

## THE CONCEPT OF THE NATION AND THE STATE IN RELATION TO THE SOCIAL IDENTITIES OF TWO SLOVAK GENERATIONS\*

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Three methods are used in order to explore social representations of the state, nation, democracy and human rights of two Slovak generations: (1) free associations to the 40 political and economic concepts, (2) rating of the same terms on a five-point scale with respect to their importance from the perspective (i) of individuals and (ii) of society and (3) questionnaire. The sample of respondents (N=200) is selected on the basis of the combination of three two-levels variables: generation (18–23, 40–45), education (with and without middle education) and gender. The data are interpreted with respect to the distinction between liberal vs. ethnic nationalism.

### INTRODUCTION

Reliability of the concepts used in everyday communication is ensured by the continuity of their development as well as by the conduct of people consistent with them. In Czechoslovakia, as in other Central European countries, the continuity of development of the major political terms like 'state', 'nation', and 'democracy' was interrupted by several profound political changes.

After the break up of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the establishment of the independent state of the two nations, the Czechs and the Slovaks in 1918, the generation born under the Monarchy experienced the Nazi occupation of Bohemia and Moravia, the resulting establishment of the Slovak State as a German satellite, the renewal of Czechoslovakia in 1945, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in 1948, the inclusion of Czechoslovakia into the satellite system of the Soviet Union. The next generation supported Dubček's reforms toward socialism

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with a human face and experienced deep disillusion when the movement was squashed in August '68 by the Soviet Army. They gradually adapted to Husák's goulash socialism and were astonished by the collapse of communism in 1989. The split of Czecho-Slovakia into two independent states in 1992 represents again a new political reality.

Several times, in various historical situations citizens were forced to choose between loyalty to the state and to their own ethnic group, between loyalty to tradition and to the new order imposed from above. The concepts of social identity/citizenship as well as state and nation were also changed in conformity with the current political situation. Moreover, along with the historical experience of violent solutions to the tension between polarized identities, and of tensions between already achieved multiple identities (intermarriages and language of instruction) and newly imposed one-dimensional identity (by different measures, e.g. suppression, dishonour, even social or genocide – of the Jews and the Romanies during WWII) influenced the conduct of citizens, and also their courage to declare their authentic identities.

One of the most significant attempts to change the meaning of a wide range of concepts and corresponding social identities in modern history was carried out in the name of Marxist ideology under the dictatorship of the proletariat during the era of socialism. For this purpose, a massive propaganda was introduced starting in kindergartens and ending only with the end of life itself.

According to Marx (in translation 1961) there is no such thing as patriotism or loyalty of the working class to its own state: only solidarity of the international proletariat exists. Communists were committed to change the social reality according to this conviction. Consequently, the old concepts of nation and patriotism had to be changed. Free expression of patriotism was attacked and persecuted, since patriotism was related to the 'obsolete' morals of the petit bourgeoisie, and thus to the ideology of nationalism. The idea of the international working class solidarity all over the world was enforced as the sole legitimate identity. (Paradoxically, in spite of the obligatory internationalism, the principle of collective guilt was implemented in the case of Czechoslovak German and Hungarian minorities after WWII. As a consequence, millions of them lost their homes and belongings (for more details, see, e.g. V. Černý, pp. 295 and 352).) New concepts were introduced to support identification with the international proletariat, e.g. 'victory of the working people over capitalism', 'removal of the class of exploiters', 'a just society without classes', 'people's democracy', 'working intelligentsia', etc.

Traditional concepts were re-interpreted. As pointed out by Peroutka (1991), after 1948 the term of socialism was used by communists as synonymous with democracy, 'because all power in a socialist state is in the hands of the working people'. Equality was used exclusively in relation to the needs, the incomes and the state social provisions, individualism was identified with egoism; individual freedom was degraded to the 'acknowledged necessity'. Consequently, the agency of

individuals received obsolete connotation. It was claimed that the state itself was powerful enough to ensure justice and equality in society. Individual agency was considered to be interfering with the activities of the omnipotent state and was suppressed by various means. The individual perspective, independent reasoning were branded as egoism (for more details see Peroutka, *ibid*, p. 187). Any other ideology was banned under the threat of incrimination as 'enemy of the socialist state'.

The question arises whether these socialist distortions of concepts and identities are still living with us, or whether socialist concepts have simply been reinterpreted in accordance with other ideologies, e.g. with nationalism, Catholicism, liberalism, or whether conceptual confusion is increasing. How do people respond to various competing political doctrines, how do they reconstruct their social identity?

Or, more specifically, does nationalism revive civil sovereignty, patriotism, a concern for the education of one's own population, a support of high culture – or is it purely a doctrine delineating 'us' as different from the others, enforcing ingroup favouritism as well as intergroup aggression, pointing out those who are 'our enemies'? How did nationalism anchor in everyday communication, to which familiar concepts is it related?

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

According to Tajfel et al. (1971) individuals identify with groups, because this enables them to positively extend their own identities. As he demonstrated in the experiments using paradigm of the minimal group, the members prefer the members of their own group to the members of the outgroup with the intention of positively distinguishing themselves rather than maximizing their own profit or directly impairing the outgroup. Moreover, Turner (1978) demonstrated that social competition (desire to be better) is a more important variable than the conflict of interests between groups. Consequently, if a group does not provide positive attributes for the individual, the individual will leave it and find another, more respected group. However, the change of group membership (social mobility) is a solution, which can be accomplished without losing face in an individualist, but not in a collectivist culture. Tajfel (in Smith and Bond, 1993, p. 81) assumes that when an individual cannot leave his group, he/she attempts to find new attributes of his/her group, which he/she previously has not considered to be important, to redefine his/her group identity in a positive sense (social creativity), or, what is only a rare case, he/she tries to improve the characteristics of his/her own group (social change).

Moscovici and Paichelier (1978) differentiate between nomic and anomic social groups. While the nomic group does not avoid comparison with outgroups, the anomic group tends to isolate itself. Only a nomic majority group can afford to tolerate those who are not its own members, because of its stable and high position in society. In contrast, the anomic majority group, with the opposite characteristics, displays a tendency to avoid comparison with outgroups and a strong favouritism for their own members.

