

Cultural Profile for Prague Accounting Program

Ascription/Achievement (Team 1)

Observations

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| Method 1. | Observed an assembly line at the Skoda Factory. |
| Observations | Employees are grouped into teams (of 4-5 people) to complete different task. Bonuses are paid to the entire team only if the team succeeds at achieving its objectives. Each team has a member in a blue shirt, which represents the team leader. The rest of the team wears white. The member in blue receives a higher salary and more vacation time than the others. Management's offices were located in the center of the assembly line, with glass windows all around. There was a break/lunch room in the middle of the assembly line where everyone takes their breaks together. |
| Conclusion | The characteristics of the assembly line and the interaction of workers indicate an achievement-oriented culture. |
| Comments | It seemed that the members of the team behaved the same way, regardless of their rank. The blue shirt employees ("seniors") treated the other team members as equal. Even though management is present all the time, everyone's manner seemed relaxed and interactive. This observation also shows that employees are rewarded based on performance rather than status. |

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| Method 2. | Interviewed an employee about rewards and the promotion system. |
| Observations | She said employees are promoted through an application process. Employees can look at the internal system to see which positions are available then apply to be promoted. The Company (Skoda) also offers extensive training course that are free to employees. They focus on teaching the English language and business/management classes. |
| Conclusion | This interview shows their promotion and reward system are similar to an achievement culture. |
| Comments | The promotion system is definitely based on performance rather than length of service. According to the employee we talked to, the average time of employment is 10 years and in some sections only 4 years, therefore time isn't a consideration for advancement. Furthermore, the fact that education is highly valued shows that personal accomplishment is a basis for status. |

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| Method 3. | Presentation by an employee at Krusovice Brewery. |
| Observations | When going through the history of the brewery, he mentioned that they have changed and updated the logo several times in its history. They wanted to maintain a fresh and current logo to keep up with popular marketing. |
| Conclusion | By changing the brand to keep up with the popular marketing, Krusovice is showing their promotion of innovation and change throughout the company. |
| Comments | From the pictures he showed of the brand, it looks like the change was made to make the brand look less historic. The old brand had small font with crowns and shields adorning the label. In an effort to make the label more simple, they removed the shields and enlarged the font. They kept the crown to show that this beer has history. |

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| Method 4. | Interaction with VSE students |
| Observations | Several VSE students described the majority of their professors as rather |

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| | informal when interacting with students. Many of the professors preferred had students address them by their first names, and some of the professors would even regularly invite students to have drinks outside of class. |
| Conclusion | A limited use of titles and casualness during interaction is most typical of an achievement-oriented culture. |
| Comments | Not all of the professors the students spoke of were as open and informal, but the fact that many of the professors were interested in having such casual interactions with their students showed how titles were not emphasized in the university setting. |

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| Method 5. | Professor Zarova and Young Skoda presenter - Randy |
| Observations | In introducing herself to the class Professor Zarova spoke at length about her credentials and accomplishments. The presenter at the Skoda factory had a very large role within the company (head of export department for India market) for such a young individual. |
| Conclusion | Professor Zarova's accomplishments and her pride in them reflect an achievement oriented culture. Likewise, the young Skoda presenter's confidence and position within the company hint at a culture that relies more on ability and talent than simply seniority or class. |
| Comments | Professor Zarova was selected as the only representative from the Czech Republic to attend EU meetings related to the development of international accounting standards. The simple fact that she was selected rather than an older male alone sheds light on the achievement vs. ascriptive distinction. It was clear from her introduction that she expected to be judged not on the basis of seniority, connections, or affiliation with a family or political party, but on the basis of her accomplishments. This demonstrates the Czech Republic's budding achievement oriented culture. In a similar manner the success of the Skoda presenter would have been unlikely under the former communist regime, which was most likely a more ascriptive culture. |

Visual Information



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| #1 | This photo is seen at the front entrance to Skoda. The display of trophies shows that their accomplishments and awards are highly valued. This supports our conclusion that this culture is more achievement rather than ascription. |
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#2 This photo was taken in the office building of Skoda. We believe the glass wall and large title of “management” show an achievement attitude towards status. Most offices will have just a nameplate outside of the office where as in Skoda they also displayed their titles outside of the offices. This photo can show that people strive to achieve a high status that is not necessarily bestowed to them.



#3 This photo was taken during our presentation at the Krosovice Brewery visit. It is interesting because it represents both achievement and ascription attitudes. The presenter noted that Krusovice prides it self on staying in the same location since 1581, an inherent characteristic. This shows that their background and connections to founding city are important to this company. We also think this represents achievement because the brewery is striving to achieve a high status in the Czech Republic.

Cultural Profile

Based from our various observations in and around Prague, our team concludes that the Czech culture has more of an achievement attitude towards status over an ascription attitude. The people are very hardworking and proud of their achievements as seen during our office visits around the city. Much like in the U.S., people work very hard at achieving their career goals.

For the most part our observations confirmed our opinion of an achievement culture. We do believe that the impact of the Hungarian Empire is still present in some instances. There are instances where family and seniority are a large component of status. For instance, both the Skoda and the Krusovice brewery were started as a family business where the founding members and family members made up top management. Now top management is selected based on different criteria and not on family association or status.

We thought the impact of communism on the Czech culture was quite interesting. During this period of time, the Czech culture would have been more of an ascription society. Family and political party would be the most important factor. Since the 90's The Czech Republic has become a “young” achievement culture.

Citizens are striving to be independent and break away from their deprived history. Traces of this history can be seen in the behavior of the elder Czechs. They stick to themselves and do not converse loudly. When we asked about this particular observation, the Czech liaison said this behavior stems from the communist era where people did not trust one another because there were so many spies for the communist parties.

It seems that the Czech Republic is not as developed or modern. This could be because there is still some communist roots in Prague. Furthermore, the people seem very conservative and quite. Even our presenter at the Skoda factory was very reserved. We also noticed that there does not seem to be a central business/finance section of city. We are used to downtown areas where most business Headquarters are located.

