

## The Czech National Identity

Basic Results of the 1995 National Survey

ALENA NEDOMOVÁ\*  
TOMÁŠ KOSTELECKÝ\*

Institute of Sociology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Prague

**Abstract:** Two main processes can be recognised in contemporary Europe: one of them leads to unification and progressive integration, the second one – as the result of the failure of the communist governmental system in the Eastern Europe – leads to the opposite process – disintegration. The path of European nations and states to a ‘United States of Europe’, from personal or state nationality to Europeanism, is one of permanent fluctuation between two relatively opposite identities. It is very important at this moment to transform the traditional conception and interpretation of national identity. But before this it is necessary to answer the questions of ‘who we are, who we want to be and who we should be within the context of contemporary Europe’. International comparative research which was carried out in 26 countries within the scope of the ISSP (International Social Survey Program) aspired to provide some basic information about the national identity of the inhabitants of the countries involved in the project. In November 1995 the ISSP survey was also realised in the Czech Republic.

*Czech Sociological Review, 1997, Vol. 5 (No. 1: 79-92)*

A random sample of 1700 (total sample) people of age 16 to 75 was selected to answer questions concerning several issues including national identity, regionalism, globalism, attitudes to ethnic minorities, refugees, and immigrants. Issues on Central Europe and the relationships between various states were also covered. Field work started on 28th October 1995 and finished on 27th November 1995. The method used was personal interview. Excluding ineligible subjects and non-responses a total of 1111 eligible ISSP questionnaires were received.

Due to the fact there is no legal access to any register of individuals in the Czech Republic, a two stage sampling method – first a random sample of households, then a random sample of individuals in each of the chosen households – had to be adopted. This bias was overcome by the weighting procedures involved in the data analysis.

The first part of this paper presents the basic features of the Czech national identity based on the analysis of the data collected by the survey. In the second part, the respondents’ view on the relationships between the Czech Republic and other states will be analysed more deeply with special emphasis on Central Europe.

### **The population of the Czech Republic– a closed society?**

The current population of the Czech Republic used to be rather heterogeneous in terms of both ethnicity and language. The coexistence of Czechs and Germans was typical of the border regions. As for the urban population, Jews were generally represented as the third

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\*) Direct all correspondence to: Ing. Alena Nedomová, RNDr. Tomáš Kostecký, CSc., Institute of Sociology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Jilská 1, 110 00 Prague 1, phone +4202 24 22 09 79, ext. 227, fax +4202 24 22 02 78, e-mail local@mbox.cesnet.cz

most important ethnic group. Moreover, the population of the old Czech Lands was exposed to a continuous exchange of ideas and various cultural influences coming from both the West and the East. The historical events of the 20th century have totally shattered this picture of an open and multi-cultural society. Most members of the Jewish community living in the Czech Lands were killed in concentration camps during World War II. The majority of those who survived the Nazi regime later emigrated, mainly to Israel. Over 90% of the German-speaking population was forced to leave the country in the early post-war period. Although in the late 40's some immigrants (mainly Slovaks) were encouraged to resettle in the border regions, the scope of immigration could not alter the newly-constituted and overwhelming majority of Czechs in the Czech Lands.

The 1948 Communist *coup d'état* and the subsequent installation of a Soviet-type communist regime seriously hindered the natural exchange of both ideas and people between the Czech Lands and neighbouring countries. The two waves of mass emigration which occurred in the Czech Lands after the 1948 Communist overthrow and after the 1968 Soviet Army invasion, do not bring to mind the words 'natural' and 'exchange'. The same is true for the Czech-Russian relationships which were based on an organised exchange of delegations and groups of visitors and (at least for the majority of Czechs) on rare contacts with the officers of the occupying army after 1968. Thus, the only real natural contact between the Czechs and other nations – that which was neither restricted by the border control, nor by the ideological aims of 'tourism planners' – was for more than forty years represented by the coexistence with Slovaks within the framework of Czechoslovakia.

