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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper examines the change in Czech women's position in the labor market since the revolution and focuses on the effects of the transition from a planned economy to a market economy on women's integration of family and work responsibilities. By comparing the following variables from before and after the 1989 revolution, labor force participation rates, occupational segmentation, wage differences, social policy regarding working women and families, discrimination in the labor market, and women's attitudes about family and work, the author determines that on the whole, no fundamental change has occurred for Czech women in the labor market. No mass exodus from the labor market has taken place, as originally feared and the labor force participation rate remains high. Rather, different segments of women have been affected both positively and negatively, depending upon their jobs, their financial situations, their attitudes about work and family, and their locale (rural vs. urban). Attitudes about work have changed to some extent, with the younger generation more eager to pursue careers before starting their families. In general, women continue to prioritize family, but manage well their full-time jobs and families. The author concludes with a section based on one-on-one between interviews with women throughout the Czech Republic, in which excerpts from the interviews are presented without analysis or comment. The main sources of data for this paper are journal articles, working papers, surveys conducted by the Czech Institute of Sociology and by IREX, and personal interviews conducted by the author.

## INTRODUCTION

Since the early 1950's, Czech women have had an important position in the labor market with an extremely high labor force participation rate, similar to that of other planned economies. Following the revolution in 1989, the position of women in the labor market has been closely examined to determine whether the high labor force participation rates would fall and whether women's position in the labor market in general would become more similar to that of women in other market economies (in some cases, lower labor force participation rate, higher unemployment, and more part-time work) or whether the more than three-fourths of Czech women who participated in the labor market would continue working full-time.

In this paper, I am seeking to answer the question of how the Czech women's position in the labor market has changed since the 1989 revolution and whether or not these changes have been viewed positively or negatively by Czech women. I define women's position in the labor market as number of hours worked, wages, fringe benefits, job security, social benefits from government (i.e., maternity leave, child payments), role in household, and amount of stress due to work and home responsibilities. After breaking down each of the above-mentioned variables both during communism and following the revolution, I find that there is no clear-cut answer that applies to the entire female population. In many respects there are contrary indicators, and often certain factors determine for each individual whether her situation has changed for the better or worse.

In Section I, titled "Women in Labor under Totalitarianism," I will examine a variety of variables including, labor force participation rates, occupational segmentation, wage differentials, social policy, and discrimination during totalitarianism, i.e., from the late 1940's to 1989. I also will include a discussion of the communist regime's approach towards work and how it affected women's current attitudes and behavior regarding the labor market. In Section II, titled "The Revolution and Ensuing Changes for Women in the Labor Market," I will assess the present situation of Czech women in the labor market, considering all of the above-mentioned variables as well as closely examining women's changing attitudes about work. These two sections are based on recently published working papers, articles, and the 1994 and 1995 surveys on Czech women in the labor market conducted by the Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. In the conclusion, I will offer my opinion on the future of women in the labor market in the Czech Republic and possible courses of change. Finally, in Section III, I will conclude the paper with a qualitative presentation of women's current views based on 10 one-hour interviews that I conducted in the spring of 1997 with women throughout the Czech Republic.

## **1. WOMEN IN LABOR UNDER TOTALITARIANISM**

### **1.1. Socialist ideology—In theory and in practice**

The socialist ideology regarding the liberation of women was developed by Friedrich Engels who theorized that equality among sexes could be obtained if private property were abolished, women were employed, and their in-home responsibilities and child care were socialized, i.e., provided by a communist government. This would, in theory, enable women to be free from the oppressive double burden of working in the labor market and taking care of the family and housework. (McMahon 94)

In the Czech Republic, women were driven into the labor market in the 1950's, as a part of the huge industrial expansion required by the first five-year plan (1949-53). Effectively, the government involved as much of the previously inactive labor resources as possible because of the need for cheap inputs (i.e., labor) and women accounted for more than half of the increase in labor required by the industrialization drive. By 1970, women made up 44.6 percent of the labor force, with the government declaring women as "emancipated." They reinforced this social policy with low-wage levels (resulting in the necessity of two incomes per family), price subsidies for food, free health care, and free education. (Paukert 91)

However, rather than being "emancipated" by their participation in the labor market, women were required to fulfill two roles: working full-time and taking care of the household and family. Women struggled with a full-time work week and all responsibilities at home since men were not inclined to partake in the majority of household chores. In addition, women felt restrained by this double burden in the workplace because the time they took off for childbearing and for taking care of sick children often limited their advancement opportunities and wages. The constraints of working full-time and raising a family became evident in the falling birth rates. In 1960, they reached record-low levels and the government decided to introduce family support social programs and a pronatality policy, including: an extended paid maternity leave, family allowances, nurseries and kindergartens, and a reduction of rent based on number of children. (Heitlinger 95)

Despite these measures, the concept of socialized housework and day care failed to manifest itself in practical terms. Whereas nurseries and day care at minimal cost were available (although painful shortages existed), little had been done to ease women's burdens at home. The planners gave priority to industrial goods and few domestic labor-saving devices were produced, such as kitchen appliances, washing machines, dryers, and dishwashers. Women were responsible for all the traditional "women's" tasks in the household such as cooking, cleaning, doing laundry, ironing, taking care of children, etc. Sex-role stereotypes were perpetuated by the socialist propaganda and men were not encouraged to increase their role in the household. Furthermore, the shortage economy resulted in extreme difficulties in obtaining regular basic goods and services. Women had to spend hours waiting in line for basic goods, including meat and fruit, clothing, toiletries, and any Western-produced or

modern product. The hours spent waiting has led some to re-label “double burden” to “triple burden”: work, housework, and shopping (waiting in lines). (Heitlinger 95)

In 1988, Czechoslovakia had the longest working hours in the manufacturing sector in all of Europe. Moreover, even though a breakdown of working hours by gender is not available, the sectors with a high percentage of female employment often had longer working hours. For instance, in the food processing sector (dominated by women), the working week was 44.7 hours whereas in the basic metals sector, dominated by males, the working week was 41.7 hours. In addition, Czechoslovakia had fewer holidays than other OECD countries and 20 percent higher average annual working hours than in OECD countries. (Paukert 91) (However, many Czech women were able to reduce their daily work hours in practice; see the discussion in D) Wages and the wage gap)

## 1.2. Labor force participation rates

The Czech labor market under communism entailed high labor force participation rates for women, low controlled wages bearing no relation to productivity, low labor productivity, and a high concentration of labor in industry and agriculture (Jackman and Rutkowski 93).

The women’s labor force participation rate (LFPR) rose dramatically between 1950 and 1980, decreasing slightly in the late 1980’s. This drastic rise in the 1950’s, 1960’s, and 1970’s diverges from the slower growth pattern of LFPR’s for women in the Western Europe and the US (their LFPR’s significantly increased later in the 1970’s and 1980’s).

Table 1 **Labor Force Participation Rates for Women Forty to Forty-four years of Age in Various Countries, 1950-85**

Region and country	1950	1960	1970	1980	1985
<i>Central and Eastern Europe</i>					
Bulgaria	78.6	83.4	88.5	92.5	93.3
<b>Czechoslovakia</b>	<b><u>52.3</u></b>	<b><u>67.3</u></b>	<b><u>79.9</u></b>	<b><u>91.3</u></b>	<b><u>92.4</u></b>
German Democratic Republic	61.9	72.7	79.1	83.6	86.1
Hungary	29.0	51.8	69.4	83.2	84.7
Poland	66.4	69.1	79.5	83.2	84.7
Romania	75.8	76.4	79.5	83.1	85.1
USSR	66.8	77.9	93.2	96.9	96.8
<i>Northern Europe</i>	30.9	39.9	53.8	69.9	71.1
<i>Western Europe</i>	34.5	39.5	46.4	55.1	55.6
<i>Southern Europe</i>	22.4	25.3	29.7	35.7	37.1

Source: Jackman and Rutkowski 1993.

Almost all women of productive age worked full-time and there was little or no difference by the 1980's between LFPR's for single women and for married women. Even women with three children or more had a LFPR of 71.6 percent in 1970, 88 percent in 1980 (compared to 81 percent and 90 percent respectively for women with one child) (Data o zenach 96). Only 11.6 percent of women worked part-time (in other industrialized nations with high labor force participation rates up to 40 percent of women worked part-time—most notably in Scandinavia.) The typical pattern for women was to work for a few years after completing secondary school or university, have a child, work again, have another child and return to work. Most women reentered the labor force within one or two years of the birth of the child, despite the three-year maternity leaves. Employers were required to guarantee women's jobs for the entire three years. However, opportunities for promotions and career advancements often were foregone. (Cermakova, Interview 97)

### **1.3. Occupational segmentation and the labor market**

The industrialization drive of the first five-year plan resulted in a huge number of workers, male and female, being directed into heavy industry. By the early 1960's, 54 percent of the male workforce and 37 percent of the female workforce worked in manufacturing, mining, public utilities, and construction. This structure remained the same throughout the following thirty years. Women were also highly employed in industrial administrative and service jobs because their labor was cheap and available. (Paukert 91)

The division between men and women began even before they entered the labor market, i.e., in secondary school and at the university. Even though a higher percentage of girls graduated from the generally academic "gymnasium" (the most difficult type of secondary school), a higher percentage of men graduated from the universities. As for specialized secondary schools, girls were concentrated in the secondary schools of health, economics, and pedagogy whereas boys made up the majority in the industrial schools. Furthermore, a large number of boys attended vocational schools or had apprenticeships, which resulted in high-paying jobs under communism (carpenter, plumber, miner, etc.). (Cermakova, Interview 97)