Free choice of one's own identity (including national) in parallel to the establishment of new civil sovereignty is, according to Pusic (1994), the essence of the liberal nationalism typical of the eighteenth century. As Pusic pointed out, nationalism in that time played a positive role, because it expanded rather than reduced variety and inclusiveness – it was a force toward universality and standardization of the criterion of belonging. Pusic compares liberal nationalism to the cultural nationalism which emerged later, at the end of nineteenth century. By contrast, cultural (ethnic) nationalism demands uniformity in the state, promotes exclusiveness and provincialism, 'founds the nation on the irrational, pre-civilized folklore' (ibid, p. 5). Pusic argues that chauvinistic nationalism is a victory of the collectivist principle over the individual, of loyalty and sacrifice to the nation over every rational interest of individual (ibid, p. 5).

### EXPECTATIONS

Close relations between the concepts of state and of nation are expected in both generations, supposing that they both hold a strong belief that each nation should have its own state (see Gellner, 1992). However, due to different ideological beliefs, differences between the two generations are expected, too. The young generation is probably less influenced by the enforced collectivism during the totalitarian regime. Its individualism is stronger (e. g. feeling of agency, planning of one's own future, defining of one's own interest as well as the degree of anomy) in comparison to the individualism of the middle generation. The young generation would probably perceive the state and the nation in a liberal sense in contrast to the middle generation. Moreover, part of the middle generation is expected to perceive nationalism negatively in relation to Nazism and Fascism while the other part would favour nationalism based on ethnicity, exclusiveness and irrational emotions. The degree of homogeneity of the associations is therefore expected to be lower in the case of the middle generation.

There are several reasons for strong affiliation to nationalism in general, e.g.: (1) As a reaction to patriotism being prohibited for 40 years and to enforced internationalism. (2) As a result of perceived differences between the West and East. Slovaks probably perceive themselves as a poor, disadvantaged group. (3) As a defence against failure in the economic competition with other nations on the international market. (4) As an expression of continuing collectivism. (5) As a defence against modernization. (6) As a defence of one's own identity against acculturation. (7) As an expression of free will to identify with one's own nation. (8) As a consequence of the high level of social insecurity, Slovaks behave as an anomic majority group (high level of ethnocentrism).

### METHODS

The idea of exploring the meaning of a concept by a set of associations was revitalized after World War II, mainly by Noble, 1952, Underwood and Shulz, 1960,

Pollio, 1963, Deese, 1959, 1962, 1965, Russel and Jenkins, 1954, Lafal and Feldman, 1962, Szalay and D'Andrade, 1972, Szalay and Bryson, 1973, Szalay and Deese, 1978 etc.).

The above mentioned authors conceive associations in terms of associative network rather than in terms of the effect of contiguity or of conditioning. Moreover, they considered the collection of the associations obtained from large samples to be the common meaning of that particular community, as part of its culture (e.g. Marshall and Cofer, 1963). Deese (1965, p. 45) pointed out explicitly that 'the structure of associative meaning... is not the meaning of a single individual but that for a population...' and 'yields a picture of the linguistic commonality that exists among these people'. Moreover, Deese (*ibid*) himself developed an original procedure, studying the meaning of words by their relations to other words. He believed that underlying schemata or structures could be inferred from the relations among words. A different method was developed by Szalay and Deese (1978), based on content analysis of the associations to the stimulus term. The associations were aggregated to clusters (categories) to reveal the meaning components of the stimulus term. According to these authors... 'certain themes and even certain domains are more important to a given culture than are other themes and domains' (p. 39, *ibid*).

A similar programme to identify the semantic universe (field), common to a group of individuals by free associations, appeared in the research of social representations (e.g. Di Giacomo, 1980). However, the aims of social representations research go beyond the description of the consensual or structural aspects of meaning (for more detail see e. g. Doise, Clemence and Lorenzi-Cioldi, 1993).

#### INFORMANTS:

Two generations of informants were chosen according criterium of the duration and intensity of Marxist indoctrination and the political context of their adolescence.

The younger generation (YG) – between 18 and 23 years had grown up in the period of normalization or the so-called goulash socialism, a system which resigned any kind of idealism (definitely communism) and kept power through manipulation and corruption rather than through ideology. Their adolescence took place in the atmosphere of political instability of the Soviet bloc (Solidarność in Poland, perestroika in Russia, introduction of elements of capitalism in Hungary, Poland, Yugoslavia, total collapse of the Soviet bloc in 1989). Their social maturation was especially affected by the breakdown of the monopoly of communist ideology in 1989, followed by the subsequent period of chaotic transition.

The middle generation (MG) – the generation between 40 and 45 years were exposed to the Marxist indoctrination throughout their schooling, starting from their early childhood. Their adolescence was influenced by the movement of reform communists in 1968, who tried to revitalize the ideas of humanism, social justice

and equality as well as to modernize the economy of the country. In contrast to the Czechs, the Slovaks supported more decentralization of power in favour of the Slovak self-ruling bodies, toward the federalization of the unitary state. Two decades later, in 1989, they participated in the removal of the communist power, as well as in the establishment of various democratic institutions.

The sample consists of 200 persons, selected through the combination of the three variables: generation, education, and sex. Each of these three variables has two values. In the case of education, two levels were distinguished: the level with 'A' levels and the level without 'A' levels (with and without 'maturita' in Slovakia). Further they are labelled as respondents with higher education – HE and the respondents with lower education – LE. Each of the eight sub-samples consists of 25 respondents.

#### Construction of the list of stimulus terms

The terms were chosen with the intention of covering all important aspects of the current societal changes in the transition toward democracy and a market economy. The extensive list of suggested terms was reduced finally to 40 terms by means of group discussions in which participants from East and West European countries participated and achieved consensus in the most important (basic) terms [1].

#### PROCEDURES

The respondents were presented with 40 political and economic terms, each printed on a separate page of a booklet. The order of terms was randomized across participants. They were asked to write down their associations in written form as quickly as possible. The task was completed individually or in small groups of five to six people and took approximately 15 to 20 minutes. Only the first associations to each of the terms were asked for because it was found that 'earlier responses are somehow more central to the representational system than the later ones' (Szalay and Deese, 1978, p. 28). Moreover, the first associations are the most stable across time (see e.g. Szalay and Deese, *ibid*). Summing up, the first associations are most representative for the particular culture rather than for the idiosyncratic experiences of the respondents.

