

# Chapter Five

## ►► HOUSEHOLDS, WORK AND FLEXIBILITY Survey Comparative Report (Volume 2: Thematic Reports)

### Work and job values in CEE and EU countries

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## INTRODUCTION

In the last decades, the developed world saw important changes in human labour. Work, which was originally seen as terrestrial pain and strain, became seen as positive behaviour, enriching human life on a mass scale. The rise of the post-materialist society in the last forty years, according to Ronald Inglehart, replaces values focused on satisfying economic and material needs for food, housing and survival by values of self-actualisation, personal development and the quality of life and opens the opportunity for the 'cognitive mobilisation' of workers. The change of work itself, as well as related work values, is a part of a comprehensive cultural change, linked to economic development and leading to post-materialist values, individual life-styles and civic participation (Inglehart, 1990). The Czech population experienced a slow trend towards post-materialism too, as revealed the comparison of value surveys witness (Rehakova, 2001).

At the same time, however, work became scarce and many people were deprived of it on account of rising unemployment: 'In fact, from being a burden, work has become a privilege' (Dahrendorf, 1990: 144). In the process of globalization, international capital moves much faster than national economies can adapt. Unskilled work moves from developed to poor countries where wage costs are lower. The opportunity to work in jobs involving high intrinsic values of human development is still not general throughout the world. In past centuries, paid

work was the basic status-forming activity of Western civilization. Nowadays, however, it brings not only satisfaction, but also stress, risk and uncertainty, leading to pressure in peoples' lives (Beck, 1992; Beck, 2000).

Both the positive and negative features of recent developments in the world of work are present in contemporary societies. The modernization process fuels economic growth and thus reduces the risk of material deprivation, by providing for basic needs including decent housing and healthcare. Education, as well as the new challenges posed by the information society contribute to human development. Instead of simple strategies for survival and material security, post-modern times bring about the potential for richer life-styles and improvements in the quality of life (Inglehart, 2001). The price paid, however, is not negligible; it includes a polluted environment, mounting stress, weakening family and social ties and other consequences.

Within this general framework, the transformation of political and economic systems in Central-East Europe (CEE hereafter) opens additional problems. After decades of the state administration of work under the command economy, the labour market is once more driven by market pressures which have changed the relationship between supply and demand in the workforce. On the supply side, skills acquired under the communist regime are being reshaped and improved in the light of new requirements. On the demand side, more stringent requirements for human resource utilisation

reflect the imperatives of the market economy. On both sides, more flexibility of work is required, but not easily accepted by workers.

In fact, the drive towards market behaviour is burdened by many distorting factors. The legacies of the communist regime are deeply rooted and the expectations of social protection of the population are still high. On account of such constraints, the labour force remains less than optimally deployed in large areas of economy. For instance, in the Czech Republic, labour hoarding has continued long after formal (legal) privatisation, due to generous conditions created for former state firms by semi-state banks operating under political influence. While weak incentives for work performance and job mobility persist, deficiency in work habits and a lack of flexibility is evident in large sections of the labour force.

During the economic reforms of the first part of the 1990s in CEE countries, labour market problems were described exclusively in the vocabulary and analysed only by the methodology of mainstream economics, which at that time was dominated by neo-classical thinking. Therefore, there was little place for investigating human values related to work and economic behaviour. There are several causes of this: firstly, values (more specifically, the hierarchy of preferences) are taken as for-granted and have no position in neo-classical economics; secondly, the measurement of human values is rather problematic, since one has to rely on subjective data; thirdly, time series data enabling comparison with the communist past are largely absent; fourthly, there is no research tradition in CEE countries which would facilitate this type of inquiry – such as economic sociology, economic anthropology or cultural studies.

By contrast, there is considerable attention paid to the institutional surroundings and social dimension of work in the West. Scholars are try-

ing to reveal qualitative changes in work relative to general value change, be it from materialism to post-materialism, from national economies to globalization or from social networks to atomized social webs. Indeed, there are important branches of economic sociology and socio-economics which deal with the social context of human work (Yankelovich et al., 1985; Tilly and Tilly, 1994; Sennett, 1998).

The requirements of flexibility make the value dimension of work even more important. Instead of the former stability, there is great mobility of jobs and occupations, as well as variability of hours and locations. Instead of a fixed set of skills which would equip someone for life, life-long learning and on-going retraining become important. Instead of a distinct separation between work and family life, there is an interpenetration of the two spheres – for example, people might work partly or fully at home, often with the help of new technologies. While people are forced to constantly adapt, they are also empowered by their wider competencies. They can also potentially enjoy considerable discretion, which might allow them to find a balance between the family and work life.

