechs sent to redress the region's dearth of teachers, erased the effects of Magyarization. But the linguistic and cultural reinstatement of Slovak identity had political consequences. Soon into the life of the young republic Slovaks began to believe that they were deprived of autonomy in the centralized state.³⁷

The divide that was present in the republic was very apparent in the amount of ethnic and regional based parties that competed in the elections over the two decades that the republic existed. Each different party, and there were more than twenty, received a significant amount of votes in only their own region. The Germans and Hungarians also had their own parties during this time. The result of this disseminated political culture was that the Czech parties worked hard to curtail the minorities' demands for more autonomy throughout the existence of the republic.³⁸ Whether or not the republic would have been able to continue in spite of the stresses on its unitary structure remained unseen because of the dismemberment that occurred in 1938. Suffice it to say, the Czechs and Slovaks did not integrate into one homogenous group of people during this time, their divergent histories would not allow this to happen.

³⁶ Holy, *The Little Czech and the Czech Nation: National Identity and the Post-Communist Transformation*, 98-99.

³⁷ Fawn, *The Czech Republic: A Nation of Velvet*, 5.

³⁸ Carol Skalnik Leff, and Susan B. Mikula, "Institutionalizing Party Systems in Multiethnic States: Integration and Ethnic Segmentation in Czechoslovakia, 1918-1992," *Slavic Review* 61 (Summer 2002): 294-308

World War II and the Dismemberment of Czechoslovakia

The Czechs and the Slovaks both fell under the power of Germany quickly proceeding World War II. The Czech lands were the first to be conquered by Adolph Hitler in 1938. The strategy of appeasement employed by the west gave away the Sudeten lands without a single shot being fired. In doing so, the Czech's line of defense against the Germans was gone. The Czechs had Hitler had appealed to the fact that 3 million Germans lived within Czechoslovakia. After the Sudeten mountains had fallen into German hands the Czechs surrendered without a fight.³⁹ The Slovaks were approached by Hitler with an ultimatum, join or be swiftly crushed. Germany ruled Slovakia as a puppet state throughout World War II, and ruled all of the Czech lands as a protectorate. Hungary gained the Southern lands of Slovakia in 1938 and all of Ruthenia (the eastern point of Slovakia) in 1939.⁴⁰ The biggest chance that occurred following World War II was the increased homogeneity of Czechoslovakia. The Sudeten Germans were ethnically cleansed out of Czech lands. Many Hungarians were summarily expelled from Slovakia, as well.⁴¹

³⁹ Skalnik Leff, *The Czech and Slovak Republics: Nation Versus State*, 38-39.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 39-41.

⁴¹ Fawn, *The Czech Republic: A Nation of Velvet*, 10-11.

Czechoslovakia Under Communism

After World War II the Soviet Union took over the countries of East Europe one at a time in piece-by-piece fashion. Czechoslovakia was the last nation to be taken over by the communists. Roskin writes,

Perhaps the Communists waited in Czechoslovakia because they had a good chance to take over legally and electorally. Many Czechs, including president-in-exile Benes in London, distrusted the Western powers for selling them out at Munich in 1938; they looked with hope to the Soviet Union, the Slavic big brother who liberated them from the Nazis. Czechoslovak Communists built on this feeling. They also gained votes from Czechs who received appropriated German property. In combination with fellow-traveling Social Democrats, the Communists built on this feeling. They also gained votes from Czechs who received appropriated German property... The Communists received 38 percent of the vote in reasonably free elections in 1946. That was by far the highest Communist vote obtained fairly in East Europe.⁴²

Following the high percentage of votes that they received, the communists moved to solidify power by taking positions throughout the government. They held cabinet posts that were important in economic decision-making such as Ministry of Agriculture, Education, and the Interior. The democratic parties in the government gave the communists an opportunity for a complete takeover when the non-communist cabinet ministers resigned from their posts. The vacancies were filled with more communists. And by February of 1948, the communist leader Gottwald announced socialism as the path that the country would take.⁴³

The changes that occurred under communism in Czechoslovakia were sweeping. Some of the fundamental changes from capitalist to market economic structures had begun while Czechoslovakia was still democratic. Fawn writes,

The government enacted nationalization...Major industries and financial services were affected, and over half the country's industrial workforce was transferred from the private to the nationalized economy. By early 1947, nationalized enterprises accounted for 80 percent of employment and two-thirds of production. The government introduced other

⁴² Roskin, *The Rebirth of East Europe*, 71.

⁴³ Fawn, *The Czech Republic: A Nation of Velvet*, 11-13.

measures to equalize wealth, including high progressive taxes, the confiscation of large personal savings, and caps on higher salaries.⁴⁴

The Soviet puppets in power in Czechoslovakia enacted new edicts after they had total control over the country. The party began the typical communist program of censorship, religious persecution, and purges of anyone who was not seen as loyal to the party. The communists disbanded every manner and sort of social association that had existed before their rise to power. This allowed them to dominate culture in Czechoslovakia.⁴⁵

The Soviet ruled puppet regime in Czechoslovakia ran the country with an iron fist. The transformation of the economy and equalization of wealth continued. Land was redistributed, and another law in 1953 wiped out bank savings to further equalize the economic level of the people.⁴⁶ Fawn writes of the communists' changes to the structure of the Czechoslovak economy.

