
From Equality to Equity?

The Czech Republic Between Two Ideologies of Distributive Justice

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Abstract: The principle objective of the paper is to uncover the interplay between egalitarian and inegalitarian norms and beliefs about distributive justice during the post-communist transformation in the Czech Republic. Two theoretical perspectives, namely the "split-consciousness" theory (Kluegel and Smith) and the theory of dominant and challenging norms of distributive justice (Della Fave), are applied in a comparative analysis of egalitarian and inegalitarian inclinations in the Czech Republic and the Netherlands. Results from multisample recursive and nonrecursive structural equation models suggest two major conclusions. First, in accordance with the thesis on "winners" and "losers" in the post-communist transformation (Matějů and Řeháková), in the Czech Republic as compared with the Netherlands the struggle between egalitarian and inegalitarian ideologies is strongly related to one's position in the social stratification system. Second, the capacity of inegalitarian distributive norms to resist the challenge from egalitarian ideology is much stronger in the Netherlands than in the Czech Republic, where, on the contrary, the capacity of an egalitarian interpretation of distributive justice to challenge meritocratic norms is much stronger.

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Introduction

After four years of the unprecedented historical experiment set in motion in Eastern Central Europe in 1989 there is no doubt that the temporality of the crystallization of a new stratification system in these countries is different from the temporality of changes in the constitutional system, political system or economy. [see e.g. Sztompka 1992, Dahrendorf 1991]¹ As shown both by classics in social stratification research [Parsons 1954] and scholars who have been studying social development in post-communist countries [Offe 1991, Dahrendorf 1991, Sztompka 1992, etc.], every stratification system has its normative roots ("paramount value system" - Parsons), regardless of whether it has been created in accordance with

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¹) In this respect, Sztompka [1992] argues that the deeper we go, the more time is required, and -- using Dahrendorf's illustrations -- he calls this phenomenon "the dilemma of three clocks" ("the hour of the lawyer," "the hour of the economist," and "the hour of the citizen"). [Sztompka 1992: 15]

the dominant distributive "ideology" or as a specific response to it. Regardless of their origin, commonly held values, norms, and historically developed patterns of beliefs establish typical motivations and corresponding social behavior, typical strategies for life and economic success. These strategies, in turn, contribute to the reproduction of social relations and the existing stratification system. Dahrendorf's prediction that these deeply ingrained and internalized factors of social behavior need more than sixty years to change [Dahrendorf 1991] may seem too pessimistic, but he may be closer to the truth than implicit assumptions that values, beliefs, norms and patterns of behavior are changing as rapidly as political systems and economic mechanisms.

Accordingly, there are two principal dimensions in which sociologists monitor and analyze changes in social stratification in Eastern Europe:

- a) the dimension of objective changes: the development of inequality, changes in patterns of occupational mobility, the development of the mobility regime, changes in the roles of factors leading to economic success, etc.;
- b) the subjective dimension of social stratification: the perception of change and beliefs about stratification, the perception of inequality and its roots, beliefs about the principal factors of economic success, the perception of social and distributive justice, etc.

In other words, in order to understand the changes in Eastern Europe, research on the subjective dimension of social stratification is at least as important as the analysis of various objective processes. There are at least two strong reasons why the analyses of beliefs about distributive justice are especially important in post-communist countries. First, all studies analyzing the development of inequality in these countries [Večerník 1992, Matějů 1993a, 1993b, Domanski and Heyns 1992, etc.] show that income inequality is rapidly increasing. Second, inequality is rarely perceived without being considered in terms of justice or fairness, especially in systems experiencing a deep change in the stratification order and in the underlying value system. The post-communist transformation is undoubtedly a kind of systemic change in which inequality is increasing along with the change in the principal criteria of allocation and distribution of income and wealth.

To the degree that social and economic groups in a given country share different or even opposing beliefs about distributive justice, the legitimation of a current political order is undermined and the potential for political conflict is heightened. In order to understand the political landscape of a post-communist society, the study of beliefs and equality and inequality norms is extremely important. Among the issues of primary importance is the crystallization of a new dominant distributive ideology. One of the most important theoretical questions to be asked in this respect is "What are the principal dimensions (ideologies) underlying the perception of distributive justice in post-communist countries?" From the point of view of policy-makers, answering this question may aid in understanding the development of "legitimation" in post-communist countries, and in locating in a given social space typical bearers of social tensions or potential political conflicts.

Following these ideas, this paper tries to answer the question to what extent a renewed meritocratic and egalitarian interpretation of distributive justice has already disintegrated the egalitarian norms that dominated the distribution of income and wealth for more than forty years.² The second important question in this respect is how this transition between the two major distributive ideologies is linked to the transformation of the social structure and to changes in the process of stratification in formerly communist countries. Both from the point of view of the theory of the post-communist transformation and that of policy it is valuable to assess what social attributes predict rather egalitarian orientations, and what social characteristics stand behind rather egalitarian and meritocratic interpretations of distributive justice. Asking this question implicitly assumes that there are two relatively well distinguished and consistent distributive ideologies beyond popular beliefs about distributive justice. However, as this assumption may not necessarily be true, particularly in post-communist countries, it should be verified empirically.

It is widely accepted that the former Czechoslovakia was one of the most egalitarian countries in the Soviet bloc. However, the egalitarian inclinations of the Czech population have deeper historical roots than solely the installation of communist rule and its corresponding ideology in 1948, which of course contributed the most to the disintegration of meritocratic norms in of income and wealth distribution.³ Furthermore, since 1989 the Czech Republic has ranked among those countries with the most rapid acceleration in the transition to a market economy. These factors are due both to the strongest political obstacles to any profound economic reform before the collapse of the communist regime, and the relatively consistent economic policy of the current government. For all these reasons the analysis of the transformation of ideologies underlying beliefs about distributive justice in the Czech Republic should show typical patterns of the transformation of beliefs about distributive justice much more sharply than in other formerly communist countries.

In order to minimize the danger of speculative interpretations and conclusions, a comparative strategy was chosen for the analysis. The choice of the Dutch society for comparison had both practical and theoretical reasons. Regarding practical reasons, both Czech and Dutch data were available from the

2) We agree with Weselowski and Wnuk-Lipinski [1992] that communist leaders officially created a specific "socialist" version of meritocratic ideology (*"each according to his work"*), but in fact this model was never put into practice. Instead the combination of peculiar criteria of "merit" and the corruption of potentially "pro-revolutionary" social strata by income preferences created a strongly egalitarian distributive system, legitimized by the ideologically forced goal of narrowing the differences between classes before they would disappear entirely.

3) There are at least two other historical roots of Czech egalitarianism: the strong protestant reformation movement in the 15th and 16th centuries with its especially profound plebeian and egalitarian interpretation of social justice, and, second, the lack of a Czech national nobility and aristocracy due to forced re-Catholicization after 1620, this being associated with the expropriation of the lands of members of the Czech Estates, who represented the opposition to Habsburg rule in Bohemia.

