

# **Mexicans in the Czech Republic**

Carolina Torres Hoyos

---

Bachelor Thesis  
2012



**Tomas Bata University in Zlín**  
Faculty of Humanities

---

---

**Tomas Bata University in Zlín**  
Faculty of Humanities  
Department of English and American Studies  
Academic Year: 2011/2012

## **BACHELOR'S THESIS ASSIGNMENT**

(PROJECT, ARTWORK, ARTISTIC PERFORMANCE)

Degree, First Name and Surname: **Carolina TORRES HOYOS**  
Personal Code: **H09533**  
Degree Programme: **B 7310 Philology**  
Degree Course: **English for Business Administration**

Thesis Topic: **Mexicans in the Czech Republic**

Thesis Guidelines:

**Study of specialized literature or historiography.**  
**Collection of research material.**  
**Formulation of hypothesis.**  
**Analysis of the material and testing of the hypothesis.**  
**Discussion of results and conclusion.**

Thesis Extent:

Appendices:

Form of Thesis Elaboration: **printed/electronic**

Bibliography:

**Bazant, Jan., Nina Bazantova, and Frances Starn. 2010. The Czech Reader: History, Culture, Politics. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.**

**Fitzgerald, David. 2009. A nation of Emigrants: How Mexico Manages its Migration. Berkeley: University of California Press.**

**Hopkins, Bryan. 2009. Cultural Differences and Improving Performance: How Values and Beliefs Influence Organizational Performance. Farnham, England; Burlington, VT: Gower.**

**Kasulis, Thomas P. 2002. Intimacy or Integrity: Philosophy and Cultural Difference. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.**

**Merrell, Floyd. 2003. The Mexicans: A Sense of Culture. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press.**

Thesis Supervisor: **Ing. Michal Pilík, Ph.D.**


Date Assigned: **30 November 2011**

Thesis Due: **4 May 2012**

Zlín, 6 February 2012

  
doc. Ing. Anežka Lengalová, Ph.D.  
*Dean*



  
doc. Ing. Anežka Lengalová, Ph.D.  
*Head of Department*

---

## Bachelor Thesis Author Statement

I hereby acknowledge that:

- Upon final submission of my Thesis, I agree with its publishing in accordance with Act No. 111/1998 Coll., on Higher Education Institutions and on Amendment and Supplement to Some Other Acts, (The Higher Education Act), without regard to the defence result;
- I approve of the release of my Bachelor Thesis in electronic form on the university information system, accessible for reading only;
- To my Bachelor Thesis fully applies Act No. 121/2000 Coll., on Author Proprietary Rights, as well as the Modification and Amendment of Other Acts (Author Proprietary Rights Act), connected to author's proprietary rights and their changes in later versions of legal directives, esp. Section 35 Para 3;
- In accordance with Section 60 Para 1 of the Author Proprietary Rights Act, TBU in Zlín is entitled to enter into a licence agreement about the use of the Thesis to the extent defined in Section 12 Para 4 of the Author Proprietary Rights Act;
- In accordance with Section 60 Para 2 and 3, I can use my Bachelor Thesis, or render the licence to its use, only with the prior expressed written agreement of TBU in Zlín, which is in such case entitled to require from me appropriate financial compensation to cover the cost of creating the Bachelor Thesis (up to the total sum);
- If the software provided by TBU or other entities was used only for study and research (non-commercial) purposes in the development of the Bachelor Thesis, it is not possible to use the Bachelor Thesis commercially.

I herewith declare that:

- The contents of the file handed over are identical with the printed copies;
- I have created this Bachelor Thesis on my own and cited all used sources. In case the results are published, I shall be cited as author.

In Zlín 30.04.2012

date



signature



## ABSTRACT

Culture differences are a reality that people are going to encounter at some point in their lives. There are many factors that influence a culture. Such factors may be similar or different from those characterizing other cultures. Different nationalities have different cultural backgrounds that identify them as being part of a country. Although there may exist different cultures within the same country, there are some predominating aspects that can define most of the individuals from the same country.

Mexicans and Czechs both have different cultural backgrounds which influence the perception on life and the behavior of their people. When a Mexican immigrates into the Czech Republic, he/she may confront various difficulties due to these cultural differences. If Mexicans are not willing to cooperate and make adjustments when moving to a new country, they will be more likely to encounter harder difficulties than those who at least will try to be more accommodating.

By analyzing the profile of the Mexican population living in the Czech Republic, one will have a better understanding of the motives they had for immigrating to this country and the factors which influence their process of assimilation and adaptation.

Key words:

Mexicans, Czechs, immigration, history, language, communication, individualist, collectivist, questioner, analysis, adaptation.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

First of all, I would like to thank all the Mexicans who participated in the questioner and interviews. Without their help, this project would not have been possible. Secondly, my appreciation to my boyfriend Pierre, who was very supportive and helpful with technical difficulties I had in managing the program excel.

Finally and most importantly, I would like to thank my dad, whom since the beginning of my thesis encouraged me and helped me by acquiring books and providing me with Mexican contacts registered at the Mexican Embassy and made time out of his busy schedule to proof read my paper. Thank you.

# CONTENTS

Introduction.....	10
<b>I THEORY.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>1 IMMIGRATION.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>2 HISTORY.....</b>	<b>15</b>
2.1 Czech History.....	15
2.2 Mexican History.....	16
<b>3 LANGUAGE.....</b>	<b>18</b>
3.1 Learning a new language.....	19
3.2 Verbal communication.....	20
3.3 Non-verbal Communication.....	21
<b>4 INTIMACY.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>5 COLLECTIVIST VS INDIVIDUALIST.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>6 MEXICAN COMMUNITIES IN PRAGUE.....</b>	<b>31</b>
6.1 Club Mexico CZ.....	31
6.2 Mexicanas CZ.....	32
6.3 Adelitas Restaurant.....	32
<b>II ANALYSIS.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>7 INTRODUCTION TO ANALYSIS.....</b>	<b>35</b>
7.1 Goals.....	35
7.2 Methodology.....	36
7.3 Respondents.....	36
7.4 Hypothesis.....	37
<b>8. QUESTIONNER.....</b>	<b>38</b>
8.1 How many years have you lived in the Czech Republic? ; How long do you plan to stay in the Czech Republic? ; Has the length of your stay in the Czech Republic been constant or accumulated.....	38
8.2 What was the reason for you to come to the Czech Republic? ; What are the things you most like about the Czech Republic? And What are the things you dislike about living in the Czech Republic?.....	42
8.3 Do you speak Czech? Do you study or have you ever studied Czech?.....	45



8.4	What are the main nationalities of most of your main friends? From the previous groups, please name your predominant groups of friends.....	47
8.5	Do you know who Krtek is? Have you ever gone mushroom-hunting with Czech friends?.....	49
8.6	Have you ever felt belittled because of your condition of foreigner here? What do you think the motive of this is?.....	51
8.7	Gender, Age, Where in the Czech Republic do you live? Highest level of Education.....	53
8.8	Marital Status. Couple's nationality.....	57
8.9	Occupation. Sphere of activity. Monthly income (after taxes).....	59
<b>9.</b>	<b>INTERVIEWS.....</b>	<b>62</b>
9.1	Before moving to the Czech Republic, did you know anything about it? Why did you decide to live in the Czech Republic? Do you believe you made a good decision by moving to the Czech Republic? Why?.....	62
9.2	What differences do you observe between Mexico and the Czech Republic? What similarities do you observe between Mexico and the Czech Republic? What advantages does the Czech Republic have over Mexico and vice versa, what advantages does Mexico have over the Czech Republic?.....	63
9.3	What privilege and benefits do you obtain by living in the Czech Republic? What difficulties have you confronted by living in the Czech Republic?.....	64
9.4	Have you returned to Mexico since your first arrival in the Czech Republic? How many times and for what reasons?.....	65
9.5	What is your relationship with the Czech community?.....	66
9.6	What recommendation would you give to someone who is planning to move to the Czech Republic?.....	66
	Conclusion.....	67
	Bibliography.....	68
	List of figures.....	70
	Appendices.....	71

## INTRODUCTION

It is not uncommon for people to pose certain questions about what it is that makes them who they are. Questions like, “who am I, why do I think and act the way I do,” are doubts that many different people from all walks of life have tried to understand. While there may be many ways of approaching such questions, one possible answer could be summed up in a single word: culture. Culture can be defined as knowledge, morals, beliefs, customs and any other habits or capabilities acquired by an individual as a member of society.<sup>1</sup> These features as well as others, influence the significance and meaning of our identities.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, culture may also answer another question that individuals tend to ask themselves when traveling to another country: “why is it sometimes difficult to adapt to a country I do not come from?”

The world is currently in the middle of what is perhaps the most extensive wave of cultural mixing in recorded history.<sup>3</sup> Each country has its own cultural background. Even though some cultures may have similar features, such as language, it is important to note that they are not exactly the same. There will always be factors that differentiate one culture from another.

The approach an individual takes when conveying a message to another individual may differ according to the country each person is from.<sup>4</sup> As a result, these differences could lead to confusion and uncertainty among both members participating in the conversation.<sup>5</sup> When first encountering someone from another culture, it is possible to experience emotional vulnerability. It is said that this vulnerability could also occur with members of the same society, but it is felt in a larger amount with a person from a distinct culture.<sup>6</sup>

When people move to a country different from their own, they will sometimes take the opportunity to read some basic information about the country they have chosen to live in, thus, creating expectations. After arriving at their destination they will decide for

---

<sup>1</sup> Edward Burnett Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art, and Custom*. Cambridge University Press: 2010, p. 1

<sup>2</sup> Stella Ting-Toomey, *Communication across Cultures*. New York, London: The Guilford Press 1999, p. 12

<sup>3</sup> Myron W. Lustig and Jolene Koester, *Intercultural Competence: Interpersonal Communication across Cultures*. Boston: Pearson Education Inc., 2006, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Ting-Toomey, Stella. *op cit.*, p. 145

<sup>5</sup> David G. Myers, *Psychology*. New York, NY: Worth Publisher 2010, p. 154.

<sup>6</sup> Ting-Toomey, *op cit.*, p. 145

themselves if the country fulfilled those expectations. Furthermore, we can assume that a Mexican would feel more vulnerable in the initial encounter with a Czech. Although within the same country we can find cultural differences, it is not the same as the cultural differences people can find in other countries.

When a Mexican meets a fellow citizen for the first time, they will often feel less vulnerable. This is due to the fact that when living in the same country, people are constantly exposed to people with the same nationality. They already know what to expect.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, when encountering a Czech, a Mexican might have some background knowledge on Czech culture from a secondary source, but they do not have the same practical experience as they would with a person from their own country.

Not only can expectations and vulnerability influence the opinion of a particular individual, but cultural differences and resistance to change could also make assimilating and adapting to the Czech Republic and its people more difficult. When going to a place a person has never been to, they must gain cultural awareness about its people, in order to have an easier adapting.

In the following chapters you will become familiar with the different factors that complicate the interaction between Mexicans and Czechs, resulting in a longer process for assimilation and adaptation.

---

<sup>7</sup> Tylor, *op cit.*, p. 9.

## **I. THEORY**

## 1 IMMIGRATION

Immigration is the process of people moving to a country that is not their own. The act of immigration can be seen as a tool for nation-building however, they introduce various languages, religions and ethnic identities which can also complicate such nation-building.<sup>8</sup>

The Czech Republic, until the late twentieth century, was a country of emigration. In the era of communism, immigration would have mainly taken place within the framework of intergovernmental improvement. It was not before the mid-1990s that the country began to receive a greater number of foreign visitors. This occurred when the migration legislation became liberal and when immigration began to be favored by economic relations. The country was progressively becoming a designated area for immigrants to live in.<sup>9</sup> In particular, migrates with a view of long-term or permanent residence from third world countries.<sup>10</sup> According to the “Population and Housing Census 2011” there are 449,450 foreign citizens from 182 different countries living in the Czech Republic.<sup>11</sup>

Mexico, a country of mass emigration especially to the United States of America<sup>12</sup> Mexicans are also included as one of the nationalities of immigrants to living in the Czech Republic. In the Mexican Embassy in Prague there are currently five-hundred fourteen Mexicans, including sixty-four children, registered in the Czech Republic. This registration is optional. This database is updated each time a Mexican immigrant comes to the Embassy and registers as a new temporary or permanent resident. The Mexican Embassy in encourages Mexicans to register any time they come for information for visas or any other reason for their visit.

Children of one or both parents, of Mexican nationality, born in the Czech Republic are considered to be Mexican as well as Czech due to the dual nationality that is allowed by the Mexican government. Mexican nationals that marry a Czech citizen are also considered to have dual citizenship under Mexican law.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> David Fitzgerald, *A nation of Emigrants: How Mexico Manages its Migration*. London, England: University of California Press, 2009, pp. 17-18.

<sup>9</sup> Triandafyllidou, *op cit.*, p. 59

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69

<sup>11</sup> Tab. 1.1 Population by sex, type of residence, residence at place of birth and foreign citizens by municipality size groups. Available at <http://www.czso.cz/sldb2011/eng/redakce.nsf/i/population>

<sup>12</sup> Fitzgerald, *op cit.*, p. 33

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

Immigrants can come to the Czech Republic as temporary (short-term) or permanent (long-term) residents. Some of the reasons for emigration include: studies; job opportunities due to unemployment or poverty in their native country; job transfers; sentimental partners; etc.<sup>14</sup>

In order to enter the Czech Republic Mexicans must have all the correct documents and information necessary in order to prove the importance of their stay. For example, if a Mexican is coming to the Czech Republic as a student they must collect all the documents from their previous school in Mexico and have them apostilled, which can cost a large amount of money. Then they would need to give these documents to the Czech school they would be attending. After their papers are looked over and they have finally been accepted they need to give evidence to the Embassy of their acceptance. At the end of each school year they need to apply to renew their visa for the next school semester. They should apply for the visa with time or they may have serious consequences like waiting for three months until being able to enter the country again.

