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Název diplomové práce:

**Czech cultural standards from Russian perspective in  
work and study environment**

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**Declaration:**

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of the thesis entitled “Czech cultural standards from Russian perspective in work and study environment”. I duly marked out all quotations. The used literature and sources are stated in the attached list of references.

In Prague on.....

.....

Sergey Mikheev

### **Acknowledgement**

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## **Title of the Master's Thesis:**

Czech cultural standards from Russian perspective in work and study environment

## **Abstracts**

Russian culture differs from Czech culture, and there are significant differences in the two countries' cultures. As a result, people coming to the Czech Republic from Russia might find it hard to become integrated effectively in the local environment. The findings of this research should allow understanding better how the process can be eased, and how Russians coming to work or study in the Czech Republic might maximize the effectiveness of their activities through effective cultural understanding. The main aim of this thesis is to identify and describe in detail the Czech cultural standards from the Russian perspective in the study and work environment. The goals of the thesis are to analyze the specificities and characteristics of culture, its elements and models; to reveal the importance of intercultural communication and its forms; to consider the main theories of cultural dimensions, namely the ones developed by G. Hofstede and F. Trompenaars; to focus specifically on the analysis of the Czech Republic, its geography, history, economy and culture. The methodology used for writing this thesis will combine secondary and primary research.

## **Keywords**

Culture, Czech Republic, Hofstede's theory, Intercultural Communication, Russian, Trompenaars' theory.

## **Název diplomové práce:**

České kulturní standardy z ruské perspektivy v pracovním a studijním prostředí

## **Abstrakt**

Ruská kultura se liší od české kultury a existují výrazné rozdíly v kulturách obou zemí. V důsledku toho by lidé, kteří přicházejí do České republiky z Ruska, mohli být obtížné se efektivně integrovat do místního prostředí. Závěry tohoto výzkumu by měly umožnit lepší pochopení toho, jak může být tento proces ulehčen a jak by mohli Rusové pracovat nebo studovat v České republice, maximalizovat účinnost svých aktivit prostřednictvím účinného kulturního porozumění. Hlavním cílem této práce je podrobněji identifikovat a popsat české kulturní normy z ruské perspektivy ve studijním a pracovním prostředí. Dalším cílem práce je analyzovat specifika a charakteristiky kultury, jejích prvků a modelů; odhalit význam mezikulturní komunikace a jejích forem; uvažovat o hlavních teoriích kulturních dimenzí, a to o těch, které vyvinuli G. Hofstede a F. Trompenaars; zaměřit se konkrétně na analýzu České republiky, její geografie, historie, ekonomiky a kultury. Metodické nástroje použité v této práci zahrnují sekundární a primární výzkum.

## **Klíčová slova**

Kultura, Česká republika, Hofstedově teorie, Interkulturní komunikace, Rusko, Trompenaarova teorie.

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# Introduction

In the condition of rapid globalization, the interaction between cultures tends to keep steadily intensifying. Managing effectively diverse cross-cultural ties is important on all levels of human interaction. Knowing the specificities of other cultures means better opportunities to adapt to such cultures' particularities in the course of communication and interaction with their representatives. The topic of cultural interaction and cross-cultural management becomes particularly important in these conditions and deserves deeper research.

The choice of the topic of this thesis is due to the author's interest in the process of integration of Russian citizens coming to the Czech Republic in the local work and study environment. Russian culture differs from Czech culture, and there are significant differences in the two countries' cultures. As a result, people coming to the Czech Republic from Russia might find it hard to become integrated effectively in the local environment. The findings of this research should allow understanding better how the process can be eased, and how Russians coming to work or study in the Czech Republic might maximize the effectiveness of their activities through effective cultural understanding.

The main aim of this thesis is to identify and describe in detail the Czech cultural standards from the Russian perspective in the study and work environment. The thesis will focus on the analysis of how the Russian and Czech cultures differ in work and study environments, and which aspects of the work and study environment the Russians perceive as the most different in the Czech Republic.

The goals of the thesis are to analyze the specificities and characteristics of culture, its elements and models; to reveal the importance of intercultural communication and its forms; to consider the main theories of cultural dimensions, namely the ones developed by G. Hofstede and F. Trompenaars; to focus specifically on the analysis of the Czech Republic, its geography, history, economy and culture; to evaluate the Czech-Russian partnership and its specificities; to carry out an analysis of how the work and study environments differ in the Russian Federation and the Czech Republic;

and to provide recommendations for Russians coming to study or work to the Czech Republic for easing the process of their cultural assimilation.

The research questions to be analyzed in the thesis are the following:

- RQ 1. How do the Russian and Czech cultural standards differ in the work and study environments?
- RQ 2. Which aspects of the work environment in the Czech Republic do Russians perceive to differ most from their home country?
- RQ 3. Which aspects of the study environment in the Czech Republic do Russians perceive to differ most from their home country?

The methodology used for writing this thesis will combine secondary and primary research. Secondary research will be used in the theoretical part of the thesis for collecting the required theoretical information on the topic for available bibliographic sources in either print or electronic form. The practical part of the thesis will be based on primary research namely on the method of cultural standards research, consisting of in-depth interviews with the respondents via Skype or in person. The respondents will include Russian Federation citizens with more than one-year experience of work or three-month experience of study in Czech Republic. Each group (work and study) will consists of 12 respondents.

For convenience, the thesis will be divided into the theoretical and practical parts. In the first chapter of the thesis, the term culture and the main characteristics and models of culture will be analyzed. The second chapter will be dedicated to intercultural communication and acculturation. The third chapter will analyze cultural standards and dimensions, focusing first of all on the theories of Geert Hofstede and Fons Trompenaars. In the fourth chapter of the thesis, a detailed overview of the Czech Republic will be provided, and the relationships between the Czech Republic and the Russian Federation will be considered. The practical part of the research will be dedicated to primary analysis. In the fifth chapter of the thesis, the findings of interviews with Russian citizens working or studying in the Czech Republic will be overviewed. In the sixth chapter, the results collected through primary research will be compared with theory. In the seventh chapter of the thesis, recommendations will be developed for Russian people coming to the work or study in the Czech Republic. Based on the findings of the thesis, conclusions will be drawn.

The findings of the thesis should allow understanding clearly how Russians see Czech cultural standards in the study and work environment, and how they can adapt to such standards more effectively.

# 1 Culture

## 1.1 Definition and characteristics of culture

Culture can be defined as *“the set of key values, beliefs, understandings and norms shared by members of an organisation... Culture is a pattern of shared values and assumptions about how things are done within the organisation. This pattern is learned by members as they cope with external and internal problems and taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel.”*<sup>1</sup> Speaking of the concept of organization in the context of culture, it can be stated that this notion embraces different kinds of human entities, from wider society to individual companies (in which case one can speak of organizational communication). Culture penetrates in the entirety of human interactions and relationships within the organization, and it shapes not only the ways in which individuals or groups communicate, but also the outcomes of such communication.

According to another definition, culture is *“the order that is not perceived to have been decided upon, for which individuals are not considered to be responsible, and that is taken for granted by those sharing the culture.”*<sup>2</sup> Therefore, it can be stated that culture is a broad concept, and it doesn't depend on individuals. It is formed on the societal level and covers broad entities of people, extending to the entirety of ties and communication processes between them.

Merriam-Webster dictionary defines culture as *“the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group; also: the characteristic features of everyday existence (such as diversions or a way of life) shared by people in a place or time.”*<sup>3</sup>

Culture has a set of common characteristics. The main characteristics of culture are the following:

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<sup>1</sup> MUKHERJEE, S. *Organisation & Management And Business Communication*. London: New Age International, 2005. p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> AHME, G. and BRUNSSON, N. *Meta-organizations*. London: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2008. p. 50.

<sup>3</sup> Merriam-Webster. Culture. *Merriam-Webster*. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/culture>

- sharedness. Culture is shared by all members of society. What is not shared can be excluded from the concept. Culture is not innate, and it is transferred from generation to generation. Culture is not affected by individuals.
- Normalcy. Cultural traits are seen as normal traits, while deviations from the formed cultural traits can often be considered as negative by the other members of society, i.e. as abnormal.
- Integration. Culture assumes the integration of a wide range of components, including values, norms, forms, and other components which form the entirety of cultural ties.
- Adaptability. Culture constantly assimilates to the conditions of the environment, and it undergoes changes under the impact of both external and internal factors.
- Social roots. The development of culture is rooted in the development of society, and the two patterns are interrelated.
- Association with ideas. Group behavior patterns are reflected in the norms of culture. They are consistent and regulated.<sup>4</sup>

## 1.2 Elements of culture

Culture embraces a wide range of different elements, which form the complexity of culture and precondition the vectors of its development. The main elements of culture are described above.

### 1. Symbols

Symbols are things which evoke people's reactions and emotions. Symbols contain meaning which is deciphered by people, and which evokes the aforementioned reactions or emotions. Symbols can be either verbal or non-verbal. Verbal symbols include words, sentences, sounds and all other forms of articulated symbols delivered through speech. Non-verbal symbols are represented by gestures, movements of the body, etc.

### 2. Language

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<sup>4</sup> MINKOV, M. *Cross-Cultural Analysis: The Science and Art of Comparing the World's Modern Societies and Their Cultures*. London: SAGE, 2012. pp. 20-25.

Language is what unites people belonging to a particular culture and ensure the best opportunities of communication between them. Language conveys the importance of particular symbols. It contributes to the complexity of culture, and preconditions largely the level of interconnection between all components of culture.

### 3. Norms

Norms of cultures can be understood as standards and expectations in terms of behavior. Norms stand for how people belonging to different cultures perceived the same events, how they evaluate their outcomes, and how they respond to such events in terms of their behavior.

### 4. Rituals

*“Different cultures also have different rituals, or established procedures and ceremonies that often mark transitions in the life course. As such, rituals both reflect and transmit a culture’s norms and other elements from one generation to the next. Graduation ceremonies in colleges and universities are familiar examples of time-honored rituals. In many societies, rituals help signify one’s gender identity.”*<sup>5</sup>

Rituals are intertwined closely with initiation, socialization and social adaptation.

### 5. Changing Norms and Beliefs

Rooted in the parameter of adaptability, this element of culture means that cultures do not remain unchanged. Under the impact of shifts in external and internal factors, the norms and beliefs within cultures tend to change as well.

### 6. Values

Values as a component of culture involve judgements of what is good or bad, desirable or not. The values of a culture affect and shape its norms. Values describe what people believe to be the most important, and what they pay particular attention to.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> University of Minnesota. The Elements of Culture. *University of Minnesota*. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: <http://open.lib.umn.edu/sociology/chapter/3-2-the-elements-of-culture/>

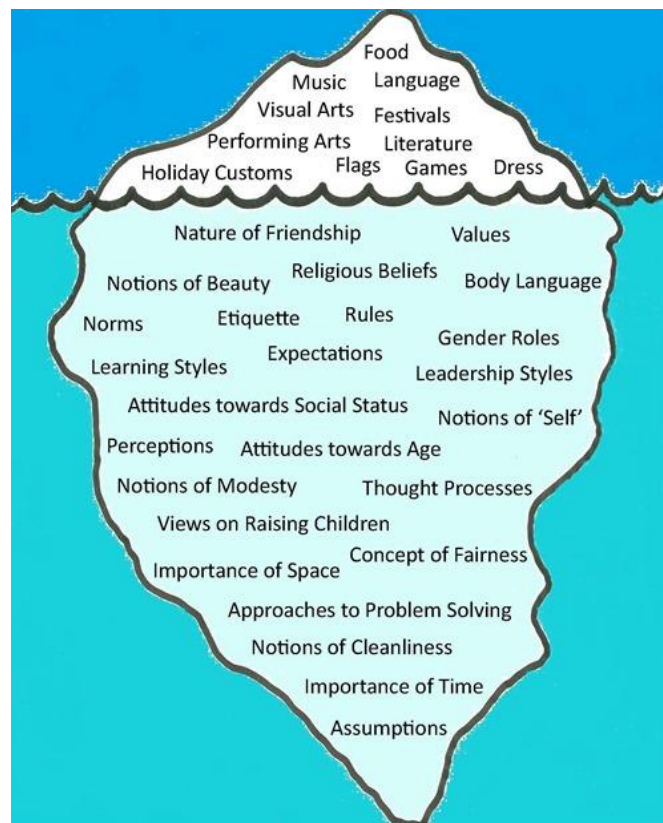
<sup>6</sup> University of Minnesota. The Elements of Culture. *University of Minnesota*. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: <http://open.lib.umn.edu/sociology/chapter/3-2-the-elements-of-culture/>

### 1.3 Models of culture

Models of culture are those theoretical tools which illustrate culture, its levels or layers, thus allowing to understand culture and the principles of its existence and development better, there are two main models of culture, which are used most widely in specialized literature, namely the Iceberg model and the Onion diagram.

The Iceberg model of culture was described first by Edward T. Hall in 1976. According to this model, culture is seen as a complex concept, a large part of which is hidden under water, and only a smaller part of elements is visible to all, similarly to an iceberg arising from water.

**Figure 1 Iceberg model of culture**



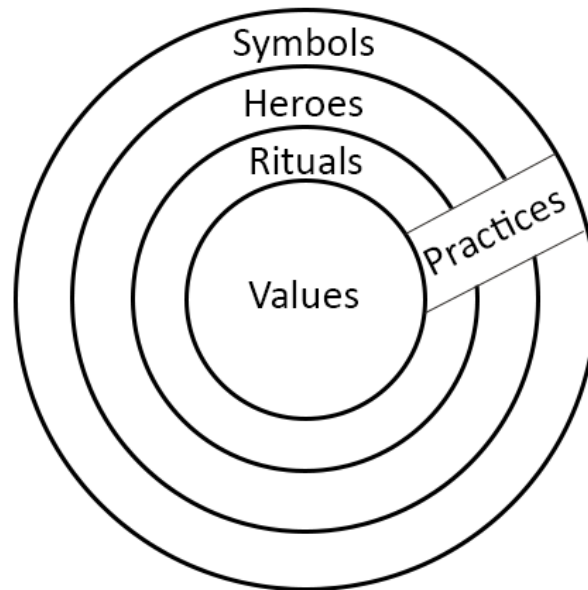
Source: Interculturalism matters. The Iceberg of Culture. *Interculturalism Matters*. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: <https://www.torbenrick.eu/blog/culture/organizational-culture-is-like-an-iceberg/>

The visible part of the iceberg includes people's behaviors and beliefs, including food, language, music and arts, dress, customs, game, and so on. These components of culture are explicitly learned and rather easily changed. The underwater elements of the cultural iceberg include the implicitly learned elements and the subconscious, including values,

norms, rules, assumptions, and so on. These elements are harder to research and to analyze, as they are more hidden and not explicit.<sup>7</sup>

The onion diagram is a vision of culture developed by Geert Hofstede and Fons Trompenaars. A visual representation of the onion diagram is presented on the chart below.

**Figure 2 Iceberg model of culture**



Source: HOFSTEDE, G. and HOFSTEDE, G. J. *Cultures and organizations: software of the mind*. Revised and expanded 2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005. p. 8.