International Social Justice Project (ISJP).⁴ As for the theoretical reasons for this choice, Czech and Dutch societies show similar egalitarian (welfare) inclinations, as various analyses show. [Peschar 1990, Bakker, Dronkers and Meijnen 1989, Jansen, Dronkers and Verrips 1989, Matějů and Kluegel 1993] Furthermore, it is likely that the similarity between the two countries regarding popular beliefs about distributive justice has similar historical roots in their especially strong reformation and protestant movement, though -- as mentioned above -- this was disrupted by the forced re-Catholicization of the Czech lands after 1620.

Methodologically, the above mentioned historical and political circumstances, which show both the marked similarity and dissimilarity of the two countries, make for quite a strong analytical position that allows a "systemic" interpretation of present cross-national differences in the ideologies underlying the popular interpretation of distributive justice. In other words, in the Netherlands the continuous presence and natural historical development of capitalism, historically rooted in a strong reformation movement, stands in substantial contrast to the forty-year long disruption of the historical evolution of capitalism by the period of communist rule in the Czech lands. Thus, there is reason to believe that the Czech-Dutch comparison will provide an extraordinary opportunity to test the effect of socialism on otherwise historically similarly rooted ideologies underlying beliefs about distributive justice, as well as a chance to monitor the effect of the historical restoration of capitalism in a Czech society characterized by deeply ingrained inclinations towards an egalitarian interpretation of distributive justice.

Theoretical background and previous research

In the recent literature, two major approaches to beliefs about distributive justice and corresponding ideologies can be traced: macro-social theories and explanations, and socio-psychological approaches. For the analysis of the development of distributive justice beliefs in Eastern Europe, we may learn from both of these theoretical avenues.

The majority of macro-social explanations are based on the assumption that in every society at least two competing ideologies of distributive justice exist in parallel: a dominant ideology and challenging one. [see e.g. Berger et al. 1972; Deutch 1975, Habermas 1975; Walster and Walster 1975; Della Fave 1980, 1986a, 1986b; Ritzman and Tomaskovic-Devey 1992, Shepelak 1987] These theories also predict that these two ideologies find different levels of support from different social strata or classes [Della Fave 1986a, Ritzman and Tomaskovic-Devey 1992, etc.] -- those occupying higher positions in the stratification and having more favorable life-chances are expected to support inequalitarian norms of distributive justice, while those with lower positions and less favorable life-chances are expected to prefer rather egalitarian norms of income and wealth distribution.

⁴) The International Social Justice Project (ISJP) includes 13 countries: Britain, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, East Germany, West Germany, Hungary, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Slovenia and the United States. In addition to receiving national funds, this project was supported by The National Council for Soviet and East European Research (USA).

However, due to the high complexity of the phenomenon and the corresponding requirements this imposes on survey data, there have only been a few attempts to test these macro-theories empirically. The recent Ritzman and Tomaskovic-Devey paper [1992] proved the existence of the two ideologies as well as their different social grounding in the United States. They, indeed, reached the conclusion that in the US the inegalitarian (equity) norm is in the position of a dominant ideology (showing general acceptance by all social strata), while egalitarian norms -- as a challenging ideology -- find support mostly from individuals with less favorable life-chances. Another study, based on a much larger international data set from the ISJP project [Matějů and Kluegel 1993], has shown the existence of the two ideologies and the same pattern of social support in other Western countries (Germany, Great Britain, Japan, the Netherlands, and the USA).

Wegener and Liebig [1992] used more historically and culturally based argumentation in their attempt to define primary and secondary distributive ideologies in different social systems (USA, West Germany, East Germany). They identify the differing social backgrounds of the two ideologies and reach conclusions that, in our view, do not contradict Ritzman and Tomaskovic-Devey's findings. They conclude that in the USA "functionalism" (rooted in the equity principle) is the primary distributive ideology regardless of class position. However, in West Germany, where "statism" is a primary ideology, members of service class (higher professionals, managers and administrators) favor functionalism more than non-service class members. Also significant for our study is their finding that in East Germany the data do not provide conclusive evidence as to which is the primary and which the secondary ideology. "East Germany, being a society in transition, does not exhibit the specific patterns of normative and rational justice ideologies typical of either a welfare or a meritocratic society." [Wegener and Liebig 1992: 16]

It is not surprising that these studies show a generally strong negative correlation between latent constructs representing the two ideologies, proving that they indeed represent well defined, competing, and largely opposing norms of distributive justice. However, this is not the case in former communist countries. There, due to the transitional situation, these two norms show much weaker negative correlations, which indicates that the two distributive ideologies are not yet well crystallized. [see Matějů and Kluegel 1993]

Regarding correlations between the egalitarian (equality) and inegalitarian (equity) principles, social-psychological theories predict the co-existence of the two competing norms not only at the societal level, but also at the level of individual consciousness. [Halle 1984; Hochschild 1981; Huber and Form 1973; Kluegel and Smith 1986; Lane 1962; Mann 1970; Sennett and Cobb 1972] Specifically, the so-called "split-consciousness" perspective [Kluegel and Smith 1986] proposes that a dominant ideology (justifying the privileged status of higher social strata and elites by means of media, education and culture) and potentially challenging beliefs (derived, on the contrary, from day-to-day struggles to make do with limited resources) may coexist without any necessary force toward change. They may

simply occupy separate places in a person's consciousness; in Lane's term [1962] "compartmentalized," or following Sennett and Cobb's terms [1972], working class individuals may maintain "divided selves." Because these two types of beliefs stem from different sources, people may rarely bring them together in their consciousness, thus never activating a potential challenge. The presence of such an ambiguity and duality in popular thinking about distributive justice may have important political implications. It implies that in societies where it is particularly strong there is a large "swing vote" regarding policy concerning economic inequality. The study of this phenomena is especially important in formerly communist countries because the existence of this -- often "unconscious" -- duality provides a strong potential for volatility in the politics of distribution and redistribution.

In our analysis we follow both these theoretical perspectives. We use the split-consciousness perspective to predict the weaker consistency of popular definitions of egalitarian and inegalitarian norms of distributive justice in the Czech Republic and their seemingly "schizophrenic" relationship. We assume that, in general, individuals in post-communist countries are simultaneously exposed to a strong new dominant anti-egalitarian ideology and equally strong economic hardships associated with profound economic reform, which may elicit egalitarian sentiments. We also make use of the theory of "dominant" and "challenging" ideologies, particularly to formulate hypotheses concerning differences in support for each of the two major competing ideologies of distributive justice from social groups sharing different life-chances in the course of the transition to a market economy.