Foremost in the communist plan was heavy industrialization. The country's successful consumer goods industries were converted to heavy industry. The agrarian areas were to be transformed, and with them, their peoples. Interwar Czechoslovakia's least developed region, Carpathia, was shed to the USSR; efforts were concentrated on Slovakia. Particularly because of its location – sufficiently removed from the East-West fault line but close to the Soviet heartland – it was designated for arms production. For Czechoslovakia the industrialization of Slovakia was one of the most important legacies of the Soviet era: the transformation of a primarily agrarian population into an industrial one, who had to rely on inefficient industry for their livelihoods. The result, however, was that by 1968 the industrial lag between the Czech lands and Slovakia was reduced from 50 to 20 years.⁴⁷

The trade between the Soviet Russia and Czechoslovakia was the inverse of what one might expect from a center-satellite relationship. Czechoslovakia produced manufactured goods and received raw materials to fuel their factories. The communist system had a healthcare, housing,

⁴⁴ Ibid., 12.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 14.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 17.

and employment safety net in place. The workers of Czechoslovakia were paid low wages, but this was counteracted by the prices of consumer goods being set by the state.⁴⁸

Overall, the Soviet system was economically inefficient and socially restrictive. In the years between 1961 and 1963 the economic boom that had occurred while the Soviets poured capital into the industrialization of Czechoslovakia halted, and the economy did not grow. The regime associated these problems with the continued existence of some private industries, so they tightened the state control of industries even more. This did not really do anything to significantly bolster the economy.⁴⁹ The stage was set for Alexander Dubcek's attempt to restructure communism in Czechoslovakia. Skalnik Leff writes, "The reform effort had a long gestation period, as discontent mounted even inside the party."⁵⁰ Much of this discontent was aimed at the ineffectual leadership of Novotny in the economic arena. His time as party leader in Czechoslovakia was up and he capitulated to the rise of Dubcek in the beginning of 1968.⁵¹

Dubcek came to power in 1968 as a new breed of communist. He had a more middle road point of view concerning the amount of state influence in economics. Also, he attempted to reform the oppressive nature of communism by toning down some of its restrictive qualities.

Roskin writes,

Quickly under Dubcek's leadership, the trappings of Stalinism fell away to reveal a vibrant and dynamic Czechoslovakia...Conservative Communists were ousted from the central committee to make room for a new breed of relative liberals. Censorship was ended and popular television programs and newspapers revealed serious economic mismanagement and the misuse of police power.⁵²

The reform plan was released in April 1968, it was called the Action Program. Dubcek was soon to be the head of a new form of communism, one that Moscow was not going to allow to spread.

⁴⁸ Skalnik Leff, *The Czech and Slovak Republics: Nation Versus State*, 49-51.

⁴⁹ Fawn, *The Czech Republic: A Nation of Velvet*, 17-18.

⁵⁰ Skalnik Leff, *The Czech and Slovak Republics: Nation Versus State*, 57.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 55-57.

⁵² Roskin, *The Rebirth of East Europe*, 113.

Skalnik Leff writes of the Action Program, “This document pledged economic decentralization and reform to revitalize growth, a federal solution to the Slovak dissatisfaction with centralized government, and much greater openness of public discussion.”⁵³ Throughout the time from the release of the Action Program to the Soviet intervention on August 21, 1968 Dubcek and the other leaders of the party declared that they were not trying to leave the Warsaw Pact or go against the Soviet Union’s policies.⁵⁴

Party leaders in the other Soviet Bloc nations pressed Moscow to intervene and put an end to the reforms in Czechoslovakia. They feared that the weakening of communism would spread like wildfire to their countries and the entire system would become uncontrollable.⁵⁵ Dubcek’s reforms under the Action Program had the intended effects on Czechoslovakia. Political culture and discourse flourished after censorship had been severely relaxed. The very nature of the government structure was changed with the advent of a new constitution that changed the unitary system to a federal one granting Slovakia nominal autonomy. Also, the economy began to grow with the winds of entrepreneurial changes in the controlled economy as privatized business was allowed to grow.⁵⁶ The fears of the party leader in the bloc were heard by Moscow. Fawn writes, “Throughout the night of 20-21 August military forces from five Soviet bloc countries overran Czechoslovakia.”⁵⁷ Dubcek’s regime was ousted from power following the Soviet tanks rolling through Prague. The reestablishment of power was almost entirely nonviolent, but the symbol of Soviet oppression had never been more apparent.

The Soviets installed a conservative regime in Czechoslovakia following the Prague Spring when Dubcek attempted to indoctrinate his reformed version of communism. A Slovak

⁵³ Skalnik Leff, *The Czech and Slovak Republics: Nation Versus State*, 57.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 58-59.

⁵⁵ Fawn, *The Czech Republic: A Nation of Velvet*, 19-21.

⁵⁶ Skalnik Leff, *The Czech and Slovak Republics: Nation Versus State*, 56-60.

⁵⁷ Fawn, *The Czech Republic: A Nation of Velvet*, 21.

name Gustav Husak was named the new leader of the Czechoslovakian Communist Party in April 1969.⁵⁸ The realignment of the Czechoslovakian communists back to a hard-line approach was called ‘normalization.’ This meant the elimination of any party member who had participated in Prague Spring from the political arena. The purges were vast in their scope.

Fawn writes,

Normalization sought to penetrate deep into society. Some 500,000 Czechoslovaks, representing almost one third of the Party, resigned, were expelled, or ‘deleted’ from the KSC [Communist Party]. This affected, by extension, millions, as party membership carried with it family privilege such as access to education. People both within and outside the Party were forced to give written denunciations of friends and colleagues who had participated in the Prague Spring or refused themselves to engage in denunciation.⁵⁹

The legacy of Prague Spring was also one of federalization of the government system. Fawn writes,

All reforms of the Prague Spring, save one, were reversed. Retained was the federalization of the country, which was introduced as a constitutional amendment in October 1968 and formally implemented on 1 January 1969. As a result, a federal parliament was complemented by the establishment of Slovak and Czech republics, each with its own parliament, prime minister, and executive.⁶⁰

The communist system in Czechoslovakia perpetuated itself until the East German government opened its borders in on November 9, 1989. After this time rallies and marches in Czechoslovakia grew in size and demands.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 22.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

The Velvet Revolution

The overthrow of communism in Czechoslovakia was brought upon by massive protests over the months of November and early December in 1989. Ladislav Holy writes,