According to the onion diagram of culture, culture consists of four main layers. The first layer, symbols, includes those elements which are well visible to everyone, including gestures, words, dress, and so on. The second layer, heroes, includes those persons who are seen as leaders or heroic personalities in society. The third layer, rituals, consists of social and religious ceremonies, and other rituals inherent of a culture. All these three layers (symbols, heroes, and rituals) are considered to be practices visible to the observer. The center of the onion consists of values, i.e. those factors which make

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<sup>7</sup> BAUMÜLLER, M. *Managing Cultural Diversity: An Empirical Examination of Cultural Networks and Organizational Structures as Governance Mechanisms in Multinational Corporations*. London: Peter Lang, 2007. p. 155.



individuals choose between different options such as evil vs. good, paradoxical vs. logical, etc.<sup>8</sup>

Cultures can differ in terms of their organization and specific characteristics of their representatives. This is where the need for intercultural communication arises. Intercultural communication will be considered in the next chapter.

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<sup>8</sup> HOFSTEDE, G. and HOFSTEDE, G. J. *Cultures and organizations: software of the mind*. Revised and expanded 2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005. p. 8.

## 2 Intercultural Communication

### 2.1 Communication forms

Forms of communication are specific types of communication which are classified separately based on their particular characteristics and inherent traits. Classifications of communication can differ based on the particular characteristics taken for the basis by researchers. Below are presented the main forms of communication and their particular characteristics.

#### 1. Formal and informal communication

Formal communication can be defined as “*goal-oriented, explicitly stated, function-related communication that flows through the hierarchy, follows prescribed norms, and transcends time and space.*”<sup>9</sup> Within formal communication, information is shared between the actors involved through clearly identified sets of rules, standards and processes. The use of terminology is specified, and the rules of etiquette are to be complied with strictly.

In contrast to formal communication, informal communication can be defined as “*a type of communicative interaction not governed by strict forms and rules... informal communication is not embedded in a particular context and is not restricted as far as participants' roles or positions are concerned.*”<sup>10</sup> Informal communication is a casual form of communication, which is most often used in communication between friends and relatives.

#### 2. Verbal and non-verbal communication

Verbal communication stands for verbal speech, i.e. it includes all information which is spoken and which conveys the information to the interlocutor directly by means of speech. Verbal communication plays an essential role in the conveying of information messages and the exchange of information between people. However,

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<sup>9</sup> SCOTT, C. and LEWIS, L. *The International Encyclopedia of Organizational Communication*, 4 Volume Set. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2017. p. 944.

<sup>10</sup> SCOTT, C. and LEWIS, L. *The International Encyclopedia of Organizational Communication*, 4 Volume Set. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2017. p. 1223.

while it transfers the meaning of the word, it might be insufficient for revealing the context.

Non-verbal communication includes all forms of human communication which are different from verbal communication. Non-verbal communication includes the body language, i.e. gestures, movements of different parts of the body, as well as vocalizations which cannot be classified as verbal speech. While verbal communication is explicit, non-verbal communication is implicit. It helps reveal the context of verbal speech, and adds information to what one says.<sup>11</sup>

### 3. Intracultural and intercultural communication

Intracultural communication is all communication which occurs within a culture and consists in the sharing of information between the representatives of this culture. Such communication is inherently easier, as people share the same cultural values and follow largely the same norms, and thus they do not have to make additional efforts to adapt to the interlocutor or partner.

Intercultural communication, in contrast, is a type of communication which involves representatives of at least two different cultures. Intercultural communication is more complex compared to intracultural communication, as the persons taking part in the communication process share different values and norms, and thus have to make additional efforts to adapt effectively to the interlocutor. The skills of such adaptation are particularly important within the framework of corporate business activities, where they are dubbed as cross-cultural management.<sup>12</sup> In the context of intercultural communication, a particular obstacle can be represented by stereotypes which particular persons have in terms of their perceptions of other cultures.

## 2.2 Stereotypes

A stereotype in terms of intercultural communication can be defined as *“a simplified concept or image and / or standard that is common to people on another group. Stereotypes can be positive or negative and usually occur when we have minimal*

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<sup>11</sup> DICKSON, D., HARGIE, O. and MORROW, N. C. *Communication Skills Training for Health Professionals*. Hoboken, NJ: Nelson Thornes, 1996. pp. 76-78.

<sup>12</sup> ASANTE, M. K., MIIKE, Y. and YIN, J. *The Global Intercultural Communication Reader*. London: Routledge, 2013. pp. 53-55.

*knowledge about a group of people. These simplistic views, opinions or images, are based on what they have in common within members of another group.*"<sup>13</sup> Stereotypes affect the effectiveness of intercultural communication, as they describe the preconceived attitude of participants in such communication in relation to each other's culture. With such preconceptions dominating the process of communication, individuals are unable to adapt effectively to the specificities of the other culture. Stereotypes in intercultural communication might be an important source of mutual misunderstandings. They might lead to major negative consequences for the negotiation process and more largely for the relationships between people. On the level of interaction between companies, the existence of cultural stereotypes might be a considerable negative factor in terms of the opportunities to enter effectively foreign markets and target foreign audiences.

*"From generation to generation prejudices and clichés become stronger irrespective of the development of the society. By clinging to cultural stereotypes we focus our attention on certain features, amplify them, and offer interpretations of our observations."*<sup>14</sup> Therefore, in order to maximize the effectiveness of communication between people from different cultures, effective management of intercultural stereotypes is required, as well as openness to accept the specificities of other cultures making differences with one's own culture.

## **2.3 Acculturation and cultural shock**

Acculturation can be defined as *"the alterations in an individual's values, attitudes, and behavior as a result of one's close contact with a culture different than one's native culture."*<sup>15</sup> Acculturation is a long process, which can take many years or even extend to a person's entire lifetime. The process of acculturation occurs due to the fact that a person coming to a foreign cultural environment undergoes significant impact on the part of the representatives of this particular local culture. As such a person lives far from his native country and is severed from the persons sharing the same cultural values and

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<sup>13</sup> ION, A. and COJOCARU, C. Stereotypes in Intercultural Communication. *ANMB*. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: [https://www.anmb.ro/buletinstiintific/buletine/2015\\_Issue2/FCS/277-278.pdf](https://www.anmb.ro/buletinstiintific/buletine/2015_Issue2/FCS/277-278.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> ION, A. and COJOCARU, C. Stereotypes in Intercultural Communication. *ANMB*. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: [https://www.anmb.ro/buletinstiintific/buletine/2015\\_Issue2/FCS/277-278.pdf](https://www.anmb.ro/buletinstiintific/buletine/2015_Issue2/FCS/277-278.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> KUZIO, A. *Exploitation of Schemata in Persuasive and Manipulative Discourse in English, Polish and Russian*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015. p. 25.

norms, he has to adapt to the new cultural environment for becoming its integral part. In this case, acculturation is inevitable, as it helps mitigate the existing differences and ensure the required adaptation.<sup>16</sup> Another definition of acculturation is “*the process of cultural exchange by which immigrants modify their attributes, beliefs, cultural norms, values, or behaviors as a result of interaction with a different culture.*”<sup>17</sup>

A concept associated closely with intercultural communication and acculturation is cultural shock. Cultural shock can be defined as “*a condition where an individual who has been exposed to another culture finds the situation exceedingly uncomfortable.*”<sup>18</sup> An individual living in an alien culture has to communicate and interact with the representatives of the local culture. In the course of such communication, conflicts of different scale can occur either due to the existing stereotypes or due to situational factors. Being an alien element in this foreign culture, the person will be likely to feel uncomfortable and stressed, which situation can be referred to as cultural shock.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, it can be stated that intercultural communication processes are inherently complex, and they require skills of cross-cultural adaptations. For this purpose, one should know the specificities of different cultures. In the next chapter, the main theories of cultural standards and dimensions describing such specificities will be considered.

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<sup>16</sup> KUZIO, A. *Exploitation of Schemata in Persuasive and Manipulative Discourse in English, Polish and Russian*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015. p. 25.

<sup>17</sup> WOO, S. M. and KEATINGE, C. *Diagnosis and Treatment of Mental Disorders Across the Lifespan*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2015. p. 32.

<sup>18</sup> KLEG, M. *Hate Prejudice and Racism*. Delhi: SUNY Press, 1993. p. 153.

<sup>19</sup> KLEG, M. *Hate Prejudice and Racism*. Delhi: SUNY Press, 1993. p. 153.

## 3 Cultural standards and dimensions

### 3.1 G. Hofstede's cultural dimensions

Geert Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions is a theoretical framework of cross-cultural communication which describes the effects of a culture on the members of society and the ensuing effects which such culture has on the behavior of people within society and in their interaction with representatives of other cultures.

The theory of Hofstede is based on the identification of dimensions of national cultures, which represent specific scales characterizing the particularities of cultures. Each cultural dimension has opposite extremities, and by evaluating the distance between particular cultures, it is possible to reveal to which extent and in which particular aspects such cultures differ, and thus how it is possible to adapt to these cultures' specificities. The cultural dimensions of culture according to Hofstede are the following:

1. Power distance index

The power distance index reveals to which extent the members of society are ready and willing to accept greater concentration of powers in the hands of other individuals. In other words, this index illustrates the level of inequality in society, the extent to which less powerful individuals in society accept the domination of more powerful individuals. A higher score on this scale illustrates the culture's leaning toward strict hierarchy and the domination of power holders. Within organizations this means a rather unilateral conveying of instructions and orders. In contrast, lower scores mean greater democracy and equality in relationships.<sup>20</sup>

2. Individualism vs. collectivism

This cultural dimension reveals the degree to which individuals in society tend to form integrated groups. Cultures having a higher score on this index are individualist societies, while cultures with lower scores are collectivist societies. In individualist

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<sup>20</sup> BOEING, M. *Analysis of Cultural Differences and their Effects on Marketing Products in the United States of America and Germany: A Cultural Approach to Marketing using Edward T. Hall and Geert Hofstede*. London: Anchor Academic Publishing, 2013. pp. 17-18.

societies, the “I” is put above the “we”, individual achievements of persons and their striving for success are emphasized. In contrast to this, in collectivist cultures, people feel their belonging to the groups in which they live, and thus the main emphasis is put on collective, and not on individual success.<sup>21</sup>

### 3. Uncertainty avoidance index

This index represents a culture’s tolerance for ambiguity, i.e. it describes how people belong to this particular culture perceive and react to something unexpected or unknown. Cultures ranking high on the uncertainty avoidance index tend to rely on absolute truth, and they adhere to steadier codes of behavior. In contrast to this, cultures ranking low on this scale tend to accept more openly different ideas or opinions. Regulations in such cultures are less stiff.<sup>22</sup>

### 4. Masculinity vs. femininity

Masculinity within Hofstede’s theory can be defined as a culture’s predominant preference for achievement, heroism and material success. Feminine cultures are characterized by greater care for others. High scores on this dimensions are inherent of masculine cultures, while low scores are inherent of feminine cultures.<sup>23</sup>

### 5. Long-term orientation vs. short-term orientation

This dimension reveals how a culture perceives the future and how planning for the future is done. This dimension also analyzed the connection between the past and the future and the associated perceptions of people. Cultures scoring high on this index take a more pragmatic approach to problem-solving: they favor changes in systems for preparing for the future. Cultures ranking low on this scale are characterized by the desire to maintain their long-standing traditions.<sup>24</sup>

### 6. Indulgence vs. restraint

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<sup>21</sup> MELKMAN, A. and TROTMAN, J. *Training International Managers: Designing, Deploying and Delivering Effective Training for Multi-cultural Groups*. Delhi: Gower Publishing, Ltd., 2005. pp. 12-13.

<sup>22</sup> MELKMAN, A. and TROTMAN, J. *Training International Managers: Designing, Deploying and Delivering Effective Training for Multi-cultural Groups*. Delhi: Gower Publishing, Ltd., 2005. pp. 12-13.

<sup>23</sup> BOEING, M. *Analysis of Cultural Differences and their Effects on Marketing Products in the United States of America and Germany: A Cultural Approach to Marketing using Edward T. Hall and Geert Hofstede*. London: Anchor Academic Publishing, 2013. pp. 17-18.

<sup>24</sup> MELKMAN, A. and TROTMAN, J. *Training International Managers: Designing, Deploying and Delivering Effective Training for Multi-cultural Groups*. Delhi: Gower Publishing, Ltd., 2005. pp. 12-13.

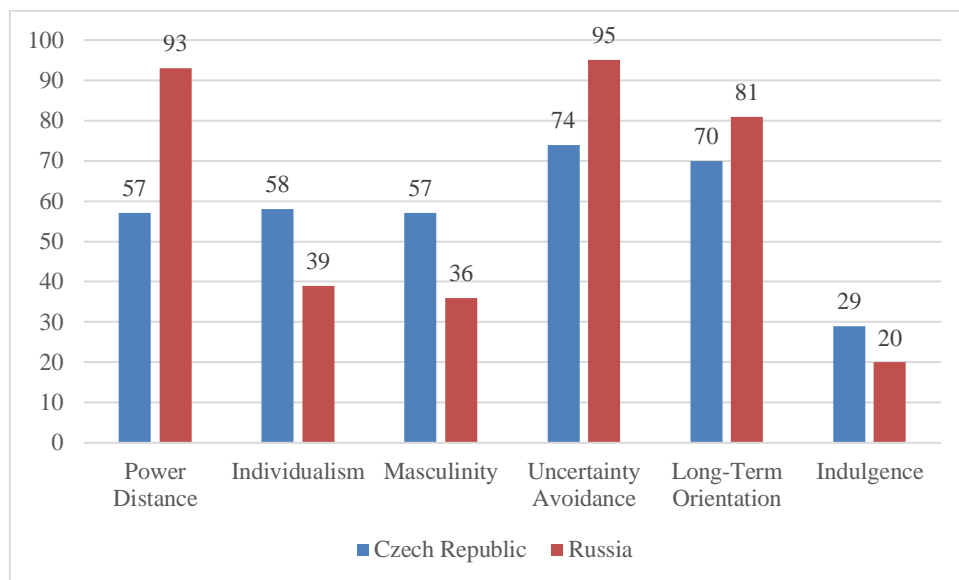
This cultural dimension analyzes the way in which wants and need are gratified. In other words, this dimension reveal the extent to which people are trying to control their impulses or desires. Cultures with weak control in these terms are in the indulgence zone, while cultures with stronger control belong to the restraint zone.<sup>25</sup>

The theory of cultural dimensions of G. Hofstede is an important theory in intercultural studies. However, it has some flaws and limitations. For example, one of the limitations is the fact that the theory of Hofstede focuses on the analysis of the national level of cultures, while differences might exist on narrower levels as well. Another difficulty might be the lack of precise scoring guidelines, which might bring to life differences in the approaches to the estimation of cultures' scores on different directions, and thus different estimations and incorrect perceptions. Also, the gender factor isn't taken into account effectively within Hofstede's framework.<sup>26</sup>

### 3.1.1 Application of Hofstede's theory on Czech and Russian cultures

To compare Czech and Russian cultures, it is worth applying Hofstede's model of cultural dimensions.

**Figure 3 Comparison of Czech and Russian models within Hofstede's framework**



Source: Hofstede-insights. Country Comparison. *Hofstede-Insights*. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/czech-republic,russia/>

<sup>25</sup> NESHEIWAT, F. K. *Misapplying Globalization: Jordan and the Intellectual Property Policy Challenge*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014. p. 12.