In formulating hypotheses concerning social differences in support of different distributive norms we also consider the results of the analysis of data from the Czechoslovak stratification survey "Transformation of Social Structure - 1991" [Matějů 1992a], which clearly show that the Czechoslovak population is far from consensus on the answer to the question of whether or not the post-communist transformation is bringing more social justice. In fact the population is split in two: about half of the population (55%) shares the view that the post-communist transformation has brought more social justice, while the rest (45%) is rather skeptical, and complains that there is less justice than before the collapse of the communist regime. This analysis also pointed out the existence of two large groups of the population that share quite opposite views on the post-communist transformation. It seems, indeed, that the post-communist transformation has its own typical "winners" and "losers" according to one's position in the former "redistributive" system. [Matějů 1992a, Matějů and Řeháková 1992]

One of the principal characteristics of state socialism was an extensive redistribution, which was used as a principal instrument of the so-called homogenization (equalization) of society, and -- of course -- also as an important instrument in the collective corruption of the lower social strata. The gradual dismantling of redistributive practices during the post-communist transformation makes those who actually profited from socialist redistribution (people with the lowest education, bureaucrats, individuals politically committed to the previous

regime, etc.) the "losers" in the transformation, and -- quite understandably -- those who were relatively discriminated against (individuals with the highest education, professionals, the self-employed, etc.) may feel themselves the "winners" of this historical game. These two groups show a tendency to exaggerate the negative or positive aspects of the transformation respectively, and -- as suggested by the theories discussed above -- both these large groups of the population tend to generate their specific distributive ideologies. According to the relevant theories, it is very likely that the "winners" and those who profit from the transformation participate in the creation of the dominant ideology, while the "losers" and all those who feel in danger share a "challenging" one.

The existence of winners and losers in the transformation process makes the issue of the perception of changing inequality especially important for sociologists and political scientists studying developments in post-communist countries. As already argued, there is a fundamental relationship between the perception of inequality and the legitimation of a new and still rather fragile social and political order. As Wesolowski and Wnuk-Lipinski [1992] rightly argue, the sufficient legitimacy of a political and social system can only be established if distributive principles are accepted not only by those whom these principles favor, but also by those whom they do not favor. [Wesolowski and Wnuk-Lipinski 1992: 89] Put simply, if there is a large group of individuals who find themselves in a relatively deprived position on account of the existing distributive principles, then the social system can develop the sufficient level of legitimacy necessary for political and social stability only with great difficulty. In accordance with the assumption that duality and ambiguity in popular thinking about distributive justice may prompt an unpredictable "swing vote" situation, these two authors also argue that a certain psychological instability regarding major norms underlying the perception of inequality may be used by populist political movements (either on the extreme left or the extreme right) to de-legitimize the current government or even the whole socio-political system. Consequently, for political scientists and politicians themselves, sociological research addressing questions of the legitimacy of existing patterns of inequality in Eastern Europe and the crystallization of distributive ideologies should be considered a much more important source of information than has actually been the case so far.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses set up for this comparative analysis make special use of the operationalizations of relevant theories provided by Ritzman and Tomaskovic-Devey [1992] and Matějů and Kluegel [1993]. Specifically, we share both the idea of the bi-dimensionality of the structure of beliefs about distributive justice (equality vs. equity) and the hypothesis predicting a weaker link of support for inequalitarian norms to stratification-related experience than for egalitarian norms. Questions may be raised about the applicability of both the "split-consciousness" and the self-evaluation perspective to post-communist countries during the transition period. Generally, one may question whether or not a dominant ideology exists at this stage of the development. Had this study been done before 1989, one

would certainly argue for the dominance of an egalitarian ideology. As argued in the introduction, it would be naive to assume that at the time the survey was conducted (June 1991) the new inequalitarian (equity) ideology was already well defined, well crystallized and strong enough to serve as a deeply ingrained dominant ideology of distributive justice as we see in a majority of Western countries. It would also be naive to assume that the "old" egalitarian ideology has already taken on the position of a weak "challenging" distributive ideology, supported only by those who share relatively unfavorable life-chances in the current social and political circumstances.

Regarding the differentiation of social support for the two competing distributive ideologies, we assume that in Western capitalist countries inequalitarian norms are widely held by their populations, both because of common socialization within quite stable socio-economic circumstances and the experience of more or less successful capitalism. However, in post-communist societies rather mixed feelings are present. For the majority of the population, the era of state socialism was one of relative ease -- though in rather modest economic conditions and a repressive political system -- that was associated with strong feelings of social guarantees and state paternalism. On the other hand, it was clear how devastating such an egalitarian and anti-meritocratic system was for the economy. Certainly in the Czech Republic as well as in other post-communist countries, equity norms now held by elites as necessary for making the transition from failed socialist to market economies are serving as a kind of "new ideology" legitimizing the transformation itself. Therefore, we may expect uniform, and in many cases perhaps also superficial acceptance of inequalitarianism. However, though some people in post-communist countries may have experience on which to base a rejection of egalitarianism, most have little if any experience on which to evaluate equity beliefs. The combination of competing ideologies, poor economic conditions and specific and strong social and economic mobility implies that the ambiguity in beliefs and norms about equality and inequality will be more pronounced in the post-communist Czech Republic than in the Netherlands.

From the above discussion, at least three operational hypotheses may be derived. The first concerns the distinctness of popular definitions of underlying distributive ideologies:

H1: Due to the transitional situation, we predict more ambiguous and less consistent popular definitions of the two underlying ideologies of distributive justice in the Czech Republic as compared with the Netherlands.

In the Czech Republic, in light of the transition between two different systems of legitimation and the profound transformation of the stratification system, and the changing life-chances of social groups and strata, the egalitarian and inequalitarian ideologies are not seen as in opposition as often as in Western capitalist countries, including the Netherlands, in which -- for reasons discussed above -- we may expect stronger support for welfare-state policy and weaker inequalitarian orientations than in other Western countries. From this assumption two other hypotheses may be built:

H2: The (negative) correlation between egalitarian and inegalitarian norms (ideologies) of distributive justice will be much weaker in the Czech Republic than in the Netherlands.

H3: In the Czech Republic the ideology of equality is more strongly affected by stratification-related experience (unfavorable life-chances) than in the Netherlands, where it has stronger support from different social strata.

From the assumption that there are typical winners and losers in the post-communist transformation, the hypothesis may be formulated that:

H4: As regards the Czech Republic, those who belong to higher social strata (especially people with college or university degrees, members of the new entrepreneurial class, etc.) and those whose life-chances gradually increase as egalitarian ideology and policy is being dismantled, strongly oppose egalitarianism. In the Netherlands, where both market and welfare principles have been present for decades (though not in a balance that may be interpreted as perfect), higher status people (especially people with the highest educational credentials) support egalitarian (welfare) rather than inegalitarian (equity) norms of distributive justice.

The last hypothesis concerns the mutual causal relationships between the two ideologies. In accordance with all that has been said so far about the two ideologies and their support from different social strata we may predict that:

H5: Disregarding differences in social support for different ideologies, the inegalitarian distributive ideology in the Czech Republic is quite universal but rather weak in terms of its capacity to resist the potential challenge from a still quite strong and powerful egalitarian ideology. In the Netherlands the power of the two principal ideologies to resist each other is more or less in balance.

Data, measures and methods

The data analyzed in this paper come from the Dutch and Czechoslovak surveys conducted in 1991 under the International Social Justice Project (ISJP).⁵ The Dutch survey was made in 1991 (June-November) on 1,783 respondents by the University of Amsterdam (Telepanel). The method used for the Dutch survey was a self-administered computer-assisted questionnaire. The Czechoslovak survey was made by the Institute of Sociology of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences and STEM (the Center for Empirical Studies) in 1991 (June-July) on 1,181 respondents by standard face-to-face interview. For the comparative analysis only individuals living in the Czech Republic were selected (810 out of 1181 cases). Both the Czech and Dutch files were reduced to include only those respondents who reported a

⁵) Each country team participating in the ISJP administered on a nationwide random sample an identical questionnaire prepared by the international research team. The international merged data set contains 17,386 cases, with the average sample size per country being about 1,300 cases. The highest number of cases came from West Germany (1,837) and the lowest from Japan (777).

permanent job at the time of the survey.⁶ After this selection there remained 462 cases for the Netherlands and 375 cases for the Czech Republic. These numbers would be a very restrictive factor for traditional statistical methods based explicitly or implicitly on cross-classifications, but they are sufficient for structural equation modelling.