But what is the opinion of Czechs towards foreigners in their country? Not all Czechs but some of them, think of Mexicans and foreigners in general as guests in their country; with the preference of temporary migration.<sup>15</sup> “The Czech population is not explicitly xenophobic, but the incorporation of migrants into public space is blocked by the glass wall of social distance.”<sup>16</sup> In each country there can be found a distinction between natives and immigrants. When a Mexican immigrant enters the Czech Republic they are subject to the law of the country. However, their presence does not consider them to be members.<sup>17</sup> Only with time may a Mexican become a resident of the country. Keeping in mind that they still may not be considered part of the Czech community by the Czech people. History

---

<sup>14</sup> Andrew Geddes, *The Politics of Migration and Immigration in Europe*. London; Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE Publications, 2003, p. 8

<sup>15</sup> Triandafyllidou, *op cit.*, p. 59

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>17</sup> Fitzgerald, *op cit.*, p. 16.

## 2 HISTORY

It is said that the history of a country influences its culture. As a result it is important to mention something about each country's past. Looking back to the period of time of our primate ancestors, we can see that since the beginning of human kind, our approach to change and the unknown was to avoid it. In certain circumstances like Mexicans living in the Czech Republic, people are in some way forced to interact with the individual from the host country. Not wanting to cooperate with this encounter may lead to misunderstanding and confrontation.<sup>18</sup>

An individual may study a number of history books from a country and still not have the skills necessary to communicate with a person from that specific country. That individual may have created knowledge of the country, but that does not necessarily mean that it could lead to competence. Understanding and knowing about a specific country as well as your own is more likely to generate competence.<sup>19</sup> Countries differ in historical backgrounds which lead to having different forms of reacting to situations and people. Contact among members of distinct cultures may reinforce negative attitudes or change neutral feelings into negative ones.<sup>20</sup>

### 2.1 Czech History

Taking this into consideration, Mexicans who are traveling to the Czech Republic should be aware about the ongoing ruling that took place in the country's recent past. As well as, the communist era that lasted since 1948 to 1968.<sup>21</sup> Czech citizens had to be very careful when choosing who to speak with and what type of language they used. If not they could have serious consequences.

Therefore after living these moments in time, since 1993 when gaining their independence, Czechs started feeling a sense of freedom. Since that period of time, they did not have to take so many precautions and worry about their actions. Indeed this change

---

<sup>18</sup> Milton Bennet, *Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication: Selected Reading*. Yarmouth, Me: Intercultural Press, 1998, p. 2

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3

<sup>20</sup> Lustig and Koester, *op cit.*, p. 157

<sup>21</sup> Jan Bažant, Nina Bažantová, and Frances Starn, *The Czech Reader: History Culture, Politics*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010, p. 335

did not happen overnight. Sometimes change can be difficult to go through, especially when it involves something a person has known for 20 years.<sup>22</sup>

To some Czechs not all, the thought of foreigners could remind them of the previous powers that once took over their country. Even though they are now free and independent people, they may still have feelings of resentment. In particular, older generations. This is because of the close connection they experienced in the past.

Life experiences affect one's perception. Consequently this may also affect how individuals interpret messages they receive while communicating with others.<sup>23</sup> These experiences have become part of each individual's cultural collective knowledge. The knowledge they gain constitutes to their history. Events people encounter throughout their lives are recounted across generations.<sup>24</sup> Culture is passed down from one generation to the next. It is done through communication. While this is taking place, people should take into consideration that there could be some small modifications.<sup>25</sup> Consequently, younger generations will not have exactly the same view on life as elder people.

## 2.2 Mexican History

On the other hand, Mexico gained its independence in the year 1810.<sup>26</sup> Cultural modifications have been made regarding the feelings towards the Spanish conquest before its independence. The result of these modifications could have made the feelings of present and younger generations minor towards these certain individuals. Many young Mexicans dream of traveling all over Europe and some of them accomplish it.

In addition, since 1963 Mexicans have been living in a diverse society. There were people who were not able to assimilate as well as people who had no alternative but to adapt to the culture imposed by the Spanish in that period of the Spanish conquest and dominance. In general Mexico has often resisted change. Although change may still occurs in smaller portions regardless of the unwillingness Mexicans might have to accept change.<sup>27</sup> As a result it is said that Mexicans have an endless quest for identity.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Billie J. Wahstrom, *Perspectives on Human Communication*. Brown Publishers, 1992, p. 63

<sup>24</sup> Lustig and Koester, *op cit.*, p. 34

<sup>25</sup> Ting-Toomey, Stella *op cit.*, p. 14

<sup>26</sup> Floyd Merrell, *The Mexicans: A Sense of Culture*. United States of America: Westview Press, 2003, p. 35.

<sup>27</sup> Merrell, *op cit.*, pp. 29-30

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*



Apparently Mexicans are accustomed to socializing with different types of people within the same Mexican community. They live in a big country where there exist diverse ethnic and social backgrounds that in one moment in their lives, will eventually encounter. Within Mexico people can find discrimination. When going to the night club, if a person is not well dressed, good looking and with money it will be difficult for them to enter the night club. Besides that there exist distinct night clubs or bars that are for different social classes and personality backgrounds. People will almost never see a Mexican from a private school being friends with a Mexican from a public school.

People can say that Mexicans in one way or another do not like to mix. They have their group of friends from the same background and they are happy with them. They do not need anything more. Mexicans may not be fond of certain Mexicans that are different from them and when encountered with those certain people they are most likely to avoid or ignore them.

Although in Mexico there is a lot of diversity it does not necessarily mean that everyone interacts with each other. So when a Mexican arrives in the Czech Republic they may unconsciously be evaluating Czechs. By evaluating them they realize if they are the type of people they are willing to socialize with or not.

### 3 LANGUAGE

Language is another feature history brings to a culture. When the Spanish arrived in Mexico not only did they cultivate religion but they also introduced the Spanish language. The power of language allows humans to communicate on a daily bases with others around them.<sup>29</sup> It functions as a system of illustration of one's perception and the way a person thinks. If a Mexican does not know the Czech language the communication between the two may not be as effective as if they knew the same language. Nevertheless individuals that speak the same language may have specific dialects and cultural practices that can baffle both individuals. It can be seen as two people who speak different languages.<sup>30</sup>

It is only when people realize that even when speaking the same language it can cause difficulties to connect individuals do we comprehend the importance of language. Knowing a common language such as English or Spanish does not necessarily mean that people will understand each other to the fullest.

Now imagine if these individuals where to speak two distinct languages. People learn language without conscious awareness. They do not observe how it influences the process in which we think and perceive the world around us. This can affect the integration to the Czech society more difficult.<sup>31</sup>

A man named Benjamin Lee Whorf had a hypothesis that the way a person thinks is influenced by the language they speak. In different languages and cultures, categories are constructed differently. Different life experiences of social and physical reality go with these different constructions. Words do not necessarily determine what we think, but it influences the way people think.<sup>32</sup>

Some languages have more words for emotions and feelings. These words can either have more positives words for emotion or negative ones and viscera more negative emotions than positive ones. Some languages even show the important of knowing different shades of color. For example the color green has many shades of green starting for

---

<sup>29</sup> Myers, *op cit.*, p. 382.

<sup>30</sup> Bennet, *op cit.*, p. 12

<sup>31</sup> Lustig, *op cit.*, p. 175

<sup>32</sup> Myers, *op cit.*, pp. 391-392, and Bennet, *op cit.*, p. 15

light green to dark green. Now for each lighter or darker shade of green there is a specific word to refer to that certain color.<sup>33</sup>

Because of the importance given to certain category of words in a language it may affect the manner in which a person receives information and thinks. It is said that language shapes how we think of ourselves. This criterion in language may be a result in the different thinking process of both Mexicans and Czechs.

If a Mexican learns the Czech language they are expanding their ability to think.<sup>34</sup> This means that unconsciously they may be gaining knowledge of the Czech mentality. I say this because when putting the language to practice and speaking with other Czechs people can little by little notice the words that are being repeated not by the same Czech but by many Czechs. Therefore they could see what themes are of more importance to the Czech people. Not only by putting the Czech language into practice do they learn more but they also have to start thinking in Czech. If they think in Spanish and then translate into Czech there will be some mistakes in translation causing confusion and misunderstandings. Thinking in Czech will have a better effect in the process of mastering the language.

### 3.1 Learning a second language

Learning new languages helps individuals communicate with other people around the world. There are just so many people that speak the same language that eventually people will encounter other individuals that do not speak the same language as they do. There exist some difficulties when learning a second language. The older you get the harder it is to learn the language and speak it with the most minimal accent possible. The time for learning a language is in your childhood, when you are young of age<sup>35</sup>.

Having an accent can influence the native's willingness to converse with foreigners, in their language or even at all. If the native speaks English or Spanish, they will most probably speak with a Mexican in either language besides Czech in order to enable a better communication between each other. Most of the Czech people I know, know that learning Czech can be very difficult. Due to the pronunciation and the many

---

<sup>33</sup> John Carroll, *Language, Thought and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 2012, p. 29

<sup>34</sup> Myers, *op cit.*, p. 393

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 387-388

inclinations they have. So they may think that it would be easier to understand each other by speaking another language that both individuals know how to speak well.

From my personal experience a monolingual Czech may have two reactions when hearing a person speaking Czech with an accent or speaking English. The first reaction is friendly, especially when you are trying to speak Czech. You could say that they feel glad that you are making the effort to communicate in the host country's language. Even though it may take a longer time to channel your message, the Czech person would wait until you finish speaking and try to understand you, to help you improve your Czech.

On the other hand, Czechs may not act so friendly toward foreigners who speak poorly Czech and in particular those who speak English. Their initial reaction is to avoid them. They hear a foreigner speak and they tell them that they do not understand, turning away focusing their attention on something else. This is seen mostly in stores. For a Mexican who encounters a situation like this for the first time might feel in some way offended. In Mexico the customer service is very good and even if an employee is upset or angry they will always have a smile on their face. This may be why a Mexican might feel belittled, because of the different attention and importance Mexicans have towards services. But after living in the Czech Republic for some period of time they may realize that the employees' behavior is not like that with them but with everyone.

Learning a difficult language and having to practice it often to improve may cause problems in the Mexicans' motivation to continue learning, especially if they are temporary guests. They may be thinking to themselves why they should learn Czech if in a couple of years they are no longer going to use it. Lack of motivation and interest in speaking Czech and interactions with the Czech people can influence the feeling Mexicans have towards the country.

### **3.2 Verbal Communication**

Humans communicate for many different psychological reasons, such as the need to know who they are, what their role is in society is, to be informed and for entertainment.<sup>36</sup> In order to have a good communication there needs to be two basic factors; a sender and a receiver. Without these two aspects there is no form of communication. Even when an individual is alone talking to themselves, there exists a two way communication. They are

considered to be both the sender and the receiver. If an individual is not willing to receive the message the communication in some way can be seen as having a bad connection.<sup>37</sup>

Communication is very important tool individuals use in order to be connected to the world. “Culture affects communication, and communication affects culture.” When a Mexican arrives in the Czech Republic it is most likely they will have a lack of communication with the people from the host country. This is due to language and misunderstanding that may occur because of the different perceptions people have. Different culture means different ways of communicating.<sup>38</sup>

### 3.3 Nonverbal Communication and body language

While an individual is verbally communicating with a stranger, they are also communicating nonverbally.<sup>39</sup> Communication between people must be portrayed by the symbolic behaviors of other individuals and be given a meaning respectively. This is done in order to develop a significant description of that individual’s behaviors.<sup>40</sup>

When people meet a person for the first time, they observe the others appearance, how they dress, their tone of voice, their facial expressions, etc.<sup>41</sup> Body language is learned unconsciously from the moment humans are born. Throughout the years they develop skills that allow them to interpret other’s motives and intentions. Nonverbal communication including tone of voice, postures and gestures influence ninety percent of the first impression people get when meeting a person for the first time.<sup>42</sup>

To perceive a person’s way of acting is to learn their way of life. Interpersonal relationships at the same time can be misunderstood. When two people learn how to read each other’s non-verbal signal properly and accept what they perceive, then good contact is made. Then the stage of communication begins.<sup>43</sup>

The initial encounter a Mexican has with a Czech is very important to define how Mexicans view Czechs though a long period of time. The body language each country has

---

<sup>36</sup> Wahstrom, *op cit.*. P. 75.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14

<sup>38</sup> Ting-Toomey, Stella *op cit.*, p.14

<sup>39</sup> Lustig, *op cit.*, p. 88.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12

<sup>41</sup> Wahstrom, *op cit.*, p. 88.

<sup>42</sup> Geoff Ribbens and Richard Thompson, *Understanding Body Language*. Hauppauge, NY: Barron’s., 2001, vii-2.

in general, differ in various ways. This can make a strong impact on how Mexicans think about Czechs. They are accustomed to seeing distinct behaviors and mannerisms that when seeing something different they can misinterpret the other individual.

