

YOUNG CZECHS' PERCEPTIONS OF
THE VELVET DIVORCE AND THE
MODERN CZECH IDENTITY

By

BRETT RICHARD CHLOUPEK

Bachelor of Science in Geography

Bachelor of Science in C.I.S.

University of Nebraska Kearney

Kearney, NE

2005

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
July, 2007

YOUNG CZECHS' PERCEPTIONS OF
THE VELVET DIVORCE AND THE
MODERN CZECH IDENTITY

Thesis Approved:

Reuel Hanks

Dr. Reuel Hanks (Chair)

Dale Lightfoot

Dr. Dale Lightfoot

Joel Jenswold

Dr. Joel Jenswold

Dr. A. Gordon Emslie

Dean of the Graduate College

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Reuel Hanks for encouraging me to pursue this project. His continued support and challenging insights into my work made this thesis a reality. Thanks go to my other committee members, Dr. Dale Lightfoot and Dr. Joel Jenswold for their invaluable advice, unique expertise, and much needed support throughout the writing of my thesis.

A great deal of gratitude is due to the faculties of Charles University in Prague, CZ and Masaryk University in Brno, CZ for helping administer student surveys and donating their valuable time.

Thank you to Hana and Ludmila Svobodova for taking care of me over the years and being my family away from home in the Moravské Budejovice. Thanks go to Sylvia Mihalik for being my resident expert on all things Slovak and giving me encouragement.

Thank you to my grandmother Edith Weber for maintaining ties with our Czech relatives and taking me back to the ‘old country.’ Thanks to all of my extended family for remembering our heritage and keeping some of its traditions. Finally, thank you to my parents, Randy and Shelly, my brother Eric, and sister Emily for their care and support throughout my academic career. They are the source of the confidence and encouragement I needed to complete this project.

To all of these people, děkuju pěkně!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Overview of Study	1
Research Questions	2
Study Area	3
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	5
Introduction.....	5
Studies on National Identity in Europe.....	5
Studies on Historical Czech Identity Formation.....	8
Studies on the Impacts of Communism	9
Studies on Nationalism and Nationalist Movements.....	11
Conclusion	13
III. HISTORY OF NATIONAL IDENTITY IN FORMER CZECHOSLOVAKIA...14	
Introduction.....	14
Early Settlement in the Czech Region	14
The Beginnings of Catholicism in Bohemia.....	17
Charles IV, Holy Roman Emperor.....	18
Reformation in Bohemian and the Hussites.....	19
The Habsburg Dynasty	21
Masaryk and the Formation of Czechoslovakia.....	22
The Pittsburg Treaty and the Slovaks	23
World War II and the Beginning of Communism	27
Communism.....	30
The Velvet Revolution.....	32
The Velvet Divorce.....	34
Conclusion	35

Chapter	Page
IV. METHODOLOGY	38
Introduction.....	38
Survey Design.....	38
GIS Database Creation.....	40
V. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS	43
Introduction.....	43
Survey Demographics.....	45
Survey Opinion Comparisons with Velvet Divorce Opinion Polls	52
Views on the Causes of the Velvet Divorce	58
Contemporary Views on Czech Identity.....	67
The Components of Czech Culture.....	69
Conclusion	78
VI. CONCLUSIONS	80
REFERENCES	84
APPENDICIES	
APPENDIX A: Czech Student Survey	87
APPENDIX B: Survey Results Summary	87
APPENDIX C: IRB Approval Documents	87

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Ethnic Structure of Bohemia - 1900	25
2. Ethnic Structure of Moravia - 1900	25
3. Ethnic Structure of Slovak Territory - 1900	25
4. Ethnic Structure of Czech Territory in 1930.....	28
5. Ethnic Structure of Slovak Territory in 1930	28
6. Decrease in German Population in Czechoslovakia 1945-1947.....	30
7. Ethnic Structure of Czechoslovakia in 1991.....	33
8. Comparison of Survey and 2003 Czech Demographics	46
9. Comparison of Survey and 1991 Czech Demographics	49
10. Comparison of Survey and Velvet Divorce Opinions	52
11. Views on Separation by Gender	54
12. Regional Comparison of Velvet Divorce Opinions	56
13. Primary Factor Behind Velvet Divorce – Regional Comparison	59
14. Czech Views on the Primary Cause of the Velvet Divorce	66
15. Czech Views on the Similarity of Czech and Slovak Cultures.....	68
16. Views on the Primary Components of Czech Culture	70
17. Religious Affiliations by Census Year	71

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. The Czech Republic and its Neighboring Countries.....	4
2. The three modern historical ethnic regions of the Czech Republic	16
3. A 1930s Russian propaganda cartoon by Kukriniksy	27
4. GIS Attribute Table of Cities Shapefile	40
5. Cities Shapefile SQL Query Example	41
6. Location of Survey Respondents within Historiocultural Regions.....	51
7. A typical roadside religious monument found in the Czech Republic	72
8. Traditions on display during a Moravian bachelor party.....	76

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Overview of Study

Young college-aged Czech students find themselves coming of age during a period of momentous change within their country. These students are caught between two unique generations of Czechs. The earlier generation grew up in Czechoslovakia, a country dominated by the post-World War II communist regime. It was this generation which, in their college years, were active in the dissident movements and student protests that brought an end to the communist control of Czechoslovakia in 1989 (Betz 1990; Hartl 1993). The later generation is the first in over 50 years not to live under communism. Members of this generation however, know Czechoslovakia only as a part of their history and are growing up in an emerging capitalist society. The focus of this study is on the intermediate generation of students who experienced both the reemergence of Czechoslovakia from years of communism as well as its subsequent breakup during their early childhoods. The members of this generation find themselves in a position which is especially unique. These students were too young to have participated in both the Velvet Revolution and Velvet Divorce, yet lived through both.

Since these students were in primary school when the Velvet Divorce occurred, they represent valuable, albeit largely untapped sources of information and may offer

useful insights into the effects these monumental transitions had on their country and its culture, as well as its national identity and relationship with Slovakia.

Research Questions

This study focuses on the Velvet Divorce. The purpose of this study is to analyze student survey responses in order to explain young Czechs' perceptions on how the Velvet Divorce affected the modern Czech national identity. The goals of the thesis will be:

1. To use student survey responses to explain young Czech students' views regarding the Velvet Divorce and the political/cultural events which they perceive to have brought it about.
2. To use student responses to determine which aspects of Czech culture contribute most to the modern Czech national identity in the opinions of young Czech students.
3. To analyze survey responses from a uniquely geographical perspective in order to identify spatial trends and regionalization within the survey responses, with particular emphasis on the Bohemian and Moravian cultural regions of the Czech Republic.

Study Area

The Czech Republic is a landlocked country in Central-Eastern Europe of approximately 78,866 km² (CIA), which was originally formed as part of Czechoslovakia at the end of World War I in 1918. It is the most westerly of the Slavic countries and is bordered to the west and south by Germany and Austria (Figure 1). The Czech Republic's neighbor to the southeast is Slovakia, the country with which it was originally united within the former Czechoslovakia, and the country which separated from it during the Velvet Divorce. The population of the Czech Republic as of July, 2006 was 10,235,455 (CIA).

The capital city of the Czech Republic (and former capital of Czechoslovakia) is Prague, located in the northwestern part of the country in the Bohemian region. The country is divided into 14 administrative regions, similar to counties (in Czech, *kraj*), and each has a designated regional capital city.

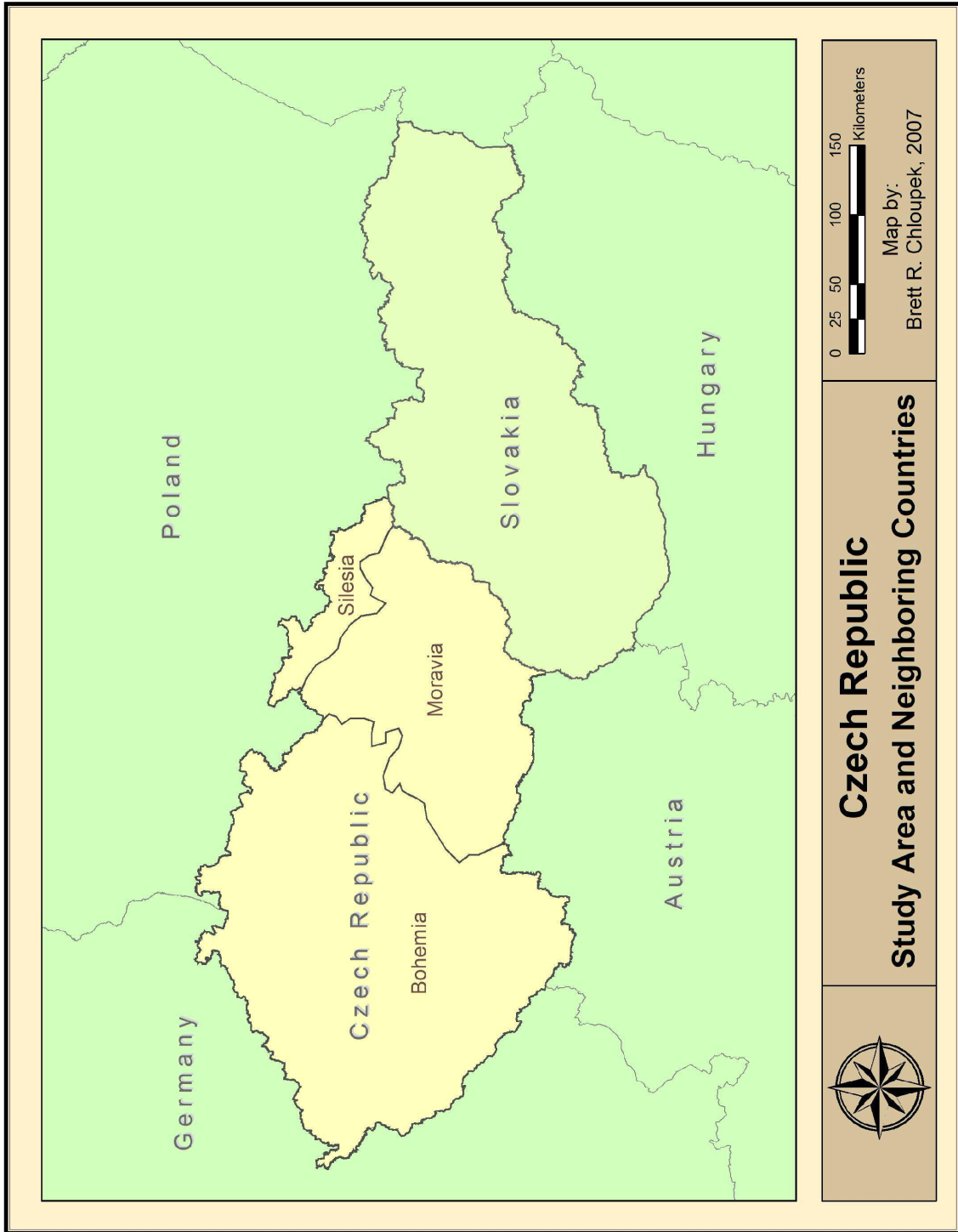


Figure 1. The Czech Republic and its Neighboring Countries.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Because of the substantial amount of change Europe has undergone since the fall of Communism in 1989, there has been a great deal written about the study of national identity in Central and Eastern Europe. Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia were the most notable examples of the sociopolitical change that occurred, resulting in both cases in the formation of new states, drawn along ethnic lines.

In order to conduct a comprehensive study regarding the impact of the Velvet Divorce on Czech identity, a review of literature written on several topics must be completed. The literature reviewed in preparation for this study focuses on the impact of communism's end in Eastern Europe and the subsequent need for new methods to conceptualize Europe and its identities, national identity in the Czech Republic, and the breakup of Czechoslovakia.

Studies on National Identity in Europe

Dingdale (1999) focuses on how best to create “a new conceptualization for the territory of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union,” arguing that the “old conceptualization of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union is no longer valid” (Dingdale

1999, 145). His article discusses the reorganization of Central and Eastern Europe after the end of Soviet control and the resulting surge in nationalist movements among the newly independent countries. He notes that “each country is now an independent state with its own economic and political system, its own aspirations for international relations and its own sense of cultural identity” (Dingdale 1999, 151). The major argument of the article is that all-encompassing regional terms like “Central Europe” and “Eastern Europe,” which are commonplace in research conducted during the Soviet era, are no longer relevant because the political and cultural dynamics within the regions have changed them entirely. The author points out that the countries within these vernacular regions have been “released from the enforced communist or Soviet colonial construction of collective identity,” and for this reason, the question arises as to whether or not these terms can remain a valid method of describing portions of Europe (Dingdale 1999, 146).

Václav Klaus also addressed the issue of reorganizing Europe after the end of communism during a speech in 2001, warning that the creation of “an artificial European state” would be a mistake (Klaus 2005, 117). Additionally, he lays out what he believes will be the cultural/political effects of joining the European Monetary Union (EMU). Klaus fears that a common currency would force political unification of Europe and harm nationalism within the Czech Republic (Klaus 2005, 118).

Focusing on the topics of national ideology and national identity, Larson et al. (1995), review various contemporary viewpoints regarding both terms and their role in describing Eastern Europe. The authors point out that in regard to measuring both national identity and ideology, very few studies have sought to measure and compare national identities of individual countries. To conduct a study of national identity among

four different countries (the authors focus on the USA, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Norway), the authors employ student surveys consisting of keywords which are ranked according to meaningfulness as determined by the students. Their survey analysis is focused on identifying unifying or conflicting combinations and sets of keywords within the individual survey groups. The study provides a useful example of a method used to measure perceptions of national identity and utilizes students' perceptions in the form of survey data as its primary data source, which is similar to the proposed methodology of this thesis.

In his study examining the role of language in constructing post-Soviet Estonian identity, Berg (2002) argues that the formation of a sense of nation or national identity in Estonia is intensely rooted in rural lifestyle and the peoples' common struggle to escape the oppression and control of the Soviet government. Additionally, the author examines the role Estonian language has played in constructing a national identity combined with an emphasis on the "geographical and political isolation from linguistic kinfolk, and the major religious border, which all reinforce the distinct Estonian identity" (Berg 2002, 112). Language has historically played a large role in the nationalism of the Czech Republic and so this study provides several good hypotheses about the role of language in constructing national identity which can be compared to the results of the student surveys.

Studies on Historical Czech Identity Formation

Agnew (2004) provides the most comprehensive historical study which has been conducted to date about the Czechs in a detailed history of the area from its earliest inhabitants to the time period after the Velvet Divorce. He explains historical expressions of Czech nationalism within the context of major historical events like the Reformation, the Thirty Years War, and the two World Wars. Also, the historical relationships between Czechs and Slovaks in relation to the various incarnations of Czechoslovak statehood throughout history are illustrated with exceptional clarity.

Other studies have focused more closely on national identity in the former Czechoslovakia. Abrams (2004) frames the main question of Czech identity in terms of a struggle between Western or Eastern orientation which began at the end of World War II. It was at this point, according to the author, that the Czech Republic found itself caught between the powers of the West and Russia to the East, which was responsible for much of the country's liberation from the Germans. Additionally, Abrams frames the issue of Czech and Slovak identity in terms of how it affected the politics of the breakup. He points out that because there was a great deal of confusion on the part of Czechoslovak citizens regarding the new post-Soviet government, the tendency was to gravitate "to the banner of national identity" and also that parties of the time which promoted either Czech or Slovak ethnicity fared well in their corresponding republics (Abrams 2004, 134).

Leff (1997) offers a very comprehensive examination of Czech national identity and discusses at length issues of national identity and the disintegration of Czechoslovakia. She terms the political structure of Czechoslovakia after the Velvet Revolution a situation of "ethnofederalism," which she describes as a political structure

that “reflects a form of bargain between two or more nations coexisting on the same state territory” (Leff 1997, 128). Also included in the study are several Czech and Slovak opinion polls which examine Velvet Divorce issues like the possibility of reunification and any lingering regret among the citizens regarding the decision to separate. Leff likens the situation of the Czech and Slovak separation to that of the Slovenes in the former Yugoslavia, pointing out that “Serbia did not persist in challenging the Slovene succession from Yugoslavia” because “Slovenia was overwhelmingly Slovenian in ethnic composition” (Leff 1997, 141). The Czechoslovak situation was similar in the fact that only one percent of Slovakia was Czech and four percent of the Czech Republic was Slovak (Leff 1997, 141). In the survey conducted for this thesis, students were asked a question dealing with relation living in Slovakia, so Leff’s work provides a source of data for comparison.