The comparative analyses are based on two sets of variables: a) "endogenous" variables capturing respondents' beliefs about the just distribution of income and wealth, and b) "exogenous" socio-demographic variables.

To represent the two principal underlying ideologies of distributive justice ("egalitarian" and "inegalitarian") six items were selected from the questionnaire:⁷

EQSHR: "The fairest way of distributing wealth and income would be to give everyone an equal share."

WNEED: "The most important thing is that people get what they need, even if this means allocating money from those who have earned more than they need."

PAYFM: "How much influence should each of these factors have in determining the level of pay for an employee?" Item selected: "The size of the family the employee supports."

KEARN: "People are entitled to keep what they have earned -- even if this means some people will be wealthier than others."

WORKH: "People who work hard deserve to earn more than those who do not."

PASSW: "People are entitled to pass on their wealth to their children."

There were several other possible indicators of egalitarian or inegalitarian sentiment in the survey. In accordance with the approach chosen by Matějů and Kluegel [1993] we have limited our attention to these six items for two reasons. First, these items do not mix two different dimensions of the evaluation of justice: a) basic or general egalitarian or inegalitarian orientations, and b) concrete measures regarding the means of achieving "just inequality" (e.g. the option of paying for education, responsibility, difficult conditions, etc.) Second, we assume that three egalitarian items (EQSHR, WNEED, PAYFM) measure adherence to three major but not entirely identical principles of egalitarian distribution: (1) the principle of "equality of outcomes" (EQSHR), (2) an abstract or general need principle (WNEED), and (3) a specific need principal, based on the family as a distributive unit (PAYFM). [Deutsch 1975]

The three inegalitarian items (WORKH, KEARN and PASSW) measure adherence to the equity principle (WORKH) and to two slightly different

⁶) Actually this reduction of a sample size is a logical consequence of the listwise deletion of missing values if variables such as the income from the main job, socio-economic status, and employment-status are included.

⁷) To facilitate orientation in the results, the original scales of variables EQSHR, WNEED, WORKH, KEARN and PASSW (1 "Strongly agree" to 5 "Strongly disagree") and the original scale for the variable PAYFM (1 "A great deal" to 4 "None") were reversed before the analyses were performed.

expressions of the principle of entitlement (KEARN, PASSW), which is a key aspect of notions of inegalitarian justice.

There are six "exogenous" variables in the structural model.⁸ AGE is in years, and SEX is coded such that 1 = male and 0 = female. Some of them require explanation. COLLEGE is a dummy variable with a value of one for respondents who reported having a tertiary education diploma. Another dummy variable (SELFEMP) distinguishes the self-employed and entrepreneurs from employees. To measure personal income we use only income from the respondent's job(s). To allow cross-national comparability, INCOME was recoded from the original monetary units of each country to income deciles (defined within each country). RIGHTOR is the respondent's self-identified position on a left-right political continuum (with 1 representing the extreme left and 10 representing the extreme right).

With the exception of political self-identification, these variables represent what are called "life chances," i.e. factors that shape people's opportunities to share in the valued goods made available by a society. [Dahrendorf 1979; cf. Ritzman and Tomaskovic-Devey 1992] In our context, each of these variables is of interest because they potentially relate to perceived prospects of benefiting from different distributive justice principles. We include political self-identification in order to examine the political-ideological shaping of preference for egalitarian or inegalitarian principles. We suspect that one of the consequences of the newly crystallizing political culture in post-communist countries is that political self-identification shows a rather weaker link to adherence to distributive justice principles, though beliefs about distributive justice are very likely among the key political issues distinguishing major political orientations in Western countries.

Confirmatory factor analysis was used to assess underlying ideologies. A recursive structural equation model was then applied to estimate the simple causal effects of the exogenous socio-demographic variables on the two underlying ideologies. The parameters of the nonrecursive model were then estimated to evaluate simultaneous direct causal relationships between the two ideologies.

As both ordinal and continuous variables entered into the analyses, input correlation matrices for both countries contained three different types of correlation coefficients: polyserial correlations (when one variable was ordinal and the other continuous), polychoric correlations (if both correlated variables were ordinal) and standard product-moment correlation (when both variables were measured on the interval scale). Furthermore, because of the violation of the assumption about normal distributions of variables (in fact all observed dependent variables violated this assumption), we were unable to apply either the Maximum Likelihood (ML) or Generalized Least Square (GLS) methods for testing the statistical fit of individual models and estimating the parameters. (Both standard

⁸) Originally there were nine "exogenous" variables in the model. To avoid multicollinearity, three variables were excluded: a socioeconomic index for the respondent's and his/her father's job, and a dummy variable distinguishing higher professionals or managers from other occupations.

errors and likelihood-ratios assessing the overall fit of the model may be underestimated in these methods if variables entering the analysis deviate from normal distribution.) For the above reasons the Weighted Least Squares (WLS) method suggested in these situations was applied. [see e.g. Jöreskog and Sörbom 1988] The program PRELIS [Jöreskog and Sörbom 1986] was used to produce the three types of correlations (polychoric, polyserial and product-moment) and to compute the asymptotic variances and covariances requested by WLS method. The models were then tested and parameters estimated by LISREL 7. [Jöreskog and Sörbom 1988] All other computations were performed by SPSSX and/or SPSS for Windows.

Instead of visual comparisons among models estimated separately for each country, multi-sample analysis was applied, in which one model may be tested simultaneously on a number of covariance (correlation) matrices representing different populations or groups. This permits testing both the general fit of the model (for all groups) and -- by imposing various equality constraints on parameters -- the similarity or dissimilarity of individual parameters between groups.

Results

To begin with, we present the simple distributions of political "left-right" self-identification (RIGHTOR - Figure 1) and the distributions of the six observed endogenous variables (EQSHR, WNEED, PAYFM, WORKH, KEARN, PASSW - Figure 2). These distributions illustrate empirically one of the initial theoretical assumptions, namely that there is an apparent similarity between the Czech and Dutch populations concerning political orientations and beliefs about the just distribution of income and wealth. Figure 1 confirms that the Dutch and Czech populations do not differ as far as the left-right political orientations are concerned, and that in the Dutch population there is even stronger support for the "moderate left" than in the Czech population, where -- for obvious historical and political reasons -- at present the "strong right" political orientation is more popular. However, if we compare the simple distributions of agreement with statements expressing various "just" rules for the distribution of income and wealth, we notice only minor differences in preferences for these rules. The exception is the role of a specific entitlement principle connected with "family size" (PAYFM), which is clearly one of the "state-socialist" principles of distribution that people still openly claim as "just" and "fair", regardless of whether they call for more meritocratic principles of distributive justice or not.