Our study is neither theoretical, nor historical. In a certain sense, it is only a beginning of a systematic analysis based on critical reading of opinion data that is backed up by a historical and cultural analysis. Here we focus upon the questions in the HWF survey that can illuminate attitudes to work and work values, especially with respect to flexibility. We use available data sources which reflect work and job values through the opinions of people. In the first part of the paper, we describe some methodological problems using also examples of previous research. In the second part we briefly present the various sources of data on work values. In the third and longest part, we display the main results of analysis of the survey. In conclusion, we summarize the main findings and discuss the problems and possibilities of generalizing from them.

## 1. HUMAN VALUES AND WORK: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES

The analysis of work values exposes many methodological problems. The main problem is that we cannot uncover work or any other values directly, but only indirectly through opinion surveys, in-depth interviews or participant observation. There are various concepts that describe human perceptions – at least, we can distinguish between preferences and attitudes, values and norms. Generally, values and norms are considered as more general and durable than preferences and attitudes.

For instance, Michael Hechter considers values as relatively general and durable criteria for evaluation. 'As such, they differ from other concepts like preferences (and attitudes) and norms. Like values, preferences (and attitudes) are internal, unlike values, preferences are labile rather than durable and particular rather than general. Whereas norms are also evaluative, general and durable, they are external to actors and – in contrast to values – require sanctions for their efficacy' (Hechter, 1994: 321).

In fact, human values as such can be identified only by means of a complex comparative socio-historical analysis (such as Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*). The traditions and socio-economic climate of a country may seriously constrain the calibration of a given value scale. People responding to sociological questionnaires express their long-term value orientations as well as their instant opinions and immediate reactions in varying mixtures, which are differentiated according to the cultural and communication capacities of the respondent. For this reason, it is better to uncover longer term value shifts (as opposed to shorter term attitudes) through longitudinal surveys. However, there are almost no such surveys available for the CEE countries at present.

In transition countries, there are additional problems related to communist legacy which has threefold importance. First, the communist regime was a totalitarian paternalism that destroyed human freedom of decision-making and, conse-

quently, values of self-reliance and responsibility. Second, it undermined the very base of the process of value creation by confining the public space and, consequently, limiting or even removing communication about general issues within society. Third, it also undermined trust among people which is there lower than in Western societies and even declined in the first period of transformation (Raiser et al., 2002). While the first aspect is somewhat acknowledged in cross-national comparisons, the second and third are not at all. All of them have an effect on interview situation and survey results.

Attitudinal data collected in the East and West can never ever be considered as homogeneous and strictly comparative. Articulation of values in CEE countries was confined and biased. People did not believe the Marxist ideology, but nothing else was at hand as a consistent frame of explanation for life and society. After 1989, people thus had to re-learn how to formulate their opinions in a consistent way. Therefore, even when using the same questions in cross-national comparison, we have to be aware of their different meanings in various countries or cultural regions. Paradoxically, the situation is somewhat better in fields where ideology dominated such as inequality, the welfare state and social justice. However the ideology was biased, the understanding of these problems was cultivated in some sense and thus differences between the East and West are salient.

Let us consider several examples. Regarding *inequality*, Marc Suhrcke concluded in the study based on the 1999 ISSP survey, that 'results do confirm the hypothesis of significant differences in attitudes. People living in transition countries tolerate existing income differences significantly less than people in the West, even after we control for the usual determinants of attitudes to inequality and for the actual level of income inequality' (Suhrcke, 2001: 25). As the inequality issue was the main one that was raised by the communist regime, systemic differences are quite under-

standable. Despite this, the comparison provides ambiguous results, since the most egalitarian country appears Portugal while egalitarian attitudes in the Czech Republic are on the same level as in France.

Regarding *social justice*, a very important variable is historical time. As Kluegel and Mason (2000: 172) found, 'in the early years of the transition, many citizens of postcommunist states supported market justice norms in simple opposition to socialist justice norms of the communist era. As the years pass, however, the influence of such 'revolutionary zeal' has declined, opening these beliefs to scrutiny on the ground of opportunity and equity'. In this regard, it is very telling that in the Czech Republic there is the reverse tendency: in comparison with 1995, 'Czechs in 1999 were less likely to believe that their society provided equal opportunity, served people's needs, or rewarded their intelligence and skill' (Kluegel and Mason 2000: 249). Most probably, previous attitudes were based on the illusion of a miraculous switch in the economic regime.

If one focuses on similarly complex issue as the *welfare state*, it is even harder to find associations between the actual (objective) state of affairs and the attitudes of people - or indeed consistent and clear country-specific or regional patterns. This was shown in analysis of peoples' support for different welfare regimes among five Western countries based on data from the 1996 ISSP survey. Giuliano Bonoli found 'the way survey questions are answered can be best understood with reference to norms and values that have traditionally dominated national practices and discourses' (Bonoli, 2000: 449). We can assume that the same would be found if comparing countries within the CEE region.