The political change in Czechoslovakia, in contrast with, for example, the Soviet Union or Bulgaria, was not instigated by the ruling elites and largely accepted below, but brought about by the open revolt of the population. Perhaps the most significant feature of the 'velvet revolution' was that it was initiated by students, actors, and other intellectuals whose publicly expressed opposition to the communist regime was swiftly followed by the masses.⁶¹

The Velvet Revolution's began as protests against the regime following Soviet leader Gorbachev's policies of glasnost and perestroika. These policies were meant to ease censorship (glasnost) in order to propagate a new openness in the discourse under the communist system, as well as to restructure (perestroika) the economies of the bloc to better compete with the West. Gorbachev wanted to structurally change the tone and structure of communism in order to ensure its survival, but in doing so he opened the floodgates that lead to the popular uprisings across the bloc countries. Czechoslovakia was no different, except that the conservative communist regime was especially resilient and against the new policies.⁶²

The movement to remove the leadership began in response to a November 17, 1989 march that was to commemorate the founding of Czechoslovakia in the interwar period. The march took on a pro-democratic tone and was forcibly dispersed by the police; the march swelled to thousands in the streets of Prague when the rumor circulated that one protestor had been killed by police brutality.⁶³ Two major groups were formed after this day. Fawn writes, "On 19 November dissidents formed Civic Forum (OF) in Prague and Public Against Violence (VPN) in

⁶¹Holy, *The Little Czech and the Czech Nation: National Identity and the Post-Communist Transformation*, 2.

⁶²Skalnik Leff, *The Czech and Slovak Republics: Nation Versus State*, 75-78.

⁶³Fawn, *The Czech Republic: A Nation of Velvet*, 26-27.

Bratislava, and called for fundamental changes.”⁶⁴ The marches continued and Dubcek made his first public speech since Prague Spring in Bratislava on November 21, 1989. That same day, in Prague, a famous and frequently imprisoned dissident named Vaclav Havel made a speech to a large crowd in Wenceslas Square. The marches became a daily occurrence and the protestors were too numerous to be stopped by police intervention. The communist regime attempted to make small concessions, such as allowing a minority of non-communists into the cabinets. These were rejected and the protests continued. Finally on December 10, 1989, the regime buckled and resigned. Havel was placed as the new president of Czechoslovakia, while Dubcek was made head of Czechoslovakian Parliament⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Ibid., 27.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

World Values Survey Data: Generational and Cultural Differences

The World Values Survey is a massive undertaking that is conducted across the world. After the fall of communism in Czechoslovakia, surveyors asked numerous questions of both Czechs and Slovaks. The data is available in a huge spreadsheet format online at www.worldvaluessurvey.org. With this data it was possible to construct tables that display the different cleavages in generations and cultures across a number of topics. This survey data was conducted in late 1990 and early 1991. The results reflect the divergent cultures of the Czechs and Slovaks as well as the differences in the opinions people of different ages. Table 1 is included to display that these survey were all taken in 1990 and 1991.

Table 1.

Year survey * Country/region * Age recoded Crosstabulation

% within Country/region

Age recoded			Country/region		Total
			Czech Republic	Slovakia	
15-24	Year survey	1990	36.0%	37.0%	36.4%
		1991	64.0%	63.0%	63.6%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
25-34	Year survey	1990	30.7%	28.7%	29.9%
		1991	69.3%	71.3%	70.1%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
35-44	Year survey	1990	31.1%	28.9%	30.3%
		1991	68.9%	71.1%	69.7%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
45-54	Year survey	1990	26.3%	25.1%	25.9%
		1991	73.7%	74.9%	74.1%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
55-64	Year survey	1990	35.9%	33.8%	35.2%
		1991	64.1%	66.2%	64.8%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
65 and more years	Year survey	1990	22.3%	22.3%	22.3%
		1991	77.7%	77.7%	77.7%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

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⁶⁶ World Values Survey, www.worldvaluessurvey.org accessed March 20-30, 2007.

The next tables will establish that the Czechs were much more secular than the Slovaks in 1990-1. The difference resulted from the tradition of Protestantism in Czech lands derived from the teachings of Jan Hus. The Czechs did identify themselves as predominantly Catholic, but it seems that they were only nominally Catholic. Generational differences among the Slovaks in these same tables display that the younger generations were much less apt to be religious than the older ones. This could be the result of the Soviet system's subversion of religion and focus on class structure instead. Table 2 displays whether or not the respondents believe in God.

Table 2

Believe in: God * Country/region * Age recoded Crosstabulation

% within Country/region

			Country/region		Total
			Czech Republic	Slovakia	
15-24	Believe in: God	No	78.8%	42.1%	66.7%
		Yes	21.2%	57.9%	33.3%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
25-34	Believe in: God	No	79.7%	33.2%	62.8%
		Yes	20.3%	66.8%	37.2%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
35-44	Believe in: God	No	79.8%	37.2%	64.6%
		Yes	20.2%	62.8%	35.4%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
45-54	Believe in: God	No	58.6%	22.4%	46.4%
		Yes	41.4%	77.6%	53.6%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
55-64	Believe in: God	No	47.9%	16.2%	36.5%
		Yes	52.1%	83.8%	63.5%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
65 and more years	Believe in: God	No	32.7%	4.7%	23.6%
		Yes	67.3%	95.3%	76.4%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

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It is clear that the more Slovaks believed in God than the Czechs do. A major significance is also present in the generational gaps in the Slovaks. The extremely high percentage of older generation Slovaks that believe in God is astonishing compared to that of the younger generation

⁶⁷ Ibid.

which is still over one half, but far beneath the latter's response. Table 3 increases the specificity of the religiousness by asking how important religion is in the lives of the respondents. Table 4 then establishes which denomination the respondents belong to. It is clear in these tables that