After the fall of the Communist rule in 1989, two conflicting processes came to light. On the one hand, the collapse of the Iron Curtain, i.e. the renewal of civic and political freedom and the beginning of economic transformation, led to substantial changes in the life of the 'ordinary' inhabitant, consisting of sharp increases in the presence of international and inter-cultural elements. Simultaneously, however, the aggravation of Czech-Slovak political tensions ended up with the split of Czechoslovakia. Thus, the Czech Republic, founded on 1st January 1993, has become a typical nation-state. The consequence of the aforementioned historical developments is that the population of contemporary Czech Republic has never been so homogeneous in terms of ethnicity as in the mid-1990's, when the survey on national identity was held.

This statement is confirmed by the March 1991 population census data where 94.8% of the population of the Czech Republic declared themselves as Czech, while only 3.1% declared themselves as Slovak, with the remaining 2.1% declaring themselves as other nationalities. As specific demographic questions were included in the ISSP questionnaire, the ethnic homogeneity of the contemporary population of the Czech Republic is even more apparent. Asking respondents about their ethnic heritage ('Which country/countries of the world did your ancestors come from?') we found that 90.2% of the population declared themselves as being of Czech origin, while only 2.3% of respondents mentioned Slovak, 1.7% Austrian, 1.5% Polish and 1.1% of German origin. Concerning the language which respondents use at home, the uniformity is even more overwhelming: 98.9% of respondents speak Czech at home. The most common second languages used at home are Romany (2.9%) and Slovak (1.2%). We can speak of an almost totally homogeneous society as far as citizenship is concerned – 99.7% of the respondents hold Czech citizenship, and the number of inhabitants without Czech citizenship is negligible. The

fact, that 96.8% of the respondents' parents had Czech (Czechoslovak) citizenship at the time of the respondents' birth also shows that the scope of immigration to the Czech Republic was very limited for several decades.

Besides ethnic homogeneity, a low spatial mobility is typical of the population of the Czech Republic. Asking respondents about their experience of living abroad, we found that 88% answered "never" and only 7% of the population had lived outside the Czech Republic for more than 1 year. Moreover, it is possible that a substantial part of those who had experienced living outside the Czech Republic, are people who lived in Slovakia before the split – which at the time was not abroad. Spatial mobility was also rather low in terms of internal migration. 57% of respondents spent most of their childhood in the town (village) where they currently live, and an additional 16% in a different town (village), but in the same district. The figures presented here mean that almost three quarters of the respondents never in actual fact moved away from the environment in which they were born. This fact is also reflected by the population's strong identification with their home town (village) – 86% of respondents feel very close or close to their town or village.

People who have never really moved to a new neighbourhood are, not surprisingly, not very willing to do so, regardless of the potential improvement in their working or living conditions. Generally, the potential migrant becomes increasingly unwilling to move in direct measure to the distance and the level of unfamiliarity to the possible new place of residence. While 42% of the population is opposed to a possible move to another neighbourhood or town (village) within the same district – regardless of potential improvement in working or living conditions (the same percentage is in favour of such a move), about 60% refuse to move to another district within the Czech Republic, 79% is unwilling to move outside the Czech Republic, and 80% outside Europe.

Considering the figures presented above, a 'typical member of Czech society' is represented by a Czech-speaking person of Czech citizenship and Czech origin, living in the same town (village) or at least not far from his/her birthplace, having a close relationship with his/her place of residence and not very willing to move anywhere, especially not away from his/her home country. Taking into consideration that this person has no personal experience with living abroad, it is not surprising, that his/her attitudes towards foreigners generally (and immigrants in particular) can be described with words such as 'fear', 'caution' or 'mistrust'. This can be easily confirmed by the respondents' answers to questions concerning the relationships between the Czech Republic and other countries (Table 1) as well as their attitudes towards immigration (Table 2).

Table 1. Attitudes to other countries: “How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?” Figures in the table represent valid answers in % (The original scale: strongly agree; agree; neither agree nor disagree; disagree, strongly disagree – was reduced to a three-grade scale)

Statement	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
Foreigners should not be allowed to buy land in the Czech Republic	59	12	29
Czech television should give preference to Czech films and programmes	56	24	20
The Czech Republic should limit imports of foreign goods in order to protect the national economy	54	18	28
Czech schools should make much more effort to teach foreign languages properly	88	9	3
For certain problems such as environmental pollution, international bodies (e.g. UN, EU, WHO) should have the right to enforce laws	74	15	11
People should support their country even if the country is in the wrong	34	23	43
The Czech Republic should follow its own interests even if this leads to conflicts with other nations	32	22	46

(The number of valid answers ranges from 1044 to 1101.)

