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***Youth in Slovakia
and
European Identity***



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For more information on the project as a whole visit

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Introduction

The geographical position of Slovakia evokes in the Slovaks the exalted emotions that they are anchored in the very heart of Europe. This anchorage is not perceived in a symbolic geo-cultural sense, as in the case of the Czechs, Poles, Hungarians, Austrians or other ethnic groups who consider themselves to be Central Europeans. There are many Slovaks who will argue with the stubbornness of a geographer that the point of intersection of the "x"-axis connecting the European coast of the Atlantic with the Russian Ural Mountains from the West to the East, and of the "y"-axis connecting the Baltic Sea with the Mediterranean Sea from the North to the South, lies exactly in Slovakia. They are even ready to swear solemnly that the point in question is almost identical with the region Krahule.

Slovakia is a small country with territory of some 49,000 square kilometres and is populated by fewer than five and a half million people. Five countries border it: Poland, Ukraine, Hungary, Austria, and the Czech Republic. One third of the population lives in communities of fewer than 2,000 inhabitants. Slovak communities are typically small because of the mountainous terrain of much of the country; Slovak society is therefore traditionally rural. Indeed, significant industrialisation and urbanisation have taken place only very recently (and especially under socialism in the 1960s -1980s).

This is also the current context where young people build their European identity. At the same time there are some circumstances specific to Slovakia. The rapid changes since November 1989 have opened up many new opportunities for young people, which have been welcomed. On the other hand, especially since 1991 the restructuring of the economy has led to a high degree of youth unemployment, a phenomenon that was unknown in previous times.

Regardless of which Slovak issue we talk about, we have to admit that we live in a country full of paradoxes. This description is also appropriate when we talk about young people and social change.

The paradox dwells in the fact that the political influence of youth movements after 1989 - even though the role of youth in the Velvet Revolution was highly appreciated - has remained so weak that none of the relevant political parties or coalitions considered it useful to push ahead demands of young people more vigorously.

On the other hand, it is necessary to mention that there was not much to push ahead, because youth representatives after 1990 were dealing with problems too remote from the actual problems of young people, namely the division of federal youth organisations' property between the Czech and Slovak Republic, a headlong and reckless privatisation of this property in Slovakia, a permanent need for appeasement between non-governmental associations, at first between old and new associations, then between coalition and opposition groups, and after 1998 even between coalition youth organisations. It is very difficult to imagine the amount of intellectual capacity and time individual associations invested in order to get more money from gradually decreasing portions of state financial support for youth activities.

However, the situation changed a bit in 1998. Thanks to the role it played in the parliamentary election in 1998, the Slovak Council of Youth -was involved in defining the new governmental policy. It helped to promote a real institutional change. New Governmental Council for issues of children and youth has been established. Preconditions for coordination of governmental youth policy have been set, thus enabling youth representatives to take part in decision-making processes of national importance.

I must emphasize that this development is in compliance with the youth policy of the European Union. All EU countries are working on the so-called White book of youth policy. Youth activists in Europe emphasize the fact that national Youth Councils should be formally recognized as a social and civil partner for defining state youth policy in the EU member countries. This civil dialogue is expected to have an institutional base in the state as well as at the local levels.

Let us summarize briefly the developments after 1998. We have the Governmental Council for Issues of Children and Youth, National Youth Conference, Parliamentary Day; there are active youth organisations in many cities and villages. We as researchers did not remain indifferent either, and for the first time since 1989 a report about the situation of youth in the Slovak Republic has been compiled and published. The institutional conditions for youth policy have never been better. The paradox is that the social situation of youth has deteriorated.

There has always been discussion about youth issues. We have started considering the protection of young people against negative phenomena, we have been interested in the juvenile crime problem and the race intolerance – these have been the most topical issues in the developed EU countries as well. Still, we

underestimated the fact that youth unemployment and the aging of our society are transferring all our youth problems from criminal law and educational perspectives to the social-political realm.

Not long ago, the President of one of Germany's federal lands learnt about this fact. During his visit students displayed a poster with the provocative inscription: Here are sitting those who will refuse to pay for your pensions in the future...

As further discussion revealed, they will refuse to pay not because they will not be willing to do so. More likely, the students are very well aware of the fact that if the state does not create conditions for quality education and professional training, they will not be able to produce enough sources to support the social welfare system of the state.

Similar to the students in Germany, our youth representatives finally realized the complete social welfare system reform would probably be paid by the present young generation. That is why they are saying: We are going to pay twice: for our parents in the same way as they were paying, but also in advance, for ourselves. There are not many people with a deeper interest in understanding the complexity of social problems among representatives of various non-governmental associations of children and youth. Still, these representatives were bitterly outraged by experts from the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues who stated at their collective meeting: What is the point in discussing these issues with youth representatives? We cannot solve anything here; the people responsible for these issues sit somewhere else.

The public in Slovakia usually perceives youth issues as important for society. But the representatives in the Parliament or in local government councils do not always support demands and projects of young people.

To the surprise of older electorate members, the present political elite is not able to divide its attention properly. The members of the elite are unable to take a decision about how much attention they can pay to their own problems and how much of it they must pay to the problems of citizens. The old as well as the young start to call the governing middle-aged generation with a derisive - although not standard-term: scum. To the surprise of young first-time voters from the year 1998, the political elite, who won their support in the 1998 parliamentary election, is not even able to define for themselves the conflict between the

investments into new human sources (the young) and the necessary care of human sources retreating from productive life (the old).

A German sociologist expresses the deepest feelings of the first-time voters: Recently he mentioned the fact that the governing middle-aged generation subconsciously and arrogantly creates better conditions for the old, since there is no chance for them to be young again, but there is a high probability that they will themselves become old.

We assume the only right thing is to invest extensively into young people's education and professional training (i.e., formal education), but also into their capacity to work and overcome the difficulties of real life. We want young people in the future not only to be able to produce enough sources for all generations, but also to be willing to share the sources compassionately with others.

Now let us ask another question: is the present political elite working in a direction that will enable the present generation of young people to repay us at least the penny symbolically borrowed from us?

At last first steps were taken to solve the high youth unemployment rate this year. National youth policies are understood to be comprehensive and complex only when they also deal with the problems of rising costs of living, unemployment, the shortage of flats, poverty, mobility difficulties, insufficient education support, restrictions in freedom of speech, and discrimination.

The outcomes of the European summit on employment held in the year 1997 were reconfirmed at the Prime Ministers' Conference in Lisbon in 2000 and have emphasized that the efficiency of EU members' youth policies will be heavily dependent on the ease with which young people can enter the labour force market. This issue will be one of the crucial criteria in judging whether the policies are successful or not.

Sociologists have recently reminded us that the intergenerational social agreement - which is the inner spirit of the youth policy - can be understood as the readiness of the young to fulfil their obligations towards the society of adults on condition that the society (the state and local government authorities) will help them and support them in realizing their life aspirations. We usually understand the above - mentioned agreement in this way: The older generation will give the coming generation a chance to react appropriately to the main challenges of modernization in three sectors of the new literacy, including language, computer

and civil life. I would add one more challenge: the ability to work for results either as an individual or as a member of a cooperative team.

What have we completed successfully in the youth policy so far? We have approved INFOVEK, a generously designed program promoting computer literacy. Many elementary and secondary schools in Slovakia are enjoying new well-equipped computer classrooms, the teachers are coming through training, and new education programs are being prepared. Since 1992 we have had a program for supporting civil associations of children and youth – this program is unfortunately receiving less financial support, even though the activities of children's and youth associations have become an inseparable part of developing free-time activities.

There is not a robust and consistent national program to promote the development of language training for children and adolescents in all types of schools. Are we aware of the fact that the fundamentals of the Irish „miracle“ are based on the ability of not only university-educated people, but also small entrepreneurs and workers to speak English?

We need to develop a new program of transition for young people from school to work. The program should mobilize and encourage parents to engage their children in household and local community work. Next, the program should offer a wide range of short-term summer jobs for students. It should finally result in reintroduction of well-proven graduate mobility within the united European territory. This program of profession-discovering journeys (not tourism) of young people might be the best choice for the Slovak Republic in case the proposed 5- or 7-year moratorium is imposed on freedom of labour force movement within EU boundaries.

The process of transition for a young person into maturity anticipates getting experience and skills in the labour process and in civil life, in those sectors where the effectiveness of received qualifications in formal and non-formal education is being tested: languages, the capacity to use information technology, the spirit of entrepreneurship, and social-communicative skills. The youth unemployment conference has clearly stated that it is impossible to reach these goals without the participation and financial support of trade unions, employers and the representatives of civil society.

We need to improve the financial support and system relations between schools and subjects youth work, between teachers and youth workers, between formal

and non-formal education. Work with young people in the nongovernmental sector is not, as it used to be understood, only playing with adolescents in their free time. Interconnection of formal with non-formal education is giving us a chance to introduce a new quality into the personality formation of young people as citizens. In conclusion, I asked myself: what is the main purpose of complex comprehensive youth policy as a tool for social change, which was intensively discussed in the 2nd National Conference of the Youth in Slovakia (2001)?

My answer: it is something that cannot be expressed just in terms of money. Every young person wants to have equal access to opportunities and freedom of choice, the chance for a fair assessment in the competitive struggle for positions in the market for education opportunities and in the labour force market. Social justice constitutes the crucial condition for integration of the young generation into society.

Ladislav Macháček

***YOUTH INDIVIDUALIZATION
AND
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Individualization Theory and Youth in the Processes of Transition and Modernization in the Slovak Republic

Introduction

Sociological youth research in Europe has recorded new stimuli for the development. It appears that especially political, economic and social changes in the countries of Europe present a new opportunity to verify K. Mannheim's thesis on the inevitable link of generations with the dynamics of social reproduction and change. (Zinnecker, J. et al. 2002) What determines our approach to youth issues as generation issues must be an unusual - to use hyperbole - historically unique dynamics and the extent of social change (Machonin, P., 1996). Particularly in applying the generation approach in sociological research in the post-communist countries of Europe one can see that historical change has enabled individualization of all members of the homogeneous age group, where traditional social differences have become objectively visible and personally experienced.

According to international sociological research projects in post-communist countries, the characteristic of transformation and processes of individualisation of the first postcommunist generation of youth (Roberts, R. – Jung, B., 1995, p. 11) represents, according to the authors, an important signal for the future of the new Europe.

Transition in the political and economic systems of Slovakia, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland is only a part of the birth of "new Europe" which opens up new perspectives for a broad process of economic, political, social and cultural integration. "Nobody can predict the direction of these changes. One is, however, certain: they will deeply influence human lives, above all of those of children and young people to date." (Chisholm, L., 1995, p. 1). The arising European youth policy sensitively articulates fears that the present and future generations of children and youth in a new Europe will be more subjected to segregation and marginalization and their life perspectives will be determined by structural inequalities from very early in their lives.

Individualisation of Youth and Modernization Theory

Not all Slovak sociologists in the field of youth issues linked transformation processes in the sphere of political life (pluralism tendencies) and economic life (market tendencies) with such a typical element of modernization as information technology. In the introduction to his text *The Situation of Youth in Transformation of Slovakia* delivered in a lecture as early as fall 1992, J. Suchý

complained that information technology entered the life of Slovak society in a rather inconspicuous way and too much in the shadow of democratization and privatization. He claimed that it was due to information technology that the transformations had gained their high speed and complexity and also their prospects for human emancipation. It is, in his opinion, information technology shifting social reproduction "along the axis of historical development from the modern industrial society to the postindustrial information society, which generates new postmodern values and standards of social life at present." (Suchy, J., 1992, p. 8).

In a society of the classic type the transformation process, along with its attributes of democratisation and market economy (or, of late, processes of European and trans-Atlantic integration with modernization strategies such as information technology, rationalization, mobilization and secularization (Martin, D., 1996), brings not only the inevitable social risks and social problems of cumulating youth unemployment but they also open an unprecedented development opportunity to use the unleashed creativity of individual personalities as an inexhaustible source of social prosperity.

Modernisation can be perceived as "the energy of transformation" or as the "destination of transformation" or as both (Havelka, M. - Müller, K., 1996, p. 146).

The theory of Ulrich Beck, the author of the monograph *Risikogesellschaft: Auf dem Weg in eine andere Moderne (Society of Risk. On the Way to Some Other Modernity)* (Beck, U., 1986) is an inspiring work for developing the issues of the relationship of social context and individualisation of the first post-communist generation of youth, and the contradictions between the production of economic resources (wealth) and production of social risk in developed Western industrialized countries.

A new image of youth started to appear in the eighties in the interpretations of youth sociologists in Germany, which was based on Beck's thesis of individualization. U. Beck defined it as a social individualization shift of an unknown impact and dynamics, which took up with the valorisation of modernization results after World War II. Social situations in all rich Western industrialized countries, especially Germany, appeared as relatively high material living standard and far-reaching securities. As a consequence of all this, according to U. Beck, a historic discontinuity arose through which people were uprooted "...from traditional class conditions and family care and their dependency on the labour market with all the risks, chances and controversies of an individual destiny increased" (Beck, U., 1986).

A decade later, I. Richter in his brief thesis (Richter, I., 1995, p. 64) could outline this concept of youth:

Family - marriage at a later age, increase in young people living by themselves, transformation of marriage into partnership.

Education - diversification of education and career, prolongation of the phase of education, democratization of pedagogic approach.

Job - new bonds of education, unemployment, life-long education, accent on individual self-realization at one's job.

Culture - a peer group life for youth of religious, sporting, political nature is influenced by multidimensional relations mediated through mass media and network systems which simultaneously bring approximation and separation.

Politics - individualization in this sphere is demonstrated through lower participation in forming political will.

Everyday existence - in fashion, sexuality and communication, forms of behaviour often described as hedonistic that are presented through mass media or mediated through mate groups peer groups.

Polemics over the issue of whether such an image holds even at present have been going on until now, including whether it is scientifically correct in this case to apply Mannheim's terminology (1928) of a "generation form" and to speak about the generation of the eighties as an environmentalist generation (Richter, I., 1995). K. Roberts queried an interpretation of the concept of individualization as destructure of young people's situations in which prolonged transition into the world of labour and adulthood creates a "moratorium" during which they may escape from old determinants of their life chances, such as gender, social class origins and achievements during secondary education. "In practice, however, the old social predictors remain still significant and effective. Young people's situations and future prospects continue to be governed by their family origins, school records, gender and places of residence" (Roberts, K., 1995).

L. Siuralla has recently responded to a popular topic of verifying post-modern changes by a question: are traditional background variables losing their power to explain these changes? (Siuralla, L., 1996, p. 63). Empirical verification of the modernization theory in Finland indicated that the process of breaking loose from traditions and collective guidance is a slow one: "...the social-class background, regional background and separate male and female cultures seem to have maintained their strong position as guiding forces in the socialization process and in mediating traditions. Similarly, educational, consumption and leisure choices are still largely made in accordance with these background factors" (Lähtenmaa, J. – Siuralla, L., 1992, p. 128). It is, however, beyond dispute that some changes in the way of life with contemporary youth in Finland can be well explained by the modernization theory. Individualization processes do not hold generally, but according to Finnish experts they can be related with metropolitan

regions, where there is some cumulating of modernization changes creating a wider selection of life chances to choose from.

It seems that K. Roberts is right when he says that the old determinants of life opportunities continue to operate, but in a variety of individualised configurations. "Individualisation is not necessarily a product of these divisions dissolving or losing their influence" (Roberts, K., 1995, p. 179).

The fact that disintegration of family, neighbourhoods and religious communities should increase young people's sense of personal responsibility for their own conditions of living and for shaping their own future, constitutes an important factor of the times, be it designated as modern or post-modern. O. Stafseng believes that a program of getting free from conventions and traditions as well as from any mechanical form of collectivism - that is, a program of the modern individual, through which young people themselves determine their own life - has older sources. Those who named it a post-modern trend, according to T. Ziehe, created a vague theory by which the just attempt to disguise that citizenship as a legislative and political basis for modern individuality in terms of personality was originally defined for men and persons belonging to "well-to-do" classes of society (Stafseng, O., 1995).

In spite of these doubts, it is necessary to admit that a tendency to individualization in modern Western societies and also in transforming European societies is a consequence of partial subversion of traditional class distinctions based on an ascriptive status and a traditional lifestyle. Individual performance has growing importance and diversification and individualization of lifestyles in transition where conditions arose for such a shift through modernization (industrialization, urbanization, information technology, secularization). This development reflects the rise of new chances and freedom of choice, but also of new forms of threats and pressures.

In our transforming European communities we regularly reveal classical contrasts such as, on the one hand, the chance of the career "choice of entrepreneurial activities", and on the other, the possibility of social or personality degradation because of the "unemployment risk" (Macháček, L., 1996). We had not anticipated the extent, and richness of these forms of opportunity and danger for young people, which have come into being due to society breaking away from the vision "socialist modernity".

C. Wallace calls this, in a rather unflattering way; an antiquated "modern" society based upon forced industrialisation as in the late-nineteenth century model and forced collectivisation, which produced huge agricultural units rather than small farms. At this time the population was crowded into huge urban centres and apartment blocks and industrial production was based upon gigantic plants often employing tens of thousands of workers in "rationalised" production. People were

divided into large collectives based upon "class" or "age" which were strongly institutionalised and forced to celebrate such collectivities through rituals, slogans and meetings. "The type of subjectivity which was encouraged was of the passive individual, dependent upon external institutions, who led a stable life and was neither geographically nor occupationally mobile. Critical thinking was strongly discouraged" (Wallace, C., 1996, p. 4). This period of industrialisation was really the opposite to Beck's and Giddens' "reflexive individualisation" whose trends we have witnessed in late-capitalist society.

According to C. Wallace, there are four main axes of change which may be sources of individualisation and increasing flexibility in the life-course for young people in the post communist European countries:

- a) a shift from public to private sector employment and service provision
 - b) a shift from entering work to continuing education
 - c) a shift from production-led social life to consumption-led social life
 - d) a shift towards informal economic activities as an aspect of process of marketization.
- Comparing the situations in several post communist European countries shows that an essential element of the "soft" individualisation of youth, in getting acquainted with actual labour markets can be the institutional network of information services, offices for retraining and guidance for self-employment activities.

It is true that confrontation chances and dangers do not apply only to adults or youth in the labour market. The golden years of innocent games are over. The competition paces with colossal verve from the world of adults to that of youth and children and enters their leisure time. According to P. Buchner, "the pressure of competition inside the school is extended to out of school life: children are increasingly engaged in exclusive leisure activities, whereas "leisure-careers" are leading to high degrees of distinction between children's lives out of school. This implies that children must learn how to take responsibility for themselves at an early age" (Buchner, P., 1995, p. 45). As a result of this, life becomes a "biographical project". Also, in Slovakia children are supposed to be able to seek their own pursuits independently of parental direction. They can organise their leisure time and must endeavour to obtain the necessary resources.

Individualisation of youth brings misunderstanding and counteraction from the old generation and is often linked with breaking traditional forms of family and kinship support. For instance, in the light of empirical analyses it seems that the theory of a sudden breakthrough by distinctly post-modern or late-modern youth in Finland is premature and exaggerated. "The process of breaking loose from traditions and from collective guidance is a slow one: social class background and separate male and female cultures seem to have maintained relatively strong position as guiding forces in the socialization process and in mediating traditions.

Similarly, educational, consumption and leisure choices are still largely made in accordance with these background factors" (Lähteenma, J. - Siurala, L., 1992, p. 128). However there are certain characteristics that point in the direction of an emerging late-modern youth in Finland. "These include at least the diversification of ways of life, the intertwining of different spheres of life (work, leisure, education) the breakdown of strict periodizations between separate stages of life and intensified search for identity that is reflected, for instance, in new ways of life and in increased travelling abroad" (Lähteenma, J. - Siurala, L., 1992, p. 128). Processes of individualisation do not apply generally, but according to Finnish experts they may be found primarily in metropolitan regions. The question for Finnish experts is whether a new way of transition from childhood to adulthood should be interpreted as negative, even pathological, or as an emancipatory trend in development. Especially if it must be accepted that in the foreground of the individualisation movement there are girls and young women who are more tied by traditions and conventions than men. Whereas they feel the challenge of individualisation even more acutely, it is young women that are bearers of such empirically apparent demonstrations as living alone, late motherhood and sexual relationships outside marriage. The enfeeblements of family, neighbourhood and religious communities in their controlling capacity strengthen young people's sense of the individuality as a model of consciousness expressing the feeling of personal responsibility for one's own conditions and for constructing one's own future.

O. Stafseng from Norway says that emancipation from convention and tradition, and also from any form of collectivism that becomes mechanical, that is, the programmed modern individuality, uses some old resources (Weber, Durkheim, Simmel, Mead, Key). If social scientists (re)discover this project and call it "post-modern", it becomes deceptive in social history and the history of knowledge, and analytically misleading. They are the developing slippery theories. "The empirical validity of the concepts of what was modern did not apply to many people at the time they applied. The limitations lay in the fact that access to the civilian "citizenship" that was the legal and political foundation for the modern individuality in terms of psycho-logical and cultural personality was restricted to males and persons who belonged to the "better situated" sectors (or classes) of society." (Stafseng, O., 1995, p. 22)

Furlong and Cartmel (Furlong, A. - Cartmel, F., 1997, 142 pp.) argue that life in late modernity revolves around an epistemological fallacy: although social structures, such as class, continue to shape life chances, these structures tend to become increasingly obscure as collectivist traditions weaken and individualist values intensify. Therefore, the social world becomes regarded as unpredictable

and filled with risks that can only be negotiated on an individual level, even though chains of human interdependence remain intact.

The reality is that in all highly industrialized countries, young people's experiences of youth transitions are moving away from traditional normative expectations, and patterns of youth transitions are becoming increasingly pluralistic. For European countries a leading hypothesis in youth research is that this alteration is realised in successive transitions from school education, occupational training, qualification for employment, separation from family of origin, friendships and partnerships, political participation and community responsibility, leisure, consumer activities, peers association, media use, drug use. Shifts which have occurred during this century in the most general sense signify the increasing importance of education and training, that is, "school work" as the expansion of "employment", and by that the process of integrating young people into juvenile culture and also into new partnership patterns have been prolonged. And because the process of physical maturity accelerates, but the other way round, a larger space is created for youth so that young people remain juvenile longer if compared with the past.

The question is not only whether this new life phase can be called postadolescence, or whether it is more sensible to call it "young maturity". Apart from a larger space for relatively autonomous forms of cultural self-realisation, the extension of the youth phase is connected with extended options and formulate one's own life project, but it means bigger risks of personal and social failure. For a correct understanding of individualisation it is essential that young people gain a higher degree of autonomy, a chance to seek alternatives in everyday life, fashion, music, leisure activities, slang, political and civil participation.

The fact that patterns of youth transitions from childhood into adulthood are more pluralist-like and life experience of young people confirm a shift from traditional normative expectations, this becomes the main hypothesis of youth research in Europe at present. This change occurs in the major building blocks of youth transitions: school education and occupational training, separation from the family of origin, friendship and partnership, entry in the labour market, leisure, consumer activities, civil and political participation (Chisholm, L. – Hurrelman, K., 1995, p. 133).

In the course of the past century, the increasing significance of education and vocational training became more important than having a job and thus accelerated the process of integration of a larger part of youth into the youth culture and partner patterns. And as the process of physical maturity likewise accelerates (in the opposite direction, however) more space will be created for youngsters to remain young for a longer time compared to the previous period.