The segmentation evident in the educational system was parallel to that of the labor market. Several sectors were highly feminized under communism, namely, health, teaching and the service sector (clerks, secretaries, banks). In 1986-87, women dominated the following industries: clothing industry (89.3 percent), social welfare industry (90.3 percent), health service (86 percent), banking and insurance sector (75.2 percent), education and culture (75 percent). (Hubner Maier, and Rudolph 93)

Women also had the majority in light industry holding mostly semi-skilled or unskilled jobs, whereas men dominated in heavy industry. At the time, the best-paid and most prestigious jobs were the skilled occupations in heavy industry, whereas clerical, administrative and service jobs were ranked at the bottom. (Hubner et al 93)

**Table 2 Percentage share of women in industry in late 1989 (at the time of revolution)**

Industry	Czech	Republic
	F	M
<b>Total</b>	<b>45.8</b>	<b>54.2</b>
Agriculture & forestry	37.6	62.4
Industry	40.3	79.7
Construction	14.0	86.0
Trade (retail)	71.5	28.5
Transport & communication	33.7	66.3
Banking and insurance	76.9	23.1
Real estate & business services	52.8	47.2
Administration and defense	63.1	36.9
Education	70.9	29.1
Health and social care	80.2	19.8
Other services	46.3	53.7

Source: Paukert 1995

The feminized sectors were given little respect because of the general stereotype that women were less competent than men, and more passive with not enough time for their job. Even within sectors that were more balanced between men and women such as agriculture and manufacturing, women held different positions than men, usually lower level positions, were paid less, and were not as respected as men. (Cermakova and Hradecka 94)

This general lack of respect for the feminized sectors was magnified by the assumption (by male employers) that all women would eventually have children and leave the labor market for some years. In this manner, women often were kept in jobs that had little or no advancement because it was assumed that women were not willing to give enough time to meet successfully the challenges of a more demanding position. In addition to horizontal segregation, due to the political situation in the country, women were also limited vertically if they didn't have the "correct" political qualifications (and even women who did were not as successful as men in reaching high-level positions). (Cermakova and Hradecka 94)

#### **1.4. Wages and the wage gap**

Wage distribution in Czechoslovakia was the tightest and most egalitarian among the former socialist countries. Two-thirds of all monthly salaries were within the range of \$60 to \$120, with certain industrial branches receiving special treatment. Following the communist takeover in 1948, the free labor market was removed,



bureaucratic labor administration was introduced, and wages were equalized in favor of manual labor as a means to maintain the political loyalty of important elements of the working class. (Vecernik 95) Despite the purported goal of equal pay for equal work between men and women, Czechoslovakia had the largest wage gap of all socialist economies. In 1984, women on average earned about 45 percent less than their male counterparts despite party membership, position in former Communist Party, marital status, and firm characteristics such as branch and occupation. (Sakova 96)

**Table 3 Average Monthly Wage in Czechoslovak Crowns in 1984 and 1988**

Year	Women	Men	Total	Difference		Ratio
				in Kcs	in %	W/M
1984	2287	3342	2914	-1055	-46.1	68.4
1988	2778	2917	3431	-1139	-41.0	70.9

Source: Cermakova 1995

Differentials between men and women in 1988, ranged from 79.1 percent among service workers to 65.1 percent among administrative and managerial positions (Paukert 91). In general, two-thirds of all monthly wages fell between 2,000 to 4,000 Czech crowns (\$80 to \$125). The lower wages were found in the strongly feminized sectors of light industry, health care, and administrative and personal services. Higher wages belonged to the male-dominated branches such as mining and heavy industry. (Nesporova 93) Much of the wage gap between manual workers can be explained by the preference given to heavy physical labor and heavy industry. The large differential in services and administrative positions demonstrated that men dominated the managerial posts. Among university-educated men and women, women had significantly lower salaries. (Paukert 91)

The Czechoslovak human capital model differed significantly from that of market economies because of the unusual emphasis on age and gender as opposed to education and qualifications. Men in general, and the older generation (founders of the communist regime) were the most rewarded. In 1988, gender and age were accountable for 36 percent of the wage gap whereas education explained only another 8 percent. (Vecernik 95)

High wages were correlated with hard physical work, length of tenure, technical education, and heavy industrial activities. Women were disadvantaged in all areas because they tended to have less tenure (early retirement age and maternity leave), less technical education, and were concentrated in light industry, services and education. (Paukert 91) Even though the wage gap in the Czechoslovakia paralleled that of many other Western European countries and the US, it has been suggested that Czech women were relatively worse off because their wage differentials could not be explained in the same manner. In Western countries the wage gap partially

could be explained by women's shorter working careers (with several years dedicated to raising family), lower average-age while working, and acceptance of part-time work. (Paukert 91) In Czechoslovakia, very few women worked part-time and did not take more than two to five years of maternity leave to be with young children. At the same time, it is difficult to compare the Czech wage gap to those of other industrial countries because of the Czech human capital model's tendency to reward experience (age) and gender rather than education and qualifications as in the Western free market economies. (Vecernik 95) In addition, wages were not determined by the free market and influenced by planning authorities.

Political factors played a role in the wage gap as well. They influenced both education (enabling one to attend a prestigious school) and type of jobs, promotions, financial compensation, etc. In order to receive a top-level or high-powered position, one almost without exception had to be a member of the Communist Party (Lobodzinska 95). The categories of workers who most benefited were the top state and party bureaucracy, and army and police officers. Party office for men was associated with an earnings premium of about 14 percent whereas party membership resulted in a premium of 10 percent. For women it was slightly less. (Vecernik 95) However, due to women's responsibilities at work and at home, few women had time for party membership and duties. This required time-consuming activities usually performed during and after working hours and women were unable to participate because of work and family constraints. As a result, they were less likely to receive politically motivated promotions or prestigious jobs. The top level management thus remained all-male and, according to one analyst, women's interests were rarely considered or defended. (Lobodzinska 95)

One characteristic of socialist economies concerning wages, is the importance of other types of non-monetary remuneration. Although wages were held artificially low by government planners, several jobs offered other benefits to its employees, especially to women. Since in many sectors, people were not required nor motivated to work hard while at work, many women would take the chance to leave during work hours and take care of personal business. This sort of behavior was common, accepted, and usually overlooked by superiors. (Raabe 97) The 1988 International Labour Office survey showed that as many as 70 percent of women could leave their workplace during working hours to take care of personal business (Paukert 91). For the most part, women partook in this behavior to manage the double burden of working full-time and taking care of the family and household. A second note-worthy non-monetary remuneration consisted of pilfering goods from one's workplace or through connections. For example, women who worked in a butcher's shop were able to get choice cuts of meat for their families or save them for friends. Women's incomes were thus supplemented by being able to leave during the day to take care of personal matters and by the various goods and supplies they could obtain from their workplace or through friends and connections. This was a consideration for women as well when selecting a job and in some ways, narrowed the wage gap, because men often did not have the same liberties. (Paukert 95)

## **1.5. Social Policy**

To compensate for the low wages, the socialist regime offered a wide-spreading social policy that consisted of two main elements: cash benefits such as pensions, student grants, paid holidays, and assistance to families, and public services such as health care, education, housing, child-care facilities, homes for the elderly and cultural activities. All citizens were covered by a social security plan and unemployment benefits did not exist because everyone was expected and obliged to work. Women and families received extra benefits including an extended maternity leave, and an assistance allowance for workers who had to care for a sick child. Women received paid maternity leave for 28 weeks and were allowed to stay home until the child's third birthday, receiving allowances during this time equivalent to the number of children in the family. Moreover, the government provided school meals, summer and winter camps for children, and canteen meals organized by enterprises, all of which aided working mothers. At the same time, other services that would have greatly aided working women were neglected, such as longer opening hours and a greater number of stores, laundries, and repair services. (Hubner et al. 93)

## **1.6. Discrimination**

As a result of these extensive social policies, notably those targeted at working mothers, employers found women's labor to be expensive and inflexible and women job seekers often were hindered by the assumption that they would get married, have children, and spend several years on maternity leave (Paukert 91). Furthermore, since some women spent several hours a week away from the office on personal matters, they developed a reputation for being unreliable and unwilling to work as many hours as their male counterparts. Even though male superiors allowed women this "informal flex-time" at the same time, they often would not consider women for promotions or higher-level positions because of their poor reputation. (Raabe 97)

## **1.7. Attitudes about work and family**

According to Barbara Lobodzinska in *Family, Women, and Employment in Central-Eastern Europe*, "Western interpretations of women's motivation for work tend to recognize employment as a means to liberation from economic dependence on men, as self-expression, and as a factor in gaining social prestige." For Czech women, this definition had little to do with being a working woman under the socialist system. The word "career" tended to have political connotations and little relation to the Western concept of a life-long dedication to and development within a profession. Employment under the communist regime for both men and women was characterized by authoritarian control by Communist elite, insufficient compensation unrelated to effort and accomplishments, and limited advancement opportunities (Raabe 97). Albeit finding employment enjoyable at times, most women worked for financial reasons, but found few opportunities for personal growth or self-realization. Much was determined by one's political beliefs, and those who were not members of the Communist Party, were quite limited in their career advancement. Furthermore, in

socialism, women's work was sometimes meaningless, considered even harmful to society (such as projects of socialism, armament industry, opencast mines, dams, etc.) and for women it could not be compared to the important contributions they made at home and in their families. (Siklova 95)