Conclusions

With the fall of communism barely twenty years past, Czech culture has undergone a rather rapid transformation. The transition to a market economy and increased interaction with the west has brought with it a shift towards an achievement oriented culture.

However, despite a narrowing culture gap, Americans must remain mindful of the Czech Republic's past as both a communist country and an ascriptive culture. It may be all too easy for Americans to take for granted their own achievement oriented culture and ignore the lasting impression communism made on older Czech citizens and business persons.

Americans may make the mistake of being too casual in business interactions if they assume all Czechs place little emphasis on status and seniority. It is likely the case that the older generations, which still run most Czech corporations, were raised in an ascriptive culture and should be addressed in a different manner than members of the younger generation whom have different expectations for interaction.

Through the course of the assignment, we realized how much of an achievement-based culture the U.S. is, as we may not have noticed without directly comparing the U.S. with another country. It made us realize the degree of informality and competence-based respect that exists within the U.S.

Universalism/Particularism (Team 2)

Observations

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| Method 1. | Met and interviewed Joe, an American who lived in the Czech Republic |
| Observations | Met Joe, who had grown up in California but moved to the Czech Republic where he worked for a Czech company for four years. Joe was especially insightful because he was an American working in a completely new environment which made it easy for him to notice cultural differences. Joe was adamant that Czech people constantly break rules in business dealings and otherwise. He said that Czechs feel constrained by structure because of their history with communism. |
| Conclusion | The insights we received from Joe, definitely indicate a society made up of mostly Particularists. |
| Comments | Joe was extremely helpful for this project, and at the time, Joe didn't even know he was really being interviewed. I met him on a tram and after finding out about his background, I was interested in hearing his perspectives on the culture. He was very insistent upon the fact that Czech people like breaking rules. He even said that Czech people have a phrase that goes something like, "If you need to find a way around something, ask a Czech person." |

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| Method 2. | Met and interviewed Martin, a Czech student studying at our University |
| Observations | Martin had grown up in a town nearby Prague, and he had been studying at VSE University for the last four years. We specifically asked him, "In general, do Czech people follow rules?" He responded by telling us that no, they didn't prefer them, although it was ultimately up to the individual. |
| Conclusion | Our interview with Martin leads us to believe there are more Particularists than Universalists in the Czech Republic. |
| Comments | Although this is just one person's opinion, I think Martin gave us the overall impression that Czech people are likely to break rules they don't believe in and not trust others right when they meet them. |

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| Method 3. | Observed an illegally parked car |
| Observations | A car had been parked illegally in a busy downtown area, blocking off an alleyway. There was no attempt made to turn the car's emergency flashers on, the owner just decided to leave it like that until his/her return. |
| Conclusion | The observation of this parking job would indicate that the people of the Czech Republic are likely Particularists |
| Comments | Although this is just one instance of illegal parking, it happens all over. Whether it be running stop signs, illegally parking, or speeding, Czech drivers don't find rules too important and will gladly choose to neglect them. |

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| Method 4. | Observed taxi drivers trying to charge more than was fair for the taxi ride |
| Observations | Prior to the trip, we were told to be wary of cab drivers not charging fairly for a taxi ride. Despite there being two "trusted" cab companies, there have still been several instances of this. Most notable was one situation that involved a cab driver pulling a knife on a student who refused to pay the higher cab fare. |
| Conclusion | Clearly, these situations in which cab drivers extort their customers and don't follow any guidelines show them to be Particularists. |
| Comments | While one cannot make an assumption on Czech culture as a whole through the cab drivers' practice of overcharging, it is evident that there are many people here who just blatantly ignore rules. |

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| Method 5. | Observed graffiti on multiple buildings. |
| Observations | There is graffiti on many buildings all over downtown Prague and its outlying neighborhoods. There does not seem to be an effort to clean it up or discourage it by punishing offenders. |
| Conclusion | Graffiti was a symbol of rebelling during the communist regime and now that it has fallen it still seems to be a way of expressing opinion. No one seems to follow the rule of no graffiti, and no one is enforcing it, showing the Particularism. |
| Comments | There is little graffiti in old town square and around the more historic building so there is more cleanup efforts and security in those areas mainly due the tourism factors. |

Visual Information



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| #1 | This photo shows a car that's blatantly parked illegally. They are completely sideways in the parking spot, and they stick way out into the street. The fact that this car is obviously breaking parking laws supports our interpretation that this culture is more particularist than universalist. |
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| #2 | This photo shows graffiti painted on a wall of a historic building in Prague. Graffiti is commonly found throughout the city. This observation supports our notion that Czechs do not follow rules. Clearly, painting graffiti on historic building isn't best for society; however, because Czechs are generally particularists, they don't care. |
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Cultural Profile

Considering our observations in Prague, we believe that Czech people are, in general, particularists. It's clear that Czech people don't mind breaking rules, whether it's illegally parking, cutting in line, jaywalking, or showing up a few minutes late to class. There are numerous examples where the Czech's disdain for structure and rules can be found. Much of this attitude can be explained by their recent history. During communism, Czechs were constrained by many more rules than they are today, and many of the rules did not make sense. Similar to the way your mother tells you not to do something and when you ask why, she replies "Because I said so!" – the Czech people were being told what to do by the government. There was no good explanation as to why they were being told what to do other than the notion that 'You should be loyal to your nation!'

In interviewing Joe, the American who had lived and worked in the Czech Republic for four years, we learned lots about the culture. Joe said he was regularly asked to engage in illegal business dealings at work. He also said, "When I see a Czech person driving a really nice car, I know they did something illegal to get it." Joe spoke about the way you can still bribe a police officer to get out of a ticket, and we discussed why taxi drivers always tried ripping foreigners off on cab fares. All in all, we learned that Czech people are not perfectly ethical nor are they rule followers. The ethical issues point to inefficiencies in the judicial and political systems here, which is characteristic of less developed countries. The Czech Republic is considered 'developed' by definition, but they have only had twenty years of capitalism to really grow as an economy. The U.S., on the other hand, has had 250. Because of our hugely different political histories, our cultures also differ. We have been free in the U.S. since the beginning, and, in fact, freedom is the principle our country was founded on. We cannot even imagine what it's like for the government to dictate our every move. To Americans, rules are good for society and keep things in order. However, to Czechs, it is quite the opposite.