An important fact for understanding individualization is that in some areas

young people acquire a high standard of autonomy, and the possibility to choose from alternatives or individual forming of everyday existence (fashion, music, leisure activities, the culture of speech, political articulation). All that, however, takes place in an unstable social context in which the social position of an "adolescent" or of a "young adult" is temporary and uncertain especially because the certainty of materializing life plans in the future does not exist. Young people, therefore, can gain autonomy and take over responsibility in areas where it is typical of adults (for example in consumption or in partnership) but they have not yet acquired the status of adults for good.

Above all, sequencing and inconsistency of the transition process from adolescence into adulthood represent fundamental risk factors. All young people, irrespective of their social origin, are on the way to adulthood thrown "into structural contradictions. The fact is that they have the possibility to optimize their life chances. However, it is important that "...where personal competence and social resources are available and sufficient, young people can and do find productive ways of negotiating youth transitions successfully and thereby establishing healthy adult personality. Where competence and resources are insufficient, the results may be transiting into poor well-being" (Chisholm, L. – Hurrelman, K., 1995, p. 152).

There are rising some new issues for youth research in Europe, which are also formulated in relation to the youth policy of European countries. It is not an accident that links between risk, stress and problem behaviour are studied. Some issues of the future youth research appeal also in countries transforming their political and economic systems. For example with personal and social risk factors in adolescence many questions are intensifying: first, how far are observable changes in the social structuration of the youth phase implicated in the generation of intensified risks; second: which specific groups are affected by such developments in what ways. Sociological reflections of the theoretical thesis "...that pluralized transitions are constitutive by contemporary youth," (Chisholm, L. - Hurrelman, K., 1995, p. 155) are an inspiration for youth research and youthwork in European countries like Slovakia which are in the transformation and modernisation stages.

Societal practice in Slovakia is confronted with reality, that the process of individualisation determined by the requirements of "reflexive modernisation" is connected with weakening parents' authority and strengthening the autonomy of children and youth within the family, especially as far as their free time and the private sphere in general are concerned. (Wallace, C., 1995, p. 100) It also means that individualisation manifests itself in reinforcing the general tendency to transfer the human and even the civil rights of young people to young people from 16 to 18, both school and out of school areas in short future also in our country.

Causes and effects of youth individualization become a cardinal issue of the current youth research also in countries that are transforming their political and economic system. That is why in Slovakia people are also interested in critical changes that are going on in the social structure of youth, which specific groups of youth are influenced by this development and in what ways.

Sociological Contexts of Youth Individualization in the Slovak Republic

The group of 20- to 24-year-olds that was studied in the empirical sociological research project (the Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland in 1995) is characterized by several peculiarities in the socialization context.

From a demographic viewpoint, especially in the case of Slovakia, it is a generation group whose potential has recorded no historical parallel yet. L. Pisca claimed that the 1970 census indicated accurately the social consequences of the lower birth rate in the period after 1953 in the Czech Republic and after 1957 in Slovakia (Pisca, L., 1980, p. 23).

The system of social precautions brought a change in birth rate in 1970's, whereby a decrease in families with one child in favor of families with two or even three children occurred, along with increased qualification and employment of women. In 1980 negative effects of the renewed population vitality were also registered.

All these difficulties accompanied children throughout their life cycles, especially in the first five years of children born between 1971 and 1975. Because material infrastructure which should meet their basic needs of life was introduced into life with minimum three to five years delay. They were born into families that were got a better position on the social urgency lists for state-owned or co-operative flats far later than families with two or three children. As children of working parents, they experienced much stress due to lack of vacancies in crèches and kindergardens. They attended school in afternoon shifts, especially in housing estates of large towns, and they receptively responded to endless efforts of the whole family clan (that is, of a social network) in seeking opportunities to get to a secondary school or a university.

From a sociological viewpoint, a generally extended feeling of social security about basic needs was typical of children and adolescents in the period before 1989, especially regarding the possibility for education and a job that came from an interaction of mutually intertwined systems of paternalism, state care and support and protection by parents. This system presented itself in the extreme dependency of young people on the state and family, especially in their attempts to get a flat, establish a family or even to gain a higher social status. W. Adamski (1987, p. 37) reminds us that, as a result of the dominating ideology of equal

chances, the aspirations of youth in the socialist countries were formed a great deal less on the structural background than was true in Western Europe. In the socialist countries the state influenced production relationships, systems of social class promotion and professional careers. This created societal socialization context for dealing with contradictions between aspirations of youth and possibilities of their materialization and thus determined the course of socialization processes.

A great number of young people, even in the planned market of education in Slovakia, created unique competition and enlarged the contradiction between increasing subjective aspirations and objective chances. Barriers of youth individualization included restricted chances to be admitted to grammar schools (especially to secondary technical or commercial schools with a general certificate of education), pressure to prepare for worker's professions at secondary apprentice training centers, passed with the general certificate of education; and a restricted number of vacancies in the most attractive branches of study at universities or technological institutes. This generation, with atypical tension between aspirations and their satisfaction in the sphere of education, represented, together with their families, a detonator for a strong background of social resistance against totalitarian political power in the period before and in 1989.

The first post-communist generation of youth in Slovakia has started its societal pilgrimage by making decisions on professional orientation (1985-1990) at the age when an experiences and experience are perceived, according to A. Melluci (1996, p. 3), as an important and controversial dimension of one's own *personality*. Its second phase, decision making on social breakthroughs into the labor market, has been shifted in *another civilization time-space* through transformation of real socialism into real capitalism.

We have not thought of the core and variety of chances endangering young people, which resulted from a breach with the vision of "socialist modernity". C. Wallace describes it rather unflatteringly as an antiquity of "modern" society based on intense industrialization typical of the end of the nineteenth century and the collectivization that produced huge enterprises with high concentration of employees in large housing estates. People were divided into large groupings based on "classes" and "age" that were rigorously institutionalized and aimed to support their collective identity through celebrations with rituals, slogans and gatherings. *"The type of subjectivity which was encouraged was one of a passive individual dependent on external institution; who led a stable life and was neither geographically nor professionally mobile. Critical thinking was strongly discouraged"* (Wallace, C., 1996, p. 4). This is the complete reverse of "reflexive individualization" that takes place in late capitalism. Here such external institutions determining, for example how, where and when to start one's job,

when to enter a marriage and have children, and where and with whom to spend one's leisure are mostly absent. All this is replaced by the necessity to make one's own choices among various alternatives and thus to form one's own individualized style of life, to cope critically with self-evaluation and even to develop a sceptical approach to one's environment in which old values and certainties lose their influence.

We agree with C. Wallace, an English sociologist having a deeper knowledge of the situation in the Czech and Slovak Republics acquired during her stay at the Central European University in Prague, that existing elements of individualization tendencies and some maneuvering space for individualization in this "gigantic apotheosis of modernism and fordism". How then could such sociologically reflected phenomena of "the household working scheme" (R. Roško), or other known forms of the grey economy extending into the sphere of the lifestyle arise (gardening, weekend houses) that were widely common but were not considered to be self-destructing for the system? They (e.g., the household working scheme) were tolerated or even supported (e.g., weekend houses) as suitable instruments for expression of individualization tendencies. It does not change anything in the justifiable argument that the insufficiency of flexibility of the old system and its resistance to "reflexive individualization" is considered by C. Wallace as the cause of its collapse. In a comment on the changes of 1989 V. Mináč, a keen observer and commentator of the same reality from within, spoke to support a collapse of the state paternalist system by the management and technocratic layer of the party nomenclature that was fed up with obscuring and concealing the source of its wealth and strove to make its élite position apparent. Simultaneously, it opened up a possibility of new individual expansion that did not oppose the ideology of socialism, but became compliant with the ethical code of meritocratic capitalist society.

Then it may be assumed that the first post-communist generation of youth was socialized in two qualitatively different social contexts. It is therefore not only a generation intensely endangered, but simultaneously one of immense, historically unique chance for life careers with many possibilities for social and geographical mobility. At the same time, it represents a generation that must overcome old values and get used to a value hierarchy suitable for a different system of social structure. It makes us think how excellent everything used to be in the recent past, without problems or conflicts, because it was stable and contained no risk once one learnt the ropes and the ways to get around the rules.

For verifying transiting structures of adulthood with the post-communist youth generation, we have at our disposal data from the survey *Transformation and Modernization 1995*, which clarify decisive moments of transition, especially *the entry in the labor market*.

Challenge of the Market Economy

Among the most important results findings from empirical surveys of the youth value orientations before 1989 is the intensive awareness that especially two values - development of science and technology and exploitation of human ideas - had their specific place in its structure. *"Prevailing opinion says that in these values capitalism is commensurate with socialism or even that there are quite a number of people who believe that capitalism ensures an even more successfully materialization of these values. The findings of the past ten years allows saying that critical attitudes of youth have been broadened in the above area."* (Macháček, L., 1988, pp. 136-137).

Even in this period it was already apparent that the image of bringing together advantages of two faces of the coin - that is, creative application of ideas and the minimum social risk in life - was a typical schizophrenic characteristic of the then - socialist generation of youth. With an analogical vision of the "human face" on both sides of the coin, young people were entering the transition phase after 1989; now it was, however, capitalism (Macháček, L., 1991, p. 37). That explains the surprising and complicated reactions over unemployment as a first visible systemic social consequence of the liberal economic reform with that side of a transformation and modernization coin which presents Januś's face of "risk and threat".

This happened in spite of the fact that measures supporting the employment of university graduates, technological institutes and all sorts of secondary schools were put in effect on the basis of decrees of the Government of the Slovak Republic and adequately turned down the unemployment "shock" of young people and their parents. These legal precautions were generally considered too social and less compatible with market economy principles.

The Government Decree No. 275/1990 allowed 2,500 graduates of universities and technological institutes to withdraw from the labor market and receive an additional specific term of study with a scholarship amounting to CSK 1,400. This made it possible for this group of young people to create better conditions for finding jobs in the labour market, and it helped to give a signal that the political representation would not admit "beating our revolutionary young generation from universities" with instruments of the market economy either. From a pragmatic viewpoint, extending the time limit was done in order to absorb the first graduates from universities by the arising market economy.

The Government Decree No. 428/1990 aimed at helping graduates of all types of secondary schools, universities and technological institutes to find jobs through better coordination in requalifying (an inter-ministerial board for requalification

and further education of youth and adults was founded) and measures stimulating employers to engage graduates. The employers were motivated by remission of income tax payments, social insurance tax, by a possibility to exceed the limits of finances for salaries in the budgetary and contributing organizations, by granting tariff payments to graduates or of their part to employers for a period of six months. According to the relevant analysis of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, these supporting measures were exploited by 3,800 graduates in the period concerned out of the total 30,220 graduates. About CSK 34 million were paid out in salaries and the compensation of salaries.

In 1991 the Government of the Slovak Republic issued Decree No. 361, on the basis of which tariff payments were compensated to employers through labor agencies from the state budget for an active policy of employing graduates for the period of 12 months from the moment when young people took up their jobs (CSK 3,500 per university graduate and CSK 2,650 per secondary school graduate). The total of these means amounted to CSK 97.8 million, which represented 2.6% of the volume of financial means drawn on the active employment policy.

In our paper on the consequences of development of market economy on youth behavior in the case of unemployment (Macháček, L., 1994), we formulated our expectation that young people would begin to design their professional and employment strategies in a flexible way and that parents and the public would accept this strategy. What we had in mind was acceptance of unemployment and drawing of unemployment benefits as well as exploiting chances of vocational requalification courses, of various forms of language and professional education and their interfacing with short-time jobs as a "normal" event of their individual way of life. This group was characterized also by the highest preference from among all age groups to include the tactical alternative "to draw on unemployment benefits and hope that the situation will be solved somehow" in their standard behavior in the labour market for a period of at least the first six months. The first post-communist young generation simply reflects unemployment as a new attractive element of the lifestyle by which a free citizen may solve his/her situation in the labour market. All the more that their parents still remember the notorious mechanism of the planned economy for regulation of the labor force in the "labor market" when people were "allocated" to particular enterprises or organizations. It confirms that unemployment is a social experience that is acquired differently by age in this historically unique time-space in the transformation of the economic system in the Slovak Republic. Even according to statistical tests, this experience occurs much more frequently with the youngest generation. In the age group over 44 years, 13% admitted they were unemployed for at least two months; in the age group between 30 and 44 years, they made

25%; in the age group 25 to 29 years, they were 35% and in the age of 18 to 24 years, they represented 44%. Likewise, in Slovakia the loss of one's job is least expected by persons over age 44 (34.5%). In 1995 groups under 24 years (50%) and from 25 to 29 years (62%) expected the loss of their jobs to a considerably larger degree.

Table 1: Strategy of Solving Unemployment in the Slovak Republic(SR) and in the Czech Republic(CR): 1993-1995

| Attitudes of various groups | | 18 - 24 | | W | |
|--|------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| | | SR N = 134 | CR N = 316 | SR N = 956 | CR N = 1206 |
| I shall requalify | 1993 | 72.7 | 63.4 | 68.3 | 58.8 |
| | 1995 | 73.0 | 69.0 | 55.0 | 54.7 |
| I shall seek a temporary job | 1993 | 66.7 | 48.3 | 65.2 | 44.1 |
| | 1995 | 52.6 | 40.6 | 49.1 | 36.7 |
| I shall apply for an unemployment benefit | 1993 | 67.5 | 27.4 | 58.3 | 31.9 |
| | 1995 | 34.0 | 38.0 | 28.8 | 33.8 |
| I shall attempt business activities | 1993 | 30.7 | 47.5 | 33.1 | 40.3 |
| | 1995 | 37.2 | 36.6 | 29.6 | 30.7 |
| I shall live on other income | 1993 | 8.6 | 5.5 | 10.2 | 7.7 |
| | 1995 | 8.9 | 11.7 | 9.3 | 9.7 |

Table 2: Strategy for Seeking a Job and Locality in the Slovak Republic(SR) and in the Czech Republic(CR): 1993-1995

| Tactical variants | | 18 - 24 | | W | |
|--|------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| | | SR N = 134 | CR N = 316 | SR N = 956 | CR N = 1206 |
| I seek a job in my speciality and locality of residence | 1993 | 45.2 | 43.1 | 51.7 | 42.9 |
| | 1995 | 90.0 | 88.6 | 88.0 | 86.1 |
| I seek a job in my speciality anywhere | 1993 | 71.3 | 44.6 | 51.7 | 50.,5 |
| | 1995 | 62.4 | 46.2 | 88.0 | 52.0 |
| I seek any job in the | 1993 | 50.0 | 46.3 | 48.1 | 37.8 |

| | | | | | |
|------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| locality of my residence | 1995 | 68.9 | 37.8 | 57.2 | 31.8 |
| I will take any job anywhere | 1993 | 58.8 | 25.7 | 48.5 | 28.1 |
| | 1995 | 44.0 | 16.6 | 31.4 | 15.6 |

Comparing data from our empirical research 1993 and 1995 shows some change in the strategies for solving unemployment. In Slovakia we recorded a sharp decrease in reliance upon the state unemployment benefits. From the former 67.5% of those ready to accept unemployment benefits there remained in 1995 only 34% of young people. In Czech Republic young people began relying on the unemployment benefit much more frequently in 1995 (38%) than in 1993 (27%).

The results we obtained indicated that readiness to solve unemployment through private business activities may be expected, especially with young people aged 18 to 24. A similar change between 1993 and 1995 occurred in the attitude toward business activities (entrepreneurial activities) which are considered to be modernization life strategies under conditions of a market economy.

In Czechia there has been recorded a decline in preferring this strategy of solving unemployment both with the whole population (from 40% to 30%) as well as with young people (from 47% to 36%). In Slovakia this strategy is less popular with the total of the population (33 - 30%); however, young people under age 24 strengthened their orientation toward business activities (from 31% to 37%).

The most remarkable change found in comparing data from surveys in 1993 and 1995 is the return to the most rigid variant of seeking a job in the place of residence: *I prefer a job in my speciality and in the locality of my residence*.

It appears that a shock from the unexpected consequences of unemployment is overcome. This was confirmed by the return to a variant, which prefers all advantages of jobs utilizing regularly obtained qualifications and professions and that reduces to a minimum expenses related with the change of one's residence. There is still another preference for locality of residence over qualification and specialty with the total of the population (10%) and with young people (18%). High transport expenses and difficulty with finding accommodation probably eliminate all advantages of a job in one's specialty outside the parents' residence. This tendency of *entrenching Slovak youth in the locality of their residence* is also confirmed by the fall in preference to seek a job in a specialty anywhere: from 71% in 1993 to 62% in 1995. In the end, there is a variant of seeking *any job anywhere*, which loses its attraction both in Slovakia and in Czechia. Older (31%) but especially younger Slovaks (44%) will realize, however, that competition in the labour market in our country will require acceptance of this least popular strategy after all.

Comparison of solving strategies of life situations in the case of unemployment in 1993 and 1995 shows that changes have been going on in this area. The

objective of Government Decree No.666/1993 was to motivate employers so that they could create socially purposeful and publicly useful jobs for graduates who were registered with the employment agencies as unemployed people. An employer received a financial subsidy for a period of 12 months if the graduate got a newly created job or for 18 months if the job was free due to the retirement of an employee. The employer was obliged to employ a graduate in a qualified vacancy and to give him/her a salary not in the amount of the subsidy but in the higher amount, that is, in compliance with his/her job assignment. In 1995 an amount of SKK 3,797,066 thousand were used for active employment policy, of which SKK 2,698,649 thousand were used for socially purposeful jobs. According to the data from employment agencies, a further 6,935 purposeful jobs were created for graduates and adolescents through an irretrievable contribution which represented SKK 65,992,830.

There was a possibility to obtain a contribution from an employment agency amounting to SKK 200 thousand for creating a self-employment job, or starting an own business activity. This contribution could have been used for acquiring tangible or intangible assets necessary for the activity or for settling the rent for leased premises or for land, or for paying up interest or loans. The condition for granting such a contribution was to carry out an independent activity for a period of two years. A whole range of forms to activate young people to engage in socially purposeful and publicly useful jobs, a contribution for self-employment, re-qualification, and protected workshops and so forth was included in the new Act on Employment that was passed by the National Council of the SR in December 1996.

In Slovakia as a result of improving the quality of the instruments of the state employment policy, passive reliance on the care of employment agencies and social care departments has decreased, orientation to business activities successively acquires its adequate share, especially with the young generation. We could, therefore, state that the trend for a change in life strategies has obtained a modernization dimension during the recent period and is adequate to the exacting character of the market economy under conditions of integration into the EU market.

The overall absence of linkage between economic transformation in the sense of market principles and the housing market is the biggest obstacle to the effectiveness of all other measures of active employment policy. In a nutshell: Slovak youth are entrenching in the locality of their residence and their readiness for mobility has been recently reduced, and seeking self-realization through their jobs has paradoxically decreased in the past period. It must, therefore, be stressed that this trend in life strategies has no necessary modernization dimension and under the given conditions it can scarcely have any. The change of attitudes of

young people to include in their flexible life strategies a variant to seek a job outside their residence probably cannot be achieved only through instruments of the state employment policy.

We believe that a really effective instrument for changing life strategies of young people in Slovakia will be achieved only when the labor market of the European Union is opened for the all members countries.

Conclusion

The challenge to transform a planned economy into a market economy and totalitarian political system into pluralist democracy means for the first post-communist generation of youth a thorough-going social change that is demonstrated by a differently structured transition to adulthood in the most important sphere - entering the labor market.

Contrary to the planned economy under real socialism, where, after the education process was over a phase of finding one's place in the labor sector easily followed, in taking over the status of an adult even in the most important sphere, the transformation-modernization process brings uncertainty in materializing life plans. Unemployment and, within its framework re-qualification with partial contractual work engagements, puts discontinuity into this process and inconsistency: that is, transition becomes individualized.

The first post-communist generation of youth experienced the phenomenon of prolonged school holidays, a phase of several months seeking a job with the help of the state, attempts to study or work abroad, attempts to start running their own business, receiving social benefits from the state or municipality and help of charity organizations.

In order to understand the social behavior of youth in the Slovak Republic, it is necessary to know the rules of the state employment policy. Graduates did not take up jobs immediately after finishing their studies mainly because until 1996 it was possible for them to draw a state benefit during the time they sought jobs immediately after they were registered. Since 1 January 1997 it has been possible to obtain a state benefit on a job search only after 6 months.

Unemployment as a social threat and as a life experience is an element of youth individualization that is demonstrated through acceptance of flexible solutions, including readiness for changes in residence and professional qualification. The comparison of surveys in 1993 and 1995 indicates that the initial shock from unemployment has been overcome. It is confirmed by a growing tendency to draw unemployment benefits in the Czech Republic, by an increased preparedness to engage in business activities in Slovakia, as well as in the preference to look for a job in one's line and in the place of one's residence for

an even longer period rather than to take any job anywhere.

On the whole, it may be stated that the transition into adulthood for the first post-communist generation is a specific process that paves the way for better understanding of the problems of subsequent generations of youth. Analysis of citizen's behavior in the labor market as well as preferences for modernization strategies intensify the overall impression that all generations are confronted with the transition in "adulthood". It appears that even the older and the oldest generations square up well to the "transition". Acceptance of social change brought by transformation is more intensive with younger generations. However, in the case of important dimensions such as privatization, democratisation and integration into Europe, we could scarcely find statistical bonds of importance among age groups.

Transformation and modernization apparently represent a civilizational-cultural process whose breakthrough is reflected in the attitudes and opinions of all generations in a relatively similar way. If we come back to the beginning of our essay on understanding transformation and modernization as a certain historical dividing line with a generational dimension, in summary it can be said that social changes are of such importance that practically all generations have to cope with them jointly. A hypothesis for future research may be inferred from what has been said: that the mere shifting of the first post-communist generation of youth into the stages of adulthood and old age will not bring any principal or substantial change neither in the civil potential nor in the economic prosperity of our society.

Youth and Civil Society in Slovakia

Building the civil society

The 'velvet' revolution in the former Czechoslovakia and the subsequent split of the federal republic into two sovereign states in 1993 created the Slovak Republic as an independent democratic state after many centuries of struggle for national recognition. The need to build a civil society after its destruction by the communist regime and in the context of a newly created state, was an important challenge. However, as in all transitory periods, this one contains a dynamic mixture of fragments of the old and the new reality, of the world of the future and the world of the past. It is an intrinsically contradictory, contentious mixture. In Slovakia, the struggle between the prime minister, Vladimír Mečiar and the president of State, Michal Kováč¹ and their respective followers between 1994 and 1998 as to the direction that Slovak society should take is representative of these tendencies. Whilst Kováč emphasised again and again the need to renovate civil society, Mečiar tried to crush or control the third sector of civil society by use of central and local state power.

The former communistic regime followed the ideas of Marx and Engels in the German Ideology (Marx, K. - Engels, F., 1977, pp. 123-124) that "civil society" was the same as "bourgeois" society and consequently "capitalist." That is why it could not set itself the goal of establishing a civil society. On the contrary, communism tried to uproot it. Uprooting civil society meant above all destruction of the institution of private property as the economic and legal foundation of civil society. The idea of "citizen" was seen as disagreeable, used only for describing traffic offences and people were mostly labelled as "working people," "the masses" and so on. The idea of the citizen embodies a notion of the individual manifestation of freedom and democracy, which was incompatible with this version of socialism. Hence it is necessary to re-create the idea of the "citizen" after 1989.