During the communist era, the slogan "women's emancipation" was often used and equated with full-time employment for women. However, since women were not given the choice due to their obligation to work and the need for two incomes, the term "emancipation" came to be viewed quite negatively and without any relation to the Western concept of the word (equality with male counterparts in the workplace and at home). (Stasna 93)

Women accepted their dual role and chose to focus on their families and on garnering satisfaction from their private lives. For both genders, family was the area of safety and comfort, a sort of home-base. Women were usually responsible for providing a comfortable environment to which their families, mainly their husbands, could escape from the daily problems of living in a communist society. (Siklova 95) A certain public sphere/private sphere mentality became characteristic of the Czech population. Public activities (i.e., work, shopping, or any activity done outside of the circle of family and close friends) were viewed as perfunctory. (Raabe 97) It was within the family, at home, and with close friends and relatives that Czechs opened up, trusted each other and really "lived." Instead of putting much effort and time into their jobs, women preferred to devote themselves to their children, relatives and personal hobbies. Almost every Czech family had a cottage or country home in which they invested a great deal of time and energy. Women would do gardening, cook, and spend time with children as a weekend refuge from daily life in the communist regime. (Cermakova, Interview 97)

On average, employed Czech women spent 30 hours a week on housework, which is about two-thirds more than their counterparts in Western Europe and the US. Men only spent about half that amount of time on housework. (Stasna 93) Nowhere in the socialist ideology of emancipation, was there room for change in men's attitudes and behavior. Nor was it openly considered that men could also contribute more to help women with their numerous duties and chores. In some families there were exceptions, but as a rule, women's responsibilities were shared by her and the society, not specifically with her husband. (Data a Fakta 9.96) However, even though women often worked 13 to 14 hours a day (in the workplace and at home), they never saw themselves as victims of male chauvinism or inequality in the society. Instead, they accepted their double burden and saw themselves as strong, capable, and self-reliant since they were able to earn wages and take care of their families. (Heitlinger 95) Although the Czech population was and still is passive by nature (partially due to the dominance of the paternalistic communist state, among other reasons) (Kroupova 92) women were quite strong and capable and managed their families and jobs.

Few Czech women thought it important enough to divide society along gender lines. Women always felt a certain sort of solidarity with men and viewed themselves as citizens above all. Even under the Austro-Hungarian empire, Czechs were bonded together by their fear of the common enemy, the Hapsburg monarchy. Later,

during WWII, men and women bonded in their fighting against fascism, and in the subsequent four decades, men and women struggled together against communism. (Siklova 95) During communism, women had a more valued position at home, and were considered to have it easier, because they had more of an escape from the socialist society (Drakulic 87). In fact, Czech women sometimes used children as an excuse not to join the Communist Party and women's participation in the Communist Party was conspicuously low compared to men. (Heitlinger 95)

As far as the concept of feminism was concerned, the Communist Party ridiculed the Western feminist movement and feminists were characterized as “spoiled, misguided, irrational man-hating eccentrics.” (Lobodzinska 95) Czech women remained loyal to their husbands and male partners and were proud of the distinguishing factors between them and men. Few felt discriminated against per se or were bothered by the status quo. They felt that dividing the society by gender was not suitable for the Czech society.

## **2. THE REVOLUTION AND ENSUING CHANGES FOR WOMEN IN THE LABOR MARKET**

### **2.1. Post 1989 events**

In 1989, the communist regime fell, and as the private sector began to develop slowly and privatization occurred, the structure of the Czech labor market began to change and adjust to the new circumstances. Labor mobility increased significantly as people were given choices and their decisions were no longer influenced by political motives, nor were they limited in their ambitions. At the same time, between 1990 and 1994, real income fell by 15 percent (Paukert 95) and many of the benefits secured by the socialist regime were foregone, or are slowly being dismantled.

Many feared that Czech women would exit the labor force, since for the past four decades they were required to work in the labor market. Moreover, several political parties proclaimed that women should return to the household and that the “overemployment” brought on by communism could be eliminated by reducing women's employment. (Cermakova and Hradecka 94) However, even though at the beginning women were considerably afraid and uncertain about the impending changes brought on by the market mechanism, Czech women's labor force participation rates have remained high, and most have chosen to continue full-time employment.

## 2.2. Labor force participation rates

Since 1989, the labor force participation rate for the entire working age population has decreased by about 10 percent for women and 6-7 percent for men. For all working age women, the labor force participation rate is 81.6 percent (Socialni Politika 96). The decrease in both men's and women's LFPR's results from the restructuring of the economy since the transition and has brought the LFPR's closer to their Western counterparts. Women still make up 46.2 percent of the labor force as a whole and in 1995, 87 percent of women aged 25-54 were economically active (compared with, for example, a 75 percent rate for that age group in the United States). (Statistical Yearbook 96, Cermakova and Hradecka 94, Raabe 97) The majority of women who left the labor force (and majority of men as well) were of retirement age (62 percent of women who withdrew from the labor market were 55 or older). As for work-age women (20-54), their LFPR declined by only 4.1 percent. Most of the decrease in the LFPR occurred in the early phase of the transition, during the shock therapy period when many drastic measures were taken to liberalize the economy. Age has proven to be a more important factor in withdrawal from the labor force than gender, mainly because of various measures taken by the government to encourage older workers and old-age pensioners to retire in order to limit the growth of unemployment. Moreover, enterprise managers working with tighter budget constraints showed a bias against older workers in lay-offs and once they lost their jobs it was harder for them to be rehired or to learn new skills. (Paukert 95)

Retirement age for women in the Czech Republic is 55 years (lower for women with three or more children) and many women in their fifties have retired in order to help their daughters with their children and grandchildren with family responsibilities. With the reduction of child-care facilities (namely, nurseries), some older women also left the labor force in order to help with childcare. As a result, a large proportion of women in their mid to late 50's are retired and receiving income from a minimal pension (their pensions are lower than men's since, as women, they had shorter working careers and less prestigious jobs). (Paukert 95)

Unemployment has been minimal, at about 3 percent (compared to 14 percent in Slovakia, 17 percent in Poland and 11 percent in Hungary). (Paukert 95) However, the possibility does exist that it could rise slightly in the near future due to recent austerity measures by the government. (Larsen 97)

Within the unemployed, women have represented a majority and currently make up about 60 percent of the total 3.1 percent unemployment rate (4 percent women vs. 2.4 percent men). This suggests that women are discriminated against in dismissal and recruitment practices. Women have a higher unemployment rate than men in manufacturing, but women with basic or no education have a lower unemployment rate than men in that category, suggesting that unskilled jobs are more available and easier to keep for women, mainly because they are willing to work for low wages. Finally, workers with secondary general education (who tend to be mostly women) have higher unemployment rates than workers with a secondary technical education (mostly men). This trend towards higher unemployment for

women could become more serious if unemployment rates were to increase significantly such as other Central and Eastern European countries. As for escaping long-term unemployment, women and men have about the same rates of re-entry into the labor market. (Paukert 95)

### 2.3. Occupational segmentation

The extensive restructuring brought on by the economic transition has resulted in some significant changes for women in some areas and in others, little has changed. The Czech economy has seen a general shift away from the industrial goods producing sectors towards the service sector and particularly, towards activities in the service sector typical of a market economy (i.e., banking insurance, real estate, business services, personal services, tourist services, restaurants, and hotels) (Paukert 95). Women have been laid off more often than men in the manufacturing and industry sectors. This decrease in employment was necessary because of the reduction of over-staffing, hard-budget constraints, the closure of non-competitive firms (with the ending of subsidies) and international competition brought on by the opening of borders to trade. New opportunities were available to women in light industries such as glass, china, printing and publishing, in small private businesses, and in the tertiary sector, in banking, insurance, communications, legal services and tourism. (Paukert 91)

**Table 4 Percentage share of women in industry at the start of reform and in 1995**

Industry	Czech	Republic
	1989	1995
	end-year	end-year
<b>Total</b>	<b>45.8</b>	<b>44.5</b>
Agriculture & forestry	37.6	35.9
Industry	40.3	38.1
Construction	14.0	11.6
Trade	71.5	56.7
Transport & communication	33.7	32.7
Banking and insurance	76.9	70.0
Real estate & business services	52.8	42.9
Administration and defense	63.1	59.4
Education	70.9	73.8
Health and social care	80.2	76.1
Other community and social services	46.3	42.0

Source: Paukert 1995 and Statistical Yearbook of the Czech Republic 1996.

An important component of the labor market is the new private sector. Currently, it includes about 128,000 female entrepreneurs, about 5.5 percent of the economically active female population, compared to 9.4 percent of the economically active male population who are entrepreneurs. Female entrepreneurs are mostly involved in consulting and services and only a very few are top managers of larger enterprises. (Stasna 93) The number of women who are self-employed as a percentage of all self-employers is comparable to that in the West. However, the overall LFPR is higher in the Czech Republic, so women entrepreneurs make up a lower percentage of the overall female economically active population than in some countries the West.

Women comprise about 38 percent of the private sector (Cermakova 95), but significantly more men than women have shifted from the public to the private sector. Women's share in the public sector has increased from 46 percent at the time of the revolution to 53 percent in early 1994. The public sector offers fewer possibilities for women, mainly lower pay and fewer chances for promotion, whereas the private sector offers higher pay, career advancement, and the opportunity to launch one's career.

As can be seen in Table 4, women continue to dominate health services, education, banking and insurance, and services and trade. Even though, banking, insurance, services and trade are both publicly and privately owned, health services and education, remain almost exclusively state-owned.