<sup>26</sup> MELKMAN, A. and TROTMAN, J. *Training International Managers: Designing, Deploying and Delivering Effective Training for Multi-cultural Groups*. Delhi: Gower Publishing, Ltd., 2005. p. 13.



In terms of power distance, there are significant differences between the Czech Republic and Russia. The Czech Republic *“has a relatively high score on this dimension (57). This means it is a hierarchical society. This means that people accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification.”*<sup>27</sup> However, the Czech Republic’s core value is democracy, and there is a balance between the acceptance of hierarchy and rejection of authoritarianism. The Russian Federation ranks high on the power distance index (93), which means that Russian culture is utterly hierarchical. It is characterized by inequality and the people’s acceptance of the concentration of power in the hands of the elite.

In terms of the individualism index, the Czech Republic ranks higher than the Russian Federation, which means that Czech culture is individualistic, and individuals are expected more to take care of themselves and of their families, rather than of the wider community. Russian culture is less individualistic. *“Relationships are crucial in obtaining information, getting introduced or successful negotiations. They need to be personal, authentic and trustful before one can focus on tasks and build on a careful to the recipient, rather implicit communication style.”*<sup>28</sup>

In terms of the masculinity dimension, the Czech Republic ranks higher than Russia. This means that Czech culture is more achievement-oriented compared to Russia. In Russia, personal achievements are rather understated. *“Dominant behaviour might be accepted when it comes from the boss, but is not appreciated among peers.”*<sup>29</sup>

On the uncertainty avoidance index, the Czech Republic ranks high, which means that Czech culture has a high preference for avoiding uncertainty. This means that punctuality is the norm, and there are quite rigid codes regulating the relationships between individuals. Security plays an important role for individual motivation. Russia ranks even higher, and therefore the same applies even more to Russian culture.

In terms of orientation, both the Czech Republic and the Russian Federation emphasize long-term orientation. This means that the two cultures have a pragmatic mindset. Truth

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<sup>27</sup> Hofstede-insights. Country Comparison. Hofstede-Insights. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/czech-republic,russia/>

<sup>28</sup> Hofstede-insights. Country Comparison. Hofstede-Insights. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/czech-republic,russia/>

<sup>29</sup> Hofstede-insights. Country Comparison. Hofstede-Insights. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/czech-republic,russia/>

depends to a large extent on the situation, time and context. Traditions can be adapted rather easily to changing conditions.

On the indulgence dimensions, both culture rank low, which means that they are restrained societies, with tendencies towards pessimism and cynicism. Not much emphasis is put on leisure. The two cultures tend to control the gratification of their desires.

Therefore, within Hofstede's model of cultural dimensions, the main differences between the Czech and Russian culture exist in terms of the power distance index, individualism, and masculinity.

### **3.2 Fons Trompenaars' cultural dimensions**

The model of cultural dimensions developed by Trompenaars is a theoretical framework serving to analyze the specificities of particular cultures and ways in which cross-cultural communication between them occurs. Trompenaars' model includes seven dimensions. These are namely the following.

#### **1. Universalism vs. particularism**

*"Universalism is the view of determining what is right and always conforming to that view. Particularism takes the opposing view which places emphasis on the obligations of friendship or other circumstances. Particularistic cultures are not bound by always doing the right thing and often break societal codes to put friendship first."*<sup>30</sup>

Universalism assumes that practices can be applied in the same form and ways, while particularism assumes that all practices should be adapted to particular situations. Cultures with high universalism tend to focus on formal rules and the application of stipulated guidelines and frameworks. Particularistic cultures tend to consider reality as subjective, and place a greater emphasis on relationships.

#### **2. Individualism vs. communitarianism**

This dimension is the same as the individualist dimension of Hofstede. Individualistic cultures praise individual achievements and people's striving for individual success. People focus on their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of their families. In countries

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<sup>30</sup> HAMPDEN-TURNER, C. and TROMPENAARS, F. *Riding the waves of culture: understanding diversity in global business*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2012. p. 9.

prone to communitarianism, the collective is valued more, and people tend to focus more on the achievement of collective wellbeing.

### 3. Neutral vs. emotional

In neutral cultures, emotions tend to be restrained, while in emotional cultures emotions are displayed directly and expressly. *“A neutral culture will place importance on their objectives where emotions are detached from business dealings. People in these cultures tend to resemble machines or are compared to them as emotions take attention away from the objective. Emotional cultures represent the opposite where business objectives are a more human matter involving an array of emotions openly.”*<sup>31</sup>

### 4. Specific vs. diffuse

A specific culture is a culture which is characterized by a clear and distinct segregation between the public space and the private space. In diffuse cultures, such boundaries between these spaces are less obvious, and the two tend to get merged. *“Specific refers to a relationship that is recognized on a very impersonal level such as the relationship offered solely by a contract as an example. A diffuse relationship is one that involves a relationship on a human level where there is a genuine connection between two parties (in a business sense). The diffuse culture prefers a more human relationship and values this over impersonal, logical relationships often seen in North American culture.”*<sup>32</sup>

### 5. Achievement vs. ascription

In achievement cultures, people are assessed based on their performance and achievements, which precondition their status in society. In ascription cultures, an emphasis is put on an evaluation of people's status based on gender, education, etc.<sup>33</sup>

### 6. Sequential vs. synchronic

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<sup>31</sup> LINDHOLM, K. The implications of culture in business and the Cultural dimensions of Finland and India. *Metropolia*. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: <https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/65301/Bachelor%20Thesis%20final%20kristian%20lindh olm.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

<sup>32</sup> LINDHOLM, K. The implications of culture in business and the Cultural dimensions of Finland and India. *Metropolia*. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: <https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/65301/Bachelor%20Thesis%20final%20kristian%20lindh olm.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

<sup>33</sup> HAMPDEN-TURNER, C. and TROMPENAARS, F. *Riding the waves of culture: understanding diversity in global business*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2012. p. 9.

Sequential cultures are characterized by punctuality. People belonging to such cultures value much their time and like events to happen in a chronological order. Planning and clearly identified deadlines play an important role in business. In synchronic cultures, less attention is paid to punctuality and deadlines can be more vague.<sup>34</sup>

#### 7. Internal control vs. external control

In cultures prone to external control, people tend to be controlled by the environment, while in internal-control cultures, people tend to have an important impact on the environment on their own.<sup>35</sup>

The difficulties in the application of Trompenaars' model in intercultural studies are largely the same that are inherent of Hofstede's model. The choice of cultural dimensions can be disputed, as well as the lack of exact score scales to evaluate the existing cultural differences.

### 3.2.1 Application of Trompenaars' theory on Czech and Russian culture

According to the research of Czech and Russian cultures within the framework offered by Trompenaars' model, the following can be stated. Thus, Russia is a highly particularistic culture.<sup>36</sup> The Czech Republic ranks lower on this scale. In terms of individualism, the Czech culture is more individualistic, while the Russian culture is prone to communitarianism. Both the Russian and Czech cultures are neutral and prone to specific. The Czech culture is dedicated more to achievement, while Russian society is rather characterized more by ascription. Both cultures are rather more sequential. In Russia, external control applies, while the Czech Republic is an internal-control culture.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, it can be stated that there are quite significant differences in the two states' cultures, but there are also similarities predefining their cultural specificities.

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<sup>34</sup> HAMPDEN-TURNER, C. and TROMPENAARS, F. *Riding the waves of culture: understanding diversity in global business*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2012. p. 9.

<sup>35</sup> HAMPDEN-TURNER, C. and TROMPENAARS, F. *Riding the waves of culture: understanding diversity in global business*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2012. p. 9.

<sup>36</sup> BALAN, S. and VREJA, L. *The Trompenaars' Seven-Dimension Cultural Model and Cultural Orientations of Romanian Students in Management*. [online]. [cit. 2018-6-18]. Available from: <http://conferinta.management.ase.ro/archives/2013/pdf/11.pdf>

<sup>37</sup> DUMETZ, J. and GABORIKOVA, E. *The Czech and Slovak Republics: A Cross-Cultural Comparison*. [online]. [cit. 2018-6-18]. Available from: [https://www.fh-ooe.at/fileadmin/user\\_upload/fhooe/ueberuns/kongresswesen/2016/ccbc/allgemein/docs/fhooe-ccbc2016-B3-A4-dumetz.pdf](https://www.fh-ooe.at/fileadmin/user_upload/fhooe/ueberuns/kongresswesen/2016/ccbc/allgemein/docs/fhooe-ccbc2016-B3-A4-dumetz.pdf)

### 3.3 Cultural standards by Alexander Thomas

In contrast to Hofstede and Trompenaars, Alexander Thomas' model is designed in a way not to divide cultures taken apart into different dimensions, but rather to compare individual cultures based on their inherent cultural standards.

Cultural standards can be identified based on the following indicators:

*“- Cultural standards are forms of perception, though patterns, judgment and interaction that are shared by a majority of the members of a specific culture who regard their behavior as normal, typical and binding.*

*- Own and other unfamiliar behavior is directed, regulated and judged on the basis of this cultural standard.*

*- Cultural standards provide a regulatory function for mastering a given situation and dealing with people.*

*- The individual and group-specific way of applying cultural standards to adjust behavior can fluctuate within a range of tolerance.*

*- Forms of behavior that exceed this specific range are not accepted or sanctioned by the respective collective.”<sup>38</sup>*

Thomas doesn't see cultural standards as universal criteria for different cultures. Their value consists in the comparison of particular cultures, with subsequent interpretation of particular social norms predominant in such cultures. The cultural environment is believed to play an essential role in predefining such social norms. In order to avoid the existing difficulties in the course of cross-cultural communication, one should take into account the differences in terms of cultural standards and adapt appropriately to the interlocutor's cultural specificities.<sup>39</sup>

Thus, there are different theoretical frameworks and models which can serve for analyzing the existing differences between cultures from different

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<sup>38</sup> THOMAS, A., KINAST, E. U. and SCHROLL-MACHL, S. *Handbook of Intercultural Communication and Cooperation: Basics and Areas of Application*. Amsterdam, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010. p. 23.

<sup>39</sup> THOMAS, A., KINAST, E. U. and SCHROLL-MACHL, S. *Handbook of Intercultural Communication and Cooperation: Basics and Areas of Application*. Amsterdam, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010. p. 23.

perspectives. Taking into account the findings outlined above, it is worth now proceeding to a more detailed consideration of the Czech Republic and its specificities.

## 4 Czech Republic

### 4.1 Geography

The Czech Republic is a country located in Central Europe. The Czech Republic's capital city is Prague. Other important cities include Brno, Ostrava, Plzeň, Liberec, and Olomouc. *“The country is bordered by Poland to the north and northeast, Slovakia to the east, Austria to the south, and Germany to the west and northwest. The Bohemian Massif occupies the major portion of the Czech Republic. It consists of a large, roughly ovoid elevated basin (the Bohemian Plateau) encircled by mountains divided into six major groups. In the southwest are the Šumava Mountains. In the west are the Berounka River highlands. In the northwest, the Ore Mountains form the frontier with Germany... The so-called Sudeten system of mountains in the northeast forms most of the border with Poland...”*<sup>40</sup>

The Czech Republic is a landlocked country. Agricultural lands cover 54.8 % of its territory, and forests cover 34.4 %. Arable lands cover 41 % of the Czech territory. The main rivers in the Czech Republic include Elbe, Vltava, Morava, and Jizera. The soil consists mostly of high-quality chernozems and brown soils. The climate in the Czech Republic is mixed. It is characterized by quite important fluctuations in precipitations and high temperature.<sup>41</sup>

### 4.2 History

The historical development of the Czech Republic can be traced back to the reunion of Slavic tribes inhabiting the Czech lands, which led to the creation of the Duchy of Bohemia in the 9<sup>th</sup> century A.D. In the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the Duchy of Bohemia extended its territories by conquering Silesia, and Moravia. Between the 11<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Kingdom of Bohemia was a part of the Holy Roman Empire. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Bohemian King Charles IV became the Holy Roman Emperor, and this gave an impetus

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<sup>40</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica. Czech Republic. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Czech-Republic>

<sup>41</sup> CIA World Factbook. Czech Republic. *CIA World Factbook*. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cz.html>

to the development of Bohemian lands in economic, social and cultural terms. The 15<sup>th</sup> century was marked by the Czechs' struggle for independence guided by Jan Hus. After the collapse of the Holy Roman Empire in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Bohemia lost its previous geopolitical importance. Soon it became a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. During World War I, after the collapse of the Habsburg dynasty, the independent Czechoslovak Republic was proclaimed. During World War II, it was occupied by Nazi Germany, and the population carried out considerable resistance activities to oppose the occupation. After the end of World War II, the Czech political regime was socialist, and it was controlled largely by the Soviet Union. The 1968 Prague Spring was an uprising against the socialist authorities, which was suppressed.<sup>42</sup>

By 1989, Czechoslovakia returned to liberal democracy with the weakening power of the Eastern bloc and the USSR. As a result of the peaceful Velvet Revolution, Czechoslovakia split into two independent republics in 1993. In 1999, the Czech Republic joined NATO, and in 2004, the country became a member state of the European Union. As of today, the Czech Republic remains committed to the Western vector of its foreign policies, and is an important constituent state of the Western structures such as the EU and NATO.<sup>43</sup>

### **4.3 Language**

The official language of the Czech Republic is the Czech language. It is the language of the largest national group of the Czech population, Czechs. The Czech language is used in official workflow and official legal procedures, and penetrates deeply into all fields of social life in the Czech Republic. It is the language of education and culture. However, the Czech Republic support diversity, and proclaims the equality of people in terms of their language.