However, after the fall of communism, the restoration of civil society was no simple matter either. The idea of the restoration of civil society touches upon both the sphere of economics (e.g. privatisation, return to the system of contract relations between free economic entities, etc.) and the sphere of politics and the state (e.g. the civil source of the state authority, political pluralism, the rule of law etc.). But the restoration of civil society through economic or legal foundations is not enough. According to Roško, it also has to be established in the subjective

¹ Ironically, the respective names represent their different positions as slashers and forgers of civil society. Mečiar means literally a swordsmith whilst Kováč means a blacksmith.

thoughts, feelings and forms of association of the citizens themselves. In this respect there is always the struggle between the progressive notions of citizenship/civil society and ones that are backward looking. On the one hand there is the desire to create a self-conscious citizenship and on the other hand, a tendency towards passive resignation from self-conscious citizenship (Roško, R., 1996).

Hence, we can define a more active definition of citizenship than that implied by T. H. Marshall (1961) in his discussion of citizenship as a set of political, juridical and welfare rights bestowed by the state. We can also invoke a non-economic sense of citizenship that is not just reliant on the institution of private property. In the words of Ján Stena, citizenship as an element of civil society could be seen as: "The grouping of people around particular interests, the process of horizontal organisation, the autonomous creation of structures based on the co-ordination of people's activities embodying the free will of every individual. It must be understood as a self-contained 'layer' of social life that generates self-regulation mechanisms influencing the development of society. Civil society is very important for articulating and defending the different interests of citizens and in controlling state power." (Stena, J., et al., 1990, p. 1)

One of the tragedies of the social development of Slovak society under communism was that the constant regeneration of associational life, party associations, clubs, interest groups, social corporations, citizens' initiatives and other movements was seen as being linked with bourgeois forms of social life, rather than as an important element of the development of civilisation more generally. The mechanisms and tools of civil society enable social problems in various spheres of everyday life to be addressed or solved in ways that could not possibly be managed by central state power.

In order to analyse better the developments in citizenship in Slovak society, we have developed the concept of 'cizenry' alongside that of democracy. This concept reflects the revolutionary rise of an activist non-party layer of citizens within civil society who co-operated actively with the opposition parties in the elections of 1998. The reasons for the creation of this broad social movement of cizenry are described in the next section.

Civil Society and the Growth of the Third Sector in Slovakia

Civil society represents the sphere of spontaneous association of people on the basis of their mostly non-political interests; the sphere of self-organisation and self-regulation. The articulation of various interests in this sphere is possible through membership in voluntary organisations, associations, movements and social organisations (Macháček, L., 1998). The state does not interfere in this

sphere and can only create favourable conditions for its existence. In this sphere many conflicts of interest between different actors are peacefully resolved. Hence, the basis of social transformation should not only be seen as the introduction of a market economy through the return of private property, but also as the return of a variety of activities, which had previously been dominated by the state - a return to civil society.

However, creating a civil society is not a one-way process of handing over the tasks to voluntary and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). It involves a process of decentralisation and regionalisation and strengthening the local self-government. Civil society should be protected from state interference by law. That is, the citizen is permitted to do anything except what is explicitly forbidden, and the state bodies are permitted to do only what they are allowed to by law. Thus, the state limits its own power by law in order to create a society of responsible citizens who take over substantial parts of the activities, which were formerly usurped by the totalitarian state.

The development of civil society and citizenship in Slovakia can be divided into four stages:

1. In the first phase, under communism, there were groups of citizens who opposed the dominant state, but generally, civil society was crushed.
2. During the second phase (1989-1994) there was the gradual re-establishment of civil society, often with the help of dissidents from the earlier stage and assistance from international organisations along with state sponsorship of various kinds.
3. In the third phase (1994-1998), under the domination of Mečiar, intellectuals and activists who had been active in establishing the new civil society were made to leave government positions and moved to the third sector. During this period the establishment tried to undermine civil society and reintroduce state control.
4. After the 1998 defeat of Mečiar, the intellectuals and activists once more moved from the third sector into governmental life.

The foundations of civil society can be traced even under communism. As Les has pointed out, the voluntary sector in Central and Eastern Europe is not only a product of the breakthroughs of 1989. Foundations and associations have a long history in the region (Les, E., 1994). Moreover, the stagnation and moral crisis of communism in the 1970s and 1980s led to the creation of the "alternative", "parallel" or "second" society. An example of one of these "small circles of freedom" was the ecological movement known as "Bratislava-nahlas" (translated as: Bratislava - say it aloud), which was very important for the Slovak anti-Communist movement before 1989.

The formal establishment of civil society in the Slovak Republic had to wait until after 1989. However, after that it expanded rapidly. According to the data of May 1995, which we obtained from SAIA-SCTS (Slovak Academic Information

Agency-Service Centre, for the Third Sector) there, were about 9800 NGOs in Slovakia. Among these were 481 foundations, 1084 civic associations with 3543 experts and 380,386 volunteers who registered their names on the mailing list of the third sector². According to sociological research project carried out by the Focus Agency in December 1994, approximately 15% of citizens were members of various associations and clubs. Empirical research undertaken by the Institute for Sociology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in the summer of 1995 (Macháček, L., 1996) confirmed that 12.6% of citizens participated in various associations and 2.5% in civic movements and initiatives. In Slovakia, the overlap between membership of civic associations such as a hobby club with other forms of association, such as political parties, trade unions, local councils, consumption and production co-operatives is typical. By 1996, 17,000 non-profit associations had been set up and comparative data show that people in Slovakia were even more active as citizenry than elsewhere. Hence whilst in Slovakia, 9.7% of the population were actively working in areas of citizen and human rights, this was the case for only 6.1% of people in Europe and 3.1% of people in the world (Woleková, H. and Salamon, L. M., 2000). The remarkable mobilisation of the citizenry can be explained by the rather dramatically changing political situation and power struggles during the 1990s.

A dominant cause of the changing situation of the third sector after 1994, during the third phase identified above, was the polarisation of the political scene in Slovakia. M. Bútorá shows (pp. 18-19) how during this time the position of the government coalition was consolidated and the state began to take over control of larger and larger areas of social life again. It was only a question of time before the third sector would be once more subject to state control. One reason why this was possible is explained by Z. Fialová who claims that: "Many intellectuals and leaders of the (reform) movements (after 1989) left their organisational activities and committed themselves to a party and government to be able to build up basic democratic structures in the country (during the period 1989-1994). This to a certain extent weakened the potential of the emerging third sector. However, after the 1992 elections, and in the following years, an important part of this political elite "withdrew" itself back into the sphere of the non-government sector - as a result of electoral failures and disappointment - where they could make use of

² Tretí sektor a občianska spoločnosť (Third Sector and Civil Society). In Sociológia 1996, no. 3, pp. 257-270. The round-table discussion of the Editorial board of the journal Sociológia took place at the Institute for Sociology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences on March 26, 1996. Scholars from the Philosophical Institute (F. Novosád), Historical Institute (E. Mannová), Institute of the State and Law (Z. Magurová) and Institute for Sociology (R. Roško) participated in it. P. Demeš, the Speaker of the Gremium of the Third Sector, was a guest. The discussion was moderated by the editor-in-chief of the journal Sociológia, L. Macháček.

their abilities in building up democracy from “below”.” (Bútora, M. - Fialová, Z. 1995, p. 33)

In my opinion, the reason for the threat to the third sector was that its leading members after 1994 were those who had been active in political life during the second phase of transition and who were struggling against representatives of Mečiar's ruling coalition, such as M. Bútora, P. Demeš and H. Woleková. After 1994 we could observe many attempts by the ruling coalition to undermine and control the third sector. For example, members of the Slovak National Party (SNS) spoke against the activities of the Open Society Fund of George Soros (pledged to fighting against totalitarian regimes of whatever kind). Another example was when the members of Parliamentary Movement for Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) discussed the issue of NGO foundations in the Slovak Parliament. After that, the central organs of the state administration (the Ministry of Education) cancelled the contract for the leasing of one building to the SAIA (Slovak Academic Information Agency), which provided services and consultations centre for the third sector. From then on, economic controls over foundations were increased and state supervision of financing was increased. I would not explain this as M. Bútora does (p. 22) “Generally it should be noted that some voluntary associations due to their disposition get into conflict with any government team (as is often the case with environmental activists)”. In fact this was not any straightforward conflict between the state and civic movements, but rather the fact that opposition forces were transferred into the sphere of the third sector. This was then the political struggle of the opposition against the ruling regime of the state and that was one reason why the ruling coalition was so keen on crushing the emergent third sector.

M. Bútora concludes his essay as follows: “It is not out of question that the third sector in Slovakia will be put to hard tests in the immediate period. Those ones that will hold out will harden their “civil health”. It will not serve their purposes only it will serve the whole society on its strenuous way toward betterment of the quality of life.” (p. 23). The problem lies only in the fact that the high moral and civil potential of Slovaks who may wish to help their fellow citizens through voluntary work, requires a social climate in which they will experience praise for such initiatives, not existential distress. This is especially the case because we were not in a situation like in the West where volunteerism is often a kind a hobby and effectively a way of spending time. Voluntary work does not enjoy such high social esteem in Slovakia. It will be dependent on financial state subsidies for a long time, and thus be in the hands of government coalitions. Therefore civic participation in various spheres of public life will remain for some time in the same condition. The rejection of representatives of the opposition from any posts in the state sector, from institutions of research and education, from

diplomacy and the mass media, has the consequence of helping to construct an ‘opposition civil society’, as described by Z. Fialová. It seems that this was the case after the electoral defeat of the Moravčík government in 1994. In this case experienced politicians and organisers moved into civil society and third sector organisations as a form of opposition. This was a real situation (1994-1998) in which the struggle for the legislative reform of the third sector, took place.

The legal status of non-profit organisations is still rather ambiguous. In the legislative system, the tax-free status and other concessions to civic associations were repealed between 1994 and 1998 and the whole voluntary sector was put into a position similar to that of private business. Interviews confirm that citizens have the attitude that voluntary work has qualities and benefits which can neither be met nor substituted by hired labour (Bútora, M. - Fialová, Z., 1995, pp. 72-73). Thus, there is a problem as to where the third sector should legislatively belong.

Young people as citizens: promoters and victims of change

Promoters of changes

As it was emphasised at the 5th meeting of European Ministers responsible for Youth in Bucharest (1998), building a democratic Europe depends on the participation of all young people. But we can ask ourselves: are young people really in the front line of changes?

Certainly, youth have consistently been among the strongest supporters of democratic and market change. Here we could draw upon a cross-national survey carried out in 1994, 1996 and 1998 in Slovakia, the New Democracies Barometer (NDB - see Table 1). This study showed that young people were generally those most in favour of political and economic change (Haerper, C.2002). This is also the case in Slovakia. However, in Slovakia we can see a tendency for youth to become more democratic over time. Using an index of democratisation to measure the support for democracy including a range of different variables, we can see that there was an evolution of attitudes as regards democracy amongst young people, between 1994 and 1998.

While they started as less democratic than the older age group in 1994, by 1998 they were more democratic by 9% than the older age cohort (Table 2). In NDB studies, higher educated and urban citizens were consistently most in favour of democracy (Tables 3 and 4). Thus, we could say that the young, urbanised and highly educated are at the forefront *of the democratisation processes*.

Table 1: Index of democracy in Post-Communist societies
(=Index of Democracy, Values 8-10)

| Country | 1994 | 1996 | 1998 | Change |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Central Europe - Mean | 57 | 52 | 61 | +4 |
| 1. Poland | 47 | 52 | 66 | +19 |
| 2. Czech Republic | 77 | 69 | 65 | -12 |
| 3. Hungary | 50 | 38 | 62 | +12 |
| 4. Slovenia | * | 47 | 57 | +10 |
| 5. Slovakia | 55 | 53 | 55 | 0 |

Source: NDB 3 (1994), NDB 4 (1996), NDB 5 (1998).

Table 2: Percentage of democrats, by age, according to the democratisation index, 1994-1998

| | 1994 | 1996 | 1998 |
|---------|------|------|------|
| 18 – 29 | 56 | 53 | 55 |
| 30 – 59 | 53 | 53 | 57 |
| 60 plus | 60 | 52 | 46 |

Table 3: Percentage of democrats, by highest educational level reached, according to the democratisation index, 1994-1998

| | 1994 | 1996 | 1998 |
|-----------|------|------|------|
| Primary | 46 | 42 | 48 |
| Secondary | 59 | 53 | 55 |
| Tertiary | 58 | 72 | 72 |

Table 4: Percentage who are democrats, by population of residential area, according to the democratisation index, 1994-1998

| | 1994 | 1996 | 1998 |
|----------------------|------|------|------|
| Villages < 6000 | 42 | 50 | 49 |
| Towns 7000 - 100 000 | 64 | 53 | 55 |
| Cities > 100 000 | 74 | 68 | 73 |

These tendencies were also visible in voting results. First time voters made up approximately 10 percent of the electorate in both the 1998 and the 1994 parliamentary elections. Young people, despite opposing the regime, tended not to vote in elections. Their electoral turnout was very small in 1994 (25%), when the MfDS won.

Table 5: Percentage of party support by socio-demographic categories
(FOCUS, September 25th - 26th, 1998³)

| Row % | n = 4516 | Age | | | | |
|--|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|
| For which party/movement have you voted? | ENTIRE SAMPLE | 18-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | More than |
| HZDS (Mečiar) | 23 | 12 | 14 | 23 | 28 | 37 |
| SDK (Dzurinda) | 28 | 32 | 34 | 28 | 27 | 23 |
| SDL (Migaš) | 15 | 18 | 17 | 16 | 17 | 11 |
| SMK (Bugár) | 9 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 12 |
| SNS (Slota) | 9 | 11 | 11 | 9 | 7 | 7 |
| SOP (Schuster) | 8 | 13 | 11 | 9 | 7 | 4 |
| Other parties | 6 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| No answer | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

HZDS - Movement for Democratic Slovakia, SDK - Slovak Democracy Coalition, SDL - Party of democratic Left, SMK - Magyar Coalition Party, SNS - Slovak National Party, SOP - Party for Citizens Understanding.

However, the election campaign of the opposition in 1998 concentrated on mobilising young, urban and educated voters with the result that their turnout in 1998 was very high (80%) when the alternative coalition won. Moreover (Table 5), over two-thirds (69%) of first-time voters in 1998 supported opposition

³ This research was an election survey carried out by the FOCUS agency for the International Republican Institute during the 1998 Slovak parliamentary elections (September 25-26, 1998). Data was collected in 99 voting precincts, which were selected by a probability method from the total number of voting precincts in the Slovak Republic. Respondents were approached when leaving the polling place and asked to complete an anonymous questionnaire. Respondents were chosen by a method of probability selection. The sample consisted of 4516 respondents. (The age structure of the sample of voters was: 18-24 years old: 16% ; 25-34 years old: 19%; 35-44 years old: 22.2% perc; 45-54 years old: 17.5%; from 55 and over: 16.7%; no answer 8.6%). *Final report: Election Poll for the IRI: 1998 Slovak Parliamentary Elections. FOCUS, Bratislava.*

parties (Dzurinda, M., Migaš, J., Schuster, R., Bugár, B.) and only 23% voted for the Movement for Democratic Slovakia (Mečiar) or the Slovak National Party (Slota) (See: Focus Agency Report 1998). The main supporters of the MfDS were people over 55 years of age (37%). Thus, the outcome of the election in which the authoritarian populist regime of Vladimír Mečiar was defeated, can be seen also as a result of the OK '98 campaign to mobilise citizens to become more active as voters.

In the summer months of 1998 it was clear that all attempts to put the voluntary civil sphere under state control had failed. The Donors Forum in Slovakia, out of which the Open Society Foundation and Foundation for Development of Civil Society supported a wide range of projects of civic initiatives, focused upon the activation of citizens in the electoral process, especially upon the participation of first time voters. (Demeš, P., 1999)

The specific form that the campaign took can be seen in the activities of the Slovak Youth Council called *'My Future'* which involved distributing 250,000 post cards urging young people to vote. Others distributed T-shirts, stickers and mobile phones in order to more easily organise young people to attend rallies, demonstrations and meetings in a very short space of time. This was a fast, effective and de-centralised method of organisation and thus difficult for the regime to control. Our sociological hypothesis on the inevitability of turning "democracy" into "citizenocracy" materialised in the nation-wide civil movement as it became clear that civil passivity, apathy and indifference would not lead to the desirable social change⁴.

An important factor in maintaining this burst of activity in civil society has been the affiliation of Slovak Republic to the European Union and its membership

⁴ RENAISSANCE OF CIVIL SOCIETY, CITIZENS AND CITIZENSHIP IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC. SGA-FOR SOCIAL SCIENCES 2000-2002. Leading researcher: Ladislav Macháček. Associate researchers: Monika Čambáliková, Róbert Roško. Institute for Sociology, Klemensova 19, 813 64 Bratislava, Slovak Republic.

In the project RENAISSANCE OF CIVIL SOCIETY, CITIZENS AND CITIZENSHIP IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC IN THE CONTEXT OF EUROPE UNDER INTEGRATION AND MANKIND IN THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROCESSES (2000-2002), the research focused on conceptual aspects of the post-November 1989 renaissance of civil society in Slovakia, as well as on the reflection of new phenomena and trends originating in the revolutionary parliamentary elections of 1998. It made it possible for us to gain a deeper insight into the contradictory development of citizenship within the classical sovereign states within the borders of integrating Europe, as well as within the framework of globalization. In particular, we paid attention to the stimulating capacity of modern means of communication. Deeper investigation focussed primarily on the dialectics of society and the State, mediator function of associated agents, and the heuristic potential of the concept citizenocracy. This non-traditional concept along with the concept of democracy represented to our mind an instrument which, we presumed might contribute to a more precise view on the development phase of civil society. Our analysis reflected the revolutionary fact of the rise of an activist non-party layer of citizenship within the fabric of the civil society in Slovakia, its successful pre-electoral cooperation with the political opposition and the directions of its post electoral self-reproduction.

in the Council of Europe. For young people, this means that the activities of the youth associations and notably the Youth Council of Slovakia are of considerable importance in view of Slovakia's integration into the new Europe; all the more so since many initiatives encouraging this process are realised precisely through the help of the emerging European youth policy and its current emphasis on education for citizenship. The development of civil society in Slovakia was greatly influenced by civic youth associations and movements, especially the uniting of national councils and international youth organisations in Europe under the recently created Youth Forum.

It is not only in youth movements, but also in the activities of other social movements (e.g. ecology, peace, human and civil rights, women's rights) where young followers are important. One might say that more highly developed, modernised societies tend to become "movement societies". Youth movements that appear in this context tend to take the form of the organised and continuous collective efforts of co-operating individuals, groups and organisations aimed at supporting and sustaining social change by means of public protest activities. Therefore, it is not enough to create a state of affluence as a material base to introduce citizenship and modern individuality to everyone. Young people grow to become citizens through organised effort, or the initiative of people of equal standing and interests who, within their rights, join forces to achieve social change.

The victims of change

However, young people have also been the victims of change in post-communist societies. Whilst in the former regimes they were institutionalised as a social group through various youth organisations to which most young people belonged and were seen as the bearers of a bright new communist future, this powerful projection of youth has now disappeared (Wallace, C. and Kovatcheva, S., 1998). Along with the disappearance of young people as formal political actors, many of the facilities which were formerly provided for them for free or with substantial subsidies, including sports centres, summer camps, skiing hostels, and travel opportunities (within the communist block) have also disappeared. Thus, we can say that many Central European post-communist countries can be seen as *post-youth* societies. After the brief political mobilisation of young people, many of whom were students, young people disappeared not only from the political scene but also from public discourse in general. People in Slovakia do not talk about youth problems or children's rights, but rather how to privatise the property used by the former youth movements. After 1989, the youth movement itself has been in the process of pluralisation.

Table 6: Development of unemployment in Slovakia - 5-years

| AGE | 1992 (N) | % | 1993 (N) | % | 1994 (N) | % | 1995 (N) | % |
|--------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| 15 – 19 | 48 448 | 18.61 | 62 542 | 16.99 | 60 415 | 16.26 | 53 534 | 16.06 |
| 20 – 24 | 39 736 | 15.27 | 58 573 | 15.91 | 56 080 | 15.10 | 47 851 | 14.36 |
| 25 – 29 | 38 204 | 14.68 | 52 668 | 14.31 | 51 570 | 13.88 | 43 708 | 13.11 |
| 30 – 34 | 37 521 | 14.42 | 52 576 | 14.28 | 53 609 | 14.43 | 46 940 | 14.08 |
| 35 – 39 | 34 040 | 13.08 | 49 527 | 13.45 | 49 486 | 13.32 | 44 074 | 13.22 |
| 40 – 44 | 26 844 | 10.31 | 39 853 | 10.83 | 42 549 | 11.45 | 39 472 | 11.84 |
| 45 – 49 | 17 950 | 6.90 | 27 485 | 7.47 | 30 019 | 8.08 | 30 359 | 9.11 |
| 50 – 54 | 12 287 | 4.72 | 17 528 | 4.76 | 19 557 | 5.26 | 19 210 | 5.76 |
| 55 – 59 | 4 943 | 1.90 | 6 890 | 1.87 | 7 757 | 2.09 | 7 722 | 2.32 |
| Over 60 | 301 | 0.12 | 453 | 0.12 | 439 | 0.12 | 421 | 0.13 |
| Total | 260 274 | 100.00 | 368 095 | 100.00 | 371 481 | 100.00 | 333 291 | 100.00 |

| AGE | 1996 (N) | % | 1997 (N) | % | 1998 (N) | % | 1999 (N) | % |
|--------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| 15 – 19 | 53 296 | 16.16 | 55 727 | 16.02 | 64 706 | 15.11 | 71 147 | 13.29 |
| 20 – 24 | 49 603 | 15.04 | 55 327 | 15.91 | 73 090 | 17.07 | 98 937 | 18.49 |
| 25 – 29 | 40 932 | 12.41 | 42 173 | 12.13 | 51 624 | 12.06 | 65 774 | 12.29 |
| 30 – 34 | 44 225 | 13.41 | 44 482 | 12.79 | 50 879 | 11.88 | 59 658 | 11.15 |
| 35 – 39 | 41 912 | 12.71 | 42 490 | 12.22 | 50 156 | 11.71 | 61 269 | 11.45 |
| 40 – 44 | 39 157 | 11.87 | 41 067 | 11.81 | 51 317 | 11.98 | 63 529 | 11.87 |
| 45 – 49 | 32 130 | 9.74 | 35 370 | 10.17 | 46 468 | 10.85 | 60 989 | 11.40 |
| 50 – 54 | 19 944 | 6.05 | 22 209 | 6.39 | 28 880 | 6.74 | 39 329 | 7.35 |
| 55 – 59 | 8 212 | 2.49 | 8 472 | 2.44 | 10 553 | 2.46 | 13 986 | 2.61 |
| Over 60 | 438 | 0.13 | 436 | 0.13 | 536 | 0.13 | 593 | 0.11 |
| Total | 329 849 | 100.00 | 347 753 | 100.00 | 428 209 | 100.00 | 535 211 | 100.00 |

Young people were among the main victims of rising unemployment (Table 6). According to research conducted by the Institute of Sociology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in 1995, 13% of people aged over 44 had been unemployed for at least two months, 25% of those aged 30 to 44, 35% of people aged 25 to 29 and 44% aged 18-24 years old. Also, the older cohorts tended to be the people who least expected to lose their jobs (35%), whereas the young cohorts had a

much greater expectation of job loss (50% of those under 24 and 62% of those aged 25 to 29) (Macháček, L., 1999).