Table 3

Religion important in life * Country/region * Age recoded Crosstabulation

% within Country/region

Age recoded			Country/region		Total
			Czech Republic	Slovakia	
15-24	Religion important in life	Very important	3.1%	15.4%	7.3%
		Rather important	10.4%	19.7%	13.6%
		Not very important	30.3%	37.2%	32.7%
		Not at all important	56.3%	27.7%	46.4%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
25-34	Religion important in life	Very important	4.9%	15.0%	8.7%
		Rather important	9.9%	26.5%	16.2%
		Not very important	34.4%	34.6%	34.5%
		Not at all important	50.8%	23.9%	40.7%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
35-44	Religion important in life	Very important	4.5%	15.6%	8.4%
		Rather important	11.4%	25.7%	16.4%
		Not very important	33.4%	27.8%	31.4%
		Not at all important	50.7%	31.0%	43.8%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
45-54	Religion important in life	Very important	8.3%	25.1%	13.8%
		Rather important	20.0%	29.1%	23.0%
		Not very important	35.6%	31.2%	34.1%
		Not at all important	36.2%	14.6%	29.1%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
55-64	Religion important in life	Very important	13.7%	34.6%	20.5%
		Rather important	21.2%	30.3%	24.2%
		Not very important	33.6%	20.3%	29.3%
		Not at all important	31.5%	14.7%	26.0%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
65 and more years	Religion important in life	Very important	23.9%	56.2%	34.2%
		Rather important	29.2%	18.5%	25.8%
		Not very important	23.9%	15.2%	21.1%
		Not at all important	22.9%	10.1%	18.8%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

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Table 4

⁶⁸ Ibid.

Religious denomination * Country/region * Age recoded Crosstabulation

% within Country/region

Age recoded			Country/region		Total
			Czech Republic	Slovakia	
15-24	Religious denomination	Free church/Non denominational church	3.4%		1.1%
		Orthodox		4.2%	2.8%
		Other	1.7%	.8%	1.1%
		Protestant	11.9%	6.8%	8.5%
		Roman Catholic	83.1%	88.1%	86.4%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
25-34	Religious denomination	Free church/Non denominational church	.9%	1.2%	1.1%
		Orthodox		2.9%	2.0%
		Other	.9%		.3%
		Protestant	7.1%	9.8%	9.0%
		Roman Catholic	91.1%	86.1%	87.6%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
35-44	Religious denomination	Free church/Non denominational church		1.2%	.7%
		Jew	.5%		.2%
		Orthodox		2.4%	1.3%
		Other		.4%	.2%
		Protestant	8.5%	11.8%	10.3%
	Roman Catholic	91.0%	84.1%	87.2%	
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
45-54	Religious denomination	Free church/Non denominational church	1.1%	1.0%	1.1%
		Orthodox	.4%	2.6%	1.3%
		Other	.4%		.2%
		Protestant	10.2%	9.7%	10.0%
		Roman Catholic	88.0%	86.7%	87.4%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
55-64	Religious denomination	Free church/Non denominational church	.3%	2.6%	1.2%
		Orthodox		3.6%	1.4%
		Other	.7%		.4%
		Protestant	11.0%	12.2%	11.5%
		Roman Catholic	88.0%	81.6%	85.5%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
65 and more years	Religious denomination	Free church/Non denominational church	1.1%	2.5%	1.6%
		Orthodox	1.1%	4.4%	2.3%
		Other	.4%		.2%
		Protestant	14.9%	14.4%	14.7%
		Roman Catholic	82.6%	78.8%	81.2%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

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⁶⁹ Ibid.

Czechs were forcibly indoctrinated into the Catholic religion during the Counter-Reformation, but that these efforts did not instill the importance of religion into the Czechs. The Slovaks for their part have religion deeply rooted into the national identity of the older generations. The influence of religion wanes in the younger generations. This could be the direct result of the years of religious suppression under the communist regime. Table 5 deepens the data concerning the Slovaks adherence to religion especially being present in the older generations of Slovaks.

Table 5

Belong to religious denomination * Country/region * Age recoded Crosstabulation

% within Country/region

Age recoded			Country/region		Total
			Czech Republic	Slovakia	
15-24	Belong to religious denomination	No	83.2%	38.5%	67.6%
		Yes	16.8%	61.5%	32.4%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
25-34	Belong to religious denomination	No	80.8%	29.6%	61.6%
		Yes	19.2%	70.4%	38.4%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
35-44	Belong to religious denomination	No	71.2%	34.6%	58.4%
		Yes	28.8%	65.4%	41.6%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
45-54	Belong to religious denomination	No	46.9%	20.7%	38.2%
		Yes	53.1%	79.3%	61.8%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
55-64	Belong to religious denomination	No	35.7%	15.5%	29.1%
		Yes	64.3%	84.5%	70.9%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
65 and more years	Belong to religious denomination	No	25.1%	10.1%	20.3%
		Yes	74.9%	89.9%	79.7%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

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The younger generations of Czechs clearly were a predominantly secular people. The younger generations of Slovaks were progressively less likely to be members of an official religion, but they are still much more religious than the Czechs. The strong leadership role that the Catholic Church had in Slovak culture under Hungarian domination is obviously a factor that still echoed

⁷⁰ Ibid.

in the older generations of Slovaks. The Czechs' secular nature was an important part of their cultural perception as being more progressive and Western than their Slovak counterparts.