Conclusions

Americans should take extra precaution when doing business in the Czech Republic. Because the Czech people were suppressed under communism for such a long time, they are likely to not trust you until they get to know you. They won't smile at you on the street or in passing; however, they will be loyal friends when they do get to know you. During communism, they never knew who they could tell their true opinions and feelings to and thus, have developed this aversion to strangers. One shouldn't be surprised if they are not as warm as Americans are in the beginning of business dealings.

Additionally, Americans should be aware of the increased likelihood for illegal practices in business. They should also be aware that the judicial and accounting systems in the Czech Republic are not as robust or developed as they are in the United States. This means that business dealings in the Czech Republic are riskier than they are in the U.S.

We found this cultural assignment to be fascinating in so many respects. We learned more about how truly lucky and proud we are to be Americans. We are so fortunate to have always had our freedoms fought for and protected. We are so lucky to have been born in a country that values choice and capitalism. This project forced us to analyze and consider aspects of a new culture in a structured way. The formula for analyzing culture in our book can be applied and used in conversation with recruiters, clients, bosses, and even friends in the future. With a systematic way of understanding different cultures and types of people, we will more effectively be able to build and nurture business relationships in the future.

Diffuse/Specific (Team 3)

Observations

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| Method 1. | Observed presenter at Skoda company visit. |
| Observations | While giving us an overview of the Skoda company, the presenter went into great detail about the history of the company and how the founders shaped the company. He told stories about the founders, including a myth about the origin of the logo. |
| Conclusion | This behavior indicates a diffuse orientation to communication. Speakers talk about the present in terms of past history and philosophy, illustrate with stories. |
| Comments | Because of the recent transition from communism to capitalism, successful Czech based companies are very proud of their history. |

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| Method 2. | Participated in a 3 hour guided walking tour of Prague. |
| Observations | The guide went on at length during the walking tour describing each landmark's history and its personal connection to her. She rambled and was willing to digress to accommodate any questions, even if they were unrelated to the original topic. |
| Conclusion | This behavior indicates a diffuse orientation to communication. Presenters are easily diverted to related topics and tangents. |
| Comments | We found similar behavior from the VSE teachers. In comparison with the UT professors, the Czech professors had much less structured teaching styles. They would digress so much, the class would lose focus. |

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| Method 3. | Asked for directions from local pedestrians. |
| Observations | Czech citizens give very vague directions. They use phrases such as "over there, through the pass" and do not indicate distance, direction, or street names. Street signs are not prominently displayed and even the maps are general. |
| Conclusion | This behavior indicates a diffuse orientation to communication. Directions are general. |
| Comments | This behavior could be due to a language barrier, or perhaps the citizens did not want to assist us with directions because we are American. Regardless, we feel this quality is common in the Czech culture. |

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| Method 4. | Observed a presenter at Krusovice. |
| Observations | We were served beer before the presentation began. The presentation did not begin on time, there was a period of socializing before the presenter began. |
| Conclusion | This behavior indicates a diffuse orientation to communication. Socializing/refreshments precede business discussion. |
| Comments | The presenter also drank a beer throughout the presentation. His communication style was very laid back and he encouraged us to interrupt him. |

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| Method 5. | Shopped in a retail store. |
| Observations | Sales associates do not approach customers or ask to assist. |
| Conclusion | This behavior indicates a specific orientation to communication. |
| Comments | This is a contradiction to our overall observation. In a diffuse orientation, |

associates would guide customers and provide recommendations. This has not been the case as far as we observed in the service industry. Perhaps this is due to the education level of these employees or their commitment to their job.

Visual Information



#1 This picture shows us having a beer and socializing with the presenter before the presentation started, which supports our interpretation that this culture is diffuse rather than specific.



#2 This picture shows an example of a Prague map. The map is hard to read due to the lack of a legend. This coincides with our observation of vague directions.

Cultural Profile

Based on our many observations and interactions with the local population, we conclude that Prague has a diffuse orientation of communication.

Although most of our methods pointed towards diffuse over specific, we observed one

contradiction. In the case of retail shopping, we noticed the salespersons were not very interactive with customers. In a typical diffuse orientation, the businessperson would attempt to build a relationship before doing business. Due to the nature of the retail industry, we resolved this contradiction with the explanation that the transaction length is too short to build rapport with the customer. Also, most employees in this industry do not receive commission or tip like they do in America and therefore have less incentive to go to great lengths to provide customers assistance.

We came across other interesting cultural differences in the Czech Republic during our observations. For example, on the public transportation, native citizens expect silence. They are very expressive in their dissatisfaction of loud noise. We have been “shushed” and yelled at several times. One man stuck his fingers in his ears to prove a point while sitting near us. In the US, public transportation is very noisy, and most people socialize or talk loudly on their cell phones.

Another striking difference was the amount of people that show public displays of affection. Usually, in America, it is frowned upon to show extreme affection by kissing and touching in public. After inquiring with our liason, we were told that this is because many kids in Europe live with their family longer than those in the US. They have less privacy and intimate time with significant others. These observations, among others, highlight the differences between Central European and Western culture.

Conclusions

The demographic in the Czech Republic is not as diverse as it is in the United States. Prague citizens are not as acquainted with members of different nationalities and ethnicities. Because of their slow start to capitalism, the Czech Republic has not always been a prominent destination for immigration. Their limited exposure to other cultures has not allowed for most regular citizens to familiarize themselves with the English language and western culture in general. This could be a difficulty for Americans wanting to do business here. We believe that the US has an overall specific orientation of communication, which contradicts with diffuse orientation and could cause conflict.