In contrast to the values relating to these 'ideological' issues, the area of work values is more burdened by relativity and lack of specificity. Under the communist regime, work itself was endowed with a dichotomous status: it was simultaneously a right and an obligation. On account of the promotion of work in the communist ideol-

ogy, it was eventually devalued in real human lives. People learnt to prefer aspects of work other than prestige and achievement. More often, such features as the lack of supervisory control and less strict working conditions were preferred because these enabled work at the formal work place to be less taxing and allowed more discretionary hours to perform a informal jobs or a variety of activities at home. Salaries were generally low, but the informal characteristics of work, including opportunities to earn an extra income in cash or kind, became important.

Under the former regimes, flexibility was not an issue. Jobs were generally long term and there was no (official) unemployment. Actors in the labour market had little (official) discretion in changing jobs or negotiating hours. Employment was heavily dominated by mass employment in the old industrial sector, whilst the service sector, where flexible jobs most predominate, was severely underdeveloped. There was no question of meeting consumer needs and demands through flexible production. To some extent this tradition still prevails in many sectors of the economy, since a large part of the population still work in the traditional industries. However, a flexible service sector is developing rapidly, along with small private enterprises where flexibility is required. There are therefore several levels to the labour market that we might expect to be reflected in people's attitudes and could even presage longer term value shifts (or the lack of them).

Analyses of work values strictly speaking are rather rare, even within the same 'family of nations'. Wolfgang Teckenberg and Michael Bayer (1999) compared the work values of Germans and Italians (in distinction of North-Middle and South regions) using the European Values Study of 1980 and 1990. They found that while for Italians, work mainly represented a channel to social integration, it has much more intrinsic value in Germany. In the latter country, work is more subordinated to the rational criteria of earning and economic efficiency. In Germany, the area of economic life is more clearly distinguished from family life and

leisure. In Italy, work and social life are more mixed, more like in East Germany.

S.D. Harding and F.J. Hikspoors (1995) used the same source for comparison of 13 Western countries. Following the former literature, they distinguish between values of 'personal development' and values relating to 'comfort and material conditions', arguing that the former are increasing in importance. While Northern European countries 'form the most fertile ground for empowered employees', Southern Europeans assume rather more importance to 'the value of comfort'. At the same time, however, 'employees are becoming more demanding of their employers' and it is not only the wage level as such which is important in this respect, but also the relationship between individual performance and reward (Harding and Hikspoors, 1995: 445-448).

As the comparison between East and West Germany suggests, the value of work in countries of real socialism was higher but only due to a stronger importance of the workplace with regard to socialisation (Meulemann, 1996). In this sense, communist countries were similar to South European, less developed nations where work has also

more social than economic functions. In particular, this was the aspect raised in opinion surveys by women in communist Czechoslovakia whose labour force participation was extremely high and whose pay was extremely low (Vecernik, 1986). However, unlike the Southern countries, there was little mix between the family and work life in pre-1989 Czechoslovakia.

During the course of transition, 'hard' labour market conditions led to more demanding criteria for work performance. We would expect this to reduce the previous social character of work and produce a more critical stance toward workers' capacities and abilities. However, the experience of the past often lead people to have a rather exaggerated subjective assessment of their abilities and to a to blame the state rather than themselves for job insecurities and work inadequacies. We can also assume that the legacy of communist attitudes is unevenly distributed among the population, most probably downwards along the educational hierarchy and according to the distinction between dependent and independent work (Vecernik and Mateju, 1999).

## 2. DATA SOURCES

As we said above, human values can be identified only by means of a complex comparative socio-historical analysis. What we do here is much simpler - we rely upon individual opinions and attitudes regarding employment and work in general and some of its particular features. We analyse this in a cross-national perspective which has some advantages as well as disadvantages. On the one hand, comparison based on cross-national surveys is the only possible way how to define 'national', 'regional' or 'transitional' profiles of opinions. On the other hand, even taking into account precautions concerning the comparability of survey questions, various cultural, regional and societal contexts do matter and affect results in a way that is hard to estimate.

Mostly we use the HWF data but partly we compare them also with other surveys such as the ISSP (International Social Survey Programme) module on work values (1996) and the EVS (European Values Survey) (1999). ISSP is a long-term international research project which originated in 1983 and is based on international and inter-project co-operation in social sciences. Samples of the 1996 ISSP module 'Work orientations' in countries under observation, after selection of respondents 18-65 years of age include more than 1000 cases per country (the next module 'Work orientations' is planned for 2004). The European Values Study was conducted the first time in 1981. The last survey we use here is of 1999 and samples of respondents 18-65 years of age include also more than 1000 cases per country.