The other explicitly egalitarian principles (WNEED - a general entitlement principle, and EQSHR - the ultimately egalitarian principle) do not get stronger support from Czechs than from Dutch people. As far as the inequalitarian rules (WORKH, KEARN, PASSW) are concerned, both populations show very much the same distributions.

Figure 1: Left-right political orientation

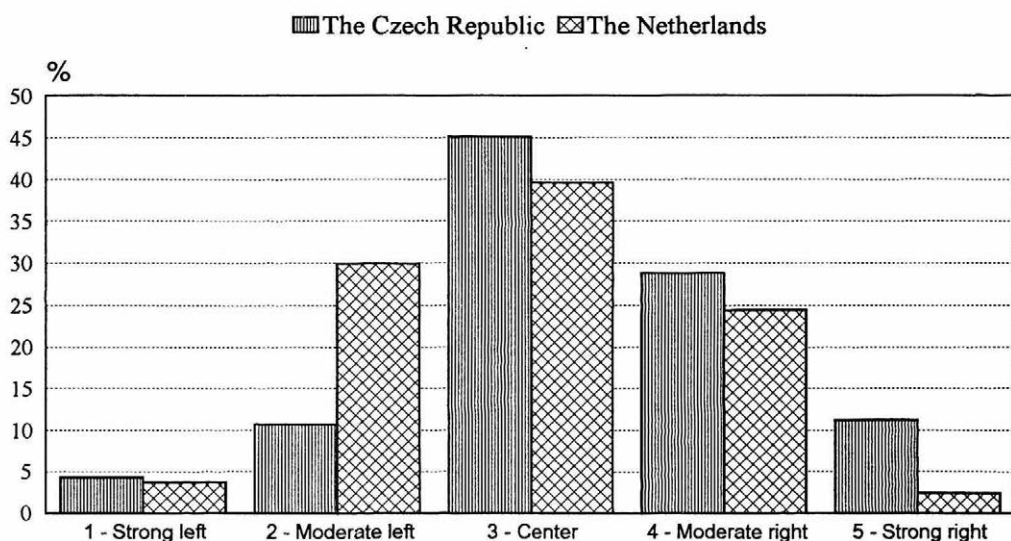
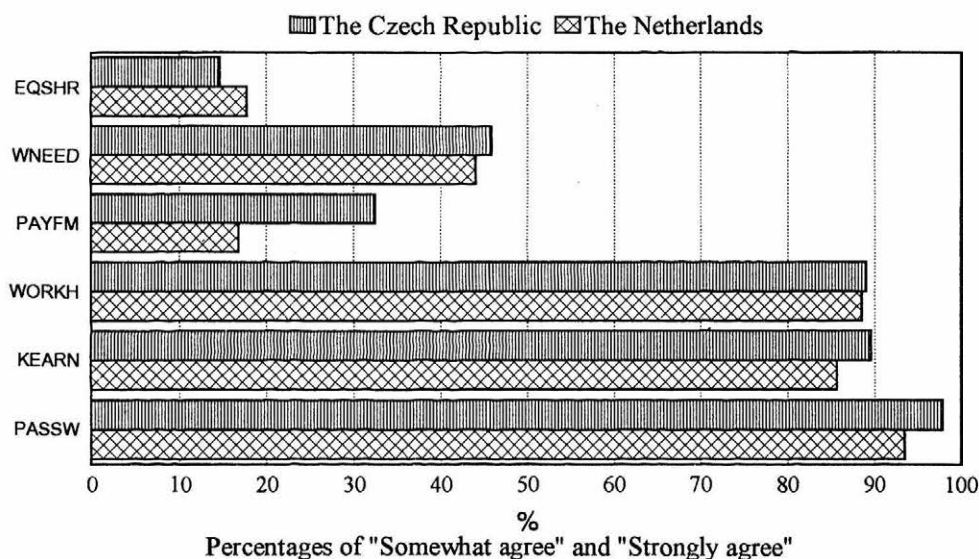


Figure 2: Agreement with individual statements about distribution rules



In order to test the above hypotheses, which try to go beyond the phenomenological similarity of egalitarian-inegalitarian orientations in the two countries, three models were tested: a) a measurement model for the two major underlying ideologies of distributive justice (Diagram 1 and Table 1), b) a structural recursive model for the six "exogenous" variables (Diagram 1, Table 2), and c) a structural nonrecursive model for the evaluation of mutual causal relations between the two endogenous variables (Diagram 2, Table 3).

The measurement model for a confirmatory factor analysis of beliefs about distributive justice is displayed on the right side of Diagram 1. In accordance with the theoretical assumptions, there are two underlying distributive norms (ideologies) in the model which were supposed to "generate" the joint distributions of six observed endogenous variables: i.e. the egalitarian norm (EQUALITY) and the inegalitarian one (EQUITY)⁹. To test the hypothesis H1, all factor loadings were initially constrained to be equal between the two countries, and only errors of measurement and selected correlations between errors of measurement were allowed to vary across nations. This highly constrained model returned a very unsatisfactory fit ($\chi^2/df > 2$), mostly because of very strong contamination of the inegalitarian norm (EQUITY) by the typical egalitarian rule of distribution "WNEED" ("people should get what they need") in the Czech Republic.¹⁰ Rather than freeing this parameter (factor loading), a virtually identical solution was chosen consisting of freeing two correlations between errors of measurement (EQSHR-WORKH and PAYFM-WNEED) in the model for the Czech Republic. This theoretically more justifiable solution led to a very significant improvement in the model fit ($\chi^2 = 14.88$ for $df = 1$), and to the conclusion that, indeed, this contamination is significant (both freed correlations between errors of measurement are statistically significant). It is also important to notice that both the Czech and Dutch populations show a significant inclination to impose some "welfare" principles onto purely meritocratic rules of distribution. (See the positive and significant correlations between errors of measurement for WORKH and PAYFM.)

As shown in Table 1, such an improved model shows an excellent fit for the data from both countries. The results displayed in Table 1 also confirm another theoretically relevant initial assumption concerning the level of "crystallization" of the two norms of distributive justice, i.e. that the two distributive norms oppose one another less sharply in the Czech Republic than in the Netherlands (-0.490 vs. -0.613).

⁹) The labels for latent endogenous variables (EQUALITY, EQUITY) should not be interpreted in any specific theoretical context. They are just abridged labels for latent variables, which - given their content - may also be labeled EGALITARIAN ORIENTATION and INEGALITARIAN ORIENTATION.

¹⁰) The modification index for loading of this variable from EQUITY reached 12.6 with suggested loading 0.424.