After completing the task of free associations, the participants rated the same terms on a five-point scale with respect to their importance from the perspective: (i) of individuals and (ii) of society.

At the end of the session the respondents answered 21 questions evaluating the degree of their freedoms, responsibilities, the changes of their financial situation, etc., by means of the Likert type 5-point scale. Finally, they filled in their personal data (age, profession, education).

The data were collected in Slovakia from February 1994 until May 1994 (after the split of Czechoslovakia in 1993).

## RESULTS

Linguistic commonality within two generations.

Table 1 shows that, the proportion of the repeated associations is very high for both generation groups. According to our expectations the associations of the young generation are more homogenous compared to the middle generation since the sum of all repeated associations is higher (2736 against 2511). The greatest difference in homogeneity of associations between the two generations is observed in the cases of: private enterprise, market economy, privatization, self interest, hero, minority rights, public interest, which yield much more homogeneous associations among the young generation group. More homogenous associations in the case of the middle generation are found only to capitalism and communism. Summing up, a higher heterogeneity of the associations is found in the middle generation group, especially for the concepts with current meanings which are not in agreement with the ideology of the previous regime.

## CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE ASSOCIATIONS TO THE NATION

Content analysis of the associations to NATION reveals whether the concept of nation is more related to the concept of state (guaranteeing individual rights, self-determination) and/or to its language and culture.

The main categories of associations to the concept of NATION are reviewed in Table 2. Fig 1 shows the most salient associations. The concept of nation relates mostly to such categories of concepts as SLOVAKS, PEOPLE, SOCIETY, STATE, UNITY, PRIDE. So the associations to the state are not more frequent than those to one's own national label and to the collectives. The associations with positive connotation dominate the negative ones.

Most of the associations to SLOVAKS refer to NATION. A small portion of the associations refer to some specific features of Slovaks, e.g. to a particular geographic object in Slovakia (the High Tatras), to national meals or customs, or to some auto-stereotypes both positive and negative (stupid Slovaks, alcoholic, disunited, good people). Positive connotation of the associations prevails in the middle generation as well, although more evaluative associations, both negative and positive, are found in the middle generation.

There is no association of NATION to the CHURCH in spite of the fact that the majority of Slovaks declare their affiliation to the Catholic Church.

The associations to STATE are mostly 'SLOVAKS', (HOME) COUNTRY, PEOPLE, SOCIETY, GROUP, NATION, as well as ORDER and GOVERNMENT.

In summary, the concept of NATION is related to a collective of people of one's own ethnic group rather than to the state. The totalitarian and collectivist type of referents suggests that the respondents understand NATION and STATE in a framework compatible more with cultural-ethnic nationalism than with liberal nationalism.

Table 1  
REPEATED ASSOCIATIONS IN %

	CONCEPTS	REPYG	REPMG	REPBG	D
1	individ.	85	82	85	0
2	priv. enter.	84	47	47	37
3	religion	84	69	73	11
4	law order	83	74	78	5
5	pol. parties	79	75	76	3
6	welfare	79	69	70	9
7	peace	78	76	77	1
8	profit	76	74	74	2
9	nation	76	64	64	12
10	mark. econ	75	50	53	22
11	dictatorship	75	61	68	7
12	min. rights	75	54	58	17
13	fraternity	73	73	75	-2
14	per. security	73	71	75	-1
15	state	73	60	61	13
16	ideology	73	58	65	8
17	self inter	73	53	54	20
18	money	72	68	69	3
19	justice	72	58	60	12
20	hum. rights	72	57	59	13
21	democracy	70	64	68	2
22	hero	70	49	49	21
23	poverty	70	72	73	-4
24	privatiz.	68	47	49	19
25	risk	68	75	76	-8
26	socialism	68	56	60	8
27	passivity	66	64	70	-3
28	character	66	68	70	-4
29	wealth	66	64	65	1
30	per. resp	63	50	52	12
31	corruption	63	70	70	-7
32	pub. opinion	63	63	64	-2
33	communism	62	69	72	-10
34	Slovak	62	68	69	-7
35	loc. comm.	61	56	64	-3
36	freedom	61	62	63	-2
37	equality	60	65	68	-8
38	self-determin.	59	57	65	-5
39	pub. interest	58	37	40	18
40	capitalism	43	62	63	-20
41	TOTAL	2736	2511	,	225

REPYG - repeated associations in % , young generation

REPMG - repeated associations in % , middle generation

REPBG - repeated associations in % , both generations together

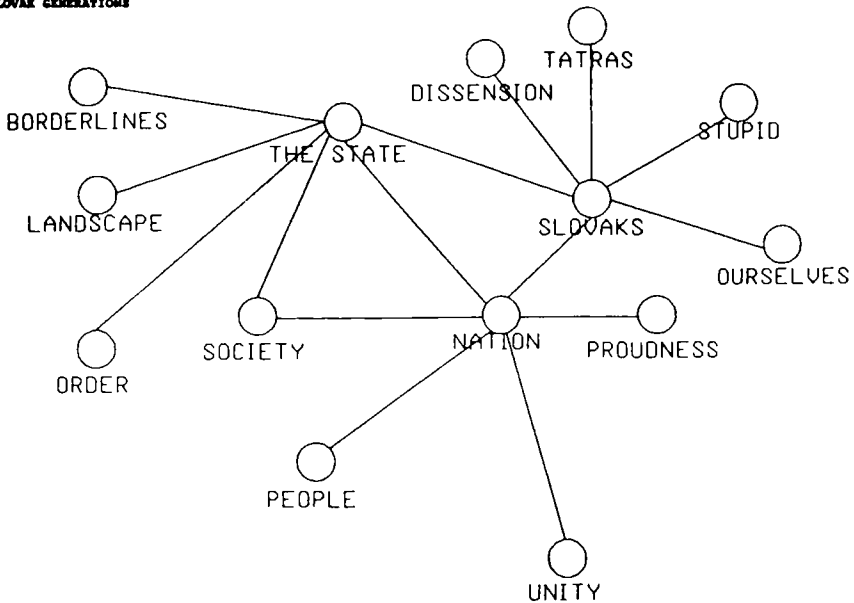
D - differences between repbg and repyg



Table 2  
THE MOST SALIENT ASSOCIATIONS

Associations	Frequency
people, mass of people	47
Slovak(s), Slovakia	39
society, community	11
common culture, language, history, symbols	7
proudness	6
the state	5
home, homeland	4
whole	4
territory	3