From the figures in Table 1, it is obvious that some isolationist ideas (of both economic and cultural dimension) found substantial support in Czech society. But it is also worthwhile mentioning that respondents' answers indicate more or less a 'defence strategy', i.e. that of trying to preserve the Czech Republic against an unwanted foreign influence, but does not necessarily indicate the presence of a desire to live in 'splendid isolation' nor directly 'out of the world'. A clear 88% of respondents agreed with the statement, that "Czech schools should make much more effort to teach foreign languages properly", 74% agreed that international bodies like UN, EU, WHO (World Health Organisation) should have the right to enforce solutions to certain problems such as environmental pollution etc.. A generally suspicious attitude towards foreigners is however not accompanied by an excessive loyalty to one's own state. Only a minority of the population (34%) expressed willingness to support their country even if the country was in the wrong (while almost 43% refused). Moreover there are also less people who would rather the Czech Republic followed its own interests even if it led to conflicts with other nations (32%), than people opposed to such a policy (46%). Looking at the percentages presented here one should be aware that there are substantial differences among different groups of respondents. The lower the education and the higher the age of the respondent, the greater the level of isolationism that can be expected. Typical isolationists also live in the countryside, claim to be of left-wing or extreme right-wing orientation and subjectively feel themselves as belonging to the lower classes.

Table 2. Attitudes to immigration: “How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?” Figures in the table represent valid answers in %. (The original scale: strongly agree; agree; neither agree nor disagree; disagree, strongly disagree – was reduced to a three-grade scale)

Statement	Neither agree nor disagree Disagree		
	Agree		
Immigrants increase crime rates	68	17	15
Immigrants take jobs away from people who were born in the Czech Republic	42	24	34
Immigrants make the Czech Republic more open to new ideas and culture	23	26	51
Immigrants are generally good for the Czech Republic’s economy	8	24	68
The Czech Republic should take stronger measures to exclude illegal immigrants	90	6	4
How much do you agree or disagree that refugees who have suffered political repression in their own country should be allowed to stay in the CR?	57	24	19

(The number of valid answers ranges from 994 to 1090.)

The attitude of Czech society towards immigration can undoubtedly be described as negative. About two-thirds of the respondents consider immigrants as a threat to the security of their society. Taking into consideration the relatively low unemployment rate, respondents do not fear so much that immigrants will take jobs away from them. Nevertheless, a clear majority of respondents do not believe that immigration is beneficial to the national economy. The idea that immigrants bring new ideas and cultures is also not welcomed. Even in the current situation of a relatively low immigration rate, an overwhelming majority would support taking stronger measures against illegal immigrants. On the other hand, the emigration due to political reasons under communist Czechoslovakia has made Czech society more tolerant to refugees suffering political repression in their own country. In this context it is interesting to mention that the most important underlying factor influencing the variability of answers is the respondents’ political orientation. Left-wing supporters (and particularly Communist Party supporters) express much less tolerance towards the immigrants than the rest of society. It seems that the old Communist ideological line ‘emigrant = traitor’ is still alive. People who were taught to be hostile to former Czech emigrants are not willing to tolerate any kind of immigration.

Isolationism and hostility to an ‘alien’ world also have some deep historical roots and they belong to the milieu of the original Czech society.

### **Concept of nationality and citizenship**

How are the concepts of nationality and citizenship understood by the population of the Czech Republic? What is the relationship between being a Czech national and a Czech citizen? In order to get a clearer understanding of these questions, respondents were asked to determine what, according to them, the important factors for being truly Czech are. Table 3 shows the basic frequencies of the respondents’ answers.

Table 3. Respondents answers to the question: "How important do you think each of the following indicators is for being truly Czech?" (N=1111) (freq. in %)

Indicator	very important	fairly important	not very important	not important at all
to speak Czech	75	19	4	2
to feel Czech	69	22	6	3
to have Czech citizenship	51	31	12	6
to live in the CR for most of one's life	46	32	15	7
to respect the CR laws and institutions	41	40	10	9
to be born in the CR	37	30	22	11
to be Christian	10	11	26	47

It is important to mention here that the terminology used in the question comprises both possible meanings: 'to be truly Czech' can be understood both in terms of nationality and citizenship. Thus, the figures show not only what is perceived to be more and less important, but also demonstrate the respondents' concepts of nationality and citizenship.