Diagram 1: Recursive structural model

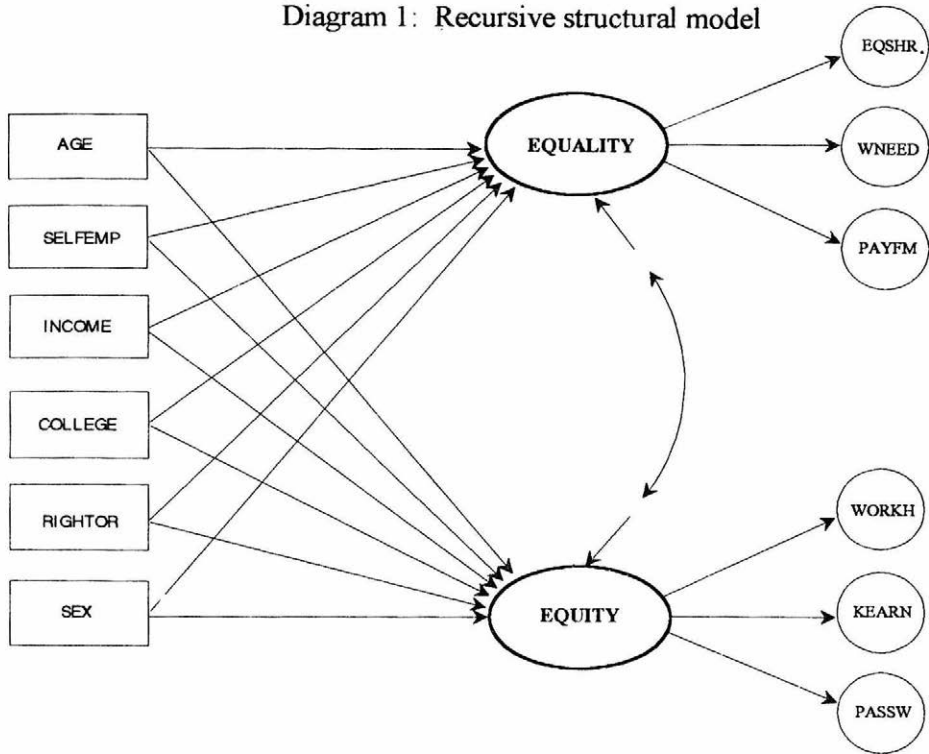
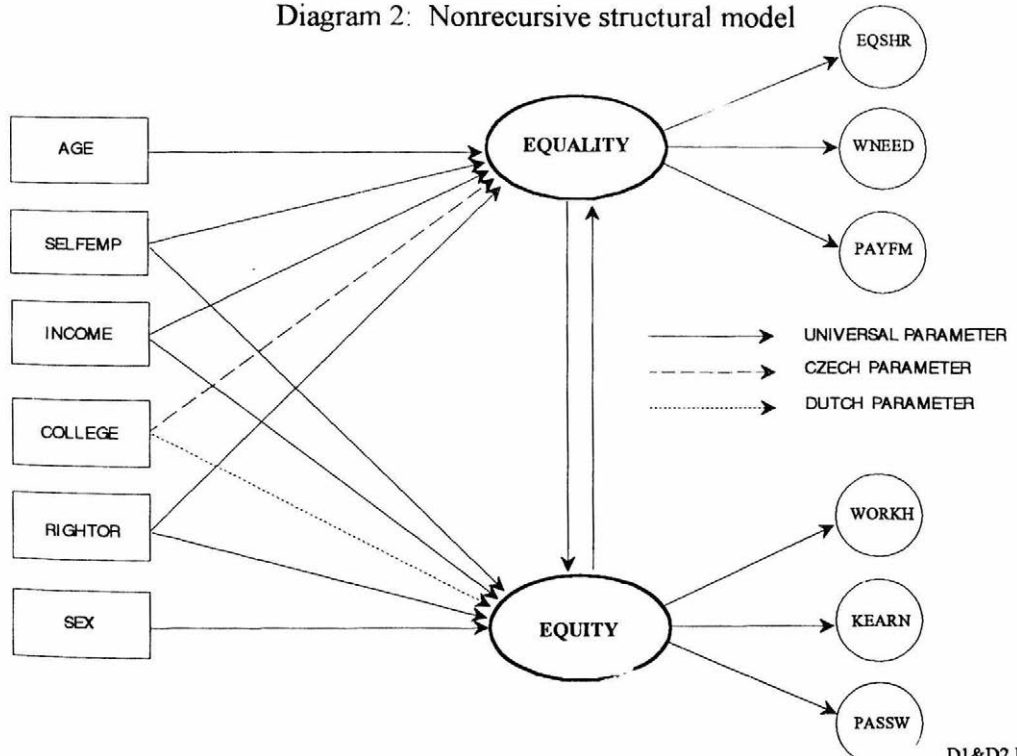


Diagram 2: Nonrecursive structural model



D1&D2.PRS

Table 1. Parameters of measurement model for EQUALITY and EQUITY - A multisample analysis

	The Czech Republic		The Netherlands	
	EQUALITY	EQUITY	EQUALITY	EQUITY
<i>a) Factor loadings (LAMBDA) - common metric standardized solution</i>				
EQHSR	.697@	.000	.697@	.000
WNEED	.168*	.000	.608***	.000
PAYFAM	.314***	.000	.314***	.000
WORKH	.000	.524	.000	.524***
KEARN	.000	.781	.000	.781***
PASSW	.000	.679	.000	.679@
<i>b) Correlations between factors (PSI)</i>				
EQUALITY-EQUITY	-.490***		-.613***	
<i>c) Correlations between errors of measurement (THETA-EPS)</i>				
EQSHR-WORKH	.183*		.000	
PAYFM-WNEED	.149*		.000	
EQSHR-PASSW	.104		.104	
WORKH-PAYFM	.112*		.112*	
<i>d) Statistics of model fit (for multisample analysis)</i>				
N of cases:	462+375=837			
df:	14			
χ^2 :	7.51			
χ^2/df :	0.54			
p:	.913			
GFI (goodness of fit index):	.998			
RMR (root mean square residual):	.032			
<hr/>				
*	.05> p > .01			
**	.01> p > .001			
***	.001> p			
@	fixed parameter			

Having such strong evidence for the existence of the two underlying ideologies¹¹ and taking the improved measurement model as a "background definition" of the two latent variables for subsequent analyses, the parameters of the recursive model were estimated to assess the direct causal effects of exogenous variables on the two latent constructs.

Diagram 1 displays the recursive structural model for the two latent endogenous variables and six exogenous variables. There are three sets of exogenous variables: three relevant indicators of one's position in the stratification system (COLLEGE, SELFEMP, INCOME), one indicator of the respondent's political orientation (RIGHTOR), and two instrumental demographic variables

¹¹) We should add that, similar to the results presented by Matějů and Kluegel [1993], the attempt to force the model to accept only one underlying concept, which would practically mean the rejection of the "split-consciousness" theory, failed -- the program showed the "inadmissibility" of the model for further computations.