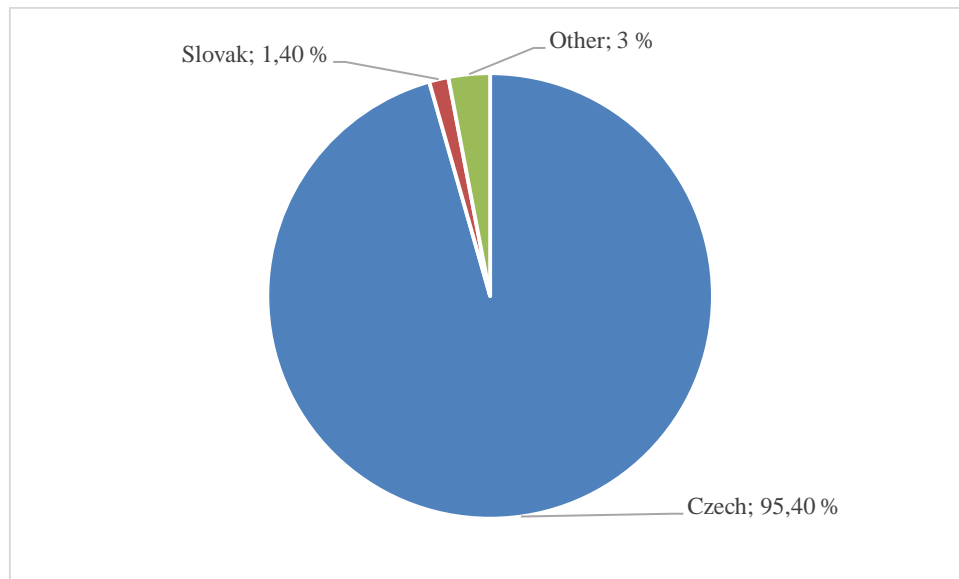
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<sup>42</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica. Czech Republic. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Czech-Republic>

<sup>43</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica. Czech Republic. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Czech-Republic>



**Figure 4 Language structure of the Czech population**



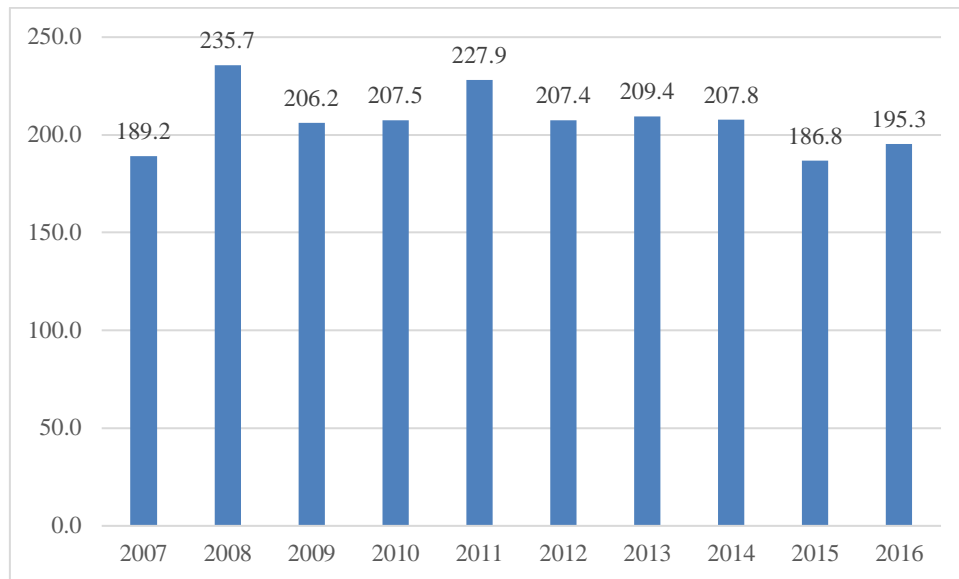
Source: CIA World Factbook. Czech Republic. *CIA World Factbook*. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cz.html>

As can be seen from the chart provided above, the Czech language is spoken by 95.4 % of the Czech population. The second most widely spoken language behind Czech is the Slovak language, spoken by only 1.4 % of the population. All other languages account for only 3 % of the total Czech population in aggregate. Therefore, the Czech Republic can be considered a monolingual state.

#### **4.4 Economic situation**

In order to understand the economic condition of the Czech Republic, it is worth analyzing more in detail the country's economic performance achieved in recent years.

**Figure 5 Czech Republic's GDP in 2007-2016, in current USD billion**

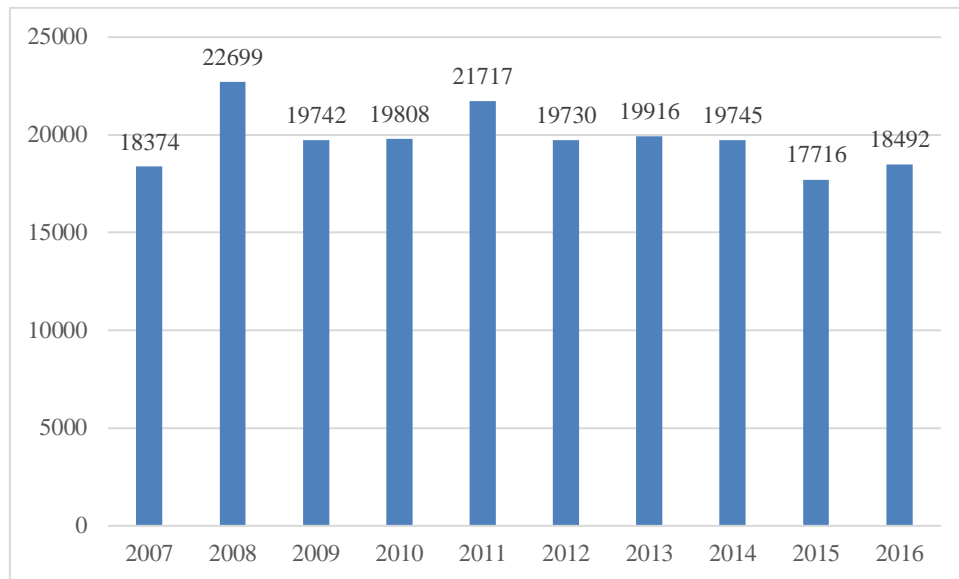


Source: WORLD BANK. World Bank Databank. *World Bank*. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: <http://databank.worldbank.org>

As can be seen from the chart above, the Czech Republic's gross domestic product has been fluctuating in recent years. In 2016, the state's aggregate GDP amounted to current USD 195.3 billion. This figure was 4.6 % greater compared to the previous year. However, this figure was significantly smaller compared to every year in the period from 2008 to 2015, i.e. even lower than during the period of the global financial and economic crisis. These tendencies are due to several factors. On the one hand, there are signs of stagnation of the Czech industry, which leads to smaller production and economic output. On the other hand, the Czech national currency's exchange rate has been fluctuating lately against the US dollar, which created negative trends for the evaluation of the country's GDP in US dollars.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Radio Prague. Czech Economy Displays Growing Pains. *Radio Prague*. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: <http://www.radio.cz/en/section/marketplace/czech-economy-displays-growing-pains>

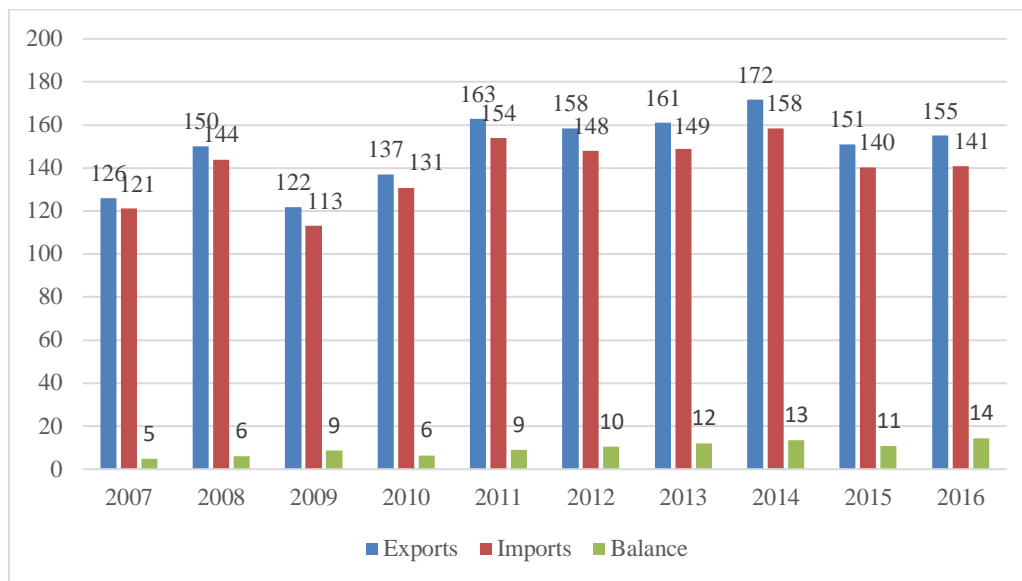
**Figure 6 Czech Republic's GDP per capita in 2007-2016, in current USD**



Source: World Bank. World Bank Databank. *World Bank*. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: <http://databank.worldbank.org>

As the chart above illustrates, the patterns of changes in the Czech Republic's GDP per capita are generally the same as for the country's absolute GDP values. The 2016 level of GDP per capita in the Czech Republic is current USD 18,492, This figure is greater compared to 2015, but is smaller than the same figure for any year in the period from 2008 to 2014. The situation is negative, as it means weakened purchasing power of the Czech population, and also overall negative trends in the economy. Therefore, the situation should be addressed by appropriate changes to the Czech government's economic policies.

**Figure 7 Czech Republic's exports, imports and current account balance in 2007-2016, in current USD billion**

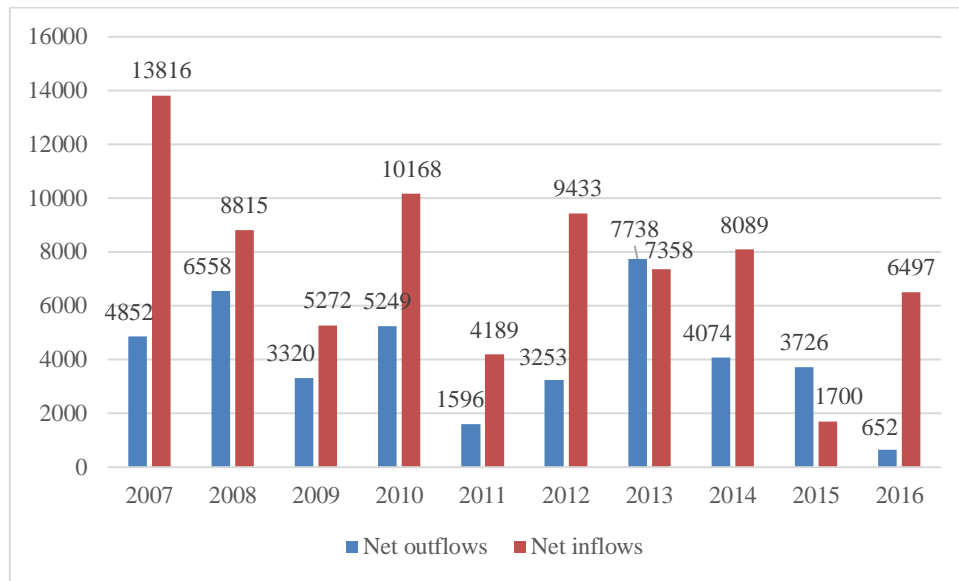


Source: World Bank. World Bank Databank. *World Bank*. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: <http://databank.worldbank.org>

The chart above depicts the dynamics of the Czech Republic's exports, imports and trade balance. As can be seen from the chart, there have been fluctuations lately, and there are no homogeneous tendencies in Czech foreign trade. The country's aggregate exports amounted to USD 155 billion in 2016, i.e. grew by 2.6 % compared to 2015, though remaining 10 % lower compared to the year 2014. The fact that Czech exports haven't been growing lately can be associated with the tendencies in the Czech economy described above. This limits the Czech Republic's opportunities to generate substantial income through foreign trade, and therefore the situation should be addressed appropriately.

The patterns in imports are rather similar. The Czech Republic's aggregate important amounted to USD 141 billion in 2016, and thus grew by 0.7 % compared to the previous year, through remaining 11 % lower compared to 2014. This further confirms the great volatility of Czech foreign trade. However, a positive fact is the growing trade balance, i.e. the net amount of income generated by the Czech Republic from its foreign trade activities.

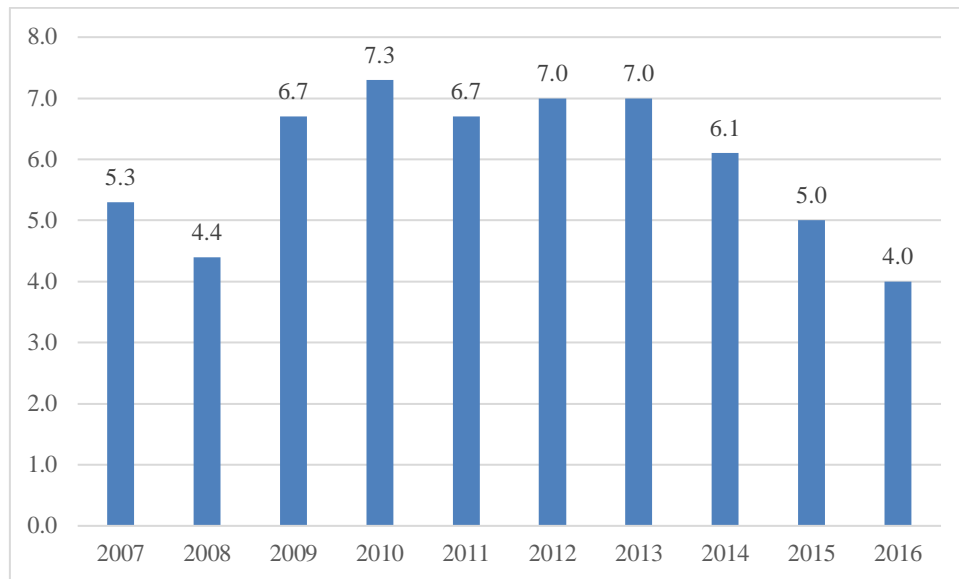
**Figure 8 Czech Republic's net foreign direct investment outflows and inflows, in current USD million**



Source: World bank. World Bank Databank. *World Bank*. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: <http://databank.worldbank.org>

The chart presented above illustrates the dynamics of the Czech Republic's foreign direct investment inflows and outflows. As can be seen from the figure, the country's total net FDI inflows are significantly greater than outflows. This proves that the Czech Republic is a net recipient of FDI. This pattern is rather inherent of developing states. Moreover, a negative fact is the steadily decreasing amount of net investment inflow, which might be a sign of the Czech Republic's decreasing attractiveness for foreign investors.

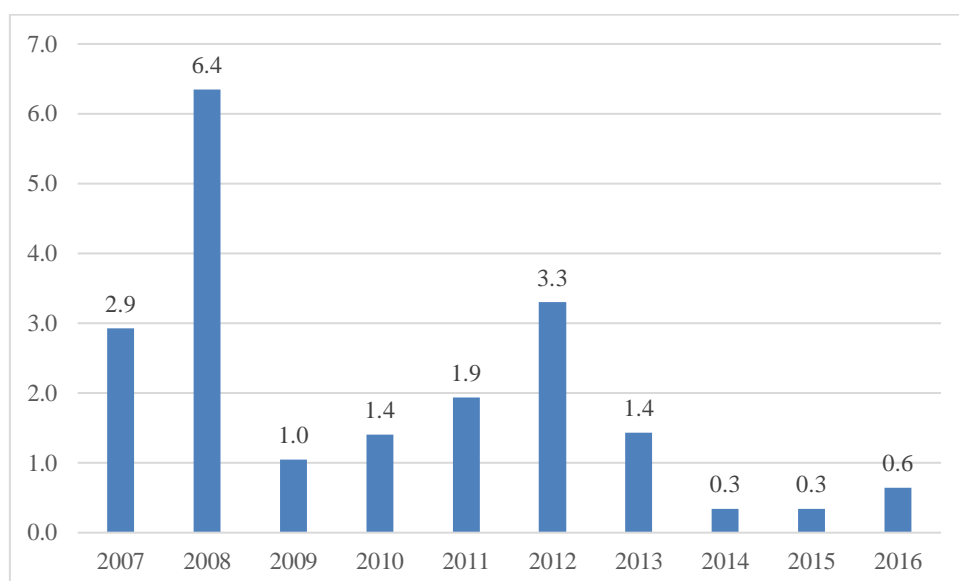
**Figure 9 Czech Republic's total unemployment in 2007-2016, in %**



Source: World Bank. World Bank Databank. *World Bank*. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: <http://databank.worldbank.org>

The chart above illustrates the recent dynamics of the Czech Republic's total unemployment. As can be seen from the chart above, the country's total unemployment rate was 4.0 % in 2016, and this was the lowest figure in the analyzed period. The current trend is for the steady decrease of unemployment in the Czech Republic: during the last four years this ratio dropped by 3 percentage points. This trend is positive for the country.