Generally speaking, the ability to speak Czech together with the feeling of being Czech were considered by far the most important conditions for being truly Czech. Over 90% of the people asked held it to be very or fairly important. The respondents were not so strict as to the necessity to have the Czech citizenship, to live for the most part of one's life in the Czech Republic nor to respect political institutions and laws of the country, although around 80% of them considered these conditions as important. Surprisingly enough, only 67% of the respondents required that a 'truly Czech' person be born in the Czech Republic. Finally, being Christian is perceived as almost irrelevant in the highly secularised Czech society.

Looking more deeply behind the data reveals interesting facts. It is obvious that people, in practice, do not make any relevant difference between citizenship and nationality. In an ethnically highly homogeneous, and for decades closed, society, being 'truly Czech' automatically means having both Czech nationality and Czech citizenship. When speaking about citizens of the Czech Republic people usually think about members of the Czech nation. The easiest (and almost unique) way to become a member of the Czech nation is to have Czech parents (or at least one Czech parent). Moreover, emigrating from the Czech Republic or even losing Czech citizenship can be tolerated if a person's parents are Czech-speaking, and feeling Czech, one can be 'truly Czech'. The hypothesis that this 'blood law' is applied extensively is also supported by the fact that, in spite of the generally negative attitudes towards immigration, over 62% of the respondents agree that: "It should be easier for those immigrants who are of Czech nationality and have come from other countries to attain Czech citizenship".

On the other hand, it is very difficult to become 'truly Czech' if one comes to the Czech Republic from abroad and has no Czech origins. Besides this, a substantial part of respondents (49%) think that: "It is impossible for people who do not share Czech customs and traditions to become fully Czech". In other words, a member of an ethnic minority born in the Czech Republic, having Czech citizenship, speaking only Czech and having lived in the Czech Republic for his/her entire life could not be considered as a

‘truly Czech’ person if his/her way of life is too different from what is commonly accepted as the norm.

A more detailed statistical analysis of the data (factor analysis) shows that the respondents were rather consistent in their answers (only one factor was extracted). Simply said, respondents who have considered one condition (for example, the ability to speak Czech) as very important for being truly Czech, also tended to consider the other conditions as very important, and vice versa. Finally, it is important to point out that the respondents’ opinions were rather determined by their personal data. Less-educated, older people, living in the countryside tended to be more demanding. However, gender, and the economic and political orientation of the respondents were insignificant.

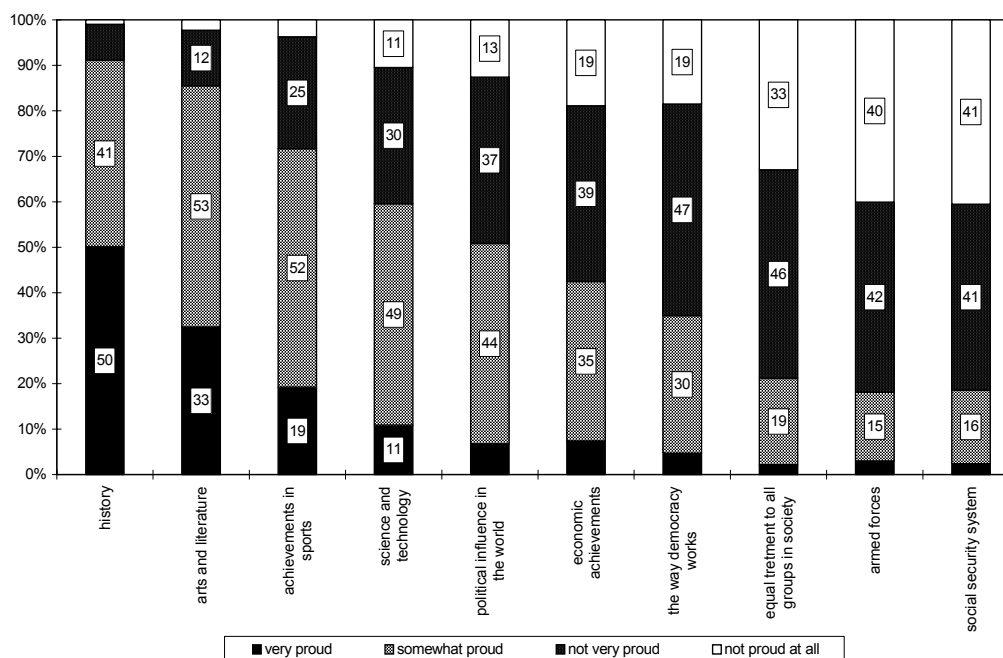
#### **What do the inhabitants of the Czech Republic think about themselves and their country?**