Latin American countries such as Mexico are considered to display a high frequency of eye contact. Whereas, European countries such as Czech Republic display a lower frequency. When a Mexican gazes into a Czech person's eyes it can be seen as impolite, threatening or even insulting. When looking at someone they know or do not know they smile in order to show a friendly greeting. Czechs on the other hand, generally have serious expressions on their face and try to avoid eye contact with strangers. This may cause Mexicans to have negative feeling towards Czechs.<sup>44</sup>

Mexicans sometimes do not realize that everyone does not act the same as they do. They are expecting Czechs to return the smile when they smile at them. Czechs may feel uncomfortable and awkward when this situation happens. Eye contact is an important part of body language that enable to gain or loss trust. It controls the continuity of the communication. Depending on each country if there exist a lack or great amount of eye contact can give a wrong impression.<sup>45</sup> Body language a Mexican uses such as touches and eye contact merely signify wanting to be friendly.<sup>46</sup>

Mexicans are very warm hearted and expressive, individuals can see this through their body language. When they speak to somebody their proximity is very close, they come from high-touch cultures. They maintain close distance because they feel that the relation is much deeper and sincere. When a Mexican enters a Czech's personal space, the Czech feels invaded and uncomfortable. They will move away from the other person until the correct distance between the two has been made. This situation makes the Mexican look at Czechs as unfriendly and cold.<sup>47</sup>

Although a Mexican comes from a high contact culture, it is also important to mention that touching is not the same with sentimental partners. Mexicans like to have their privacy when it comes to love. Being too close and showing too much affection in

---

<sup>43</sup> Thomas Kasulis, *Intimacy or Integrity: Philosophy and Cultural Differences*. United States of America: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002, p. 45

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Ribbens and Thompson, *op cit.*, p. 8.

<sup>46</sup> Roger E. Axetell, *Gestures: The Do's and Taboos of Body Language around the World*. Revised and expanded edition. Canada: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1998, p. 219.

<sup>47</sup> Wahstrom, *op cit.*, p. 94

public is regarded as offensive and disrespectful. On the other hand, Czechs come from a non-contact culture and their relation with their partner can be seen as very intimate, through the eyes of a Mexican. Czechs also coming from an individualist society, demand more romance and personal fulfillment.<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> Myers, *op cit.*, p. 157

## 4 INTIMACY

What is Intimacy? Intimacy is the act of expression. It is sharing personal, innermost qualities. The level of intimacy of each particular individual depends on certain personality traits they possess. They could be either timid or highly expressive. “Interpersonal intimacy requires opening up one’s feelings, motives and thoughts sharing them with others.”<sup>49</sup>

Although within the same country people can find diverse cultures and distinct personalities, a large amount of individuals tend to have similar levels of intimacy. Therefore individuals will be generalized, regarding the similarities which characterize them as part of a nation. Mexico and Czech Republic both have different views on how intimacy is perceived.

Trust is one of the main factors in the decision of opening up to others and sharing feelings. If someone is sad or angry or maybe even really happy and in love and they do not have a very strong relationship (or friendship) with another person, they might not always be willing to express their emotions. This can be seen with many Czech citizens. As it was previously stated, the Czech Republic was once a communist regime and trust was a very touchy issue at that time.

Czechs are known for being a bit reserved, which might make the intimacy among other people and themselves harder to express. They may have difficulties in trusting people they first encounter. But once they get to know that person better and feel more comfortable around them, then maybe they will be willing to have a more intimate relationship with that person and express their feelings.

On the other hand, Mexicans are considered to be more open and expressive.<sup>50</sup> People can see this when first meeting them. They can talk to people about their lives as if they had known them for many, many years. When in reality they have been only speaking to each for less than an hour. It is an instant connection. This might come as a shock to some. How can someone have such a natural conversation with a person they have recently met? What if somebody tells everyone what they have just said? Mexican’s are trusting people. It is like the expression, “Innocent until proven guilty”. There is no reason for them not to trust somebody. They are only trying to make a nice conversation between a stranger and themselves. If they do not want everyone to know about specific details in their life they

---

<sup>49</sup> Kasulis, *op cit.* p. 28



are not going to talk about it. But what is the harm of a friendly conversation? They only want to make a new friend. Normally, this is seen mostly among other Mexicans.

It also depends on the type of personality each individual has. If a Mexican is shy, they might not walk up to a person and start a conversation with them. On the other hand, if a Mexican goes to talk to another Mexican who is shy, they will most probably end up talking each other about themselves.

Only by opening ourselves to people and situations and trusting that they will not violate mutual commitments to each other, can people truly become part of each other and have a real relationship. When this happens people feel like they belong.<sup>51</sup>

When people feel most comfortable with themselves and others regarding the level of intimacy, it is called the locus of intimacy. At this special stage, people have a sense of belonging. On the contrary, when someone is outside the locus of intimacy he might feel lost and unwanted. A Mexican living in the Czech Republic and meeting a Czech person for the first time might not have the same connection as he would have with a fellow Mexican. This can make the Mexican go outside his locus of intimacy, making him feel part of an alien environment.<sup>52</sup>

Mexicans usually spend more of their time interacting with other Mexicans than they do with other people. They also spend more time reading Mexican news and watching Mexican television than they do from other countries. This generates a national character that differentiates Mexicans from other cultures.<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> Axetell, *op cit.*, p. 219.

<sup>51</sup> Kasulis, *op cit.*, pp. 44-45

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36

<sup>53</sup> Bennet, *op cit.*, p. 4

## 5 COLLECTIVIST VS INDIVIDUALIST

There are two ways of looking at relations. They can be external or internal. What do these two relations imply? Having an external relation means that the elements in the relation exist independently; they are separate entities. Whereas internal relation is the opposite: relations are interconnected. The internal relation is part of both of the people in the relationship. If we try to separate these two entities, it would transform these elements. They are seen as more than a connection, they are one. To lose this relation would mean to lose a part of one's self.<sup>54</sup>

A man named Geert Hofstede discovered from his studies that countries in North America and Europe (Czech Republic), with some exceptions, are of individualist cultures, whereas countries from Latin American (Mexico) and Asia are collectivists. Geographical location is not the only factor that distinguishes a country being individualist or collectivist; it also depends on socioeconomic status and historical era. Taking that into consideration, some people will find it more difficult to adapt to one particular location than to another. In an intercultural interaction, the greater the differences that exist, the more difficult it will be to establish a mutually satisfying relation<sup>55</sup>.

This does not mean that all the citizens from these particular countries are exactly the same or that they share all of the same characteristics. There exists diversity within cultures. In the most individualist or collectivist country there may be people who manifest the opposite values.<sup>56</sup> Generally speaking, a large number of these individuals can be described as being part of an individualist or collectivist culture. Neither of these two aspects is better than the other. They are concepts used to know how to better understand certain individuals within different societies. An individual might believe that some personality traits he has are based on his person, but in reality, when looking at the bigger picture, people see that a very large group of people from the same nationality have similar mentalities and behaviors. This is due to society.

---

<sup>54</sup> Kasulis, *op cit.*, p. 37

<sup>55</sup> Colleen Ward, Stephen Bochner and Adrian Furnham, *The Psychology of Cultural Shock*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2001, p. 69. And Kim Uichol, *Individualism and Collectivism: A Psychological, Cultural and Ecological Analysis*. NIAS Publications: Copenhagen S, Denmark. 1995.

<sup>56</sup> Myers, *op cit.*, p. 156

Differences are found among people from Mexico and the Czech Republic. However, these differences may also be seen among individuals from the same country. What could one of these differences be? When talking about Mexicans and Czechs, it is important not only to know about their historical and language differences, but also how each society functions and the perception they have on life or other individuals: “Cultures vary in the extent to which they give priority to the nurturing and expression of personal identity or group identity.” Individualist societies are those who give a more priority to personal identity and being independent, whereas collectivists are more interdependent, granting priority to group identity.<sup>57</sup>

Interdependent individuals such as Mexicans put stress on the following features: the need for predetermined and stable friendships, collective identity, particularism, emotional dependence, group solidarity, etc. On the other hand independent individuals, including Czechs, are characterized by the need for specific friends, financial security, universalism, self-reliant, etc.<sup>58</sup> Collectivists see themselves as a member of a group. They depend on each other. It is said that these personality traits or values can be seen in countries where people live in scarcity and threatening conditions. The reason for this is that they depend more on each other for survival.<sup>59</sup>

Imagine a Czech transfer student arriving to a new school in Mexico. He/she does not know anyone. A Mexican, being part of collectivist society, when seeing this student will almost always go and talk to that person. They will introduce the new student to their friends, trying to integrate them into their group. Mexicans like being part of a group and when they see someone alone their reaction is to go help them and make them feel like they belong. Now, imagine this same situation in the Czech Republic. It is most likely that it will not have the same outcome. Because Czechs are individualist, they will not give so much importance to the new Mexican student. They are preoccupied with their own things and they are not concerned if the Mexican student is alone or not. If the Mexican wants to make friends and have a conversation, he/she will have to go and talk to the person.

When this happens a Mexican can feel upset because he may think he does not belong. If no one is talking to me, does that mean they do not like me? Because each

---

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>58</sup> Uichol, *op cit.*, p. 4

<sup>59</sup> Ward *et al.*, *op cit.*

country is either independent or interdependent their views and action will be different. These actions can result in misunderstandings and uncertainties. So it is important for a Mexican to understand that it is not that he is not wanted, but that Czechs approach people differently from the way Mexicans do.

Another example of differences due to being either an individualist or a collectivist society, is the manner in which people view self-expression. In the majority of Mexican schools, there exists a certain dress code. Uniforms are worn out of discipline and they identify students as a member of the school. In universities, uniforms are no longer used. By contrast, with very few exceptions, Czech schools have no uniform, allowing students to express who they are through the clothes they wear.

Collectivist cultures are likely to feel ashamed or guilty when their behavior is judged or thought negatively toward themselves or another member of their group.<sup>60</sup> Being a Mexican myself, I can say that most of us are highly concerned or pay very close attention to what society is saying about us. The majority do not like being talked bad about or to feel unappreciated by other members of the community. We tend to be careful of our behavior when we are in front of people we do not know. The image (the way people perceive us) is not only a reflection on ourselves, but of all the people we are close to, especially our family. My mother has always told my siblings and me that we represent my diplomatic father. If we do not behave appropriately, we are not the ones who are going to be judged and pay for the consequences, but my father the diplomat representing my country.

Collectivist societies do not separate their personal traits from situations or relationships. One of the main sources of satisfaction they get is being successful in maintaining and achieving interpersonal harmony. Being part of group ensures collectivist well-being. They protect themselves by considering everyone's needs and feelings. If the other person is happy, they are happy.<sup>61</sup>

The decision-making will also be influenced on the particular needs of the group. An example of this can be seen in Mexican families. The head of the family, a role usually done by males (father, husband) is the one who usually makes the decisions in the family.

---

<sup>60</sup> Uichol, *op cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>61</sup> Ward *et al.*, *op cit.*, pp. 13-14

He takes into consideration all the needs and feeling of the family, instead of thinking of his individual needs before making a decision. He will most likely sacrifice his needs for the well-being of his family. Likewise, the mother is the one guaranteeing the family unity and harmony.

Being true to your own values and beliefs is another feature of an individualist person. The collectivist's view adheres to traditional values. Values and morals can be a concern of conflict between these two types of people. Individuals may have strong feelings and opinions about each other's' values and can be offended by the actions of other people.<sup>62</sup>

Having learned the various characteristics of a collectivist society and an individualist society, we can understand why the integration of Mexican citizens in the Czech Republic entails certain difficulties. When Mexicans immigrate to the Czech Republic, they can feel alone. They have left family and friends behind and they have to learn how to meet people and become part of another group. They are unconnected from the people who have defined who they are, experiencing a loss of identity.<sup>63</sup>

The different cultural backgrounds will most probably shape each individual's approach and comprehension of the world around them. Coming from two different cultural backgrounds it is most probable that each individual will have certain ways of thinking and seeing the world around them. This can be a very big problem when interacting in a diverse culture because of the fact that when communicating there might be a lack of understanding in the way the other is behaving or perceiving a situation. People who have not traveled will have even more difficulties because they only know what they are used to. When traveling, people broaden their horizons. They see that not everyone is the same as they are. As a result, they will not be expecting a person to act exactly the same as someone from their own country.

When two cultures from these different backgrounds meet, they encounter different values and social attitudes. People notice these differences by their certain ways of communication, methods of expressing emotions and their behavior.<sup>64</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4

<sup>63</sup> Myers, *op cit.*, p. 156

<sup>64</sup> Ward *et al.*, *op cit.*, p. 15

When a Mexican arrives in the Czech Republic these differences may affect the interpersonal communication because of the lack of understanding due not only to language but to cultural background. Coming from two distinct countries may cause an impact on each other's social structure, value systems, institutional arrangements and political processes. This depends on the conditions under which the interaction of these two individuals occurs and this can have a bigger impact on how their communication will be in the future. If their first encounter is bad, then they will have resentment towards the other person, making it more difficult for the Mexican immigrant to adapt.<sup>65</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27

## 6 MEXICAN COMMUNITIES IN PRAGUE

There exist different Mexican communities in Prague, such as Club Mexico CZ, Mexicanas CZ and Las Adelitas. The first two communities are specifically for Mexicans, whereas the last one encourages not only Mexicans to be involved but everyone. These three communities are organized by Mexicans themselves and invite new arrivals to integrate to their society.

When arriving to a new country, people sometimes do not know what to expect. They have no friends and do not know where to go to buy certain thing or have any information about what requirements they need for their stay in Prague. Having a fellow Mexican helping in that situation is ideal.