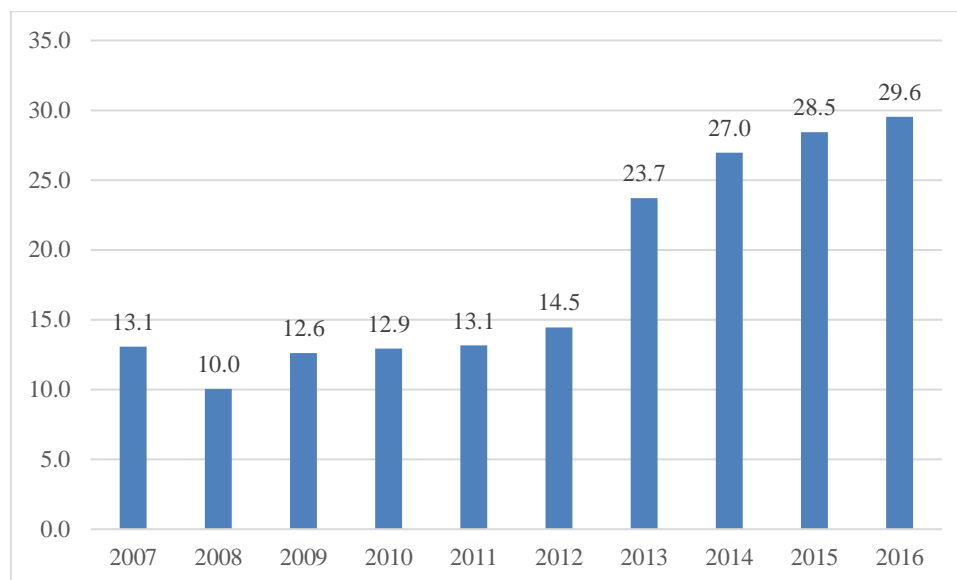
**Figure 10 Czech Republic's inflation (Consumer Prices Index) in 2007-2016, in %**



Source: World Bank. World Bank Databank. *World Bank*. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: <http://databank.worldbank.org>

As can be seen from the chart presented above, the inflation rate in the Czech Republic has remained at low levels throughout the recent years. This tendency is positive for the country and for its opportunities of subsequent economic growth.

**Figure 11 Czech Republic's total foreign reserves, including gold, in 2007-2016, in current USD billion**



Source: World Bank. World Bank Databank. *World Bank*. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: <http://databank.worldbank.org>

As the chart above reveals, the Czech Republic's foreign reserves have been growing steadily in recent years. In 2016, they amounted to USD 29.6 billion, and thus were 4 % greater compared to the previous year, or 25 % greater compared to 2013. This means the country's growing independence in its monetary and fiscal policies, and the ability to cope more effectively with its financial liabilities.

Therefore, based on the economic overview of the Czech Republic, it can be stated that the main negative tendency as of today is industrial downturn, which leads to smaller exports, and thus to overall impaired performance in terms of GDP.

## 4.5 Identity, values and traditions

The Czech identity has been formed throughout the country's existence, and the values and traditions inherent of the Czech population shape the specificities of the local Czech culture. The Czech Republic is located in the center of Europe. The country makes

a part of the European Union and promotes its liberal and democratic norms, which affects the Czech people's cultural perceptions.

Czech people are quite open in their communication, and aim to stick to the rules of the etiquette and to the norms of politeness. *"While Czechs generally do not greet or acknowledge strangers on the street, it is polite and expected to greet people you don't know when you walk into a small store, restaurant, waiting room, or small public space but one would not generally engage in conversation. For example, when entering a shop you would say Dobrý den to everybody in general and it is expected that people will respond in kind."*<sup>45</sup>

As the Czech Republic is limited in its geographic space, this influences the living habits of the Czech people. Thus, the vast majority of the population is living in apartment block buildings. Czechs tend to avoid traveling at long distances, but at the same time like voyages abroad. *"Czech personal space is also smaller but its boundary is firmer. This is especially obvious when compared with Americans who require larger personal space but are much more willing to let people into it. This difference influences much that is typical of Czech culture. For example, a person has fewer friends who are closer. Also, people generally do not smile or even initiate contact with strangers. Public displays of affection are common, however, because they are happening within that close personal space with much stronger boundaries."*<sup>46</sup>

In terms of their time perceptions, Czechs tend to value the time of others. They do not come earlier, but they tend to arrive in time, with maximum five-minute delays. Czechs value knowledge and intelligence. They like distinguishing between formal and informal language in communication.

Table etiquette plays an important role in Czech culture. Czechs value significantly national cuisine, and they drink most beer per capita in Europe. Czech tends to pay significant attention to how dishes are served, in which combinations and consequences, which drinks are served with them, and so on. *"A sense of humor and an ability to take things less seriously are probably two of the most important qualities for most Czechs. Modesty in attitude is also a very important virtue so as to not appear better than*

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<sup>45</sup> Barnes. Czech Values, Attitudes and Habits. Barnes. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: [http://czechbarnes.weebly.com/uploads/4/3/5/3/4353042/czech\\_values\\_attitudes\\_and\\_habits.pdf](http://czechbarnes.weebly.com/uploads/4/3/5/3/4353042/czech_values_attitudes_and_habits.pdf)

<sup>46</sup> Barnes. Czech Values, Attitudes and Habits. Barnes. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: [http://czechbarnes.weebly.com/uploads/4/3/5/3/4353042/czech\\_values\\_attitudes\\_and\\_habits.pdf](http://czechbarnes.weebly.com/uploads/4/3/5/3/4353042/czech_values_attitudes_and_habits.pdf)



*someone else. For example, a proper response to a compliment is not to say thank you but offer a statement of disagreement. Czechs quite often underestimate themselves as it would be considered rude not to do it since Czechs rarely boast.*"<sup>47</sup>

Familial ties are valued much in the Czech Republic. Children often live together with their parents, even at an older age. The common way of making new acquaintance in the Czech Republic is to be introduced to a new person by a mutual acquaintance or friend. Friendship often lasts from childhood. As for the perceptions of other nations, it should be noted that the Czech Republic is nationally and ethnically uniform and homogeneous culture, due to which it is characterized by signs of latent xenophobia.<sup>48</sup>

Overall, it can be stated that the culture of the Czech Republic and its inherent values and norms have been formed throughout the history of development of the Czech Republic, and are preconditioned by the impact of a wide range of different factors.

#### **4.6 History of Czech and Russian relationship**

The history of relationships between the Czech Republic and the Russian Federation is rooted in the earlier times, and namely in the period after World War II. Up until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Czechoslovakia remained its important economic and political partner. After the collapse of the USSR, as Czechoslovakia found itself in the new conditions of cooperation with foreign partners, the country sought reevaluating its relationships with other countries, and the Russian Federation maintained close economic ties. It was important for both states in the light of their ongoing transformations for greater liberalization and the creation of national economic, legal and political systems from scratch. The Czech Republic's gradual transition to the Western vector of integration made the relationships between the two states less close in terms of political partnership, but they both remained important economic partners for each other.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Barnes. Czech Values, Attitudes and Habits. Barnes. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: [http://czechbarnes.weebly.com/uploads/4/3/5/3/4353042/czech\\_values\\_attitudes\\_and\\_habits.pdf](http://czechbarnes.weebly.com/uploads/4/3/5/3/4353042/czech_values_attitudes_and_habits.pdf)

<sup>48</sup> Barnes. Czech Values, Attitudes and Habits. Barnes. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: [http://czechbarnes.weebly.com/uploads/4/3/5/3/4353042/czech\\_values\\_attitudes\\_and\\_habits.pdf](http://czechbarnes.weebly.com/uploads/4/3/5/3/4353042/czech_values_attitudes_and_habits.pdf)

<sup>49</sup> KORAN, M. *Czech Foreign Policy in 2007-2009: Analysis*. Ústav mezinárodních vztahů, v. v. i., 2010. pp. 207-209.

After the Czech Republic's adherence to the European Union, the country's popularity as a migrant destination among Russian citizens only grew, and this is another important factors favoring the development of Czech-Russian relations as of today.<sup>50</sup>

#### 4.7 Modern Czech and Russian relationship and future perspectives

In order to analyze the current stage of Czech-Russian economic relationships, it is worth analyzing the dynamics of the two states' mutual trade.

**Table 1 Czech imports and Russia's contribution, in USD billion and %**

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Czech imports from Russia	9,1	5,4	6,8	8,1	7,9	7,8	6,2	4,2	3,4	3,0
Czech total imports	141,8	104,8	125,7	150,8	139,7	142,5	153,2	140,7	142,3	162,1
Share of Russia in Czech imports	6,44 %	5,15 %	5,42 %	5,37 %	5,66 %	5,44 %	4,08 %	2,98 %	2,40 %	1,85 %
Share of the Czech Republic in Russian exports	1,95 %	1,79 %	1,72 %	1,57 %	1,51 %	1,47 %	1,26 %	1,22 %	1,19 %	0,84 %

Source: International trade center. Trademap. *International Trade Center*. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: <https://www.trademap.org/>

As the table above illustrates, Czech imports from Russia have been declining steadily in recent years in both absolute and relative terms. In absolute values, Czech imports from Russia dropped more than three times in the last 10 years. The share of Russia in Czech imports in the same period decreased from 6.44 % to 1.85 %, and the share of the Czech Republic dropped from 1.95 % to 0.84 % in Russian exports. This trend is mainly due to the sanctions implemented by the European Union member states against the Russian Federation after Russia's annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014, and by the overall deteriorating quality of political relationships between Russia and the EU member states.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>50</sup> KORAN, M. *Czech Foreign Policy in 2007-2009: Analysis*. Ústav mezinárodních vztahů, v. v. i., 2010. pp. 207-209.

<sup>51</sup> Reuters. EU extends Russia sanctions over Ukraine crisis. *Reuters*. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ukraine-crisis-eu/eu-extends-russia-sanctions-over-ukraine-crisis-iduskcn1go0yl>

**Table 2 Czech exports and Russia's contribution, in USD billion and %**

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Czech exports to Russia	4,0	2,6	3,5	5,2	6,0	5,9	5,5	3,2	3,1	3,5
Czech total exports	146,1	112,9	132,1	162,4	156,4	161,5	174,3	157,2	162,1	180,2
Share of Russia in Czech exports	2,73 %	2,32 %	2,68 %	3,21 %	3,86 %	3,68 %	3,13 %	2,04 %	1,90 %	1,95 %
Share of the Czech Republic in Russian imports	1,49 %	1,53 %	1,55 %	1,70 %	1,91 %	1,89 %	1,90 %	1,75 %	1,69 %	1,55 %

Source: International trade center. Trademap. *International Trade Center*. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: <https://www.trademap.org/>

As can be seen from the table above, in contrast to imports, the amounts of Czech exports to Russia have been overall stable in recent years. However, in both absolute and relative terms they are smaller compared to the years before 2014, which is due to the reasons outlined above.

In the near future, the development of relationships between the Russian Federation and the Czech Republic will be preconditioned largely by the development of wider EU-Russia relationships, and thus the opportunity of achieving political compromise for the sake of future mutual benefits.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Reuters. EU extends Russia sanctions over Ukraine crisis. *Reuters*. [online]. [cit. 2018-4-8]. Available from: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ukraine-crisis-eu/eu-extends-russia-sanctions-over-ukraine-crisis-iduskcn1go0yl>

## **5 Research**

### **5.1 Methodology**

The qualitative part of the research within the framework of this thesis is based on the method of cultural standards developed by Alexander Thomas. It consists of interviews to be held among respondents with a background of work and studies in the Czech Republic. In line with the goals of the thesis, the questions asked to the respondents focused on identifying and evaluating the differences between Czech and Russian cultural standards and on revealing the main difficulties which might arise in terms of Russian citizens' adaptation to the Czech cultural standards in the work and study environment.

For the purposes of this research, two groups of respondents were chosen, each containing 12 persons. The first group included Russians who have worked in the Czech Republic for at least 6 months. These respondents completed their higher education in the Russian Federation and do not have any background of studies in the Czech Republic. The second group included Russians who have studied in the Czech Republic for at least 6 months. The respondents belonging to this group do not have any work background in the Czech Republic. This approach should allow guaranteeing the transparency of findings obtained for both groups. Another important aspect in the basis of the selection of respondent groups consists in the fact that they were chosen based on ethnical homogeneity in order to avoid possible deviations and misrepresentations. Thus, all of the 24 chosen respondents are Slavic Russians.

The selection of respondents was done through personal acquaintance and an additional search in online social networks. Potential respondents were offered to participate in an interview, and the sample was filled when there were 12 respondents who agreed in each of the groups.

The interviews held with the respondents lasted approximately 30 minutes each. They were held either in person or via Skype or Facebook Messenger. Each respondent was interviewed on an anonymous basis, and it was agreed that only the first names of the respondents can be used in the interpretation of results.

The interviews for both groups included two blocks of questions. The first block included short introductory questions required for learning more on the respondents' demographic parameters, and in the second block they were offered questions to share information on their experience in the Czech environment and the issues which they faced in terms of adaptation to the Czech cultural standards. The block of general questions was the same for both groups, while the second block of questions was adapted specifically to each of the two chosen groups. The structure of the interviews with the two groups is given in Annex 1 to the thesis.

Every respondent was asked to provide some detailed information on the main issues and barriers which he or she has faced in the course of studies/work in the Czech Republic, so as to reveal the main factors imposing difficulties on Russians' adaptation to the Czech cultural standards in the study and work environment. The findings of the interviews were thereafter transcribed and analyzed by the thesis author.

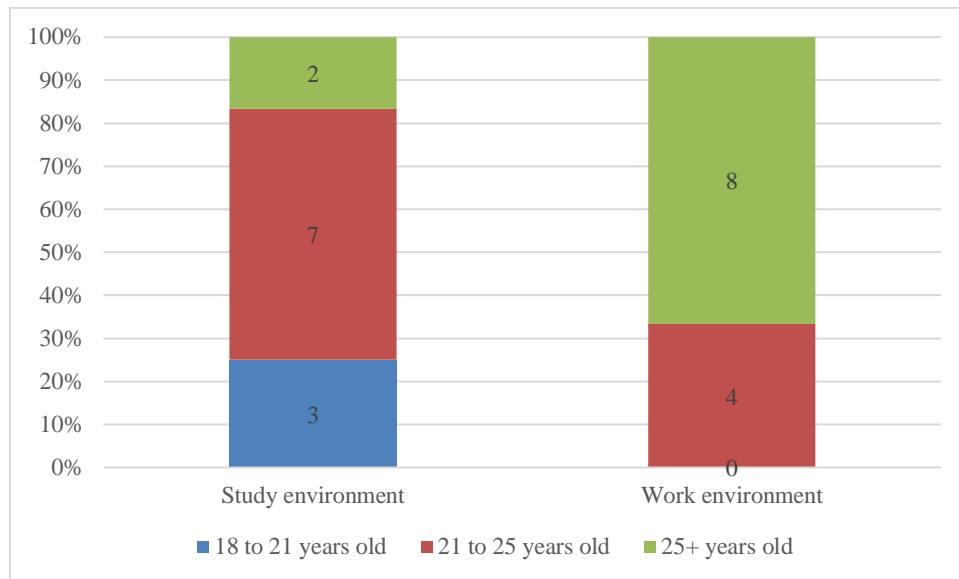
All interviews were held during the months of March and April of 2018.