### 3. DESCRIPTION OF THE MAIN RESULTS

Below we begin with the question which is most central to the analysis of work values: satisfaction in the main job. After reporting about the overall satisfaction, respondents were asked about its various components. The contrast of the Eastern and Western countries is here striking - both sets of countries display large internal homogeneity and distance towards one another.

The most satisfied are the Dutch and the Swedes and those that declare themselves the least satisfied are the Czechs, Hungarians and Romanians. In all countries, the area of a highest satisfaction is job stability and working hours, while the item with the least satisfaction is the locality of work - this is often with respect to commuting.

**Table 1. Satisfaction in the main job (index)**

	Czech Republic	Hungary	Slovenia	Bulgaria	Romania	Great Britain	Netherlands	Sweden
Overall	64.3	65.2	68.8	67.2	65.4	78.2	84.9	81.1
1. Stability	71.1		72.7	67.8	69.2	86.2	91.1	89.1
2. Duration	62.0	77.1	64.5	71.7	67.7	75.8	85.9	72.7
3. Hours	70.9	65.3	74.7	74.1	73.5	83.3	83.6	84.6
4. Locality	49.1	73.8	51.5	44.2	41.0	62.0	71.2	59.6
5. Earnings	60.8	43.3	62.0	61.5	60.7	72.7	79.4	74.0
Average 1-5	63.0		66.2	64.5	64.7	77.4	82.6	77.5

Note: Index is computed so that 'very satisfied'=100 and 'very dissatisfied'=0.

Source: HWF Survey 2001 – Unified international data collection

**Table 2. Satisfaction in the main job (correlations of the overall satisfaction with partial satisfactions)**

	Czech Republic	Hungary	Slovenia	Bulgaria	Romania	Great Britain	Netherlands	Sweden
1. Stability	0.552		0.320	0.575	0.582	0.397	0.461	0.354
2. Duration	0.511	0.339	0.304	0.452	0.557	0.264	0.311	0.235
3. Hours	0.511	0.464	0.418	0.490	0.537	0.410	0.338	0.267
4. Locality	0.518	0.429	0.301	0.577	0.515	0.347	0.361	0.415
5. Earnings	0.500	0.465	0.469	0.455	0.526	0.331	0.301	0.310

Note: All correlations significant on the level  $P=0.000$ .

Source: HWF Survey 2001 – Unified international data collection

It is interesting that the average of individual components is in all cases lower than the overall satisfaction - this suggests a value-added aspect of the composite effect of the job. However, while in the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Romania, partial satisfactions predicts the overall index quite well, in other countries the correlations are

much lower. Surprisingly, in most cases it is not earnings that contribute the most to the overall satisfaction (this is only the case in Hungary and Slovenia) but the stability of the job (in the Netherlands, Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Romania), working hours (in Great Britain) or locality of work (in Sweden).



**Table 3. Overall satisfaction in the main job (correlation with person's characteristics)**

	Czech Republic	Hungary	Slovenia	Bulgaria	Romania	Great Britain	Netherlands	Sweden
Sex	0.013 (0.668)	0.054 (0.158)	0.023 (0.586)	0.062 (0.053)	0.052 (0.123)	0.062 (0.113)	0.050 (0.166)	0.006 (0.830)
Age	0.002 (0.948)	0.017 (0.664)	-0.047 (0.264)	-0.016 (0.614)	-0.051 (0.132)	0.004 (0.917)	0.091 (0.011)	0.058 (0.038)
Education	0.112 (0.000)	0.220 (0.000)	0.169 (0.000)	0.112 (0.000)	0.284 (0.000)	-0.027 (0.483)	-0.013 (0.719)	0.016 (0.563)
Self-employed.	0.097 (0.002)	0.075 (0.050)	-0.003 (0.938)	-0.089 (0.005)	0.077 (0.023)	0.080 (0.040)	0.081 (0.023)	0.138 (0.000)
Type of locality	-0.042 (0.185)	-0.096 (0.012)	-0.094 (0.024)	-0.039 (0.226)	-0.165 (0.000)	0.004 (0.924)	-0.001 (0.975)	0.003 (0.928)
Household income	0.116 (0.000)	0.270 (0.000)	0.267 (0.000)	0.233 (0.000)	0.348 (0.000)	-0.050 (0.260)	0.020 (0.616)	0.142 (0.000)
Economic satisfaction	0.155 (0.000)	0.163 (0.002)	0.172 (0.000)	0.186 (0.000)	0.368 (0.000)	-0.024 (0.637)	-0.561 (0.205)	0.158 (0.000)

Note: P level in parantheses.