The underrepresentation of women in the private sector (and high concentration in the public sector) can be explained by several factors. First, women have been hesitant to change their working environments and have preferred the shorter working hours and greater flexibility of the public sector (whereas men are more interested in higher salaries and lucrative opportunities). Second, women's high pre-revolution concentration in sectors such as education and nursing, often gave them little choice but to remain in the public sector (private medical clinics and private schools are not prevalent). Two other factors are the subtle gender bias in hiring by private sector companies and the limited opportunities for women (mainly due to time constraints brought on by work and family responsibilities) for training and retraining. Finally, the low number of female entrepreneurs, due to several reasons, including women's tendency to avoid risk and their time constraints, also have kept the numbers of women in the private sector low. (Paukert 95)

Even though women now make up about 60 percent of the services sector (banking and insurance, finance, and community and social services), their share also has been decreasing as considerable numbers of men joined the sector following the revolution. For example, in banking and insurance, total employment has expanded, but the share of women has decreased. Moreover, men have been hired for decision-making positions, bypassing women who have long worked in these fields. The share of female employment has increased in education, mainly due to large numbers of men leaving education for more lucrative positions in the private sector. Time also has shown that the light industries, once dominated by females, are now starting to hire men and are slowly diluting the high female concentration in this industry. (Paukert 95)



On the whole, although determining the exact changes which occurred in the structure of the labor force as regards to gender is difficult, it is possible to conclude from data in the 1994 Labor Force Sample Surveys that there has been a clear trend towards a more mixed labor force in the services sector and occupation segregation remains relatively high in the traditionally divided labor force. In the future, the industry sector could become even more male-dominated, if more women choose to leave that sector, and the formerly female-dominated services sectors could become more mixed. However, the more mixed nature of the service sector does not rule out the possibility that vertical segregation exists and is reinforced by the new labor market structure. (Paukert 95)

**2.4. Wages and the wage gap**

Following the revolution in 1989, the wage gap has exhibited interesting trends, decreasing significantly in 1992 with women earning 74.8 percent compared to men (compared to 70.9 percent in 1988), remaining at about 75 percent in 1994, and then dropping to 71 percent by early 1996 (Cermakova and Hradecka 94, Trexima 96).

**Table 5 Average hourly wage by gender in the 1st quarter of 1996**

Gender	Average hourly wage		
	1994	1995	1996
Men	41.15	51.29	60.85
Women	31.49	37.47	43.46
Total	37.44	46.02	54.08

W/M	1984	1988	1992	1994	1995	1996
Ratio	68.4	70.9	74.0	76.5	73.1	71.42

Source: Trexima 1st. Quarter 1996, Cermakova and Hradecka 1994, Sakova 1996.

Effectively, the wage gap between men and women dropped by almost 8 percent, from 32 percent in 1984, to 24 percent in 1994, in a mere ten years. Then it rapidly increased by 5 percent to 29 percent. This puzzling trend has been analyzed by researcher Zuzana Sakova who, based on data for 1992, found that the gender gap that year was underestimated. She estimated it to be at 33 percent after taking into account non-employed members of the labor force. (Sakova 96) Although no recalculations were made for the following years, based on Sakova’s conclusions, it is possible to infer that the actual wage gap, when counting unemployed members of the labor force, is larger than portrayed by the above statistics. This would be more consistent with the general belief that the development of the private sector would widen the wage gap because of the higher concentration of men in the private sector,

where wages are higher than the feminized public sector where wages are still controlled (Cermakova and Hradecka 94).

The wage gap currently is highest between women and men in managerial positions. The wage differential between male and female senior managers and managers is 35 percent (1<sup>st</sup> quarter 1996). The wage gap is also high among male and female qualified workers at 31 percent. (Trexima 96). Furthermore, the wage gap varies between age groups, with the smallest difference being among the lowest age categories (88.4 percent for those in the under 20 age category and 88.2 for those in 20-29 age category) (Cermakova and Hradecka 94).

The wage gap has persisted, not only because women are concentrated in the public sector, but also for the same reasons as mentioned earlier, namely occupational segregation, and both vertical and horizontal segmentation. Another change in labor market structure, concerns the human capital model. Whereas under communism, experience and gender were the two most important factors in one's salary, the trend is gradually shifting towards education and qualification as the most important factors in one's value to the labor market. (Vecernik 95). On the one hand, since a larger percentage of university graduates are men, the gender gap could be aggravated. On the other hand, since experience is no longer as important, women's shorter working careers (maternity leave and early retirement), may not be as detrimental of a factor as in the past.

## **2.5. Social policy**

For women, thus far there have not been any dramatic changes or reductions in social policy, although there have been some policy modifications, fee increases, and a decrease in monthly child payments. Women continue to receive a one-time child-birth grant (in 1995 it was \$15 or about 5-6 percent of the average monthly wage) and have 28 weeks of paid maternity leave (90 percent of their salary with a ceiling below the average salary), three and a half additional years of parental benefits, on the condition that the mothers stay home with their children. (Socialni Politika 97) Under the socialist system, women had three years total of maternity benefits. Maternity leave was extended for one year following the revolution by the rightist factions in the government. At this point in time, it has yet to be determined if the majority of women are spending the fourth year at home or are going back to work after three years. Moreover, before the revolution, all families received a monthly children's allowance in addition to the maternity benefits, as long as the children were in school (up to age 26). Following the revolution, the government decided to target these children's allowances only at families in the lowest income ranges, excluding families in the middle and upper income ranges who have had to readjust. (Cermakova, Interview 97)

There also has been the reduction of nurseries. Mothers are staying home for the first two or three years with their children instead of going to work and leaving their kids in nurseries (which they did more often under communism). The supply of kindergartens and childcare has remained adequate and prices have not risen dramatically. Primary, secondary, and superior education also have remained free,

having been supplemented by a handful of private universities and high schools (Raabe 97)

Czech women have expressed dissatisfaction with the changes in social policy. When asked in a 1995 study<sup>1</sup> to compare the current social policy to that of the pre-1989 system, almost 60 percent of Czech women responded that the current social policy is poor in comparison. Only 31 percent found it to be more or less the same. Nevertheless, the main change, the reduction of child allowances, has been accepted and families have made the necessary adjustments.

## **2.6. Discrimination and relevant labor laws**

In the Czech Republic, men and women are considered legally equal in the workplace. According to a study by the European Commission (PHARE) with the Czech Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, "The Czech labor law governing access to jobs, remuneration and key areas of social security, such as maternity and pensions, was found not to contain any overtly discriminatory clauses...but it is restricted by its narrow interpretation of equal opportunities; e.g. it does not offer adequate definition of what constitutes direct and indirect discrimination...." The report recommended not only the clarification of the definitions of direct and indirect discrimination but also, the extension of the protective element of the legislation. Moreover, the report highlighted the need to introduce a public debate on the topic to increase women's awareness of their rights by law and the means through which they can defend themselves (court procedures). (Castle-Kanerova 96)

In practice, equality between men and women in the labor market is not pervasive. A 1993 International Labour Office survey in the Czech Republic found that only 29 percent of managers claimed to have no problems specifically associated with the employment of women, whereas 40 percent claimed to have no problems associated with the employment of men. Twenty-seven percent claimed that "family matters" were the most important problem concerning the employment of women and another 16 percent mentioned production problems. Eighty percent of managers also mentioned that the presence of children under six was a handicap for working women. Another 33 percent of managers found the presence of children aged 6-15 as a disadvantage. For men, the presence of pre-school aged children makes no difference, while the presence of school-age children makes no difference or is considered an advantage. (Paukert 95)

As far as maternity leave is concerned, only 37 percent of managers found women's productivity to be lowered after maternity leave. Most managers felt that maternity leave, leave to take care of sick children, and other such protective measures for women with family responsibilities did not affect employment of women. However, such measures negatively affected labor costs, women's attendance and their general usefulness for the firm. (Paukert 95)

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<sup>1</sup> "Family-Friendly Policies and Women's Employment in the Czech Republic and Slovakia: Continuity or Change" survey. Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic and IREX, June 1995

On a positive note, the majority of managers found women and men equally suitable for several professions, including managerial and administrative work (see Table 6). Approximately 60 percent found men more suitable for professional and technical professions.

**Table 6 Managers' gender preferences for recruitment by occupation**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>men more suitable</b>	<b>women more suitable</b>	<b>equally suitable</b>
Managerial and administrative	35.8	2.1	62.1
Professional & technical	58.3	2.2	39.5
General service & organization	39.7	8.7	51.5
Skilled operatives	42.6	15.2	42.2
Semi-skilled operatives	19.7	27.9	52.4
Unskilled operatives	19.7	24.8	55.5
Maintenance and repair	93.5	0	6.5

Source: Paukert 1995, ILO Labor Force Surveys, 1993.