Knowing someone from a person's own country is very comforting. They have someone to talk to that has already lived the experience of moving to the Czech Republic. Some of those individuals have struggled to assimilate and adapt, while others have had a much easier time doing so. They can help that person understand the Czech society and its people. Maybe not to the fullest, but at least they can say that they are not the only ones having gone through what they are going through.

What I have noticed about these communities is that they focus to a large extent on Mexico; Mexican exhibits, concerts, information on Mexican products, etc. They do not give so much importance to informing the Mexican population in Prague about activities and ways to integrate to the Czech society.

These societies exist in order to make Mexicans feel less lonely. To know that they are not the only Mexicans living in the Czech Republic. It is like a mutual support system.

### 6.1 Club Mexico CZ

Club Mexico Cz is a Mexican organization registered in the Czech Republic, which tries to help other Mexicans in whatever they need may have. Not only do they help other members, but they also share with them important information, such as having to register in advance at the Mexican embassy if they desire to vote in Mexican elections. They inform people about many of the cultural, sport and social activities involving Mexico and both Mexicans and Czechs are welcome to participate.

Some Mexicans only join the community to ask about important information concerning their stay in the Czech Republic, while others are more gregarious and organize friendly gatherings to socialize. This club has a website, a Facebook page and an email address where people can turn to them in search of information and support. While the

website has technical problems and has not been working for a very long time, the Facebook page functions properly, providing information about the particular activities mentioned earlier.

Czech people that speak Spanish, mostly women, join this community in order to get information on getting their partners' Czech visa and so on.

### **6.2 Mexicanas CZ**

Mexicanas CZ is a society quite different from the other two. This community includes only Mexican women, mostly with young children. Of course any woman can join this group. It was created to allow for the interaction among Mexican women that live in Prague, to help each other with problems they might have, or to share information about the Czech Republic.

This is more a kind of social chit-chat community. For the children they sometimes organize activities that allow them to interact with each other, and for the women themselves they organize lunches and gatherings to hold conversations.

Like any other group of women, there exists a lot of gossiping among each other, which causes problems sometimes within the society. Due to this factor, there are a number of Mexican women that try to avoid this society. Instead, they only gather with a few other Mexican women that they might or might not have met through this society. This proves that just because they are from the same country, that does not mean that their relations will be the best.

### **6.3 Las Adelitas**

Living in the Czech Republic, Mexicans often miss having a typical Mexican meal. They can try preparing something in their homes but without the correct ingredients the food would not taste the same. In Prague, Mexicans can find a number of Mexican restaurants. Las Adelitas restaurant is one of the most genuine restaurants of Mexican food a person can find in the Czech Republic.

Why categorize "Las Adelitas," as part of a Mexican community in Prague? A restaurant is a restaurant and nothing more, someone may think. "Las Adelitas" is more than just a simple Mexican restaurant. What makes it part of a community is the staff. Everyone that works there speaks Spanish, and most important, the majority are Mexicans: the owners, the chefs, most of the waiter and the bar tenders, are Mexicans.

The interaction between them does not end after work. The employees at the restaurant as well as the owners are not older than thirty years of age. They go out to parties and have



fun together when they are not working. Just because someone is not working there does not mean that they cannot be part of their community. Although almost all the staff is men, they are very welcoming and friendly to all those whom they meet.

It is like a small Mexican family. Mexicans go there to feel like they are in some way transported back to Mexico. Not only do Mexicans go there to eat, but also many Czechs, Americans and other nationalities who enjoy Mexican food and atmosphere go there to have a drink or a bite to eat.

This restaurant has become one of the most popular Mexican restaurants in Prague. It has become very popular due to Facebook and recommendations from people who have gone there to eat. They have become so popular that the restaurant has been talked about on the Czech television and other media outlets. Las Adelitas staff has participated in cooking shows, interviews and written report coverages.

Not only do they give promotion to their food but also to the Mexican culture. In their website and Facebook sites they advertise Mexican musicians that they have invited to perform in their restaurant, exhibitions in Prague about Mexico, important dates in Mexican history, etc.

## **II. ANALYSIS**

## 7 INTRODUCTION TO THE ANALYSIS

People from all over the world have distinct elements which influence their culture. Those elements can be a very big factor on how individuals perceive situations and other individuals. When a person lives most of his life in his native country, he gets used to the behaviors and mannerisms of the people in his land. When people travel to a different country, they may expect to observe landscapes, architecture, nature and many other things in the country, to be different from their own. In my opinion, not many of people give as much importance to the distinct attitudes and actions from others in their own country.

As a result, they unconsciously compare these differences without understanding the various causes of why people behave in a certain way.. During the individual's stay in the host country, he undergoes either an easy or difficult period in assimilating and adapting. Returning to one's country or having negative thoughts towards the individuals of that particular country will be the result of the person's ability to accept the differences and avoid judging those who live there.

After learning some information about what influences each country's cultural background (history, language, being either collectivist or individualist) causing in turn difficulties in the Mexican integration to the Czech society, as well as into Mexican communities in Prague, we can move on to learning more about the Mexican population in the Czech Republic..

### 7.1 Goals

The purpose of this section is to learn why Mexican people move to the Czech Republic, what they are doing here and what kind of relationship they have with the Czech society. We will get a general view on how the Mexican population lives in this particular country.

We will also observe the opinion of some Mexicans towards Mexico and the Czech Republic. Will they have positive answers or negative ones? Cultural awareness and the way individuals perceive a country--as well as its people--will most likely affect their willingness to continue living in the Czech Republic or the difficulties they may come across do to these opinions. A person may not like the individuals that live in a certain country, but he/she may like all the opportunities and benefits this country has to offer.

## 7.2 Methodology

Quality and quantity research methods were used to gain all the statistics considering the Mexican population. The quantity research method used was a questioner. Questioners are important tools to resort to when wishing to assess average information about a particular foreign community living in the Czech Republic. The quality research method used was interviews. The interviews were given in order to avoid limitations when answering a question and to hear the opinion of the interviewee, assuring them that there is no wrong answer.

The questioner was made in the document application g-mail offers. Then, it was transformed and given a live format. On January 20, 2012, a number of e-mails were sent to the Mexicans registered in the Mexican Embassy in Prague's data base. They were kindly explained the purpose of the questioner, reassuring them that each response was going to be anonymous. They received a link where they could find an online version of the questioner. Whenever a person finished answering the questioner, it was registered on the documents application in my personal g-mail.

## 7.3 Respondents

More than four hundred questioners were sent to Mexicans (from ages eighteen and older) based all over the Czech Republic. Eighty people responded. It is assumed that some of these e-mails did not reach the Mexican population due to email failures, while others did not have time or interest to participate. Some of the Mexicans that received and answered the questioner wrote me emails manifesting me their interest to know the final results.

The first respondent to the questioner was registered on January 23, 2012, whereas the last was on March 5, 2012.

There were also 10 people interviewed, five men and five women. The information about these contacts was given to me by the Mexican Embassy in Prague. The interviews were made to Mexicans living in Prague whom have been living in the Czech Republic for more than four years. These interviews were made either in public locations or in domicile locations.

## **7.4 Hypothesis**

By looking at the results of the questioner, we will discover that some Mexicans may have certain resources which help them in the process of adaptation. Although they may have useful skills, that does not guarantee a positive first impression from the Czechs and neither from the Mexicans. If a Mexican is not willing to understand and interact with Czechs, he/she will have a difficult time processing the way of life of a Czech person. Mexicans may create friendships with a Czech, but that does not mean that all Czechs will see them as their Czech friends do.

## 8 QUESTIONER

The questioner consists of twenty-three questions, including: five demographic questions (identifying characteristics such as age, gender and occupation); two dichotomous questions (with yes or no answers); fifteen multiple choice questions, and one opened ended questions. The questions will be divided into various sections. Some questions are interconnected, which means that by including them into the same section they will be help to fulfill a certain goal. The goal of each section is to gather specific information about the Mexican population in the Czech Republic.

The first section includes questions one through three, which are the following: 1. How many years have you lived in the Czech Republic? ; 2. How long do you plan to stay in the Czech Republic?, and 3. Has the length of your stay in the Czech Republic been constant or accumulated? These three questions relate to one topic which, is time length.

Another section includes the questions: Do you speak Czech?, and Do you study or have you ever studied Czech? This section covers the topic of language. By observing the answers to these two questions, we can determine the average knowledge of the Czech language and the willingness to study it. If these questions have positive results, we can observe whether or not the Mexican population is making an effort to integrate to the Czech society.

### **8.1 How many years have you lived in the Czech Republic?, How long do you plan to stay in the Czech Republic? Has the length of your stay in the Czech Republic been constant or accumulated?**

These three questions were asked in order to have a general view on the Mexican intent to continue living in the Czech Republic, to see how many people after a short or long period of time think that they will continue living in the country and to know whether their stay here has been constant or accumulated. By knowing the answers to these questions we can imagine the stability of the Mexican population in another country.

The average population of Mexicans in the Czech Republic may either have reasons to stay or leave the country. Some may not be sure of what their plans are for the future. They might not have found a reason to stay or leave the country, but may be after some confronted with the decision of what they will want to do. In another section we will observe the motives for the Mexicans' arrival in the Czech Republic, which can by a factor that determines the length of their stay.



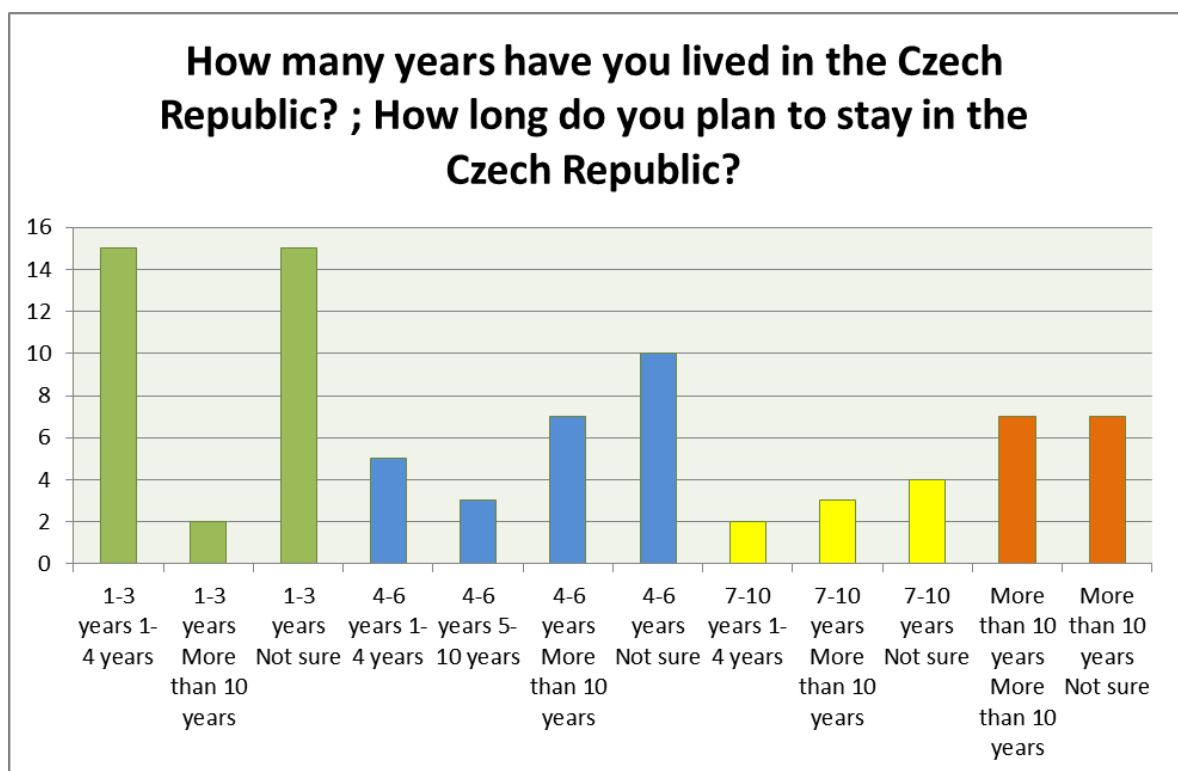
**Figure 1**

In Figure 1 we can see reflected the answer to the first question (How many years have you lived in the Czech Republic?) The majority of the Mexican population has been living in the Czech Republic quite recently. With thirty-one out of eighty of the respondents (44 percent) saying that they have lived in the country less than four years and adding the twenty-six respondents that have been in the country for up to six years, we have that more than three quarters of the total Mexican population are rather recent arrivals, with the other fourth being old-timers. As a conclusion to this question, we can also add that in the past six years the Czech Republic has seen an increase in the inflow of Mexican immigrants.

By putting questions one and two together, we can see whether or not the average Mexican population, after having spent a certain period of time in the Czech Republic, are planning to extend their stay. We will see if they have an identified number of years or if they are uncertain about whether they would like to continue living in the country.