It is conventional wisdom that scepticism and pragmatism are typical of ‘the Czech national character’ (if such a thing does exist). It seems that the data we have obtained from the ISSP questionnaire, support at least the first part of this claim. Although Czech society is rather suspicious towards immigrants (as can be seen above) it is obvious that people do not think very highly of their own country and nation either. Only 15% of the respondents believe that: “The world would be a better place if people from other countries were more like the Czechs”, while over 40% do not think so and the rest do not know. The Czech Republic is also not considered to be a better place than the majority of other countries – only just over one-fifth of the respondents agreed with this statement. Taking into account, that over 70% of the population have found themselves feeling ashamed of something about their country, it is rather surprising to discover that the same proportion of respondents would rather be a citizen of the Czech Republic than of any other country in the world.

To give a clearer picture of why people identify themselves with their home country, respondents were offered a set of potential reasons for national pride and were asked to determine how proud they were of each item on the list. Chart 1 summarises the basic frequencies.

The most frequent reason for being at least somewhat proud of the Czech Republic is its history – more than 91% of the people think so (50% of respondents are very proud of Czech history). Taking into account the terminology used in the question and the fact that the Czech Republic was founded in 1993, respondents should, strictly speaking, evaluate the time period between 1993 and 1995. But evidently, they either have considered the Czech Republic as the descendant of the Czech Kingdoms as well as Czechoslovakia and/or have thought of the history of the Czech nation. The same is true for the achievements in arts and literature, which were also highly evaluated (33% very proud, 53% somewhat proud). As for other potential reasons for being proud of the Czech Republic, the share of satisfied respondents declines rather rapidly. However, the majority of people asked still feel proud of the Czech Republic’s achievements in sports, science and technology, and political influence in the world. Economic achievements and the way democracy works is a cause for pride for only around one-third of respondents. Far less people think there is anything to be proud of concerning the fairness and equality of treatment of all groups in society, the armed forces or the social security system.

**Chart 1: How proud are you of the Czech Republic in each of the following aspects (N=1111)**



A more detailed analysis of the data (factor analysis) shows that there are basically two different types of pride (two factors are extracted). The first type of pride is based on the evaluation of aspects which can be classified as cultural (history, arts and literature, sports, sciences and technology). All topics mentioned have some common features: they are more the products of the long-term development of society than of the contemporary state, they are more independent of the governments and regimes (and entirely independent of the present government) and, finally, they are more closely connected to the Czech nation than to the Czech state(s). The second type of pride is based on the assessment of the situation in today's Czech Republic. Looking at the answers of individual respondents, one can find any combination of the above-mentioned attitudes. Being proud of contemporary achievements can be, but also need not be, accompanied by the pride in history and culture and vice versa. It is interesting to see that the intensity of both identifiable 'types of pride' was more or less irrelevant to most of the respondents' personal data. The only underlying factor explaining some variation in the respondents' answers is their political orientation: the pride in the present achievement of the state is more probably felt by right-wing people who are evidently more satisfied with the present general state of the country.

#### **Europe and the world as seen from the Czech Republic – the relation between the Czech Republic and other countries**

Geographical location, the history of mutual relationships, as well as recent political situations are the most important factors influencing the population of the Czech Republic in their attitude towards any foreign country. Respondents were first asked to present



their image of Central Europe. Each individual country from the list of countries offered to respondents came under the heading West, Central or East European. It was up to the respondent to decide what kind of criteria he/she would use. Chart 3 summarises the results of such classification. Individual countries were classified into the three above-mentioned groups in accordance with what they meant to the majority of respondents. Figures in brackets represent the percentage of respondents who considered the country as a component of the respective parts of Europe. Furthermore, because the ‘westernmost’ countries are placed the most leftward and the ‘easternmost’ the most rightward (see the West-East axis at the bottom of the chart), the position of the country’s name in the chart displays also the respondents’ personal understanding of mutual ‘distance’ between pairs of countries.