During our stay here, we have learned that when living in a different country, you must adapt yourself to the local culture. You must be aware of societal norms, and act in a way that does not offend the locals. In America, we are used to being the native and interacting with foreign visitors, it was interesting to be in the reverse situation.

This methodology is very helpful for young professionals about to enter the workforce. When in business situations with people of other cultures, we will be more informed on how to adapt our behavior to better relate with them. In such a growing global environment, these intercultural skills are vital. We can use these cultural analysis tools and our experiences in Prague to differentiate ourselves when talking to recruiters.

Long-Term/Short-Term Orientation (Team 4)

Observations

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| Method 1. | Observed presenter at Krusovice company visit. |
| Observations | The presenter made it a point that they don't license their brewery process outside the Czech Republic because they know that their customers only want to drink an authentic Czech beer. Although they know it would be easier to expand their business and increase sales by licensing their brewing process, they don't because it is important to Krusovice that they maintain their authentic Czech brand. |
| Conclusion | Views customers as relationships to be maintained. |
| Comments | The presenter emphasized the important and success of the Krusovice brand since the 16 th century and this success can be attributed to their customer relationship-focused mentality. |

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| Method 2. | Observed Krusovice advertisements during company visit. |
| Observations | After learning about the company's history, they have always maintained the crown and crest of the Krusovice brand in their logo which emphasizes that they attribute the success of the company to past history and tradition. |
| Conclusion | Their current and past logos demonstrate an emphasis on the company's history. |
| Comments | The presenter also mentioned that all current and future advertisements would include the Prague Castle in the background, which ties the brand back to its royal roots. |

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| Method 3. | Observed famous historical sites throughout Prague. |
| Observations | After site seeing throughout the city, it is clear that historical sites are well preserved. |
| Conclusion | The fact that the buildings are in such good condition shows that historical sites are a source of pride amongst Prague's residents. |
| Comments | During WWII, the astronomical clock tower was destroyed by Czech opposition; however, Prague restored the face of the clock and the tower housing the mechanism to preserve their history. |

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| Method 4. | Attended a walking tour of the city. |
| Observations | The tour guides only took us to significant historical sites throughout Prague. As they taught us about the different historical sites, it was obvious that each landmark provided a sense of pride for the locals in their city. |
| Conclusion | The tour guide's focus on the history of the city emphasizes past glory over more modern successes. |
| Comments | As you walk through the most historical parts of the city, you will likely see multiple tours going on around you with the guides emphasizing the past culture and history of the city. |

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| Method 5. | Observed local practices at restaurants. |
| Observations | Throughout a meal, service is much slower than what you would typically experience in the United States. |
| Conclusion | This behavior indicates that punctuality is not essential in a business environment. |
| Comments | Wherever we went to eat, whether fast food or dine-in, service is much |

slower than in the United States. This shows that the locals are much more relaxed, slower paced, and less concerned with deadlines.

Visual Information



- #1 This photo depicts the crown emblem used in Krusovice's logo, which shows their emphasis on past history and Czech culture. They have redone the logo many times and continue to keep the crown in each one as to not deviate from the royal roots of their brand.



- #2 This photo shows the Astronomical clock in the Old Town Square of Prague with tourists and tour guides surrounding the base of the tower. We chose this picture because you can see a mass of people as they observe and admire the clock while learning about the mechanism's historical past. As seen in the picture, the tower housing the clock has been fully restored since WWII, which shows that Prague's residents are very proud of the clock and want to keep it well-maintained.

Cultural Profile

We feel that Prague primarily has a long-term oriented mentality. We believe this because, after touring the city, it is apparent that past history is greatly emphasized. During the company visits, it was clear that their business strategy focuses on the preservation of past success and building a high level of quality into their brand name. These are qualities that are typically associated with long-term oriented cultures. Although all of our data gathering methods pointed towards a long-term orientation, the city's dismissal on its communist past made us question if they were more short-term oriented.

We also found it interesting that many of the local businesses are very well established and have built relationships within the community. For example, many of the restaurants in the city center have been around for several hundred years. This shows that the locals are very careful about creating and maintaining long-lasting relationship within the community, a uniquely long-term oriented characteristic.

There are a number of cultural differences between Prague and the United States. One major observation is that items that are customarily given away in the United States will cost money in Prague. This includes condiments, plastic bags at the grocery store, etc. We have also observed that there is a negative mentality regarding providing any type of service. In the United States, businesses strive on strong commitment to excellent customer service, but in Prague, providing high quality customer service is not the most important aspect of a business. For instance, we feel that there is a general impatience with the staff at most restaurants.

Conclusions

The long term orientation of the culture in the Czech Republic could have various implications for Americans whether they are trying to establish business relationships in the country or simply taking a vacation. Several issues may arise from American corporations doing business in the Czech Republic such as higher costs, wasted time, and keeping business relationships. An American corporation may find it more time consuming and costly to acquire a Czech subsidiary than simply doing business domestically or in more westernized areas of the world. Due to the long term orientation we have observed a lot more time would have to be invested in building a business relationship in order to acquire a company or simply become affiliated partners. For example, a long term oriented culture emphasizes the importance of building relationship with customers in order to achieve success in the long run. Because of this, it may be difficult for a new profit-oriented company to start a business in the Czech Republic because it will take time to build up a customer base. Additionally, Czech companies want to be sure that their history and culture will not be lost or tarnished as a result of the business combination. This could lead to higher costs of doing business for American corporations, which could have an adverse impact on the amount of business the Czech Republic can draw. Various other business issues could arise due to the extreme emphasis American business culture puts on punctuality and customer service, which do not seem to have as much priority in Prague.

From our experiences in Prague you really notice how much of an impact growing up in a specific culture has on your day to day activities. For instance, destination points are mapped out before leaving the dorm because it seems that help around the city is harder to come by than in the U.S. This may show how much more dependent we are on other people in America to help us with daily issues such as getting lost or speaking with a customer service representative. Also, timely service has a different definition in Prague than in the U.S., which we found out when we sat down for a little over two hours for lunch and, subsequently, had to rush to make our train to Munich. This shows the attitude we have towards time as being very precious and rigid.