THE MOST SALIENT ASSOCIATIONS TO THE NATION  
BOTH SLOVAK GENERATIONS



### FREQUENCY OF THE ASSOCIATIONS

The order of the frequency of associations indicates the degree of importance of various themes for a particular group. For the middle generation group the order is the following: MONEY, NATION, FREEDOM, and SLOVAKS while for the young generation it is: MONEY, FREEDOM, NATION. Interestingly, the concept

SLOVAKS is an important theme for the middle generation but not for the young generation. Moreover, FREEDOM is a more important domain than NATION for the young generation while the case is quite opposite with middle generation. MONEY, the most important domain for both generations, is even more important for the young generation group (108 vs. 74 associations).

#### ANALYSIS OF CONCEPTUAL RELATIONS AMONG CONCEPTS – CLUSTER ANALYSIS

The Phi square measure – the standardized measure of chi square – was used for computing the dissimilarity between each pair of words. In principle, the real distributions of the associative frequencies related to every couple of terms are compared to the random distribution of the associations. The Phi square measure computes the sum of the differences between the obtained frequencies and random frequencies and thus provides an estimation of the deviations from the average relationship among all terms. The more elements have two concepts in common, the lower the dissimilarity (or higher similarity) between them. The value of this coefficient ranges from 0 to 1. The higher the value of the coefficient, the higher the dissimilarity between the two terms.

The distances between each pair of words are presented by dendrograms, as outcomes of cluster analysis (for more detail, see e.g. Blashfield, R.K., Alenderfer, 1988). The degree of dissimilarity is expressed by the spatial distance. The more common the associations, the shorter the distance, and therefore ‘the earlier stage’ of their connection. In the first stage of the analysis, the less dissimilar words are connected and vice versa. The clusters of terms in this case are created on the basis of their common associations and direct associative links.

The internal cohesiveness of the two matrices corresponding to the two generations is approximately the same: 33.6% and 28.4% (for the young and the middle generation respectively).

The analysis of the associative relations for the two generations together indicates (see dendrogram – Figure 2) that the terms NATION and SLOVAKS create a separate cluster in the first stage of the analysis. It suggests a strong identification of Slovaks with their nation. In a further stage of the analysis, STATE joins the NATION and SLOVAKS. The distance between STATE and NATION is larger (coefficient .8096) than the distance between NATION and SLOVAKS (coefficient is .5254). Some common associations are found between STATE and LOCAL COMMUNITY, as well as between INDIVIDUALS and STATE (.9566, .9810 respectively). The terms referring to the liberal principles of the organization of society (EQUALITY, FRATERNITY, LAW AND ORDER, HUMAN RIGHTS and MINORITY RIGHTS etc), are related to STATE at a lower level than the random one.

The particular dendrograms for the two generation groups do not reveal substantial differences (Figures 3 and 4). For both generation groups the most salient associative link is between NATION and SLOVAKS and the distance between

FIGURE 2

## H I E R A R C H I C A L C L U S T E R A N A L Y S I S

Dendrogram using Average Linkage (Between Groups), Phi-square measure  
BOTH SLOVAK GENERATIONS (N=200)

(Crossing associations)

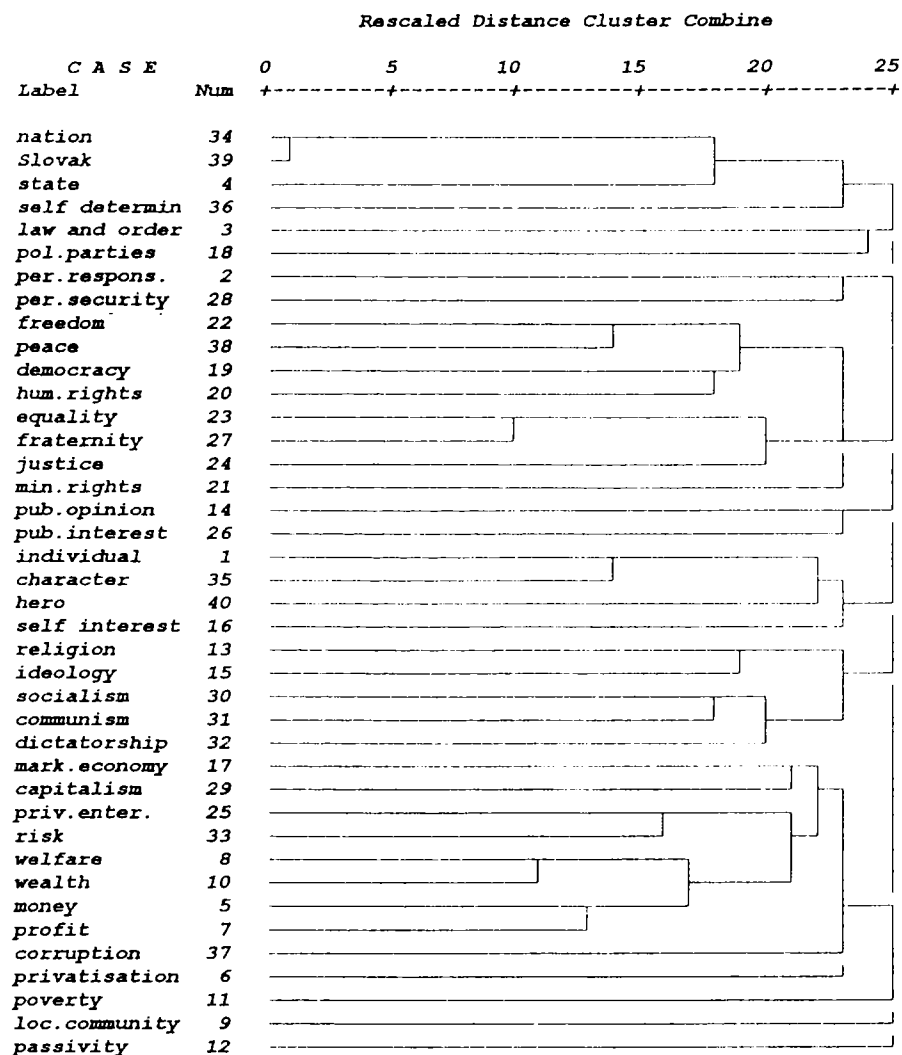


FIGURE 3

# H I E R A R C H I C A L C L U S T E R A N A L Y S I S

Dendrogram using Average Linkage (Between Groups), Phi-square measure  
THE YOUNG SLOVAK GENERATION