(AGE, SEX). In accordance with both initial assumptions and the results from the separate estimation of the measurement model (Table 1), the recursive model allows the estimation of the correlation between error variances of the two latent variables. Table 2 gives the parameter estimates for this model. First, the model returns satisfactory fit (the ratio of chi-square to the number of degrees of freedom is below 2, the GFI index is very high and the root mean residual is far below the suggested critical value).¹² Second, even without a detailed inspection of the individual effects of exogenous variables, it is clear that the EQUALITY "counternorm" is more strongly linked to one's position in the system of social stratification than the EQUITY norm (see coefficients of determination). Nevertheless, there are also interesting differences between the two countries. First, in accordance with theoretical expectations and with hypothesis H3, the egalitarian orientation is more a stratification-related norm in the Czech Republic than in the Netherlands (r^2 : 0.406 vs. 0.355). Second, direct causal effects show that, in the Czech Republic, egalitarian ideology is much more strongly rejected by higher social status individuals (particularly by people with college or university diploma) than in the Netherlands (-.499 vs. -.162). Third, parameter estimates also show that while in the Netherlands those with higher education are more likely to reject inequalitarian norms, in the Czech Republic, college-educated individuals -- typically the losers in the "socialist redistribution" -- far more strongly support inequalitarian principles of distributive justice (-.165 vs. .339).

It is also valuable to note that correlations between the two latent constructs did not decrease evenly after the inclusion of exogenous variables: in the Czech Republic the correlation between error variances dropped to 12% of its original size (from -.490 to -.060) and has lost statistical significance, while in the Netherlands it dropped to only 33% of its original size (from -0.613 to -0.205) and remained highly significant. This result is of theoretical relevance. Though the theories discussed above suggest that the two distributive justice norms are linked to one's position in the system of social stratification, they also predict that -- if these norms are well crystalized -- first and foremost they represent different and opposing principles. The recursive model suggests that in the Czech Republic the "struggle" between the two ideologies is almost exclusively mediated by one's position in the system of social stratification, while in the Netherlands it has its autonomy, as predicted by political theories.

¹² A traditional chi-square-based likelihood ratio shows the imperfection of the model, but as the number of cases increases this criterion is less likely to show satisfactory fit. In such situations other measures are recommended. [see e.g. Wheaton et. al 1977, Byrne 1989] Both recommended criteria (RMR and χ^2/df) show quite satisfactory fit.

Table 2. Parameters of recursive model - A multisample analysis

	The Czech Republic		The Netherlands	
	Dependent variable			
	EQUALITY	EQUITY	EQUALITY	EQUITY
<hr/>				
<i>a) Direct effects (GAMMA) - common metric standardized solution</i>				
AGE	.007	.000@	.138*	.000@
SELFEMP	-.209	.116	-.121	.018
INCOME	-.198	-.154	-.077	.239
COLLEGE	-.499*	.339	-.162*	-.165
RIGHTOR	-.400***	.247***	-.431***	.323***
SEX	.000@	-.209	.000@	.103
R ²	.406	.167	.355	.154
<i>b) Correlations between EQUALITY and EQUITY (PSI)</i>				
r		-.060		-.205***
<i>c) Statistics of model fit (for multisample analysis)</i>				
N of cases:	462 + 375 = 837			
df:	66			
χ^2 :	95.65			
χ^2 /df:	1.45			
p:	0.010			
GFI (goodness of fit index):	0.988			
RMR (root mean square residual):	0.057			
<hr/>				
*	.05 > p > .01			
**	.01 > p > .001			
***	.001 > p			
@	fixed parameter			

To evaluate the interplay between the two ideologies parameters of a nonrecursive model were estimated (Diagram 2, Table 3). Firstly, the nonrecursive model shows as good fit as the nonrecursive one, though two other parameters were fixed to zero: the effect of education on EQUITY in the Czech model, and the effect of education on EQUALITY in the Dutch model. Thus this model may be considered an acceptable alternative representation of the causal relationships between exogenous and endogenous variables. Secondly, parameter estimates of the nonrecursive model show that, indeed, the two ideologies are in very different mutual causal relationships in the two compared social systems. Once simultaneous causal effects between the two latent constructs are allowed¹³ the contrast between mechanisms generating very similar distributions of distributive justice items

¹³ As shown in the table, in order to keep the model identified, this step required the fixing of additional parameters by setting them equal to zero. Several preliminary test have shown that the only admissible solution was to fix the effect of college education on EQUITY in the model for the Czech Republic and the effect of college education on EQUALITY in for the Dutch model. As well, the error variances of the two latent constructs had to be constrained to be equal between the countries, an assumption that wasn't in fact far from the truth (cf. values of R² in Table 2).

becomes more evident. The model reveals that the contrast between the two countries consists both in the effects of stratification-relevant variables on the two endogenous variables and in the causal links between the two latent constructs. In the model for the Czech Republic, the negative effects of education and self-employment on EQUALITY further increased (from -0.499 to -0.889, and from -0.209 to -0.746), whereas these parameters did not change significantly in the model for the Netherlands. Another relevant change occurred in the direct effects of political self-identification on both latent variables. While in the Netherlands both these effects increased by the same factor (1.4), in the Czech model only the negative effect of right-wing orientation on egalitarian norms increased (from -0.400 to -0.454), while the positive effect of this variable on inegalitarian inclinations virtually disappeared (from 0.247 to 0.012). In our view, this result also supports the assumption that in the Czech Republic the struggle between the two ideologies is less a matter of a relatively autonomous political orientation than a direct consequence of the evaluation of both previous ("socialist") and present ("transitional") life-chances. This assumption may also help in the interpretation of the striking result that income in the Czech Republic apparently plays quite an opposite role than in the Netherlands. Estimated correlation matrices (displayed in the Appendix) tell us quite a different story: income shows weaker correlations with the two latent variables in the Netherlands than in the Czech Republic, where the negative correlation of income with EQUALITY and the positive correlation with EQUITY are very high. As the model shows, the solution to this puzzle lies in the role of education. If higher income is associated with higher education (college diploma), then support for EQUITY and rejection of EQUALITY have one strong factor in common: feelings of opening opportunities if the role of egalitarian principles in the distribution of income weakens. Consequently, if we control for the strong effects of education and self-employment, higher income is very likely associated with one's previous position, either directly or indirectly through various "conversion" strategies. [see e.g. Matějů 1993, Matějů and Řeháková 1993] Having taken these underlying relationships in account, the reversal of the effect of income may be effectively explained.

With regard to the objectives of this paper, the remaining two parameters of the nonrecursive model, i.e. the direct simultaneous causal effects between the two ideologies, are the most important. While in the Netherlands the inegalitarian norms of distributive justice show a strong capacity to resist potential "temptations" or "attacks" from the egalitarian interpretation of distributive justice (-0.400), this capacity is still almost non-existent in the Czech Republic (-0.077). On the other hand, among the Dutch population the tendency of egalitarian inclinations to challenge existing meritocratic rules is not very strong (-0.296), while among the Czech population the egalitarian interpretation of distributive justice still represents quite a strong challenge for the rising inegalitarian and meritocratic interpretation of distributive justice (-0.498).