Figure 2. Indicates the period of time each Mexican plans to stay in the country with regards to how many years he/she has already lived here. The first years indicate the length of stay in the country, whether the second block of years refers to how long they plan to continue living in the Czech Republic. Fifteen Mexican who have been living in the country for one to three years plan to continue living in the country for one to four more years. So we can assume that either these individuals have a specific reason for being in the

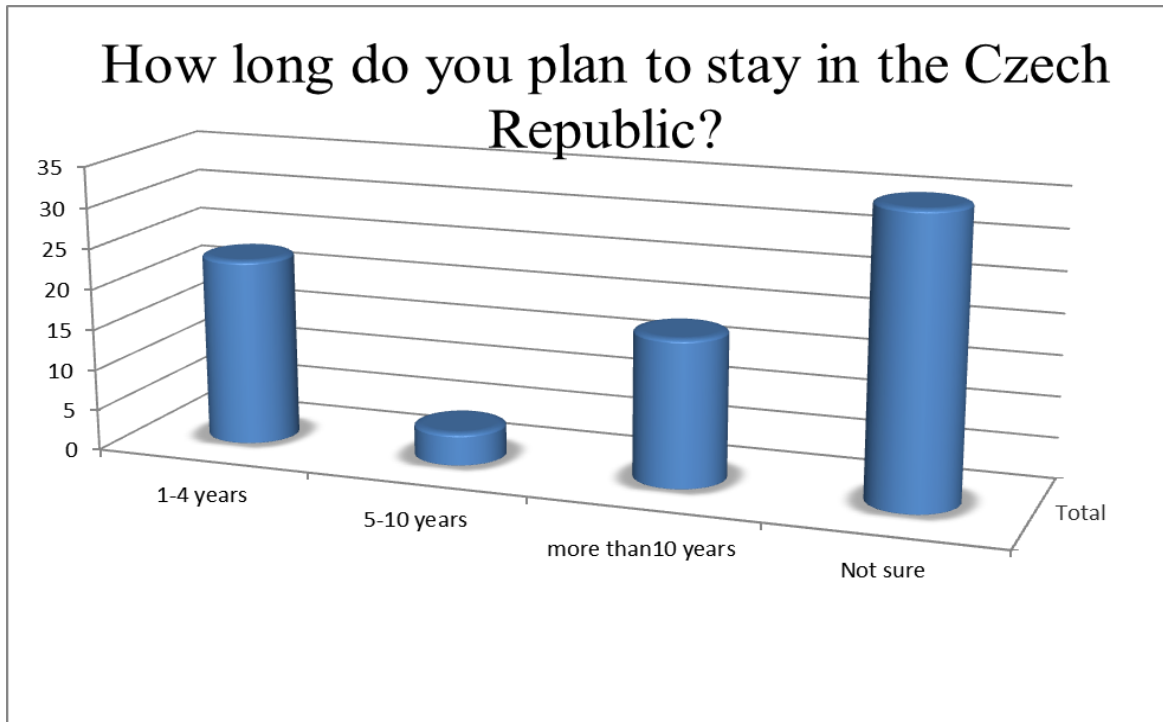
country—e.g., to study and return to Mexico after fulfilling their purpose—or that the process of assimilating to the country has been difficult and they plan to leave within a short period of time. In contrast, seven Mexicans who have been living in the country for more than ten years, plan to continue staying in the country for another ten or more. We can determine from this information that these seven Mexican have already settled down and most probably have raised a family here, so there is no point in relocating to Mexico or another country. Additionally, it is worth noticing that out of those having lived here for seven or more years, nearly half (43.5 percent) also plan to continue calling the Czech Republic their home, while the rest leave the answer to the unexpected (they are not sure).



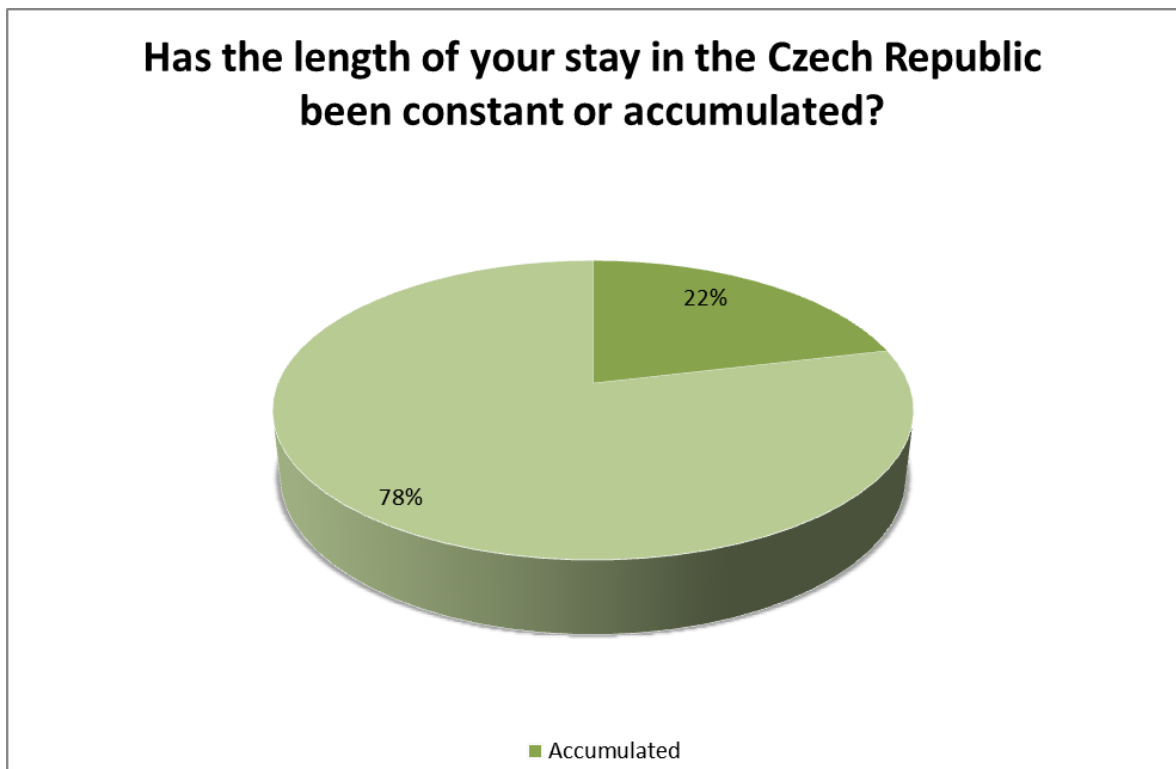
**Figure 2**

From Figure 3., we can get a more general idea about the Mexicans’ decision to continue living in the Czech Republic. As shown on the graph, a large portion are indecisive about staying in the Czech Republic. This either means that while they entertain the idea—and most probably the desire—to stay in the country, they are also considering the intangibles as well as the length of their prolonged stay. This result can be a cause of not having a well-defined plan for their future. They may also have not found motives strong enough to help them make a decision. And immigration procedures may be a factor as well. After a certain period of time, most of these Mexicans will eventually make a decision concerning their future stay in the Czech Republic.





**Figure 3**



**Figure 4**

Having learned about intentions to stay, Figure 4 shows that almost two-fifths of the Mexicans living here they have accumulated consequent years in the country, not including vacations. This means that nearly 20 percent have been on and off the Czech Republic,

probably trying out other places of returning to their home country for longer periods of time.

## **8.2 What was the reason for you to come to the Czech Republic? What are the things you most like about living in the Czech Republic?; What are the things you dislike about the Czech Republic?**

This section is about motivation. The answers to the first questions will reveal the Mexicans' motivation to immigrate into the Czech Republic. The next two questions addressing motivations influencing the ultimate decision as to stay in the country or to leave. It is important to have in mind that some motivations are stronger than others, such as having a sentimental partner.

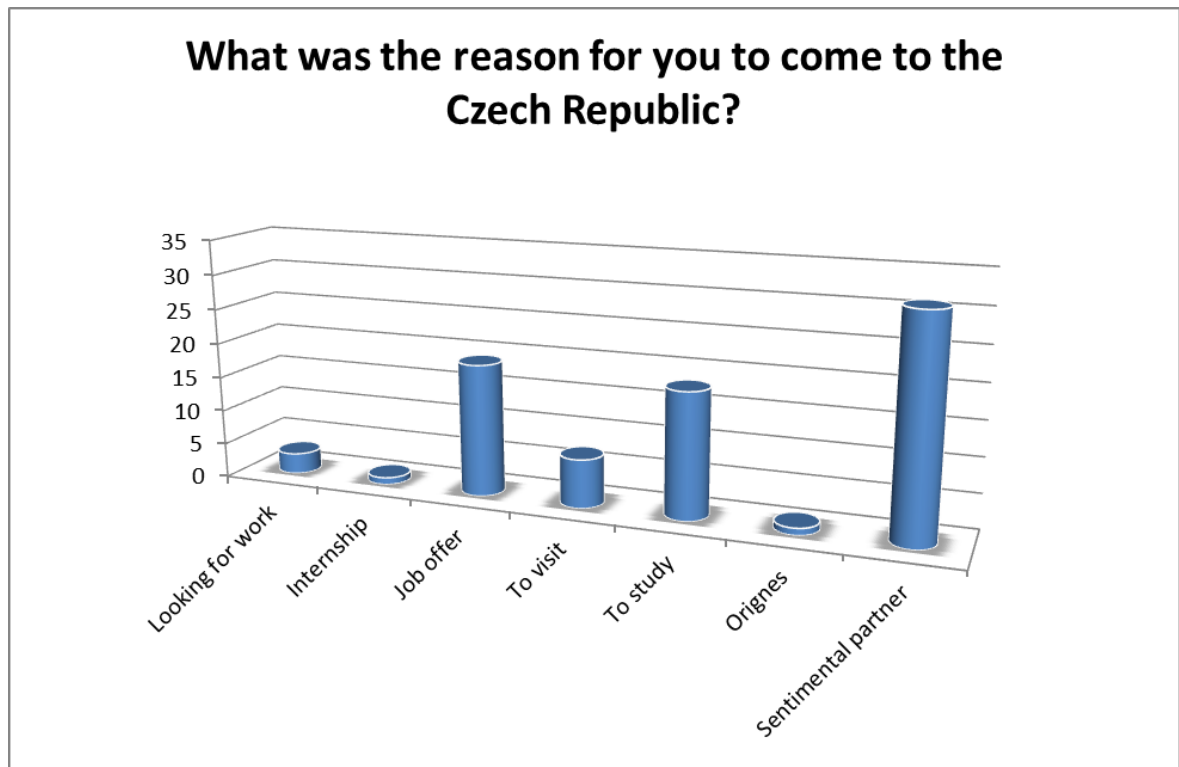
As it was mentioned earlier in the theoretical section, Mexicans come from a collectivist culture and are therefore expected to meet the needs of others before their own. Thus, if they have a sentimental partner whom is living in the Czech Republic or is going to live there in the future, it is most likely that the Mexican will also come to the Czech Republic.

There are various motives that different individuals have to immigrate to other countries. In Figure 5 we can observe the reasons why Mexicans have left their country, in order to live in the Czech Republic. There exist three main motives for immigration.

First, we can observe that 39 percent of Mexicans moved to the Czech Republic to follow a loved one. This being the original reason for their arrival, that does not necessarily mean that they are still in a relationship with them. Second, almost one fourth of the people polled (24 percent) have come to the Czech Republic due to a job offer. A job offer can be a very big motivation for someone to relocate. The salary of this new job can be higher than the amount earned by them in Mexico. Having an increase in people's monthly income can also increase the standards of living, which make it a good reason to immigrate to the Czech Republic.

No far behind (22.5 percent), is the number of Mexicans that came to the Czech Republic for educational reasons. Knowing this, we can assume that they immigrated only temporarily to study at the university. I say this because the lowest age a respondent could be is eighteen years old, the age when in Mexico people usually begin studying at the university. The length of stay expected for these individuals may be determined depending on the field and degree the person is studying. Thus, it is fair to conclude that in this case

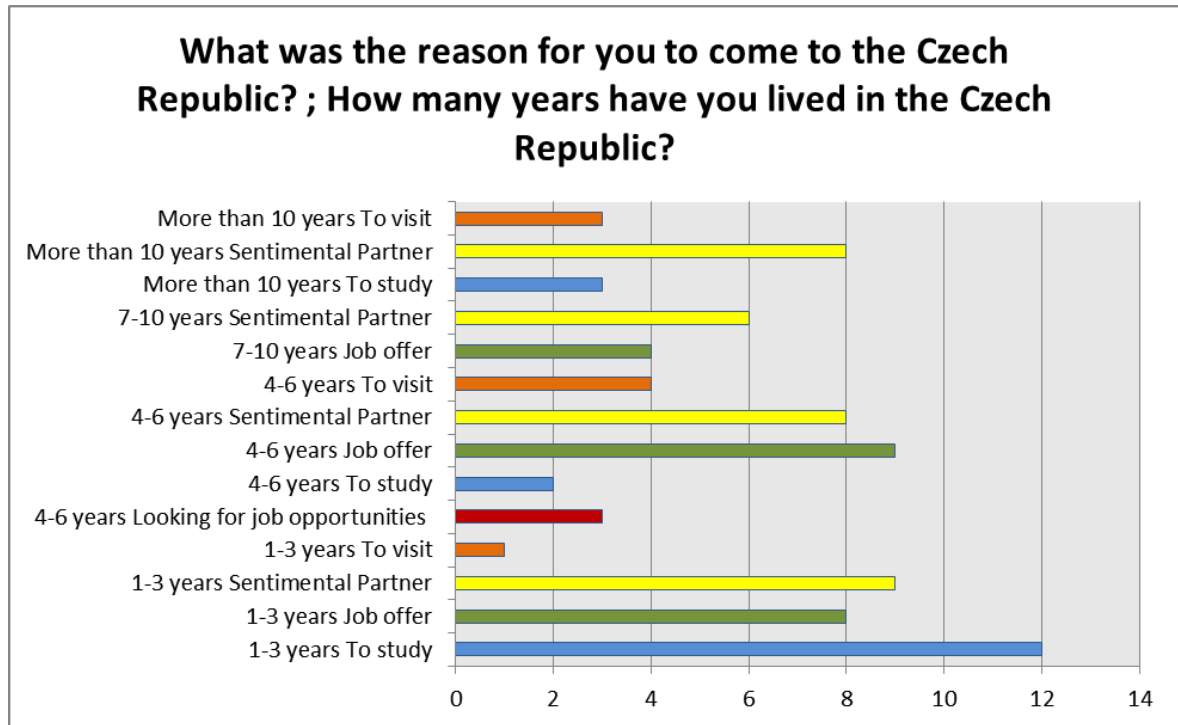
they might only have the desire to realize their studies in the Czech Republic and return to Mexico or move on to another country.