Thus we could say, that young people, as citizens are both the promoters and victims of social change: their situation in post-communist Slovakia is double-edged. On the one hand they are the people who most support the reforms and are most likely to adapt to a market economy through individualisation and entrepreneurialism. On the other hand, young people are the most likely to be unemployed and have lost much status and many resources in the course of post-communist transition.

During the present historical era we should see the education of young people for citizenship as having a European dimension. The new concept of citizenship, which is the most relevant here, involves not only responsibility of individual citizens for themselves and their country, but also for others within our continent. It is my contention that this can only adequately happen through the construction of new forms of solidarity.

Solidarity is to be understood as the readiness for the redistribution of vital resources and opportunities with respect to the environment, housing, establishing families, bringing up children, and access to education and jobs, according to the various needs of different citizens. This kind of solidarity is missing in both Eastern and Western Europe where collective solutions are passed over in favour of individual ones. There is a typical tendency amongst the young people of Europe towards individualisation. This does not mean that individuals have become egoistic or that they are unwilling to co-operate in a group. (Macháček, L., 1998) It is rather a move away from the strictly state-planned orientation of personal objectives, as was the case previously in Slovakia. Young people must now focus more on their own personal development and self-realisation, and bear responsibility for their decisions, including those that may lead to failure. This applies as much to their professional orientation as to their choice of a partner. This process is not quite so developed in transition countries where young people continue to depend extensively on their parents, relatives, state or municipal care, but we can still discern movements in this direction since 1993. For example, young people are more likely to espouse those values which are most important for the transformation to a market economy, including greater competition, greater consumer choice and less state protection (Wallace, C., 1997). Thus, whilst before 1989 young people felt it most important to have "an interesting job" they now see it as more important to have "a steady job with acceptable income". Being a dependable employee, achieving a high professional level, gaining a high-quality education and professional qualifications are goals found consistently among the values held by young people. These are values relevant to the process of the emerging market economy.

The social threat of unemployment as an element of individualisation has been absorbed by young people. A comparison of surveys in 1993 and 1995 indicate that the initial shock of unemployment had been overcome and young people were more prepared to undertake business activity and to pursue employment in a more determined way. For young Slovaks, the passive surrender to state care as a preferred survival strategy has been losing ground in favour of an orientation towards entrepreneurial activities and self-employment (Macháček, L., 1999). The problem is to preserve the idea of solidarity with others under these circumstances.

Citizenship has many meanings. We should bear in mind that although young people are ready to become involved in civil participation, their understanding of this participation is not so clear-cut. We know that “I want to be a responsible citizen” does not necessarily mean, “I intend to participate in public affairs”. Analysis of young people who might have “civil potential”, shows that there is a difference between the “onlookers”, who observe social events in the media, and the “active ones”, participating in social affairs.

Social welfare, legislation and social policies have recently begun to identify young people directly as holders of civil rights. This gradual change, which is not yet completed, implies that young people will become more directly integrated into the society and have more responsibility towards social and political participation. Young people are therefore becoming subjects with individual rights as citizens, perhaps more accurately as proto-citizens. However the age structure for becoming a citizen is not consistent in European states.

In Slovakia we can see how difficult it is to create active citizens from people who have been subjected to political control and paternalistic care from the state for many years. The idea of new political rights for young people raises the question: What does the individual give to the state, to society or to local communities? Active citizenship does not only imply that young people must take responsibility for their own welfare and that of their families. To be a good citizen means to have more political responsibility for the future development of one's own nation in the process of European integration. The opinions and voting behaviour of young Slovaks shows that they are keen to become free and creative citizens. The problem now is to create structures and opportunities where this can happen in such a way as to encourage solidarity with others and not just individual strategies for self-enhancement.

Conclusions

The further modernisation of Slovakia will depend as much upon the creation of an active civil society as upon the process of political and economic reform.

That is, it will depend upon the creation self-aware and active citizens (Roško, R., 1996). In recent years we have seen a remarkable institutionalisation of civil society through the creation of a variety of third sector organisations. This has been greatly assisted by massive financial support from the European Union by the program PHARE and from the USA by the program Democratic Network. This support can be viewed as urgently needed to strengthen the transformation of European post-communist countries and their direction towards pluralistic democracy; a prerequisite for their integration into the community of European democracies associated with the European Union and NATO. We should bear in mind that in the context of transitional societies, where civil society is not well established and civic participation is low, state sponsorship still plays an important part.

The voluntary and non-government sector of civil society and its development between 1993-1998 has been considered an important factor of transformation and modernisation of the Slovak Republic. The NGO s in Slovakia “...are now much more than island of isolated idealists or the so-called island of positive deviants, as the independent civil activities in late 1980s were called by Slovak sociologists. They created a vivid, vibrant and efficient “civil archipelago”, an archipelago of hope and positive action.” (Bútorá, M., 1997) However, the maintenance and furtherance of citizenship will depend upon the active continuation of these non-state organisations in a situation where many of their leaders have been drawn into government or state administration or even have left the country.

The problem is one of how to establish the framework by which the state does not interfere, despite considerable state sponsorship, and where different political regimes will not influence the shape of civil society. The empowering of young people as voters and as social actors can have important consequences for a political change as we saw during the 1998 elections. The challenge for the future will be to create and encourage a civil society in which young people will play an active part and which can help to sustain the progress towards democratisation and the development of a market economy in this new state.

State Youth Policy in the Modernization Process in Slovakia

Designing a state policy for youth in post-communism and subsequently independent Slovakia has been a complicated process. The country is still searching for a satisfactory distribution of responsibilities among the central bodies of state administration. And there is a parallel search, with no end yet in sight, for partnership between the state and civil society. The youth movements are still not sure whether they want a state ministry of youth; neither politicians nor youth organizations are sure what the responsibilities of such a ministry should be and a host of government departments have become entrenched in disputes about the responsibilities of each. Why has youth policy in Slovakia become such a muddle?

The following passages argue, first, that independent Slovakia needs a new law on youth work rather than legislation on youth *per se*. Second, it is argued that a law focused on youth work will bypass conflicts between the various organs of government. Third, it is argued that the independent youth movements need the protection and support that only the state can offer, and that the absence of such support, with a clear legal base, is the greatest threat to their independence and existence. Why is all of this not generally acknowledged? The core answer lies in the difficulties that inevitably arise in state-building in a newly independent country. Slovakia's difficulties are particularly acute. The country became independent as recently as 1993 and has no earlier modern history of independence to draw upon. The Bratislava-based administration and its politicians are inexperienced in dealing with national, let alone international, problems. Herein lie the reasons why, from 1993 till now Slovakia still has no agreed youth policy. Herein also lies the root of Slovakia's unpopularity in European Union circles between 1994-1998. The country has been excluded from the first group of countries to pursuing a full membership in the EU.

In the field of youth legislation and policy, the Slovak case, when properly analysed, reveals with unusual clarity the principles that must govern the role of the state in countries where youth organizations have their roots in civil society rather than state/party structures.

First steps

Slovakia's search for a new youth policy began with a legislative initiative by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport which was resulted in a government decree on new principles for the state's policy towards youth. The next steps should have involved implementing these principles through a law on the protection and support of youth. The basic principles of state policy towards youth

in Slovakia were in fact approved by the Slovak government on January 7, 1992 (Zásady, 1992) but have subsequently been only partially implemented. However, Slovakia has become a full and active member of the Council of Europe whose member states have permanent bodies responsible for the coordination of youth care. The appraisal of youth care in all European countries which took place in 1985 found out that only six ministers or state secretaries for youth were actually installed, even though other five countries had youth issues included in broader ministerial portfolios on education and culture, for example. (Ramos, M., 1993) By 1993, this situation changed considerably. As many as fourteen states had established central bodies responsible for youth which were headed either by a minister or a state secretary while in thirteen states the youth sector came under other ministries. The cultural agreement of the Council of Europe which regulates the cooperation of ministers responsible for youth has not yet adopted any clear standpoint with respect to desirability of 'autonomy' for youth sections. This is not really a contentious issue. Some countries, including the United Kingdom, play a full part in these sessions, though they permanently vote against resolutions that would require the treatment of youth as a special section of the population with interests safeguarded by its own ministry. In the Slovak Republic the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport was initially established with a separate section for youth and sport. Later this ministry was transformed into the Ministry of Education and Science, which installed a state secretary responsible for the spheres of youth and sport. At present, therefore, this ministry includes a special section responsible for state policy towards youth.

Many other European countries have similar administrative arrangements. This solution to the location of state care of youth is fully compatible with the Council of Europe's conventions. Slovakia's administrative set-up has proved to be perfectly acceptable to other member countries. Indeed, Slovakia has played a leading role via the Council of Europe in advising other former communist countries on the reform of their youth ministries' remits, and their relationships with youth organisations rooted in civil society rather than party/state administration. However, a resolution of the fourth conference of European Ministers Responsible for Youth (held April 13 - 15, 1993) posed problems within Slovakia. This states that any policy towards youth should be global and implemented impartially in respect of all groups of young people in all regions (Mládež, 1993). This should really pose no special problems for Slovakia. Its administrative solution is very similar to those of the Austrian Ministry of Environment, Family and Youth, the German Ministry of Youth, Women and Old Age Pensioners, and the French Ministry of Youth and Sport. In practice, however, Slovakia has encountered internal political difficulties. One body of opinion has queried whether any state policy can be truly impartial. This has been

a hot issue in a newly independent country in which the creation and maintenance of national cohesion has inevitably been a leading political issue.

The second phase in forming Slovakia's state youth policy

The decline in prestige, and arguably stigma, attached to any state policy towards youth has been a definite complication in the post-communist situation. This has applied in many former communist countries. In Slovakia this led to the initial rejection by youth organizations of the principles proposed by the Slovak government. These principles, had they been adopted, would undoubtedly have strengthened the position of the state *vis-à-vis* youth. Disputes surfaced when the text was under preparation and was reflected in a speech by the representative of the Youth Council of Slovakia (YCS) at a youth-care conference (Kubik, 1992). This body was created soon after November 1989. It is a self-governing organization composed of representatives of forty-five non-governmental youth organizations, some linked to political parties, others to churches, and others based on sport and other leisure-time activities. Representatives of the Youth Council of Slovakia felt unable to support the government's proposal on the relationship between the state and the YCS even though they were aware that only a legal guarantee would eliminate the excuses of inactive politicians and the misuse of the legal vacuum to ignore youth problems. The representatives of the YCS pointed at several obstacles which, in their opinion, prevented acceptance of the proposal: it was said to be unrealistic in that it would not solve the problems that were to be solved, it was said to be inconsistent with existing statutes in so far as the concept 'youth' and its age range were concerned, and it was said to contradict the existing civil code governing maturity and criminal responsibility. Finally, the YCS representatives argued that the proposal was based on not just Soviet administrative principles but on the traditions of Russian czarism. A comparison of arguments of the YCS and the government's proposals shows that there is a problem in legitimizing the interests and needs of youth in any legal code. Solving this problem requires sensitive terminology. Three comments made by other government departments are particularly noteworthy:

1. The Ministries of the Interior, and of Labour, Social Affairs and the Family, did not agree with the draft principles because, they argued, the relevant problems were already regulated by existing legal codes, the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, international conventions on human rights and liberties, and conventions on the rights of children.
2. The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and the Family indicated that the rights and duties of other central organs of the state executive were being infringed.

3. The Ministry of Agriculture argued that the concept 'youth' should be made consistent with the terminology of existing laws.

Redefining the problem

The young people and scientists who first attempted to found post-communist civic associations on 10 April 1969, were aware of the dangers of inter-ministerial disputes about their respective responsibilities. A definition of the problem was presented by Professor J. Cecetka (1969), the chairman of the Commission for Youth Sociology at the Sociological Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, who subsequently accepted candidature for the Chair of the State Committee for Children and Youth. In his article in the youth newspaper *Smena* (New Generation), he argued against the widespread opinion favouring a Ministry of Youth, and claimed that it would be more advantageous 'to leave the youth agenda with the existing ministries, and to create an institution above the ministries instead, which would cooperate with them in solving youth problems with respect to the coordination of activities and the interaction of individual ministries, whereby it would be superior to them in solving or establishing principles for solving particular issues of youth, and especially those problems that have not been managed by any ministry so far, which could be handed over to its sole competence' (Macháček, L., 1992). At that time the foundation of a state committee for youth, or a ministry of youth, as an expression of a new state policy, was not torpedoed by competence conflicts between the different ministries. The controversy was centred around the very idea of a single youth organization or any single state institution for youth. This invited allegations that Soviet, even tsarist, practices were being retained. In the context of such a paternalist model the constructive efforts of sociologists could not appear innocent; on the contrary, they appeared to some to be a dangerous tendency splitting the unity of youth despite their primary intention of respecting the emerging plurality of civic associations. No better example of this confusion can be given than the comment of one participant in the debate who said, 'It seems to me at the moment that a Ministry of Youth might be perhaps established, but then the Youth Council (SZM) would have to disappear' (Macháček, L., 1992).

Pluralism and the state

The existence of plurality of civic youth associations after 1989 may be seen as the supreme substantiation of the need for a unified state youth policy. The authentic, democratic and autonomous development of youth movements and their evolution as independent agents of youth work, independently setting their own

tasks and forms of activities, can be regarded as defining the responsibilities of a central organ of state administration. All in all, the independent existence of associations and leagues in civil society can determine the legitimate form and subject of state policy. Proceeding in this manner can avoid any conflicts relating to competence with other institutions of state administration, and fears that any state department of youth might compromise the independence of youth organizations.

The Section for Youth in the Slovakian Ministry of Education have in fact recognized these needs. The fourth conference of European ministers responsible for youth care recommended developing information services for youth and connecting these across Europe in the years to come. The conference had in mind schemes such as support for youth mobility and exchange and research on youth (Mládež, 1993). All of these initiatives require governmental action. This, in turn, depends on national governments having ministries with the power to act. None of this suppresses individualization, individualism or the independence of non-governmental youth organizations. The experience of several years of cooperation between the youth section of the Slovak ministry and other departments has made it possible for the practical problems encountered by centres managing youth leisure activities to be transferred by mutual consent into the ministries remit. This is an example of how competence issues can be solved without raising problems and fears as to how the new state executive will grapple with its tasks and responsibilities. Simultaneously, clear evidence of this executive body's willingness to respect the responsibilities of other state departments has been required. Unfortunately this has not always been forthcoming. One body of opinion within the youth section of the ministry has insisted that addressing the problems of young people, and representing their interests, depends on this section becoming the ultimate authority over all government policies and programmes aimed at young people.

A consensual division of labour between government departments has been established in Lower Austria. A. Kager (1993) has explained how the Lower Austria Act of 1983 emphasizes that work with youth should be far more active where needs arise which cannot be sufficiently fulfilled either by parents, home or school, or leisure-time opportunities in culture, sport and so on. Other needs of youth in social and labour spheres fall under the competence of such state organs as the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, or, alternatively, the Ministry of the Interior, or the Ministry of Justice.

Responsibilities

Deciding which tasks to entrust to a new type of state youth organ has been a major political issue in Slovakia. From the presented arguments it would seem that the most controversial tasks are those which, up to now, have been located in other bodies of state administration. From the legal point of view, there is the problem of the respective responsibilities of civil, non-governmental youth associations on the one hand, and the youth section of the ministry on the other. As this problem was not solved early on (not even a pragmatic compromise was achieved) the controversy imperilled efforts to overcome other troubles. The legal aspects of defining the role of state *vis-à-vis* youth are well developed in countries with governments of strong social-democratic orientation which express the principle of social solidarity between the older and younger generations through their youth policies. Simultaneously, the principle of influence or intervention by the state in social and civil processes is generally accepted. In states where a liberal or conservative orientation prevails the existence of youth as a special social group may not be accepted. The state may claim no right to intervene in this sphere, and the problems of young adults may be left to civil society. Yet even in such countries, the protection and support of children at least up to age 18 is invariably respected. Ways of addressing social and other problems concerning young people over 18 differ depending on how the legal code grants benefits or aid, or imputes legal responsibility according to the age of the citizen. Slovakia's legal system does not acknowledge the concept of 'youth'. The above-mentioned Lower Austria Law on youth defines adults as all persons who have reached the age of 18. The law on youth of the Federal Republic of Germany recognizes 'children' and 'adults', but also adds the category 'young adults' or 'young mature persons'. In the Marxist-Leninist sociological paradigm, the concept of 'youth' was related to a homogeneous social structure in which specific tasks, connected with the socialization process, were overlaid by a social-class perspective. The system change in the transition to a market economy arouses expectations of prosperity linked to individual performance, especially in the competitive struggle in the labour market. Conditions of socialization are being changed, and that is why youth is also changing from being a homogeneous social group in the socialist social structure into a social aggregate of individuals at a certain phase in the life course. It seems more appropriate to speak about young citizens, young workers, young artists, young urban citizens, young citizens of the middle Slovakian region, and so on. In this way the issue of the legitimation of youth care is easily lost. Doubts arise over automatically classifying all young people in the labour market into the 'youth' category. The arguments of legal science and legislative practice that new legal norms should be compatible with existing ones

are extended by arguments drawn from sociological theories about youth. The examples of other countries' legal codes governing youth protection and support suggest that concepts of children, adolescents and young adults can be applied.

Legitimation strategy

It follows from the above-mentioned analysis that there are several reasons for fundamental changes in the youth law which have been proposed and debated for many years in Slovakia. The government is not ready to accept new goals concerning legislation of youth. After approving its draft principles on state policy towards youth in 1992, the Government of the Slovak Republic had no need to introduce new, major legislation on the protection and support of children and youth. It needed simply to give the ministry's existing responsibilities a new legal base.

In the author's opinion, the strategic aim of the legislative process at present should be for stabilization and anchoring, via the Slovak Republic's law on youth work (children and young people) in leisure time, those responsibilities which are currently exercised by the Youth Section of the Ministry of Education. We can summarize these responsibilities briefly:

- Supporting the activities of civil youth associations and other subjects engaged in work with youth by means of youth protection and support programmes.
- Guiding local youth care by means of tutors operating from the state administration through district offices.
- Operating information services through a network of Information centres for the young.
- Guiding and managing the network of centres for the leisure time of children and youth.

Core functions will need to remain with the central state executive even when the process of regionalization in the Slovak Republic has been completed.

We can mention these core functions briefly:

- Formulation of state policy for youth, its planning and coordination with all state and civil entities engaged in work with youth.
- Management and distribution of financial grants for youth care from the state budget.
- Gathering and evaluating information necessary for drafting state policy and developing work with youth in leisure time, including the results of scientific research on youth.
- Developing and promoting international cooperation in youth care.

Conclusion

The need for a change in the Slovak Government's strategy of legitimizing youth interests and needs in the legislative process has pragmatic and theoretical roots. The pragmatic source lies in an unusually strong inertia of remit and interests in different organs of the central state administration in Slovakia but there is really no need to challenge this inertia. The theoretical point of view follows from the retreat from the model of paternalistic state care and from strengthening liberal tendencies in the transformation of Slovakia's political, social and economic systems. There is no case, in a democratic market-oriented society, of a paternalistic social-welfare base for state youth policies.

The role of state interventions should not be to regulate market forces and civil society but rather to encourage self-help, to assist youth organizations to be independent, and to encourage them to encourage young people to become active citizens, partly but not exclusively via their involvement in youth organizations, thereby strengthening the modernizing tendencies and development of Slovakia into a truly open society. Ken Roberts is right when he says: "Countries which have retained youth ministries or state departments for youth are wondering what their role should be" (Roberts, K., 1997). Ultimately it is irrelevant whether a case for state care, expressed in the form of rights to protection or support, is derived from age, gender or ethnic status. From the point of view of the legislative process, the principle goal, for both theoretical and pragmatic reasons, has to be support for active citizenship and civil participation. In the case of young people this goal can be pursued largely through institutions engaged in youth work in young people's leisure time.

The promotion of active citizenship comprising social and political participation is fostered and practised, providing sites for self-socialization into the contemporary demands and values of a polity that focuses on social progressivism, and is especially amenable to the extension of citizenship rights, since these accord to young people an independent *raison d'être sociale* (Chisholm, L., 1995).

The relations between the central state administration on youth and the Youth Council of Slovakia – representing youth associations – should also be considered from the point of view of the frontiers of the state and the civic society and their relativity and permeability. If the Youth Council of Slovakia is trying to take over the functions of the state, for example the redistribution of financial funds among individual youth organizations, it provokes a very important question concerning their identity as the 'representative' of civic youth associations, as an independent, objective interpreter of their interests. It would also require an increase of paperwork in order to assure executive and supervisory tasks. However, such a

role is unacceptable for the Youth Council of Slovakia and its member organizations because it would imply a return to the proliferated bureaucracy in youth organizations which operated before 1989. This is apparently yet another reason why additional time and practical experience would be necessary to examine whether the Principles and the Programmes really are the very optimal standard of relationship between the state and civic society in the area of youth.

Principles of the state youth policy and programmes of youth support and protection in the Slovak Republic from 1992 until 1996 significantly encouraged the development of out-of-school pursuits for young people in all districts of Slovakia. They helped to build a new network of associations, unions and youth initiatives as well as inspiring adult citizens with deeper interest in youth work (Zásady - Principles, 1992).

The Principles of state policy in relation to young people adopted by the Government of the Slovak Republic emphasize:

1. State policies in relation to young people constitute a system of measures aimed at protection and promotion of young people which shall be prepared and implemented primarily within the family, school, cultural, social, economic, health-care, population, and ecological domains.
2. The state shall create legislative and material prerequisites for the protection and promotion of young people in the interests of the broad development of children and young people.
3. Young people, in the sense of state policies, shall be understood as the social group (provisionally defined as ranging from 15 to 26 years of age; the age range shall be stipulated ultimately in the Act) who are preparing themselves and gradually entering social life.
4. The aim of state policies in relation to young people shall be the creation of conditions suitable for their high-quality education, instruction and professional preparation and their entry into employment and social life. The policies support the development of the skills and talents of young people both inside and outside the school.
5. State policies in relation to young people shall devote special attention to the protection and the promotion of young people from socially weak families (single or divorced parents bringing up their children, unemployed parents with children and teenagers, etc.). It shall create the conditions for the development of a preventative and supportive system aimed at endangered, problem-causing and marginal groups of young people.
6. The major areas of state policies in relation to young people include the following:
 - protection of civic rights and freedoms, creation of legislative and material conditions for the participation of young people in the life of democratic society,

care of the family as the basic educational environment for children and young people,

- creation of conditions for the activities of civic associations for children and young people,
- education and instruction of children and young people, their professional and qualification-increasing training for jobs and professions,
- support before employment, stimulation of youth employment and protection against unemployment,
- creation of conditions for leisure time, recreation and entertainment,
- promotion and creation of conditions for youth exchange, youth mobility and development of international youth contacts,
- promotion of youth participation in the cultural life of society, and the creation of conditions for the contribution of young people into cultural advancement,
- creation of specific conditions for advancing the talents of young people in various areas of activity,
- protection and broad promotion of health care for young people,
- specific care, education, protection and promotion of physically disabled young people, and for young people with inadequate social skills,
- protection against negligence, demoralization, cruelty and other phenomena endangering the healthy moral development of children and young people.

After 1993, the polarization of the governmental coalition and political opposition influenced young people's political representation and participation in associations; young people struggled for their thoughts and beliefs. In the spring of 1996, a new umbrella-like organization called the Slovak Youth Congress was founded (close to the governmental coalition). Its goal was for the new president (M. Božik) to 'become an alternative to the Youth Council of Slovakia' (in opposition to the government).