Studies on the Impacts of Communism

Betz (1990) examined the role Soviet control played in shaping Central and Eastern Europe, particularly on how it affected the unity of Europe as a whole. He attributes the surge of nationalism in Eastern Europe to the end of communist control and influence in the region along with the Eastern European countries’ return to contact with the west (Betz 1990, 173). The most important impact, Betz argues, was that the balance of culture in Europe was thrown out of balance after the Russian annexation of much of Eastern and Central Europe following the end of World War II. According to Milan Kundera, these regions of Europe can never be defined by political movements, but rather “by the great *common situation* that resemble peoples, regroup them along the imaginary

and ever-changing boundaries that make a realm inhabited by the same memories, the same problems and conflicts, the same common tradition” (Kundera 1984, 106-107). For Eastern Europeans, emphasizing their diversity and national identity, according to Betz, is the best solution to defining their place within Europe.

Okey (2004) discusses the internal impacts of the Velvet Revolution on Czech culture, with emphasis on some of the unforeseen consequences caused by the removal of the Soviet regime. In a country where “culture and national tradition have always enjoyed high prestige,” after the Velvet Revolution many young adults had little appreciation or knowledge of Czech history or tradition (Okey 2004, 169). Also, the author points out that many Czech intellectuals came to realize that the removal of the Soviet regime combined with this lack of appreciation for Czech culture among young Czechs opened the country to a myriad of western influences and consumerism which might have negatively effect Czech identity (Okey 2004, 169).

Rothschild and Wingfield (2000) provide an excellent description of the role the Soviets played in creating and then suppressing ethnofederal problems, such as the Yugoslav and Czechoslovak situations. The authors explain that the Soviets’ “refusal to recognize their existence and dimensions simply drove these conflicts underground where they festered,” and never provided any sort of “integrating identity to any of the onetime ‘real existing Socialist states’ of East Central Europe” (Rothschild and Wingfield 2000, 263).

Studies on Nationalism and Nationalist Movements

Hilde (1999) examines the role Slovak nationalism played in the breakup of the country, with particular emphasis on what he sees as the lack of clarity in previous literature regarding exactly which factors contributed to a post-Soviet Slovak nationalism and how it impacted the process of Czechoslovakian breakup (Hilde 1999, 653). He argues that much of the process was politically motivated and points out that “many observers have described the Slovak demands for a revision of the Czechoslovak Federation as little more than instruments used by Slovak politicians to mobilize support” (Hilde 1999). According to Hilde, at the heart of Slovak nationalism was the desire to be visible and recognized as equal in importance to Czechs. “Just as Scotsmen and Welshmen resent being called English, many Slovaks objected to the way Czech was used both in the Czech Lands and internationally as an abbreviation for Czechoslovak” (Hilde 1999).

Fowkes (2002) discusses the brief Moravian-Silesian movement of the 1990s, which sought greater autonomy and recognition for the Moravian and Silesian regions and peoples in the Czech Republic, within the larger context of the Velvet Divorce. “The Moravian autonomists took advantage of the dispute between Czechs and Slovaks by offering an alternative solution” (Fowkes 2002, 129), which was a three-way split which would create autonomous Czech, Moravia-Silesia, and Slovak Republics. The author also references several public opinions polls taken prior to the Velvet Divorce which gauged public opinions amongst the Czechs and Slovaks regarding possible political/national arrangements.

Shepherd (2000) frames the events surrounding the Velvet Revolution and Velvet Divorce within the context of Czechoslovak statehood, starting with Thomas Masaryk and the formation of Czechoslovakia at the start of the 20th century and ending after the Velvet Divorce. An entire chapter, entitled *Surviving Mečiar*, focuses on the newly formed autonomous Slovak Republic, discussed the difficult road to true democracy that Slovaks encountered after Vladimir Mečiar became leader of Slovakia following the Velvet Divorce. Interestingly, the author clearly views the Velvet Divorce as Slovak independence from the Czech Republic, instead of as a mutual split (Shepherd 2000, 127).

Bugajski (1995) is among the definitive references on ethnic politics in former Czechoslovakia. The author dedicates one chapter each to the discussion of politics and political parties in the Czech and Slovak Republics. Bugajski summarizes the political views of the variety of notable political parties within both republics as well as developing two timelines highlighting important events surrounding both the Velvet Revolution and Velvet Divorce. Particular emphasis is given to ethnicity as it affected the political situations of the time, making it a particularly good reference for the purposes of examining ethnicity and national identity formation, as is the goal of this study. Of interest to this study is the discussion of Moravian and Silesian regionalist parties, including the Movement for the Self-Governing Democracy of Moravia and Silesia (HSDMS), the Moravian National Party (MNP), the Moravian-Silesian Citizens' Assembly (MSCA), and the Radical Moravian Nationalist Party (RMNP). The discussion of these parties and their political involvement leading up the Velvet Divorce

is helpful in illustrating the subtle ethnocultural differences which make the study of ethnicity and national identity in the region particularly complex.

Conclusion

These studies examine Czech national identity throughout history, the role of post-Soviet nationalism, and the role nationalism played in affecting political situations of the era, very little has been done which strikes at the heart of Czech identity itself, particularly since the end of Communist control in 1989. The purpose of this study is to identify the modern Czech identity and determine how it has been affected by the Velvet Divorce.

While a substantial amount of existing research has been done on post-socialist national identity within Eastern European countries, very little of it has been conducted based on the perceptions and opinions of the citizens themselves. Since national identity is foremost a construction of the collective consciousness of a country's citizens, the most effective manner in which to study it is by examining a population's perception of its own national identity (Berg 2002, 117). Additionally, the Velvet Divorce brought about monumental change for the Czech Republic and its citizens. The event may have significantly altered aspects of Czech identity and occurred very recently (within the last 15 years). For this reason, a qualitative analysis of the modern Czech identity which focuses on the Velvet Divorce – using the history of Czech national identity formation as a background – will provide significant new insights into how this event shaped a post-socialist national identity.

CHAPTER III

**HISTORY OF NATIONAL IDENTITY IN
FORMER CZECHOSLOVAKIA**

Introduction

The history of the lands which now make up the Czech Republic is immensely complex. It is a history marked by the rise and fall of empires, constant religious revolution and struggle, invasion by foreign forces, and the struggle of the Czechs to maintain their identity and place in Europe. This history illuminates many of the events of the 20th century and the historical formation of identity and culture which established the context in which these events transpired.

Early Settlement in the Czech Region

The history of sustained settlement in the lands now known as the Czech Republic goes back to the sixth and seventh centuries, when the first large-scale influx of Slavs began to settle in the region. The word Czech comes from the name of one of the tribes, the Cechi, which settled in the region during this period (Bideleux and Jeffries 1998, 212). Very early in Czech history, the Czechs and Slovaks become joined by a common territory and government. Around the year 830, Mojmir I united the two regions and peoples by assuming the leadership of the Czech lands as well as the western portion of

Slovakia (Bideleux and Jeffries 1998, 212). This empire is commonly known as Great Moravia. Later, Mojmir's nephew Rostislav came to power and orchestrated an event which drastically changed the identity and history of the people in the Czech lands. Rostislav appealed to the Byzantines in 863, asking that they send religious missionaries to the region.

Emperor Michael III and the Patriarch Photius sent a pair of brothers named Cyril and Methodius to Christianize the people in Rostislav's empire (Agnew 2004, 11). The brothers brought with them Orthodox Christianity and most importantly, the beginnings of a written Slavonic language, made possible by their development of a Slavonic alphabet known as Glagolitic script (Bideleux and Jeffries 1998, 213). The work of Cyril and Methodius was important not only because of its religious implications, but perhaps most importantly because of the impact it had on the language of the Czechs. Throughout their history, the Czechs have used language as a primary tool to justify their independence and territorial distinctions.

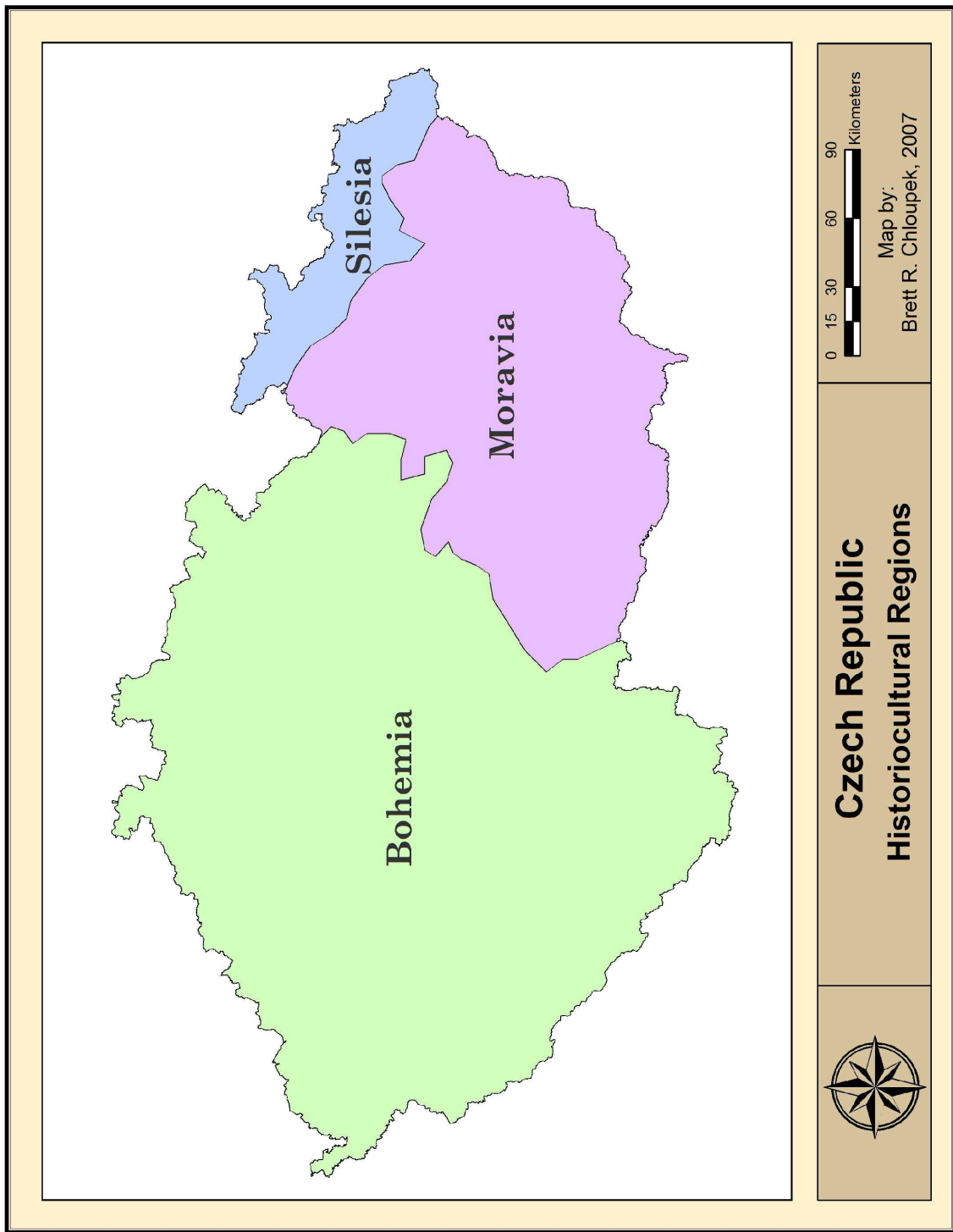


Figure 2. The three modern historical ethnic regions of the Czech Republic.

The Beginnings of Catholicism in Bohemia

The beginnings of Christianity in the region brought about significant changes which worked to form much of the groundwork for Czech identity and culture. First, in 870, Rostislav was overthrown by his nephew Svatopluk, aided by German Catholics, which set in place the conversion of the Bohemian Empire to Catholicism (Bideleux and Jeffries 1998, 213). Soon after the time of Cyril and Methodius, another figure would emerge who would not only solidify, but also justify Czech statehood.

Václav (more commonly known today as *Wenceslaus* or *Good King Wenceslaus* from the popular Christmas carol), became duke of Bohemia in 921 after the death of his grandmother, Ludmila (Agnew 2004, 12). Václav “reined in the depended dukes...and used Christianity to strengthen his state,” establishing St. Vitus Cathedral in Prague, as well as allying with the German King Henry I (also known as *Henry the Fowler*), although as a subordinate (Agnew 2004, 12). Václav was murdered by his brother Boleslav I (also known as *Boleslaus the Cruel*) in order to achieve the Bohemian crown. It was Václav’s death however which indelibly marked the identity of the Czechs:

The deceased duke was swiftly canonized by the Catholic Church, which also propagated pious legends about him (and named innumerable churches after him) throughout Western Christendom. Moreover, St. Vaclav became the patron saint of the Bohemian state, and his image subsequently graced medieval Czech coins, seals and flags and the Bohemian crown (Bideleux and Jeffries 1998, 213).

Quite similarly to the way he worked to unite the Czechs into a unified state throughout his life, in death, Václav quickly became a symbol of Czech statehood. From the point of his death, the Czech crown would forever be known as the crown of St. Wenceslaus. To newly forming states like Bohemia, patron saints “provided a strong

force for cohesion,” so “St. Václav assumed this unifying role among the Czechs” (Agnew 2004, 23). He, along with various other patron saints like his grandmother Ludmila, St. Vojtěch, and St. Zikmund have “remained important in Czech political ideology for centuries” (Agnew 2004, 23). So while religion is, in broader terms seen as a universalizing force, it has worked as an identifying and cohesive one in terms of identity for a large portion of Czech history.

Charles IV, Holy Roman Emperor

Another important figure in the history of the Czechs who altered their history and identity was Charles IV, Holy Roman Emperor (also known as *King Karel*). Charles established his residence in Prague, which greatly influenced its prominence and helped stimulate growth of the city and its architecture (Agnew 2004, 33). Charles commissioned a bridge (now Charles Bridge, the defining landmark of Prague) and a major university (now Charles University). Again, the influence of St. Václav remains evident, as the seal of the university Charles founded pictures Charles IV kneeling down before Václav (Agnew 2004, 33). Another important contribution of Charles was the use of Czech language in official state documents. Documents which were written in Czech while Charles was Holy Roman Emperor date back to 1370 (Agnew 2004, 35). After Charles’ death, his son, Václav IV assumed control of Bohemia in 1378. His feud with the archbishop of Prague resulted in the death of a priest named Jan of Nepomuk (in Czech *Jan Nepomucký*), who was bound and thrown off of Charles Bridge. Jan of Nepomuk has become a symbol of the Czech Republic, and a statue of him can be seen

on or near virtually every bridge in the country, as he is the patron saint who is said to protect against floods.

Reformation in Bohemia and the Hussites

An integral part of the Czech identity throughout history is the region's involvement in the reformation and development of Protestantism. Again, Charles IV's son Václav IV was at the heart of a controversy which this time, sparked a large cultural movement within the Czech people. Jan Hus, who was a teacher at Charles University and a critic of the Catholic Church, gained favor with Václav after the decree of Kutná Hora. This decree turned Charles University into a center of religious reform and consequently caused a mass exodus of teachers and students to the newly formed University of Leipzig (Agnew 2004, 41).

It was at this time that the teachings of John Wycliffe were being spread throughout the Czech lands with Hus as the primary proponent. Sigismund (in Czech *Zikmund*, not be confused with the Czech patron saint *Zikmund of Burgundy*), who was the second son of Charles IV and younger brother of Václav IV, was heir to the throne as Holy Roman Emperor and was responsible for convening the Council of Constance on November 4th, 1414 (Bideleux and Jeffries 1998, 225). It was at this council that Hus appeared, with the promise of safe-conduct from Sigismund. Hus was promptly imprisoned, tried, and burned at the stake as a heretic at the request of council members.