**Figure 5**

After reviewing the motives for the Mexican immigration into the Czech Republic, we may focus our attention to the next graph (Figure 6). There is a combination of two questions, namely: What was the reason for you to come to the Czech Republic?, and How many years have you lived in the Czech Republic? By combining these two questions it is possible to observe whether how these motivations responded to expected and realized time-frames.

One to three years ago, the main motivation for immigration was to study. There were also many other motivations such as a job offer and having a sentimental partner. Due to the motivation of a sentimental partner, eight Mexicans have been living in the country for four to six years and nine Mexicans for one to three years. Love is a strong feeling that will sometimes make individuals do anything . It is also worth noticing that most of those originally arriving for sentimental reasons have indeed stayed for several years (23 Mexicans having lived here for at least 4 years), which does not necessarily mean they are still together with their partner. In another section we will observe how many individuals have gotten married after following their loved ones to the Czech Republic. (Figure 19)

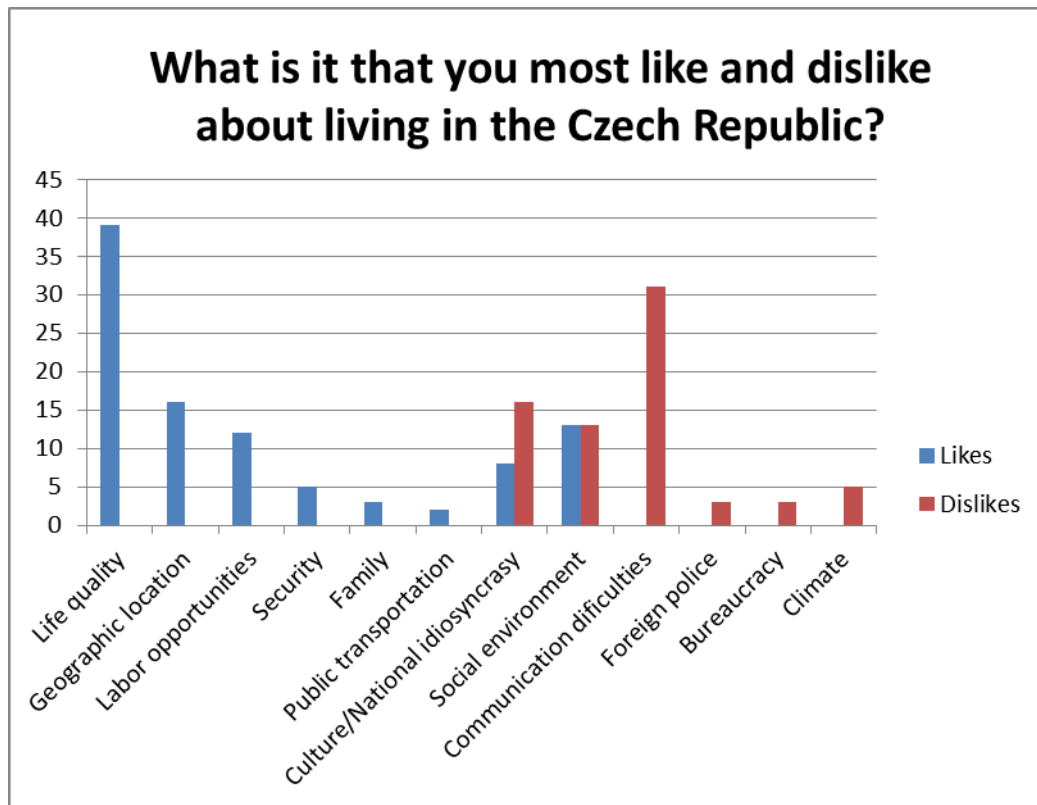


**Figure 6**

Another motivation people may have for staying or leaving the country are the likes and dislikes of that particular country. In Figure 7 we can compare the various opinions Mexicans as being or not to their liking. In these two questions the respondents were able to choose more than one answer, as well as having the option to add another choice. As a result, we can observe a variety of answers, with varying degrees of.

Thirteen Mexicans both like and dislike the Czech social atmosphere. Depending on the individual’s life style, they can either be content or unhappy with particular situations. It is not possible to determine whether more people like or dislike the Czech Republic’s social atmosphere because out of the twenty-six people who focused their attention on social atmosphere half of them answered positively and the other half answered negatively. On the other hand, eight people like the culture and idiosyncrasy, while twice as many dislike it.

Looking at positive answers, the highest like was the quality of live in the Czech Republic. Nearly one half of Mexicans (49 percent) said that this was the thing they most like about living in the country. By contrast, the negative appreciation toward the country lies in the difficulties for communicating amongst themselves and with the Czechs. We will see later if this difficulty is a result of the lack of knowledge of the Czech language.



**Figure 7**

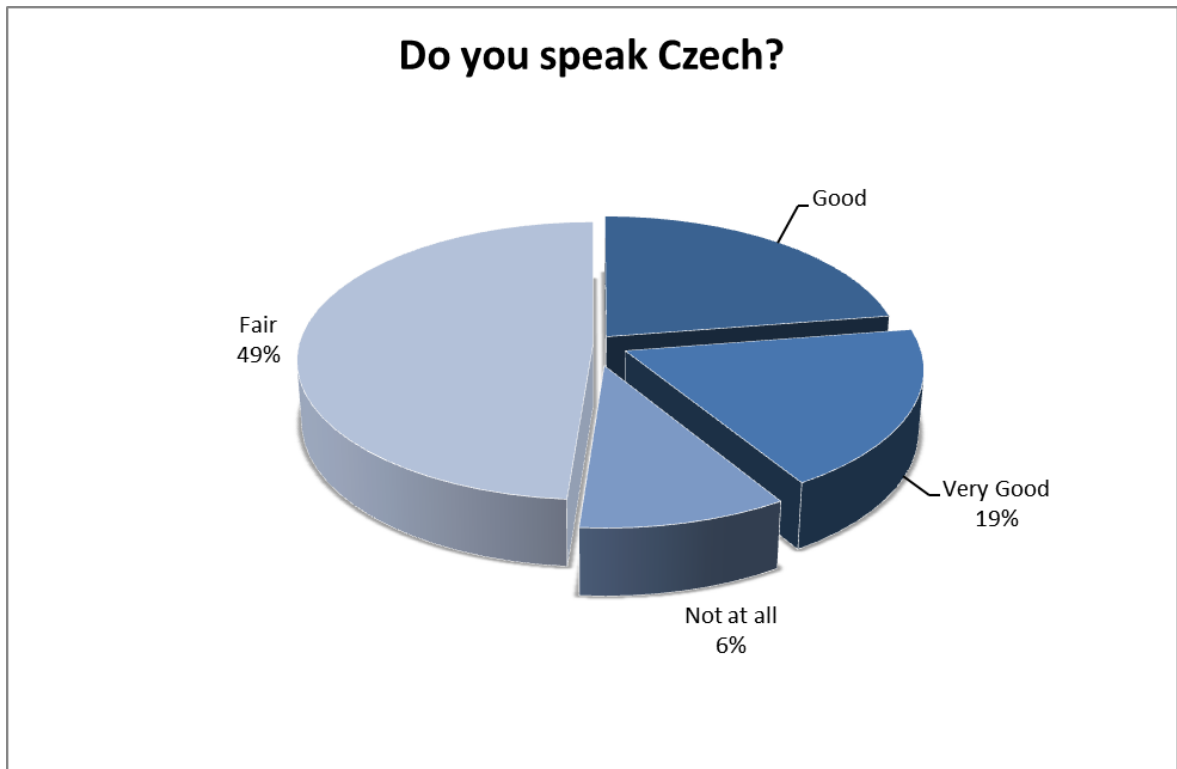
### **8.3 Do you speak Czech? Do you study or have you ever studied Czech?**

A Mexican who does not speak the Czech language is going to have difficulties in communicating. When moving to another country, it is important to learn the host country's language. People never know if the individuals from that country will be able to speak the same language as the person traveling to the country or if both of these individuals share a common knowledge of a different language. Fluency in the Czech language as been found to have a most positive effect in the process of adaptation on sociocultural relations with people from the Czech Republic.<sup>66</sup> In figure 8, we can see the Mexican's ability to speak the local language. There we can determine that, surprisingly, more than half of the Mexican population in the Czech Republic has some knowledge of the language, with nearly 40 percent of individuals having either a good level (22.5

---

<sup>66</sup> Ting-Toomey, Stella. *Communication across Cultures*. New York, London: The Guilford Press 1999 240-241

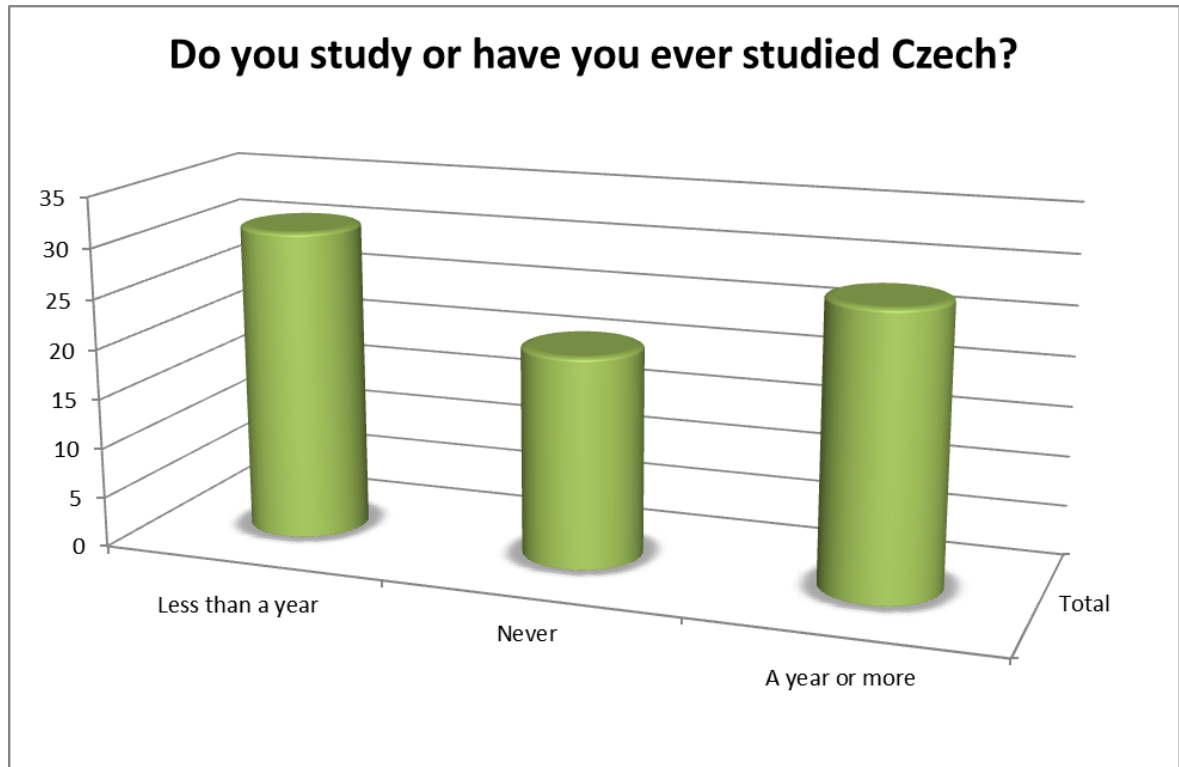
percent) or a very high level (16 percent). Almost another half of the respondents (42.5 percent) have a low level of Czech.



**Figure 8**

To be able to speak the host country's language, individuals must first have an initiation. People say that the Czech language is very difficult to learn. If someone puts a fair amount of time and dedication into learning the language, they will get better in a shorter period of time than those who only study it occasionally. By learning the language, Mexicans can ensure a better communication with a native..

In the figure below (Figure 9), there is a graph showing whether Mexicans have studied the language and for how long when they have. More than half of the respondents have tried to study the Czech language for at least some months. On the other hand, 26 percent of Mexicans have never studied the language. This shows the willingness of Mexicas to facilitate their integration into the Czech society by learning its language.