(Crossing associations)

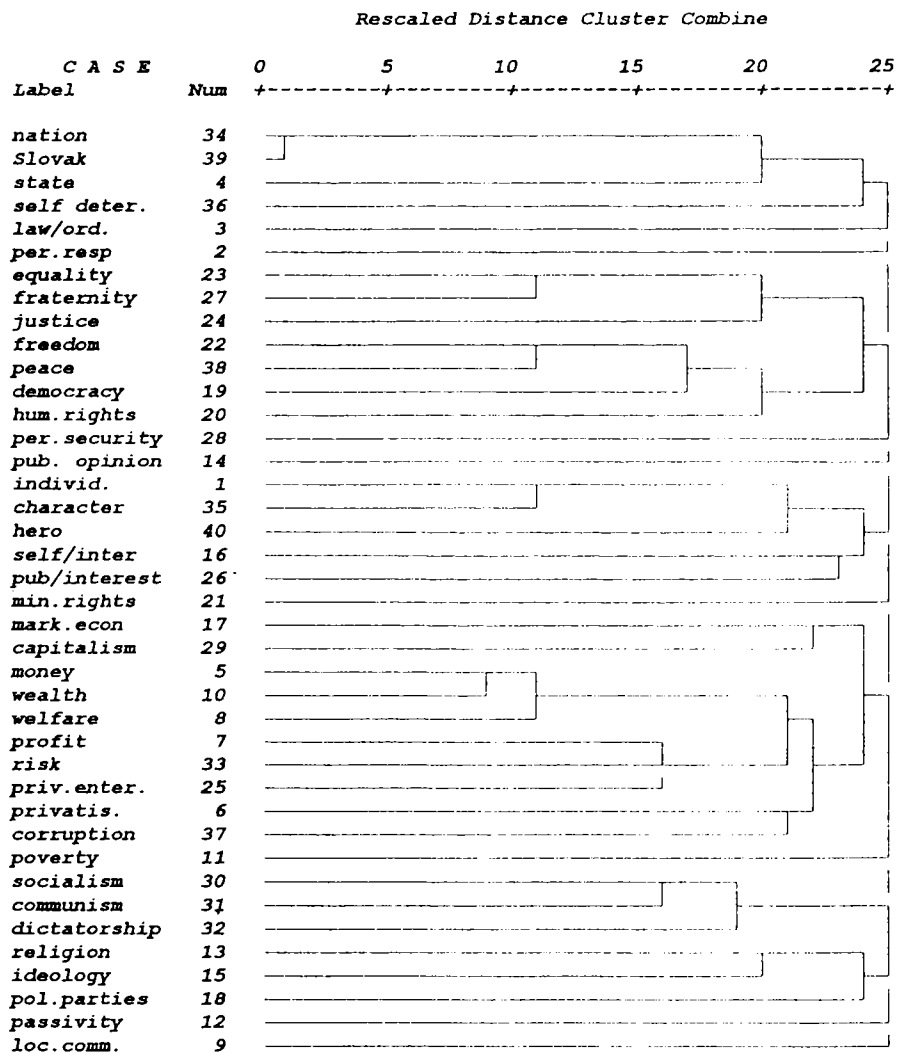
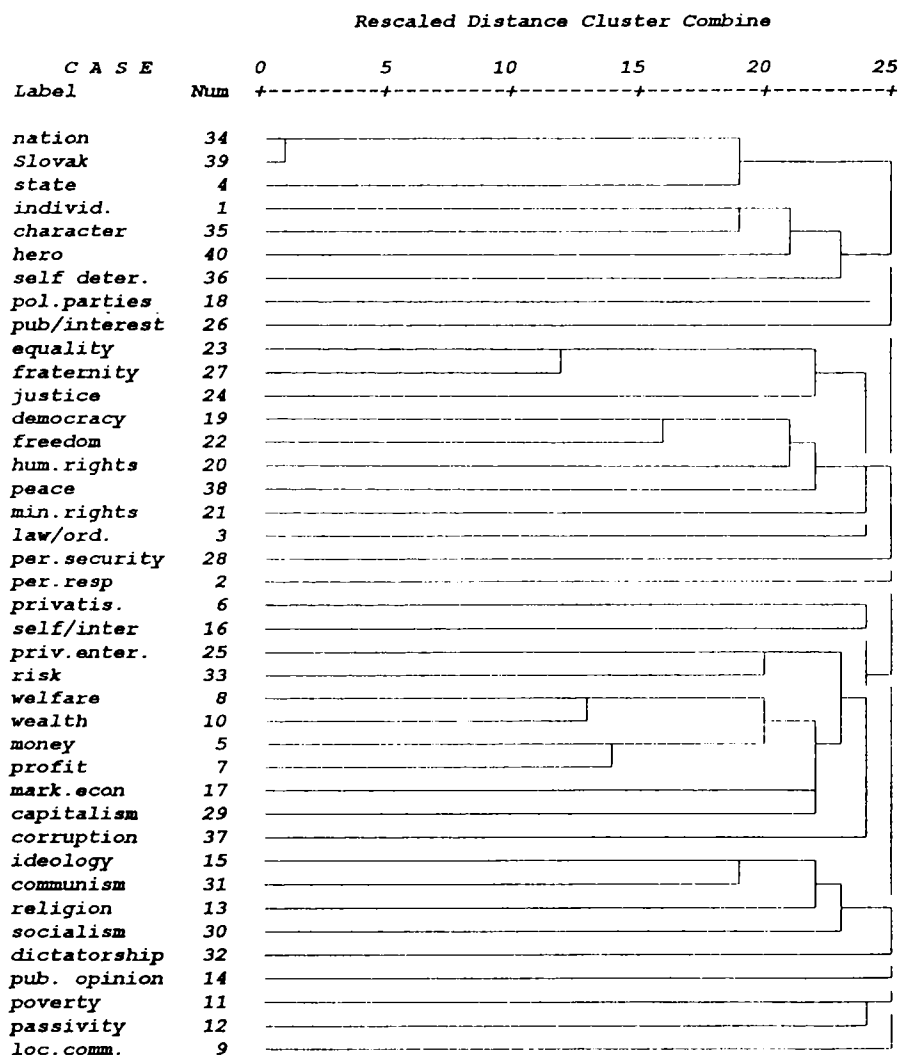