Table 6

How proud of nationality * Country/region * Age recoded Crosstabulation

% within Country/region

Age recoded			Country/region		Total
			Czech Republic	Slovakia	
15-24	How proud of nationality	Very proud	16.3%	20.8%	17.9%
		Quite proud	54.2%	50.0%	52.8%
		Not very proud	25.4%	24.2%	25.0%
		Not at all proud	4.1%	5.1%	4.4%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
25-34	How proud of nationality	Very proud	17.7%	21.8%	19.2%
		Quite proud	50.0%	54.1%	51.5%
		Not very proud	27.4%	19.6%	24.5%
		Not at all proud	4.9%	4.5%	4.8%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
35-44	How proud of nationality	Very proud	20.5%	29.9%	23.7%
		Quite proud	50.7%	49.3%	50.2%
		Not very proud	23.9%	17.0%	21.5%
		Not at all proud	5.0%	3.8%	4.6%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
45-54	How proud of nationality	Very proud	29.9%	32.5%	30.7%
		Quite proud	53.3%	50.6%	52.4%
		Not very proud	14.5%	14.0%	14.3%
		Not at all proud	2.4%	2.9%	2.5%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
55-64	How proud of nationality	Very proud	37.2%	37.2%	37.2%
		Quite proud	44.2%	46.3%	44.9%
		Not very proud	15.6%	11.7%	14.3%
		Not at all proud	3.0%	4.8%	3.6%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
65 and more years	How proud of nationality	Very proud	52.0%	44.5%	49.7%
		Quite proud	38.2%	39.6%	38.6%
		Not very proud	8.5%	11.6%	9.4%
		Not at all proud	1.3%	4.3%	2.2%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

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The importance of nationality is a major theme in this research. Table 6 examines whether or not the Czechs and Slovaks felt that their national identities was a positive factor in

⁷¹ Ibid.

their lives. It is easy to see that the majority of both Slovaks and Czechs of all generations had a positive view of their respective nationality. The younger generations of both groups did not have as positive of a response to the question, but the reasons for this are unclear. It could be simply that with age comes a more strong identification with one's ethnic group. Table 7 is very critical to establishing where the respondents believe find their primary identification in terms of the geographical location. The results display that the Slovaks definitively identified with their local area and region much more than the country as a whole. This displays how the Slovaks felt separate from the idea of Czechoslovakia. The factor of which generation a Slovak belongs to does not seem to be a factor in the identification. The worldview of the Slovaks was overwhelmingly on the smaller local scale compared to the Czechs. The Czechs identified with the country as a whole at a much higher percentage than the Slovaks. This trend is especially prevalent in the older generations of Czechs. This is an indication that the older generations of Czechs were indoctrinated into feeling that Czechoslovakia was their country. The reasons for this lie in the preponderance and importance of Prague as the seat of power during the communist years.

Table 7

Geographical groups belonging to first * Country/region * Age recoded Crosstabulation

% within Country/region

Age recoded			Country/region		Total
			Czech Republic	Slovakia	
15-24	Geographical groups belonging to first	Locality	38.9%	38.3%	38.7%
		Region	17.1%	35.1%	23.3%
		Country	25.5%	14.9%	21.8%
		Continent	4.8%	2.1%	3.9%
		The world	13.7%	9.6%	12.3%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
25-34	Geographical groups belonging to first	Locality	32.4%	40.5%	35.4%
		Region	18.8%	36.4%	25.4%
		Country	33.4%	14.2%	26.2%
		Continent	3.1%	2.0%	2.7%
		The world	12.2%	6.9%	10.3%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
35-44	Geographical groups belonging to first	Locality	34.9%	40.4%	36.8%
		Region	17.6%	34.9%	23.7%
		Country	35.0%	15.5%	28.2%
		Continent	4.9%	3.7%	4.5%
		The world	7.6%	5.5%	6.8%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
45-54	Geographical groups belonging to first	Locality	35.6%	47.8%	39.6%
		Region	18.3%	34.1%	23.5%
		Country	38.4%	10.8%	29.3%
		Continent	2.4%	2.0%	2.2%
		The world	5.3%	5.2%	5.3%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
55-64	Geographical groups belonging to first	Locality	36.1%	48.5%	40.2%
		Region	16.0%	31.3%	21.1%
		Country	39.7%	17.6%	32.4%
		Continent	3.6%	1.3%	2.8%
		The world	4.6%	1.3%	3.5%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
65 and more years	Geographical groups belonging to first	Locality	36.8%	44.6%	39.3%
		Region	18.4%	33.1%	23.1%
		Country	40.5%	16.6%	33.0%
		Continent	.8%	.6%	.7%
		The world	3.4%	5.1%	4.0%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

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⁷² Ibid.

Table 8

Trust: Czechs * Country/region * Age recoded Crosstabulation

% within Country/region

Age recoded			Country/r egion	Total
			Slovakia	
15-24	Trust: Czechs	Trust completely	2.8%	2.8%
		Trust a little	31.0%	31.0%
		Neither trust or distrust	35.2%	35.2%
		Not trust very much	23.9%	23.9%
		Not trust at all	7.0%	7.0%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	
25-34	Trust: Czechs	Trust completely	3.0%	3.0%
		Trust a little	25.0%	25.0%
		Neither trust or distrust	39.0%	39.0%
		Not trust very much	24.0%	24.0%
		Not trust at all	9.0%	9.0%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	
35-44	Trust: Czechs	Trust completely	8.1%	8.1%
		Trust a little	29.7%	29.7%
		Neither trust or distrust	32.4%	32.4%
		Not trust very much	21.6%	21.6%
		Not trust at all	8.1%	8.1%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	
45-54	Trust: Czechs	Trust completely	14.3%	14.3%
		Trust a little	34.9%	34.9%
		Neither trust or distrust	27.0%	27.0%
		Not trust very much	14.3%	14.3%
		Not trust at all	9.5%	9.5%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	
55-64	Trust: Czechs	Trust completely	5.1%	5.1%
		Trust a little	44.3%	44.3%
		Neither trust or distrust	24.1%	24.1%
		Not trust very much	12.7%	12.7%
		Not trust at all	13.9%	13.9%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	
65 and more years	Trust: Czechs	Trust completely	12.5%	12.5%
		Trust a little	37.5%	37.5%
		Neither trust or distrust	22.5%	22.5%
		Not trust very much	20.0%	20.0%
		Not trust at all	7.5%	7.5%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	

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⁷³ Ibid.