This methodology can be useful in observing the workplace culture in the various jobs we have after graduation. Every company has a different workplace culture when it comes to communicating to superiors, appropriate dress, etc. so obviously being able to spot these sorts of norms in the office can be very helpful. Also, recruiters like to know that you are mature enough to be aware of your own attitudes and bias so that a better match can be made between employee and employer and that respect will be shown to all cultures.

Direct vs. Indirect (Team 5)

Observations

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| Method 1. | Interaction with restaurant staff |
| Observations | While with a sizeable group at a restaurant called The Pub, we received a message on our order monitor that asked said, "Must you be so loud?" The Pub is a restaurant that encourages copious amounts of beer consumption, yet when we Americans (it was obvious to the Czech staff since we spoke English exclusively) were having a good time, we were called out. The message was only received electronically via a monitor on our table. No waiter or bartender ever came over to us and asked us to quiet down. |
| Conclusion | This indicates very direct communication since we were told, in a rather condescending manner, to quiet down. |
| Comments | Everyone in attendance was a bit taken aback by the comment, especially since this was our first night out as a big group in Prague. We all believed to be minding our business and having a good time, but the Czech restaurant staff thought we were being obnoxious, and they did not hesitate to let us know, exhibiting direct communication. |

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| Method 2. | Observed an altercation at a train station |
| Observations | Some tourists could not figure out how to open the coin-operated door to the bathroom and accidentally broke the door lock in the process. The station employee became very angry and, although he spoke no English, directly pointed to each one of them and then pointed outside while saying "Police". His message was very clear, if they did not get out immediately he was going to call the police on them. |
| Conclusion | This event indicates a very direct approach to communication. |
| Comments | The fact that the station employee was angry could have caused him to be more direct than he may otherwise have been. However, because we have experienced several unrelated instances of people communicating very directly we continue to believe that, on average, people in our destination country are pretty direct in their communication. |

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| Method 3. | Observation of behavior in grocery store |
| Observations | The cashiers are direct in explaining that the plastic grocery bags have to be paid before usage. They are very expressive about letting the customer know that they are not free by showing emotion and a lot of hand gestures while speaking. Also, instead of counting the amount of bread in one bag on their own, they would directly ask the customer to get the total amount. This conveyed directness on how they interact with customers no matter who they are. |
| Conclusion | This behavior indicates a direct approach to communication as they value direct exchange of information and content more than relationships. |
| Comments | I went to the store the second day of my stay here in Prague, and I was quite taken aback by the directness shown to me by the employee. Respecting the customer always comes first in the US, and this did not seem to be the case in the Czech Republic. |

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| Method 4. | Interacted with a local on the train when she reacted to my actions as a tourist. |
| Observations | As a group of students traveling on the train, I put my feet up on the other |

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| | side of the train on the seat. I did this only to relax, but right as I put my feet up a Czech woman immediately yelled at me, in Czech, wanting me to take them down. She spoke very clearly in a stern voice to convey her displeasure and even without understanding the Czech language I understood what she wanted because of how direct she was with her communication. |
| Conclusion | This experience indicates the very direct form of communication that is used in the Czech Republic. She did not hesitate to express her emotions and she conveyed them directly. |
| Comments | I was a little shocked by how displeased she was just because I put my feet up on a seat. This shows how the Czech people take pride and value their country and culture, in this case the public transportation system. |

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| Method 5. | Interacted with the front desk worker at VSE dormitory |
| Observations | I asked, in English, for the key to the TV room, which everyone can easily get with a VSE ID card. The old lady stared at me, shook her head, answered something in Czech and then ignored me. This happened at least three times. The other day, I used my phone to translate "Can I reserve the TV room?" to Czech and showed her the message. She looked at it and acted the same way. There were other people sitting next to her at that time, and I tried to talk to them in English, but they laughed and ignored me. |
| Conclusion | Their behavior indicates a direct approach to communication, expressing that they don't like people who don't speak their language. |
| Comments | One of the other people who were sitting there knew a bit of English and responded. However, she didn't understand my question about reserving the TV room, so she said "whatever" and started talking in Czech again with other people. This action shows that they don't want to understand people who don't speak Czech at all, and their communication is pretty direct. |

Visual Information

Attach **at least two** visual indications (photos, videos, etc.) **to your e-mail message** (do not paste them into this document). Provide a **description** in the spaces below showing how they support your cultural assessment. The fields will expand to accommodate your text.

Descriptions of Your Photos



| | |
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| #1 | These photos show the restroom signs for women and men. You can tell from the restroom activities illustrated that their means of communication is direct rather than indirect. Indirect communication would be using the dress image for women's restroom and suit image for men's restroom. |
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| #2 | This picture shows a sign that forbids walking on the grass. It is very direct in nature showing someone's feet walking on the grass with a line through it. The picture shows very clearly that walking on the grass is not allowed in a very overt and direct way. |
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Cultural Profile

In light of several observations, which we have made during our time in Prague, we would tend to conclude that the local residents are pretty direct in their communication. We have observed that, on average, people tend to get right to the point of what they want to say and make it very clear as to the message that they are trying to convey. This direct approach to communication has been very clear to us even when the language barrier is taken into account. When it is clear that somebody does not understand the Czech language, we have observed that local tend to use expressions and gestures to get their point across. We have noticed a trend for direct communication not only in the way that people communicate with each other, but also on signs seen throughout the country. Most signs, especially the ones telling people what not to do, are very direct and clear in the message that they are trying to convey. It would be very difficult to misinterpret most of these signs even if you cannot read the text.

In our opinion, the data gathering methods, which we used, have shown a definite trend toward direct communication by people in the Czech Republic. While we have noticed a few contradictions to this trend, we have resolved these through knowledge of the fact that the way a person communicates is not based solely on their culture. Another major component in determining how a person communicates is their personality. Some people just have an indirect, non-confrontational, personality. You will have representations of both direct and indirect forms of communication in any country just based on this fact.