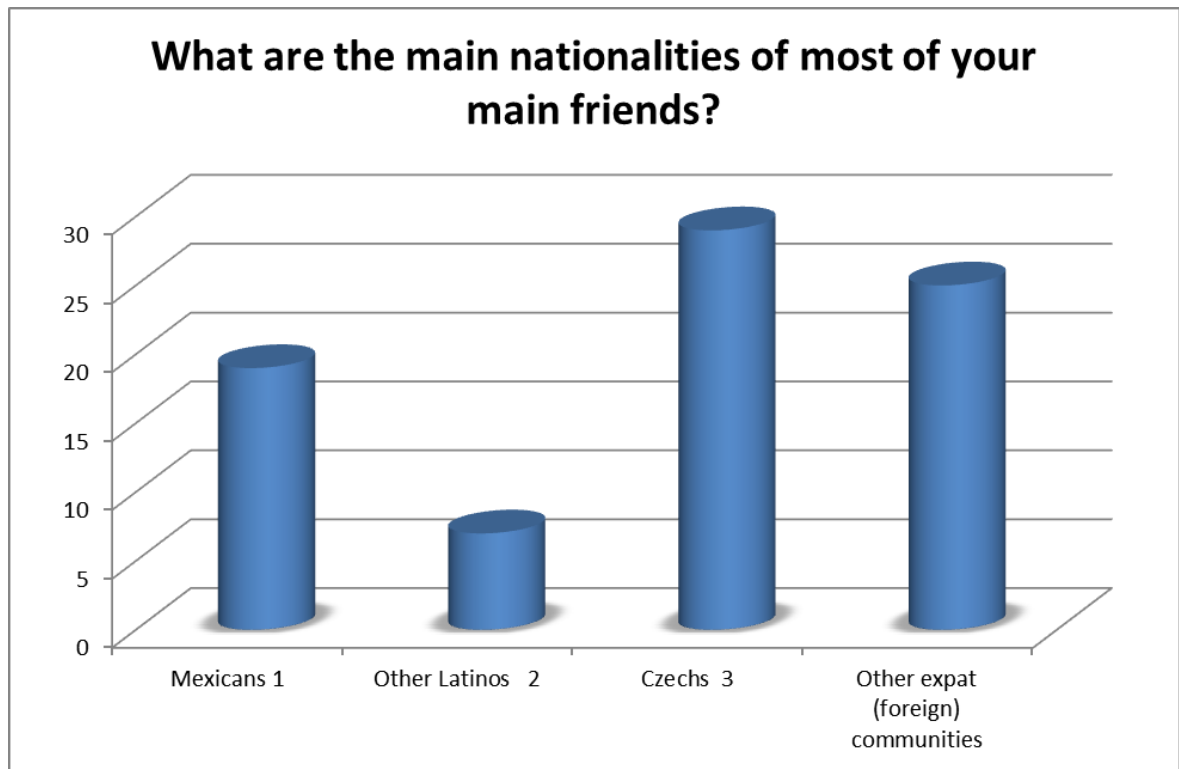


**Figure 9**

**8.4 What are the main nationalities of most of your main friends? From the previous groups, please name your predominant groups of friends.**

Depending on the individuals' location, be it the capital, a small city or a village there is a varying degree of exposition to different nationalities. When living in a small city or village it is more likely that the number of foreigners will be low. We will later learn that more than half of the Mexican population (Figure 17) live in the capital, Prague. Therefore, they will have the opportunity to interact with many different peoples. It is the Mexican national's decision with whom to get involved and create friendships. The fact that Mexicans are daily exposed to Czechs does not necessarily mean that the majority of the Mexican population will be communicating more with Czechs.

In the next Figure (10), we can observe that the main group of friends of more than one third of the respondents (36 percent) are of Czech nationality. Yet, we can observe a larger association with individuals other than Czechs. Nearly the other two-thirds of the Mexicans polled have individuals of other nationalities or of Mexican origin as their main group of friends. This does not mean that these are the only nationalities of their friends, but at least that they conform the majority of them.

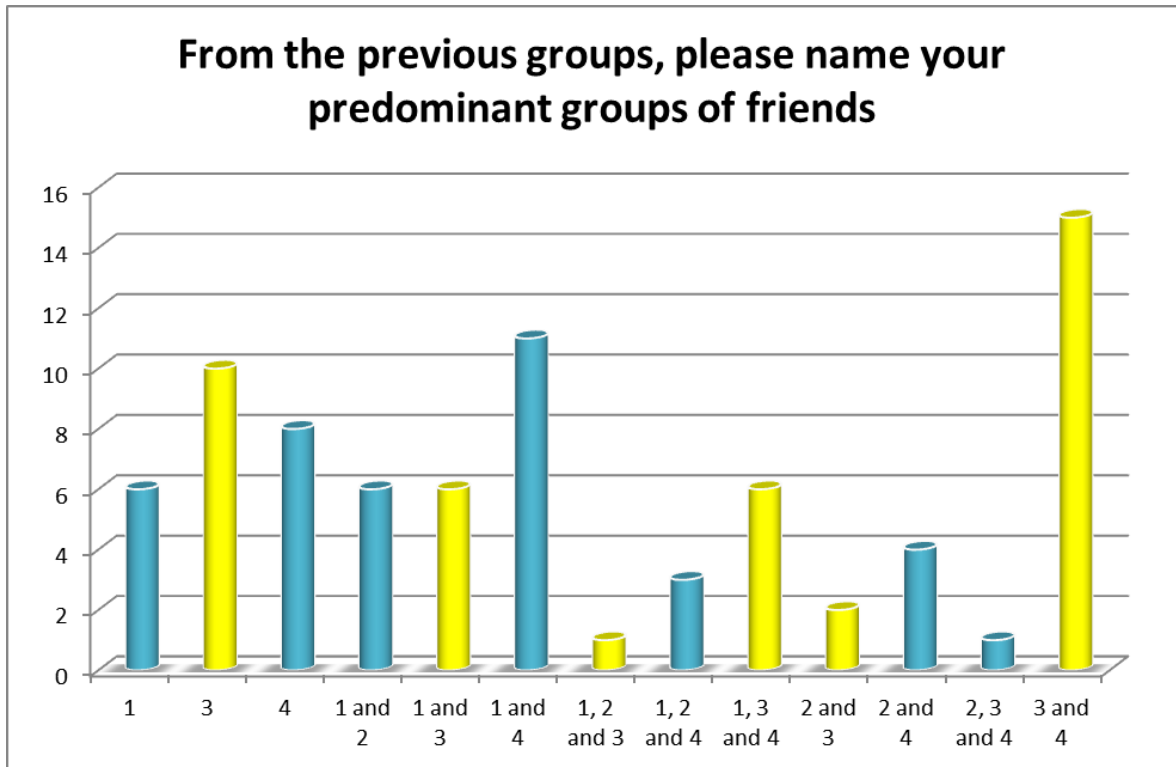


**Figure 10**

Taking this into consideration, we will focus a little more of our attention to Mexicans who have Czech friends. As shown in Figure 10, there were twenty-nine Mexicans out of 80 whose main friends are Czech. In the next graph we will see whether we can establish that although Czechs may not be the main group of friends Mexicans still have at least some friends who are Czech.

The following Figure (11), indicates the other group of friends Mexicans have in the Czech Republic. Each number shown represents a nationality. On the previous graph, we can see which number represents which nationality. To make it easier, I have highlighted in yellow the combination of Czech friendships and those who also interact with other nationalities. The first yellow column indicates that for 10 Mexicans the predominant group of friends involves only Czechs. Whereas the other yellow columns indicate two or three predominant groups of Mexicans, including Czechs. When making certain calculations regarding Figures 10 and 11, we can determine that from out of the fifty-one Mexicans whose main nationality of friends only eleven then later realized that they may not be their main group of friends but they still have some Czech friends.





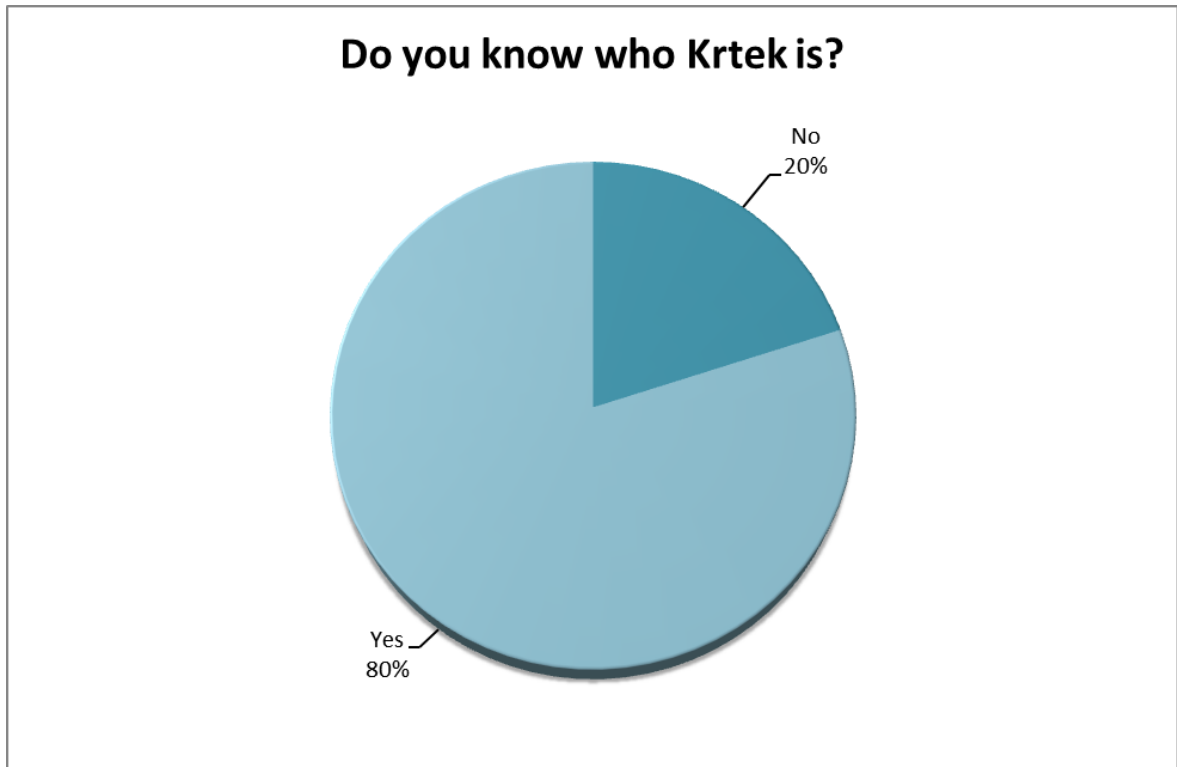
**Figure 11**

In conclusion, we can say that half of the Mexican population in the Czech Republic has a small interaction with Czech people, while the other half has it to a larger degree.

**8.5 Do you know who Krtek is? Have you ever gone mushroom-hunting with Czech friends?**

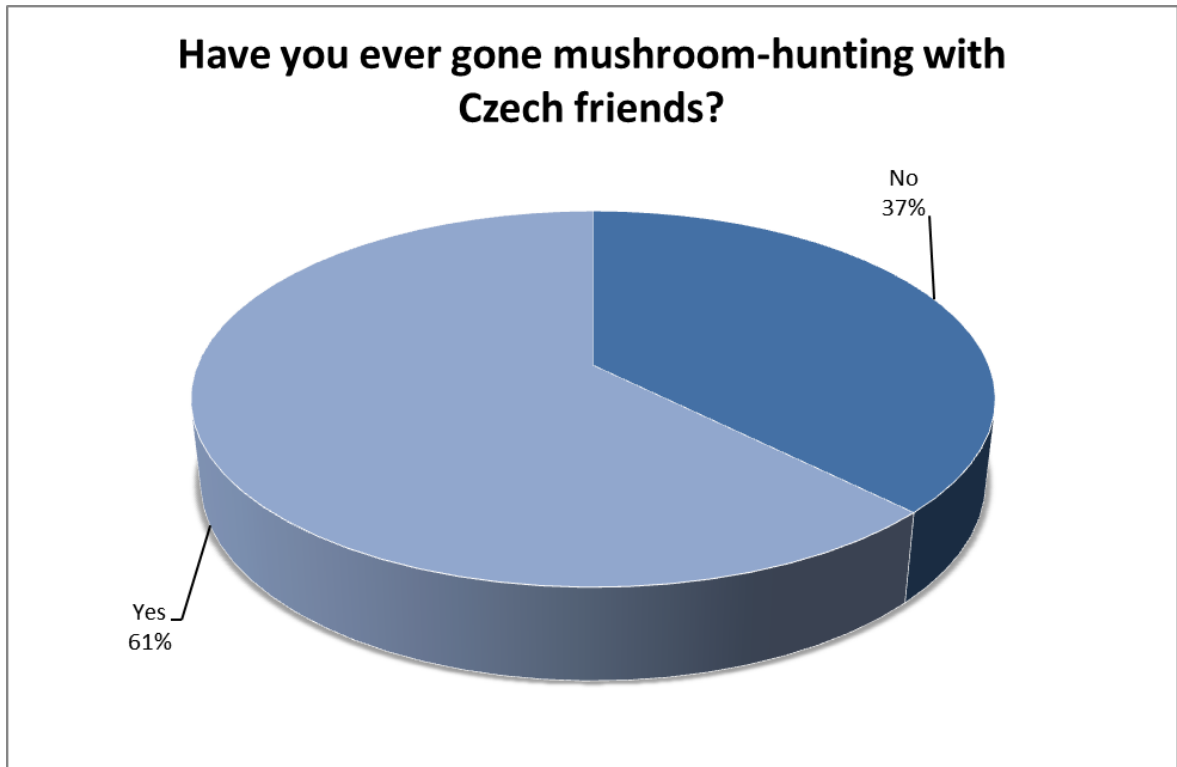
The purpose of these two questions was to observe how familiar Mexicans could be with the Czech society, as well as the more intimate relationship they could have with some Czech individuals. It is a well-known fact that not just anyone has the privilege to be invited by a Czech national to go mushroom-hunting, a favorite pastime among the Czech population. Also, identifying one of the most traditional characters in the Czech Republic is indicative of being familiar with its popular culture.

While Krtek is a character from children’s books and a Czech television show, knowing who he is does not necessarily mean that the person identifying him has watched the cartoon program or read any of those books.