Moreover, 54 percent found women and men to be equal in productivity with another 24 percent saying women were better. (Paukert 95, Raabe 97)

A 1995 survey by the Public Opinion Research Institute in the Czech Republic found that 47 percent of the population stated they were indifferent to whether their boss was a man or woman (up from 39 percent in 1991, when 53 percent gave preference to men). These percentages varied considerably with education. Of those with university education, 53 percent preferred men and only 35 percent of those with primary education gave preference to men. Among those surveyed, 23 percent attributed the quality of decisiveness specifically to men in management positions, where as 20 percent found thoroughness to be women's most positive quality in management. (IVVM 95)

In the new private sector, women also have been discriminated against in on-the-job training and retraining programs for reasons such as women's low retirement age, as well as their "unreliability" (and absenteeism) which has led managers to question the profitability of investing in women. Women also have been less available for retraining because of their time constraints and thus women's participation has been lower in most training programs (language, computer, business administration). (Paukert 95)

In the 1995 "Women and Men in the Labor Market" study,<sup>2</sup> 32 percent of men and 27 percent of women claimed to have been discriminated against, with women listing

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<sup>2</sup> "Women and Men in the Labor Market" survey conducted by Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, December 1995

personal reasons (64.2 percent) and gender (39.2 percent) as being the main reasons for discrimination. Men listed personal reasons, political reasons, and age as the main factors. Gender was a factor for only 2.5 percent of men. (Data and Fakta 6.96) One can conclude from these data, that discrimination against women in the labor force is not a major concern of Czech women, although to some extent they are aware that they may be discriminated against because of gender. The society remains rather traditional in the workplace with men and women being divided and separated by tasks and wages. However, the question that remains to be answered is whether this is true because of discrimination on the part of employers, or lack of interest and career ambition on the part of women (or both).

**2.7. Attitudes on family and work**

**2.7.1. Public opinion on general and specific changes since the revolution**

In a public opinion poll carried out in 1995, men and women were asked how women and men (divided by gender) have fared since the revolution. A total of 34 percent found that women were better off since the revolution, and 56 percent found that men were better off now. Another 35 percent found that women were worse off and only 19 percent found that men were worse off now than before.

**Table 7 Opinion on the Situation of Men and Women in Today’s Society**

	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
Definitely gained	<b>8 %</b>	<b>17%</b>
Rather gained	<b>26 %</b>	<b>39%</b>
Rather lost	<b>27%</b>	<b>15%</b>
Definitely lost	<b>8%</b>	<b>4%</b>
Different answer	<b>8%</b>	<b>7%</b>
Don’t know	<b>23%</b>	<b>18%</b>

Source: IVVM 1995

N= 889

When broken up by age and education, the responses on women’s position were similar among the different age groups (only those aged 60 and over were more skeptical about women’s position with 45 percent claiming a deterioration in the situation for women), but differed among education groups. Among those with university education, 51 percent found the changes for women to be positive and 28 percent found them negative. Moreover, when regional differences were considered, those living in Prague and in cities with populations greater than 5,000 had more positive responses than those in towns with a population of less than 2,000. In these

areas 25 percent found the situation of women to have improved and 42 percent found it to have worsened. (IVVM 95)

Following the revolution, many women have experienced significant changes in the workplace. For some, it has been positive and rewarding, whereas others have much greater difficulty making ends meet than before the revolution. Many women have been forced to work longer hours and be more productive while at work. (Cermakova, Interview 97) New opportunities have arisen to pursue different professions and women were free to take the career path they chose (i.e., they were no longer limited politically). Several women who were politically “incorrect” under communism and severely limited in their professional activities, emerged from the woodwork to pursue careers and open new businesses. (Vecernik 95, Paukert 95) Morale at the workplace changed in many places as companies started focusing on profits, productivity, and cost-cutting (Cermakova, Interview 97).

In the 1995 “Continuity and Change” study, 46 percent claimed their workload had increased. When asked about their ability to rest and relax away from work, 38 percent reported that they had less time for rest and relaxation since the revolution. Furthermore, about 48 percent stated that their job security has either partially or significantly declined and 56 percent said that the job availability had worsened. On a more positive note, 33 percent stated that their work had become more interesting and 49 percent stated that their salaries had improved. (“Continuity or Change” survey 95)

These findings indicate the conclusion that thus far, only a certain percentage of women benefited from the changes in the workplace (higher salaries, more interesting work), with the majority more or less feeling the same.

One area in which not much has changed for the better is the public sector. Many professors at universities have found their schools drained of talent as considerable numbers of professors seek higher salaries elsewhere. Women in the health sector have had to adjust to cuts in health care spending. Furthermore, even though no specific data has been collected on rural women, there is a general conclusion among sociologists that their situation is especially difficult. Many of those employed in agriculture have lost their jobs since much of the cooperized land has been returned to original owners, and the once-subsidized public transportation has now been reduced in service significantly and has become more expensive, making it more difficult for women to commute to jobs in urban areas. (Cermakova, Interview 97) This is complies with the 1995 public opinion poll in which 42 percent of those in small towns (less than 2,000 in habitants) think the situation for women has worsened. (IVVM 95)

**Table 8 Changes in working conditions for women since the revolution**

	improved significantly %	improved partially %	stayed the same %	declined partially %	declined significantly %
Workload	4.7	8.7	40.6	32.3	13.8
Time for rest and relaxation	2.0	9.9	49.4	25.7	12.9
Job security	4.2	9.8	37.7	26.4	21.9
Job availability	3.4	13.6	26.7	30.2	26.1
Interest in work	11.4	22.2	53.4	10.1	2.9
Higher salary	8.4	40.4	23.3	16.1	11.9

*Source:* “Family-Friendly Policies and Women’s Employment in the Czech Republic and Slovakia: Continuity or Change” survey. Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic and IREX, June 1995

N= 620

### **2.7.2. Private sector opportunities**

An important point discussed by Liba Paukert is the long-term implication of the lack of women compared to men in the private sector. She finds that women shifted more slowly into the private sector and have not benefitted as much from the privatization process as men. Instead, men were more able/and or willing to take advantage of the new opportunities and higher-paying jobs, as well as the chances to open new businesses. At the outset, twice as many Czech men expressed interest in opening a business as women, mainly because women feared the longer hours and more demanding schedules would limit their time with their families. Women also have a low share among employers. In the long-run, this lack of gender diversity in the business community may have long-run implications for income distribution and wealth among men and women. According to Paukert, the main reasons for this discrepancy are: women’s “double burden” and time constraints, their lack of interest in juggling both a career and family, limited opportunities to work part-time, women’s lack of initiative, the occupational structure of the female workforce (concentration in the public sector), and a certain gender bias in hiring by private firms. According to a 1991-92 survey “Women in the Labor Market,”<sup>3</sup> the main advantages expected from entrepreneurship were better possibilities for self-realization, greater independence and a higher income. Only a small group of respondents named greater time flexibility for taking care of children and household responsibilities, which also confirms that significantly fewer women than men have ventured into private business on their own because of family commitment and time

<sup>3</sup> The survey “Women in the Labor Market” was conducted by the International Labour Office by the PORI Institute in Prague, 1991-1992.

constraints. Moreover, 44 percent of female respondents (45 percent of male respondents) claimed that business and entrepreneurship were mainly for men and that women should serve as helpers. (Paukert 95, Cermakova 95).

Another important factor is the general importance of certainty and stability to the Czech population. Many women have expressed preference in being financial secure with stable jobs and incomes. One of the most important changes produced by the revolution is the introduction of insecurity and instability in the lives of much of the Czech population. (Cermakova 95) Jobs are no longer as secure as during communism, and there are major fluctuations in both politics and the economy that cause concern among Czech women. Most recently, there has been much speculation and heated debate over the devaluation of the Czech crown and the new austerity measures proposed by the government. The majority of the Czech population will be affected significantly in the form of, possibly, unemployment, inflation, and slower wage growth. (Larsen 97) With the instability and uncertainty of the transition period, most women seem to prefer stability and security in their homes and families. They are interested in job stability and a steady income that they can rely on in the future. This preempts some women from taking risks that their families cannot afford. (Cermakova, Interview 97)

A small group of female entrepreneurs pursued a remarkably different path after the revolution than most of the Czech female population. These women were among the few women who were able to overcome several obstacles, such as managing both their families and demanding jobs, take risks, and take an active approach to their careers. The majority of the female population had a more passive approach to the changes. The female entrepreneurs chose, on the other hand, for the most part, to have both careers and families, even though most Czech women give priority to their families over work (“Continuity and Change” survey 95, Paukert 95).

### **2.7.3. Current attitudes about work**

The majority of women work mainly for financial reasons, as expressed in recent surveys.<sup>4</sup> Several also stated independence as an important reason why they work, followed by the desire to be around people. Only 16 percent would return to the household if their standard of living would not be affected by the loss of their income. About 45 percent would work part-time, 18 percent would work occasional jobs and 21 percent would continue working full-time. Overall, 73 percent of Czech women expressed satisfaction with their jobs. (“Continuity or Change” survey 95)

Very few Czech women seem inclined towards returning to the household to be full-time housewives. When asked in a 1994 survey<sup>5</sup> if being a housewife was as satisfying for a woman as going to work in the labor market, only one-fourth of men and women agreed, and 45 percent disagreed further demonstrating Czech women’s

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<sup>4</sup> “Family-Friendly Policies and Women’s Employment in the Czech Republic and Slovakia: Continuity or Change” survey. Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic and IREX, June 1995

<sup>5</sup> “Family 94” survey conducted in 1994 by the Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic.



deep-found commitment to working in the labor market. In other Western countries the disagreement rate with this statement was much lower: 21 percent in the U.S., 32 percent in the United Kingdom, 31 percent in Sweden and 17 percent in Poland. (Raabe 97, Data a Fakta 95) Moreover, compared to several other European countries and the US, Czechs also had the highest “strongest agree” response to the item “both the man and woman should contribute to the household—income,” with 60 percent of women agreeing and 48 percent of men agreeing. (In comparison, “strongly agree” responses were 32 percent in Sweden, 19 percent in the US, and 17 percent the UK and 14 percent in Poland). (Raabe 97, Cermakova 95)

The importance of family for Czech women has been constant since the revolution. Czech women continue to see family as paramount and often find that careers come at the expense of families, although this is less true for the younger generations (Cermakova 95). In the 1995 “Continuity or Change” survey, 95 percent of women stated that family was very important. Over 93 percent of women also stated that work was important (see Table 9). When asked if they give priority to family or work, 12 percent said they give priority only to their families; and almost 48 percent stated they are devoted to both their families and work, but give priority to their families (see Table 10). In the same survey, about 53 percent of working women, claimed to manage both work and family responsibilities without major problems (see Table 11).