Chart 2. Europe as seen from the Czech Republic: “Some people suggest that Europe has three parts if one considers geographic location, politics and history: West, Central and East Europe. In your view, to which of these parts do the following countries belong?”

West Europe	Central Europe	East Europe
France (93)	Austria (58)	Croatia (50)
The Netherlands (91)	The Czech Republic (90)	Bulgaria (73)
Germany (78)	Poland (80)	Lithuania (87)
Switzerland (77)	Hungary (77)	Ukraine (94)
Italy (68)	Slovakia (60)	Russia (97)
	Slovenia (50)	
<b>←WEST</b>		<b>EAST→</b>

Note: Countries were classified in accordance with the opinion of the majority of respondents. Figures in brackets represent percentages of respondents who considered the country as a component of the respective parts of Europe.

Surprisingly enough, from among 16 countries only three are regarded as unquestionably Central European – The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. More than three-quarters of respondents think so. Although the majority of people classified also Austria, Slovakia and Slovenia as Central European countries, their choice was far from indisputable. However, while Austria is perceived as a West European country by a significant number of respondents (around 40%), the other mentioned countries are labelled as East European by the same share of respondents. France, The Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland and Italy are placed in West Europe by a clear majority of respondents (Italy is closest to Central Europe). On the other side Russia, Ukraine, Lithuania and Bulgaria are unambiguously placed in East Europe, Croatia seems to be somewhere between Central and Eastern Europe.

The respondents’ answers helped to reveal the classification criteria which were used. The majority of respondents have obviously not only thought about the geographical location, but have also taken into consideration the culture, political system as well as the history of the countries. This is the only explanation for the great differences between pairs of neighbouring states (Italy-Slovenia, Austria-Slovakia, The Czech Republic-Germany, etc.). The other important feature in the respondents’ answers is the clear identification of Czech society in Central Europe, and also the somewhat ethnocentric view of

the reality – note that the only ‘pure, Central European country’ is the Czech Republic itself.

Leaving the question of the mental map of Europe aside, one can analyse the issue of the Czech Republic’s relationships with other countries. Respondents were asked to determine three countries with which the Czech Republic should co-operate most closely in economic and political terms, those which are the most similar in cultural terms, and those which could become a danger for their home country. The following table shows the share of respondents who mentioned individual countries.

Table 4. Relationships between the Czech Republic and other countries

Country	% of respondents who mentioned the country	Country	% of respondents who mentioned the country
<i>A. Which three countries should the CR co-operate most closely with in economic terms?</i>		<i>B. Which three countries do you think are the most similar to the CR in cultural terms?</i>	
Germany	73.3	Slovakia	76.7
USA	33.9	Poland	56.3
Austria	33.0	Austria	37.5
Slovakia	26.9	Germany	23.7
France	22.3	Russia	12.1
<i>C. Which three countries should the CR co-operate the most closely with in political terms?</i>		<i>D. Which countries do you think could become a danger to the CR?</i>	
Germany	56.6	Russia	67.8
Slovakia	34.1	Germany	51.8
Austria	33.7	Slovakia	16.2
USA	33.3	China	13.5
Poland	23.0	Yugoslavia	10.5

It is evident from the tables above that two countries – Germany and Slovakia – have a special position. Germany is considered as the most important partner for not only economic but also political co-operation (it is believed especially by younger and politically right-oriented respondents). However, at the same time, Germany still remains a potential danger for slightly more than half of the population (older and politically left-oriented respondents often hold this view). Slovakia is generally perceived as the country by far the most similar in cultural terms but, particularly among the older and left-oriented respondents, there is the belief that the Czech Republic should co-operate closely with Slovakia both on a political and economic level. Rather surprisingly, Slovakia was mentioned also as one of the countries which could become a danger to the Czech Republic. Since almost exclusively right-oriented respondents have expressed this opinion, it is very probable that in speaking about ‘the danger from Slovakia’ they are thinking predominantly about political instability or, as sometimes mentioned, the ‘transfer of leftist ideas’.