The majority of young people watched the struggle rather passively since they were actively involved in solving problems which arose from their demands for education and labour. Youth unemployment is a reality. The real youth movement 'lives' outside the structures of youth associations. It takes the form of local cultural and sports life or of the movements of young people's sport and pop fan clubs, even the form of spontaneous groupings of urban 'skinheads' (attacking Roma people). The development of civil youth associations is important for the socialization of young people as citizens of the new republic. The number of institutions for extracurricular education and training for young people is thus growing, and a system of education towards citizenship is being created.

***YOUTH IN SLOVAKIA
AND
EUROPEAN INTEGRATION***

The Citizenship Potential of Unemployed and Self-Employed Youth in East-Central Europe⁵

Youth individualisation

The transformation of a planned economy into a market economy, and a totalitarian political system into a pluralist democracy, represents a key social change for the first post-communist generation of youth. It manifests itself in the new structure of transition to adulthood as young people enter the labour market and acquire civil rights.

Unlike in the planned economy of the so-called "real socialism" where education was followed immediately by employment through which young people acquired the social status of adults, transformation and modernisation have brought insecurity to young people's life projects (Ondrejko, P., 1997), through for instance, unemployment which causes acute discontinuity and inconsistency.

The first post-communist generation of youth enjoyed an element of "prolonged holidays". Not all school graduates took their jobs immediately after graduation. They embarked on a search for jobs which often took several months, subsidised by the state through unemployment benefits. Those who studied at universities often took short-term jobs in Slovakia or abroad. A comparison of surveys carried out in Slovakia in 1993 and 1995 indicates that the psychological shock from unemployment was soon overcome (Macháček, L., 1997). Subsequently the experience of unemployment has become integrated as an element of youth individualisation in the East-Central European countries. Unemployment has been socially accepted by young people and is no longer understood as a deficient state of the individual.

Unemployed young people are now able to look for diverse solutions to their problems with the support of kin and offers by Labour Offices. In some cases unemployment is the springboard for young people to launch their own business activities. However, being unemployed and even being self-employed may result in young people sinking into the social welfare net.

Transformation as modernisation

Experts on the transition of post-communist systems are ever more inclined to claim that this unusual historical process is not only a transition from totalitarianism to pluralist democracy and a civil legal state, or from a planned to a

⁵ The research on which this papers are based has been supported by grants from ACE/PHARE (P95-2141-R) and the UK Overseas Development Administration (R6665)

market economy but also that: "Modern citizenship is possible only if people know and are willing to become free and creative citizens. Markets and political pluralism are inevitable objective prerequisites for pursuing ways to modern citizenship. However, unless these objective factors are transposed into personal systems of values and activities compatible with these values, we shall reach the halfway of the course only and the whole project of transformation and modernisation may in fact fail utterly." (Roško, R., 1997, p. 6) Most professionals perceive modernisation in the traditional sense of the word as technological modernisation with innovations such as information technology (Suchý, J., 1992). However, it is only a broader perception of modernisation as deconsecration, rationalisation and mobilisation (Martin, D., 1996), and recently of democratisation as "citizen-crazy" (Roško, R., 1997) that makes it possible to understand the actual historical objective of the transformation processes.

This perspective gives us a chance to become fully aware of why this process has occurred since 1989. It provides a vision of the emergent social system, which extends beyond practical competency and capability. It envisages neither more nor less than the effective integration and globalisation of the human world: "The Soviet communist system as one of the two most ambitious attempts at leadership failed in this (macro) historical experiment. And it was exactly the opposite result which was achieved by the social system of Western democracies or societies for the citizens - the second ambitious participant in this public tender" (Roško, R., 1997, p. 19).

R. Roško holds that two messages follow for all citizens in the post-communist European countries:

Message I: It is not the US which will integrate THEM, it is THEM who will integrate the US.

R. Roško considers the second message as a complete contrast with what was experienced through the Soviet system .

Message II: Thanks to the civil character of the integrating system, we are not in danger of being integrated (and subsequently held in integration) against our own will.

On the contrary, the Slovak experience signals that a situation may arise when THEY - NATO and the EU - refuse to integrate with the US, in spite of Slovakia declaring an interest to be integrated.

The process of Europeanization (Mitev, P., 1996) raises questions concerning national identity and sovereignty (Fontaine, P., 1995). Unhappily, the polarised polity in Slovakia connects Europeanization with the idea of an even greater influence for West European institutions on the activities of the Slovak state and

its collective political agents (parliamentary political parties). It is sometimes seen as in conflict with the autonomous nation-state's self-regulation of processes which develop market milieu including privatisation.

As sociologists, we must admit that not only the government coalition, but also the citizens of the Slovak Republic as a whole display some reservations about the European integration process. It is difficult to place Slovakia amongst the existing types of society in the integrating Europe. A. Maier (The Young, 1996) could not find the data or perhaps even enough courage to identify Slovakia as one of the two types of East-Central European society in the process of integration. Thus he did not see Slovakia as a dual society showing strong capitalist trends and selective modernisation (Hungary, Czech Republic, Poland) or as a society with weak capitalist trends and blocked modernisation (Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia).

However, apart from Slovakia, none of the other countries in the research - Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria - has simultaneously to cope, along with the process of European integration, with the process of adapting citizens to independent statehood. After the Czechoslovak Federal Republic (CSFR) was split, the Slovak government was praised for establishing the Slovak Republic by only 23.3% of Slovaks, while the Czech government was honoured by almost 40% of Czechs (Názory, Opinions, 1993). It is only now that Slovakia is experiencing a breakthrough in this respect. By the end of 1995, 60% of those questioned in a study showed at least some support for independence: 34% agreed with Slovakia becoming an independent state and 27% acquiesced with the independence of Slovakia (Národná obroda, December 30, 1995, p. 2).

An international survey on societal transformation and modernisation which was carried out in 1995, revealed that the attitudes of citizens to the split of the CSFR had an influence on their attitudes toward European integration. Among those who were still in favour of the integration of the CSFR and consequently against the break up of Czechoslovakia, only 2.9% were against Slovakia joining the EU. On the other hand, those who agreed with the separation of Slovakia from Czechoslovakia in the survey in 1995 did not link this process with European unification. Indeed, a substantial part of them (20%) wanted to slow down the integrative processes.

Since 1990 our research team at the Institute for Sociology at the Slovak Academy of Sciences, has been researching the place of the citizen, citizenship and civil society in the transformation and modernisation of post-communist societies (Creation, 1994). We have attempted to understand and explain the structure of the civil potential compatible with the renewal of civil society (Roško, R. - Macháček, L., -Čambáliková, M., 1994).

We define the new structure by three dimensions: (1) the institution of parliamentary democracy, (2) the institution of private property, (3) the

relationship to Western European systems. In view of the specifics of the transformation process in Slovakia we have had to include one more aspect linked to the historically belated state emancipatory process. Accordingly, we identify four partial civil potentials: (1) democratisation, (2) privatisation, (3) Eurocitizenship, and (4) state-emancipation.

These express the readiness of individuals, associations (political parties, civil movements) and generalised agents (the state) to participate in the modernising transformation of the social system:

- (1) The democratisation potential expresses reconstruction of the political sub-system.
- (2) The privatisation potential reflects reconstruction of the economic sub-system.
- (3) The Eurocitizenship potential reflects reconstruction of the relationships of former states of the so-called Eastern bloc to the states of the so-called Western bloc.
- (4) The state-emancipation potential reflects the creation of Slovak statehood and reconstruction of its relationships with neighbouring countries.

The results which we have recently presented elsewhere (Macháček, L., 1997) indicate that the attitudes of Slovak citizens to the systems existing in Western Europe are contradictory. They are not always formed on the basis of the values and institutions, which form the foundations of Western European societies (that is, the lawful state, parliamentary democracy, private property, and market economy). How else can we explain the paradox that a critical attitude to European integration is typical for citizens who assume a high democratisation potential and that, the most striking surprise for political experts has been the finding that a relatively large group of adherents to European integration, whom we label "EU supporters," are not characterised as having democratic or privatisation potentials.

Hypotheses and indicators in the 1997 survey

The research commenced in 1996 and within each country the fieldwork was based in two regions with contrasting economic profiles and/or levels of unemployment. Samples of young self-employed and young unemployed people were selected by quota within parameters, which ensured that the respondents from the various regions and countries were comparable. The interviews, using a mixture of closed and open-ended questions, were standardised, and sought information about each individual's family, educational background, labour market experience, current circumstances and future intentions.

Within each of the research regions we gathered information about the assistance that is available for youth in the labour markets from central and local government agencies and programmes, and from non-governmental organisations. One of the aims of the research was to assess the match between the assistance that is available and the needs of the young people in the various countries and regions.

The research was funded under the ACE-PHARE and ODA programmes and was being conducted by teams of investigators based in each of the countries. The findings became available in 1998.

The research involved interviews with a total of 800 young unemployed people, 100 in each of two regions in four East-Central European countries (Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia). In each country, one of the research regions had above average unemployment rate, and the other had unemployment below the country's average. The regions were Plovdiv and Velingrad in Bulgaria, Szabolcs and Vas in Hungary, Katowice and Suwalki in Poland, and Galanta and Trencin in Slovakia.

In all eight regions the samples were selected in identical ways. Three-quarters of the subjects were selected from the official unemployment registers while the remainder were unregistered and were contacted by whatever methods were considered most appropriate by the local research teams.

All the regions' samples contained equal numbers of males and females. Three-quarters were aged up to 25 and the remainder were aged up to 30. The age group covered up to 30 years old allows higher education graduates to be adequately represented, and recognizes the fact that throughout Europe youth transition affects young people above 26 as well. These methods of sample selection allowed both the long and short-term unemployed to be represented reflecting the populations from which the samples were drawn.

However, the present analysis concentrates on general characteristics of the young unemployed across all the regions and countries, and, in all probability, across East-Central Europe as a whole.

Identical interview schedules were used in all the countries and local teams of specially trained investigators conducted regions and fieldwork. The interviews contained closed and open-ended questions, and sought information about each individual's family and educational background, labour market history, job search methods, types of job search assistance sought and received his or her day-to-day lifestyle, and socio-political views.

The data set from the interviews in all four countries was prepared centrally (in Bulgaria), so as to ensure uniform practices, and then distributed to all the researchers who collaborated in the analysis and interpretation of the results.

Alongside this research, parallel surveys in all eight regions were conducted among samples of the young self-employed (400). Many identical questions were asked in the two sets of investigations. Some findings from the enquiry among the self-employed are therefore used for comparative purposes in the following analysis, as a convenient benchmark, in assessing the experiences and outlooks of the unemployed with those of a relatively advantaged group of age peers.

Our research into youth unemployment and self-employment makes it possible to search for answers to the following questions:

a) Does the market economy produce distinctive values and motivations, and personality structures in the case of long-term unemployed persons and those in business?

b) What are the specifics of the process of accepting new values and throwing off old stereotypes in view of the objective transformation of the political and economic systems in the individual countries?

And finally;

c) Does the impact of more or less developed regions in these countries manifest itself in the value orientations of young people?

In our research we had several empirical indicators of citizen potential:

a) The likelihood of participation in the next general election - expressing the democratisation potential;

b) A preference for a market economy and evaluation of the quality of family life in the old and the current systems - expressing pro-market potential;

c) Levels of support for co-operation with Russia, Central/Eastern European countries, and EU countries - expressing Euro-citizen potential.

Survey results and their interpretation

Democratisation potential

For legitimisation of the political system and political parties, the act of participation in general elections is extremely important. Through this act, the citizen delegates a part of his or her civil competence to political parties. That is why attention needs to be paid to whether the turnout in elections has changed with the on-going transformation and modernisation. Has political participation become similar, in its structure and forms, to known tendencies in EU countries?

We found out that expected turnout in the general elections(1998) in the above countries was relatively high. It reached 60 to 70%. In spite of this, it could be observed that unemployed young people refused to go to the polls more frequently than employed young people, and simultaneously they were less sure about which candidates to vote for, than young businessmen and women (see Table 1).

Unemployment in these countries had already exerted its impact leading to a decreased inclination to exercise this basic civil right. Consequently, young voters were giving up their chance to influence the employment and social policies in the country.

Table 1: **Intends to vote in next election (%)**

| | Self-employed (n=400) | Unemployed (n=800) |
|----------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Yes | 73.3 | 63.5 |
| Not Sure | 15.0 | 18.5 |
| No | 11.8 | 17.9 |

With regard to the regions, we could observe some differences between Slovakia and the other countries where, in expected participation in the next general elections, the difference between young people in business and the unemployed in Slovakia was as much as 15%, whereas in Bulgaria it was just 10%, in Hungary 6% and in Poland 7%.

Pro-market potential

Young businessmen and women preferred the free market economy (80%). Young unemployed people were not staunch supporters of the old political system (only 12.5%), but they seemed to have considerable doubts over which economic system to prefer (37%). In interpreting these findings, it must be borne in mind that the free market economies in the countries where the survey was carried out were not identical either with the type of the social-market milieu found in Germany, or with the liberal-market milieu of the USA.

In Hungary, Bulgaria, Poland and Slovakia, the free market has characteristics typical of a predatory phase of capitalism, seen elsewhere at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The market economy in these countries is based not only on legitimate institutions. The entities of the free market are established by taking and dividing the property of the state in such a manner that it is widely called the ‘theft of the century’. It is important for sociological analysis of the acceptance of the market economy to find out whether ideological allegations such as anyone who is not for the market at any time and at any price must be a socialist or communist, or whoever disagrees with state interventionism as the only cure for social ailments is a liberal-heathen or even a flunkey of imperialism (Potůček, M., 1997, p. 8) – affect the attitudes of youth.

Table 2: **Preference of economic systems (%)**

| | Self-employment (n=400) | Unemployment (n=800) |
|-------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Free Market | 79.2 | 50.5 |
| Old System | 2.0 | 12.5 |
| Not Sure | 18.8 | 37.0 |

In interpreting the opinions and stances of young people, historical specifics of the working market elements in the individual countries must also be taken into account.

In our survey we found that some respondents had experienced signals of the market economy and the private sector in their country for many years, especially in agriculture (Poland). Hungary had already experienced a transformed economy for several years. However, Bulgaria was only about to take the first steps to establish a free market economy.

After our co-operation with Czech sociologists, we have become aware of how deceitful a reciprocal mirror may be. Thus we approach our task of comparing the data on the four countries with more experience and that is why we formulate some conclusions with great trepidation and anxiety over the responses of our colleagues.

Poland. In both of the regions studied, there are similar differences between young people in business (79%) and the unemployed (37%) in evaluating the market. The differences in their evaluations are wider than in all other surveyed countries - almost 40%.

Table 3: **Preference of market economy (%)**

| | Bulgaria | Hungary | Poland | Slovakia |
|---------------------|----------|---------|--------|----------|
| Yes - self-employed | 95.0 | 58.8 | 79.0 | 83.5 |
| Yes - unemployed | 71.5 | 39.2 | 37.0 | 54.3 |

Bulgaria. This country shows the highest preference for a free market economy among both young people in business and the unemployed. However, in the more developed region of Plovdiv, the unemployed turn with greater confidence to the market economy than their colleagues in the less developed region.

Hungary. This country is a land where the differences between the more and less developed regions are very large. The young unemployed in the more developed region of Vas evaluate the free market more positively (54%) than the young business people from the less developed region of Szabolcz (49%). What is undoubtedly interesting is that the preference for a free market economy amongst young businessmen and women is lower than their colleagues in all the other countries.

Slovakia. The difference between the preference for a free market amongst the unemployed and those in business is approximately 20% in the region of Galanta. The difference in the region of Trencin is higher - approximately 32% - due to the more positive evaluation of the market milieu by young business people.

A complementary verification of the modernising potential held by the inhabitants of the post-communist countries is how they evaluate the past system. We enquired in the survey how the respondents evaluated the quality of life in the past and the present systems.

Two types of answers prevailed: **the old life was better** was the majority opinion of those currently unemployed (53.2%); **while life has not changed** was the dominant opinion of the business people (41.3%).

Family life under the previous state system was attributed a higher quality primarily by the young unemployed in Hungary (79%) and Bulgaria (62%). The view, "there is no difference between the quality of family life in the current and the old system" was more typical in Slovakia (53%) and Poland (45%).

The quality of family life was considered, even by most young business people, better in the previous system in Hungary (58%) and by many in Bulgaria (47%). Slovakia exhibited a transitory kind of evaluation - the quality of family life has been the same in both systems (66%). Business people in Poland have gained an experienced better quality of life already. Thus the proportion of people who regarded the quality of family life in the previous system as worse, was therefore high (45%).

From the regional point of view, it was only the opinions of the business people which were remarkable. In fact they were rather controversial. In Poland the situation seemed to be that few business people in either region regarded family life in the old system as better. Slovakia displayed exemplary features in the industrial region of Trencin. In the agricultural region of Galanta, both groups – those in business and the unemployed - appreciated the quality of family life in the old system to an equal extent (38%). In the era of the planned economy it was easier to do business in the agricultural region: electricity was cheap and there was no competition from abroad.

The quality of family life includes not only the standard of living of the family but also values, which are related more to the personal characteristics of spouses. According to the opinions of our respondents, both the present and the old systems could coincide with the ideal type of planned socialist economy. In fact, the socialist economy after 1975 was infiltrated by a range of forbidden and persecuted, as well as permitted and tolerated, business activities in all of the countries that we conducted our research in. The informal, "underground" or grey economy worked according to principles such as: the state's -ours- mine; and 'those who do not steal, deprive their own family'. This economy, called by Roško the "household labour circuit" (Roško, R., 1980) illegally used the space of the workplace for the production of goods and services exchanged in the informal market of family, friends and neighbours. In all of the countries we studied, there were also illegal business activities in small-scale production in trade and services.

Table 4: **Quality of family life in the current and the old system (%)**

| | Worse | The Same | Better |
|-----------------------|-------|----------|--------|
| Unemployed (n=400) | 10.3 | 36.5 | 53.2 |
| Self-Employed (n=800) | 21.0 | 41.2 | 37.9 |

However, we found that preferring the present market economy had some relationship to evaluations of family life quality in the past. This bond was statistically more important in the case of the unemployed than in the case of business people. This suggests that a preference for the market economy amongst young business people depended not so much on their evaluation of family life quality. The free market was preferred more by those young business people who considered the quality of family life in the past state system to be worse. The free market was preferred least by the young unemployed who regarded the quality of family life in the past system as better than in the present.

Eurocitizenship vs. state-emancipation potential?

European integration is a challenge to the young citizens of Slovakia to assess their prospects if, and when, they become citizens of Europe.

The entry of the Slovak Republic into the Council of Europe (human and civil rights), its application for membership of the European Union (the economic-social aspect of European citizenship), and its preparations for joining NATO (military-security aspect of Eurocitizenship) were not always interconnected and co-determined dimensions of European integration.

We found out in the 1997 survey coordinated by Ken Roberts that the orientation of those interviewed in the four countries favoured co-operation with the EU (90%). Support for co-operation with Central-Eastern European countries was 20 - 25% lower. The position of Russia, not so long ago a decision-making partner of all the studied countries, had changed substantially (35% lower).

The EU was highly accepted both by the people in business and the unemployed in all the countries. Business people generally attached a greater importance (3-7%) to co-operation with the EU countries, and the differences between individual countries and regions were statistically insignificant.

In Bulgaria and Slovakia, the intensification of co-operation with Central European countries was more highly appreciated by the unemployed than by business people. The reverse held in Poland and Hungary. In some regions of the studied countries (for instance Suwalki in Poland) the Central European orientation of co-operation was accentuated especially by the self-employed.

Evaluations of relationships with Russia were most positive among business people and the unemployed in Bulgaria (65% - 60%). In two countries co-operation with Russia was most esteemed by business people: in Hungary 46.4% against 31% of the unemployed, and in Poland 33.3% against 14.5%. Slovakia was the reverse of Poland. Co-operation with Russia was supported more by the unemployed (28.3%) than by business people (13.5%).

If we consider these results in the separate regions in Poland, there is no difference, whereas in Slovakia it was especially business people in Trencin who declined to co-operate with Russia. This phobia cannot be explained by the conditions and results of business activities in the region. It is more likely an ideological refusal to co-operate with Russia due to uncertainty about Slovakia's integration in Euro-Atlantic structures.

Business people's support for co-operation with Russia in all the countries was related to their evaluations of the quality of family life in the past. Only those who believed the past was better than the present wanted closer links with Russia. Opposition was slightly higher among those who believed that conditions had improved (63.4% - 36.6%) than among those who felt that there had been no change (71.2% - 28.8%).

Table 5: **Support closer ties with EU (%)**

| | Russia | Central-Eastern Europe | EU |
|---------------|--------|------------------------|------|
| Self-employed | 39.8 | 63.1 | 90.7 |
| Unemployed | 33.6 | 68.6 | 85.4 |

There may be several understandable reasons for the negative stance towards Russia: its efforts in the international field to discourage the Central and East European countries from integration into NATO, and Russia taking advantage of its strategic energy and other raw material resources to enforce its own economic interests in the European region.

For many people, of course, Russia represents something more. It is still a symbol of the old system of a planned economy. In Slovakia, in the political contest for integration into the EU, the adherents of intensifying co-operation with Russia are stigmatised as agents of "communist" Moscow. Their Pro-EU adversaries are seen as agents of a Brussels which discriminates through "assigned quotas" against exports from Central-East European countries into the EU.

In our survey we examined the relationship between support for the free market and support for intensifying co-operation with Russia. In the sample of young business people there were no differences between the two groups. Likewise, the supporters of co-operation with Russia (80.1%) as well as their adversaries (79.1%) preferred the free market. It was, however, different with the young unemployed people. It may seem surprising that there were more adherents of the free market among those who preferred co-operation with Russia (57.1%) than among their Pro-EU adversaries (47.1%).

Table 6: **Support closer ties with Russia (%)**

| | Self-employed | Unemployed |
|-----------|---------------|------------|
| Galanta | 18.8 | 26.0 |
| Trenčín | 8.3 | 30.5 |
| Suwalki | 34.7 | 16.2 |
| Katowice | 32.0 | 12.9 |
| Szabolcs | 49.8 | 31.0 |
| Vas | 43.8 | 31.0 |
| Velingrad | 62.0 | 63.0 |
| Plovdiv | 68.0 | 58.0 |
| Total | 400 | 800 |

Different results are, however, shown in Slovakia where the political dispute over integration orientation goes on in perhaps the most pointed way of all the countries. Among the young unemployed support for the free market was similar whether they preferred co-operation with Russia (55.6%) or were against it (54.3%). Among the business people who were against co-operation with Russia,

the number of free market supporters was higher (85%) than in the case of the other group (69.2%). This could be due to the success of young business people, especially in the region of Trenčín. However, it should be borne in mind that support for co-operation with Russia was expressed by only 14% of the sample of Slovak business people.

Conclusions

We can conclude as follows:

- (1) The political orientations of the young unemployed and self-employed are influenced by the regions where they live, but mainly by the individuals' experiences.
- (2) Differences in young peoples' opinions of the EU in the four countries are related to the countries' historical-cultural traditions. These traditions cover or hide the influence of recent social system changes.
- (3) The social positions of the unemployed and business people have a substantial impact on their civil potential.

Generally, young business people demonstrate a civil potential, which is compatible with the new political and economic systems. They recognise the significance of their participation in shaping the political system through the process of general elections. They support the principles of the free market economy and attribute improvements in family life to its working. Moreover, they evaluate the EU as the most important body with which to co-operate in the European context. Co-operation with other Central European countries and even with Russia is not seen as an alternative to the EU.