We noticed that Czechs are pretty direct yet reserved in general. We rarely see them engaging conversation to accompanies or talking to someone on the cell phone in public transits. The locals do not talk for the sake of talking. They are more quite, and they usually talk only when they need to exchange information. Yet they can be very talkative if they are couples. We noticed that they would engage in extensive talking in the public area. Their close intimacy can be seen by having little personal space between them and a lot of physical contact while talking. In summary, Czechs are private people until they get to know the person.

Czechs and Americans are considered as direct. The difference is that Americans have the tendency to be more vocal and loud whereas Czechs are more reserved and quite when engaging in conversation. Americans treat strangers as their friends even they have never met before and can engage in conversation next to someone they do not know in any settings. Czechs treat every stranger is a stranger. Friendship will not be developed until they get to know you. Americans can make quick friends without thinking much about developing close or mutual relationship; they consider nearly everyone their friend because we want people to like us and we like to build personal network which could be benefit them professionally or

personally. Czechs seem to us that they need time to figure out whether the person is trustworthy before they start developing any friendship. They are more realistic about people, and we think trust is something that should be earned in order to be friend with the Czechs.

Conclusions

These experiences only share a few of our many cultural observations of the people of the Czech Republic. While a unique place in many ways, they share many similarities to the direct communication culture of the U.S.A. Challenges still remain though, and one of those challenges, illustrated in a few examples above, is the language barrier. As a group, we have traveled all around Europe these past few weeks, and we noticed that Czech is an unintelligible language for an American not familiar with it. Most Americans can understand words in Spanish, Italian, and French, but Czech has no similarities, making communication a challenge, especially when being so severely chastised as in some of our experiences.

We are very lucky as Americans. English is the lingua franca, the U.S. dollar is the most traded currency, and our nation protects us wherever we may go. It's tough to fathom how other cultures live until you experience it. Dealing with the confusion of the Czech crown, facing the language barrier, and living in a new society with different laws and habits have made all of us stronger people, in addition to making us more accepting of other people. We now have experiences first-hand how other cultures proceed, and the knowledge attained will help us immensely in our future careers.

Although our observations described above occurred within the Czech Republic borders, we can use the knowledge of direct communication culture while dealing with many people. Direct communicators like concise, up-front conversations, as opposed to laid-back, social discourses. As accountants, we will be dealing with multinationals, and because of this, we can use our knowledge of direct communication to satisfy a client or obtain an important document. Communication is the key to a successful business, and while cultural barriers do exist, experiences like the one we have had in Prague make us that much more adept at what we do.

Neutral/Expressive (Team 6)

Observations

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| Method 1. | Observed locals on the public transportation trams. |
| Observations | In general, the Czech population was very quiet and soft spoken. Even when traveling in larger groups, individuals kept to themselves or spoke barely above a whisper. Very rarely were there many expressive outbursts or emotions shown in the public arena. |
| Conclusion | This behavior indicates a neutral orientation towards behavior. |
| Comments | It seemed the younger population was a bit more expressive in their mannerisms and behavior possibly signaling a shift on the spectrum. |

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| Method 2. | Encountered a student at the University |
| Observations | An individual from our group bumped into a local student walking into the University who did not appreciate the shoulder contact. He quickly spun around and gave our group the middle finger in a show of anger. |
| Conclusion | This behavior indicates an expressive orientation towards behavior. |
| Comments | In align with our previous analysis, the younger population seems to be more expressive than the general population as this was one of the strongest expression of emotions we saw during the entire the trip. |

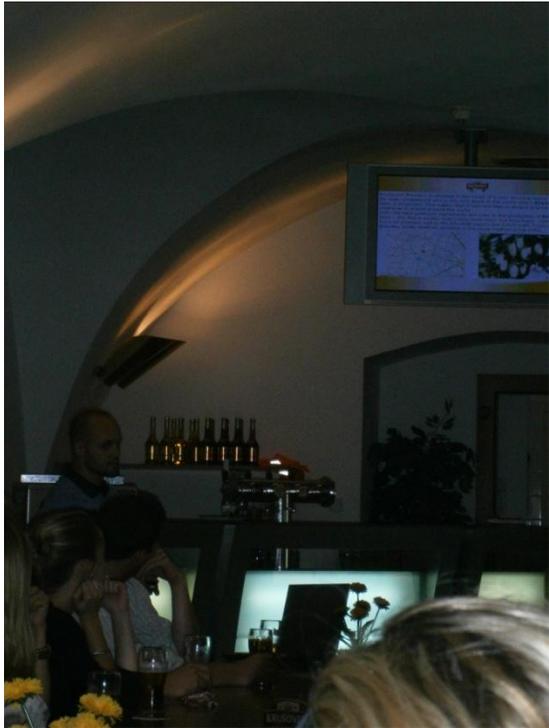
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| Method 3. | Witnessed an encounter at a local pub with a bartender. |
| Observations | During a night out, a local bartender kindly asked our group to quiet down by sending a message through our screen located on the table. |
| Conclusion | The observation can be viewed in two different aspects. For one, the fact that the bartender confronted us and asked us to be quiet shows an expressive cultural. However, the fact that he sent it through the screen and did not confront us personally shows a more neutral behavior. |
| Comments | The group is beginning to formulate our theory that the Prague population is somewhere in the center of the spectrum with some instances of extremes in both directions. |

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| Method 4. | Observed and photographed a presentation by senior management. |
| Observations | Overall the presenter maintained an even tone throughout the entire presentation. In addition, the presenter sought to convey factual information in a manner that limited his engagement with the audience. Afterwards, he answered our questions directly and offered little additional information. |
| Conclusion | This behavior indicates a neutral orientation towards behavior within the older population. |
| Comments | Our observation coincides with our belief that the older generation, the population one would expect in such senior roles at a company, to be more neutral in conduct than the younger population. |

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| Method 5. | Witnessed and documented a couple exhibiting public displays of affection on the public transportation system. |
| Observations | As we headed home from the central train station, one of our group members observed a local couple expressing their love for one another with several prolonged kisses on the public tram. |
| Conclusion | This behavior indicates an expressive orientation towards public behavior within the young population. |