Table 9

Trust: Slovaks * Country/region * Age recoded Crosstabulation

% within Country/region

Age recoded			Country/re gion	Total
			Czech Republic	
15-24	Trust: Slovaks	Trust completely	2.3%	2.3%
		Trust a little	17.8%	17.8%
		Neither trust or distrust	40.3%	40.3%
		Not trust very much	27.9%	27.9%
		Not trust at all	11.6%	11.6%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	
25-34	Trust: Slovaks	Trust completely	3.4%	3.4%
		Trust a little	14.0%	14.0%
		Neither trust or distrust	35.8%	35.8%
		Not trust very much	32.4%	32.4%
		Not trust at all	14.5%	14.5%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	
35-44	Trust: Slovaks	Trust completely	4.0%	4.0%
		Trust a little	22.4%	22.4%
		Neither trust or distrust	30.5%	30.5%
		Not trust very much	34.5%	34.5%
		Not trust at all	8.5%	8.5%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	
45-54	Trust: Slovaks	Trust completely	3.7%	3.7%
		Trust a little	22.4%	22.4%
		Neither trust or distrust	29.9%	29.9%
		Not trust very much	30.6%	30.6%
		Not trust at all	13.4%	13.4%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	
55-64	Trust: Slovaks	Trust completely	2.3%	2.3%
		Trust a little	24.6%	24.6%
		Neither trust or distrust	21.6%	21.6%
		Not trust very much	35.1%	35.1%
		Not trust at all	16.4%	16.4%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	
65 and more years	Trust: Slovaks	Trust completely	5.8%	5.8%
		Trust a little	15.1%	15.1%
		Neither trust or distrust	23.3%	23.3%
		Not trust very much	33.7%	33.7%
		Not trust at all	22.1%	22.1%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	

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⁷⁴ Ibid.

The Czechs and Slovaks were also asked to identify how much they trusted different groups in the World Values Survey. Table 8 reflects how much the Slovaks trusted the Czechs just after the fall of communism. The table displays that the three youngest generations of Slovaks trusted the Czechs less than the older generations did. The Slovaks did show a significant level of positive affirmation to the notion of trust in the Czechs. In Table 9 the Czechs were asked the same question of trust in the Slovaks. The Czechs did not trust the Slovaks very much in this survey. This displays the animosity that many Czechs had toward the Slovaks. The real important thing about these questions is the fact that almost all Czechs lived in what is now the Czech Republic and almost all Slovaks lived in what is now Slovakia. The Czech answers to this show the amount of disconnection between the two cultures.

The next area of study is to display the amount of faith that the Czechs and Slovaks had in the democratic government that followed the fall of communism. Table 10 displays the amount of trust the Czechs and Slovaks had in the government as a whole. Table 11 shows how much trust the Czechs and Slovaks had in the parliament of the new government. The Slovaks had considerably less trust in both the government and the parliament during this time. This could be the result of the view among many Slovaks that the reforms were taking place too fast, and the government was very centered in Prague in the figurative sense as well as the literal. The percentages are very consistent across the generations. Figures like these vividly display the difference in the opinions of Czechs and Slovaks over how mindful the government was to their ethnic groups particular needs. The Slovaks were obviously not overly thrilled with the new government.

Table 10

Confidence: The Government * Country/region * Age recoded Crosstabulation

% within Country/region

Age recoded			Country/region		Total
			Czech Republic	Slovakia	
15-24	Confidence: The Government	A great deal	3.9%	5.6%	4.5%
		Quite a lot	36.4%	33.8%	35.5%
		Not very much	55.8%	56.3%	56.0%
		None at all	3.9%	4.2%	4.0%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
25-34	Confidence: The Government	A great deal	4.5%	3.0%	3.9%
		Quite a lot	41.3%	38.0%	40.1%
		Not very much	50.8%	48.0%	49.8%
		None at all	3.4%	11.0%	6.1%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
35-44	Confidence: The Government	A great deal	4.5%	7.2%	5.4%
		Quite a lot	40.4%	24.3%	35.0%
		Not very much	48.0%	54.1%	50.0%
		None at all	7.2%	14.4%	9.6%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
45-54	Confidence: The Government	A great deal	3.7%	4.8%	4.1%
		Quite a lot	49.3%	19.0%	39.6%
		Not very much	43.3%	65.1%	50.3%
		None at all	3.7%	11.1%	6.1%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
55-64	Confidence: The Government	A great deal	6.4%	11.4%	8.0%
		Quite a lot	46.2%	19.0%	37.6%
		Not very much	43.9%	58.2%	48.4%
		None at all	3.5%	11.4%	6.0%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
65 and more years	Confidence: The Government	A great deal	7.0%	15.0%	9.5%
		Quite a lot	45.3%	32.5%	41.3%
		Not very much	43.0%	40.0%	42.1%
		None at all	4.7%	12.5%	7.1%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

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⁷⁵ Ibid.