The death of Hus unleashed a rash of revolts and uprisings in the region, involving not only common citizens but also some pro-Hus nobility. A key article of Hus' teachings, which became the cause of his student Jakoubek of Stříbo, was that

Catholic communion should be received in both species, bread and wine known in Latin, *sub utraque specie* (Bideleux and Jeffries 1998, 226-27). It is from this term that the followers of the movement derived their name, Utraquists. During this time it was common for clergy to receive both species while the congregation received only in bread form. A far more radical branch of reformers were known as Taborites, though, henceforth both groups will be referred to using the term they are most commonly known as, Hussites.

On July 30, 1419, radical Hussites stormed the town hall in Prague and attacked the city council, throwing several members out the windows of the hall, and impaling them on spears arranged on the square below. This event has come to be known as the first Defenestration of Prague and marked the beginning of the Hussite wars, which leader Jan Žižka and the Hussites would wage for nearly two decades (Agnew 2004, 44). These events established a Protestant legacy within the country which remains to this day and affected Czech identity in a manner which can still be recognized.

Interestingly enough, during the larger Lutheran reformation in Europe which occurred after the Hussite Wars, Czech Catholics and the more moderate Hussite followers actually worked together in suppressing the intrusion of foreign religious denominations into Czech lands (Bideleux and Jeffries 1998, 249-50).

The Habsburg Dynasty

The Habsburg Legacy in the lands of the Czech Republic is still visible to this day. “No other European dynasty has...left so deep an imprint on European History” as the Habsburgs and “much that has happened in East Central Europe since then has been a consequence of the collapse of the Habsburg Empire in 1918” (Bideleux and Jeffries 1998, 265). The territories which formed the Austrian Empire were united under the Habsburg family. Additionally, the conditions for Czech independence and official statehood were made possible after the collapse of this empire, Austria-Hungary, following World War I.

One of the most important historical events of the Thirty Years War, the Battle of White Mountain on November 8, 1620 (In Czech *Bílá Hora*) near modern-day Prague, saw Ferdinand II, Holy Roman Emperor (a Habsburg), defeat the army of Bohemian protestants and regain Catholic control of the region (Agnew 2004, 67). While in some cases, the defeat of the protestants at White Mountain has been likened to the “destruction of Czech culture,” at the same time, “the reintegration of the Bohemian Crownlands into Catholic Europe brought more direct exposure to other artistic styles...giving rise to the Czech version of the next dominant cultural style, the Baroque” (Agnew 2004, 75). Baroque architecture is deeply imbedded in Czech culture, and arguably the finest examples of Baroque can be found in the lesser quarter of Prague.

Also, the reintegration of Czech lands into Austria-Hungary by the Habsburgs during the Thirty Years War may have worked to preserve and even develop Czech culture and identity. Due to the “emasculatation of political ambition and activity” after the reintegration of the Czechs into the Habsburg Empire, the Czech people developed

other activities to which they directed their ambitions, particularly on manufacturing, agriculture, and the arts which “initiated the transformation of the Czech Lands into the industrial hub of the Habsburg empire” (Bideleux and Jeffries 1998, 283).

It was also while under the Habsburgs, and arguably, because of them, that Czech language and culture flourished. Joseph II, son of Maria Theresa, commissioned chairs in Czech Language and Philosophy at Charles University and, “before long the Czech language was developing rapidly as a major outward manifestation of Czech national identity” and as the common form of communication for Czech intellectuals and educated citizens (Bideleux and Jeffries 1998, 309).

Masaryk and the Formation of Czechoslovakia

Prior to 1918, both Czech and Slovak politicians had no aspirations for autonomy, but rather, were focused on gaining a favorable position within the Austro-Hungarian structure. In 1864, František Palacký, a well known Czech politician, explained the Czech position for wishing to remain a part of Austria-Hungary:

We Bohemians certainly wish sincerely for the preservation and unity of Austria. Considering that by our own efforts we could scarcely create an independent sovereign state, we can preserve our historico-political entity, our particular nationality and culture and, finally, our economic life nowhere and in no better way than we can in Austria (Kann 1950, 138).

Only a few decades later however, World War I would change the makeup of Europe forever and see the birth of numerous new independent states, including Czechoslovakia. With the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand (the Habsburg heir) in Sarajevo, World War I began in 1914. The eastern front reached its closest point to the Czech lands when

Russian forces controlled portions of modern-day northeastern Slovakia; however after Austro-Hungarian offensive campaigns, the front moved steadily eastward until armistice in 1918 (Magocsi 1993, 124). It was during this time that the most important figure in the history of Czech state creation, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, who had worked while in exile during the course of World War I to gain Czech autonomy, came to power as the head of the new Czech government. The Allied powers officially recognized the Czechoslovak National Council in 1918 and Masaryk became the first president of Czechoslovakia.

The Pittsburg Treaty and the Slovaks

The newly formed state merged Czechs and Slovaks once again—an arrangement which may have seemed quite natural. “Slovakia had been part of the kingdom of Hungary for a millennium. Linguistically, however, Slovak is extremely close to Czech, and Czech nationalists had on this basis claimed Slovaks for the nation for more than half a century” (Sayer 1996, 181).

Despite the fact that Czechs and Slovaks had been separated since the time of Great Moravia, the similarities between their cultures (and most importantly, their languages) were remarkable. Masaryk (who it should be pointed out was Slovak) was hopeful that these similarities would enable a common national identity to gradually develop. He “considered Slovaks a branch of the Czech nation and their language was a form of Czech” (Szporluk 1981, 139). Many Czechs and Slovaks shared this view and were hopeful “that a common Czechoslovak identity would evolve over time—not an

ethnic merger perhaps, but at least a sense of shared identity and values that would give some cohesion to the state” (Leff 1997, 24). At the time, the idea of a shared identity may not have been ideal or even desired by all Czechs and Slovaks, but it was perhaps necessary. After the formation of the state in 1918, the country contained large percentages of minority populations—Germans in the Czech lands (Tables 1 and 2) and Hungarians in the Slovak lands (Table 3), both of which were formerly territorial masters of the respective regions.

Table 1. (Eberhardt 2003)

Ethnic Structure of Bohemia in 1900	Population	
<i>Ethnic Group</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>% of Total</i>
Czechs	3,930,100	62.7
Germans	2,244,300	35.8
Jews	92,700	1.4
Others	3,900	0.1
Total	6,271,000	100

Table 2. (Eberhardt 2003)

Ethnic Structure of Moravia in 1900	Population	
<i>Ethnic Group</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>% of Total</i>
Czechs	1,727,300	71.4
Germans	631,200	26.1
Jews	44,300	1.8
Poles	15,600	0.6
Others	2,300	0.1
Total	2,420,700	100

Table 3. (Eberhardt 2003)

Ethnic Structure of Slovak Territory in 1900 (determined by declared language)	Population	
<i>Ethnic Group</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>% of Total</i>
Slovaks	1,704,600	60.5
Hungarians	627,000	22.3
Jews	183,000	6.5
Germans	169,400	6
Ukrainians	99,100	3.5
Others	33,800	1.2
Total	2,816,900	100

Masaryk explained that, “Together, [a Czech-Slovak alliance] would raise the Slav majority population to almost 9 million, and be so much stronger vis-à-vis the minority” (Leff 1997, 25). In this way, the Czechs and Slovaks used each other to constitute a majority and marginalize any minority voice or dissent; however, at the same time maintaining their separate identities, instead of moving towards a common Czechoslovak ethnicity. After all, the name Czechoslovakia “blended two different Slavic peoples with different languages and historical experiences. There is no such thing as an ethnic Czechoslovak [and] no such language as Czechoslovak (Leff 1997, 24).

The Pittsburg Agreement of 1918 established the first formal agreement between the Czech and Slovak politicians prior to the formation of Czechoslovakia and is of particular importance when considering the political events of the Velvet Divorce. As it became more and more evident that the creation of Czechoslovakia would become a reality, Masaryk traveled to the United States to meet with President Woodrow Wilson about the Czech cause. He signed an agreement with the Slovaks which promised a certain level of autonomy within the Czechoslovak state. His promises of autonomy included local governmental control with the formation of Slovak courts and governmental bodies (Szprolik1981, 141).

During the years that followed, Slovak nationalists, most notably Andrej Hlinka who was leader of the Slovak Peoples party (later chaired by Josef Tiso), protested the fact that the autonomy promised in the Pittsburg Agreement had not been delivered to Slovak lands. “This lack of sympathy for Slovak politicians on the party of the Czech

majority was one reason why Slovak nationalism evolved in a more radical direction in the 1930s (Fowkes 2002, 44). While Slovak politicians were clearly upset with the lack of local control enjoyed during the interwar years, World War II and the Nazis would provide them their first experience in national autonomy, for better or worse.

World War II and the Beginning of Communism

The Munich Agreement, signed on September 29, 1938, effectively ended the first Czechoslovak Republic. The agreement, which is still referred to by Czechs as the Munich Dictate (no doubt due to the fact that the agreement was made for the Czechs by the Allies), caused the loss of nearly 40 percent of Czech territory to Germany, Hungary, and Poland (Anonymous 1998). Nazi Germany's act of irredentism—claiming that the Sudetenland, which was occupied by several million ethnic Germans, should be reunited with greater Germany—was not disputed by the western powers. Instead, as per the agreement, the western Czech lands became a protectorate of Germany.



Figure 3. A 1930s Russian propaganda cartoon by Kukriniksy showing Western leaders giving Czechoslovakia (represented as a steak) to the Nazis.

Table 4. (Eberhardt 2003)

Ethnic Structure of Czech Territory in 1930		
(determined by declared nationality)		Population
<i>Ethnic Group</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>% of Total</i>
Czechs	7,304,600	68.4
Germans	3,149,800	29.5
Poles	92,700	0.9
Slovaks	44,500	0.4
Ukrainians	22,700	0.2
Hungarians	11,400	0.1
Others	48,700	0.5
Total	10,674,400	100

Table 5. (Eberhardt 2003)

Ethnic Structure of Slovak Territory in 1930		
		Population
<i>Ethnic Group</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>% of Total</i>
Slovaks	2,337,800	70.4
Hungarians	571,900	17.2
Germans	148,200	4.5
Ukrainians	90,800	2.7
Jews	65,400	2
Others	107,800	3.2
Total	3,321,900	100

At the same time, Slovakia was made an independent republic by the Nazis, although Nazi influence permeated the leadership of Slovakia throughout this brief period of autonomy. Josef Tiso, the successor of Andrej Hlinka as leader of the Slovak Peoples Party, became president of the newly independent Slovak Republic, which was formed on October 11, 1938 (Slovakia was effectively under control of the Nazis at this time, so the term *independent* is somewhat misleading). Also, Nazis spread propaganda throughout Slovakia with anti-Czech messages in addition to the more widely known anti-Jewish propaganda (Breuilly 1993).

Eventually, the Germans would invade and occupy the remainder of Czechoslovakia until the end of the war. During the occupation, a Nazi leader named Reinhard Heydrich was appointed by Hitler to administer the former Czech lands. In what is an interesting bit of World War II Czech history, he was assassinated by Czech operatives under guidance from Great Britain in a military maneuver codenamed Operation Anthropoid (Pittaway 2004, 22). In response to the assassination, the Nazis took swift revenge, particularly with the mass murder of the entire village of Lidice. Operation Anthropoid was planned in part by Edvard Beneš, who acted as Czechoslovak President while exiled during World War II.

When the Russians liberated Czechoslovakia on May 8, 1944, Beneš returned to power as President of Czechoslovakia, which was restored to basically its pre-war state, in terms of territory. It was during this time however, that the ethnic composition of the country was altered considerably. First, the Jewish population was nearly eliminated in the Czech Republic through Nazi deportation to concentration camps during the war, and later, through mass emigration to the newly formed Israel or to the United States (Bugajski 1995, 296).

The Czechs greatly resented the large population of Sudeten Germans for their role in the events which resulted in Nazi occupation. The population of ethnic Germans after the war shrank to a mere fraction of the pre-war number. Large-scale deportation and migration of Germans from the Sudetenland caused the number of ethnic Germans to virtually vanish. According to the 1950 Czech census, only 165,000 Germans remained in the country—the same country which was home to more than 3,000,000 before the war began (Bugajski 296). Some studies suggest that the number of ethnic Germans who

either fled or were forcibly removed at the end of the war was substantially higher at over 5,000,000 (Eberhardt 2003, 139).

Indeed, “it is difficult to overstate the critical importance of the Sudeten German question to any understanding of the character of the Czech people” (Shepherd 2000, 16). The results of the Germans and Jewish being largely removed from the Czech population created a much more ethnically homogenous population to the point of being “something close to mono-cultural as a result” (Shepherd 2000, 16).

Table 6. (Eberhardt 2003)

Decrease in German Population in Czechoslovakia - 1945-1947			
	Total	Czech Territory	Slovak Territory
German Population - May 1945	3,200,000	3,000,000	200,000
Unorganized Outflow	-660,000	-650,000	-10,000
Planned Resettlement - 1946	-2,256,000	-2,100,000	-156,000
Planned Resettlement - until May 1947	-80,000	-70,000	-10,000
German Population - May 1947	204,000	180,000	24,000

After the end of World War II, Beneš, who was largely responsible for ordering the removal of the Sudeten Germans, was reelected as President for one more term. In 1948 however, Communism would take control throughout the country.

Communism

In 1947, the Czechoslovak Communist Party (*Komunistická strana Československa* or *KSČ*) experienced its first political success in government elections and “committed itself to an electoral road to socialism, in view of its success in the 1946 elections” (Pittaway 2004, 48; Abrams 2004, 183). Party surveys in 1948 indicated that the KSČ was projected to win 55 percent of the popular vote, more than enough to gain majority control of the government. There was a degree of Czech émigré communist

political leadership from Russia that presented themselves as returning to their “liberated homeland,” with the goal of seizing political power (Abrams 2004, 179).

The Communist Party and its intellectual supporters certainly wished to create a socialist Czechoslovakia oriented toward the East. However, they came with neither a preconceived, preformulated strategy designed to carry them to power nor a complete conception of how the state would look at various stages along the way (Abrams 2004, 179).

After communist party electoral victory in 1948, free elections were banned and a single-party KSĊ government was adopted in an event which is most commonly referred to as the Prague Coup (Pittaway 2004, 49). The KSĊ took control of the Czech police force. In response to this, non-communist elected members of the government protested by resigning on February 20, 1948. This action did not cause the government to fold, nor did it spark enough public response in order for new elections to be held. At this point, the country was totally in control of the Communist Party.

It was not until 1968, when party-reformer Alexander Dubček gained control of the KSĊ, that Czechoslovakia saw a moment of slight relief from the grasp of communism. After Dubček became head of the KSĊ, Ludvík Svoboda, a hero in Czechoslovakia for his contributions in both World Wars, was elected as president (Berend 1996, 141). These two events, combined with the attempts at governmental and economic reforms which soon followed, were all part of what is called the Prague Spring.

The events quickly came to an end, when the Soviets, invoking the Brezhnev Doctrine, invaded Czechoslovakia and retook control of the government on August 20, 1968 (Berend 1996, 145). In 1969, Dubček lost party control of the KSĊ to Gustáv Husák who presided over the period in Czechoslovakia known as the Normalization,

which was a return of the communist policies which had been partially undone by the Svoboda and his government. It was not until the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989 that a grassroots movement within Czechoslovakia began to gain momentum, with the goal of ending the control of the communist regime over the country.

The Velvet Revolution

The Velvet Revolution arose from peaceful student protests which lasted from mid-November 1989 until December 29th, 1989, when then President Gustáv Husák appointed the first non-communist controlled government that Czechoslovakia had seen since the end of World War II (Hartl 1993). The demonstrations started with the official (or at least superficial) purpose of remembering the death of a student named Jan Opletal who was killed at the hands of the Nazis during World War II. The over-arching message of the demonstrations however, was a desire for increased freedoms for the Czech people (Table 7), politically and culturally (Leff 1997, 79). The protests were followed by a general workers' strike on the 27th of November, during which more than half of the Czech population at least partially observed the strike, most visibly of course, in Prague (Agnew 2004, 290).