Given the principles of the research outlined above, it is now possible to provide an overview of the respondents and their demographic profiles.

## **5.2 Profiles of the Respondents**

In order to understand the basic composition of the chosen samples of respondents, it is worth providing a brief demographic overview of the persons who took part in the interview in both groups. This overview is based on the answers provided by the respondents to the first block of questions and the first question of the second block (regarding the time of studies/work in the Czech Republic).

**Figure 12 Age structure of respondents**



Source: Own research

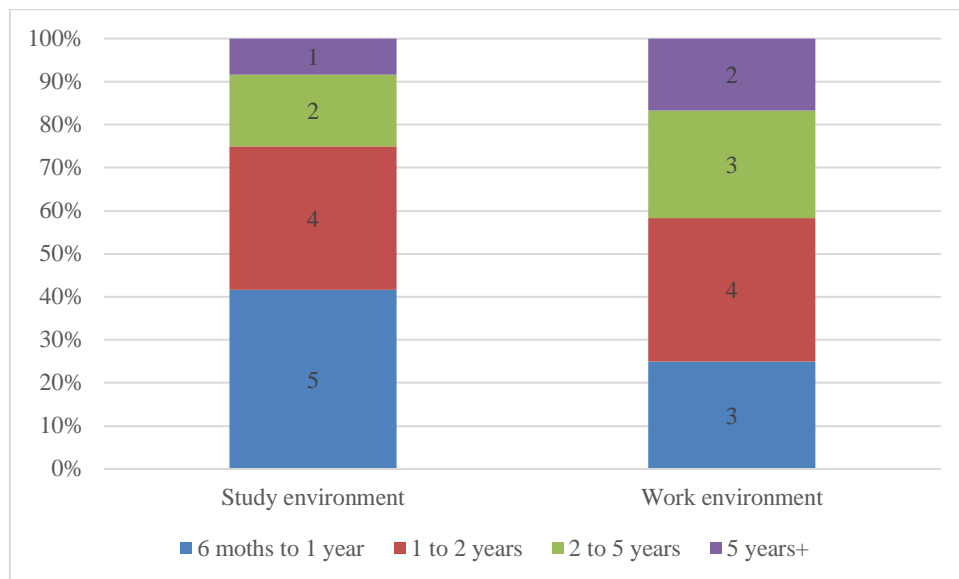
As can be seen from the chart provided above, there are differences in terms of the age structure of the respondents belonging to the two groups. Thus, in the group of Russian respondents in the study environment, the 3 persons (25 %) are aged 18 to 21 years, 7 persons (58 %) – 21 to 25 years old, and 2 persons (17 %) – 25+ years old. In contrast to this, in the group of Russian respondents in the work environment, there are only two age groups: persons aged 21 to 25 years old (4 respondents, or 33 %) and 25+ years old (8 respondents, or 67 %).

These differences are due to the fact that for the interviews the groups have been segregated distinctly: the persons analyzed in the first group have no work experience in the Czech Republic, and the persons analyzed in the second group have no educational background in the Czech Republic. Therefore, in the first group respondents tend to be younger as they come for higher education in the Czech Republic most often right after high school studies in the Russian Federation. Those who are aged 25+ came to the Czech Republic already with a higher education diploma. At the same time, respondents in the second group came from the Russian Federation later, and thus their age structure leans more toward an average older age.

It should be noted that the gender parameters are not taken into consideration in this research, as given the small samples for two groups, it would be impossible to run any

grounded research for different genders in the breakdown of their age structure, and therefore this parameter is omitted.

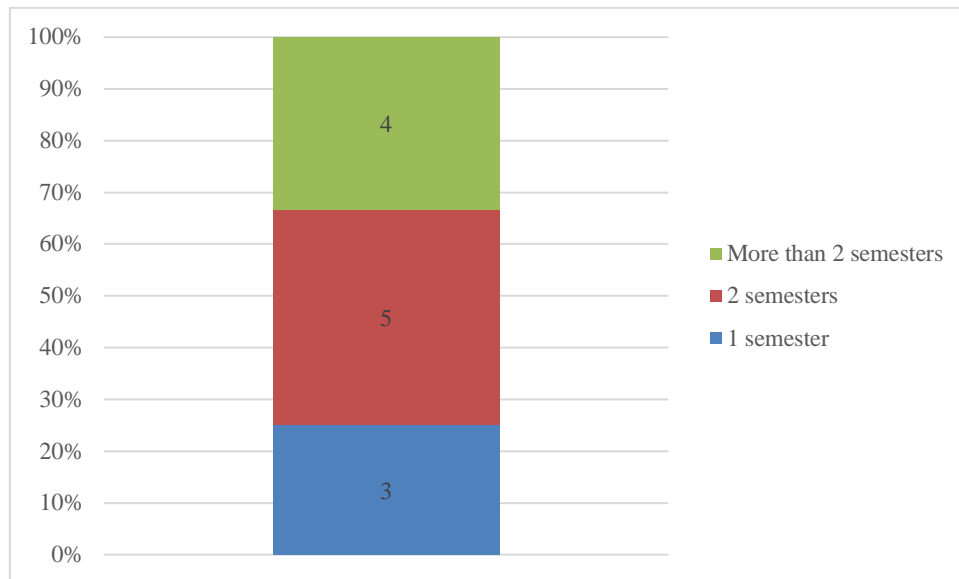
**Figure 13 Respondents' period of living in the Czech Republic**



Source: Own research

As depicted in the chart above, most respondents in both groups have been living in the Czech Republic within a range of 6 months to 2 years. For the respondents in the first group, the number of such persons amounts to 9 (75 %), and for the respondents in the second group it amounts to 7 respondents (58 %). The share of people with the smaller residence period in the Czech Republic is greater for the first group, as a conditions for the participation in the research was the lack of work background in the Czech Republic for those persons who belong to the study environment.

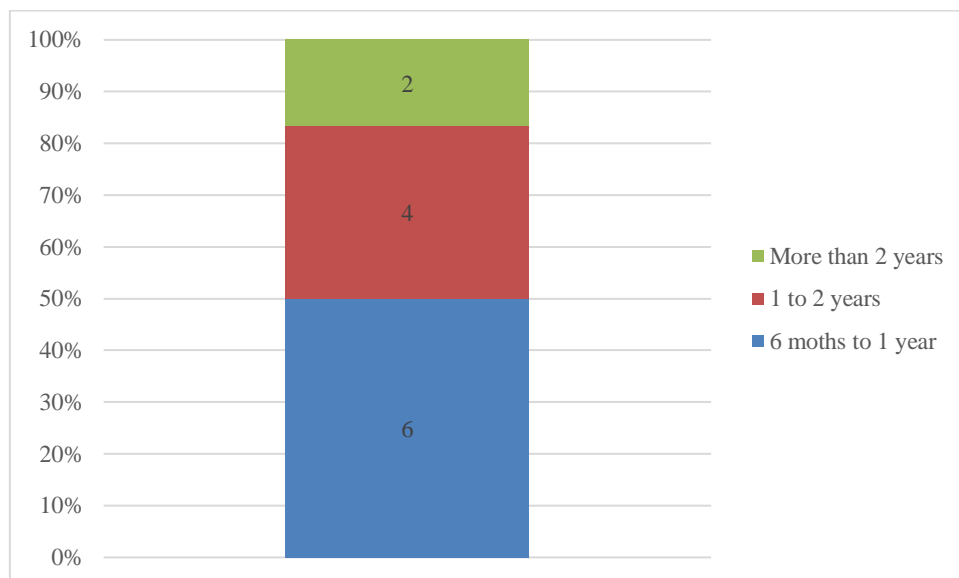
**Figure 14 Period of studies of respondents in the study environment**



Source: Own research

As can be seen from the chart above, among the respondents in the first group, 3 persons (25 %) have completed one semester of their education in the Czech Republic, 5 persons (42 %) have completed two semesters, and 4 persons (33 %) have completed more than 2 semesters of education in the Czech Republic.

**Figure 15 Period of work of respondents in the work environment**



Source: Own research

As the chart above illustrates, among the respondents in the second group, 6 persons (50 %) have been working in the Czech Republic for 6 months to 1 year, 4 persons (33 %)



have been working in the country for 1 to 2 years, and 2 persons (17 %) have been pursuing their work activities in the Czech Republic for more than 2 years.

Now, having understood the basic demographic parameters of the respondents in the two groups, it is now worth analyzing the main limitations of the research before proceeding to the presentation and interpretation of the results of the interviews.

### **5.3 Limitations of the Research**

There are several inherent limitations which impose boundaries on the practical applicability of the findings of the interviews and which should be noted in particular within the framework of the practical part of this thesis.

Due to the time and financial constraints of this research, the samples chosen for the two groups of respondents can be considered as rather small. Even though the samples were chosen based on the principles of homogeneity and were separated for the study environment and the work environment for the transparency of results, their size doesn't allow generalizing the results of the thesis for scaling to greater statistical samples. While this can be seen as a considerable limitation for subsequent research, this shouldn't be expected to affect significantly the findings of this research as applicable to its aim and goals.

Together with the first limitation, it should be noted that the answers of the respondents taking part in these interviews are definitely affected by subjectivity, and thus it can be stated that the findings of the research should be processed and interpreted with due account for the fact that they might be dependent on the subjective perceptions of the respondents, which might eventually lead to distortions when approximating these findings on statistical samples of larger scales.

Also, the research doesn't focus on a comparison of the perception of Czech cultural standards in the study and work environment on the part of Russian respondents with the perception of such standards by representatives of other nations and cultures. Although this isn't included in the scope of the research due to the limitations outlined above, this kind of analysis could have been beneficial, as it would allow comparing and contrasting Russian perceptions with other cultures, and thus would allow making

a cross-cultural comparison of the results obtained. A research of this kind can be recommended for subsequent studies on the topic of the thesis.

Despite the existence of the limitations outlined above, the findings of the thesis should still guarantee an appropriate level of consistency and accurateness within the framework of the aim and goals of this research.

## **5.4 Results of the Interviews and Interpretation**

### **5.4.1 Study Environment**

The findings of the research allow classifying a number of key cultural standards along which the perceptions of Russian pursuing their studies in the Czech Republic can be analyzed. Such standards are outlined in the table below, and the interviews are analyzed thereafter, with the presentation of excerpts and quotations from such interviews.

**Table 3 Czech-Russian cultural standards in the study environment**

1	Bureaucracy and formal rules
2	Structure of classes and exams
3	Quality of communication
4	Equality in the assessment of students' achievements
5	Students' commitment to the educational process
6	Punctuality and time management
7	Conflict management

Source: Own research

#### **Bureaucracy and formal rules**

Most respondents believe that bureaucracy and formal rules play an important role in the organization of studies in the Czech Republic, however Russian students do not face any significant problems with this, as the level of bureaucracy and formality is even higher in the Russian Federation. Russian students are generally accustomed to bureaucracy and formality, and therefore they believe Czech bureaucracy to be rather smooth and not so exigent.

*“The number of administrative procedures in the Czech Republic is rather not so great, however the rules are to be complied with thoroughly. A major advantage is that most*

*rules are provided explicitly in written form. As soon as one is acquainted with the general principles of the organization of the process of studies, the rules become easier to comprehend. This relates not only to the sector of studies, but also to everyday life. You need to comply with specific procedures for opening a bank account, but the rules are always comprehensible” Anna.*

*“The bureaucratic formalities can give a wrong impression on the first sight, as Czechs pay attention to legal compliance. But then the rules are quite easy to memorize and to comply with as well. In Russia, we have a much deeper penetration of bureaucracy” Ivan.*

*“I have never faced any problems or issues with Czech bureaucracy or formal procedures in the course of studies. Moreover, after Russia, this becomes quite simple. Czech bureaucracy is strikingly different from the one we have in Russia. In the Czech Republic, bureaucracy is a tool of legal compliance. In Russia, it often becomes a tool of corruption and is used by responsible persons for gaining their personal benefits. The rules are rather strict in the Czech Republic, but their definite advantage consists in the fact that they can always be accessed by everyone, and thus there are no barriers for monitoring the changes in rules and for complying with them in the long run, which is in contrast to Russia, where this might be much more difficult” Sergei.*

### **Structure of classes and exams**

Here, most respondents who took part in the survey agreed that the structure of classes and exams differs in the Czech Republic compared to the Russian Federation. The studies at Czech universities are more oriented on practice, they link the theory with the practice, and they incorporate widely case studies, while in Russia everything revolves more around pure theory. Czech studies promote creative spirit instead of mechanic learning of the material. Group work is promoted. People who participate actively in the course of studies during the semester do not face any major difficulties when passing the exams.

*“In Russia, we always have to work with lots of theory. This begins at school, and then the framework is the same at the university. I have completed my bachelor’s studies in Russia, and I can compare well. Initially, I felt myself totally not adapted to studies in the Czech Republic. One of the major problems is that we do not have any skills of linking the theory with the practice. We can know the theory quite well, but then we*

*can't draw appropriate conclusions from the same theory in different situations. In the Czech Republic, all focuses more on practical learning. We get an opportunity to show what we can and to present our own ideas" Sergei.*

*"In the Czech Republic, we learn many case studies. Our university invites businessmen and other notorious persons who share their success stories, and thus we can learn information not only from the books, but also from the 'first hand" Danila.*

*"The tutors at Czech universities pay considerable attention to the preparation to lectures and seminars, and they always watch over updating the practical materials presented to the students. I find it hard to learn all such materials. In Russia, we focus more on theory, and this is what we have to learn. It is easier when know what you should learn and how you should answer then. Here, in the Czech Republic, you can know the theory well, but then the teacher might invent a question which cannot be found right away, and this might affect the grade you get" Alina.*

*"I find it hard to meet the requirements of Czech universities. The workload is significantly higher compared to Russia. The number of exams doesn't differ significantly, but I feel that the preparation to such exams is more difficult in the Czech Republic. We are studying many special disciplines, and to cope with everything you have to stay very concentrated and focused" Konstantin.*

*"I generally like how the process of studies is organized in the Czech Republic, although I think it might be very difficult for people coming from Russia. It is good that great attention is paid to foreign languages. Foreign language studies are much weaker in the Russian, and I believe it to be one of the main reasons which affect the speed of Russians' integration in the Czech study environment" Denis.*

### **Quality of communication**

The majority of the respondents stated that the quality of communication between the tutors and the students is very well organized in the Czech Republic. Tutors are always open and can be accessed by students for the discussion of ongoing issues. As for the communication between students, no major differences have been revealed compared to the Russian Federation. The Russian respondents believe that communication between students is good in the Czech Republic, however some of them note that issues might exist in the communication between Czech and foreign students.