Source: HWF Survey 2001 – Unified international data collection

Using the regression analysis, it is easy to predict overall satisfaction in the job by partial satisfactions, but difficult to do the same with a person's characteristics. Only the level of education provides significant results, and only in CEE countries. The more educated a person is, the more satisfied they are with their job. This could be caused by the relative scarcity of higher education in these countries, which results in a stronger educational hierarchy. It testifies also to the changes that took place during a short period of time during the transition, which opened doors for educated workers. In some countries (the Czech Republic, Sweden), self-employment contributes to job satisfaction, while in other countries (all Eastern countries and Romania in particular), the type of locality is important.

An important factor is, how much a worker feels free in his/her job regarding the decision-making about working hours, work schedule, overtime work and location of work. One could suppose that the more developed the economy is and the more skilled the labour force, the higher is the liberty in workers' decision-making. To simplify the picture, in Table 4 we chose only the answer 'I decide' and collapsed all others into one

category 'the employer decides', 'I and employer decide together', 'it is outside of control of both of us'). We see a marked contrast between the Eastern and Western countries - the percentage of 'free' workers being roughly one-fifth in the former and one-third in the latter. The only exception is Romania, due to the large number of farmers, most of whom are able to control their hours of work.

Let us now consider the relationship between freedom of decision making and satisfaction with the job. We might hypothesise that job satisfaction would increase where freedom to control aspects of the job were highest. We find only two countries among those observed where overall satisfaction is significantly positively associated with freedom of decision-making on the job: Hungary and Sweden. In most of other countries, the relationship is positive but insignificant. In Bulgaria and Romania, correlations are negative, which means the more freedom, the less satisfaction. This is rather strange but it could be explained by the fact that a considerable part of the 'free' working population are farmers who have many other reasons for dissatisfaction under the transition processes.

**Table 4. Freedom in decision-making in the main job (index)**

	Czech Republic	Hungary	Slovenia	Bulgaria	Romania	Great Britain	Netherlands	Sweden
Number of hours	20.9	22.0	21.6	18.0	34.0	30.9	34.0	35.9
Working schedule	17.7	23.2	22.0	18.2	33.5	31.2	42.3	35.8
Overtime work	27.3	25.4	25.4	20.9	42.6	43.8	61.6	58.8
Place of the work	19.3	21.4	20.5	18.2	37.2	21.2	25.7	27.7

Note: Answers on decision-making were recoded so that 1= 'I decide myself' and 0=all other variants. P level in parentheses.

Source: HWF Survey 2001 – Unified international data collection

**Table 5. Overall satisfaction in the main job (correlation with freedom in decision-making)**

	Czech Republic	Hungary	Slovenia	Bulgaria	Romania	Great Britain	Netherlands	Sweden
Number of hours	0.060 (0.054)	0.133 (0.000)	0.006 (0.883)	-0.100 (0.002)	-0.047 (0.164)	0.082 (0.035)	0.074 (0.041)	0.198 (0.000)
Working schedule	0.059 (0.059)	0.116 (0.002)	0.034 (0.417)	-0.095 (0.003)	-0.096 (0.005)	0.090 (0.022)	0.065 (0.072)	0.100 (0.001)
Overtime work	0.086 (0.006)	0.123 (0.002)	0.050 (0.257)	-0.076 (0.019)	0.027 (0.447)	0.042 (0.309)	0.093 (0.014)	0.130 (0.000)
Place of the work	0.060 (0.058)	0.120 (0.002)	-0.039 (0.361)	-0.099 (0.002)	-0.077 (0.024)	0.099 (0.011)	0.067 (0.068)	0.117 (0.000)

Source: HWF Survey 2001 – Unified international data collection

There are two sets of questions describing something what could be described as a skill and labour mobility potential, or a readiness to adapt to harder conditions of work. The first item evokes the situation of joblessness and asks about respondent's willingness to accept new job under certain conditions. The second evokes the situation of an attractive offer of a job with twice the salary in comparison with current earnings and asks again about willingness to accept new job under certain conditions.

It is hard to find a rationale behind the large inter-country diversity of acceptable conditions of a new job, if unemployed. Apparently, Eastern nations are ready to work more – but Britons too. Western populations are ready to learn a new language – but Slovenes as well. The most choosy seem to be Dutch workers who would be reluctant to work more, accept less attractive work conditions or – even – retrain. However, they compensate this reluctance by readiness to learn a

new language. The very opposite case is represented by Bulgarians who declare their readiness to work more and accept worse conditions the most of all. The difference can be explained by fear of unemployment. While in the Netherlands the unemployment rate was very low, in the UK, Slovenia, Bulgaria it is very high.

If counting all strategies together, we find almost a half of Czechs and Britons with zero interest to invest into one's own skills or compensate something for sake of a new employment. However, there is almost one-third of Britons ready to accept one of 3-5 strategies or several of them together. Czechs accept much narrower scope of potential activities. The most ready to accept any or several strategies are Bulgarians, in sharp contrast to Czechs where only less than one-fifth would be ready to follow any of proposed strategies. Czechs score in retraining but are laggards in other possible ways.

