

Are the Czechs and the Slovaks different?

Basic Value Preferences in the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic
(A Research Note)

The most recent political developments in the CSFR explicitly show the divergence between the two nations that comprise the country, Czechs and Slovaks. The question of the substantive differences between the two must naturally be posed, but it can hardly be answered completely. This research note is intended to contribute to this question, showing two fragments of value system differences. It is based on a study coordinated in the CSFR by the Department of Sociology and Social Policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences of Charles University in Prague. The study has been a part of a broad international project organized by the European Value System Study Group. It deals with complex value systems, and covers, in detail, individual value dimensions; it is based on various theories and repeats a similar study done in 1981 (the CSFR did not take part in it at that stage).

The data were collected and the fieldwork was provided by the A.R.C. Research Consortium in Prague. The complex random sampling design was created from the Central Register of Citizens

and contained stratification allowing for the comparison of three parts of the CSFR (Bohemia, Moravia and the Slovak Republic) which, according to the hypothesis, would differ in value systems considerably. These three equal size strata are further stratified by region, size of the town, and the sex and age of respondents. The two stages of the cluster selection have been given by counties within the region and by the administrative parts of the towns (villages) within the county. The data was collected between April and October 1991. The project "The Value System in the CSFR" has been supported in part by the European System Study Group and by the Bishops' Conference of the CSFR and has followed the methodology, instruments and approach of the international team.

In this short account it is only possible to display very basic data and point out only the main and selected differences at the descriptive level. The data presented in table 1 are based on the introductory question of the research instrument, asking for the rank of importance of six selected value system dimensions: work, family, friends, leisure, politics, religion. The difference between the Czechs and Slovaks will be shown by comparing education categories, thus presenting differentiation by one of the most important structural categories.

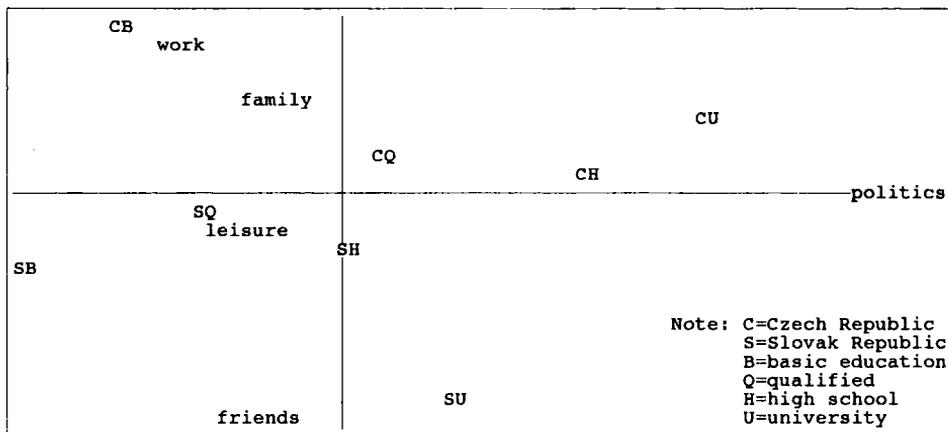
Table 1. Value profiles for educational levels in both republics
(mean values on the importance scales 1-4)

	family	work	friends	leisure	politics	religion
Czech, basic	3.80	3.55	2.88	2.84	1.92	2.30
Czech, qualified	3.83	3.60	3.02	3.00	2.25	1.92
Czech, high school	3.88	3.52	3.03	2.92	2.41	1.87
Czech, university	3.91	3.59	3.05	2.99	2.56	1.91
Slovak, basic	3.88	3.53	3.11	2.95	1.90	3.20
Slovak, qualified	3.83	3.66	3.10	3.15	2.16	2.53
Slovak, high school	3.90	3.63	3.15	3.04	2.28	2.31
Slovak, university	3.92	3.61	3.29	3.09	2.43	2.12
Czech republic	3.85	3.56	3.00	2.95	2.26	1.98
Slovak republic	3.37	3.61	3.14	3.06	2.16	2.60
CSFR	3.86	3.58	3.05	2.99	2.23	2.19

The preference order is uniform (with a minor exception in the group of qualified Slovaks) among the items "family-work-friends-leisure-politics". The very high differentiating effect of religiosity has to be analyzed separately in detail (the effect of both nation and education is clearly seen). The religion scores are negatively correlated with politics and these two are

complementary in the value system. The directly visible traits of the profiles are, however, accompanied by a latent structure of typical deviations of individual groups from the common profile in CSFR; it can be displayed in the profile correspondence map (religion is omitted from the picture because of its dominating interaction with the group of Slovaks with basic education).