FIGURE 4

# H I E R A R C H I C A L C L U S T E R A N A L Y S I S

Dendrogram using Average Linkage (Between Groups), Phi-square measure  
THE MIDDLE SLOVAK GENERATION

(Crossing associations)



STATE and NATION is approximately the same (YG – .8776 and MG – .8887). For both generations STATE is related to PUBLIC INTEREST, PUBLIC OPINION and to LOCAL COMMUNITY. Moreover, the middle generation relates LOCAL COMMUNITY to POLITICAL PARTIES; in younger generation the picture is somewhat different since POLITICAL PARTIES are primarily associated with CORRUPTION. The distance between INDIVIDUAL and STATE is slightly smaller in the case of the young generation (YG – .9895, MG – .9917).

One can infer from content analysis as well as from the analysis of associative networks that in common sense the nation is understood as the ethnic group, as the people with common language, habits, tradition, rather than as the state, a self ruling community, or individuals endowed with civic rights. Interestingly, the state itself is bound through associations to NATION, LOCAL COMMUNITY and PUBLIC OPINION rather than to the institutions that guarantee law and order, rights of individual and rights of minorities.

#### ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TERMS

From the point of view of the individuals, NATION is evaluated as the most important term only by 27.3% of the respondents which is a relatively low portion compared e.g. to terms like FREEDOM, HUMAN RIGHTS and PEACE (Table 3). Neither SLOVAKS nor STATE are assessed to be the most important by the majority of respondents. However, all three terms are valued significantly higher from the point of view of society. The largest shift in the evaluation occurs in the case of STATE (from 28.1% to 70.5%). STATE, and to a less degree NATION and SLOVAKS are significantly more important from the point of view of society than from the perspective of the individual. According to common sense, the same is valid for public interest, law and order, public opinion. Contrary to common sense, MARKET ECONOMY and the other economic terms (WEALTH, WELFARE, PROFIT, PRIVATIZATION) are the most important for the majority of respondents from the perspective of the society but not from the point of view of the individual. There are terms which are evaluated to be less important from the perspective of the society as well, e.g. SELF-DETERMINATION, CHARACTER, SELF INTEREST, PERSONAL SECURITY, PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY and JUSTICE. In the last case it is a shift contradictory to our expectation that JUSTICE would be as important for society as it is for the individual. It suggests that individuals do not share a hope in a just society.

The chi-square test does not reveal any differences in the evaluation of NATION, STATE and SLOVAKS between the two generations (see Table 4A and 4B). They differ only in the assessment of the importance of some economic terms. The middle generation respondents consider such terms as MONEY, PROFIT, WEALTH and WELFARE to be more important than the respondents from the young generation.

However, significant differences are found between respondents of the two different educational levels. Respondents with lower education (LE) display a ten-

Table 3  
% OF Ss RATING THE CONCEPT AS THE MOST IMPORTANT – DIFFERENCES  
BETWEEN THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

	TERMS	INDIVID	SOCIETY	DIFEREN	SIGN
1	justice	82,23	69,35	-12,89	,
2	peace	80,30	83,84	3,54	,
3	freedom	74,50	71,86	-2,64	,
4	self-determin.	70,35	34,52	-35,83	,000
5	per. respons.	67,50	45,23	-22,27	,000
6	human rights	67,34	67,50	,16	,
7	character	67,34	37,19	-30,15	,000
8	pers. secur.	65,33	41,84	-23,49	,000
9	money	48,48	52,26	3,78	,
10	law order	46,23	72,36	26,13	,000
11	equality	44,95	49,00	4,05	,
12	self inter.	43,00	15,74	-27,26	,
13	democracy	37,69	54,50	16,81	,019
14	Slovak	35,35	45,00	9,65	,038
15	the state	28,14	70,50	42,36	,000
16	nation	27,27	44,50	17,23	,000
17	profit	27,14	51,01	23,87	,000
18	min. rights	21,21	27,50	6,29	,
19	fraternity	21,00	18,69	-2,31	,
20	welfare	19,60	35,68	16,08	,001
21	market econ.	16,16	45,00	28,84	,000
22	poverty	14,87	15,31	,43	,000
23	enterprise	13,20	26,63	13,44	,002
24	religion	12,56	13,07	,50	,
25	wealth	12,24	30,65	18,41	,000
26	loc. commun.	10,99	20,00	9,01	,005
27	corruption	10,20	17,26	7,05	,
28	privatization	9,09	35,18	26,08	,000
29	pub. opinion	8,54	29,15	20,60	,000
30	risk	8,50	8,12	-,38	,008
31	ideology	7,11	12,69	5,58	,003
32	pub. interest	6,63	35,53	28,90	,000
33	passivity	4,64	8,67	4,03	,
34	dictatorship	4,57	6,09	1,52	,
35	pol. parties	3,50	26,00	22,50	,000
36	capitalism	3,06	6,12	3,06	,
37	communism	,50	3,52	3,02	,020
38	socialism	,00	3,52	3,52	,035
39	individual	,	38,19	,	,

INDIVID - from the point of view of individual

SOCIETY - from the point of view of society

DIFEREN - differences between the two perspective

SIGN - statistical significance of differences between the two perspective tested by Chi-square test