The young unemployed have rather different outlooks. They display less interest in citizen participation. Not only do they regard the quality of family life as having been better in the past, but many are sceptical about the free market economy. However, they support co-operation with other countries. In Slovakia and Bulgaria they lay stress on co-operation with other Central Europe countries, and also with Russia.

Our evidence suggests that more educated citizens are best able to take advantage of the possibilities created by democratisation and the market economy. This is why they adhere to individualist principles. Individuals with basic education are more likely to experience the negative effects of economic liberalisation. For instance, they are more likely to lose their jobs and experience a drop in living standards. They often appeal to equality and solidarity principles, and support collective concepts (equality, fraternity, nation) (Plichtová, J. - Brozmanová, B., 1997, p. 393).

The better educated are "more flexible in their cognitive capacities, and they have consequently got rid of...the stereotypes of the past regime earlier; people who read more take the new ideology for their own sooner", (Ibid, p. 393).

In our survey we have compared two social groups which have very different experiences of the new system, and simultaneously their cognitive flexibility is differently influenced by amount of education they have had (19% of the business people and 39% of the unemployed had just basic or vocational education).

Young business people are a group of citizens whose political and social participation is playing a decisive role in the transition of the post communist countries to a new social system. They appropriate its advantages and endorse its principles. The young unemployed are a marginalized group with considerable experience, typically exceeding 12 months, in this disadvantaged position. They face great difficulties in overcoming their social isolation and especially in materialising their life projects. It is more difficult to explain to them the virtues of the new social system. Given their level of education, they cannot be expected to be flexible.

In spite of Slovakia's generally polarised situation, groups of both the young unemployed and self-employed in Slovakia are comparable with their counterparts in Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria.

Slovakia and Austria: European Challenges

An important factor affecting activities of civic society in Slovakia has been the affiliation of the Slovak Republic with the European Union, and its membership in the Council of Europe. For young people, this means that the activities of the youth associations, and notably the Youth Council of Slovakia, are of considerable importance in relation to Slovakia's integration into the new Europe, and all the more so since many initiatives encouraging this process are implemented precisely through the help of the emerging European youth policy and its current emphasis on education for citizenship. The development of civil society in Slovakia was greatly influenced by the civic youth associations and movements, especially in the uniting of national councils and international youth organisations in Europe under the recently created Youth Forum.

It is not only in youth movements, but also in the activities of other social movements (e.g., environmental, peace, human and civil rights, women, etc.) where young members become important. One might say that the highly developed modernised societies tend to become "movement societies". Youth movements that appear in this context tend to take the form of the organised and continuous collective efforts of co-operating individuals, groups and organisations aimed at supporting and sustaining social change by means of public protest activities. Therefore, it is not enough to create a state of affluence as a material base to introduce citizenship and modern individuality to everyone. Young people become citizens through organised effort, or through initiatives of people with equal standing and common interests who, within the legal framework, join forces to achieve a social change.

The further modernisation of Slovakia will depend as much upon the creation of an active civil society as on the process of political and economic reform. That is, it will depend on the forming of self-aware and active citizens (Roško, R., 1996). In recent years we have seen a remarkable institutionalisation of civil society through the creation of a variety of third sector organisations. This has been greatly assisted by massive financial support from the program PHARE in the European Union and in the USA by the program Democratic Network. This support can be regarded in the context of the urgent need to strengthen the transformation of European post-communist countries and their development towards a pluralistic democracy. This is a prerequisite for their integration into the community of European democracies associated in the European Union and NATO. We should bear in mind that in the context of transitional societies, where civil society is not well established and civic participation is low, state sponsorship still plays an important role.

The volunteer and non-governmental sectors of civil society and its development between 1993-1998 have been considered important factors in transformation and modernisation of the Slovak Republic. However, the maintenance and development of citizenship will depend upon the active continuation of these non-state organisations in a situation where many of their leaders have become members of the government or state administration, or have left the country.

The problem is of how to establish a framework in which the state does not interfere, despite considerable state sponsorship, and where different political regimes will not influence the shape of civil society. As we could see during the 1998 elections, the empowerment of young people as voters and as social actors can have important consequences for political change. The challenge for the future will be to create and encourage a civil society in which young people will play an active part and which can help to sustain the progress towards democratisation and the development of a market economy in this new member country of the enlarged European Union. Thanks to the role it played in the parliamentary election in 1998, the Slovak Council of Youth - was involved in defining the new governmental policy. It helped to promote a real institutional change. Governmental Council for Issues of Children and Youth has been established. Preconditions for co-ordination of governmental youth policy have been set, thus enabling youth representatives to take part in decision-making processes of nationwide importance.

I must emphasise that this development is in compliance with youth policy of the European Union. All EU countries are working on the White Paper on Youth. Youth activists in Europe put emphasis on the fact that national Youth Councils should be formally recognised as social and civil partners for defining state youth policy in the EU member countries. This civil dialogue is expected to have an institutional base at the state as well as the local level. To summarise briefly the developments after 1998: There is the Council for Issues of Children and Youth, National Youth Conference and parliaments of children and youth, which are active in many cities and villages. The researchers did not remain indifferent, and for the first time since 1989 a report about the situation of youth in the Slovak Republic has been elaborated. The institutional conditions for youth policy have never been better.

Slovakia and Europe

Living conditions in Slovakia have changed substantially since 1989. One of the main factors influencing the way people (and especially young people) feel about life is the freedom to travel. Members of the older generation still have

deep-seated sub-conscious images of barbed wire fences (especially of the fence built along the Slovak-Austrian border near Devín and Petržalka).

With reference to the information we obtained, young people consider this opening of the borders with Western countries and the destruction of the "dead border" as an advantage (62.2%). At the same time we have to consider that people are starting to perceive more intensely the discrepancy between civil freedoms and the economic opportunities available to realise them.

On the other hand, the opening-up of the borders to Western countries that has taken place during the past ten years is not only a general process of democratisation allowing citizens to move freely. This process is also taking on the dimension of European integration, and thus has not only a civil dimension but also political, economic and social dimensions.

In our survey⁶, young people were given the opportunity to assess the development of Slovakia after its entry into the EU using eight criteria: economic development of all members of the EU, economic development of cross-border regions, labour market and unemployment, development of tourism, feeling of self-confidence and knowledge of the country, security and crime rate (delinquency), development of road traffic and the quality of life.

Different aspects of social life in Slovakia are evaluated positively with regard to integration into the EU. However, integration into the EU is also perceived as a danger. Primary school pupils in particular have the feeling that they do not have enough information to judge certain aspects and they refused to take a clear position.

⁶ In January 2000 we carried out a sociological survey focusing on young people living in eight regional centres of Slovakia regarding their opinions and attitudes towards current issues of youth policy and youth activities in Slovakia.

In the interview, we asked young people aged between 15 and 26 years living in eight main regional centres some questions concerning

- a) their leisure time, and possibilities of how to spend it meaningfully in and around their city;
- b) If and in which ways they are interested in what is going on in their city, their personal participation in the problem-solving processes (e.g., within the structures of various children's and youth associations);
- c) How they perceive and evaluate risks (drugs, unemployment) of today's young generation in comparison to their parents;
- d) How violence is approached and assessed by their group of friends, if they would use violence in self-defence and in defence of their friends (or family);
- e) How they would accept legal changes that would grant more rights to young people at an earlier age (16-17) and would thus confer more responsibility for their own decisions and actions on them;
- f) How they see their own future in the context of these changes taking place in Slovakia and in Europe.

The data were collected by ASA (Agency for Social Analyses) in Bratislava between January 7th and February 7th 2000. The sample includes 945 young people aged 15 to 26 years.

The selected group of young people living in the main regional centres constitutes 27.72% of the total number of young people in this age group living in Slovakia. The group under survey is representative with respect to gender, age, education, social groups and cities.

To demonstrate the young people's contradicting views in their understanding of the integration into the EU, we offer two examples:

1. The crime rate in the EU is perceived as a danger by 48% respondents

Young people between the ages of 21 and 24 years feel relatively more endangered by the rise of crime and the decline of security (48.0%) than people between 15 and 20 years. This situation is to a certain extent illustrated by the answer "I do not know" which was the most frequent in the group of primary school pupils (40.7%). With respect to individual cities, the greatest feeling of risk is among young people from Nitra, B. Bystrica and Bratislava, where the rates are between 53 and 56%.

2. 48% think that membership in the EU will have a positive effect on the employment rate in Slovakia

The development of the labour market and the rate of unemployment are perceived as largely positive in connection with integration into the EU. University students (65.1%) and young people in Trenčín (58.8%) are the most optimistic in their expectations about this issue. Surprisingly, the opinions of both the unemployed and the employed as well as students of vocational and secondary schools (45-49%) differ only slightly. All this means that there is still a prevailing hope among the majority of young people (including those who are currently unemployed) that the integration into the EU labour force market, elimination of obstacles to free movement of the labour force, or possibly inflow of capital and investments will facilitate the improvement of the general employment situation in Slovakia. (Table No. 1: Advantages and disadvantages of integration into the EU).

More detailed analysis confirms that young employed people who have a university degree or a full secondary school education, or who are currently university or secondary school students see the most advantages. Apprentices (vocational school students) and young housewives, however, can see only a few advantages of the integration into the EU. The young people from Prešov have the most pessimistic attitude towards the advantages of integration.

Despite some worries about negative effects of EU membership the advantages prevail (72.1%). EU membership is even seen favourably, as more than just the opening of the borders to Western countries after 1989 (62.2%).

Slovakia and Austria

Our cooperation with Austria has its unquestionable priorities. We do not refer here to our cultural affinity and historical tradition. Austria is the only one of Slovakia's direct neighbours that has been a member of Western countries with a social market economy and working democracy. Moreover, Slovakia and Austria shared a common history after 1989. The content of this common history is the process of Austrian integration into the EU and the Slovak process of becoming an independent state. These processes were frequently mirrored in various stages of mutual cooperation as the bilateral relations were being intensified or becoming more detached. Austrian membership in the EU also substantially influenced its opportunities in the field of youth policy and youth activity programmes.

Our analysis starts from the most basic fact about the rate of visits to Austria and how young people assess their visits. The most popular Austrian destination for Slovak visitors is Vienna (more than one visit 23.7%, one visit 28.8%). It means that approximately 52.5% of young Slovak citizens have visited the capital of the neighbouring country. The rate of visits to Lower Austria (more than one visit 15.1% and one visit 14.7%) as well as to other federal states of Austria is somewhat lower, i.e., 30% and 23.8% (Figure No. 2: Visits.)

Most visitors to Vienna are young people coming from Bratislava, Trnava, Trenčín and Nitra. The origins of visitors to Lower Austria are similar: Bratislava, Trnava, Nitra, Trenčín. Visitors to other federal states of Austria come mostly from Bratislava, but Nitra caught up in this category of visitors. Prešov, Žilina, B.Bystrica and also Košice have significantly fewer contacts with Austria.

The evaluation of these contacts is generally either very positive or positive. Occasionally, there are negative attitudes. It would surely be very interesting to obtain and compare similar information from young Austrians about their visits to Slovakia and their evaluation of these visits.

Austria has shown its positive attitude towards the transformation of Slovakia into a country with a market economy and pluralistic democracy during the recent years, regardless of whether Slovakia was a part of Czechoslovakia or an independent state after 1993.

Our respondents gave answers to our question of whether Austria (especially Vienna) and Lower Austria should be initiators of the mutual cooperation. The prevailing type of answer is "they should be initiators" (51.2%), but a large part of respondents said "yes, definitely" (19.7%). Agreement is most frequently expressed by secondary school and university students, by young people from Nitra, Trnava, and also from Bratislava.

Table 1: If we compare advantages and disadvantages generally arising from the entry of these countries into the EU and opening-up of boundaries related to this situation, what will prevail?

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------|
| Disadvantages rather than advantages | 27.9 |
| Advantages rather than disadvantages | 72.1 |

Table 2: Have you been to Austria recently?

| | Yes, often | Yes, once |
|--------------------------|------------|-----------|
| To Vienna | 23.6 | 28.9 |
| To Lower Austria | 15.1 | 14.8 |
| To other part of Austria | 7.6 | 16.3 |

We inquired further as to how important the youth activities are in the cooperation between Slovakia and Austria. Youth activities such as cooperation between schools, youth festivals, and programmes of student exchange are seen as very important indeed.

In two cases (cooperation between schools and student exchanges), there is a clear support from young housewives, pupils and students, and the unemployed. Youth festivals elicited a positive reaction mainly among university students, whereas there was average support from the rest of the groups.

Austria, Slovakia and the EU

The bilateral cooperation between Slovakia and Austria has changed since Austria became a member state of the EU and Slovakia became an accession country.

During our visit to the youth department of the Lower Austrian Government in 1999, we got to know a political slogan: Austria is the heart of the EU without boundaries. This nice association was used by the political leaders of the country in their effort to win the support of Austrian citizens for the idea that Austria (especially Lower Austria) should no longer have frozen borders with the former Communist Czechoslovakia and post-Communist Slovakia—the borders that used to be a no-man's-land.

As a country belonging to the EU, Austria has a good chance to change from being a border country of the EU to a country belonging to the heart of the EU

without boundaries. We asked our young people from eight main regional centres what this will mean for Austria.

The prevailing opinion is that for Austria it will be very good (14.6%) and good (35.4%) if the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia become members of the EU. A significant number answered, "I do not know" (32.3%).

A certain number of respondents think, however, that for Austria it will be worse rather than better (15.2%) and only a very small group of respondents thinks it will be very bad (2.5%).

Table 3: Slovakia wants to enter the EU as soon as possible. If this happens, border controls will disappear. What attitude will Austria take?

| | |
|---|------|
| Will be very supportive | 17.5 |
| Will be rather hesitant | 67.7 |
| Will probably oppose Slovakia's entry into the EU | 14.8 |

Young people from Prešov and Košice (Eastern Slovakia) often answered, "I do not know". The remaining cities have negative expectations (18-20%) for Austria and its situation after its neighbours entered the EU.

Young citizens of Trnava (West Slovakia) showed the most faith in Austria's good future: the evaluation "It will be positive for Austria" is shared by 53.3% (with 22.2% of responses "very good").

Slovakia's effort not to miss the process of integration will not depend solely on its actions (as it is often one-sidedly emphasised) – the support and cooperation from its neighbours will be equally important; Austria has a unique position and importance for Slovakia.

Our survey was carried out before the new coalition government came into power in Austria and the fierce reaction of the EU member states against the participation of J. Haider and his Freedom Party in the new government. Despite this, there is a remarkable observation that our young fellow citizens carefully follow our complicated situation and make differentiated assessments of our neighbours' attitudes.

Answers to the question "What is the most probable attitude of Austria towards Slovakia's effort to enter the EU?" were clearly divided into three groups: will be very supportive 17.6%, will be rather hesitant 67.8%, will probably oppose Slovakia's entry into the EU 14.6%.

The young people having the closest contacts with Lower Austria (Trnava) expressed the highest optimism and the lowest pessimism: the expectation of active support (26%), the expectation of opposition (8%)

Table 4: How do you assess the development of Slovakia in the following fields when it is a member of the EU?

| | Positively | Negatively | No response consequences | I do not know |
|---|------------|------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| Economic development of all members of the EU | 43.0 | 8.4 | 27.0 | 22.6 |
| Economic development of cross-border regions | 45.0 | 8.1 | 25.0 | 22.4 |
| Labour market-unemployment | 48.0 | 16.5 | 21.0 | 14.6 |
| Development of tourism | 65.0 | 3.5 | 22.0 | 8.8 |
| Feeling of self-confidence and knowledge of country | 41.0 | 6.9 | 37.0 | 14.8 |
| Security, crime rate (delinquency) | 12.0 | 48.0 | 25.0 | 15.1 |
| Development of road traffic | 38.0 | 18.5 | 29.0 | 14.0 |
| Quality of life | 40.0 | 9.8 | 29.0 | 20.4 |

From the above (see table No. 4) we can infer that it is necessary to intensify all existing forms of youth cooperation in the regions of Bratislava and western Slovakia (Záhorie, Malé Karpaty). Apart from the traditional forms of development in the near-border regions, it would be strategically useful to look for new possibilities of cooperation also for Prešov and Žilina cities where the cooperation (economic or cultural) is not less developed.

Conclusion

Young people living in the eight main regional centres of Slovakia have shown their positive attitudes and opinions towards the opening of Slovakia to the European integration process in which they see good prospects for economic development not only for Slovakia itself, but also of all EU member countries. They perceive the process of opening Slovak boundaries to Europe to be internally contradictory: on the one hand it promises solutions to the difficult problem of unemployment, but on the other hand, it presents a certain danger to the security of inhabitants.

Among our neighbours, Austria is a partner who has become a relatively well-known partner by our young citizens during the last 10 years. They frequently

visit Austria, especially its capital Vienna and the towns in Lower Austria. There are many forms of civil cooperation, predominantly with the above-mentioned cities and regions.

Youth projects of cooperation have an honest place here thanks to the Regional Youth Departments of Lower Austria and Municipality of Vienna City. Young citizens of Slovakia have positive experience with these contacts and the quality of the contacts has been reflected in higher expectations regarding Austria's attitude of support towards Slovakia's effort to become a member of the EU.

Even today - step-by-step - we are reinforcing the positive attitude of young people in Slovakia towards the European integration by developing cooperation between the young people in both countries.

There are pragmatic reasons for not neglecting this area: in a few years' time, these now 15- to 18-year-old people will be a decisive group in the ratification plebiscite concerning Slovakia's entry into the EU. The reform of the civil service will probably be helpful in this process, too. Increased decision-making powers of local authorities, or possibly of new regional units, should at last stabilise the partnership relations between youth departments of the Austrian Regional Governments and their counterparts in Slovakia.

There have been many generous offers for cooperation, especially from the Regional Youth Departments of Vienna, Lower Austria, Burgenland, and Salzburg, but unfortunately there have been no reliable or competent partners for this cooperation on the Slovak side. Now the local governments possess authorization for youth work in leisure time, we have a chance to improve and extend cooperation in Trnava, Trenčín, Nitra, Prešov and Žilina.

In this way we can readily see the close relation between national youth policy and other strategic programmes for modernisation and prosperity of Slovakia. Youth mobility programmes are predominantly associated with processes of European integration. These processes are nothing other than a reaction of the continental European community to the challenge of globalisation.

Young People in Bratislava and Prague: National and supra-National Identities⁷

Introduction

Though the split of the Czechoslovak federation occurred without giving the people a chance to express their opinion about the planned act (in the end this decision was taken by two political leaders), the mutual emancipation of these new nations could be a positive outcome of a long struggle between Slovaks and Czechs for their national sovereignty and a dignified position among European nations. One can even say that the relationships between the two nations have gradually improved since the dissociation. This point of view seems to be common in the both publics now.

Project Methodology and Sample: Bratislava - Prague

As Jamieson notes, "Since the 1970s, the idea of European citizenship and a 'People's Europe' has been promoted by politicians, intellectuals and bureaucrats of the European Community (2002, p. 508). She emphasizes that it can be "useful to distinguish the possibility of a European identity as a type of supra-national identity from a sense of European citizenship, a citizenship identity rather than a national identity... Unpacking the distinction between 'national-identity' and 'citizenship-identity', however, requires a review of debates about nationalism and citizenship on the one hand⁸ and deeper scrutiny of the concept of 'identity' on the other" (Jamieson, L., 2002, p. 509).

The research project 'Orientations of Young Men and Young Women to Citizenship and European Identity' provides a new insight into the orientations of young people toward 'being European' and to European citizenship, including

⁷ Research reported here emerges from the project "Youth and European Identity" which is funded by the European Commission as part of its 5th Framework Programme. The work on this project is coordinated by Lynn Jamieson from the University of Edinburgh. The other partners, researchers and consultants in this project are Claire Wallace and Reingard Spannring (Institute for Advanced Studies, Vienna), Klaus Boehnke and Daniel Fuss (International University Bremen), Bernhard Nauck (Technical University Chemnitz), Ladislav Macháček, Gabriel Bianchi, Barbara Láštiová and Pavla Macháčková (Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava), Maria Ros and Miryam Rodriguez Monter (Universidad Complutense de Madrid), Hector Grad and Gema Garcia Albacete (Universidad Autonoma de Madrid), Susan Condor (University Lancaster), Sue Grundy and David McCrone (University of Edinburgh). The author is indebted to Barbara Láštiová for her cooperation (Macháček, Ladislav – Láštiová, Barbara: "Orientations of Young People from Bratislava and Prague to Citizenship and European Identity" *Sociológia* 2003, No. 3, pp. 247-266).

⁸ The issue of European, National and Ethnic Identity has traditions in sociological literature in former Czechoslovakia (Laiferová, E., 2000, Turčan, L., 2000).

better insight into the possible sources of differences between and within nations and regions: In the case of this article, those between Bratislava and Prague in the Slovak and Czech Republic.

There were two groups in both countries, comprising young people aged 18-24: a random sample drawn from all social backgrounds, and a highly educated group with pro-European career orientations, e.g. European Law or studying multiple European languages. This sampling allows us to compare 'ordinary' young people with those who have particular reasons for feeling pro-European. In both cases, we recruited equal number of young men and young women and only those who have grown up in the region and the country. Our random samples consist of young people aged 18 - 24 years old: Prague n = 396 and Bratislava, n = 397. Our target group is made up of young people from Prague (n=89) and Bratislava (n=98), aged 18-24 years old.⁹

The Prague and Bratislava random samples are similar in almost all important socio-demographic indicators (see tables). This is especially true for the proportion of men and women in the samples from both cities. In the case of the age structure, the proportion of young people aged 18-21 in the Prague random sample (43.8%) is slightly higher than in the Bratislava random sample (39.3%). It is also higher than the proportion of the 18-21 age group in the Prague group. When looking at the educational qualifications among participants, in the Prague random sample there are more people with the general high school qualification (31.8%) than in the Bratislava random sample (22.7%). The proportion of young people from the Bratislava random sample with a vocational qualification is slightly greater than in Prague, especially those with the lower vocational qualification (23.4% in Bratislava vs. 15.7% in Prague). In the Bratislava random sample there is a higher proportion of young people with at least one parent in a managerial or senior official position (18.3%) than in Prague (10.0%).

Both random and target samples from both cities have a very high proportion of young people born in that city or elsewhere in the respective countries. There is also a very high proportion of single people with no children. A large proportion of the participants' parents were born in the cities where the participants live now. The overwhelming majority of parents, both of the random and target samples, were born in the respective country.

⁹ The selection of the participants in the target group was based on the assumption that their educational qualification or their current profession make them more likely to pursue a European career. The Bratislava target group is a bit younger than the Prague target group. The majority of young people from both target groups are still studying (65.2% in Prague and 68.5% in Bratislava). In comparison to the random samples from both cities, significantly more main earners in the families of the target group respondents work in professional occupations.

Both samples contain only a small proportion of ethnic minorities or people with a non-Czech/Slovak background. In the Prague and Bratislava random samples, 91.3% and 93.0% of participants respectively report not having a parent of a different ethnicity/nationality.¹⁰ In the Prague and Bratislava target groups it is 94.3% and 82.0%, respectively. The most represented "different" nationality in both the Prague random and target samples is Slovak (about 2%) and in both the Bratislava random and target samples group, it is Czech and Hungarian (about 2% each). Traditionally, Bratislava has a relatively high proportion of inhabitants of Hungarian nationality. Those parents with Czech nationality in the Bratislava samples and those parents with Slovak nationality in the Prague samples are probably people who came to Prague/Bratislava to work during the existence of Czechoslovakia or those who later married a local national.