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| Comments | This is one of the more animated displays of emotion our group witnessed during the trip and helped solidify our conclusion of the local population. |
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Visual Information



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| #1 | This photo shows a presentation given to us by a ranking executive on the history and operations of a local corporation during our second office visit. You can see his back is turned to the audience while reading facts directly from the slides, which supports our interpretation that this generation is neutral rather than expressive. |
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| #2 | This photo shows a couple displaying their affection for one another on a public tram within the city. This behavior exhibits expressive conduct in a considerable way and solidified our analysis of the distinction between the cultural divide between the older and younger generations within Prague. |
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Cultural Profile

From our observations and encounters, we believe the Prague population is in a relatively central position on the Neutral/Expressive spectrum. Our data followed our conclusion fairly well that the younger population exhibits a more “expressive” manner while the older public displays more “neutral” behavior. The group has attributed the difference of conduct to the Communist era of Czech history. The older population would have experienced and lived under the oppressive political regime of the late 20th century which would explain why they avoid physical contact and never necessarily express what they are thinking or feeling. The older population seems to have strong self-control and speak in a lower tone of voice than the rest of the public. The younger generation, who has not lived under Communist control, displays more expressive mannerisms. One can conclude that the expressive behavior will continue to evolve in the Prague population now that the Czech Republic government allows certain degrees of freedom of speech.

It was interesting to hear the stories of individuals on how their life and experiences differed from under the Communist state than under the Czech Republic democratic government. As a citizen of a country with a long history of a stable democratic government, it is a new experience to hear how much government can affect individual lifestyles.

The United States is further along the spectrum toward “expressive” as the nation has a long history of freedom of speech and political protection. As time passes, the group expects the population of Prague to converge with the American public as Prague develops speech protection law.

Conclusions

When doing business in Prague, Americans may find it difficult to interpret the interest level of foreign managers and executives as the older generation displays few emotions during an interaction as illustrated in our first photograph. Additionally, Americans tend to get very expressive and animated in certain scenarios. Americans need to keep this in mind when doing business with someone from the Czech Republic as their behavior could come off as obnoxious and rude. As the younger population moves into these roles however, American business executives can expect interactions and the corporate environment to be similar with that of the States.

During this assignment, I learned that despite being in a very “expressive” country, I tend to be neutral in certain aspects of public life. This made me realize that although the general public may exhibit one behavior, there are always outliers within a population. It may prove useful to remember that fact when interacting with foreigners in a business setting. Other group members realized just how expressive we tend to be as Americans. In America, we are surrounded by people who tend to be just as animated as us. As such, we have a tendency to be loud and expressive in public life. There were some times near the beginning of our time in Prague, while riding the trams through the city, that we would look around and realize that no one on the tram was talking except for us. We were talking and laughing in a rather loud and animated way attracting the not so amused gaze of others on the tram. This was something we had to work on during our stay in Prague.

I found it interesting putting an entire population onto a spectrum that describes everything from behavior to mannerisms. Several of our interactions that we found odd throughout the summer trip could be explained by the culture descriptions within our packets.

When dealing with a neutral society throughout my career, I will need to remember that a lack of expression does not necessarily symbolize a lack of interest in the content of a presentation or transaction.

Monochronic/Polychronic (Team 7)

Observations

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| Method 1. | We observed our Czech teachers, Ing. Hallk and Professor Zarova, presenting material in class. |
| Observations | Both teachers were late to class and started class late. Professor Zarova gave a 20 minute break, but it really turned out to be about 30 minutes. She did this on multiple occasions. In the United States, most teachers are strict about being back exactly within the 20 minutes. Ing. Hall's lecture was very disorganized. He chose random topics to discuss, and he spoke in very general terms. He also looked up a Wikipedia article. He improvised throughout the entire presentation and asked for questions often. Two of our teachers explained topics very thoroughly and slowly at the beginning of class, and then had to skip portions of material at the end of class due to poor time planning. |
| Conclusion | This example indicates polychronic tendencies. |
| Comments | Teachers seem more flexible about class start times, breaks, and the class structure. |

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| Method 2. | We waited for the tram every day multiple times to go to school or into Old Town. |
| Observations | The tram came often, but it did not necessarily come at the stated times. The schedules were very explicit, and they even broke up schedules for Monday through Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. However, this does not help when trams were late. On the cultural event, we were in Cesky Krumlov waiting for a tram that was supposed to come at 12:21 AM. We were there at 12:05 AM, but the tram never came. |
| Conclusion | This example indicates polychronic tendencies. |
| Comments | We think this experience was a very local experience, because we lived about 25 minutes outside of the tourist area in Prague. The trams did have a schedule, but they seemed to arrive at random times. Some drivers stopped for a long time at each stop, while others hurried passengers by using a buzzer. |

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| Method 3. | We went to dinner at restaurants and had drinks at bars. |
| Observations | Whenever we ate at restaurants, we had to ask the waiter for our check. The waiters in the Czech Republic were very slow even when you did ask for a bill. According to locals, slow service is considered good service. Every meal took over an hour, if not two hours, to finish. The clubs in Prague stay open very late, and according to a Prague resident, they stay open until the last person leaves. Several members of our group left a club when the sun was rising. |
| Conclusion | This example indicates polychronic tendencies. |
| Comments | From our experiences, we determined that Czechs tend to eat slowly and relax. They enjoy staying at the restaurant to drink and converse long after they finish a meal. This was much different from American life, where the waiter promptly brings you a bill and expects you to leave the table after paying. Sometimes, we felt bad rushing a waiter for the bill when we had to be back at school or attend a cultural event. |