Table 4 A

% OF Ss RATING THE CONCEPT AS THE MOST IMPORTANT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE INDIVIDUAL – DIFFERENCES BETWEEN YOUNG AND MIDDLE GENERATION

	CONCEPTS	TERMYG	TERMMG	DIFTERM	SIGNTERM
1	individual	,	,	,	,
2	per. respons.	63,00	72,00	9,00	,
3	law order	33,33	59,00	25,67	,0001
4	the state	23,23	33,00	9,77	,
5	money	37,76	59,00	21,24	,0018
6	privatiz.	6,12	12,00	5,88	,0031
7	profit	19,19	35,00	15,81	,
8	welfare	14,14	25,00	10,86	,0062
9	loc. commun.	11,58	10,42	-1,16	,
10	wealth	5,10	19,39	14,29	,0434
11	poverty	7,22	22,45	15,23	,0140
12	passivity	1,01	8,42	7,41	,
13	religion	13,00	12,12	-,88	,
14	pub. opinion	5,05	12,00	6,95	,
15	ideology	6,00	8,25	2,25	,
16	self interest	41,00	45,00	4,00	,
17	mark. economy	14,00	18,37	4,37	,
18	pol. parties	3,00	4,00	1,00	,
19	democracy	37,00	38,38	1,38	,
20	hum. rights	74,00	60,61	-13,4	,
21	min. rights	20,00	22,45	2,45	,
22	freedom	75,00	74,00	-1,00	,
23	equality	45,45	44,44	-1,01	,
24	justice	81,00	83,51	2,51	,
25	priv. enterp.	7,07	19,39	12,32	,0355
26	pub. interest	3,00	10,42	7,42	,
27	fraternity	21,00	21,00	,00	,
28	per. security	59,60	71,00	11,40	,
29	capitalism	2,02	4,12	2,10	,0323
30	socialism	,00	,00	,00	,
31	communism	,00	1,01	1,01	,
32	dictatorship	2,02	7,14	5,12	,
33	risk	7,00	10,00	3,00	,
34	nation	25,00	29,59	4,59	,
35	character	65,00	69,70	4,70	,
36	self-determin.	71,72	69,00	-2,72	,
37	corruption	9,18	11,22	2,04	,
38	peace	75,76	84,85	9,09	,
39	Slovaks	39,00	31,63	-7,37	,

TERMYG – % Ss rating the concept as most important from the perspective of the individual (the young generation)

TERMMG – % Ss rating the concept as most important from the perspective of the individual (the middle generation)

DIFTERM – differences in ratings between two generations from the perspective of the individual

SIGNTERM – significance of differences between two generations in ratings from the perspective of the individual (Chi-square test)



Table 4 B

% OF Ss RATING THE CONCEPT AS THE MOST IMPORTANT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE SOCIETY – DIFFERENCES BETWEEN YOUNG AND MIDDLE GENERATION

	CONCEPTS	WORDYG	WORDMG	DIFWORD	SIGNWORD
1	individual	38,00	38,38	,38	,
2	per. respon	42,00	48,48	6,48	,
3	law order	67,00	77,78	10,78	,
4	the state	70,00	71,00	1,00	,
5	money	44,44	60,00	15,56	,0487
6	privatiz.	29,00	41,41	12,41	,
7	profit	41,41	60,61	19,19	,0165
8	welfare	29,00	42,42	13,42	,
9	loc. comun.	14,14	26,04	11,90	,0014
10	wealth	24,00	37,37	13,37	,
11	poverty	7,22	23,23	16,02	,0045
12	passivity	3,00	14,58	11,58	,0029
13	religion	16,16	10,00	-6,16	,
14	pub. opinion	30,00	28,28	-1,72	,
15	ideology	13,00	12,37	-,63	,
16	self interest	11,11	20,41	9,30	,0428
17	mark. economy	42,00	48,00	6,00	,
18	pol. parties	26,00	26,00	,00	,
19	democracy	49,00	60,00	11,00	,
20	hum. rights	66,00	69,00	3,00	,
21	min. rights	24,00	31,00	7,00	,
22	freedom	69,70	74,00	4,30	,
23	equality	50,00	48,00	-2,00	,
24	justice	62,63	76,00	13,37	,
25	priv. enterp.	25,25	28,00	2,75	,
26	pub. interest	31,31	39,80	8,48	,
27	fraternity	23,23	14,14	-9,09	,
28	per. security	34,38	49,00	14,63	,
29	capitalism	7,07	5,15	-1,92	,
30	socialism	4,00	3,03	-,97	,
31	communism	4,00	3,03	-,97	,
32	dictatorship	6,06	6,12	,06	,
33	risk	9,09	7,14	-1,95	,
34	nation	44,00	45,00	1,00	,
35	character	27,27	47,00	19,73	,0402
36	self-determin.	28,57	40,40	11,83	,
37	corruption	11,22	23,23	12,01	,0016
38	peace	79,59	88,00	8,41	,
39	Slovaks	43,00	47,00	4,00	,

WORDYG – % Ss rating the concept as most important from the perspective of society (the young generation)  
 WORDMG – % Ss rating the concept as most important from the perspective of society (the middle generation)

DIFWORD – differences in ratings between two generations from the perspective of society

SIGNWORD – significance of differences between two generations in ratings from the perspective of society (Chi-square test)

dency to evaluate NATION and SLOVAKS as more important from both perspectives, and STATE from the perspective of the individual. They also assign greater importance to EQUALITY and FRATERNITY than the respondents with higher education (HE). On the other hand, the HE respondents tend to evaluate DEMOCRACY and HUMAN RIGHTS as more important than LE respondents. A significant discrepancy is observed in the importance of STATE and NATION on the one hand and DEMOCRACY – HUMAN RIGHTS on the other hand between respondents with different levels of education. HE persons show a tendency to value the importance of DEMOCRACY and HUMAN RIGHTS rather than the importance of NATION, EQUALITY and FRATERNITY. LE persons show just the opposite tendency.

It can be concluded that HE persons value STATE and DEMOCRACY from the point of view of society as almost equally important, while LE persons consider DEMOCRACY to be less important than STATE. Similarly, HUMAN RIGHTS are considered to be as important as THE STATE only by HE respondents.