“The ‘Velvet Revolution’ produced an interim ‘government of national reconciliation’ (*vlada narodniho usmireni*) charged with the task of transition toward pluralistic democracy and holding free elections, the first in the lifetime of the majority of voters...a populace politically dormant for two generations woke up” (Ulč 1996, 337; Agnew 2004, 290). This was the first Czech government since the elections of 1948 not

to be comprised of a communist party majority. It also included a number of notable Czechs who had either been imprisoned or exiled during communist rule (Agnew 2004, 290).

This newly formed democratic government, with its dissident-turned-President Vaclav Havel, was charged with orchestrating the monumental transition.

Table 7. (Eberhardt 2003)

Ethnic Structure of Czechoslovakia in 1991	Population	
<i>Ethnic Group</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>% of Total</i>
Czechs	8,363,800	81.2
Moravians	1,362,300	13.2
Slovaks	314,900	3.1
Poles	59,400	0.6
Germans	48,600	0.5
Silesians	44,400	0.4
Gypsies	32,900	0.3
Hungarians	19,900	0.2
Ukrainians	9,100	0.1
Others	46,900	0.4
Total	10,302,200	100

Almost immediately however, it became evident that while the political minorities had united under the common goal of escaping communism, they had not necessarily united under much else. The structure of the Czechoslovak political system after the Velvet Revolution in 1989 played a major role in causing the political deadlock which ended in the breakup of Czechoslovakia. The country elects a president (at that time, Havel) whose powers are largely ceremonial, with the exception of a veto in the Czech parliament. Additionally, each of the republics retained a prime minister who functioned as the head of the majority governmental parties. After the first democratic elections were held, Václav Klaus became Czech prime minister as head of the Czech majority Civic Democratic Party. In 1992, Vladimír Mečiar became prime minister of the Slovak

Republic as leader of Movement for a Democratic Slovakia. It was with these three leaders in power that events began to unfold in the newly democratic Czechoslovakia that would lead to an event referred to in the world media as the Velvet Divorce.

The Velvet Divorce

The Velvet Divorce of 1993 marked the end of Czechoslovakia, a country just having successfully finished its struggle to escape communist control some four years earlier. It is worth noting that the term Velvet Divorce was popularized by Western journalists and not used by Czechs or Slovaks to describe the process of separation. Both events are noted in the history of the region for their bloodlessness—both were the result of non-violent movements, which is in stark contrast to other nationalist movements of the time, particularly those which occurred in Yugoslavia.

The changing relations during this time between the political powers of both the Czech and Slovak republics would bring about the country's eventual breakup. In 1992 the first parliamentary elections were held, which resulted in the elections of Vaclav Klaus and Vladimír Mečiar to lead the Czech and Slovak National Councils, respectively. Klaus—who was influenced heavily by American economist Milton Friedman—favored an immediate move by the Czechs toward a free-market economy. Mečiar, who was a former member of the communist party, was in favor of a much slower transition and favored a mixed economy (Anonymous 1993).

Both ministers were certain that these transitions would be accomplished much more smoothly as independent states; however, neither publicly stated this during their

respective political campaigns (Anonymous 1993). The movement to separate the two republics was largely the product of two political movements which favored greater autonomy, both with different philosophies on how to best move their republic forward economically. One major problem which contributed to failure of the political process to retain a unified country was the political structure the Czechoslovaks inherited from the Soviet era.

Because of the federal structure of the government, a new national constitution required the approval of three separate houses, one of which was the Slovak House of Nations (Leff 1997, 133). The Czechs “could not break [a] deadlock to change the communist federal structure without a constitutional revision” and “could not gain a constitutional revision without Slovak approval” (Leff 1997, 133). Ultimately, the federation of the two republics which consisted of 10 million Czechs and approximately 5 million Slovaks dissolved at midnight on December 31, 1992 (Ulč 1996, 331).

The Velvet Divorce has been the subject of an enormous amount of academic scholarship since 1993. It was of particular interest to political geographers during the early 1990s in that it offered an opportunity to analyze and study the breakup of a country—with all of its political, ethnic, and cultural facets—in real time as the events unfolded daily.

Conclusion

This examination of several key elements of the Czech history illustrates the various influential forces which have shaped and formed the Czech identity throughout history. From the earliest Slavic settlers, the identity of the people of this region has been

unique. The early influences of the Orthodox missionaries Cyril and Methodius began to form the religious and linguistic identity of the Czech culture. Later, the arrival of Germanic influences and Roman Catholicism during the time of Václav began to formally unify the region under a common leadership. The ascension of Charles IV as Holy Roman Emperor furthered the Czech language, as well as laid a foundation for the development of a Czech intelligentsia at the country's university. The mark of the Hussite Revolution and the struggle between Catholicism and Protestantism significantly altered the region's national identity and served as a harbinger of the larger struggle which would later engulf Europe.

The modern history of the region began to take shape during World War I. The Czechs, through military support of the Allies, as well as the political deftness of their leaders Masaryk and Beneš, gained independence by joining together with the Slovak people and forming Czechoslovakia. In doing so, they freed themselves of the Germans and Hungarians and became free to further develop their country and cultures. The unresolved issue of a large German minority in the Sudetenland spurred a Nazi invasion at the start of World War II, and the betrayal of the Czechs by the western powers foreshadowed the reorientation of Czechoslovakia toward the East at the end of the war. Communism took hold of the country for decades, suppressing the national identity of the Czechs and ultimately, altering irreversibly. The Velvet Revolution of 1989 ended the control of the communist regime and brought about significant change to the region and the identity of the people. A few short years later however, the disagreements between the Czech and Slovak governments, enhanced by the governmental structure inherited from the communist era, brought about the breakup of the country. Now, the first

generation of Czech students are growing up in the Czech Republic, developing a modern Czech identity in a country politically separate from the Slovaks. It is this identity which will be explored.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

To study the unique insights of young Czech students regarding the issues of Czech national identity and the impact of the Velvet Revolution, four original surveys were conducted. The survey instrument was originally designed in English and then translated into Czech (for the original survey questions, refer to appendix 1). Two independent surveys were conducted at the Charles University in Prague, a university in the Bohemian region of the Czech Republic. Two more independent surveys were conducted at Masaryk University in Brno—a university in the Moravian region. Additionally, during the summer of 2006, the author traveled to the study area in order to gather first-hand information about the impact of the Velvet Divorce and how it had impacted the national identity.

Survey Design

The survey is comprised primarily of questions related to the breakup of Czechoslovakia into the Czech and Slovak Republics, including questions polling students about their views on the decision to split the country, as well as on the future prospect of a reunification.

In order to account for the possibility that distinct differences between regional identities might emerge during the course of the study, students were asked to identify themselves as Bohemian, Moravian, or Silesian. Additionally, students were asked to identify their hometowns, which enabled the geographic locations of respondents to be mapped. Additionally, students were asked to identify themselves as coming from either a rural or urban setting in order to study the survey results from such a perspective.

Students were asked questions to determine their views regarding the similarities between the Czech and Slovak cultures. A similar set of questions was then asked regarding the similarities between the Bohemian and Moravian cultures. Next, students were asked a series of questions asking them to rank in order of importance the most important components of Czech culture from a preset list. Finally, students were asked a similar question asking them to rank in order of importance the factors which contributed, in their minds, to the breakup of Czechoslovakia.

Questions requiring students to select only one response from a number of possible choices were aggregated using simple tallies and transformed into percentages according to the number of total responses. Questions which asked students to rank items in order of importance were averaged using a simple average formula. In addition to calculating totals and percentages for the entire survey population, the data was divided using several demographic identifiers, including gender, urban/rural setting, and cultural region membership (Bohemian vs. Moravian), with separate percentages and averages being calculated for each.

GIS Database Creation

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software provides a number of very useful spatial analysis capabilities which can provide unique insights into survey data and aid in identifying geographic trends within a survey population. For this study, the ArcInfo GIS software suite from ESRI was used to map and analyze the survey responses. Shapefile data for the Czech and Slovak Republics, including detailed city, town, and village shapefiles, was obtained. A table summarizing the locations and numbers of respondents per location was created for the entire survey population. The table was then joined to a shapefile containing all cities in the Czech Republic using the **Name** field as the unique identifier ID, resulting in a shapefile attributed table linking the locations of survey respondents to geographic locations on the digital map created in ArcMap. A **Student** field next to each city in the attribute table displays the number of survey respondents from the particular city.

FID	Shape	NAME	Student	POP_CLASS
627	Point	Praha	15	> 500,000
0	Point	Ceske Budejovice	1	50,001 - 100,000
12	Point	Liberec	1	50,001 - 100,000
13	Point	Hradec Kralove	1	50,001 - 100,000
66	Point	Cemosin	1	1,001 - 5,000
624	Point	Ostrava	1	100,001 - 500,000
689	Point	Roznov pod Radhoste	1	5,001 - 20,000
1	Point	Jihlava	0	50,001 - 100,000
2	Point	Prerov	0	50,001 - 100,000
3	Point	Zlin	0	50,001 - 100,000
4	Point	Tmava	0	50,001 - 100,000
5	Point	Plzen	0	50,001 - 100,000
6	Point	Chomutov	0	50,001 - 100,000
7	Point	Kladno	0	50,001 - 100,000
8	Point	Teplice	0	50,001 - 100,000
9	Point	Usti nad Labem	0	50,001 - 100,000
10	Point	Most	0	50,001 - 100,000
11	Point	Decin	0	50,001 - 100,000

Figure 4. A shapefile attribute table showing number of survey respondents (Student), for each city in the Czech Republic (NAME).

Additionally, survey responses to individual questions can be linked to the shapefile attribute table and then queried using the built-in GIS Structured Query Language (SQL) engine in order to identify the locations of a particular response to any of the questions found on the survey. The major advantage of the GIS database construction then, is that it allows an immediate graphical representation of any and all survey responses. The benefit is that such a cartographic representation enables spatial trends within the survey responses to be easily identified. Also, it provides a spatial analysis tool with capabilities above and beyond any of the demographic survey questions which asked students to identify their hometowns, rural/urban setting, and membership to one of the three historical regions.



Figure 5. Structured Query Language (SQL) engine with query string.

Mapping the locations of student survey answers using the GIS database allows survey responses to be understood and compared not only by historical region, but also by trends within historical regions. It enables national, regional, and sub-regional analysis of the survey data to be conducted.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Introduction

Using the methods discussed previously, the survey data was manipulated to develop a snapshot of the opinions young Czech students currently hold regarding their country's national identity in relation to several factors. The first and primary factor is how the events of 1992 and the resulting Velvet Divorce affected Czech identity. The main distinction to be made using the survey data is how this demographic of students views the nature of the Czech identity, particularly in relation to that of the Slovaks. That is, to what degree (if any) is there a commonality between the two identities? Have any of the two peoples' shared historical experiences and/or cultural similarities caused a common identity to form, or have young Czechs retained or developed a distinct identity from that of the Slovaks? Once this has been established, much can be said about how the Velvet Divorce affected the national identity of the Czechs.

Before this can be accomplished, a distinction needs to be made about how the students view the cultural situation and conditions that existed between Czechs and Slovaks prior to the Velvet Divorce. This will perhaps be the most insightful in terms of illustrating the degree of change Czech identity has undergone. Several of the survey questions deal with this issue. The relationship between the Czechs and Slovaks,

culturally and politically, is at the heart of this distinction, so the extensive history provided previously in this study is vital in setting the stage for a discussion of student opinions regarding Czech/Slovak relations.

Inherent in all of the following analyses is the phenomenon of opinion regionalization. Again, because of the cultural differences not only between Czechs and Slovaks, but also between the historicocultural regions of the Czech Republic, it is not only possible, but expected that the opinions expressed by the students will demonstrate at least some degree of noticeable regionalization which will affect the overall determination regarding whether a national identity or several smaller regional identities predominate within the Czech Republic.

This analysis is divided into five sections. The first will examine the appropriateness of the survey sample, comparing its demographic characteristics with those of the study in order to establish that it is indeed an accurate representation of the larger Czech population. The second will analyze several statistics derived from the survey responses to compare them with available historical survey data and opinion polls. In this way, it is possible to identify any similarities and/or changes in popular opinion regarding the Velvet Divorce from 1992 up to the present day.

The third section focuses on determining whether survey responses indicate that students feel the cause of the Velvet Divorce was primarily cultural or political in nature. This analysis will establish the cause-effect relationship between culture and politics as it relates to the Velvet Divorce. The final question to be answered by this relationship is whether Czech or Slovak cultural factors influenced political events, or whether political

parties attempted to manipulate or employ culture and identity politics in order to achieve political goals.

The fourth section focuses on examining the survey through historiocultural regions. Survey responses are examined in terms of Bohemia and Moravia/Silesia in order to determine whether one or both exhibit unique regional identities and produce a level of unique identity. Particular focus is on how similarly or differently each region views the other, as well as how the respondents from towns in both regions responded to questions relating to Slovakia.

The last section analyzes which characteristics the students view as most central to the national Czech identity. Again, using the history of national identity discussed at length previously, the results of this analysis can be placed in the appropriate cultural/historical context in order to better understand the results. It is at this point that an overall determination can be made as to the importance and/or predominance of a national identity over any regional identities. Additionally, a determination can be made about how any of the identified national and regional identities have been altered as a result of the Velvet Divorce.

Survey Demographics

It is important for the integrity of the study to ensure that the survey data is an accurate representation of the greater Czech population. Several primary demographic indicators were included in the survey including age, sex, hometown, Czech citizenship, urban/rural background, and historiocultural/ethnic membership (i.e. Bohemian, Moravian). Three separate surveys were conducted across the Czech Republic at two of

the largest universities in the country, Charles University in Prague and Masaryk University in Brno. Prague is located in the Bohemian region, while Masaryk is located in Moravia.

The first survey was conducted by Dr. Dan Shanahan, a Professor of Communication in the Humanities Faculty at Charles University, and produced 30 responses. The second was conducted by Dr. Vít Fojtech, a Professor in the English and American Studies Program at Charles University, and produced 60 responses. The last survey was administered by Dr. Petr Danek, a Professor of Geography at Masaryk University, and resulted in 130 student responses, for a total of 220 total survey respondents. Out of the 220 surveys, 18 had to be removed because the respondents were not Czech citizens, leaving a total of 212 surveys to be considered in the study. Regionally, there were 146 Bohemian respondents and 66 from either Moravian or Silesian.

The demographic data resulting from these surveys can be compared with similar statistics regarding the overall Czech population in order to illustrate the appropriateness of the survey data as a fair representation of the Czech population.

Table 8. Czech Population Source: (CZSO 2003)

Comparison of Survey and 2003 Czech Demographics						
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Rural</i>	<i>Urban</i>	<i>Bohemian</i>	<i>Moravian/Silesian</i>
Czech Population	49%	51%	29.70%	70.30%	90.0%	4.0%
Survey Population	53%	47%	23.10%	76.90%	68.9%	31.1%
Bohemia	55%	45%	21.53%	78.47%		
Moravia/Silesia	63%	36%	50.0%	50.0%		

The survey population has a median age of 21 and is comprised of 53% men and 47% women, which corresponds roughly to the distribution of gender within the larger

Czech population. The percentage of students coming from an urban setting is slightly higher (Table 8) than the overall Czech population. There are several possible explanations for why this is so. The method for determining rural versus urban population between the two groups is different. While the Czech Statistics Office (*Český statistický úřad* or CZSO) uses a standardized method by which to determine a rural or urban dwelling, the students who were surveyed were asked to self-identify and given no parameters by which to determine how to answer.

Secondly, many students may make the determination of a rural or urban setting according to their current living situation. Since the survey population is comprised solely of college students, they all currently live in some of the larger cities in the Czech Republic, and this factor most certainly inflated the resulting urban percentage. Finally, one reason for the larger urban percentage may be the fact that students coming from an urban background have a substantially higher opportunity to pursue a college education. As of 2005, only 10.4% (CZSO 2006) of the Czech population had an educational level equal to a college degree, so college students definitely represent a smaller and more privileged segment of the population, which would be much more urban than rural in composition.