A structured questionnaire was used to explore the meaning of 'being European' and respondents' ideals and active citizenship involvement. The questionnaire explores understandings and experience involved in constructions of self in relation to others, social obligation to others, and sense of social inclusion and exclusion. This could indicate whether respondents incline to racism or tolerance, civic or ethnic citizenship. The questionnaire includes keys to analysis of how personal, familial and locally based understandings and experiences are connected to orientations of being 'European' and European citizenship.

Table 1: Socio-demographic structure of Prague and Bratislava samples (in%)

| | Prague | | Bratislava | |
|-----------------------------|--------|--------|------------|--------|
| | Random | Target | Random | Target |
| Men | 47.5 | 40.4 | 49.6 | 49.0 |
| Women | 52.5 | 59.6 | 50.4 | 51.0 |
| Aged 18-21 | 57.1 | 38.2 | 53.4 | 46.9 |
| Aged 22-24 | 42.9 | 61.8 | 46.6 | 53.1 |
| Born in the city | 81.6 | 78.2 | 79.6 | 80.6 |
| Born in the country (CR/SR) | 99.0 | 97.8 | 97.7 | 100.0 |

¹⁰ In Slovakia, the term "nationality" is commonly used as a synonym of ethnicity, but we make a distinction between nationality and citizenship. It means that a person who has, for example, Hungarian nationality can be a citizen of the Slovak Republic.

Table 2: **Highest educational qualification of participants (in%)**

| | Prague | | Bratislava | |
|--|--------|--------|------------|--------|
| | Random | Target | Random | Target |
| Basic education | 46.0 | 65.2 | 54.2 | 68.5 |
| General high school | 31.8 | 52.8 | 22.7 | 65.3 |
| Lower vocational/basic initial apprenticeship qualification | 15.7 | 0.0 | 23.4 | 2.0 |
| Higher vocational/basic initial apprenticeship qualification ¹¹ | 29.5 | 23.6 | 33.2 | 17.3 |
| First University degree (BA) | 9.1 | 14.6 | 6.3 | 5.1 |
| Higher postgraduate/university degree (PhD, MA) | 4.5 | 5.6 | 6.0 | 1.0 |

The Czech, Slovak and “Czechoslovak” Identity

Our data enables us to compare the strength of attachment to territory, country and Europe (Table 3). As already mentioned, a high proportion of participants (overall about 80%) contacted in Prague and Bratislava were also born there.

In both random samples, the participants feel slightly more attached to their native country than to their hometown. Different result came up in the target groups, yet still more pronounced in Bratislava than in Prague.

The Slovak and Czech Republic were, until 1993, parts of a common state (Machonin, P., 2002) we also wanted to know whether the participants felt any attachment to the territory of “the other republic” (the Slovak Republic for Czech and the Czech Republic for Slovak participants). This attachment is relatively low across all the groups. It might be due to the fact that we asked, in this particular case, about the attachment to the territory of the actual Czech/Slovak Republic. In fact we do not know how people understand the concept of attachment. For instance, attachment to his/her hometown might be associated with an emotional attachment to a family or friends who live there, not with the territory itself. If we had asked, for example, about “Czech/Slovak culture”, the attachment would have been likely higher, especially in the case of young people from Bratislava, who are still very much in contact with Czech literature, music and cinematography. Overall, the attachment to Europe is higher than the attachment to “the other republic”. There is no statistically significant difference between the attachment to Europe expressed by the target groups and random samples of both countries.

¹¹ In the Slovak and Czech Republics both ‘General high school’ (leading to a general A-level) and ‘Higher vocational/basic initial apprenticeship qualification’ (leading to a professional A-level) are university entry qualifications.

Table 3: **Percentage of people with ‘strong’ or ‘complete’ attachment to city, nation (the Czech Republic or the Slovak Republic), the other nation within former Czechoslovakia (the Czech Republic for Slovaks and the Slovak Republic for Czechs), and to Europe**

| | Prague | | Bratislava | |
|------------------------|--------|--------|------------|--------|
| | Random | Target | Random | Target |
| To your hometown | 70.3 | 75.0 | 67.5 | 75.3 |
| To your native country | 77.5 | 70.4 | 71.8 | 66.2 |
| To the Czech Republic | - | - | 14.8 | 20.0 |
| To Slovakia | 15.4 | 17.3 | - | - |
| To Europe | 41.6 | 50.6 | 43.5 | 47.7 |

We also asked the participants to what extent ‘being from Prague/Bratislava’ and ‘being from the Czech Republic/Slovak Republic’ was important for them as a source of their overall identity. As table 4 illustrates, these items are considered important by a relatively high proportion of participants, but are not considered the most important aspect of self. Participants got a list of items and answered the question: ‘How would you rate the importance of the following in terms of who you are, that is, how you feel or think about yourself as a person?’

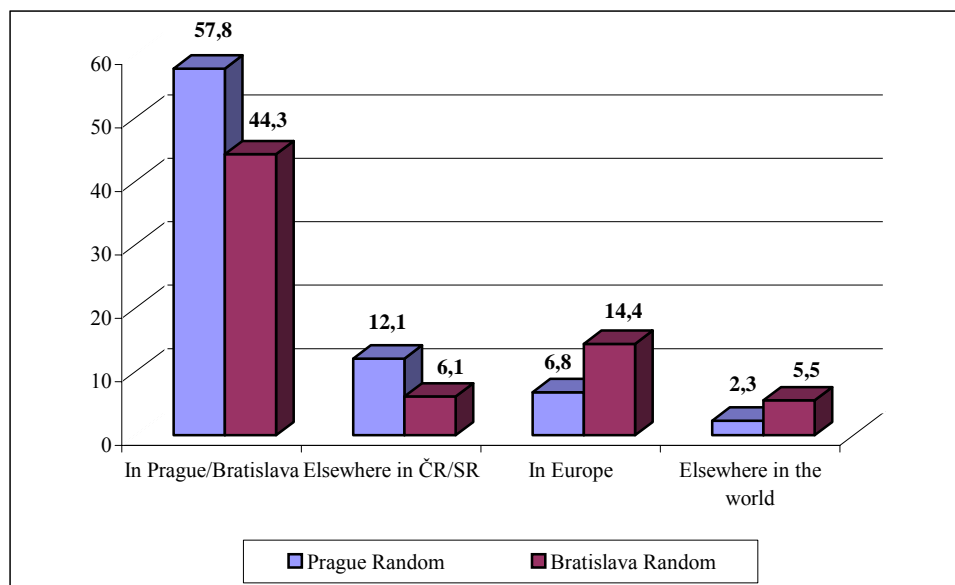
The table shows the percentage of interviewees in Prague and Bratislava rating items on the highest two points on a five-point scale of importance. Friends, family, partner, professional career and education are clearly rated as the most important sources of their identity (Macháček, L. – Lášticová, B., 2003). More young women than young men in Prague samples consider family relationships important for their overall identity .

Table 4: **Percentage of interviewees rating items as “important” or “very important” for their overall identity,**

| | Prague | | Bratislava | |
|------------------------------|--------|--------|------------|--------|
| | Random | Target | Random | Target |
| Place of birth | 46.2 | 48.3 | 47.7 | 47.9 |
| Being from Prague/Bratislava | 67.5 | 71.9 | 65.0 | 58.8 |
| Being from CR/SR | 68.1 | 68.2 | 60.0 | 48.4 |
| Being a future EU citizen | 44.0 | 68.5 | 59.5 | 69.5 |

The above-mentioned sources are more important than 'being from' the Czech Republic/Slovakia and 'the place of birth'. Bratislava target group participants rate 'being from the country' as less important than other items. Being from Slovakia is more important for young people from the Bratislava random sample than for the young people from the target group.

Graph 1: **Where do you plan to live when you are 30?**



We can observe the same pattern for the Bratislava random sample and target groups, but the differences are not statistically significant. The high preference for their own cities in the random sample could be partially explained by the fact, that Prague and Bratislava are the capitals offering relatively many opportunities for work, education and entertainment. In Slovakia, in particular, the cultural and educational life is still very much concentrated in Bratislava.

The proportion of those who plan to stay in their own city is higher in the Prague random sample, Prague being probably considered 'an attractive place to live in'. In contrast to Bratislava, Prague is a metropolis of European or even world caliber. For the young citizens of Bratislava, it may be one of the primary destinations on their way to (14.4%) (Graph 1).

The Czechoslovak: from national feeling to feeling of reciprocity

In our study we asked about the 'strength of attachment to' particular geographical entities, and about the 'strength of feeling' about particular nationalities. These questions show a similar pattern of variation in terms of people's feelings about their country and their nationality.

Despite the existence of two separate countries, our participants were asked to express the strength of their feeling about being "Czechoslovak" (Graph 2). It should be noted that recognition of Czechoslovakia by the victorious great powers as an independent state in 1918 was associated with the concept of a "unified Czechoslovak nation". Political negotiators after the fall of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire fought against its dominant non-Slav Austrian and Hungarian government and the argument of cultural and language closeness (identity) was not only tactical but also truthful. Nevertheless, there are different and meanings for the Czechs and Slovaks. "The first Czechoslovak Republic represented for majority of the Czechs the success of the national emancipation movement. ... The integration of "the Slovak national segment" was an extension of the Czech historical statehood towards the east rather than its new definition" (Pauer, J., 2003, p. 23).

The strong assimilation pressure after the Austrian-Hungarian compromise (1867) and the situation at the end of the World War I manifested the fact that the concept of unified state-forming Czechoslovak nation¹² gained a decisive political support. For the Slovaks, it was primarily protection against Hungarian assimilation. Nevertheless it was also a chance for national emancipation and the first major experience of a functioning parliamentary democracy. Democratic experience was especially important because it was rather a unique case than the norm of the day in the region of Central Europe. At the same time the countries bordering Czechoslovakia struggled with fascist and authoritarian rule (Germany, Poland, Hungary and Soviet Russia). However, the Slovak national emancipation was not going to be further developed under the conditions of parliamentary democracy. This was signalled by World War II events (the establishment of the war-time Slovak Republic¹³ in 1939) and by the course of the democratisation process in Czechoslovakia (federalisation in 1968).

Czechoslovakism has been for the Czechs a significant component of the national identity even after 1990: they have kept the state flag, and still

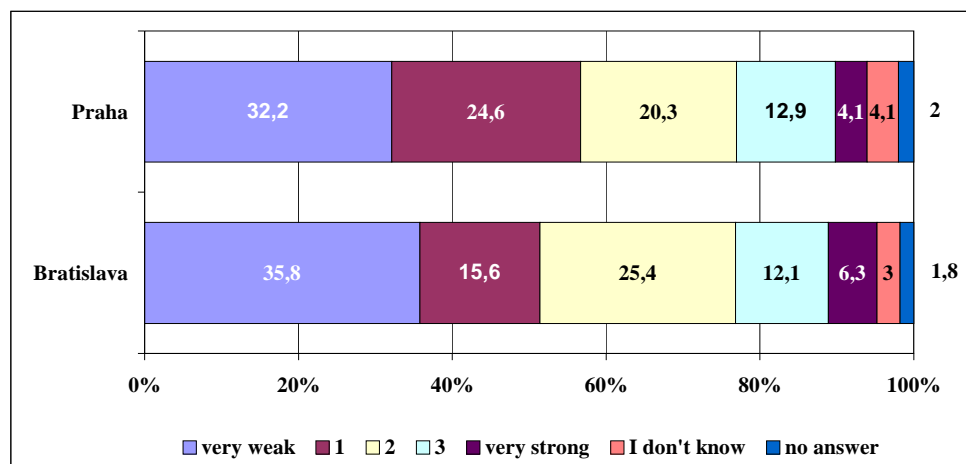
¹² The concept of unified state-forming Czechoslovak nation proliferated through the common political and educational usage of the naturalising metaphors such as the "the (Czechoslovak) trunk with two branches (Czech and Slovak)".

¹³ War-time Slovak Republic (1939-1945) was Nazi-controlled, "puppet" authoritarian regime.

commemorate the day when Czechoslovakia was established as a national holiday.

Even after 1993, the concept of “Czechoslovak reciprocity” still has its followers among the Slovak cultural elite and the public. It does not contain only the traditional historical and cultural (language), but also many social-structural (mixed marriages of Slovaks and Czechs and their children in Bratislava and Prague) and economic-political (a pillar in the processes of European integration and the advantageous interconnection with the economic market) sources and causes.

Graph 2: Intensity of feeling like a Czechoslovak



As shown in the scale above (Graph 2) as many as two-thirds of the young generation we interviewed perceive the reciprocity and solidarity of the Czechs and Slovaks to some degree. This is demonstrated in various positive phenomena of cooperation between independent republics and in European institutions.

If we compare the strength of feeling about the “Czechoslovak” nationality with the strength of attachment to the partner republics within former Czechoslovakia, we can see that the patterns of responses to these questions are similar among young people from both cities in all groups.

The feeling of his/her nationality is equally strong in all the groups of participants and seems to be stronger than the attachment to their countries. In spite of the fact that our participants have lived for 10 years (for some of them half of their lives) in the independent Czech Republic and Slovak Republic, there is

still almost one fifth of persons in both random samples and in the Prague target group and almost a quarter in the Bratislava target group, who feel strongly about the “Czechoslovak” nationality. (Table 5)

Table 5: Percentage with ‘strong’ or ‘very strong’ feelings about national identities (in%)

| | Prague | | Bratislava | |
|--------------|--------|--------|------------|--------|
| | Random | Target | Random | Target |
| Slovak | - | - | 87.2 | 88.7 |
| Czech | 87.5 | 87.5 | - | - |
| Czechoslovak | 18.1 | 17.5 | 19.3 | 24.0 |

Table 6: Feeling strong or complete attachment to (in%)

| Study area | Czech Republic | Slovak Republic | Spain | | Britain | |
|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|
| | Prague | Bratislava | Bilbao | Madrid | Edinburgh | Manchester |
| University town | 77 | 77 | 82 | 98 | 79 | 68 |
| Region or sub-nation | Not asked | Not asked | 77 Euskadi | 75 Madrid | 87 Scotland | 81 England |
| Nation/federal nation | 78 | 72 | 41 | 80 | 46 | 72 |
| Europe | 42 | 44 | 39 | 54 | 32 | 39 |

Question: ‘People may feel different degrees of attachment to their city, town or village, to their region, to their country or to Europe. Thinking about your own attachments, and using the scale (0=not at all attached – 4=completely attached), please rate how you feel about...’; a. r.= autonomous region

In contemporary multinational federal states, Great Britain and Spain, being “British” and “Spanish” is different from feeling “Czechoslovak” when two separate countries exist instead of common state. It may be presumed that if Czechoslovakia still existed today, the perception of “Czechoslovak” identity, in case of the Slovaks would be analogous to the Scots’ perception of “British” or the Basques’ recognition of “Spanish” (Table 6).

Identification with Europe or the European Union

Measuring the attachment to Europe and attitudes of young people toward European citizenship and EU is a method of investigating 'European identity'. However, each of these indicators measures different aspect of it. Thus European identity cannot be reduced to only one of these indicators.

That is why, in the qualitative part of our research, it will be necessary to explore the meanings of the terms 'being European', 'being a European citizen', etc.

We asked our respondents about how it feels being 'European'. As we can see, the proportion of the respondents with very strong or strong feelings about being European (Table 7) is overall lower than the proportion of the respondents with very strong or strong feelings about being Czech/Slovak. However, this feeling was expressed by at least 59.7% of participants in both studied groups in both cities.

Table 7: **Strong or Complete Feelings About 'Being European' versus Other Nationalism** (in%)

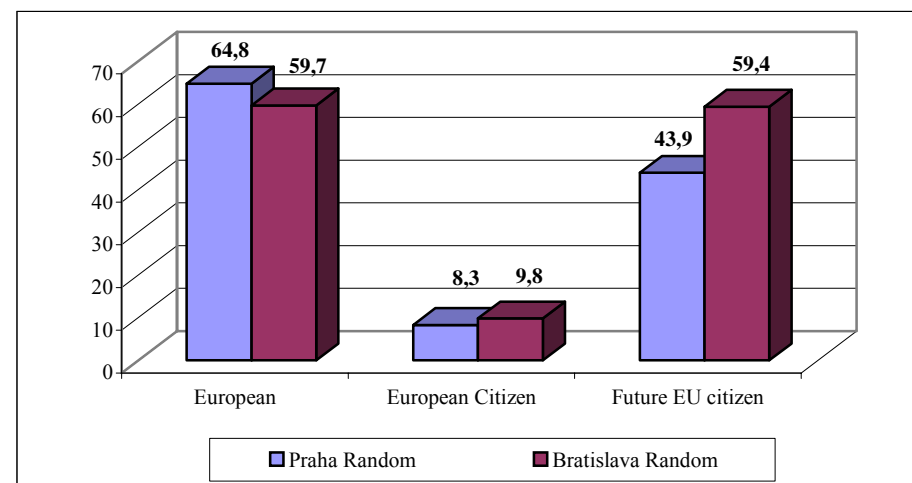
| | Czech Republic | Slovak Republic | Spain | | Britain | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Study area | Prague | Bratislava | Bilbao | Madrid | Edinburgh | Manchester |
| Region/sub-nation | Not asked | Not asked | 68 Basque | 67 Madrilenian | 85 Scottish | 80 English |
| Federal nationality | 88 | 87 | 31 Spanish | 68 Spanish | 43 British | 77 British |
| European | 65 | 59 | 28 | 38 | 23 | 30 |

Question 'Now I would like to ask you about the strength of how you feel about holding different nationalities On a scale of 0-4 (0=no feeling at all, 4=very strong feeling) how do you feel about being... (for instance) English/Scottish, British, European?'

This proportion is also much higher than the proportion of the participants who feel themselves to be Czechoslovak (Table 5).

In both Bratislava and Prague, more young people from target groups than from random samples reported very strong or strong feelings about being European .

Graph 3: **Percentage of those with very strong or strong feelings (3-4) about being**



Participants were asked, 'how frequently they think of themselves as a European citizen and as a global citizen'. Only 8.3% of participants in the Prague random sample and 9.8% in the Bratislava random sample chose the answer 'often' and 'always'¹⁴. However, in both the Prague and Bratislava target groups, a significantly higher proportion of the participants chose the latter answer.

Also slightly more young people in the Prague than in the Bratislava target group chose the answer 'often and always', but this difference is not statistically significant. It seems that 'being European' and 'being European citizen' means different thing for our participants.

Overall, but especially in the random samples from both cities, the proportion of young people who feel a 'strong' or a 'complete' attachment to Europe (Table 4) is higher than the proportion of those who 'often' or 'always' think of themselves as European citizens.

Finally, we asked our participants to rate on a scale from 0 to 4, how important 'being a future citizen of the European Union' is in terms of how they feel or think about themselves as a person. 43% (Graph 3) of young people in the Prague and

¹⁴ We don't know what is the perception of the label 'European citizen' in the EU member states. In Slovakia and in the Czech Republic, it is not often used. On the other hand, the term 'global citizen' has a slightly negative connotation in Slovak language (cosmopolitist). It denotes a person 'without the homeland' who can be at home anywhere in the world. This term was often used in this negative sense by Slovak nationalist politicians to denote the people whose Slovak 'national feeling/national identity' was not 'strong enough' (no patriot).

59% in the Bratislava random samples rated European citizenship as of 'high' or 'very high' importance. In Prague, a significantly higher proportion of young people from the target group rated it like that, than from the random sample. The difference between the Bratislava samples is not significant, but considerably more target group participants seem to consider being future citizens of the EU as important.

Only in Bratislava the majority of interviewees equally rated citizenship in the European Union and national identity as important for 'how I feel or think about myself' (60% & 60%). There is a surprisingly large difference (Jamieson, L., et al, 2003) in the proportion placing importance on European citizenship between Bratislava and Prague (60% & 44%). A finding could be predicted from other answers, mainly from "understanding of Europe" and "what Europe means".

The meaning of Europe

The 'geographical' representation of Europe

We wanted to know what Europe means for young people. First we explored geographical representations of Europe. We made it clear that there was no 'right' list of countries in Europe and that Europe meant different things to different people.

Participants were offered a list of seven countries, including the EU accession states (the Czech and Slovak Republic, Estonia, Turkey), countries that are not EU members (Iceland, Russia) and one member state (Britain/UK). The countries were chosen to represent the geographical 'edges' of Europe, the North Atlantic and Iceland in the north, the UK and the continental 'edges' by Russia, Estonia and Turkey. The countries were listed in a random order. The participants were asked to consider each country being a part of Europe or not.

The overwhelming majority of participants in both studied cities and both in the random samples and target groups see the Czech and Slovak Republic as part of Europe. This could be explained by countries' common history and cultural traditions, close languages, geographical location and mutual interaction in various fields, for example, on the governmental level in the integration processes into EU and NATO.

On the other hand, Turkey has the lowest ranking from all the countries listed. Turkey obtained the highest rating in the Bratislava random sample, when only half of participants see it as a part of Europe. This low ranking can be explained by the country's geographical distance from Slovakia and the Czech Republic, but mainly by the cultural differences and differences in religion, Turkey being a Muslim country.

Table 8: Percentages of participants who think of the selected country as part of Europe

| Country | Prague | | Bratislava | |
|----------------|--------|--------|------------|--------|
| | Random | Target | Random | Target |
| UK | 90.4 | 95.5 | 81.1 | 90.8 |
| Turkey | 27.5 | 31.5 | 50.4 | 31.6 |
| Czech Republic | 90.7 | 92.1 | 96.7 | 100.0 |
| Estonia | 60.9 | 75.3 | 49.4 | 64.3 |
| Iceland | 55.1 | 73.0 | 52.6 | 67.3 |
| Slovakia | 93.4 | 96.6 | 96.0 | 98.0 |
| Russia | 49.0 | 40.4 | 55.9 | 56.1 |

In both cities examined, Estonia and Iceland are considered European countries by a significantly higher proportion of respondents from the target groups than from the random samples. Estonia obtained the lowest ranking in the Bratislava random sample. In fact, the differences can be explained by the fact that the Baltic States are relatively unknown amongst the general population, which leads to perceptions of them as homogenous states and being still part of the former Soviet Empire.

The target group participants seem to be more acquainted with Estonia's economic and political achievements, which have played a large part in Estonia's accession to the EU.

Russia was excluded from Europe by a substantial part of both the Prague random sample and the target group participants. However, more than half of the participants both in the Bratislava random sample and the target group consider it the part of Europe, more than Turkey, for example. The perception of Russia in the Slovak and Czech Republic has been considerably influenced by the experience of 40 years of the communist regime, Russia being the most powerful heir of the former USSR.

One of the possible reasons of the difference in perception between Prague and Bratislava respondents could be, for example, the crushing of the Prague Spring in August 1968 and the harsher regime in the Czech lands than in Slovakia during "normalization". Another factor could be the relative geographical proximity of Slovakia and Russia. A potential factor behind young Prague inhabitants' exclusion of Russia from the concept of Europe could be the inflow of "new rich" Russians into the Czech Republic and the "invasion" of Chechnya refugees.

All different perceptions of European countries need to be further explored and explained through qualitative interviews.

'What Europe means for you'

In addition to the question of which countries are part of Europe, interviewees were asked how important the following issues in relation to 'what Europe means' to them: 'membership of the European Union', 'Euro currency', 'geographical location', 'certain values and traditions'. Interviewees were asked to rank each from 0-4, from 'not at all important' to 'very important'.