**Table 9 Importance of family vs. importance of job**

	<b>Family (%)</b>	<b>Job (%)</b>
Important	94.0	48.0
Rather important	5.7	45.4
Rather unimportant	.3	5.7
Unimportant	0	.8

**Table 10 Family and work priorities for Czech women**

	<b>%</b>
Give priority to family	<b>12.4</b>
Devoted equally to family and job, but give priority to family	<b>47.7</b>
Devoted equally to family and job	<b>30.6</b>
Devoted equally to family and job, but give priority to job	<b>8.2</b>
Give priority to job	<b>1.1</b>

**Table 11 Managing Family and Jobs**

	%
Able to manage both without major problems	<b>53.2</b>
Able to manage job responsibilities well, but cheating family	<b>16.5</b>
Able to take care of family responsibilities well, but cheating work	<b>5.7</b>
Able to manage both half and half	<b>20.8</b>
Not able to manage both family and work, have problems with both	<b>3.8</b>

*Sources:* “Family-Friendly Policies and Women’s Employment in the Czech Republic and Slovakia Continuity or Change?” Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic and IREX, 1995

N= 620

The above statistics show that family is the number one priority for Czech women, even though work is considerably important for them as well.

Czech women seem accustomed to their full-time position in the labor market, and even though many express desire to work less hours, particularly those who feel like they are cheating their families because of their job, almost all are willing to stay in the workplace. As mentioned before only 16 percent would stay at home full-time if they could afford not to work. Czech women also find that in a market economy, working in the labor market is important, as evidenced by the strong agreement with the statement “In a market economy a woman can’t get by without education and her own career,” with which 92.4 percent agreed. (“Continuity and Change” survey 95).

**2.7.4. Changes in the nature of the “double burden”**

Since most Czech women are and intend to continue working, it is important to consider how women today are managing their work and home responsibilities and how the post-revolution changes have affected and improved their situation. Women’s main responsibilities include shopping, cooking, doing laundry, cleaning, and taking care of children. A significant improvement for women has been the marked increase in availability of various foodstuffs and consumer goods. Women no longer have to spend hours waiting in lines for products such as meat, fruits, and feminine products. In addition, all types of stores throughout the country are now well-stocked, so that extreme shortages are no longer a reality for Czech women. Store hours also have been extended in the evening, and on the weekends, especially in large cities. Not only has shopping become easier, but women also can now buy various market-produced consumer goods that can help them with their household responsibilities. Automatic washing machines, dryers, microwave ovens, cleaning products, (detergent, liquid detergent) are all available in various sizes and styles. Also, laundries and dry cleaners are greater in number, have increased the speed of their services, and have extended their hours. To the contrary, the increase

of availability of goods and services has been coupled with the increase in prices and cost of living. Hence, many of these goods remain unattainable for much of the population, especially, the lower strata. (Cermakova, Interview 97)

According to Barbara Lobodzinska, “The very basic instrument to secure women’s chances for equality is men’s notable involvement in household responsibilities and child care as a vehicle of strengthening the family as a social institution in general.” (Lobodzinska 95). In this area, women continue to shoulder the burden of work in the household. In the “Family 94” survey, women claimed to always or almost always do laundry (93.3 percent), do the shopping (64.6 percent), take care of a sick member of the family (63.6 percent) and decide what to cook (59.7 percent). Women stated that men do not share the housework evenly, but instead help occasionally. (Data a Fakta 95) With housework defined as “laundry, cooking, cleaning, shopping, repairs, auto maintenance and cleaning, various apartment/house maintenance,” women (N = 809) estimated that they spent about 90-100 hours a month on housework on average and that men spent about 30 on average. The men’s estimates differed only slightly (N = 842). Thus, both men and women agree that women spend more time doing housework, even when the definition of housework includes traditional male activities such as auto maintenance and various household repairs. It also has been suggested that men may spend an equivalent amount of hours involved in activities outside of the home such as working overtime (unpaid) and being involved in politics and various charitable activities. However, data from the same study show that men spend on average only 1.19 more hours a month involved in such activities than woman. (Data a Fakta 9.96)

When asked to name what they would change in order to alleviate their double burden, women were most in favor of higher salaries, improved services for families, and a change in employers’ approach towards women. The fourth most popular response was a change in husband’s attitude towards the women’s role in the family. Thus Czech women envision a possible improvement in their double burden coming from forces outside of their control (salaries, family services provided by the government) rather than from internal forces over which they have some control (roles within the family). (“Continuity or Change” survey 95)

### **2.7.5. How men and women view themselves in society**

In an interview conducted in the early 1990’s, Livia Klaus, the Czech Prime Minister’s wife and senior researcher at the Economic Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences was asked if the struggle of feminism meant something to her. To which she responded, “The ‘struggle’ for specific women rights is for me, as a citizen living in Czechoslovakia today, really rather remote. I consider the concern for the creation of civil rights and the struggle for them as much closer and more important.” (Stasna 93). This short extract emphasizes the importance of citizens’ rights over women’s rights and is paralleled in the stances of most of the main political parties. The coalition partners, the Citizens’ Democratic Party and Citizens’ Democratic Alliance (ODS and ODA), do not have any statement or platform addressing women’s issues in particular. Instead, they are concerned with citizen’s issues, not distinguished by gender. In her study on female entrepreneurs, Jaroslava

Stasna concludes that instead of encouraging an academic and public discussion of women's position in society, people tend to feel that "there are more important problems to solve and different priorities with which to cope." (Stasna 93) With the current economically unstable situation, labeled "crisis" by some, impending budget cuts, and increases in unemployment, the public debate on women may be postponed even further with people being more worried about the near-future and the effects on their wallets of the current austerity measures.

Moreover, Marie Cermakova concludes, based on the "Family 94" study, that in terms of family and work issues the Czech society is not polarized by gender, but by other characteristics such as age, education, position at work, experiences, and religious orientation, among others (Data a Fakta 95). Instead, gender equality is interpreted in a more "separate but equal" manner. It is considered normal that men and women have different responsibilities in the household and at work. However, as Phyllis Raabe concludes, "women do not derive their social status from parents or husbands and seek equal status with their partners rather than accepting subordination to them." Generally, Raabe goes on to claim a "comparable worth model of gender equality" in which men and women have different activities and accomplishments, but are considered equal. (Raabe 97)

The continuing distaste and lack of respect for feminism are echoed in a recent poll of top personalities in the Czech Republic. Of the twelve asked, most of whom are well-known, including, a writer, an economist, an actress, a minister, a doctor, a traveler, a businessman and a rabbi, with the exception of a few positive and insightful answers, most responses were rather sarcastic in nature and revealed that, in their opinion, feminism had no relevance to the majority of Czech society. Of the three women polled, two stated clearly that they weren't feminists (Magazin Dnes 97). The communist era lack of respect for Western feminism had continued and with the exception of a small group of women centered around the Gender Studies Center in Prague, most feel alienated from Western feminist theories. Barbara Lobodzinska gives her interpretations of the differences:

The typical Western feminists' interests—diversity in family forms, single women, single mothers, feminization of poverty, inequality of mothers' and fathers' parental privileges and duties, sexual harassment and exploitation,..., are marginal... Women in Central-Eastern Europe are seduced by the notion of a superwoman, who is strong and can do everything, even beyond her limits. This ideal appeals more to the overburdened "powerful sex," than projecting her as a victimized and exploited object of men's supremacy. (Lobodzinska 95)

Because of their different historical experiences and such attitudes towards gender equality and feminism, it is unlikely that women in the Czech Republic will join the Western movement and rally together against the status quo in order to bring women's issues to the forefront of public awareness. Women feel immense pride and satisfaction from their ability to manage both their families and jobs.

One acceptable option or change in the future, that is already occurring presently, is the postponement of age of marriage and childbirth. The Director of the Gender Studies Center in Prague, Hana Havelkova, recently stated that the age of marriage

for women has been postponed by six years. This gives women more options to accomplish personal goals and spend more time pursuing their career before starting a family. In general though, Czech women are not interested in jobs that would prevent them from having families or cause them to sacrifice their families in any extreme measure. (Cermakova 95)

## **Conclusion**

Women will continue to work in the labor force in high numbers due to several factors: the present economic situation of families, the educational structure, generational experience, general lack of prestige of household work, and the low social status of unemployed women. (Cermakova 95). A new factor to consider is the current economic unrest and the possibility of a slight increase in unemployment, predicted to rise from 3.5 percent to 5-6 percent (Larsen 97). At this time, it is uncertain what consequences this could have on women's employment; whether some women who are laid off will choose to leave the labor force, or will continue seeking employment. In addition to the increase in unemployment, an increase in prices is expected, including price increases in gas and rent in the upcoming months. It has been predicted that individual Czechs, namely the middle class, will feel the brunt of the current economic difficulties (Larsen 97) and thus, the financial need for women to work seems likely to continue in the next few years in the Czech Republic.