While the overall combined population of Moravians and Silesians according to the latest Czech census is only approximately 4% (Table 8), among the survey respondents the percentage is substantially higher at 31.1%. There are two primary reasons for this discrepancy. The first is that on the Czech census form many of the population who are in fact Moravians and Silesians simply identify themselves as Czech and do not claim a minority status. For this reason, the number of Moravians and

Silesians are underrepresented in census numbers. Secondly, while in English the terms *Bohemian*, *Moravian*, and *Silesian* are used, in Czech language there is no exact equivalent for *Bohemian*. In the Czech vocabulary, the term *Čech* is used to describe not only Bohemians but also Czechs in general. So while Moravians and Silesians may identify themselves using the regional *Moravian* and *Silesian* titles, they may just as often (and not inappropriately) identify themselves using the broader term *Čech*, meaning it only in the sense that it identifies them as a citizen of the Czech Republic. This would be perhaps comparable to a citizen of Texas—a state with a strong regional identity—using the terms *Texan* and *American* interchangeably. In other words, the three regional distinctions used in the Czech Republic are not necessarily equal. Rather, the *Bohemian* identity is much more closely related to the larger national identity of the Czech Republic, while the *Moravian* and *Silesian* identities are very much regional/minority identities. On the student survey form—because of the need for clear identification of each respondent as a member of one regional group—students were not given the opportunity to simply identify themselves as Czech, but instead forced to choose one classification, unlike the Czech national census.

During the 1910 census of Czech lands, and in subsequent censuses taken in Czechoslovakia, it was not possible to register as a Moravian or Silesian. While these identities were certainly more evident in terms of culture during this time, it was imperative that the Czechs appear to the victorious allied forces of World War I as a unified and substantial population (along with the Slovaks) in order to make the case for the establishment of their own state. A fractioning of the population through use of such

ethnic/regional identities would not help the population’s aspirations for state creation (Leff 1997, 24), and this was quite evident to Tomáš Masaryk.

It was not until the 1991 census, 73 years later that Moravians and Silesians were first given the opportunity to officially identify their ethnic membership in such a way, although at the time the titles *Moravian* and *Silesian* were “considered a regional rather than an ethnic category” (Bugajski 1995, 293). The large number of people identifying themselves as Moravians or Silesians coincides with the rise of an autonomous Moravia-Silesia movement, led by the Movement for the Self-Governing Democracy of Moravia and Silesia (MSDMS) and various other smaller political parties that sought the creation of a separate Moravian-Silesian state. The MSDMS “proved surprisingly successful in the June 1990 general elections, gaining about 6 percent of the popular vote nationwide and 10 percent in the Czech Republic [and] based its election campaign entirely on the championing of ‘Moravian and Silesian identity’” (Bugajski 1995, 307).

Table 9. Czech Population Source: (Bugajski 1995)

Comparison of Sample and 1991 Czech Demographics		
	<i>Bohemian</i>	<i>Moravian/Silesian</i>
Czech Population 1991	81.2%	13.6%
Survey Population 2007	68.4%	31.6%

When the student survey population is compared with the results of the 1991 Czech census, the percentages of historicocultural regional membership are much closer to those of the survey, even considering that there were many more than two regional/ethnic membership choices available on the 1991 census. This indicates that the current Czech census data does not accurately reflect the true number of citizens who consider themselves Moravian or Silesian. When students were forced to describe themselves

using only one of the three identifying terms, there are in fact still a large number of the people who retain one of these regional/ethnic identities.

While students were allowed to self-identify as Bohemian, Moravian, or Silesian, at the same time they were asked to provide the names of their hometowns. This makes it possible to identify Bohemians living in Moravian, and vice-versa. These two separate identifiers also allow a Bohemian versus Moravia/Silesia comparison to be made in two different ways:

1. by student self-identification and
2. geographic location of respondent hometowns within the three regions using GIS analysis and mapping (Figure 6).

The analysis of the student survey demographics shows that the survey data is indeed an accurate representation of the Czech population. In addition to accurately reflecting a proportional gender makeup, it also follows closely the rural/urban and regional trends of the Czech population as a whole.

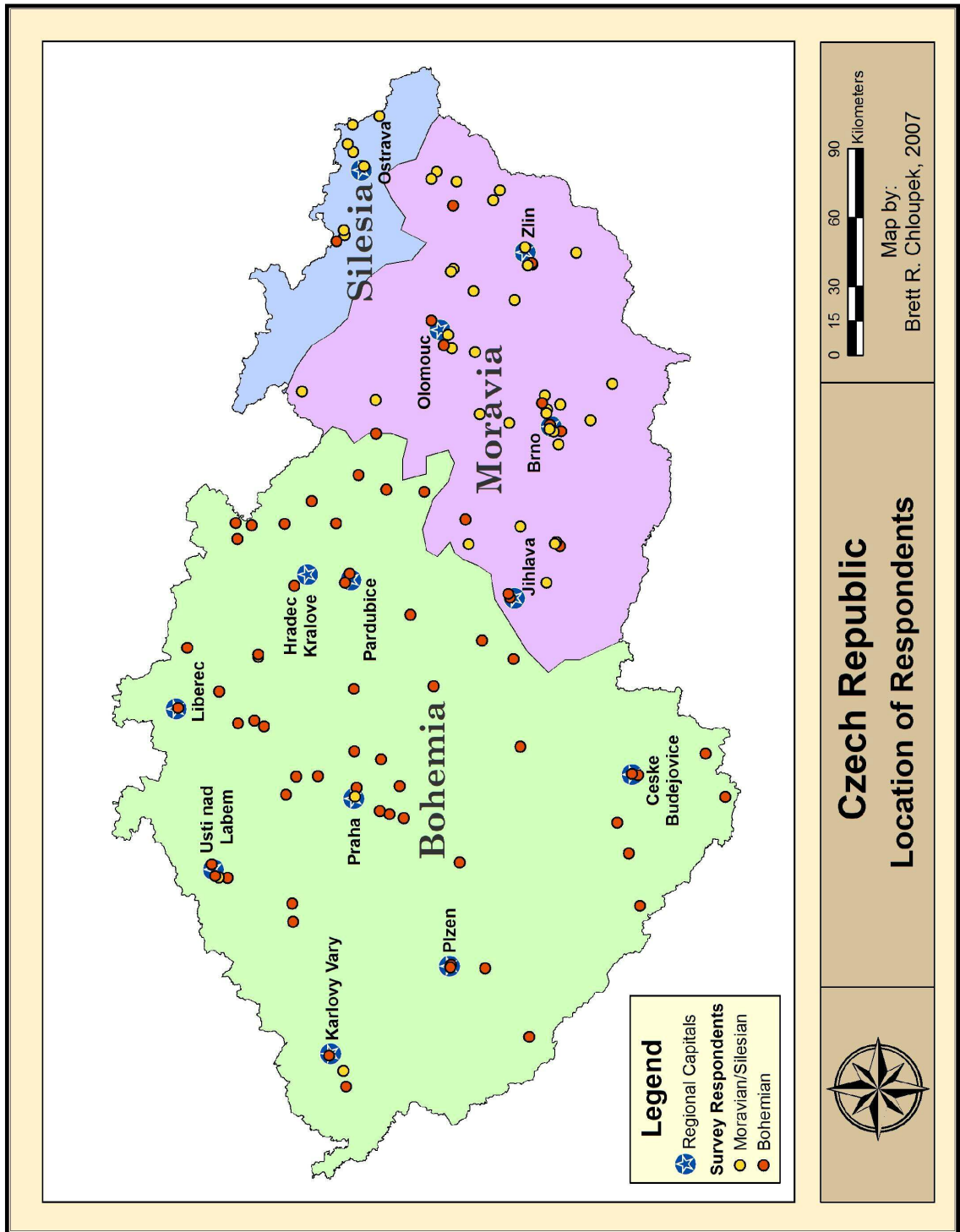


Figure 6. Location of Survey Respondents within Historiocultural Regions.

Student Opinion Comparisons with Velvet Divorce Opinion Polls

Prior to the Velvet Divorce a number of opinion polls were conducted by the Czechoslovak government to gauge the public's views about the continuation or dissolution of Czechoslovakia. The results of several of the student survey questions are interesting when compared with this historical opinion poll data, since such comparison provides insight into the views of Czechs in the two years prior to the divorce and young Czechs today.

Although Czechs and Slovaks were indeed polled about the issue of the preferred form of statehood in the early 1990s, there was no official public referendum to ultimately decide the statehood question. “What appears worse still is that in Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union citizens in the secessionist republics at least had the chance to vote on independence in referenda” (Leff 1997, 138). According to the historical poll data (Table 10), in both 1991 and 1992 polls, the Czech population overwhelmingly rejected the idea of total independence from Slovakia.

Table 10. Czech Opinion Source (Leff 1997)

Comparison of Survey and Velvet Divorce Opinions			
	<i>Vote to Split</i>	<i>Czech Benefit</i>	<i>Vote to Reunify</i>
Survey - Yes	60.6%	63.8%	10.8%
Survey - No	39.4%	36.2%	89.2%
91 Czechs - Yes	12.0%		
91 Czechs - No	73.0%		
92 Czechs - Yes	11.0%		
92 Czechs - No	67.0%		

What is not revealed by this data, however, is the ambivalence of Czechs with regard to the preferred form of statehood. The 1991 and 1992 survey data has been aggregated so that all survey responses which favored any of the various forms of

continued statehood (Unitary, Federation, Confederation) were considered a vote against a split. In the current survey, students were simply asked if they would have voted for or against the breakup of the country given the chance, and were not given choices about the preferred form of a continued state.

While a yes or no answer to the question of continued statehood versus independence may seem quite simple, in reality it was too simple. During the years just prior to the Velvet Divorce, the issue of continued statehood was twofold. Not only was there a question of whether or not Czechoslovakia should remain unified, but the issue was also (and more importantly) on the form of statehood favored by the Czechs and Slovaks. For this reason, holding a public referendum in the two republics was not necessarily the most practical solution and “given the differences between Czech and Slovak popular preferences on the form of the state, a referendum or constitutional alternatives could very well have resulted in a Slovak vote for confederation and a Czech vote for a tighter federation...then what?” (Leff 1997, 139)

Comparing current student opinions to those of the historical polls shows a stark contrast between their opinions. Nearly 61% of the students responded that, had they had the opportunity to vote on the issue in 1992, they would have voted for Czech autonomy. Of course, these students have the benefit of over fifteen years of hindsight. The truth is that, at the time of the Velvet Divorce, Czechs and Slovaks were both much less sure about the benefits of autonomy. Given that the Velvet Revolution had happened only a few years before and also the volatility of the surrounding regions, there was at least some reason to be concerned that splitting Czechoslovakia into two smaller countries would negatively impact the stability of both.

The opinions of women regarding the Velvet Divorce are particularly interesting, because in all three of the instances that students were asked about the breakup of the country, the female respondents were much more strongly in favor of the separation (Table 11). More women were in favor of the split and indicated that they would have voted to separate from Slovakia if they had been given the opportunity in 1992. Even more interesting is the fact that while male respondents were somewhat ambivalent about whether Czechs had benefited more than Slovaks from the Divorce, three of every four Czech female students felt that Czech Republic has benefited the most from the breakup of Czechoslovakia. While the exact reasons for this opinion are unclear, it is evident that young Czechs women view their status as having improved since the Velvet Divorce.

Table 11.

Views on Separation by Gender			
	<i>Agree with Split</i>	<i>Vote To Split</i>	<i>Czech Benefit</i>
Men - Yes	79.3%	56.9%	58.3%
Men - No	20.7%	43.1%	41.7%
Women - Yes	86.6%	67.4%	75.0%
Women - No	13.4%	32.6%	25.0%

Two possible explanations are that “the promotion of women’s participation in the communist workforce was a means to...maximize production, rather than an abstract commitment to equality,” and that women were paid less on average in the communist system than men (Leff 1997, 198). The non-discrimination policies which have accompanied the transition to free-market capitalism in the Czech Republic may explain why young Czech women view the plight of women as having improved in the last 15 years since the Velvet Divorce. Also, it is not necessarily the case that women respondents view this question solely in terms of the benefits that the Velvet Divorce provided to Czech women, but instead, Czechs in general. It is clear from discussing

these results with several Czechs—both male and female—that there is no immediate explanation for the discrepancy between male and female opinions on these issues.

The opinions of the students regarding the possibility or desire for a Czechoslovak reunification are crystal clear. More than 89% of Czech students are not in favor and would not vote to reunify Czechoslovakia if they were given the opportunity. It seems unlikely according to this information that there will ever be a movement to reunify the two countries. Student opinions are much stronger today than in 1995, when polls showed that only about 80% of Czechs favored the divorce and were not remorseful about the breakup (Leff 1997, 163). Currently, both countries have friendly relations and an open border. Both the Czech and Slovak republics have been admitted to the European Union and will soon be using the Euro as national currency. For these reasons, it appears that there is no real political advantage or reason for the two countries to reunify.

While the opinions of women regarding the issue have already been examined, student responses as a whole to the question of which country has ultimately benefited from the breakup of Czechoslovakia are somewhat less clear. Approximately 64% of Czech students feel that the Czech Republic has benefited from the breakup of Czechoslovakia, while the remaining 36% indicate that they believe Slovakia has benefited from its autonomy. The reason for this mixed opinion is most likely due to the fact that in actuality, both countries have fared reasonably well economically and socially after the Velvet Revolution and continue to do so.

As Rothschild and Wingfield explain:

Although the difference between the two parts of Czechoslovakia in economic performance had increased since 1989, it paradoxically divided at a time when (again in contrast to the Soviet Union or Yugoslavia), the variation between the economic and the living standards of the Czechs and Slovaks had been reduced to a minimum. At the beginning of the 1990s, Czech and Slovak societies had similar economic and social structures and demographic behavior as well as nearly identical legal, technical, and educational systems (Rothschild and Wingfield 2000, 274).

Indeed, during the years of communism, the Slovak region made a rather impressive transition from being a primarily agricultural economy to the point where social and economic situations in both countries were virtually the same (Fowkes 2002, 130).

Czech students' opinions about the decision to split the country, as well as which of the new republics benefited the most from the breakup, show that students from the three regions have very different views. When asked how they would have voted, had they been given the chance in 1992, a majority of Bohemian students (61.3%) indicated that they would have been in favor of separating from Slovakia. Moravian and Silesian students' opinions were exactly the opposite, with a majority of the students opposed to the breakup (Table 12). In addition to this fact, a majority of Bohemian students view the Czech Republic as the greater benefactor from the breakup of the country, while Moravians and Silesians are undecided on which of the two republics benefited the most.

Table 12.

Regional Comparison of Velvet Divorce Opinions			
	<i>Vote to Split</i>	<i>Czech Benefit</i>	<i>Vote to Reunify</i>
Bohemia - Yes	61.3%	63.2%	9.9%
Bohemia - No	38.7%	36.8%	90.1%
Moravia/Silesia - Yes	43.8%	50.8%	7.8%
Moravia/Silesia - No	56.3%	49.2%	92.2%

In addition to any role the greater geographical separation of Bohemia from Slovakia may play in shaping Bohemian students' opinions, several other factors should be considered when trying to identify possible reasons for this regional variation. First, the demographic makeup of the regions is rather different. Most notably are the rural and urban population distributions. While the Bohemian students are 79% urban and 21% rural, the distribution of Moravian and Silesian students is exactly 50% urban and 50% rural. It may also be the case that while Moravian and Silesian students would not necessarily vote to split the country and cannot identify any perceived benefits from the breakup, they still view reunification as more trouble than it would prove to be worth.

In Czechoslovakia the Czechs were undoubtedly the power-holders in the Czech-Slovak political relationship. Within the Czech Republic, Bohemia is currently the dominant region, politically. The capital and primate city of Prague, along with the national government is located in Bohemia and the region is more urbanized. A final explanation for why Moravians and Silesians may be less in favor of the breakup is that there was a level of employment overlap between the Czech and Slovak Republics before the breakup. That is, Moravians and Silesians who were working on the Slovak side of the border established after the breakup experienced a great deal of difficulty. Suddenly, these people were working in a foreign country and being forced to cross a border each day. According to several Czechs encountered during a recent visit to the region, this was initially a very tedious task. Although students were not asked to identify any specific benefits they believe were gained by the separation from Slovakia, these factors, combined with the demographic differences between the three regions, may explain why there is a significant regional variation of opinion.