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| Method 4. | We attended a presentation at Skoda Auto during a company visit. |
| Observations | The presenter was the Director of Marketing with a focus on their Indian branches. He had a very clear, chronologic PowerPoint presentation of the history of Skoda Auto. He discussed the evolution of the company in a sequential order. The Director also began the presentation promptly at 1 PM, and he finished within the scheduled time. We went through the Skoda Auto factory, and all of the workers were adding parts to cars on an assembly line. The assembly line moves at an even pace, and if a car isn't finished it must be taken off the line. The shifts last 8 hours per day, and workers must arrive promptly in order to get the cars made. We saw punch clocks at the entry of the factory, which indicated the need for timeliness. |
| Conclusion | This example indicates monochronic tendencies. |
| Comments | Skoda Auto is a car manufacturer owned by the German car company, Volkswagen. Also, car manufacturer likely have similar production processes worldwide. |

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| Method 5. | Discussion with Krusovice Director of Export. |
| Observations | The Krusovice Director, Petr, gave a short presentation on the export goals and achievements of Krusovice. Petr encouraged our active participation saying, "please interrupt me with questions so that this is not a boring presentation." Two of our group members then asked him what his thoughts were on the cultural parameters of monochronic vs. polychronic. Petr, probably in his early 30s said that he believed there is a major difference in the attitudes of those who are over 30-35 and those who are younger. Petr believed that the older generation is more likely to follow monochronic tendencies while the younger were much more likely to display polychronic tendencies. Petr alluded to the fact that the older generation group up during the communist era when obedience was law. This is compared to the younger generation who grew up post communist regime with numerous western influences |
| Conclusion | This example indicates that some believe there is a sharp distinction between two groups of Czech culture. The younger generation is polychronic and the older is monochronic. |
| Comments | The communist regime of the 80s and 70s heavily influenced the way people acted and behaved in society. With the authoritarianism rule of the communism, people were encouraged to be monochronic in order to fit in with the status quo. Any deviation from this status quo was deemed a threat by the government, thus encouraging monochronic behavior. |

Visual Information



- #1 This photo was taken in our classroom as we neared the end of a break. Most of the students were back and ready to begin class, but our professor was still not back, suggesting her polychronic teaching style.



- #2 This photo shows several people waiting at a tram stop as it was due to be at this stop at the time listed on the posted schedule shown in the picture, revealing the departure from the intended monochronic nature of the schedule.

Cultural Profile

For the most part, Prague has polychronic citizens and a polychronic culture; however, the business we observed (Skoda Auto) performed in a very monochronic way. While abroad, our teachers, waiters, tram drivers, as well the citizens we encountered seemed monochronic. Citizens are not concerned with being on time, and punctuality seems much more important in the United States. Meals last longer, public transportation is not always on time, and both of our Czech teachers either took longer breaks than allotted, or started class late. We had heard that Czech citizens were very timely from the former communist rule, but most of the citizens that we encountered did not fit this profile.

Business life in The Czech Republic is a bit more monochronic, as we saw in the car factory assembly line at Skoda Auto. Every detail on the assembly line was monitored and was either on time or early. This probably has to do with western influence and not much with the

overall culture of The Czech Republic. This Western nature may be especially prevalent in this specific factory, as Skoda is a subsidiary owned by Volkswagen. We chose to write this off as a western influence and not as an overarching cultural assessment of the Czech Republic.

The group noticed many different aspects of the culture throughout the trip that did not necessarily relate to punctuality. For example, it is hard not to notice the stress on alcohol in Prague. Alcohol consumption is much more of a routine activity in the Czech Republic. It is common to see a business meeting that involves alcohol at lunch, and we even spotted beers in the local Subway! Another big cultural difference involved the reserved nature at which the residents conduct themselves. The Czechs as a country are very quiet and often do not smile, especially with someone they do not know or trust. This relates to the communist regime that was lifted in 1989; Czechs lived in refined spaces and did not ever know who they could trust other than close family and friends.

The characteristics above all differ from those in the United States. In the US, punctuality is much more important; a teacher would never come late to class without reason, nor give longer breaks than scheduled. Public transportation is always very much on time in the US, and if it were to be late, citizens would be alerted immediately. Going out to dinner is also much different, as in the US, dinner usually takes no more than an hour, let alone the two-hour dinners we have encountered abroad. Alcohol takes a backseat in the United States as it is more of a recreational activity than an overall way of life. As we have observed, the Czech Republic is a very polychronic culture, which is quite opposite to the monochronic attitudes in the United States.

Conclusions

While we have been groomed to live and work off of a strict schedule developed by the American culture, the polychronicism in the Czech Republic has forced us to reflect on our potential interactions in the Czech Republic. While culture shock is inevitable, we have learned of some potential challenges that Americans might face while doing business in the Czech Republic. As Americans are often rushing from one thing to the next, one may want to practice patience when interacting in the Czech business culture. Americans may want to be mindful of their expectations for a business meeting as a list of objectives may not be achieved in a similar manner in the Czech Republic. With a more open mind, Americans may find that their meeting was more successful than if they went in with an intended To-Do list that was not accomplished or discussed. Americans may also want to practice similar patience when dining out, whether it be on business or for pleasure. While we are accustomed to receiving service in a timely manner, we will want to be flexible and enjoy the experience of dining out rather than rushing the event. If we are aware of our expectations, we may be more likely to be flexible during our interactions in the Czech Republic. During these various observations, we learned that we must make a conscious effort to practice patience and embrace our new culture. We also learned that being prepared for a specific culture can be extremely handy in monitoring culture shock. As we participated in these various observations, we thought it was interesting that our tour guide at the Krusovice company tour told us that younger Czechs (35 and below) were certainly polychronic, but that older Czechs were more monochronic. It is also interesting that the Czechs never mention communism when talking with them. They will say "older people" do this and "younger people" do this, but don't come outright and say why it is the way that it is. It is important to make these observations as we start our careers to help us to be respectful of other cultures and to help us fit in. If one can relate with someone and embrace his or her culture, they will have a much more successful relationship. While we may need to keep our expectations and limits in mind, we can be more mentally prepared for the business meetings to come. In talking to recruiters, it is clear that we are now more equipped to adapt to dynamic situations and cultures, both in the U.S. and abroad.