As for increasing awareness on women's issues in the Czech Republic, a few changes in society's approach towards women's issues could make a difference, such as, first, a serious public debate on the issue, not one riddled with sarcasm and extreme notions of feminism, and second, legal support and changes in the labor laws regarding women's employment. A committee is currently lobbying to change labor laws, but even if it succeeds, Czechs often feel that changes in the law don't always translate to practical changes (Siklova 95). Third, more visible female role models who are willing to stand up for women's issues could help bring such issues into public debate, as could an increase in gender studies lectures in the country's various universities. Finally, and most importantly, Czech women have to decide for themselves if a public debate on women's issues would be desirable or useful, and if there is anything they want to change as far society's approach to women's issues is concerned.

In response to the question posed at the beginning of this paper, whether working women with families are better off now than before the revolution, my final conclusion is that there is no answer that applies to every Czech woman. There are however, some positive nationwide trends, such as an increase in availability of consumer goods, new job opportunities in the private sector, political freedom in the workplace, positive morale in the workplace, and new possibilities available to the younger generation to pursue a career before settling down and having children. On the flipside, women now have to deal with the increased cost of living (inflation, rising rents, electricity, etc.), increased insecurity and job instability, and more limited job opportunities in rural areas and small towns. As many interviewed women have stated, it often depends on the woman's personality, as well as on her job and economic situation, as to whether she views the post-revolution changes as positive

for her or whether she prefers the security and “simplicity” of life under a socialist regime.

### **3. WOMAN’S VIEWS**

In the spring of 1997, I conducted ten in-depth interviews with women throughout the Czech Republic, posing questions about their families, their jobs, and the changes since 1989. Excerpts from these interviews are included and organized by topic to present a qualitative picture of how a number of Czech women view their current situations as well as how they view the general picture in the Czech Republic today for women. Each woman is described briefly; by profession, education, age, number of children, and locality. Real first names are not used. Please see the appendix for a listing of original questions, although occasionally questions were adjusted to comply with each interviewee’s background.

#### **INTERVIEWEES:**

Michaela, 27

*Profession:* Casino management. *Education:* Secondary economic school. *Family:* Divorced, one son, age 8. *Locality:* Prague.

Hana, 36

*Profession:* Drafting (construction). *Education:* Secondary school (two diplomas). *Family:* Married, three children, age 11, 8 and 2 mos. *Locality:* Velke Hosteradky (village outside of Brno, in Southern Moravia).

Jana, 38

*Profession:* Secretary. *Education:* Secondary school (economic). *Family:* Divorced, two children, age 16, 14. *Locality:* Prague.

Eva, 43

*Profession:* Insurance agent, general nurse by profession. *Education:* Secondary school (nursing). *Family:* Married, three kids, age 23, 21, and 17. *Locality:* Brno.

Jaromila, 43

*Profession:* land surveyor. *Education:* Secondary school. *Family:* Married, two sons, age 19, 17. *Locality:* Brno.

Denisa, 45

*Profession:* Factory worker in a machine factory. *Education:* secondary school. *Family:* Married, two daughters, age 23 and 24. *Locality:* Pecky (small town west of Prague).

Milena, 47

*Profession:* Works independently for the land administration. *Education:* Agricultural university with post-graduate degree in milk processing. *Family:* Married, two sons, age 21 and 19. *Locality:* Zlonice (village northwest of Prague).

Mila, 49

*Profession:* Director of management training consultant company. *Education:* University degree in general linguistics and phonetics. *Family:* Divorced, no kids. *Locality:* Prague.

Ludmila, 53

*Profession:* Computer programmer, translator, interpreter. *Education:* Masters in Computer Technology. *Family:* Married, three kids, in their twenties. *Locality:* Prague.

Helena, 58

*Profession:* Professor of economics. *Education:* Ph.D. in economics. *Family:* Married, two sons age 34 and 24. *Locality:* Prague.

### **1) Ability to juggle both career and taking care of children**

With few exceptions, the women interviewed found juggling both responsibilities challenging and stressful, resulting in little time for themselves. Some were helped by their mothers or in-laws, others by their husbands, and others had to manage entirely themselves. Usually when the children were sick, the mothers stayed home as well. On the whole, they were able to manage both having families and working full-time, but under significant stress, especially when the children were little.

**-Michaela (casino):** “I have a hard time. Luckily, my job is the type where you finish up, go home from work, and don’t need to worry about your job... It’s doable, but you have to run around a lot.”

**-Ludmila (computer):** “It was really hard. My parents helped, but it was very hectic. The kids were sick often and it was very very hard. I had ulcers,..., I had to take care of everything including the shopping, kids, and housework,..., I had to leave the kids with various baby-sitters.”

**-Helena (professor):** “I managed, but not very well. It was very demanding. I had kids ten years apart—that’s a big advantage that I had one at a time. If I had had them both closer together, it would have been much harder.”

**-Hana (drafter):** “Thanks to their grandmother who lives here, I managed. If it weren’t for her, I could have never gone to work in Brno because I left for work at 4am and my mom had to get the boys ready for school, and I barely managed because I came home from work around 4pm, really tired because I had been on my feet since four in the morning and the kids wanted to play and talk and for me to pay attention to them, and I was so tired that by 7pm, I was falling asleep,..., There are a lot of moms [locally] who don’t return to their jobs after maternity leave because they can’t commute, there’s no one who can help them, the grandmother isn’t retired yet, can’t take the kids to preschool, etc., and it doesn’t work otherwise because you can’t get to Brno at 6am in the morning. So, here it’s an issue of the commute.”

## **2) Does (did) maternity leave, household responsibilities, and children, hold you back in your career/work?**

Some women said that in their job, maternity leave, household responsibilities, and children didn’t hold them back or that they managed. Others admitted that it held them back, but didn’t see it as a problem because they preferred spending time with family rather than building a career.

**-Eva (insurance agent):** “No, because if someone really wants something, and wants to learn something, then they have a chance while they’re on maternity leave. They can always find a way to do it,... At least I always tried to do it that way, not for others, but for my own satisfaction.... So I don’t see it as negative when a woman stays home longer on maternity leave and is a housewife. To the contrary, I think it’s a huge plus. For her and for the family, for the kids, and even for the husband. I would rather the mothers had the chance to be home with their kids.”

**-Hana (drafting):** “Well, I don’t think of it as limiting. You could say that it limits me, that I stopped working, that if I had stayed in my job, I would still be working there today, I’d be enjoying it and I’d have gotten much further and have a certain position in the field, and would know it much better. But, I wouldn’t trade it, children, for that, no. I’d rather have three kids than be at work. I think you have to have a certain personality for that... Someone who really wants to have a career, can’t have kids, or can’t be with them as much... there’s no other way, they’d have to be in preschools and daycare... Someone may think of it as limiting but for me, no.

**-Ludmila (computer):** “Yes, women weren’t hired when they had kids and they were undervalued.”



**-Helena (professor):** “I was really happy to have kids. If I had to choose, I would always want them even if it held me back in my career....I am at the same level as my colleagues, but there are places where women can't keep up. Basically, when the woman leaves for a certain period of time, such as a doctor in a hospital, then she is behind. I think that it is worth it, that the woman is the only one and her role in the family is very important.”

**-Jaromila (surveyor):** “I don't feel that way because I'm not a “careerist.” I'm more of the family type. I was happy that I had a job that satisfied me and I didn't want more.”

### **3) Are women as successful as men and equally represented in management positions (in your field)?**

Of those interviewed, the women seemed to feel, with the exception of the woman working in the casino and the woman in the computer industry, that even though usually men were more often in management positions than women, women were equally capable and had the same opportunities or that women themselves didn't want those positions.

**-Helena (professor):** “The problem is that women don't accept higher level positions. They just don't want to. In some workplaces there are only women, but a man is the manager or director, because they [the women] don't feel up to it, don't have enough time for it. They don't want to take on the responsibility. So, I think that for the most part it's the women themselves [who don't want it]... I think that, it will never change completely, that it wouldn't even be good. And it should only go to the extent that women want it to be.”

**-Hana (drafter):** “There were more men [in management positions], but it wasn't like a woman couldn't get to that position. If she was the same [had the same qualifications] then she could get there too... it's more because more men studied this field than women.”

**Jaromila (surveyor):** “I think that they are equally-represented, at least in the field I work in the supervisors are both men and women, basically if someone worked well and was good enough... it wasn't as if only men were directors... If the woman was good enough, she would do it.”

**-Denisa (factory worker):** “I think that people think that women don't have enough time to devote to their career, that they do it always at the expense of something, either at the expense of their personal life or their kids, and to complete her career would be impossible...We have both men and women. The director of a factory is a man, but the supervisors are women. You could say it's about one woman to three men. It's not that bad, even though it's the machinery industry and men should dominate.”

**-Milena (land administrator):** “I think that when a woman is in a management position, then she definitely does a good job because I think that women are very

responsible and hard-working. At the same time, either her family or someone has to help her with things because obviously, it takes more time. Otherwise, I think that a woman can do the job as well and sometimes even better, more responsibly and more solidly than a man. We have a friend who worked as a director of clothing stores, and she said that whenever the manager was a man, the people who actually took care of everything were the women below him, because they were hard-working.”

**-Eva (insurance agent):** “Even though in some firms they hire more men in the management positions, I think that essentially not that much, it depends more on the individual and how competent she is and how she is able to show and apply her abilities and then the one who can demonstrate the most wins, not the one who sits back and waits until someone tells her something. Here you need initiative, creative capabilities, otherwise it’s not possible, they’ll promote someone else.”

#### **4) Did you ever experience discrimination as a woman?**

**-Mila (company director):** No, ..., as a consultant I have thought it’s good to be a woman. In many cases I can work more easily than a man would be able to because somehow I eliminate the need for competition because I am a woman and men have no one to compete with because I am of a different kind and therefore I feel that I can often times do much more than a man would be able to do...I am a little bit sad that there are so few women here who would want to do that...”