The greatest question raised by the percentages of Czech students who favored the breakup of Czechoslovakia is the manner in which they currently justify the breakup and its perceived causes and benefits. Before an in-depth analysis of the modern Czech identity can be completed, it is necessary to establish how students view the role of identity in bringing about the Velvet Divorce. Once the answer has been established, it sets the stage for an analysis of the modern Czech identity after the establishment of Czech autonomy.

Views on Causes of the Velvet Divorce

Through the examination of student survey responses it is possible to determine how young students in the Czech Republic today view the role of identity in bringing about the breakup of Czechoslovakia. Determining how students view the relationship between Czechs and Slovaks that existed prior to the Velvet Divorce will illustrate the degree to which the students view a unified “Czechoslovak” identity to have existed, if at all. After making such a determination, the results can be compared with students’ views on the current state of Czech identity to reveal not only how Czech national identity has changed since the Velvet Divorce, but also reveal more about its current state, particularly in regard to the Slovaks. In the survey, students were asked to choose from a list which factor was the primary force in bringing about the breakup of Czechoslovakia (Table 13). Each student was asked to select only one factor from the list of possible choices.

Table 13.

Primary Factor Behind Velvet Divorce - Regional Comparison					
	<i>End of Communism</i>	<i>Czech Politicians</i>	<i>Slovak Politicians</i>	<i>Czech People</i>	<i>Slovak People</i>
Bohemia	10.8%	19.9%	47.0%	1.2%	21.1%
Moravian/Silesia	15.8%	17.1%	46.1%	1.3%	19.7%
Czech Republic	12.7%	19.2%	46.1%	1.2%	20.8%

Examining the answer to this survey question, it is quite clear that young Czech students view two of the largest causes of the Velvet Divorce to be the Slovak Politicians and the Slovak people, with nearly 67% of students choosing one of these two factors. When the data is examined regionally, again both the Bohemian and Moravian/Silesia survey groups select these two factors as the most important, indicating that this is the current sentiment of young Czechs throughout the country. The most imposing Slovak figure in Czechoslovakia prior to the Velvet Divorce was Vladimír Mečiar, the leader of the Slovak government. He was the figure who represented Slovak politics in the minds of the Czechs in the early 1990s. During a recent visit to the country, it is clear that students equate his name with the Velvet Divorce and Slovak autonomy.

It was Mečiar's HZDS party which rejected the notion of creating a confederative government, although it was the most popular governmental structure among Mečiar's own Slovak constituents (Shepherd 2000, 138). Despite this fact, it was the HZDS which received majority support from the Slovak people, indicating that they were in support of at least some of Mečiar's policies. From this data, it appears that Czech students view the Slovaks and their political leaders as a distinct cultural and political entity during the Velvet Divorce, with their own agenda and national ambitions. This would support the

idea that the students who were surveyed do not view a great deal of unity between the Czechs and Slovaks at the time, and certainly not the presence of a common identity.

If the Slovaks had real ambitions for autonomy from the Czechs, then the June 1992 elections can be viewed as the political “point of no return.” As noted previously, the two dominant political entities of the time, Vaclav Klaus and the ODS party and Mečiar and the HZDS, were fiercely opposed in terms of economic philosophy. While Klaus favored entering into a rapid free market economic transition phase, Mečiar favored a much softer approach to the economic situation in Slovakia.

The election of both as prime ministers in the 1992 elections effectively “erected an insurmountable barrier against retaining a common state in so far as, given the fact of the other, both election victors possessed greater incentives to separate the state than to seek a state-maintaining compromise” (Shepherd 2000, 141-142). Recalling the political events of 1992 and the emergence of the two leaders as preeminent national figures, the results are clearly reflected in the student survey results (Table 13), where students also indicated that Czech politicians were at least somewhat to blame for the Divorce. Klaus and Mečiar were polarizing figures which represented two distinct groups of people—the Czechs and the Slovaks—not to mention two separate governments. A political leader never emerged after the Velvet Revolution which enjoyed majority support from both the Czechs and Slovaks. This may be in part due in some part to the governmental structure inherited from the communist regime, but it is more likely due to the fact that support for political parties was so clearly drawn along ethnic lines.

Another factor which can explain why the absence of a common Czechoslovak identity helped facilitate the dissolution of the state is the degree to which the Czechs and

Slovaks were intermixed geographically. In stark contrast to the Yugoslavia crisis, where the Serb minorities were substantially intertwined in the population, leading to violence, the Velvet Divorce was termed appropriately due to the virtual absence of conflict. During the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the movement toward Slovenian autonomy went largely uncontested, due in part to the fact that the region was ethnically homogeneous (Leff 1997, 161).

Much in the same way, the lack of a substantial Czech minority in Slovakia and vice versa can explain much of why the Velvet Divorce seems to be so passively accepted by both the Czech and Slovak people. Supporting this idea is the fact that nearly 84% of the students who were surveyed indicated that they had no relatives living in Slovakia. This statistic reveals two important cultural facts. Not only is there relatively little ethnogeographic overlap between Czechs and Slovaks, but it also seems that a relatively small degree of intermarriage occurred between the two. This seems to be the case because students would certainly also be considering any Slovak relatives gained through marriage when answering this question.

Also, because of the lack of intermixing between the two populations, ethnic tensions were quite low during the early 1990s, if they existed at all. When asked about their views on the level of Czech/Slovak tension prior to the Velvet Divorce, 88.8% of the students indicated that they did not feel any existed.

In particular, most of the Slovaks in the Czech Republic had arrived there only during the communist period; they had resettled voluntarily, had...assimilated relatively well, and were in a position to either return 'home' or settle permanently in the Czech Republic. There was therefore no real sense of ancestral belonging or of being ripped away from the motherland, no ancient territorial right (Leff 1997, 141).

The clear opinion of the students surveyed indicates that the great majority do not believe that there was any hostility between Czechs and Slovaks. This opinion was shared by both at the time, as polling data during the 1990s “repeatedly showed that Czechs and Slovaks did not hate and fear each other or even dislike each other” (Leff 1997, 142). In other words, there was no large minority of Czechs or Slovaks displaced in either region to protest being orphaned by the breakup of the country. Another reason why neither group seems to have felt any genuine animosity toward the other can be partially explained by the degree of similarity between the two cultures and identities.

Students were surveyed about their perceptions of the Slovak culture and how closely it relates to the Czech identity. When asked if they believed the Slovak people have a real understanding of the Czech culture and identity, 91% of the students indicated that they do. Indeed, because of the similarities and mutual intelligibility of the Czech and Slovak languages, one way in which both populations were able to experience the other culture was through television. Television programming in Czechoslovakia regularly featured both languages and only worked to increase the level of cultural and linguistic understanding between Czechs and Slovaks. At the same time however, the very fact that Czechs were regularly exposed to Slovak language and culture through television and mass media perhaps worked to reinforce the differences between themselves and the Slovaks. Simultaneously, the great deal of similarity between the two cultures mitigated the development of any feelings of hostility or ethnic tension.

It is important to articulate the connection of the Czech and Slovak languages. “Historically, Slovakia had been part of the kingdom of Hungary for a millennium. Linguistically, however, Slovak is extremely close to Czech, and Czech nationalists had

on this basis claimed Slovaks for the nation for more than half a century” (Sayer 1996, 181). These “communalities of language allowed Hungary’s Slovaks to be reconfigured as a lost fragment of a primeval Czech nation; for Czech and Slovak are so close as to be mutually intelligible” (Sayer 1996, 191). Because of the two languages’ similarities, neither was as threatening to the other as German or Hungarian had been.

The Slovaks enjoyed greater linguistic freedoms by joining with the Czechs in 1918.

The First Republic did not give them top dog status but it was a big improvement on the domineering rule of Slovakia’s highly discriminatory, non-Slavic, Hungarian masters in the days of the empire. Slovaks could now participate at all levels of national life. Cultural organizations...were reborn. Literacy improved. Educational opportunities, especially at the secondary school level, flowered, and enhanced freedom of expression allowed for increased use of the Slovak language in public life generally (Shepherd 2000, 12-13).

By joining together, the Czechs and the Slovaks were able to develop a partnership in which they shared much more in common than with either of their previous masters, the Germans and Hungarians (Shepherd 2000, 10). Table 15 shows the degree of similarity the Czechs see in Slovak culture. As pointed out earlier, these young Czechs feel strongly that their country is culturally closer to Slovakia than to any of its other neighbors and that Slovaks understand Czech culture (with a mutually intelligible language as the central component, this seems only natural).

In 1921, Tomáš Masaryk famously asserted:

There is no Slovak nation...the Czechs and the Slovaks are brothers. Only cultural level separates them—the Czechs are more developed than the Slovaks, for the Magyars held them in systematic unawareness. We are founding Slovaks schools. We must await the results; in one generation there will be no difference between the two branches of our national family (Masaryk 1934, 78).

Despite Masaryk's hopes that over time the two cultures would develop a unified national identity, the passive acceptance of Czechs and Slovaks at the time, as well as the contemporary Czech student opinions derived from the survey show that such an identity never developed. The lack of such an identity, in turn, facilitated an easy separation of the two countries in 1993.

An examination of the political party structure during the early 1990s illustrates the degree to which Slovak politicians were able to capitalize on the lack of a unified Czechoslovak identity in order to gain support. Many of the major Slovak parties including Mečiar's HZDS party, the Slovak National Party, Slovak Motherland Party, the Movement for an Independent Slovakia, Slovak National Democratic Movement, and the Party of Freedom-Party of National Unity all openly advocated the movement toward Slovak autonomy as official policy. "The widespread popular support in Slovakia for a revision of the [Czechoslovak] Federation indicates that most Slovaks saw themselves as separate from the Czechs not only in culture but also in political terms" (Hilde 1999, 649). There was really no Czech equivalent in terms of a party advocating total separation of the Czech and Slovak republics (although several were privately not opposed), and any of the Czech parties which considered the possibility of a separation,

viewed such a possibility mainly in terms of the possible economic benefits, including Václav Klaus and the Civic Democratic Party.

There are several explanations for why Slovak culture and nationalism was more deeply involved in the political structure of Slovakia. First, Slovaks viewed themselves as unequal partners in the Czech/Slovak relationship. The most superficial indicator of this sentiment, but an event which pointed to much deeper problems within the relationship was the so-called “hyphen war.” The Slovaks wished to add a hyphen in order to change the name “Czechoslovakia” so that “Slovakia would...cease to be an uncapitalized appendage in the federal state’s name” (Shepherd 2000, 137).

Secondly, feelings of Slovak nationalism were heightened during the 1990s because of the ongoing issues related to the large Hungarian minority within the country. After the Velvet Revolution, Hungarians became increasingly politically active.

Hungarian groups claimed that the position of minorities was under threat from rising Slovak nationalism and increasing disengagement by Prague. They claimed that Bratislava would apply various restrictions and discriminatory measures. Hungarian organizations also expressed concern over the incitement of ethnic conflict by ultra-nationalist Slovak forces, some of whom staged anti-Magyar demonstrations and even called for the wholesale expulsion of the Hungarian minority (Bugajski 1995, 325).

The Czechs had dealt with their largest minority issue, the Germans of the Sudetenland, definitively in the years immediately following World War II, so several decades had passed and any heightened nationalist/ethnic passions had calmed. Also a common Czechoslovak identity was absent, despite the hopes of Tomáš Masaryk, which allowed the political events of 1992 to proceed largely unchallenged by either the Czech or Slovak populations.

Table 14.

Czech Views on Primary Cause of Velvet Divorce				
	<i>Politics</i>	<i>End of Communism</i>	<i>Decision of Citizens</i>	<i>Cultural Differences</i>
Bohemia	1.46	2.63	2.80	3.14
Moravian/Silesia	1.45	2.32	2.82	3.42
Czech Republic	1.46	2.53	2.80	3.22

Students were asked to rank four possible causes of the Velvet Divorce on a scale of importance, with a ranking of one being most important and four contributing least to the Velvet Divorce. The rankings for each category were determined by calculating a simple average of all the responses. Across all three regions, the perception of Czech students was that politics were responsible for the breakup of Czechoslovakia. An examination of regional opinions about the primary cause of the Velvet Divorce shows that students from both regions hold virtually the exact same views about which factors were most influential in the breakup (Table 14). The only slight regional variation worth noting is that a slightly higher percentage of Moravians and Silesians attributed the cause of the Velvet Divorce to the end of communism. At the same time, cultural differences were viewed as the least important factor. Despite this fact, it is clear that students perceive Slovak politicians with the support of the Slovak people to have caused the breakup as indicated in Table 13, illustrating that students viewed Slovak culture as having played a role in bringing about the Velvet Divorce.

As discussed earlier, most of the Slovak political parties supported autonomy in 1992. While only slight cultural differences may have existed between Czechs and Slovaks in the early 1990s (certainly not enough to incite violence or protest), the fact remains that the two groups remained largely separate in terms of identity. Had a common identity formed between Czechs and Slovaks during the previous 74 years of

Czech and Slovak partnership, the political structure of the country would certainly have been much different and the ethnic/identity politics which prevailed in the early 1990s, particularly among the Slovaks, would have been greatly reduced. With a common identity, political party support after the Velvet Revolution would have most likely formed around issues other than ethnicity, and Slovak autonomy would have been a non-issue. So in reality, the Velvet Divorce can be seen as the result of the cultural differences between Czechs and Slovaks which were evident as far back as the Pittsburgh Agreement of 1918, manifesting themselves through the political events of the 1990s.

Contemporary Views on Czech Identity

Despite the fact that the Czechs and Slovaks were culturally very similar, Czechoslovakia ceased to exist on December 31, 1992. For the first time, the Czechs and Slovaks controlled their national destinies wholly separate from one another. The students being examined in this study were among the first to begin to develop a Czech identity entirely unique to the Czech Republic. They are completely politically separated from the Slovaks. The question now is: to what degree are they culturally separate? Statistics from the survey data show contemporary Czech views on the similarities between Czech and Slovak cultures (Table 15). Students were given five choices, ranging from very similar to very distinct.

Table 15.

Czech Views on the Similarity of Czech and Slovak Cultures					
	<i>Very Similar</i>	<i>Slightly Similar</i>	<i>The Same</i>	<i>Slightly Distinct</i>	<i>Very Distinct</i>
Bohemia	42.1%	6.2%	0.0%	51.0%	0.7%
Moravian/Silesia	50.8%	6.2%	0.0%	38.5%	4.6%
Czech Republic	40.0%	6.7%	0.0%	51.1%	2.2%

It is clear that young Czechs continue to perceive a great deal of similarity between themselves and the Slovaks. When combined, the number of students who feel the Czech and Slovak cultures are either very similar or slightly distinct (the difference of which is simply a matter of perception) was nearly 92%. When the data is examined regionally, a greater percentage of Bohemians (over 93%) indicated that the two cultures are very similar. Interestingly, a smaller percentage of Moravians and Silesians (89%) perceived a great deal of similarity between themselves and the Slovaks. This is perhaps due to the fact that, with a stronger sense of regional identity, in addition to a closer geographic proximity, Moravians and Silesians are more attuned to the differences between themselves and the Slovaks, and more apt to assert the uniqueness of their identity, as was the case in the survey results.

Geographically, both Moravia and Silesia share a border with Slovakia. For this reason, the perceptions of students from these two regions regarding cultural similarities and differences are particularly interesting. It may be expected that because the two regions are closer to Slovakia, and were once unified during the times of Great Moravia, they would be culturally more similar. However, it can also be argued that students from these regions are more attuned to the slight cultural variations and would thus perceive a

greater amount of cultural distinctiveness. Examining the data indicates, at least to some degree, that the later is true.