*“Czech tutors are loyal to students in terms of the assistance they provide with studies. The communication between the tutors and the students tends to be formal, and tutors can be accessed during particular hours and in particular places. But the amount of such communication is sufficient, and it indeed allows resolving practical issues, which is very important for our good studies and overall comfort in the study environment in the Czech Republic” Svetlana.*

*“In Russia, it is a common situation when a tutor refuses to communicate with a student because he presumably doesn’t have time or doesn’t want to discuss anything. In my personal opinion, as Russian teachers earn small salaries, they aren’t satisfied with the situation, and this is why they want to limit their communication with the students. In the Czech Republic, the tutors are dedicated to the desired results, i.e. to the provision of students with knowledge. And they perform the duties assigned by the universities, indeed running the required communication” Ivan.*

*“The style of Czech tutors’ communication is formal, and sometimes problems might arise on the part of Russian students, as we are rather more accustomed to a kind of more informal communication in our educational institutions” Inna.*

*“The communication between students doesn’t differ somehow from Russia. We communicate in the course of studies and sometimes beyond the classroom. The university organizes some extracurricular activities where students can communicate more informally as well. Sometimes, there might be misunderstandings between Czech and foreign students, either due to the existing language barriers, or due to cultural differences” Stanislav.*

### **Equality in the assessment of students’ achievements**

Most respondents who participated in the interview evaluated positively the equality in Czech tutors’ approach to the assessment of their knowledge. According to the respondents, their grades generally correspond with the actual amount of knowledge they have, and they didn’t see any kind of discrimination compared to Czech students or students of other nationalities.

*“I have never been discriminated in my grades compared to local students, however this had been of my fears when going for studies to the Czech Republic. The educational process is rather democratic, and the tutors show their compliance with the internal*

*regulations when assessing the students' knowledge or any kind of work they deliver in the course of studies" Marina.*

*"In my opinion, the principles of equality and fairness are maintained in the Czech Republic's universities, and the difference is obvious compared to Russia. In Russia, higher education is penetrated by corruption and bribes, and therefore there is no equality in the learning process. Here in the Czech Republic, I believe that we all have equal opportunities to get new knowledge, and this means that the entire system of local education functions effectively. However, the requirements to knowledge are high, and I believe that the overall level of higher education in Russia is weaker. So, according to my observations, Russian students have worse grades compared to local students or students from Western Europe. Therefore, they might perceive the situation negatively, and might sometimes blame the tutors for their partiality and biased assessment. I do not think that this is the case, as I have never faced any issues and believe the whole process to be rather very democratic and fair" Aleksei.*

*"I like that there is competition between students in Czech universities, as this stimulates to achieve something better. Czech tutors promote this competition by providing effective conditions for its development. I believe that this is in favor of both the students and the universities themselves. Russian universities have to take into account Czech experience in this context" Inna.*

### **Students' commitment to the educational process**

According to the findings of the interview, local Czech students show a higher level of commitment to studies compared to Russians, however the respondents state different reasons which might justify such discrepancies, including Czechs' better adaptation to the local system of higher education on the one hand, and Czechs' higher level of knowledge on the other hand.

*"Czech students are involved significantly more in the educational process. They pay greater attention compared to students in Russia to their homework and practical work on seminars and during lectures. They are not intimidated to share their ideas, and show a better level of practical understanding of tasks. Maybe this is connected with the fact that the Czech educational system is significantly different from the one of Russia, and Czech students are well adapted to it. For Russian students, achieving such a level of commitment is higher" Aleksei.*

*“What amazed me is that Czech students use cribs very rarely throughout the semester and on the exams. In Russia, this is very common, and tutors always have to apply the strictest forms of control to monitor any possible use of cribs by students. They always have to walk around and to look at everybody. In Czech universities, there is no such strict control, and at the same time students do not use cribs so often. Probably, this is because Czech studies focus much more on the practical side of issues, where you have to think creatively, and not according to some theoretical templates. On the other hand, I believe that the level of Czech students’ self-consciousness is higher compared to the one of Russia, and this is rather a direct consequence of the underlying differences in the two countries’ educational systems”* Danila.

*“I think that even when comparing Russian students who study in the Czech Republic and local Czech students, it can be stated that the locals are more involved in the process of studies. Moreover, Czech students participate actively in both individual and group assignments, and they work hard on maximizing the quality of the outcomes of their studies”* Ivan.

### **Punctuality and time management**

In terms of the functionality and flexibility of Czechs, Russian respondents stated in their majority that Czechs tend to be less flexible in moving the deadlines compared to Russians, and tend to be rather more punctual, however these differences are not so great. Overall, Russian students pursuing their studies in the Czech Republic haven’t faced any considerable difficulties in the context of punctuality and time management with the locals.

*“If we speak of universities, the deadlines are quite clear, and they are stipulated explicitly in written form. Everyone has to comply with the rules, which is favored by the Czechs. Deadlines can be postponed in case of important issues affecting the activity of either the tutor or the student, and sometimes for less important tasks. In Russia, this is less strict, and this might sometimes be a problem for Russian students to cope with the deadlines. However, if we speak of the general course of life, beyond our studies, there are no considerable differences, and the patterns of punctuality tend to be very similar in the Czech Republic and the Russian Federation”* Alina.

*“Yes, I believe that Czechs value exactness and precise compliance with the deadlines more strictly than Russians. Personally for me, this has never been a problem,*

*as we study at universities, and it is normal that the tutors set particular deadlines for us to submit our papers and other works. Probably, in Russia it is less strict. But I would like to emphasize here once again that in Russia, the level of corruption is higher. And quite often, based on my personal experience, deadlines for important tasks can be postponed after some bribes. I can never imagine a similar situation in the Czech Republic” Konstantin.*

*“I am not sure whether there are some considerable differences. Personally for me, the attitude to time management and the deadlines is very close in the Czech Republic and the Russian Federation. This shouldn’t be an issue in the process of studies” Svetlana.*

### **Conflict management**

In terms of the occurrence of conflicts, most respondents stated conflicts occur rather rarely, and the general atmosphere is favorable for mutual cooperation in Czech universities. However, some tensions might arise between Russian students and local students occasionally. These conflicts are rather resolved easily, and it is not hard to reach a mutual compromise.

*“I have never had any conflicts personally, nor have I seen any conflicts either between Czechs and Russians or between Czechs at the university. I guess that the level of general culture is high in the Czech Republic, and the educational institutions in the country are characterized by a high level of civilized discipline” Sergei.*

*“Conflicts are rare in Czech universities. Compared to Russia, I think that the occurrence of conflicts is more intensive in the Russian Federation. Most conflicts which I have seen are rather connected with the work process and the ensuing misunderstanding between students. Such conflicts are generally easily overcome without the involvement of third parties. I think that Czechs are prone to seek a compromise, which eases significantly the task of conflict management at universities” Anna.*

*“I have been involved in one conflict since the beginning of my studies, as a local student humiliated me due to the fact that I am a foreigner. The conflict was considerable. However, I tend to see it rather as an exception, as I have never faced any other insults on the part of the locals, and I think that Czechs show an overall loyal attitude to foreigners” Stanislav.*



### 5.4.2 Work Environment

The findings drawn from the interviews with the respondents belonging to the work environment in the Czech Republic allow classifying a range of cultural standards of the Czech culture for analyzing how Russians perceive such standards and how this affects their integration in the Czech work environment and more generally in Czech society. These standards are presented in the table below, and are subsequently analyzed, with quotations from interviews.

**Table 4 Czech-Russian cultural standards in the work environment**

1	Importance of formal rules
2	Power distance
3	Quality of communication
4	Gender equality
5	Focus on planning
6	Importance of deadlines and time management
7	Conflict management

Source: Own research

#### **Importance of formal rules**

According to the answers provided by most respondents, complying with formal rules is more important in the Czech Republic compared to the Russian Federation. Also, managers pay greater attention to the establishment of explicit written rules and regulations to serve as instructions and guidelines for the effective operation of all business units and high performance of all employees.

*“I think that formal rules are important in the Czech Republic. In my company, we have a well-developed system of internal regulations, and virtually every aspect of our professional activities is governed by such rules. This is beneficial to the company, as it allows ensuring a clear and transparent organization of all activities, and also effective distribution of responsibilities between all managers and employees”* Viktoria.

*“Comparing Russia and the Czech Republic in terms of the importance of formal rules, I would say that they are equally important for employees to comply with, but the attention paid to them by managers in the two countries is different. In Russia, managers always want you to comply with the regulations, even though they may be unavailable, outdated, or even non-existent at all. In contrast to this, Czech*

*managers always monitor the rules and regulations to be updated, all staff members to be informed of such regulations, and this contributes to a more easily visible hierarchy of responsibilities within the company” Ivan.*

*“It has been a bit hard for me to adapt to the rules of Czech work after the rules at the Russian university. The rules themselves are rather more democratic and loyal, but you have to comply with them in full, and this might be a problem, especially on the first stage of work in the Czech Republic” Anna.*

### **Power distance**

The respondents who took part in the interview affirm that power distance is significantly smaller in the Czech Republic compared to the Russian Federation. Local managers delegate greater powers and responsibilities to employees, the staff's ideas are value more and are taken into account when developing corporate business strategies. Thus, employees are more loyal to the company as well, as they feel their inclusion and engagement.

*“I am motivated to raise my performance here, as I feel that the managers have confidence in me and provide me with responsibilities. In fact, I am like a small part of the mechanism, but I know that my opinion really matters, and that every contribution I make indeed leads to corporate growth, and thus to my own wealth. This inspires and motivates to work better and to achieve even higher results” Anna.*

*“There are drastic differences in terms of power distance between the Czech Republic and Russia. The style of management in Russia is rather autocratic: the manager holds the entirety of powers and conveys the decisions to be implemented within corporate business policies to the employees. Communication is unilateral, and in most cases, the opinion of employees is not taken into consideration when developing corporate strategies. In the Czech Republic, there is an exchange of opinions. While hierarchy is prominent and strict, the interconnection is great between the managers and the employees, and all work as a single team” Nikolai.*

*“For me, it was rather uncommon and difficult to adapt to this smaller power distance in the Czech Republic. I like it more in Russia: the managers bear the full responsibility, and we as employees simply perform our tasks. This is easier for us, and then accountability becomes easier as well. In the Czech Republic, when a manager asks me to provide your opinion on corporate strategies, I become intimidated, and I am not*

*sure how my opinion will affect my position in the company. I don't like this excessive responsibility” Sergei.*

### **Quality of communication**

Based on the answers provided by most individuals who took part in the interview, Russian employees in the Czech Republic tend to perceive the effectiveness of corporate communication in the Czech Republic as rather high particular to the Russian Federation.

*“Internal communication is very effective here, and this is true speaking of both the communication between employees and the communication between employees and managers. Formal communication is built based on internal regulations and operates effectively, but at the same time informal communication contributes to effective cooperation between stakeholders as well” Aleksandr.*

*“Managers communicate more with employees compared to the Czech Republic. As power distance is smaller, managers are rather more loyal and willing to help. In Russia, the communication between the employees and managers is unilateral, and in the Czech Republic it is bilateral, with information being exchanged between them for the best results of internal corporate communication. As for the communication between employees, I believe that it is effective as well. The companies in the Czech Republic contribute to more effective communication between employees by running teambuilding activities” Dmitriy.*

*“The atmosphere in Czech companies is favorable for effective communication, and I believe that Czech employees have a loyal attitude to foreigners, and therefore the communication between them is effective, just as between Czech employees only” Snezhana.*

### **Gender equality**

In terms of gender equality, most Russian respondents in the work environment in the Czech Republic stated that gender equality is paid significantly greater attention in the Czech Republic compared to the Russian Federation. Most respondents are persuaded that the degree of discrimination of women is smaller in the Czech Republic compared to Russia, both on the part of managers and other employees. Women have better opportunities to achieve career growth and professional development.

*“I am very satisfied with how women are treated in the Czech Republic, and namely in the work environment. In Russia, the attitude to women on the part of men might be rather arrogant quite often. A common stereotype is that women are less effective in their work compared to men, that they should focus on raising the children, while men develop their career. In the Czech Republic, I do not feel any arrogant attitude: women are provided with equal opportunities with men, and have the required opportunities to succeed in their professional development and career growth” Nina.*

*“There have been no cases of insult on the part of managers or other employees based on gender stereotypes during my work career in the Czech Republic. I feel that the atmosphere is rather friendly here. Probably, there are some stereotypes among men, but they aren’t manifested directly, and moreover, managers never show any kind of familiarity regarding women, which favors a mutually beneficial productive atmosphere” Anna.*

*“Czech society is overall more tolerant, and I believe that this covers all aspects of relationships, including in the corporate sector. So, I believe that the attitude toward women as a part of corporate teams is better here compared to Russia, and this favors women’s professional growth” Vadim.*

### **Focus on planning**

Most respondents who took part in the survey noted that Czech companies focus significantly on an effective planning of corporate business development for different time perspectives, including on the short and long term.

*“Czech managers always focus on good planning, as they know that without good planning the company will be unable to perform well. Planning exists on all levels, and it extends from the activities of departments to the activities of individual employees. Thanks to this, companies are able to guarantee effective monitoring and control, and thus to re-evaluate and redefine their corporate business strategies and policies” Dmitriy.*

*“What I like in Czech companies is how their planning is flexible. Planning here doesn’t mean that the company should adhere to it strictly and no changes are possible. On the contrary, planning serves for apportioning resources effectively, controlling costs and ensuring subsequent control. But ongoing operating planning serves to ensure all timely changes and adaptations to the existing situation, so that the company would*

*be react promptly to any changes in the external environment, preserving its effectiveness in the long run” Anna.*

*“In Russia, companies tend to apply greater control to the operations performed by employees, but paradoxically smaller attention to follow-up control for evaluating the overall level of effectiveness of corporate business activities. In the Czech Republic, planning is on a higher level, and corporate managers know how to put to use the findings obtained from it. Planning is the initial stage of any business project and is what allow achieving its best implementation” Sergei.*

### **Importance of deadlines and time management**

The findings of Russian respondents from the work environment allow stating that Russian perceive Czechs as slightly more punctual and paying greater attention to time management compare to the Russian Federation. The respondents believe that Czechs value more preciseness in meeting the stipulated deadlines.

*“I think that meeting the deadlines is quite important in the Czech Republic, even though I would not say that this is very critical. If this is not a contract which cannot be postponed, but rather the performance of an ongoing task, the manager will not be outraged, if you are unable to complete it in time, and there is always room for seeking a compromise. However, Czechs indeed can be believed to value deadlines slightly more than Russians. From my personal experience, Czechs come to work meetings with a delay more rarely than Russians, and generally prefer to arrive either in time or several minutes before the assigned time” Nikolai.*

*“Yes, time management and time organization are important in my practical activities in the Czech Republic. To be able to achieve professional growth and to get positive attitudes of both my managers and colleagues, I have to be able to organize my time effectively, and to manage my tasks in a way to ensure their timely implementation. Timing in the Czech Republic is connected strongly with planning: to fulfil the desired goals, time has to be managed effectively” Inna.*

*“Czechs like deadlines to be met, but then the difference with Russia is not so critical, and I don’t really think that the attitude to time and time management might indeed represent a problem for a Russian citizen’s integration in professional activities in the Czech Republic” Stanislav.*

## **Conflict management**

As the answers of the respondents who participated in the interview testify, Russian employees tend to perceive positively Czechs' skills of conflict management and believe the locals to be quite loyal and willing to achieve a mutual compromise. The atmosphere at Czech companies tends to be evaluated positively by Russian employees, and they value much the positive and favorable conditions in which they are able to work.