Table 11

Confidence: Parliament * Country/region * Age recoded Crosstabulation

% within Country/region

Age recoded			Country/region		Total
			Czech Republic	Slovakia	
15-24	Confidence: Parliament	A great deal	7.6%	4.8%	6.6%
		Quite a lot	38.9%	25.4%	34.2%
		Not very much	40.3%	47.6%	42.9%
		None at all	13.2%	22.2%	16.3%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
25-34	Confidence: Parliament	A great deal	5.0%	3.8%	4.5%
		Quite a lot	30.2%	25.5%	28.5%
		Not very much	52.7%	51.6%	52.3%
		None at all	12.1%	19.1%	14.7%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
35-44	Confidence: Parliament	A great deal	6.8%	5.0%	6.1%
		Quite a lot	29.4%	24.9%	27.8%
		Not very much	48.8%	45.8%	47.8%
		None at all	15.0%	24.3%	18.3%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
45-54	Confidence: Parliament	A great deal	7.1%	5.6%	6.6%
		Quite a lot	30.5%	25.6%	28.9%
		Not very much	50.5%	49.6%	50.2%
		None at all	12.0%	19.2%	14.4%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
55-64	Confidence: Parliament	A great deal	12.4%	6.9%	10.6%
		Quite a lot	36.0%	24.1%	32.1%
		Not very much	41.9%	46.6%	43.4%
		None at all	9.7%	22.4%	13.9%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
65 and more years	Confidence: Parliament	A great deal	11.4%	8.1%	10.4%
		Quite a lot	36.9%	28.3%	34.2%
		Not very much	43.5%	45.7%	44.2%
		None at all	8.2%	17.9%	11.3%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

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⁷⁶ Ibid.

The next issue of importance is the amount of latent sympathy for a control economy was left after the fall of communism. Table 12 addresses the question of which is preferable private ownership or public ownership. The older generation of Slovaks displays a significant percentage that thought that the state should still have a very strong role in the economy. The Czechs display a more of a trend towards accepting that the economy needed to be reformed significantly. The Slovaks also had a significant percentage across all generation that wanted the employees to have a large role in the decisions taken by the business sector. This displays a latent wish for a true form of socialism, where the businesses are truly run by the workers. This idealistic view is a remnant of the communist system. The Czechs seem much more eager than the Slovaks to shed their communist past economically.

The next issue that is addressed by the survey data is about the amount of change that was needed to renovate society and politics. Table 13 deals with the changes necessary to society; Table 14 deals with political change. Both the Czechs and Slovaks had similar answers to the question of societal change. The generational gaps in answers are displayed nicely in this table. The older generations were less apt to agree to rapid change being needed because they had lived their entire lives under the Soviet system. The changes they advocated would be slow and gradual. This view advocated more of an adaptation of society to fit the new political system, rather than the rapid change advocated by some of the members of the younger generations. The cultural divide is apparent in Table 14. The Slovaks thought that the political change was occurring too rapidly in a much higher percentage than the Czechs did. This shows that the Slovaks had a more traditionalist view of political change being a slow process not a quick change. It may also display a fear in the Slovaks that the Czechs were carrying out too sweeping of reforms too quickly.

Table 12

How business and industry should be managed * Country/region * Age recoded Crosstabulation

% within Country/region

Age recoded			Country/region		Total
			Czech Republic	Slovakia	
15-24	How business and industry should be managed	Owners should run their business	43.4%	34.3%	40.2%
		Owners/Employees participate in selection of managers	38.0%	45.7%	40.7%
		The State should be the owner	5.4%	1.4%	4.0%
		Employees should own the business and elect managers	13.2%	18.6%	15.1%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
25-34	How business and industry should be managed	Owners should run their business	40.8%	29.0%	36.6%
		Owners/Employees participate in selection of managers	48.6%	47.0%	48.0%
		The State should be the owner	1.1%	7.0%	3.2%
		Employees should own the business and elect managers	9.5%	17.0%	12.2%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
35-44	How business and industry should be managed	Owners should run their business	38.6%	22.5%	33.2%
		Owners/Employees participate in selection of managers	43.6%	45.9%	44.4%
		The State should be the owner	4.1%	8.1%	5.4%
		Employees should own the business and elect managers	13.6%	23.4%	16.9%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
45-54	How business and industry should be managed	Owners should run their business	37.9%	19.0%	31.8%
		Owners/Employees participate in selection of managers	46.2%	47.6%	46.7%
		The State should be the owner	3.0%	17.5%	7.7%
		Employees should own the business and elect managers	12.9%	15.9%	13.8%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
55-64	How business and industry should be managed	Owners should run their business	32.5%	31.6%	32.3%
		Owners/Employees participate in selection of managers	42.0%	24.1%	36.3%
		The State should be the owner	9.5%	17.7%	12.1%
		Employees should own the business and elect managers	16.0%	26.6%	19.4%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
65 and more years	How business and industry should be managed	Owners should run their business	31.4%	22.5%	28.6%
		Owners/Employees participate in selection of managers	44.2%	32.5%	40.5%
		The State should be the owner	8.1%	27.5%	14.3%
		Employees should own the business and elect managers	16.3%	17.5%	16.7%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 13

Basic kinds of attitudes concerning society * Country/region * Age recoded Crosstabulation

% within Country/region

Age recoded			Country/region		Total
			Czech Republic	Slovakia	
15-24	Basic kinds of attitudes concerning society	Society must be radically changed	21.3%	22.1%	21.6%
		Society must be gradually improved by reforms	54.7%	51.2%	53.5%
		Society must be valiantly defended	24.0%	26.7%	24.9%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
25-34	Basic kinds of attitudes concerning society	Society must be radically changed	18.7%	15.7%	17.6%
		Society must be gradually improved by reforms	61.6%	67.3%	63.7%
		Society must be valiantly defended	19.7%	17.0%	18.8%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
35-44	Basic kinds of attitudes concerning society	Society must be radically changed	18.2%	15.5%	17.3%
		Society must be gradually improved by reforms	59.5%	60.4%	59.8%
		Society must be valiantly defended	22.4%	24.1%	23.0%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
45-54	Basic kinds of attitudes concerning society	Society must be radically changed	15.5%	18.3%	16.4%
		Society must be gradually improved by reforms	58.6%	63.5%	60.1%
		Society must be valiantly defended	25.9%	18.3%	23.5%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
55-64	Basic kinds of attitudes concerning society	Society must be radically changed	18.1%	18.6%	18.2%
		Society must be gradually improved by reforms	55.7%	60.5%	57.3%
		Society must be valiantly defended	26.2%	20.9%	24.5%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
65 and more years	Basic kinds of attitudes concerning society	Society must be radically changed	12.7%	12.5%	12.6%
		Society must be gradually improved by reforms	48.1%	54.2%	49.9%
		Society must be valiantly defended	39.2%	33.3%	37.5%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

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⁷⁷ Ibid.