While an overwhelming majority of Czechs view the Czech and Slovak cultures to be quite similar, not a single respondent from a sample of over 200 indicated that they viewed the cultures as one and the same. There can be no clearer indicator that, although Czech students may view the Slovaks as being culturally similar to themselves—perhaps more similar than any other Slavic people—they still view them as a distinct culture, altogether separate from Czechs. Since national identity is foremost a construction of the collective consciousness of a country's citizens, the fact that not a single respondent views Slovak culture as being the same as Czech culture makes it safe to assume that the modern Czech national identity is something entirely unique to Czechs and, consequently young Czechs view the Slovaks as cultural relatives, but certainly not as members of their immediate family.

The Components of Czech Identity

The modern Czech identity is being formed by the country's young citizens separately from the Slovak people for the first time. Thus far, the student survey results have been compared with historical opinion polls in order to determine the degree of commonality between the Czech and Slovak identities and the role of identity in the Velvet Divorce. Students clearly view the Czech identity as inherently unique to the Czech Republic. The question is which characteristics do Czechs view as most indicative of their culture and identity? In the survey, students were asked to rank a number of

common cultural characteristics in order of the importance they hold in constructing the Czech identity (Table 16).

Table 16.

Views on the Primary Components of Czech Culture						
	<i>Language</i>	<i>Traditions & Customs</i>	<i>Music & Art</i>	<i>Food & Drink</i>	<i>Political System</i>	<i>Religion</i>
Bohemia	1.76	2.69	3.09	3.41	4.52	5.30
Moravian/Silesia	1.88	2.18	3.35	3.43	4.85	4.88
Czech Republic	1.80	2.53	3.16	3.43	4.62	5.18

Like similarly formatted survey questions, the rankings for each category were determined by calculating a simple average of all the responses. The lowest numbers indicate the greatest amount of importance in the opinions of the Czech students. The resulting data reveals a great deal about Czech culture, and reinforces several popular and long-standing beliefs about the national identity of the Czech people.

Currently, the Czech Republic is one of the least religious countries in Europe. According to the Czech Statistics Office, in 2001 nearly 60% of Czechs considered themselves either atheist or agnostic, followed by 26.8% who identified themselves as Roman Catholic (Table 17). There is no doubt that communism played an important role in changing Czechs' religious views and practices. "Communist ruling parties officially promoted scientific atheism, and to varying extents, tried to eliminate or at least heavily regulate religious practices and institutions" (Froese and Pfaff 2001, 482). Analyzing Czech census data, the trend toward atheism during the years of communist control are evident. As discussed previously, the KSČ first came to power in Czechoslovakia after the elections of 1948. In 1950, 87% of Czech citizens claimed membership within one of the country's two largest Christian denominations. After the Velvet Revolution, that

percentage had dropped to only 40.7%—virtually equal to that of the atheist/agnostic population. The trend toward atheism which began during the communist era is clearly continuing today. Accordingly, the students definitively ranked religion as the least important characteristic in defining Czech culture, with an average ranking of 5.38.

Table 17. (Source: CZSO 2001)

Religious Affiliations by Census Year			
	1950	1991	2001
Roman Catholic	76.4%	39.0%	26.8%
Hussite	10.6%	1.7%	1.0%
Atheist/Agnostic	5.8%	39.9%	58.0%

The Czechs have a religious history deeply rooted in Roman Catholicism, although as discussed previously, the region of Bohemia also has a storied history of Protestantism, going back to the times of Jan Hus, Jan Zizka, and the Hussite movement. Regionally, Moravia and Silesia are more rural and its people are generally considered to be more religious. While religion was consistently the lowest rated identity component among students, this slight variation in religious tradition can be seen in somewhat more favorable ranking (4.88) in Moravia/Silesia than in Bohemia (5.30). Despite this fact, Czech patron saints are still very visible national symbols and many of their feast days are still celebrated as national holidays. For these reasons, the low ranking of religion may initially seem puzzling.



Figure 7. A typical roadside religious monument found throughout the Czech Republic.

While very few students ranked religion among the culture's primary components, the few who ranked religion highly most likely did so due to individual family traditions or personal beliefs. During a visit to the region during the summer of 2006, several Czechs were asked why they felt religion was not central to Czech identity. Students pointed out that while religion may have historically played a role in many Czech peoples' lives, Christianity is not something inherently unique to them and, as such, does not help to define the Czech culture. Additionally, it appears that any of the religious figures and symbols revered by the Czechs today have moved from the religious realm to be viewed in broader terms as historic or national symbols. Consequently, these

religious symbols do not equate to ‘religion’ as reflected in the opinions of the students who were surveyed. In addition to the effect of communism on the Czechs’ religious practices, it is also clear that before the Velvet Revolution, communism had taken hold of much of the country’s artistic and literary traditions.

Through this period the authorities, well aware of the propaganda value of culture, continued to subsidise a vast range of cultural activities either directly or indirectly (e.g. by maintaining low production costs and prices). They calculated that besides improving their image, such support would stimulate artistic production which would promote the official ideology and enhance its appeal (Hajek 1994, 127).

During the years of communist control in Czechoslovakia, there were official government policies governing what music could be played in cultural facilities. In the face of such rules, “young people set up a network of underground clubs outside the official framework” (Pittaway 2004, 148). The students show that Czechs view music and art as important in defining Czech national identity, ranking it third in the survey. On recent visits to the Czech Republic, the absence of live traditional Czech music was somewhat surprising and disappointing. Despite the fact that the prevalence of traditional folk music has declined rather dramatically in popularity with the younger generations of Czechs, it can still be found when searching in the right places (and more importantly during the right time of year). Generally, the winter season is when traditional music prevails, particularly because the wintertime is when many dancing balls are held.

After visiting one of the discothèques in the city of Moravské Budějovice—Ceské Budějovice’s smaller Moravian counterpart, in 2006, it was quite apparent that much of the popular music being enjoyed by students was heavily influenced by Western European and American styles. In addition to the explosion of the pop and techno

markets, the influence of American bluegrass music is becoming more apparent, and Prague is considered by many to be the country music capital of Europe (Wilson 2000, 652). Stumbling upon a bluegrass festival in the medieval city of Telč in the summer of 2003 reinforced the belief that this trend is indeed continuing. The increasing influence of Western popular music is no doubt having an effect on music styles in the Czech Republic. Again, the popularity of Western music can be attributed in part to the culturally repressive practices of the Czech communist government. The regime “regarded with alarm the hold Western popular culture, especially music, enjoyed over East European youth” (Pittaway 2004, 126). The suppression of western music only enhanced its appeal with Czech youth during the years of communism.

The value of the Czech literary tradition, especially as expressed through its struggle against communism regime, is evident in the events following the Velvet Revolution. Czech president-to-be Václav Havel, originally a writer and playwright, was imprisoned for his role in authoring the Charter 77 manifesto, which circulated throughout Czechoslovakia, along with other “locally produced *samizdat*” (Hajek 1994, 127). While many artists and writers were forced into exile during this time period, Havel and his co-authors were tried for subversive actions and sentenced to prison terms. Finally in 1989, after the long struggle against communism, Czechoslovakia was able to experience the “resuscitations of banned works, taboo issues, and blacklisted individuals” (Esbenshade 1995, 75). Havel ascended to become the first Czech president after the resignation of Gustav Husák in 1989.

Of great importance to the Czech national identity, according to young Czechs, is the country’s native cuisine and beverages. When visiting the Czech Republic, it is quite

evident that its citizens take great pride in their traditional food. Many families in rural areas still tend gardens which most Americans might consider as elaborate. A typical Czech restaurant still promotes what is considered the 'traditional' Czech meal of roast pork, dumplings, and sauerkraut. In the United States, people may be most familiar with kolaches, used in English to describe a very specific type of pastry of Czech derivation (although *koláče* in Czech is plural and refers to any of a wide variety of cakes).

Perhaps more than anything else, Czechs are world renowned and immensely proud of their natively brewed beer, particularly those brewed in the towns of Plzeň (Pilsner Urquell) and České Budejovice (Budweiser). Consistently, Czechs are credited with consuming more beer per capita (approximately 160 liters per person per year) than any other country in the world, with Germany coming in second (CBC News 1998). While the negative effects of communism on the culture and identity of the Czechs are numerous, it appears that the communist system may have inadvertently had a positive impact on the treasured Czech tradition of beer brewing. Because they were shut off from western advancements in brewing technology for decades, Czech and Slovak breweries were forced to maintain traditional brewing techniques with antiquated equipment and consequently, the craftsmanship devoted to brewing remained virtually unchanged for several decades, producing a superior product.

Ranked only behind language, Czech customs and traditions are highly valued by young Czechs. There are a number of important Czech holidays which celebrate events in their history. January 1st is recognized as Restoration of Czech Independence Day, celebrating the creation of the Czech Republic. Czechs celebrate May 8th as World War II Liberation Day and November 17th as the beginning of the Velvet Revolution. The 28th

of October is recognized as Independent Czechoslovak State Day to celebrate the creation of Czechoslovakia in 1918.



Figure 8. Traditions on display during a Moravian bachelor party.

Despite the predominance of atheism in the Czech Republic, several religious holidays are still regularly celebrated. On July 5th, Czechs celebrate Sts. Cyril and Methodius Day, in honor of the two brother evangelists who came to the area of Great Moravia in 863. This is followed the very next day by Jan Hus Day on the 6th of July. In spite of their religious significance, many of the younger generations of Czechs view these days as simply another day off of work or out of school.

Easter traditions in the Czech Republic are very strongly celebrated, particularly in more rural areas. Additionally, the Monday following Easter, known as Dyngus Day is part of the Czech tradition. In terms of the traditions and customs practiced by Czechs,

there is a notable spatial variation worth discussing. It is generally accepted that Moravians and Silesians are more traditional peoples. This notion is supported by the student responses (Table 16). Moravians and Silesians rank traditions and customs as more important to Czech identity than do Bohemians. More than 35% of Moravians and Silesians ranked *Traditions and Customs* as the most important component of their identity, ahead of even language. In comparison, only 15% of Bohemians ranked *Traditions and Customs* as being more important than language. This regional difference appears to be the primary component of regional Moravian and Silesian identities.

The most important part of the Czech identity, throughout history as well as currently, is the Czech language. An important reason Czechs have historically held, and according to young students today continue to hold language as the primary indicator of Czech national identity (Table 16) has been the historic struggle of the language along the borders of the country's German-speaking neighbors. "It is...crucial in understanding the rise of extreme German and Czech nationalism in central Europe to examine the whole issue of the 'moveable language border'" (Cornwall 1994, 917).

Language is the primary and most unique characteristic used by the Czech people to differentiate their culture from most of their neighbors (Slovaks being the exception), and on those grounds, reinforce their national identity. While surrounded by German-speaking populations on virtually all sides, "regrounding identity in language allowed Czech lands to be disentangled from their "Germanic" surrounds and reconceived as the most westerly outlier of an imagined *Slavic* civilization" (Sayer 1996, 191).

It should not come as a surprise that students agree with what has always been suspected about the place of language in their culture. Language has always been central

to the national identity of the Czech people and throughout the Czechs' long history, the nation-state had been realized through the unity of a common language.

Conclusion

Using the data gleaned from the student surveys, some conclusions may be drawn about how students view the cultural and political nature of the Velvet Divorce. Using these opinions as a contemporary data source by which to compare historical Czech opinions polls conducted during the years just prior to the Velvet Divorce, several meaningful observations were made about how opinions regarding national identity compare over the last decade and a half.

The survey demographic analysis indicates that the student survey population is indeed very representative of the larger Czech population, both in terms of urban/rural distribution as well as gender. Because of this fact, it can be assumed that the survey data is a reliable indicator of young Czechs' opinions regarding the topics they were asked to consider in the survey.

Inherent in all of the analyses is the phenomenon of opinion regionalization. Because of the cultural differences between Czechs and Slovaks, but more importantly between the Bohemians, Moravians and Silesians, several of the opinions expressed by the students demonstrate noticeable regionalization. Survey responses were examined in terms of Bohemia and Moravia/Silesia in order to determine whether one or both exhibit unique regional identities and produce a level of unique identity. The survey data indicates that Czech censuses since 1991 (when the regional distinctions first became available) have consistently underrepresented the number of Czechs that retain regional

Moravian and Silesian identities—in some cases, substantially. Emphasis was placed on how similar or different each region views the other, as well as how the respondents from both regions responded to questions relating to Slovakia. It is from these analyses—using a uniquely geographical approach—that final conclusions can be made about how young Czechs view the Velvet Divorce, its relationship to and impact on national identity, and lastly, the composition of the modern Czech identity.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

The focus of this study has been on the insights and perceptions of an intermediate generation of students who experienced both the reemergence of the Czechoslovakian state from communism during an event termed the Velvet Revolution, as well as the breakup of that country a few short years later, in what was called a Velvet Divorce. These students provide a valuable source of information about how breakup of Czechoslovakia and separation from the Slovaks affected their country both politically and culturally. Additionally, their insights shed light on the character of the modern Czech identity, how it has changed since the Velvet Divorce in 1992, and what is most central to the Czech national identity in the 21st century.

Young Czechs today view the Velvet Divorce as a political movement brought about by Slovak politicians like Vladimír Mečiar and supported by the Slovak people. Additionally, several historical events, including promises made by Tomáš Masaryk to the Slovaks in the Pittsburg agreement, the short-lived autonomous Slovak state during WWII, and the alteration of the Czechoslovak governmental structure to confederative structure, help explain the political landscape which helped to facilitate the events which ultimately led to the Velvet Divorce.

While the students recognize the political nature of the Velvet Divorce, the amount of responsibility they place on the Slovak people indicates the degree to which the students view them as separate in terms of identity, having their own ambitions for statehood separate from the Czechs. Czech students view the Czech and Slovak cultures as having a great deal of similarity, yet at the same time, not a single one views the two cultures as being the same. According to the students, there is very little interrelation between the two populations, as was the case at the time of the Divorce, and there was very little hostility that existed between Czech and Slovaks while they were joined together in Czechoslovakia, which matches historical opinion polls conducted prior to the Divorce.

The numerous similarities between the two cultures allowed them to strike a convenient and culturally beneficial agreement—creating a new country that allowed both peoples to escape the cultural dominance of their non-Slavic German and Hungarian masters following the end of World War I in 1918. Throughout the years of near-continuous Czechoslovak statehood, the two populations retained separate identities, despite the hopes of early politicians like Tomáš Masaryk, who viewed the development of a common Czechoslovak identity as vital to the survival of Czechoslovakia. After the Velvet Revolution liberated Czechoslovakia from communism, the Czech and Slovak confederative government structure proceeded to self-destruct, resulting in the breakup of Czechoslovakia along ethnic lines.

Czech students are generally in favor of the breakup, and a majority of the students who were surveyed would have voted to separate from Slovakia, had they been in position to do so in 1992. Female support of the Velvet Divorce is much stronger than

that of men's, however the exact reason is unclear. Female respondents also see Czechs as the largest benefactors of the breakup. Opinions on this issue also vary significantly within the historiocultural regions. Bohemians support the decision to separate from Slovakia and believe that the Czech Republic has benefited the most since gaining autonomy. Moravians and Silesians would not have supported the decision to breakup the country, yet are ambivalent about which of the newly formed republics has benefited. Despite the fact that they are in disagreement with the Bohemians on the issue of separation, they agree strongly with them that efforts to reunify Czechoslovakia would either be unbeneficial or futile.

Young Czechs today view the Czech language, along with Czech traditions and customs to be the central components of the modern Czech identity. The uniqueness of Czech language historically allowed Czechs to differentiate themselves from their non-Slavic neighbors, most notably the Germans and Austrians. Its connection to the Slovak language also helped enable the creation of the first Czechoslovak state in 1918, yet the subtle differences between the two languages may have worked to reinforce Czechs' perceptions that the two cultures were indeed different. While all three historiocultural regions rank the components of Czech identity in the same order, Moravians hold their customs and traditions as more central to their identity, indicating that this is the primary means by which they differentiate themselves from their Bohemian brothers.