**Table 6. Imagine that you had no job and could get a new one only under certain conditions. Would you be willing to ...**

	Czech Republic	Hungary	Slovenia	Bulgaria	Great Britain	Netherlands
1. Work more than 40 hours per week	39.5		53.2	57.5	53.6	27.4
2. Move (migrate) to another settlement	15.9	19.1	26.0	27.3	38.6	25.4
3. Accept less attractive work conditions	16.6	25.0	23.7	33.0	27.2	20.3
4. Retrain for another profession	57.5	58.0	40.2	46.2	64.3	50.2
5. Learn a new foreign language	39.7	44.6	48.6	36.9	57.4	63.2
Count:						
0	48.9		32.3	29.2	46.9	28.7
1-2	32.5		34.2	33.3	22.4	40.8
3-5	18.6		33.4	37.4	30.7	30.5
Mean	1.14		1.73	1.96	1.52	1.72

Note: Only answers 'yes' were taken into account. The other two answers were 'maybe' and 'no'.

Source: HWF Survey 2001 – Unified international data collection

Results suggest a bifurcated or segmented labour market, with an inflexible group of workers on the one hand and a dynamic group of flexible workers on the other hand. While the first reflects the continuation of old industrial traditions from the former era, the second represents new attitudes towards work and job, readiness to mobility and flexibility. In reality however, there is no such clear distinction separating those two groups but various transitory categories between them.

Taking as contrasting examples the Czech Republic and Great Britain, we see that flexibility potential is more often declared by men, younger people and, in particular, is related to education in both countries. The specificity of the Czech population is that self-employed people declare much more willingness to move and invest than employees, unlike Great Britain where this distinction does not matter. The specificity of British population is, however, the association between readiness to be flexible and income level. This suggests that returns to flexibility, be they experienced or expected, are probably higher in standard market countries than in transition countries.

In general, the incentive (pull) effect is much stronger than enforcement (push) effect of unem-

ployment. It is again the Czech Republic where the gap between both 'potentials' is the highest (if comparing mean count of strategies). Bulgaria is on the second place, followed by Great Britain and the Netherlands where both perspectives return the same averages. In particular, Czechs would be more willing to accept worse work conditions (twice as much), work more (1.6 times more) and, even, migrate (also 1.6 times more) for a higher salary than for a new job if unemployed.

In any case, there still remains 42 percent of Czechs who would not be interested in any strategy leading to a doubled salary, somewhat less than Britons. In contrast, there is only one-quarter of Bulgarians and one-third of Dutch who would be not interested. There are also more Bulgarians and Britons ready to accept 3-5 strategies. In this perspective, the structure of attitudes does not respect regime differences at all. The fact that we can compare only four countries makes considerations about possible reasons difficult. It is also surprising that the CEE populations – speaking minority languages – are less ready to learn a new language in comparison with Britons.

**Table 7. Imagine that you were offered a new job position with twice the salary you have now. Would you be willing to ...**

	Czech Republic	Hungary	Slovenia	Bulgaria	Great Britain	Netherlands
1. Work more than 40 hours per week	63.9			70.1	63.8	31.6
2. Move (migrate) to another settlement	26.4	26.8		36.2	50.3	28.9
3. Accept less attractive work conditions	31.8	29.1		41.7	39.8	19.1
4. Retrain for another profession	67.6	60.9		54.1	70.2	46.4
5. Learn a new foreign language	49.1	47.5		44.2	63.8	60.5
Count:						
0	42.2			25.5	46.2	34.7
1-2	25.3			25.5	14.2	33.2
3-5	32.5			49.1	39.6	32.1
Mean	1.61			2.36	1.82	1.70

Note: Only answers 'yes' were taken into account. The other two answers were 'maybe' and 'no'.

Source: HWF Survey 2001 – Unified international data collection

**Table 8A. Have any of the following changes occurred in your occupational life since 1989? A. All respondents**

	Czech Republic	Slovenia	Bulgaria	Romania	Great Britain
1. Entered employment	23.8	20.0	20.7	14.5	15.3
2. Retired.	3.8	16.9	9.9	24.0	11.7
3. Changed job once	30.8	17.2	15.2	17.6	15.2
4. Changed job more times	25.7	12.2	20.8	10.1	27.5
5. Changed profession once	24.5	9.5	9.6	9.1	8.5
6. Changed profession more	13.3	4.7	10.5	4.7	8.1
7. Started private business.	24.2	6.5	7.0	5.7	6.7
8. Promoted	22.6	16.9	6.7	8.3	21.3
9. Demoted	9.6	3.4	1.8	1.2	2.0
10. Started second job	15.6	7.1	4.6	5.4	7.6
11. Lost employment once	18.8	13.1	19.5	14.9	10.1
12. Lost empl. more times	8.3	3.6	16.7	3.3	4.6
Count:					
0	45.2	40.4	19.5	38.7	26.0
1-2	26.1	43.6	61.5	48.1	55.6
3 and more	7.3	16.1	19.0	13.2	18.5