Correspondence between education levels in Czech and Slovak Republics and basic dimensions of value profiles (mean scores).



Remark: The profile has been reduced by the dimension of religiosity, since it shows an overwhelmingly strong interaction with basic education in the SR

The correspondence graph provides a visual summary of two distinguished features: a) the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic are clearly separated; and b) education groups are ordered by level in both parts of the CSFR but they show quite distinctive patterns of their own differentiation. In the Czech Republic, education is correlated with preferential emphasis on a scale 'work - family - politics'. In the Slovak Republic, the educational scale circles and concentrates around the dimensions 'leisure - friends'. With the same preference order, the nations differ in subtle emphasis: Slovaks stress social life and the activities of leisure time while Czechs weigh the remaining items more. Religion (not included in the graph) might be the complex dimension covering the items explicitly

stressed by the much less religious Czech republic separately in individual dimensions. On the other hand, the election results and political development in the two parts of the country support the findings. Slovaks are backing away from the new rapid changes simply because of different emphasis on dimensions in the value system.

Another important viewpoint that can explain the different speed of political, economic and social development, and the different determination for radical changes within the CSFR is the different perceived geo-political affiliation in the various regions. For a more complete differentiating picture, four geographic areas are used in this comparison, namely Prague, Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovakia.

Table 2. Parts of the CSFR by geo-political affiliation: row percentages of preference and simultaneous significance of cell interactions (Question: Which of these geographical groups would you say you belong to first of all?)

Parts of CSFR	Affiliation to:					N
	locality	CR/SR	CSFR	Europe	world	
Prague	23.9 %	18.1 %	41.5 %	4.8 %	11.7 %	188
	---	0	+++	+	0	
Bohemia	40.4 %	20.8 %	30.2 %	1.8 %	6.6 %	873
	0	0	0	0	0	
Moravia	39.3 %	12.8 %	38.6 %	1.8 %	7.4 %	1030
	0	---	+++	0	0	
Slovakia	45.4 %	36.1 %	11.4 %	1.2 %	5.9 %	1116
	++	+++	---	0	0	
Total	40.8 %	23.4 %	27.0 %	1.8 %	6.9 %	3207

Remark: +++ , --- = .001 level, ++ , -- = .01 level, + , - = .05 level, 0 = insignificant; the inference on adjusted residuals follows the Holm method

The interactions of table 2 can be decomposing the log odds using the program mapped to the correspondence graph (by LINDA).

Correspondence map of CSFR parts and affiliation to the geopolitical level (Question: To which of the geographical groups do you belong first of all?)

PRAGUE europe world	republic SLOVAKIA
csfr MORAVA	BOHEMIA locality

Remark: capital letters show the parts of the CSFR (respondent groups), small letters indicate the preference of affiliation place

The graph displays a clear picture of preferences that are typical for the groups. While Prague, Moravia, and Slovakia give quite evidently definite choices differentiating them unambiguously, Bohemia is in the center of all, closest to

"locality". The matrix of perceived distances can be derived from this picture describing the pattern quantitatively. The perceived distance matrix indicates how far or near (relatively to other parts) people are subjectively to Europe, among others.

Table 3. The perceived distances of inhabitants of various parts of the CSFR to levels of geo-political hierarchy

	locality	republic	CSFR	Europe	world
Prague	1.62	1.46	.98	.22	.68
Bohemia	.54	.87	.70	.88	.45
Moravia	.85	1.35	.33	1.00	.73
Slovakia	.82	.23	1.69	1.48	1.09

The contrasts in both the value-system dimensions and placement with respect to the geo-political hierarchy of the world are remarkable and correlate with the present political development in CSFR. The value system displays the basic influences in the process and points out the root of diverging attitudes and activities. In spite of a great

simplification and the fragments used, even these two simple tables give very clear evidence about the existence of differences between the two nations. More analytical work is, of course, necessary to capture the subtle details and to come to more relevant conclusions.

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