**-Jana (secretary):** “Well, yes, of course, that was a problem [being a woman with kids]. They always wanted mothers with grown-up kids or with grandmothers. Many times when I was changing jobs they asked me who would take care of my kids when they were sick, and I said that I had to take care of them myself, because the kids’ grandmothers were still working at the time, and so that was somewhat of a problem.”

#### **5) Salary (compared to that of male colleagues with same responsibilities)**

The responses were mixed on this topic. About half of the women felt that men earned more than women, regardless of qualifications and the other half felt they earned the same. It may be a question of profession (for example, in academics, according to Helena, there is no wage gap, same with Milena in land administration and Eva, in insurance, whereas Michaela in the casino claimed overt discrimination in terms of salary as did Denisa in the factory, and Jaromila in land surveying.)

**-Eva (insurance agent):** “Yes, [it is equal] because the commission is the same, it depends on how well I do with my clients, how much energy one puts into it and how one negotiates with clients, and how one gains the confidence of the client. There are tons and tons of things that influence one’s closing a deal or not. For now, I am doing well, and am satisfied and I am among the best in this region...”

**-Jaromila (land surveyor):** “No, [it is not equal] definitely not. All the guys who were there had more. Men were always more highly valued than women even if we did the same job...Even men who only had secondary education, they made more than I did.”

**-Denisa (factory worker):** “No, definitely not, definitely not. I don’t know if it’s because there’s women’s work and men’s work, but it probably comes from before when men were considered the providers of the family and had more rights than women. Now it’s equalized a little bit, but a man, well, he’ll always be a man.”

## **6) If you could financially afford to stay home, would you stay home or continue working?**

Only one woman, the 27 year-old with an eight year-old son said she would stay home if she could. The majority said they would reduce the amount of time they worked, to perhaps part-time or once or twice a week, but definitely that they would continue some activity in the labor market.

**-Hana (drafting):** “I would probably find something, so I could leave for a day or two, so I could get away from the stereotype. It wouldn’t be for the money, but just for a day or two, just so I could be around people, and think about different things...But if I could avoid it, then definitely not full-time, because then the kids would pay price.”

**-Ludmila (computer):** “No, definitely not. I think that probably the majority of people, of women, have a need inside them from Mother Nature, a need to create, first of all, and second of all, a need to be part of a community or society. And in this I see the importance of being an active member of society because if I’m going to be doing something at home, then it would get on my nerves,... For me, the most important is to be...useful, a useful part of society, but it depends on the personality; there are some women who are happy with their kitchen, garden, and that’s all they need. But I’m not that type.”

**-Jaromila (land surveyor):** “...maybe I would like to go to work for like four hours, but I definitely would not want to stay home all the time because you don’t have as much information or opportunities to meet people, and to always be home, and cook and do laundry and clean, I don’t think I’d like it.”

**-Jana (secretary):** “I would definitely go to work. I like it, also, it’s nice just being among people, right?”

**-Mila (company director):** “I work for all reasons other than financial...”

## **7) How has your life changed since revolution concerning work and family?**

**-Helena (professor):** “...I do feel differently at work in such a way that under communism, we all just spent our time teaching because we weren’t allowed to have

any other work. There wasn't anything to spend the money on. Now, because there are such huge possibilities, people are here as little as possible. They teach what they have to, not badly, but everyone has other work to do somewhere else. That's because of the low salaries for professors... What no longer exists, is people sitting around talking. Everyone has their time planned out. They try to make the most of it."

**-Jaromila (drafter):** "I don't know, when you look at the big picture...[my husband and I] have work, we both work, but some people have more worries because the jobs aren't as secure. Before the revolution, you had a job where you worked and as long as you didn't want to leave, no one would throw you out. So there were people who weren't good, who messed around at work, but stayed because people just had to accept them as they were. And now, either organizations or companies are shutdown and you have to find a job. I don't know, if I could find a job somewhere else."

**-Jana (secretary):** "As far as work is concerned it hasn't really changed. I would say mainly that prices have changed and availability of goods. On the one hand it's really nice that so much is here now, but on the other hand, I would say that for a mother with kids it was simpler before the revolution. Even though it was quite a juggling act there weren't so many things available and one didn't need so much money for their kids... it is much harder now to keep the kids satisfied so that they have about as much as those around them. This is my biggest concern."

## **8) Are people better or worse off after revolution?**

**-Eva (insurance agent):** "In the past few years we have made huge leaps, and everything happened really quickly, but it depended on how the people were able to adapt to the changing conditions, some people couldn't handle it and felt helpless and others were able to benefit from it, take advantage of it without regards for others, and some are just starting to adjust, to get used to it slowly, start on their own path..."

**-Helena (professor):** "It depends. I actually think that for a long time we will all be worse off because the economy was so devastated. There's not enough money in the budget, the infrastructure is bad, the railways, hospitals...people were used to the idea that a market economy consists of all these expenditures, beautiful things, they thought that it was for free. So they are somewhat disappointed. They don't understand that they even in the US, people have to work if they want something. They have to work and we were horribly spoiled by communism..."

**-Michaela (casino):** "...after the revolution people had many more possibilities as far as work is concerned because there are foreign firms here and such. Before, employment was pretty much fake. Such that people went to work and didn't have to do anything. They just sat there eight hours and then went home. Now there are some really interesting things here, like firms where one can really enjoy their work and be motivated to go to work. Before, this didn't exist... I think that it's really hard

financially here in the Czech Republic. Salaries are not that high and everything is expensive, like housing and such,...,there's a certain group that has a lot, but the majority doesn't..."

**-Jana (secretary):** "Well, there are a lot of people who are better off, but I would say that a lot of people are also worse off. The people who are better off are those who spoke foreign languages or those who had attractive jobs and knew how to get by during that period. The people who are worse off are those who are older or who have such jobs. Teachers, for instance, or maybe the type of people who can't switch to high-paying jobs, ... All the security that everyone here was used to is gone. For the older people and those like my parents for example, they are really afraid of what's next."

### **9) Has women's position changed for better or for worse since the revolution?**

**-Ludmila (computer):** "Yes, definitely for the better. Since they have the chance to show what they know how to do and be completely independent. That's wonderful. Because,..., it's a fact that before, a woman tried to get work and fit in wherever she could and she always worked for somebody, more or less, because there were few women in management positions... and women basically waited for whatever was left over or until they could get it somehow with their feminine charms or through their husband's job or with their own capabilities. I think that with their own capabilities was the least common. The majority was with her "charms" or through her husband's acquaintances and so now this period gives women the possibility to use their own capabilities and skills."

**-Hana (drafter):** "I don't think it's changed. Here it wasn't that the women were totally stepped on, that they couldn't do something, it wasn't that bad. No one could say that before the revolution a woman couldn't study, or that she couldn't have a management position, if she was good enough then she could... but the truth is that the political position was really important, but that was the same for men too, it wasn't just for women. What does bother me is that a woman should have the possibility to decide. Either she'll pursue a career, and not be with her kids, or if she has kids she knows ... that she wouldn't have time for everything... and wouldn't devote as much time to her family,..., I don't have the choice, because once my daughter is old enough, I'll have to go to work full-time because I can't afford not to."

**-Jaromila (land surveyor):**"It depends on who you're talking about... there are plenty of women who, wives of businessmen, for example, who don't have to go to work, who stay home, but their husbands, it seems to me, turned them into maids. They expect her to cook, to clean up, to make the home comfortable, the husband is making money, has a career, and expects the woman to do everything at home. It's individual. For example, a woman who wants to have a career, she has more possibilities now, more than, maybe, before the revolution. I think that now, some women, as long as they are capable and smart, can get a job and pursue a career, as long as they have the right conditions—family and everything. I think that now women are better off than before."

**-Michaela (casino):**“[There isn’t a difference between changes for men and women after the revolution.] Basically, a woman, when she wants to, can find her role in society, although she has to work harder than a guy. Men have it easier in management positions because they don’t have as many responsibilities and worries as women and a woman, when she wants really achieve something, has to decide whether to put having a family aside or have a family and not a career.”

## **APPENDIX**

### **Interview Questionnaire**

- 1) Could you please describe your working career, education, and profession?
- 2) Why did you choose this field/profession, what or who inspired/motivated you?
- 3) Was it difficult for you to find employment that matches your education and ambitions?
- 4) Do you have children and a family? Are you able to juggle both your career and taking care of your children? Does anyone support you in your career?
- 5) Do you feel anything is holding you back or limiting you in your professional growth and development?
- 6) Do you think that maternity leave, raising children, and other housework are holding you back in your career/work?
- 7) What qualities or capabilities do people in your profession need to demonstrate in order to be promoted or to receive interesting or challenging work?
- 8) Do your male colleagues ask you for advice? When you need advice, to whom do you turn, men or women?
- 9) Are your friends at work mostly men or women?
- 10) Is your salary equal to that of your male colleagues with the same work responsibilities?
- 11) Do you believe that women in your profession are as successful as men and are equally represented in management positions?
- 12) Does it seem to you that whether you are a woman or a man matters in your profession?
- 13) If financially you could afford to stay at home and not work, would you rather go to work anyway or stay at home?
- 14) How has your life changed since the revolution as far as family and work are concerned? Do you feel differently at work than under communism?
- 15) Do you think people are better or worse off since the revolution?  
And what about women?

16) Do you think the position of women has changed in general and in regards to the labor market?

17) Is there anything I did not mention during the interview that you would like to discuss?



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