Source: HWF Survey 2001 – Unified international data collection

**Table 8B. Has any of the following changes occurred in your occupational life since 1989?  
B. Respondents in the labour force over the entire period**

	Czech Republic	Slovenia	Bulgaria	Romania	Great Britain
<i>Percent of the sample</i>	72.5	65.6	69.7	62.7	73.0
3. Changed job once	31.3	14.7	16.9	19.1	18.6
4. Changed job more times	25.7	9.3	21.9	10.1	27.2
5. Changed profession once	24.9	7.2	10.3	10.5	9.4
6. Changed profession more	13.1	3.5	10.8	4.9	7.7
7. Started private business.	26.4	5.7	8.2	6.8	7.8
8. Promoted	23.6	16.1	6.2	6.9	22.3
9. Demoted	10.0	3.5	1.9	1.2	2.2
10. Started second job	13.4	5.5	3.9	5.4	6.4
11. Lost employment once	16.8	12.2	23.0	17.4	11.3
12. Lost employment more times	7.6	3.1	18.5	3.9	4.2
0	50.0	57.7	36.2	60.4	39.7
<i>Count</i> 1-2	24.8	30.2	48.9	29.6	45.4
3 and more	25.2	12.1	14.9	10.1	15.0

Source: HWF Survey 2001 – Unified international data collection

The questions about changes in economic and occupational status appear to be purely 'objective'. However, as our experience with Czech data witnesses, there is a huge difference between labour mobility as usually measured by the Labour Force Surveys (LFS) and respondents' retrospective answers. The main reason certainly is that LFS cannot cover such long period of time, their analyses being limited on one year (five quarters exactly). The other reason is that LFS does not include such a wide spectrum of changes. Last but not least, people often perceive as important changes that include other events not possible to measure by statistics, i.e. when comparing reported status in two periods.

The objective of the question asking to report about changes during a long period of time (which was used several times in Czech surveys) was to demonstrate huge changes occurred during the first transition decade in reforming countries, in comparison with advanced Western countries. As the question was only optional, we have only the UK as a 'benchmark country'. Against expectations, various mobility flows are much higher in the politically and economically 'stable'

Great Britain than in post-communist transitory Czech Republic and Slovenia.

Czechs experienced the most single changes but many of them are in parallel - starting private business can be also declared and recorded as change of job, change of profession, losing employment and professional promotion. Therefore, it is rather the count of mobilities which matters. In this perspective, the British and the Bulgarian populations appear to be even more mobile, since only one-fifth/one-quarter have not registered any change, in contrast to Czech population where 'only' 55 per cent respondents moved in some sense.

In the second part of the table, we kept only respondents remaining in the labour force the entire period under observation. The percentage ranges between two-thirds in Slovenia and Balkan countries and near to three-quarters in the Czech Republic and Great Britain. Here we find extreme difference between Bulgaria which displays large mobility (64 per cent) and Romania reporting only a small one (40 per cent). In Bulgaria, there are twice as many people reporting a change of the job more than one time and almost five times more people reporting multiple spells of unemployment, in comparison with Romania.

In many cases, we find various 'typical' mobility shifts in individual countries. In Bulgaria, there are repeated losses of the job followed by repeated unemployment spells. In contrast in Romania, there is a lot of single loss of job and following one unemployment spell.

In the Czech Republic, the typical biographical event is job change paralleled by change of occupation. The country is similar to Great Britain as regards frequent job mobility, but dissimilar in

the sense that such mobility involves change of occupation at the same time. Moreover, change of profession is also often linked to self-employment in the Czech Republic. We identified 11 percent of respondents (permanently in the labour force) where job mobility meant also a change of profession and starting a private business, against about 2 percent in all other countries. This is also a considerable number of respondents declaring three or more job changes.

#### 4. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Very often, the same or similar questions return different results in various surveys. The only question that can be used to compare the HWF to the other opinion surveys carried out in recent years are shown in Table 9. While the rank order of satisfaction in the job is the same in all surveys in Western countries under observation, it varies somewhat in Eastern countries. Among them, location of Hungary is still quite consistent, and partly also placement of two Balkan countries. The main 'troublemaker' is the Czech Republic that located itself on the first place among Eastern countries in 1999 and at the very end in 2001. The only possible explanation for such difference is the rising requirements of work under harder labour market conditions.