Table 9: Percentage of participants ranking the following as "very important" in what Europe means to them. In brackets is the sum of percentages of those who answered "important" or "very important" (3-4)

| | Prague | | Bratislava | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | Random | Target | Random | Target |
| Membership in the EU | 28.1 (57.0) | 41.4 (66.7) | 47.6 (68.7) | 47.4 (78.3) |
| Euro currency | 15.4 (40.7) | 25.3 (44.8) | 29.8 (62.3) | 33.3 (62.6) |
| Geographical location | 27.2 (61.3) | 37.9 (64.3) | 37.6 (64.2) | 37.9 (70.5) |
| Certain values and traditions | 39.0 (72.7) | 40.9 (85.2) | 43.7 (67.7) | 45.7 (72.3) |

None of the items was placed close to 'very important' ('4' on the scale) by the majority. This may indicate that the judgment of the meaning of Europe is a complex process, combining many different criteria and the ratings are thus not clear-cut. It might also indicate a lack of knowledge or lack of interest in the issues.

Membership in the EU, euro, and the geographical location of the country are considered as 'very important' by more young people in the Prague target group than the Prague random sample. In Bratislava, there is no significant difference between the responses of the random sample and the target group in any four categories.

The Euro seems to be the least important in both Prague samples. This tendency is even stronger when we look at the sum of the percentages of those answering 'very important' and 'important' (3 and 4). Then, in the case of both Prague samples, the euro currency is the only item that is not considered as 'important' for the meaning of Europe by the majority of respondents. On the other hand, the majority of participants in both the Bratislava random sample and target group see it as important. Young people from Bratislava, probably more

than their Prague peers, link EU integration to the economic development and the economic prosperity of the country, which is symbolised by euro.

The results (Table 9) clearly show that for the Slovaks, Europe means much more than for the Czechs all that formally characterize the European Union politically (membership) and economically (common currency - euro). It also means that the Slovaks, being a relatively young nation, grasp very well that they will be definitely labelled and also recognized as the Europeans only as EU members. The Czechs with their rich historical and cultural tradition and autonomous statehood were never faced with such a problem in modern history.

Table 10: Percentage of interviewees including Czech and Slovak Republic in their 'Europe'

| Respondents from listed countries | Bregenz | Vienna | Prague | Bratislava | Chemnitz | Bielefeld | Bilbao | Madrid | Manchester | Edinburgh |
|-----------------------------------|---------|--------|--------|------------|----------|-----------|--------|--------|------------|-----------|
| Czech Republic | 73 | 81 | 95 | 98 | 90 | 70 | 66 | 64 | 44 | 58 |
| Slovak Republic | 73 | 81 | 97 | 97 | 81 | 56 | 61 | 61 | 37 | 49 |

The answer options were yes (shown above), no and don't know. 'Don't knows' are included in the valid percentages.

Certain doubts on attachment of the Slovaks to Europe are roused among citizens of big cities (Table 10), with exception of Austria and Czech. Analysis comparing all of the data suggests that those respondents "living in Manchester had a particularly narrow and distinctive view of 'Europe'. The majority of Manchester interviewees included Turkey (54%) in 'their' Europe but only a minority included the Czech (44%) and Slovak Republics (37%). Only a minority of respondents in Edinburgh included the Slovak Republic (49%) in 'their' Europe" (Jamieson, L., et al, 2003, p. 21).

The meaning of Europe for interviewees is an area that we hope to explore more thoroughly through in-depth interviews.

Attitudes towards European integration

One of our aims has also been to explore the attitudes toward European integration among young people in Prague and Bratislava. The participants were asked to rate on a scale (0 no impact – 4 a big impact) the impact of the future

integration of their country into the EU. They were considering, respectively, the impact on themselves, their region (Prague/Bratislava) and their country (Czech/Slovak Republic).

Table 11: **Percentage of participants thinking that the integration of CR/SR will have 'an impact' or 'a big impact' (answering 3 or 4 on the scale)**

| Impact of integration on | Prague | | Bratislava | |
|--------------------------|--------|--------|------------|--------|
| | Random | Target | Random | Target |
| You personally | 58.3 | 78.6 | 53.7 | 68.3 |
| Prague/Bratislava | 72.5 | 84.3 | 68.0 | 82.7 |
| Czech/Slovak Republic | 83.3 | 94.4 | 78.6 | 90.8 |

The majority of young people from both cities and both samples consider that European integration will have an impact on themselves, their region/city and the country.

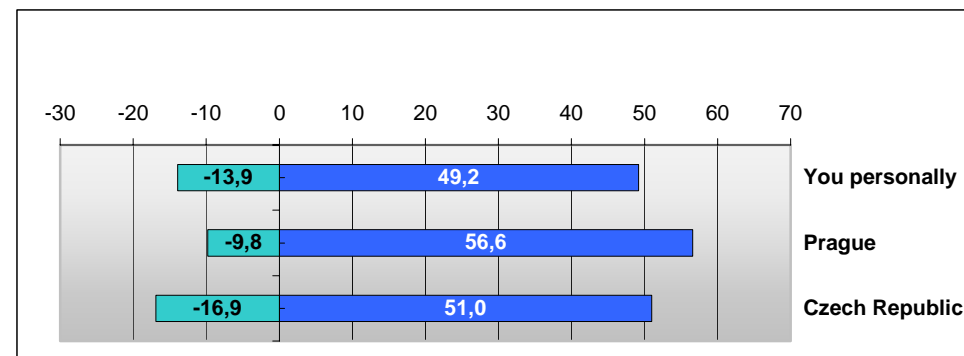
As (Table 11) illustrates, the percentage of respondents who think there will be an impact, is highest for the anticipated impact on the country and decreases for the city and again for the anticipated impact on the participant. One possible interpretation of this pattern of answers is that our interviewees do not really understand what EU membership can bring to them as individuals, but they can better imagine its consequences on macro social - economic and political - level. Nowadays, the economic and political consequences are emphasised in media most of all. However, many young people probably do not understand what exactly the costs and the benefits of EU integration are and subsequently see it as relatively distant to their own lives¹⁵.

Moreover, the young people in Bratislava and Prague expect that the impact of EU integration will be mainly positive. The Prague target group participants expect it to be almost equally positive for themselves, their region and the country. In both cities, the number of young people expecting EU integration to have a positive impact is significantly higher in the target groups than in random samples. This holds on all the three levels of anticipated impact. There are no gender differences Moreover, expecting a negative impact of EU integration is very low in Bratislava and Prague. It seems that in both countries the political parties and movements with a Euro-sceptic political agenda do not receive support from the young people. Euro-optimistic expectations clearly dominate, especially

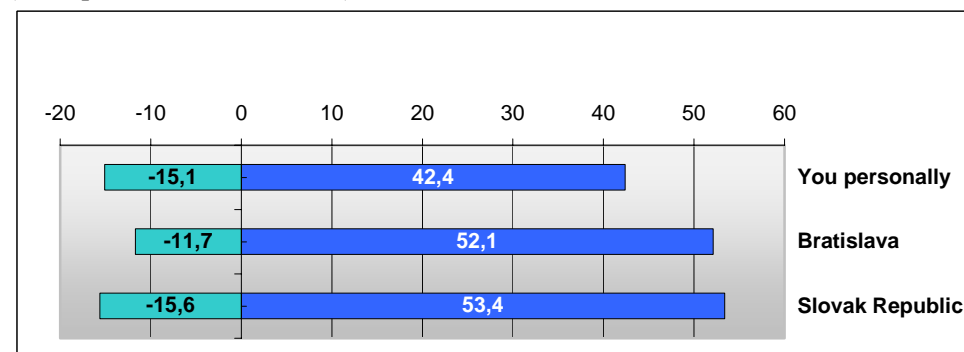
¹⁵ It may be documented by comparison of data collected in Austria (Vienna), where the young people give the highest evaluation to the positive impact in EU membership on their individual person (65%) and slightly less to the city and country.

those related to personal prosperity, development of regional towns as well as the future of both countries in the united Europe.

Graph 4: **Will this impact be mainly positive or mainly negative?** (% respondents in Prague)



Graph 5: **Will this impact be mainly positive or mainly negative?** (% respondents in Bratislava)



Conclusion

The split of Czechoslovakia is a challenge for politicians and sociologists even after a decade. An answer is sought to the question of whether the actions of the political elite were justified in the light of the commencement of European integration and the complicated split of the big federations (Yugoslavia and Soviet Union) with the consequences for peace and European stability. An answer is sought to the question of whether the Slovak or Czech public would support or refuse their decision if they had been given a referendum on the matter.

In 1993, public opinion on the split of the Czechoslovakia was rather confused. It should be noted that there was no clear feeling amongst the Czech public: 40% were positive, 40% negative, and the rest undecided. The attitude of the Slovak public was less confused: almost a half (47.8%) evaluated the split negatively, 26% were undecided and only 28.9% evaluated the split positively. The political elite knew that the referendum would certainly mean a rejection of the split with Czechoslovakia and for that reason there was no referendum. The 2001 research (Tuček, M. 2003) showed, some facts of the split of Czechoslovakia in the new light:

In opinions on the common state

1. The coexistence in the common state was not advantageous for the Slovaks in the opinion of both the Slovaks (57.1%) and the Czechs (55.8%).
2. The coexistence in the common state was advantageous for the Czechs in the opinion of both the Slovaks (75%) and the Czechs (61.9%).

In opinions on the prosperousness of independent republics

1. The independent development of the Czech Republic after the split was prosperous not only in the opinion of the Czechs (67.9%) but especially of the Slovaks (80.5%).
2. The independent development of the Slovak Republic after the split was prosperous neither in the opinion of the Czechs (74.9%) nor, particularly, the Slovaks (82.7%).

The public in both of the independent republics evaluate the Czech Republic's areas of societal life - democratism, possibility of self-realisation, social certainties, social justice, societal moral, freedom of an individual, lawfulness, and standard of life – as better, while the Slovaks give it still higher evaluation than the Czechs.

The critical attitude of the Slovaks to their own situation after the split of the common state (especially to the lower standard of living) does not consequently mean a negative evaluation of the new political order created in 1989. A surprising finding for the Czech and Slovak publics is that "...unfulfilled expectations in Slovakia bring along almost excessive criticism of the present Slovak situation, but the criticism does not lead to any envy or anti-Czech phobia" (Tuček, M., 2003, p. 19). This is hardly surprising for those sociologists who did some research on Czech and Slovak relations. (Roško, R., 2000; Machonin, P., 2002). Historically, the hatred was never the fundamental part of Czech and Slovak relations. On the contrary, these relations were dominated by feeling of common belonging, solidarity, subtle irony and competitiveness.

One can assume that the Czechs do not say any more what they did during the period of the split: That serves them right, they have what they wanted. Today, there are mostly the Slovaks who say that, in a slightly changed form: That serves us right, we have what we did not want, but still we did let that happen. The nationally oriented political forces that initiated the process of the split of Czechoslovakia had the possibility to control (1994-1998) the social transformation processes. In the period 1998-2002 they had to retreat to the opposition particularly because they threatened the beliefs held by the younger generation that Slovak membership of the European Union would lead to personal prosperity.

The low standard of living in the Slovak segment of the former common state is objectively connected with underdeveloped infrastructure (uncompleted highways, express railways, regional airports) with the consequences of conversion of heavy industry (unemployment), etc.¹⁶

Under the conditions of the independent Slovak Republic, a natural battle for civic modernisation of the Slovak society has been immediately launched. It is connected with the founding of new civic political parties with more liberal orientation¹⁷, with the origin of right-left democratic coalition (1998-2002) and right-oriented coalition (2002-2005); and with an unprecedented development of civic society and the increase of political and civic participation of youth.¹⁸

The new national identity is also co-created by traditional instruments for encouraging exalted manifestations of collective solidarity for removing consequences of unjust decisions of international community.

The story of the Slovak ice-hockey team in the period 1993-2003 is a classic example. Its success is considered as a result of long-year effort to achieve professional performances and career, but also the outcome of "the whole

¹⁶ It may be assumed with high probability that these problems would survive in the entire period (1993-2003) of accession negotiations with the EU in the Czechoslovak Federation too. The problem of economic situation in some regions of Slovakia, especially in the East, would satisfy the nation-ethnically oriented political parties whose elite would reorient the population dissatisfaction to the Czech political elite. It would mean a tension in Czechoslovakia and dissatisfaction with negative impact on European integration process.

¹⁷ Alliance of a New Citizen (chairman P. Rusko)

¹⁸ The volunteer and non-government sector of civil society and its development between 1993 and 1998 has been considered as an important factor of transformation and modernisation of the Slovak Republic. The NGOs in Slovakia "...are now much more than islands of isolated idealists or the so-called islands of positive deviants, as the independent civil activities in late 1980s were called by Slovak sociologists. They created a vivid, vibrant and efficient "civil archipelago", an archipelago of hope and positive action" (Bútora, M., 1997).

The empowering of young people as voters and as social actors can have important consequences for a political change as we have seen during the 1998 elections. (Macháček, L. 2000) The challenge for the future will be to create and encourage a civil society in which young people will play an active part and which can help to sustain the progress towards democratisation and the development of a market economy in the Slovak and Czech Republic as members of the new European Union after 2004.

nation's" strive for international recognition, independent existence and the respect of other partners.¹⁹

The European Union is a similar challenge for the Slovak Republic. After 1993 and election results in 1994 (coalition of national political parties: V. Mečiar and J. Slota) all political processes of acceptance of Slovakia as a suitable partner not only for NATO but also for EU, slowed down and stopped. This situation changed in 1998 thanks to the younger generation who realized that and did not let the parliamentary agony continue. The government received a mandate to accelerate the processes of the European integration of the Slovak Republic. In 2002, Slovakia became a member of NATO (guarantees security of foreign investment).

In 2003, Slovakia, along with the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, Estonia and Malta, successfully concluded pre-accession negotiations for EU membership (guarantee of implementing the standards of democratic governance), which officially began on May 1st, 2004.

Higher enthusiasm about the independent Slovak Republic does not have to be necessarily interpreted as lower enthusiasm about Europe and European Union. However, young people from the Bratislava random sample consider being future EU citizens as more important than young people from the Prague random sample.

¹⁹ The very last presentation of the joint Team Czechoslovakia was the Ice Hockey World Championship in 1992, which was held in Bratislava for the second time in history. Leaving the federation of two states politically and in a hockey way too had a taste of bronze. After the split up the Czech hockey walked to the top goals. Slovak ice hockey started modern independent history (according to the IIHF decision) right from the bottom of the world hierarchy (pool C) letting everybody know of who they were.

Thanks to the skilful diplomacy Slovakia was to participate to the Olympic Qualification in Sheffield in 1993 and to win. Therefore the door to the *Winter Olympic Games in Lillehammer in 1994* was open up. Performance of the Slovak National Team was a surprise for many hockey specialists. Team Slovakia under the leadership of *Peter Šťastný* (the only Slovak player, who started with hockey in Slovakia and got to the NHL Hall of Fame), winner of a strong group accompanied by Canada, Sweden and USA was unlucky to lose the game against Russia by 2:3 in overtime period during the quarterfinals. However, the overall 6th place was a great success.

Slovakia must have bit through to hockey elite right from the bottom - C category. The top-level hockey was seen in Spišská Nová Ves and Poprad in 1994 when *Oto Haščák* scored two winning goals during the decisive game against Team Belarus. There was no other obstacle on further way to the higher category for the players under coaching tandem of *Július Šupler* and *František Hossa*. One year later the World Championship Category B was organised in Bratislava.

23 minutes and 45 seconds was the time limit for the premier scoring at the World Championship Category A in Vienna in 1996. It was a benefit of *Lubomír Sekeráš* in game against Team Canada and the first performance of the Slovak players resulted in a tie 3:3. Despite the fact that Slovakia must have fought for its position among the top hockey teams in relegation round during the mentioned championship, the team proved its valid membership to the group in order to proceed higher step by step.

The 2000 IIHF World Championship in St. Petersburg was a demonstration of such effort winning the silver medals under the baton of the Slovak National Team Head Coach *Ján Filc*. Slovak players led by their captain *Miroslav Šatan* returned home with the title of *Vice Champions of the World, 2002 with the title of Champions of the World* (Sweden) and 2003 with bronze medal after winner match with Czech team.

The young citizens of Bratislava have much greater expectations about Slovakia's EU membership at the level of "being" in Europe than "having" something from Europe. Slovakia, which gained in the past only penalty points from the European Union and the Council of Europe²⁰, has gained by EU membership a certificate of democratic country and "the Slovak chair at the European table" (*J. Čarnogurský*). Only two weeks before its entrance into the EU, Slovakia held its presidential elections. In their second round, Slovak citizens decidedly withheld *Vladimír Mečiar's* prospects for becoming the Slovak President for 2004-2009 term.

²⁰ Black Peter of nationalism for the split of Czechoslovakia (1993) and Water Power Station Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros. Red cards of visa duty as the only postcommunist country from among Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary as well as for problems with Roma ethnic and its economic tourism in Europe (Belgium, Finland, United Kingdom).

Conclusion

State youth policy systematically makes use of scholarly knowledge about processes, which affect the living conditions of the present young generation and overtly manifest themselves at school, at home or at the time of leisure. State youth policy is also formed through contacts with all elements operating within the system of youth work, especially during free time activities. Civic children's and youth associations, leisure time centers, youth information centers, as well as youth experts at the district and regional offices build a large mosaic of practical knowledge and incentives of appreciable cognitive value.

Sociology of youth enables the researcher to gain stimuli from youth work and vice versa – the personnel and the volunteer activists of civic youth associations, instructors at leisure time centers and employees of youth information centers can orientate themselves in the theory and the methods of sociology of youth and other scientific disciplines too.

It is only natural that the knowledge from other scientific disciplines (psychology, pedagogy, ethnography, law, social medicine, criminology, etc.) infiltrates the youth work projects. However, it is the sociology of youth as a special sociological theory that provides the systematic analysis and constructions of an image of youth as a socio-age group of society.

Sociology of youth observes the ways in which the young people take on respected social values and norms, the models of behavior and expert knowledge gained in the name of social progress and generational continuity, analyses the causes of creation of separate youth subculture at the crucial moments of the social development and eventually its role in revolutionary situations of changing social system.

Sociology of youth provides the required frame of reference for the complex characteristics of youth, regarding the changes in its social structure and the growth of social mobility, equal educational opportunities and other relevant issues. With regard to the development of political culture, it explains youth activities in civic youth associations and the levels and forms youth participation in political life. Into this system of information are also integrated data on acquired general and specialized education as well as professional qualifications, data on the state of its (youth's) health and the choices of leisure time activity as preferred by city and country youth. Within the complex perception of youth is examined its social situation while looking for a job and starting to work as much as the time of establishing a family and a household (housing situation).

In connection with the effects of modernization of society, the socio-pathological symptoms among young people (drug and alcohol abuse, delinquency and criminality) and processes of their marginalization in case of a

longer unemployment are clarified. A comparison of these characteristics on a time scale reveals the measure of change in social conditions and the kind of principles implemented in state youth policy of the given country.

On the occasion of the 5th Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Youth in Bucharest, April 27-29, 1998, the Council of Europe Youth Directorate published an information document called *25 Years of Youth Policy in the Council of Europe: Taking Stock and Looking Ahead*. It points out that the years 1964 – 1969 were the actual stimulus to creation of European youth policy, when the conflict between young people and society and its values had plainly manifested itself. For that reason the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe decided in May 1968 to regularly confer about the situation of youth in Europe and recommended to establish the European Youth Centre and the European Youth Foundation.

In Slovakia, the years 1964 – 1969 were also marked by the attempts to solve the generation gap problems. Originally, the discussions on non-conformism of youth art in the magazine *Kultúrny život* (Cultural life) turned into reflections upon new elements of youth subculture (hairstyles, clothing, dance, and music). Philosophical and sociological reflections on the generation gap nevertheless clearly indicated (M. Kusý, J. Suchý) that it was not just a self-serving protest against the older generation. The stagnation of society became a problem of both the young and the older generation, which understood the socialist state-party regimentation of social processes to be limiting individual career possibilities and aspirations.

The public discussion, joined by a large circle of literary men and publicists brought about a request to do a research of youth's taboo themes also. Hence, next to the already existing (since 1964) Research Committee for Youth of Slovak Sociological Society at the Slovak Academy of Sciences.

On its initiative originated the research (*Quo vadere*) on the relationship between the young people and their youth organization (Š. Lahita, K. Šuran, P. Ondrejko, L. Macháček), which led to a proposal for a division of the organization according to individual interest and age groups. A group of experts came up with the suggestion of bringing about some changes in the state youth policy.

It is a well-know fact that August 1968 was a foreboding month for the young people in Slovakia. The invasion of Warsaw Pact armies and the ensuing „normalization" after April 1969 blocked the modernization process in countries of Central and Eastern Europe for 20 years – even the lives of young people, their youth organization and the state's youth policy. Many sociologists of youth in Slovakia were persecuted and marginalized.

The fact that Czechoslovakia/Slovakia were invited (after 1989) to join the Council of Europe and especially the Council's analysis of the associative life of Slovak and Czech youth (O. Stafsgeng), the contacts with colleagues in Austria (J. Holos, A. Kager, R. Spannring, H. Krenn) and in Germany (S. Hubner-Funk, R. Bendit, M. Heger, J. Zinnecker), involvement in research programmes PHARE (K. Roberts) and research programmes EC(L. Jamieson), the cooperation with RC 34 ISA (L. Chisholm, C. Wallace), all these meant that our specialized activities have reached a higher level of quality in 1989 – 2004.

In Slovakia there has never existed any centre such as the DJI in Munich, so that the scientific association of sociologists played an important role in self-organizing of individual persons and small groups of researchers. The Research Committee of Youth of the Slovak Sociological Society at the Slovak Academy of Sciences has been one of the most active. It organizes regular conferences and workshops on state youth policies in Europe. After 1990 (ISA World Congress in Madrid, Bielefeld, Montréal, Brisbane), it has been cooperating with the International Sociological Association and its research group RC 34 Sociology of Youth (S. Hubner-Funk, O. Stafsgeng, L. Chisholm, H. Helve).

The affiliation of Slovak Republic in the European Union and its membership in the Council of Europe has an additional meaning to the young people. The activities of youth associations and notably the Youth Council of Slovakia are of considerable importance in view of Slovakia's integration into the new Europe, all the more so since many initiatives intensifying this process are realized precisely with the help of the emerging European youth policy. Its development was greatly influenced by the civic youth associations and movements, especially the recently united (Youth Forum) national councils and international youth organizations in Europe.

Sociologists believe it is not enough to speak of youth movements, but also of other social (ecology, peace, human and civil rights, women's, etc.) movements having predominantly young adherents merely as a chance product of modernization. One might say that the higher developed, modernized societies tend to become „movement societies“. Youth movements that appear to be a kind of organized and continuous collective effort of cooperating individuals, groups and organizations aimed at supporting and sustaining social change by means of public protest activities.

Therefore, it is not enough to create a state of affluence as a material base to introducing the citizenship and modern individuality to all. Especially the young people grow to become citizens through the process of „subjectivisation“, i. e. organized effort, movement or initiative of people of equal standing and interests who, within their rights, join forces to achieve a social change. They do it by

gaining public recognition of their legitimacy and secure their legality through respective representative and administrative organs.

The proposals and projects of legislative change put forward at negotiations with the representatives of state institutions require a high level of expertise. Therefore, it becomes more and more important for the heads of civic and youth associations to work together with the youth research experts. Under Slovak circumstances, the youth research has also a function of saving and passing on information, concepts and analyses in the area of youth policy. It guarantees the continuity of the know-how in solving the youth problems.

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