*"Conflicts occur rarely. The atmosphere is positive, and conflicts are most often of a minor scale, they are related to some work aspects, and do not go beyond these limits. Managers pay particular attention to the creation of a favorable atmosphere and to prevent conflicts, and this allows mitigating such situation effectively. Czechs themselves are loyal to foreigners as well, and therefore there are most often no reasons for people to enter into conflicts"* Inna.

*"I have never been a target of mockery on the part of my Czech colleagues. On the contrary, the atmosphere is positive and very friendly, and I am delighted to work at the company. This is important for a foreigner, who might often feel himself embarrassed in some situations. We communicate effectively and we share mutual respects, and so there are no reasons for any significant conflicts. Czechs are willing to seek mutual solutions for problems, and therefore I have always felt myself rather comfortable thanks to this"* Aleksandr.

*"In my opinion, Russians are more prone to conflicts compared to Czechs. Czechs are rather softer in their approach, and it isn't hard to find a compromise with a Czech for a Russian employee. All the conflicts I've had were really minor, and they didn't occur more often than conflicts between Czechs themselves, so I can't say there is some distinctly preconceived opinion in relation to Russian employees here"* Vadim.

## **6 Comparison of research results with theory**

The aim of this chapter is to compare the cultural standards revealed for the Czech study environment and work environment with the theories presented in the theoretical part of this research, through a comparative analysis of Czech and Russian cultures and their specificities.

### **6.1 Study Environment**

#### **Bureaucracy and formal rules**

- There is a certain level of bureaucracy in the Czech Republic, but it is smaller compared to the Russian Federation. However, the compliance with all formal rules in the Czech Republic might be difficult for Russians given the specificities of such rules. This can be associated with the fact that under the theory of Trompenaars, the Czech Republic can be considered to be a universalist culture, where generalized practices are valued more than practices applicable to particular situations. In Russia, universalistic values are proclaimed, but in practice, a particularist approach is quite prominent, which is namely due to a high level of corruption and a selective approach to the application of formal rules and constraints to individuals.
- Under the theory of cultural dimensions of Hofstede, this can be explained by the fact that the Czech Republic has a high score on the uncertainty avoidance index. Although the Russian Federation's score is high as well, the limitations described above are valid here as well.
- Rules and regulations in the Czech Republic are result-oriented and provide important benefits for the organization of studies.

#### **Structure of classes and exams**

- The structure of classes and exams in the Czech Republic is different from Russia: the focus is put on practice, creative thinking and case studies.
- Under the theory of Thomas, this can be explained by the fact that one of the social norms in the Czech Republic is the willingness to achieve better results, while in Russia, adherence to older standards is common.

### **Quality of communication**

- The quality of communication is high in the Czech Republic, both between students and between students and tutors. The educational system is designed in a way to enhance the quality of such communication for the benefit of both students and universities.
- Czech culture is diffuse according to the theory of Trompenaars, and therefore communication between students and tutors is mostly limited to formal communication. The public and the private space are segregated.

### **Equality in the assessment of students' achievements**

- The democratic approach of Czech tutors allows achieving a high level of equality in terms of the assessment of students' achievements, regardless of the country in which the student was born. This creates a spirit of free competition between the students.
- In line with the theory of Thomas, it can be stated that corruption has become a norm in Russia, where it exists on all levels, while in the Czech Republic, people have greater control over the public space, and therefore the manifestations of corruption are rarer. This predefines the different level of equal assessment in Czech and Russian universities.

### **Students' commitment to the educational process**

- Czech students show a higher level of commitment to the educational process and tend to demonstrate a responsible and self-disciplined attitude to the organization of their studies.
- Based on the assumptions of the theory of Hofstede, Czech culture is characterized by a significantly higher level of individualism compared to Russian culture. This means that Czechs value more personal achievements and personal growth. Therefore, Czech students are focused on studies as a key precondition for their subsequent effective work career, and tend to behave in a responsible manner in relation to their studies.



- This can also be confirmed by the theory of Trompenaars, where the Czech Republic ranks higher on the individualism vs. communitarianism scale compared to the Russian Federation.
- Negative tendencies in the Russian education sector affect the attitude of Russian students as well. Russian students coming to the Czech Republic might find it hard to adapt to the local specificities of studies.

### **Punctuality and time management**

- Czechs tend to pay considerable attention to punctuality in meeting the deadlines. At the same time, they also have flexibility, particularly speaking of less important tasks or goals. Therefore, time management is important, but not critical.
- Differences between the attitude toward punctuality and time management are rather minor between the Czech Republic and the Russian Federation. This can be explained by the fact that both cultures are rather sequential under the theory of Trompenaars, hence they both value time management.

### **Conflict management**

- Czechs are prone to resolve conflicts effectively. Particular attention is paid to the prevention of conflicts, but also to the mitigation of their consequences. Czechs tend to show a positive attitude toward foreigners, and their loyalty makes it easier to find a mutual compromise.
- The proneness to conflict management and positive conflict resolution among Czechs can be associated with the overall peculiarities of the Czech culture and with the civilized manner in which they seek resolving any difficult situations.

## **6.2 Work Environment**

### **Importance of formal rules**

- Formal rules play quite an important role in the organization of corporate business processes in the Czech Republic. Czech companies prefer to provide rules in written form and explicitly stated. This allows transparency in the

organization of hierarchic ties and communication between managers and employees, and makes it easier for employees to become integrated in the work process.

- Regulations in the Czech Republic are not a pure formality, but indeed contribute to an effective organization of corporate business processes, while in Russia they might exist for formal reasons only.
- The importance of formal rules in Czech corporate culture can be explained by the fact that Czechs seek avoiding uncertainty, according to the theory of Hofstede.

### **Power distance**

- Power distance in the Czech Republic is significantly smaller compared to the Russian Federation. Czech managers tend to be more democratic in their style of management. The opinions of employees are taken into account in the course of decision-making, and a prominent focus is put on raising the level of employees' engagement in the process of mutual work.
- Under the theory of Hofstede, this can be associated with the fact that the Czech Republic ranks significantly lower on the power distance index compared to the Russian Federation.
- Under the theory of Thomas, it can be stated that this democratic approach is a part of Czech social norms, and therefore this is quite understandable and logical.

### **Quality of communication**

- The quality of communication between all stakeholders in Czech companies is high. Both formal and informal communication exists, and effective information exchange between managers and employees is promoted for the best business results. Managers show a loyal attitude toward their employees, and Czech employees accept well foreigners.
- Based on the theory of Thomas, this can be explained once again by the fact that democratic approaches and principles are inherent of Czech culture, and Czechs adhere to them in their everyday life.

### **Gender equality**

- The situation with gender equality is considerably better in the Czech Republic compared to the Russian Federation. The general promotion of the principles of democracy in Czech society contributes to effective maintenance of women's rights in work. Russian respondents state that the level of discrimination of women is lower in the Czech Republic compared to Russia, and this is true speaking of both local employees and foreign employees coming to the country.

### **Focus on planning**

- Planning is paid greater attention in the Czech Republic compared to the Russian Federation, namely in terms of the practical application of such planning for subsequent monitoring and control and for improving the quality of corporate business performance.
- The focus on planning can be explained by the focus on avoiding uncertainty under the theory of Hofstede.
- Czech companies use both long-term and short-term planning, and this approach is used for both business units and individual employees. At the same time, plans are flexible, and managers can adapt them effectively to the existing situation for improving the outcomes of corporate business performance.

### **Importance of deadlines and time management**

- Deadlines are valued in the Czech Republic, particularly for important contracts or work tasks. For less important ones, deadlines can sometimes be postponed or shifted. However, in general, Czech managers and employees like it more when the stipulated deadlines are complied with.
- In overall terms, the importance of deadlines in the work environment in the Czech Republic and Russia can be considered as rather similar. There are no significant obstacles affecting Russian employees' adaptation to the Czech work environment in terms of time management.
- Using the theory of Trompenaars, this can be explained by the fact that the Czech culture is sequential, and thus deadlines and time management are indeed important.

### **Conflict management**

- The occurrence of conflicts is rather rare in the work environment in the Czech Republic. This is achieved thanks to effective corporate teambuilding and the attention that Czech managers pay to the implementation of conflict management and related activities. At the same time, the positive attitude of Czech employees to foreigners ease the integration of Russian employees in the Czech work environment.
- Under the theory of Thomas, a tolerant attitude toward foreigners can be considered as a norm for Czech society, and this is manifested in the work environment.

## **7 Recommendations for Russian people who are going to study and work in the Czech Republic**

### **7.1 Study Environment**

Russians who come to study in the Czech Republic might face a number of considerable difficulties in terms of their adaptation to the local environment. Therefore, some recommendations can be provided in order to make this process easier and shorter.

#### **Pay attention to the formal rules from the beginning**

The rules and regulations in Czech differ from the ones applicable in Russia. The rules are practical, i.e. they indeed are implemented, and not just purely formal. It is important to meet the criteria for getting higher grades. It is also important to meet the internal regulations for integrating in the process of studies and in social life at the university.

#### **Dedicate yourself to studies**

In the study environment in the Czech Republic, it is important to become immersed in studies. Studies are not just for getting a certificate, but for getting knowledge, and they focus on the practical side of issues, which requires great attention during the lectures and participation in the course of practical seminars and workshops.

#### **Be polite and engage in communication**

Czechs are generally loyal to foreigners and demonstrate their positive attitude, so it is worth showing the same attitude to them. Engagement in communication with the tutors and the local students should ease the process of studies.

#### **Meet the deadlines**

It is better to meet the deadlines set by the university, as this will show the student's dedication to studies, and will contribute to his or her positive image in the eyes of the teaching staff and other students.

## **7.2 Work Environment**

Just as in the study environment, Russian people who come to work in the Czech Republic might face a number of barriers or issues to be overcome in order to complete their effective integration in the work team and to achieve a high level of performance.

### **Comply with regulations**

The regulations in the work environment of Czech companies are not specifically hard, but one should be fully aware of them and of how to comply with them before proceeding to work. Therefore, it is worth familiarizing oneself with all formal requirements in order to meet them subsequently.

### **Engage in communication and be polite**

Communication is a key prerequisite for effective performance. Czech managers and employees share a positive attitude toward foreigners, and engagement in communication should ease the process of integration in work and also favor higher performance in the long run.

### **Work hard**

Just as in the study environment, in the work environment employees are expected to contribute to corporate growth by their own high performance. People who do not engage in the process of work will have weaker chances to be accepted favorably by the local managers and other employees.

### **Share your ideas**

In the Czech work environment, employees are encouraged to leave their feedback and to share their ideas for the benefit of the company. This shows employees' engagement in the work process and their commitment to the company's business growth.

### **Meet the deadlines**

Meeting the deadlines is important for showing oneself as committed to corporate business growth. When an employee meets the deadlines set, he shows the value of his work and its importance to him.

## Conclusion

The main **aim** of this thesis was to identify and describe in detail the Czech cultural standards from the Russian perspective in the study and work environment.

The **research questions** analyzed in the thesis were the following:

- RQ 1. How do the Russian and Czech cultural standards differ in the work and study environments?
- RQ 2. Which aspects of the work environment in the Czech Republic do Russians perceive to differ most from their home country?
- RQ 3. Which aspects of the study environment in the Czech Republic do Russians perceive to differ most from their home country?

The findings of the thesis allow stating that cultural mobility intensifies the processes of cultural exchange, which leads to greater numbers of foreigners pursuing their studies or work career in other countries. They found themselves in a foreign environment, and thus have to adapt to the local requirements in order to become integrated successfully in the local community.

Answering RQ1, it can be stated that the analysis run within the framework of the practical part of this research testifies that there are considerable differences between the Czech and Russian standards in the study environment and the work environment, and thus Russians coming to study or work in the Czech Republic have to adapt to the local community' requirements for achieving success in each particular field.

In the study environment, the main difference consists in the fact that Czechs pay greater attention to the organization of studies. The main focus is put on practical studies and on students' ability to apply their knowledge in practice in their subsequent work career. Czech students perform their duties more diligently, and tutors are open to communication and willing to contribute to their students' progress. The level of corruption is significantly lower in the Czech Republic compared to Russia, which favors as well the quality of the knowledge obtained by students.

In the work environment, the main difference consists in the smaller power distance in the Czech Republic. Managers are more democratic and more loyal to their subordinates. Communication is bilateral, and not unilateral. The opinion of employees

is taken into account in corporate decision-making. Regulations play a more important role compared to the Russian Federation, and meeting the deadlines can be considered as slightly more important compared to Russia as well.

Answering RQ2, it can be stated that Russians who work in the Czech Republic might face issues with the greater powers distributed to the employees on the part of managers and the need to demonstrate own creative spirit. In Russia, managers are more autocratic, and employees feel more comfortably when they are given strict and precise orders. Another issue might be the need to meet the requirements imposed by internal regulations and to pay greater attention to punctuality. These issues constitute the aspects which Russians perceive differently in the Czech Republic compared to their home country.

Answering RQ3, it can be said that Russians coming to study in the Czech Republic find the greatest difference in the practical orientation of Czech studies, and the fact that Czech students are more willing to show better results without any control or constraint, in contrast to Russians, who tend to perceive education as a mandatory step in their life, but not as a deliberate desire to choose an own career path. Also, they perceive differently the organization of communication, which is more open and intense between tutors and students in the Czech Republic.

These differences might impose difficulties on Russian people coming to the Czech Republic for their studies or work. In order to mitigate the effects of such differences, Russian people have to adapt to the local conditions. Namely, in the study environment, it is recommended to pay greater attention to formal rules, to stay more focused on studies and personal progress, to engage in communication and to always stay polite with the tutors and with other students. In the work environment, it is recommended to comply with all internal corporate rules and regulations, to work hard and to show commitment to common corporate goals, to share own ideas and feedback, to meet the deadlines, and to get involved in mutual communication.

By fulfilling the recommendations provided above, it should be easier for Russian people to complete successfully their process of integration in the study environment or the work environment in the Czech Republic.

Based on these findings, it can be stated that the aim of the research has been fulfilled.



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## **Annex A Questions of the Interview**

### **Interview with respondents**

#### ***General questions***

1. What is your name?
2. What is your age?
3. For how long have you been living in the Czech Republic?

#### ***Respondents with experience in the study environment***

4. For how long have you been studying in the Czech Republic?
5. How do you evaluate your experience of studies with Czech people?
6. What are the main differences in the process of studies in the Czech Republic and Russia (requirements, preparation, relationships with tutors and between students, formality in expressions, importance of deadlines, planning and flexibility, etc.)?
7. What situations or behavior surprised you in the course of studies (either positively or negatively)?
8. Why did these situations occur? How did they affect you and how did you feel? What happened next?
9. What is a common behavior of Czech people in conflicts in the study environment?
10. How is it possible to solve such conflict situations?

#### ***Respondents with experience in the work environment***

11. For how long have you been working in the Czech Republic?
12. How do you evaluate your experience of work with Czech people?
13. What are the main differences in the process of work in the Czech Republic and Russia (level of formality, power distance, time management and deadlines, strictness or flexibility of regulations, gender equality, planning, etc.)?
14. What situations or behavior surprised you in the course of work (either positively or negatively)?

15. Why did these situations occur? How did they affect you and how did you feel?  
What happened next?
16. What is a common behavior of Czech people in conflicts in the work environment?
17. How is it possible to solve such conflict situations?