Table 3. Parameters of nonrecursive model - A multisample analysis

	The Czech Republic		The Netherlands	
	Dependent variable			
	EQUALITY	EQUITY	EQUALITY	EQUITY
<i>a) Direct effects (GAMMA, BETA) - common metric standardized solution</i>				
AGE	-.131	.000@	.144*	.000@
SELFEMP	-.746*	-.123	-.101	.017
INCOME	.251***	-.274	-.115*	.318
COLLEGE	-.889***	.000@	.000@	-.157
RIGHTOR	-.454***	.012	-.257**	.221*
SEX	.000@	-.329	.000@	.230
EQUALITY	.000	-.077	.000	-.400*
EQUITY	-.498	.000	-.296	.000
R ²	.753	.339	.583	.383
<i>b) Statistics of model fit (for multisample analysis)</i>				
N of cases:	462 + 375 = 837			
df:	68			
χ^2 :	102.67			
χ^2/df :	1.5			
p:	0.004			
GFI (goodness of fit index):	0.987			
RMR (root mean square residual):	0.057			

*	.05 > p > .01
**	.01 > p > .001
***	.001 > p
@	fixed parameter

Conclusions

The question of primary theoretical importance we set for this paper was whether "split-consciousness" theories and theories predicting relationships between dominant and challenging ideologies have merit for the study of the post-communist transformation, particularly for the explanation of a transition from egalitarian to inegalitarian principles of distributive justice.

Returning to the initial five operational hypotheses, some general conclusions can be drawn:

1. The Czech-Dutch comparison, similar to other recent studies [Ritzman and Tomaskovic-Devey 1992, Matějů and Kluegel 1993, Wegener and Liebig 1992] has proved the merit of split-consciousness theories, namely their common assumption that there is no simple "equality-equity" continuum, but rather overlapping, though principally opposing, patterns of beliefs about distributive justice. Furthermore, the split consciousness perspective may help in the understanding of the transitional situation in post-communist countries. In accordance with this perspective and other assumptions concerning the post-communist transformation, the analysis verified the initial assumption that the

Czech population would show less consistent popular "definitions" of the two underlying distributive norms than the Dutch population. More specifically, the analysis pointed out that Czechs are more likely to mix typically egalitarian principles with clearly meritocratic rules of distributive justice.

2. The analysis also confirmed that due to the transitional situation the two "ideologies" are less opposed to each other in the Czech Republic than in the Netherlands. Regardless of the internal consistency of the "inegalitarian" and "egalitarian" interpretation of distributive justice, in the Czech Republic the two ideologies and their corresponding judgements are more likely to be mixed-up and interchanged in the face of different life situations. In the Netherlands the two ideologies show both a greater internal consistency and a stronger mutual contrast.

3. In accordance with various theoretical predictions, the analysis shows that the egalitarian ideology is more strongly linked to one's position in the system of social stratification than the inegalitarian norms of distributive justice. Regarding differences between the two countries, hypotheses H3 and H4 were corroborated by the results. Egalitarian distributive ideology is more a stratification-related norm in the Czech Republic than in the Netherlands. In the Czech Republic, higher status individuals and particularly holders of college or university diplomas, who were the typical losers in the "socialist redistribution," tend to vigorously reject the egalitarian interpretation of distributive justice. In the Netherlands, on the contrary, these individuals are more likely to reject inegalitarian norms.

4. In general it has been proven that in the Czech Republic the "struggle" between the two distributive ideologies is almost exclusively mediated by one's position in the social stratification system, while in the Netherlands these two ideologies show a quite autonomous relation of mutual counteraction. One of the most important results of the comparative analysis is the assessment that in the Czech Republic the capacity of inegalitarian norms of distributive justice to resist the egalitarian counternorm is still much weaker than in the Netherlands. On the contrary, the egalitarian distributive ideology remains a strong challenge for the rising meritocratic interpretation of distributive justice.

5. Regarding the creation of the Czech political landscape, two results are relevant. First, the analysis verified that the right-wing political orientation predicts quite accurately the rejection of egalitarianism but -- with other stratification relevant factors being held constant -- it does not predict a tendency towards the meritocratic and inegalitarian interpretation of distributive justice at all. This particular inconsistency is undoubtedly a typical product of the transitional situation characterized by a new political culture still in a period of crystallization. Second, the analysis has revealed that, from the point of view of system legitimacy, the situation in the Czech Republic is not as satisfactory as the results of simple public opinion polls may indicate. Though there is clear and strong support for inegalitarian and meritocratic norms of distribution in the Czech Republic, there is also quite strong evidence that there are two potential sources of instability based on the lack of legitimacy. Firstly, we found evidence of some "psychological instability" [Wesolowski and Wnuk-Lipinski 1992], represented by more ambiguous popular definitions of egalitarian versus inegalitarian norms of distributive justice

than in the Netherlands. As shown by Matějů and Kluegel [1993] this conclusion holds for post-communist countries in general. Secondly, from the point of view of system legitimacy, one of the most important results of our analysis is that the inclination to either the egalitarian or the inegalitarian interpretation of social justice is strongly linked to one's position in the social stratification system. If the theoretical proposition according to which system legitimacy is seriously undermined if the prevailing distributive principles (represented by a dominant distributive ideology) are not accepted by those who are not favored by them is true, we may conclude that system legitimacy in the Czech Republic is still weaker than in western capitalist countries. We found that the autonomy of beliefs about distributive justice in the Czech Republic is very weak, and that the "struggle" between the egalitarian and inegalitarian interpretations of distributive justice is almost exclusively mediated by one's position in the system of social stratification and the corresponding life chances that distinguish quite effectively between "winners" and "losers" in the transformation process. In this respect the latent contest between the two major interpretations of distributive justice present in any social system may -- under certain political or economic circumstances -- take on the form of open political conflict.

In conclusion, we believe that this paper has proven the potential value of the study of social justice beliefs and their dynamics, especially in countries undergoing post-communist transformation. One of the aims of this analysis has been to show that research on the crystallization of distributive justice ideologies may contribute significantly to answering irritating theoretical questions, as well as practical ones concerning the social and political consequences of the differing speeds of the various levels of the historically unprecedented social transformation set in motion in formerly communist countries in 1989. In this respect, it would be extremely valuable to replicate this study some years in the future using updated survey data. Such a replication study would be able to show the real dynamics of the subjective dimension of the post-communist transformation, where the historical clock is running most slowly, and where the most significant potential for social tension and political conflict lies.

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Appendix Estimated correlation coefficients

	EQUITY		AGE		INCOME		RIGHT	
	EQUALITY	SEX	AGE	SELFE	INCOME	COLL	RIGHT	COLL
<i>A. The Czech Republic</i>								
EQUALITY	1.000							
EQUITY	-.514	1.000						
SEX	.270	-.246	1.000					
AGE	-.086	.030	-.023	1.000				
SELFE	-.370	.070	-.388	-.177	1.000			
INCOME	-.564	.218	-.709	.174	.535	1.000		
COLLEGE	-.532	.250	-.121	.209	-.253	.459	1.000	
RIGHTOR	-.410	.256	-.144	-.101	.112	.097	-.060	1.000
<i>B. The Netherlands</i>								
EQUALITY	1.000							
EQUITY	-.712	1.000						
SEX	.157	-.080	1.000					
AGE	.103	.021	-.112	1.000				
SELFE	-.156	.066	.033	.077	1.000			
INCOME	-.155	.130	-.769	.215	-.156	1.000		
COLLEGE	.085	-.111	-.018	.048	-.124	.374	1.000	
RIGHTOR	-.478	.360	-.136	.051	.146	.056	-.205	1.000

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OF COURSE WE HAVE OUR OWN DATA BANK, GRAND DAD! BUT WE DON'T
CARRY IT AROUND WITH US!..