The opinions of young Czech students examined in this thesis illuminate the complex and fascinating character of the Czech people—citizens of a country that in the last century has undergone numerous monumental changes, from its creation in 1918, through both World Wars, decades of communism, and finally the formation of a

separate Czech Republic in 1993. Outside a small church near the town square in České Budějovice, I found the following written in stone on the ground, which most eloquently summarizes the identity of the Czechs and their country:

Pokolení odchází, pokolení přichází, ale země stále trvá

“Generations come, generations go, but the land remains the same”

REFERENCES

- Abrams, B. F. 2004. *The Struggle for the Soul of the Nation*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Agnew, H. 2004. *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown*. Stanford California, Hoover Institution Press.
- Anderson, B. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised Edition. London.
- Anonymous. 1993. After the Velvet Divorce. *Wilson Quarterly*, Spring 1993, Vol. 17, Issue 2.
- Berend, I. 1996. *Central and Eastern Europe 1944-1993: Detour from the Periphery to the Periphery*. Cambridge Studies in Modern Economic History. Cambridge University Press. University of California, Los Angeles.
- Berg, E. 2002. Local Resistance, National Identity and Global Swings in Post-Soviet Estonia. *Europe-Asia Studies* 54(1): 109-122.
- Betz, H.G. 1990. Mitteleuropa and Post-Modern European Identity. *New German Critique* 50(Spring-Summer, 1990): 173-192.
- Bideleux, Robert, and Ian Jeffries. 1998. *A History of Eastern Europe: Crisis in Change*. Routledge Press, London and New York.
- Breuilly, J. 1993. *Nationalism and the State*. Manchester University Press.
- Bugajski, J. 1995. *Ethnic Politics in Eastern Europe: A Guide to Nationality Policies, Organizations, and Parties*. Center for Strategic and International Studies, M.E. Sharp, Armonk, New York.
- CIA. 2007. The World Factbook. Date last updated: 8 February, 2007. Date Accessed: 4 March, 2007. <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ez.html>
- CBC News. 1998. Are Canadians Big Beer Drinkers? *CBC News Radio broadcast*: Oct. 28.

- Cornwall, Mark. 1994. The Struggle on the Czech-German Language Border, 1880-1940. *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 109, No. 433 (Sep., 1994).
- CZSO. 2006. *Publication on Public Spending, Social Sphere, Culture, and Living Standard Czech Republic*: Czech Statistical Office. Database on-line. Available at www.czso.cz.
- CZSO. 2003. *Territorial Comparisons. Selected Indicators by Region*. Czech Republic: Czech Statistical Office. Database on-line. Available at www.czso.cz.
- CZSO. 2001. *Obyvatelstvo Hlásící se k Jednotlivým Církvím a Náboženským Společnostem..* Czech Republic: Czech Statistical Office. Database on-line. Available at www.czso.cz.
- Dingdale, A. 1999. The Changing Meaning of Place in Post-Socialist Eastern Europe: Commodification, Perception, and Environment. *The Geographical Journal* 165(2): 145-153.
- Eberhardt, P. 2003. *Ethnic Groups and Population Changes in Twentieth-Century Central-Eastern Europe: History, Data, and Analysis*. M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, New York.
- Esbenshade, Richard S. 1995. Remembering to Forget: Memory, History, and National Identity in Postwar East-Central Europe *Representations*, No. 49, Special Issue: Identifying Histories: East Europe Before and After 1989 (Winter), p.75.
- Fowkes, B. 2002. *Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict in the Post-Communist World*. Palgrave. New York.
- Froese, P and S. Pfaff. 2001. Replete and Desolate Markets: Poland, East Germany, and the New Religious Paradigm. *Social Forces*, December 2001, 80(2).
- Hájek, Igor. 1994. Czech Culture in the Cauldron. *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 46. No. 1, 1994.
- Hartl, P. 1993. The Natural Experiment: Czech-Slovak Velvet Divorce. *Convergence* 26(3).
- Hilde, P. S. 1999. Slovak Nationalism and the Break-Up of Czechoslovakia. *Europe-Asia Studies* 51(4): 657-665.
- Huntington, Samuel P. 1996. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. Touchstone. New York.
- Kann, R. 1950. *The Multinational Empire; Nationalism and National Reform in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1848-1918*. Columbia University Press. New York.

- Klaus, V., 2005. *On the Road to Democracy: The Czech Republic from Communism To Free Society*. ed. J. C. Goodman. National Center for Policy Analysis, Dallas.
- Kundera, M. 1984. A Kidnapped West, or Culture Bows Out. *Granta* 11: 99.
- Larson, K. S., D. H. Goberg, K. Krumov, L. Adrejeva, N. Kashlekeva, Z. Russinova, G. Csepeli, R. Ommundsen. 1995. Ideology and Identity: A National Outlook. *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 32, No. 2., (May), pp. 165-179.
- Leff, C.S. 1997. *The Czech and Slovak Republics: Nation Versus State*. West View Press.
- Masaryk, T.G. 1934. *Spisy*, Vol. 2. Prague, Czech Republic.
- Magocsi, P.R., 1993. *Historical Atlas of East Central Europe*. University of Washington Press. Seattle, WA.
- Okey, R. 2004. *The Demise of Communist East Europe, 1989 in Context*. Oxford University Press Inc., New York.
- Pittaway, M. 2004. *Eastern Europe 1939-2000. Brief Histories*. Hodder Arnold. Oxford University Press. New York.
- Reynolds, M. 2005. Neighborly Understanding Falling: Young Czechs Forget Slovak 12 years after 'Velvet Divorce.' *The Prague Post*, 11 April.
- Rothschild J., N. M. Wingfield. 2000. *Return to Diversity, A Political History of East Central Europe Since World War II*. Oxford University Press Inc., New York.
- Sayer, Derek. 1996. The Language of Nationality and the Nationality of Language: Prague 1780-1920. *Past and Present*, No. 153 (Nov., 1996).
- Shepherd, R. 2000. *Czechoslovakia: The Velvet Revolution and Beyond*. St. Martin's Press, New York.
- Szporluk, R. 1981. *The Political Thought of Thomas G. Masaryk*. East European Monographs. Columbia University Press, New York.
- Ulč, O. 1996. Czechoslovakia's Velvet Divorce. *East European Quarterly*. Vol. 30, No. 3, September, pp. 331-352.
- Wilson, Felice. 2000. Country to Country. *The Prague Post*, 1 November.

APPENDIX A.

Czech Student Survey (Czech Language)

1. Jaké je vaše křestní jméno? _____

2. Kolik je vám let? _____

3. Kde bydlíte? _____

4. Jste občanem České republiky?

- a. Ano
- b. Ne

5. Vyrůstal/a jste ve městě nebo na venkově?

- a. Venkov
- b. Město

6. Pohlaví

- a. Muž
- b. Žena

7. Cítíte se být Čechem, Moravanem nebo Slezanem?

- Moravanem
- Čechem
- Slezanem
- žádným z výše zmiňovaných

8. Souhlasíte s rozhodnutím rozdělit Československo v roce 1992?

- a. Ano
- b. Ne

9.Který z těchto důvodů byl podle vás největší příčinou rozdělení obou zemí v roce 1993?
a.Konec komunismu umožnil rozdělení federace.

b.Byla to vůle českých politiků.

c.Byla to vůle slovenských politiků.

d.Rozdělení chtěli čeští občané.

e.Rozdělení chtěli slovenští občané

10.Která země z rozdělení vytěžila více z pozice kultury a identity?

a.Česká republika

b.Slovenská republika

11.Myslíte si, že slovenští občané rozumí české kultuře a jejímu dědictví?

a.Ano

b.Ne

12.Myslíte si, že před rozdělením Československa cítili Češi a Slováci k sobě nevraživost?

a.Ano

b.Ne

13.Žijí nějakí Vaši blízcí příbuzní (bratři, sestry, tety, strýčkové, prarodiče) na Slovensku?

a.Ano

b.Ne

14.Myslíte si, že česká a slovenská kultura jsou si podobné nebo naprosto odlišné?

a.Česká a slovenská kultura jsou si velmi podobné.

b.Česká a slovenská kultura jsou si jen málo podobné.

c.Česká a slovenská kultura jsou stejné.

d.Česká a slovenská kultura jsou jen trochu odlišné.

e.Česká a slovenská kultura jsou zcela odlišné.

15.Myslíte si, že existuje něco jako společná česká kultura nebo jsou česká a moravská kultura odlišné?

a.Moravská a česká kultura jsou si velmi podobné.

b.Moravská a česká kultura jsou si docela podobné.

c.Češi a Moravané mají úplně stejnou kulturu bez jakýchkoliv rozdílů.

d.Moravská a česká kultura jsou trochu rozdílné.

e.Moravská a česká kultura jsou zcela rozdílné.

16.Kdyby jste mohl/a volit v roce 1992 o rozdělení Československa, volil/a by jste pro nebo proti?

a.Pro rozdělení.

b.Proti rozdělení.

17. Kdyby jste mohl/a volit pro opětovné sjednocení České a Slovenské republiky v Československo, byl/a by jste pro nebo proti?

- a.Pro.
- b.Proti.

Pro následující otázky prosím použijte stupnici od 1(nejdůležitější) až po nejvyšší číslo (nejméně důležité).

18. Prosím ohodnoťte nejdůležitější části české kultury (od 1 do 6).

- __Náboženství
- __Politický systém
- __Hudba a umění
- __Jazyk
- __Tradice a zvyky
- __Jídlo a pití

19.Prosím zhodnoťte podle důležitosti (od 1 do 4) důvody, které způsobily rozdělení Československa 1992.

- __Bylo to rozhodnutí politiků.
- __Bylo to způsobeno velkými rozdíly mezi Čechy a Slováky
- __Bylo to rozhodnutí československých občanů
- __Bylo to způsobeno koncem komunistické nadvlády.

Czech Student Survey (English Translation)

1. What is your first name? _____

2. How old are you? _____

What is your hometown? _____

3. Are you a Czech citizen?

- a. Yes
- b. No

4. Did you grow up in an urban or rural area?

- a. Rural
- b. Urban

5. What is your gender?

- a. Male
- b. Female

6. Do you consider yourself a Bohemian, Moravian, or Silesian?

- Moravian
- Bohemian
- Silesian
- None of These

7. Do you agree with the decision to split Czechoslovakia in 1992?

- a. Yes
- b. No

8. Do you feel there is a great deal of difference between the cultures of the Czech Republic and Slovakia?

- a. Yes
- b. No

9. Which country do you believe benefited the most from the breakup in terms of culture and identity?

- a. Czech Republic
- b. Slovakia

10. Do you believe that Slovak citizens understand Czech culture and heritage?

- a. Yes
- b. No

11. Do you think that before the breakup of Czechoslovakia, Czechs and Slovaks felt any hostility toward each other?

- a. Yes
- b. No

12. Do you have any close relatives currently living in Slovakia?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Prefer Not to Answer

13. Do you believe Czech and Slovak cultures are very similar or are they completely different?

- a. Czech and Slovak culture is very similar
- b. Czech and Slovak culture is only slightly similar
- c. Czechs and Slovaks are completely different in terms of culture
- d. Czech and Slovak culture is slightly different
- e. Czech and Slovak culture is very different

14. Do you believe that there is a unified Czech culture, or are Bohemian and Moravian cultures actually quite different?

- a The Moravian and Bohemian cultures are slightly similar
- b The Moravian and Bohemian cultures are extremely similar
- c Bohemians and Moravians have the same culture
- e The Moravian and Bohemian cultures are slightly different
- f The Moravian and Bohemian cultures are very different

15. If you could have voted in 1992, would you have voted to split Czechoslovakia?

- a. Yes
- b. No

16. If you could vote today to reunify the Czech Republic with Slovakia and live in Czechoslovakia again, would you?

- a. Yes
- b. No

17. Do you believe that Slovakia and the Czech Republic will ever reunify?

- a. Yes
- b. No

For the following questions, please rank the answers using numbers with 1 being most important and higher numbers being the least important.

18. Please rank the most important parts of Czech culture.

- ___ Religion
- ___ Political Systems
- ___ Music and Art
- ___ Language
- ___ Traditions and Customs
- ___ Food and Drink

19. Please rank, in order of importance, the reasons you believe caused the breakup of Czechoslovakia in 1992.

- ___ It was the decision of politicians
- ___ It was large difference between Slovaks and Czechs
- ___ It was the decision of Czechoslovak citizens
- ___ It was the end of communist control

APPENDIX B

Survey Results Summary

Survey Results		
Average Age	21.0	
	Responses	Percentage
Urban	163	76.9%
Rural	49	23.1%
Male	113	53.3%
Female	99	46.7%
Bohemian	141	68.4%
Moravian	59	31.6%
Silesian	6	
Question 8 - Yes	172	81.1%
Question 8 - No	40	18.9%
Question 9 - a	31	12.7%
Question 9 - b	47	19.2%
Question 9 - c	113	46.1%
Question 9 - d	3	1.2%
Question 9 - e	51	20.8%
Question 10 - Czechs	136	63.8%
Question 10 - Slovaks	77	36.2%
Question 11 - Yes	193	90.6%
Question 11 - No	20	9.4%
Question 12 - Yes	24	11.2%
Question 12 - No	190	88.8%
Question 13 - Yes	35	16.4%
Question 13 - No	179	83.6%

	Responses	Percentage
Question 14 - a	96	45.1%
Question 14 - b	13	6.1%
Question 14 - c	0	0.0%
Question 14 - d	100	46.9%
Question 14 - e	4	1.9%
Question 15 - a	62	29.0%
Question 15 - b	45	21.0%
Question 15 - c	6	2.8%
Question 15 - d	97	45.3%
Question 15 - e	4	1.9%
Question 16 - Yes	126	60.6%
Question 16 - No	82	39.4%
Question 17 - Yes	23	10.8%
Question 17 - No	190	89.2%
Question 18	Average Response	
Language	1.79	
Traditions/Customs	2.53	
Music/Art	3.17	
Food/Drink	3.43	
Political System	4.62	
Religion	5.18	
Question 19	Average Response	
Politics	1.46	
Czech/Slovak Differences	3.23	
Decision of Citizens	2.80	
End of Communism	2.53	

APPENDIX C: IRB Approval Documents

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Tuesday, April 24, 2007
IRB Application No AS0725
Proposal Title: Young Czechs' Perceptions of the Velvet Divorce and the Modern Czech Identity
Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 4/23/2008

Principal Investigator(s)

Brett R. Chloupek
229 N. Knoblock Apt. 302
Stillwater, OK 74074

Reuel Hanks
211 Scott Hall
Stillwater, OK 74078

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, beth.mcternan@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Sue C. Jacobs, Chair
Institutional Review Board

VITA

Brett R. Chloupek

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: YOUNG CZECHS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE VELVET DIVORCE AND THE
MODERN CZECH IDENTITY

Major Field: Geography

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born April 29, 1983 in Harvard, NE

Education: B.S. Geography, University of Nebraska at Kearney, 2005; B.S,
Computer Information Systems, University of Nebraska at Kearney,
2005; Certificate in GIS, Oklahoma State University, 2006; M.S.
Geography, Oklahoma State University, July, 2007.

Experience: GIS Consultant, Spatial Analytics, Inc; GK-12 Graduate Fellow,
Rural Alliance for Improving Science Education (RAISE), National
Science Foundation.

Professional Memberships: Association of American Geographers, Gamma
Theta Upsilon, Phi Kappa Phi, Mortar Board

Name: Brett R. Chloupek

Date of Degree: July, 2007

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: OKC or Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: YOUNG CZECHS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE VELVET DIVORCE AND
THE MODERN CZECH IDENTITY.

Pages in Study: 94

Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science

Major Field: Geography

Scope and Method of Study:

Using a combination of paper surveys and GIS database analysis, student opinions regarding the Velvet Divorce and the composition of the modern Czech identity are analyzed.

Findings and Conclusions:

Young Czechs have developed a national identity which is wholly separate from any surrounding nation, including Slovakia. They view the Velvet Divorce as having resulted from a combination of political maneuvering by the Slovaks combined with popular support from the Slovak people. Czechs view their language to be the most important part of their identity. Regional Moravian/Silesian identities exist and are underrepresented in recent Czech censuses. The main components of these identities are made up by continued observance of traditions and customs.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL: Dr. Reuel Hanks