Our observations at present are cross-national, not taking the time dimension into account. The interesting question is to what extent

work values in the two halves of Europe are converging? Regular observation of subjective indicators in the two parts of Germany can give us some hints, since this is a living experiment in the merging of two countries, separated for four decades by political and economic regime. It is interesting to find that perception of respondent's job does not differ in both parts of unified Germany in 1998 and has not changed at all since 1993, according to welfare survey. While the objective situation did certainly change in the sense of greater similarity of work-style and job insecurities, its subjective perception did not change at all (Habich, Noll and Zapf, 1999). Job satisfaction has been also constant during the 1990-2000 decade remaining very close in both Germanies (Christoph, 2002). It seems, therefore, that our results are not transitory, therefore.

**Table 9. Satisfaction in the job (rank order)**

	Czech Republic	Hungary	Slovenia	Bulgaria	Romania	Great Britain	Netherlands	Sweden
A ISSP-1996	4-5	8	4-5	7		3	1	2
B EVS-1999	3	6	7	4	5		1	2
C HWF-2001	8	7	4	5	6	3	1	2

Source: ISSP-1996, EVS-1999, HWF-2001

Nevertheless the main conclusion of our analysis is that there are differences between CEE countries and EU countries under observation on a number of indicators:

- CEE people are less satisfied with their jobs than EU people, first and foremost because of unsatisfactory salaries; in contrast, the level of control does not seem to affect satisfaction with work and job to any great extent;
- Education makes a difference to the satisfaction of people in CEE countries, most probably because of many new opportunities for educated people which has led to increasing distinction among educational and occupational categories on the labour market.
- People in CEE countries have much less control over different aspects of their work than in the EU countries; this might be because of the continued importance of big, old-style employers as well as similar attitudes even in many new firms.
- The great extent of readiness to be flexible appears both in CEE and EU countries as the cases of Bulgaria and Great Britain illustrate; in Great Britain, the erosion of job security has been an explicit policy objective since 20 years and this has only recently been modified slightly.
- Czech workers are flexible too but experienced several single changes and in parallel; they are also the most likely to be self-employed in both their first and second job significantly more than people in other countries.
- There seems to be a cleavage between a highly mobile and highly immobile sector of the labour market, at least in terms of job change; such cleavage is related to education in a considerable degree.
- Positive or 'pull' incentives, such as increased salary are more likely to induce flexibility than negative or 'push' incentives, such as fear of unemployment; probably better conditions to promote flexibility would be

thus income dynamics under full employment, rather than fear of unemployment.

Last but not least, we should mention other forms of flexibility that we have not yet explored. For the relatively poor nations of CEE region, the communist regime was an involuntary lesson of inventive search for coping strategies and, therefore, their own forms of 'flexibility'. Such ways were further cultivated and developed under new regimes and have remained rather hidden, much like in the former regime. In this respect, we can speculate about the following forms of spontaneous flexibility 'from below' which might involve combinations of various statuses:

- The first is a combination of full dependent employment (within weak constraints, be they given or negotiated) with a part-time self-employment, be it in the same or similar job (advantageous, because one can use time and premises of the main job) or with a completely different job. In reality, the second job is often primary regarding time and effort invested. According to HWF survey, 16.5 per cent of full-time employees have an additional income, the highest figure is in the Czech Republic (25 per cent).
- The second is the case of full dependent employment in a job, but one possessing considerable positional (social) capital regarding decision-making power. This solution is most likely for state officers on various level of authority. This possibility was opened by privatization (when officers of the Ministry of Privatization became actual owners of firms and other assets) and is constantly encouraged by state orders and all non transparent trading between the state and the private sector.
- The third is a combination of long-term welfare status with various informal activities, be they abroad or at home, non official self-employment or contracting occasional or seasonal work, etc. The obscurity of the labour market in transition economies, the low levels of law enforcement and the generally corrupt environment, create fertile conditions

for inventing and using plenty of 'flexible' solutions which avoid both the formal economy and the state.

- The fourth is the combination of a minimum wage job with an additional payment in cash, thus avoiding considerable payroll and incomes taxes. This is preferred by employers and by some employees too. Yet another solution is a sickness status, often used by employees going to be fired (they are thus protected during time of sickness) or employers (who in this way solve the problem of a temporary lack of work for employees). The use of this strategy is enabled by the fact that sickness status can be quite easily acquired in transition countries

These 'strategies' are not exclusive to transition countries but they are quite typical for them, unlike standard democracies with transparent and enforced rules of economic life. All alternatives to the formal economy are also evidence of the relaxed attitudes towards traditional work virtues and huge requirements of the state. They indicate, however, a readiness to becoming flexible maybe even more than people declare in their attitudes, provided – of course – that a decent salary will be paid. This is also the reason why 'Eastern' workers become very flexible, even compared with the West where the rewards of work are much higher. The puzzling challenge is, then, how to create a 'Western' economic climate and conditions with 'Eastern' attitudes and work ethics.



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