The greatest danger for the Czech Republic is Russia. This belief is shared by all groups of society – even the majority of left-oriented respondents think so, a considerable part of whom belong to Communist Party supporters (38%!). On the other hand, the im-

age of the USA is different – the Czech Republic should co-operate closely with the USA in both political and economic terms, although it must be admitted that older and politically left-oriented respondents do not share this idea so much. Austria is also considered as an important partner for both political and economic co-operation. Moreover, it is claimed that Austria is one of the most similar countries. It is worthwhile mentioning here that there are no differences among different groups of respondents as to attitudes towards Austria. Another country which should be mentioned here is Poland. The majority of respondents consider Poland as one of the most similar countries to the Czech Republic in cultural terms, a substantial part of Czech society is in favour of close political co-operation. Looking at the data globally it seems that the Czechs show two basic tendencies in perceiving foreign countries. Older and left-wing people tend to support co-operation with the ‘old allies’ (chiefly the former communist countries) and are more suspicious towards the ‘old enemies’ on the other side of the former Iron Curtain. On the other hand, younger and right-oriented people tend to reject all traditional alliances preferring exclusively western orientations.

#### **Austria and the Czech Republic – a common history in the eyes of Czechs**

Questions asking respondents about their attitudes towards the Austro-Hungarian Empire are an integral part of the questionnaire. Due to the fact that none of the respondents have had any personal experience with living under this rule (the oldest respondents were born in 1920), the data we have obtained reflect an image of this reign based mostly on history lessons at school, literature, and stories passed down. This could be the main reason why the most significant feature of respondents’ answers to questions concerning this was a large measure of no opinion (from 42% to 54% used “do not know” or “neither agree, nor disagree”). Looking at the half of respondents who have expressed some opinion, we can conclude that relationships towards the reign of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy are unclear as seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Attitudes to the reign of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy: “In the following, we list alternative descriptions of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Please say if you agree or disagree with them” (in %)

Statement	Agree	Disagree	No opinion
The Empire was a prison for the nations and peoples that lived under its rule	32	26	42
People in Central Europe have not lived so well and happily since the Empire fell apart	13	42	45
The Empire was economically heterogeneous and inefficient	31	16	53
The bureaucracy of the Empire was more efficient and reliable than present-day state administration in Central Europe	19	27	54
The Empire helped the economic development of its underdeveloped regions	29	22	49

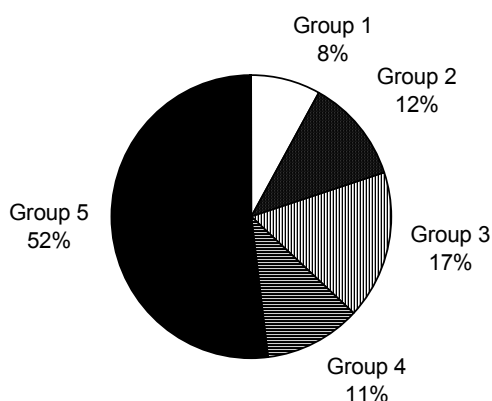
It is clear from the figures that a negative evaluation of the reign of the monarchy is slightly more prevalent among Czech society than a positive view. But there are differences as to individual items. While only 13% of the population agreed that “People in Central Europe have not lived so well and happily since the monarchy fell apart” (42% disagree), the share of respondents admitting that the monarchy helped the economic de-

velopment of its underdeveloped regions is slightly higher (29%) than the share of opponents (22%). It seems that contemporary Czech society tends to admit some positive economic effects of the existence of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but does not see anything else to be highly regarded. Not surprisingly, only about 10% of the respondents regret that the monarchy fell apart. For the majority of Czechs this reign is evidently a part of history very distant from their everyday lives. It is also interesting to note that in the minds of respondents contemporary Austria is usually not connected with the monarchy (as seen in contrast to the very positive image of present-day Austria). There are also no differences based on age, gender, education or political orientation of the respondents.

### The Czech Republic and European integration

If the survey data served for prediction of the results of a hypothetical referendum on the entrance of the Czech Republic into the European Union, adherents of the process of European unification would be satisfied: 50% of respondents were in favour of joining the EU, 18% were against and the remaining 32% did not know. Taking into account all questions related to the EU it is possible to produce a more structured view on the respondents' attitudes and opinions. The results of such a classification is shown in Chart 3 (the procedure QUICK CLUSTER from the SPSS statistical package was used to determine the individual groups of respondents).