Table 14

Political reform is moving too rapidly * Country/region * Age recoded Crosstabulation

% within Country/region

Age recoded			Country/region		Total
			Czech Republic	Slovakia	
15-24	Political reform is moving too rapidly	Agree completely	5.8%	17.0%	9.5%
		Agree somewhat	21.3%	25.1%	22.6%
		Neither agree nor disagree	29.4%	28.7%	29.2%
		Disagree somewhat	26.5%	13.5%	22.2%
		Disagree completely	17.0%	15.8%	16.6%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
25-34	Political reform is moving too rapidly	Agree completely	9.3%	15.3%	11.5%
		Agree somewhat	18.8%	23.0%	20.3%
		Neither agree nor disagree	22.0%	27.2%	23.8%
		Disagree somewhat	27.8%	18.2%	24.4%
		Disagree completely	22.0%	16.3%	20.0%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
35-44	Political reform is moving too rapidly	Agree completely	12.7%	23.9%	16.5%
		Agree somewhat	19.2%	20.8%	19.8%
		Neither agree nor disagree	16.2%	23.1%	18.5%
		Disagree somewhat	30.7%	16.9%	26.0%
		Disagree completely	21.2%	15.3%	19.2%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
45-54	Political reform is moving too rapidly	Agree completely	15.0%	25.3%	18.2%
		Agree somewhat	18.9%	24.9%	20.8%
		Neither agree nor disagree	13.6%	19.9%	15.5%
		Disagree somewhat	31.4%	16.3%	26.7%
		Disagree completely	21.1%	13.6%	18.8%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
55-64	Political reform is moving too rapidly	Agree completely	15.1%	20.1%	16.7%
		Agree somewhat	21.3%	24.8%	22.4%
		Neither agree nor disagree	18.4%	23.4%	20.0%
		Disagree somewhat	28.9%	20.1%	26.1%
		Disagree completely	16.2%	11.7%	14.8%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
65 and more years	Political reform is moving too rapidly	Agree completely	15.6%	26.5%	18.7%
		Agree somewhat	19.2%	30.9%	22.6%
		Neither agree nor disagree	18.9%	19.9%	19.1%
		Disagree somewhat	29.6%	15.4%	25.5%
		Disagree completely	16.8%	7.4%	14.0%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

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⁷⁸ Ibid.

The question of which is preferable freedom or equality, can be easily expanded upon. The freedom answer lends itself to a more democratic liberty point of view, while the equality answer is reminiscent of the imposed equality under the communist system. These questions are addressed in Table 15. The answers should be seen as merely an indicator, not the

Table 15

Freedom or equality * Country/region * Age recoded Crosstabulation

% within Country/region

Age recoded			Country/region		Total
			Czech Republic	Slovakia	
15-24	Freedom	Freedom above equality	61.0%	49.7%	57.2%
	or equality	Equality above freedom	28.7%	35.8%	31.1%
		Neither	10.3%	14.5%	11.7%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
25-34	Freedom	Freedom above equality	61.1%	53.4%	58.4%
	or equality	Equality above freedom	29.3%	37.6%	32.3%
		Neither	9.6%	9.0%	9.4%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
35-44	Freedom	Freedom above equality	57.6%	49.9%	54.9%
	or equality	Equality above freedom	33.4%	40.7%	35.9%
		Neither	9.0%	9.4%	9.1%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
45-54	Freedom	Freedom above equality	52.0%	48.7%	51.0%
	or equality	Equality above freedom	41.8%	43.2%	42.2%
		Neither	6.2%	8.1%	6.8%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
55-64	Freedom	Freedom above equality	51.6%	49.8%	51.0%
	or equality	Equality above freedom	40.1%	42.5%	40.9%
		Neither	8.3%	7.7%	8.1%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
65 and more years	Freedom	Freedom above equality	54.4%	46.1%	51.9%
	or equality	Equality above freedom	39.4%	46.1%	41.4%
		Neither	6.2%	7.9%	6.7%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

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end-all-be-all on the question of which way these people are orientated. The younger generations of Czechs seem to have valued freedom over equality more so than the older

⁷⁹ Ibid.

generations. The Slovaks were spilt pretty evenly across all of the generations. The question of freedom vs. equality has resonates in democracies and has great significance in regards to which path is preferable to the populace.

Conclusion

Through their different historical experiences the Czech and Slovaks developed unique cultures as divergent neighbors. The generations also display differences in opinions as a result of their historical experiences. The Slovaks seemed to fit the model as a more religious people that were wary of change in the first years after the fall of communism. The Czech were more progressively minded after communism and more apt to accept that changes must occur. The Protestant legacy of Jan Hus can be seen, as the Czechs are only nominally Catholic in religious terms. Both cultures have had a vibrant history. The Czechs have ruled themselves for much more of their history than the Slovaks. The Czechs were the dominant political actors during the time that the two cultures lived together in a common state. The Slovaks are now the masters of their own destinies since Czechoslovakia split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The future of both countries looks bright, as they have both been admitted into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union in recent years. The focus of this study was to establish the different natures of the Czechs and Slovaks as a result of their histories. The differences are present and perhaps it was folly for the Slovak and Czech elites to ever envision the emergence of a Czechoslovak nationality. It seems that historical consciousness built identities that were too strong to be blended into one common one. It is also interesting to see the differences that age plays in the answers to the questions. The older generations were more religious and feared the speed of the changes after communism more than the younger ones did.

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