The principal component analysis (PCA) of rating data from the point of view of society reveals 10 factors. Three terms – which are associatively highly interconnected – SLOVAK, NATION, STATE – create a separate factor, labelled as NATION factor. The other factors are named as follows: (1) self-interest, (2) group interests, (3) equality, (5) material well-being, (6) regimes, (7) corruption, (8) democracy, (9) public interest and (10) ideology. Thus democracy together with human rights, as in previous data, are separated from the state. The analysis of variance of the factorial score obtained from PCA, confirms that the factors of nation and of equality (together with fraternity) are more important for LE respondents than for the HE ones. In contrast, human rights and democracy are more important for HE persons.

The two generations differ one from another only in their judgment of the factor of welfare (money, wealth, profit). The older generation conceived the terms included in this factor as more important than the younger generation.

Summing up, the analysis of variance of individual factor scores confirms the results obtained by the chi-square test that the level of education is a powerful factor influencing understanding of the relationships between STATE, NATION, DEMOCRACY and HUMAN RIGHTS.

## ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

A comparison of distributions of every response between the two generations by the Chi-square test indicates that the members of the young generation feel less restricted by their financial situation than the middle generation. Moreover, the young generation enjoy freedom, e.g. in planning their future life to a greater extent. Their way of life as well as their financial situation improved during the last three years in larger proportion. Their job satisfaction is also higher.

With respect to the level of participation in politics, there is no salient difference between the two generations. There is only a slightly stronger tendency to-

wards greater involvement at the work place in the middle generation, while the young generation tends to be more involved in local communities.

As for the interest in politics, the middle generation is much more interested in national politics than the young one. However, there is no difference between the two generations in the interest in either European politics or world politics.

Significant differences between the two educational levels were found as well. HE respondents report a significant improvement in their way of life with higher percentage (22% vs. 5%); financial situation improved slightly or significantly for 51% HE respondents, while for LE respondents this was only 30%. HE respondents express much higher work motivation compared to LE respondents: 80% of HE respondents claim they would or certainly would work even if they would not be economically forced to do it, while in the case of LE respondents it is only 57% of cases.

In addition, HE respondents display interest in domestic as well as in international political issues in a significantly higher proportion than LE respondents.

The principal component analysis (PCA) of ratings of questions reveals 7 factors explaining 60% of variance in responses. These factors are named as follows: (1) interest in politics, (2) feeling of agency, (3) satisfaction with one's own way of life, (4) involvement in politics, (5) assessment of the quality of the mass media (6) feeling of responsibility, (7) work motivation. The analysis of factor scores following from PCA confirms the significant effect of generation on: (1) – interest in politics ( $p < .001$ ), (2) – feeling of agency ( $p < .05$ ), (3) – satisfaction with one's own way of life ( $p < .01$ ) (5) – assessment of the quality of media ( $p < .001$ ) (7) – motivation to work ( $p < .05$ ).

The members of the young generation are less interested in politics than the middle generation. On the other hand, the young generation feel their own agency in higher proportion, they are more satisfied with their own way of life and they are more motivated to work.

The effect of education is also confirmed in the following factors: (1) – interest in politics ( $p < .001$ ),

(3) – satisfaction with one's own way of life ( $p < .01$ ),

(4) – involvement in politics ( $p < .05$ ) as well as

(6) – feeling of responsibility ( $p < .01$ ).

HE persons are more interested and involved in politics, they are more satisfied with their own way of life and feel more responsibility than those with LE.

The effect of interaction between generation and education is observed only in the case of interest in politics ( $p < .01$ ), indicating that the differences between HE and LE persons are greater in the young generation than in the middle generation.

We may conclude, that the young generation shows a higher degree of individualism (motivation, freedoms, planning one's own future) than the middle generation. Its preferred values are more compatible with the spirit of capitalism. That is one reason why the young generation is adapting better to social changes and is

profiting more from them than the middle generation. LE respondents were better off in the previous regime, which maintained economic equality among various social strata. Nowadays the market economy is more favourable for persons with higher education.

In contrast to LE persons HE persons feel more obligation, they are more interested and involved in politics.

## INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

It was found that:

1. The nation and the state are conceptually strongly interconnected. The nation is understood mainly as a collective of people and the state as the representative institution of that collective. Major liberal principles of ruling society are not related to the state.

The great disparity in the assessed importance of the state from the perspectives of the individual and of the society indicates that the state is implicitly allowed to set up limits to the interests of individuals in the name of the collective. Thus the totalitarian power of the state still seems to be perceived as something taken for granted. It suggests ethnic rather than liberal nationalism.

2. The young generation express individualism in a higher proportion than the middle generation. The differences between the two generations can be explained in terms of the intensity and duration of the enforced collectivism. However, differences between respondents of two educational levels seem to be in contradiction with the above explanation. The latter inconsistency can be explained by:

a) higher capacity of HE respondents to oppose the enforced ideology, b) different social identities of HE and LE respondents c) higher degree of collectivist values of LE respondents (e.g. economic equality) d) greater social dependence of LE persons as compared to HE persons.

Thus, the greater importance of equality, fraternity, state attributed by LE respondents could be explained by their greater need for a welfare state. (It should be remembered that their financial situation is worse than three years ago and there is a lack of opportunities to improve their lot. By contrast, HE respondents are more successful in adapting themselves to social changes, they are better off.)

The greater importance attributed to the nation could be explained by the higher degree of identification of LE persons with their own nation because (1) they evaluate their own nation more positively, (2) collective identity is more important for LE persons who are more vulnerable in the competition within the market economy.

We may conclude that (1) the meaning of NATION and STATE is more influenced by the level of education rather than by the generation. (2) The meaning of the concepts NATION and STATE is affected by the degree of individualism which is stronger in the case of young and more educated group of respondents. (3) In general, STATE is accepted as the representative institution of a collective which

has legitimate power to set up limits to individual interests. (4) NATION is generally understood as an ethnic unity, a collective of people rather than as an open political institution. (5) The concepts of STATE and NATION are understood by both generations in accordance with the belief that nation and state must be in coincidence. (6) Higher educated persons value democracy and human rights as much as the state while lower educated persons tend to prefer the state more than democracy.

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