Chart 3: Groups of respondents in accordance with their relationship to the European Union (N=751)



The typical characteristics of individual groups are as follows:

- Group 1 (8% of respondents) – the respondents of this group have a very limited knowledge of the EU; they think the Czech Republic would not benefit from being a member of the EU; they view joining the EU with disfavour and have no opinion as to the way the Czech Republic should enter the EU.
- Group 2 (12% of respondents) – possess a limited knowledge of the EU; they do not know whether the Czech Republic would benefit from being a member of the EU; despite this fact they support joining the EU after fulfilling the necessary pre-conditions; the EU should be joined individually.

- Group 3 (17% of respondents) – hold an average knowledge of the EU; they think the Czech Republic would not benefit from being a member of the EU; and are strictly against joining the EU; the Czech Republic should do all it can to protect its independence from the EU; this group holds no opinion as to the way the Czech Republic should enter the EU.
- Group 4 (11% of respondents) – have an average knowledge of the EU; the Czech Republic would benefit from being the member of the EU, and this group gives its support for joining the EU after fulfilling the necessary pre-conditions.
- Group 5 (52% of respondents) – have relatively the broadest knowledge of the EU; the Czech Republic would surely benefit from being a member of the EU; this group is strictly in favour of joining the EU; the Czech Republic should join the EU individually and as quickly as possible.

An analysis of the data supports the idea of positive statistical relationships between the level of knowledge of the EU and the conviction regarding the usefulness of joining the EU for the Czech Republic. It is interesting to note that people who both know a lot about the EU and reject joining it are practically not present in the sample. Czech ‘Euro-scepticism’ is more a product of the fear of the unknown than a rational decision based on the rejection of EU principles. This claim can be indirectly supported by the fact, that older and less educated people are much more opposed to the idea of joining the EU.

Attitudes towards the EU are also influenced by the political orientation of the respondents. Those who place themselves on the left of political spectrum generally express much more reservations towards the EU than the rest of the population. This fact is somewhat paradoxical, showing different images of the EU held by the population and the political elite. While the EU is often accused by Czech right-wing politicians of being an anti-liberal stronghold of social engineering and bureaucracy, functioning under the influence of different kind of socialists, the majority of right-wing respondents perceived the EU as a symbol of successful capitalism. On the other hand, the majority of the Czech left-oriented political elite usually speak of the EU as an example of a well-managed organisation preserving high social standards of employees, which contrasts with the 19th century capitalism installed in the Czech Republic by the right-oriented government. A substantial part of the left-oriented respondents, however, (probably influenced by the years of communist propaganda) still tends to consider the EU as an organisation serving only the interests of “multinational capital”.

### **Conclusions**

1. A deep emotional relationship is typical for 90% of the inhabitants of the Czech Republic.
2. Most people are not ready to change their place of residence even if it can improve living or working conditions. Three-quarters still live in the same place, or not very far from, where they spent their childhood.
3. The Czechs see the integrity of the Republic as the basic condition of its existence.
4. Speaking and feeling Czech, one can be ‘truly Czech’. Also, having Czech citizenship is mostly required.

5. Only one-third of Czechs can speak well another language. Mostly they can speak German, English and Russian. They are aware of the fact, that language education is poor and must be improved.
6. The Czechs mostly don't recognise the difference between nationality and citizenship.
7. The inhabitants of the Czech Republic are very proud, especially of its history (including history of the Czech Kingdom), arts and literature. Also, they are mostly proud of the results of the national economy since 1990.
8. People would like to regulate the import of goods and to restrict immigration. They are afraid of the impacts of immigration (increasing crime rates, the conflict of different cultures, unemployment).
9. Attitudes to the national minorities are not marked, probably due to the national homogeneity of the population. Hostility is concentrated towards Gypsies.
10. The Czechs feel themselves to be typical Central Europeans. They prefer to collaborate in cultural, political and economic issues especially with Germany and other Western European countries, and also the USA. They are mostly afraid of Russia.
11. People support affiliation to the European Union and NATO. But they hold a low level of knowledge of these organisations.

ALENA NEDOMOVÁ, TOMÁŠ KOSTELECKÝ – *The authors are senior researchers of the Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences. They are concerned with social indicators of regional and local problems.*

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