**Figure 12**

Something very curious about the result to this question is that in the previous section we found out that only half of the Mexicans that answered the questioner included Czechs as the main nationality of the predominant group of friends. Notwithstanding, the result of the question: “Have you ever gone mushroom-hunting with Czech friends?” shows that fifty out of the eighty (62.5 percent of the) respondents indicated that they have done that activity with Czech acquaintances whom we might assume are their friends. This means that even if they do not consider Czechs in their predominant groups of friends, ten Mexicans still might have at least some close Czech friends.



**Figure 13**

**8.6 Questions 13 and 14. Have you ever felt belittled because of your condition of foreigner here? What do you think the motive of this is?**

As we learned in the theoretical part of immigration, there is a distinction in each country between natives and foreigners.<sup>67</sup> We also learned that it was not until the mid 1990's that a large number of immigrants started entering the country.<sup>68</sup> Finally, we learned that some Czechs are considered to be xenophobic.<sup>69</sup> Does the Mexican population feel belittled a result of these three factors as well as of others relating aspects?

In Figure 14 we can observe that thirty-three Mexican (41 percent of the total) have never felt belittled, whereas a slight higher number, 45 percent, have occasionally felt belittled. Those who declared to have felt this, were asked to explain why they think that Czechs made them feel this way. This was an open question, so they many reasons could be advocated. There were answers such as: ignorance, cultural differences, disinterest of

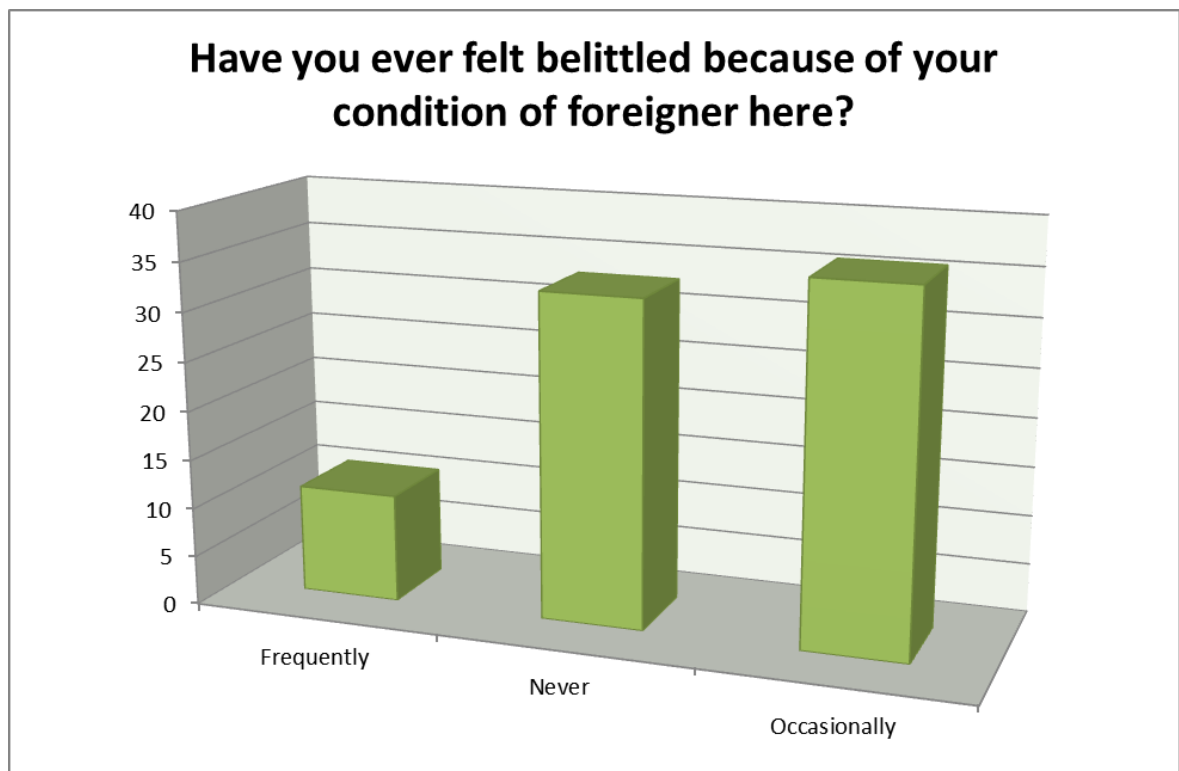
<sup>67</sup> Fitzgerald, David. *A nation of Emigrants: How Mexico Manages its Migration*. London, England: University of California Press 2009, 16

<sup>68</sup> Triandafyllidou, Ann and Ruby Gropas. *European Immigration: A Sourcebook*. Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company. 2007, 59

the Czech to communicate with someone who does not speak the language or speaks it no fluency, being identified as other minorities, like gypsies, due to the color of their skin, and because Czech are closed-minded and reserved and also xenophobic.

According to the opinion of the block of the Mexican population whom have felt belittled at some point—making more than half of the total respondents—fourteen agreed that the motivation for this reaction was racism towards people of darker skin, confusing them with gypsies or Arabs. While another fourteen said that was due to xenophobia. Yet another nine Mexicans added that some Czechs avoid communicating with people that do not have a good level of Czech, let alone with those who do not speak Czech at all.

After giving their response only six Mexicans explained that by after speaking with the Czech person and telling them where they are from, etc. The opinion of the Czech changes towards the Mexican immigrant.



**Figure 14**

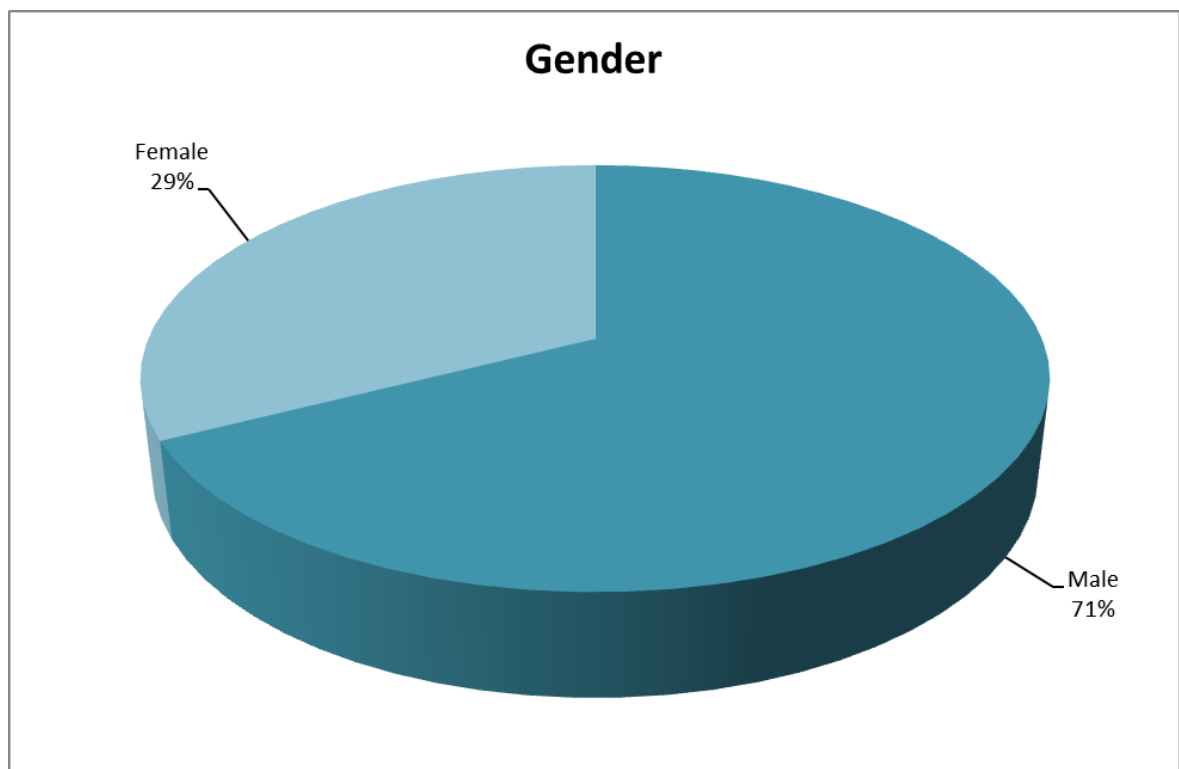
---

<sup>69</sup> Triandafyllidou, Ann and Ruby Gropas. *European Immigration: A Sourcebook*. Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company. 2007, 70

### 8.7 Gender, Age, Where in the Czech Republic do you live? Highest level of Education.

These questions go with one main topic, which are demographic variables. These variables, such as age and educational level, have been found to influence the individual's ability to adapt to an individualist culture. The younger the person is, the easier the process of adapting to the country. Individuals with low educational backgrounds tend to have more difficulty into adapting.<sup>70</sup>

In Figure 15 we can see that more than two-thirds of the Mexican population is male. Being a male of Mexican nationality in the Czech Republic may mean having an easier time socializing among Czech and other nationalities. From my experience, most Czech women are intrigued by foreigners, especially men, and see them as exotic, thus making it easier for men to socialize with natives, even if those turn out to be mostly women. Women are very special people, hard to understand. They gossip, criticize and are pickier when it comes to choosing who they befriend with. Women can sometimes be very observing. They are more intuitive and judge more from first impressions, which can make it more difficult to socialize.



---

<sup>70</sup> Ting-Toomey, Stella. *Communication across Cultures*. New York, London: The Guilford Press 1999, 240

**Figure 15**

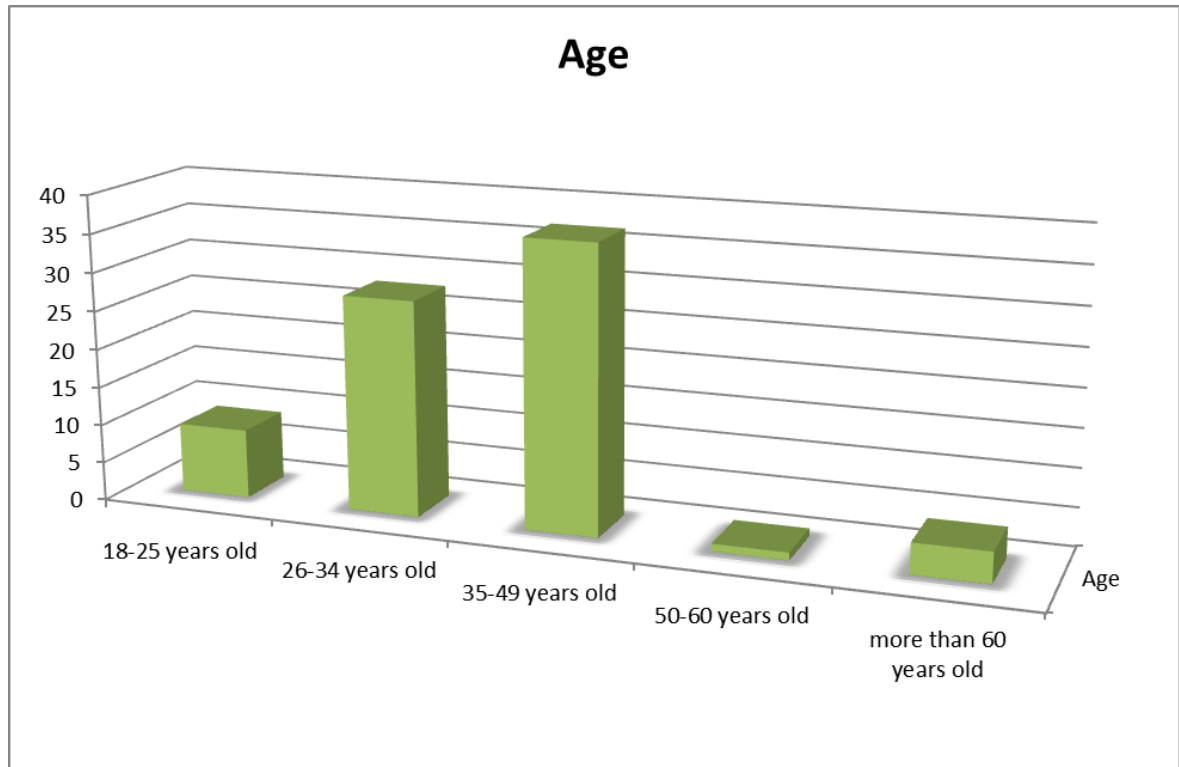
The figure below (Figure 16), indicates the most frequent age group of the Mexican population. 46 percent of the respondents belong to the thirty-five to forty-nine age group and 35 percent are from ages twenty-six to thirty four. As previously stated, the age of each individual will influence the ability to adapt. By observing the graph, we can determine that approximately half of the Mexicans living in the Czech Republic will have an easier time adapting. Whereas the other half will have a more difficult time.

From my experience, the younger you are, the more you are willing to socialize. Young people like to meet other people and communicate with them. People of older age already have certain groups of friends and are most likely to have a family. This can cause problems of adaptation because they may focus more of their attention on the people who are already in their circles, like their families, and have less time to integrate to the Czech society.

As it was already mentioned, older people have greater difficulty learning a second language.<sup>71</sup> This can also be a big factor in adapting, because without the knowledge of the Czech language the potential for communication diminishes considerably. Although there are Czechs that can speak English, not all of them will be able to communicate with Mexicans.

---

<sup>71</sup> Myers, David G. *Psychology* New York, NY: Worth Publisher 2010, 387-388



**Figure 16**

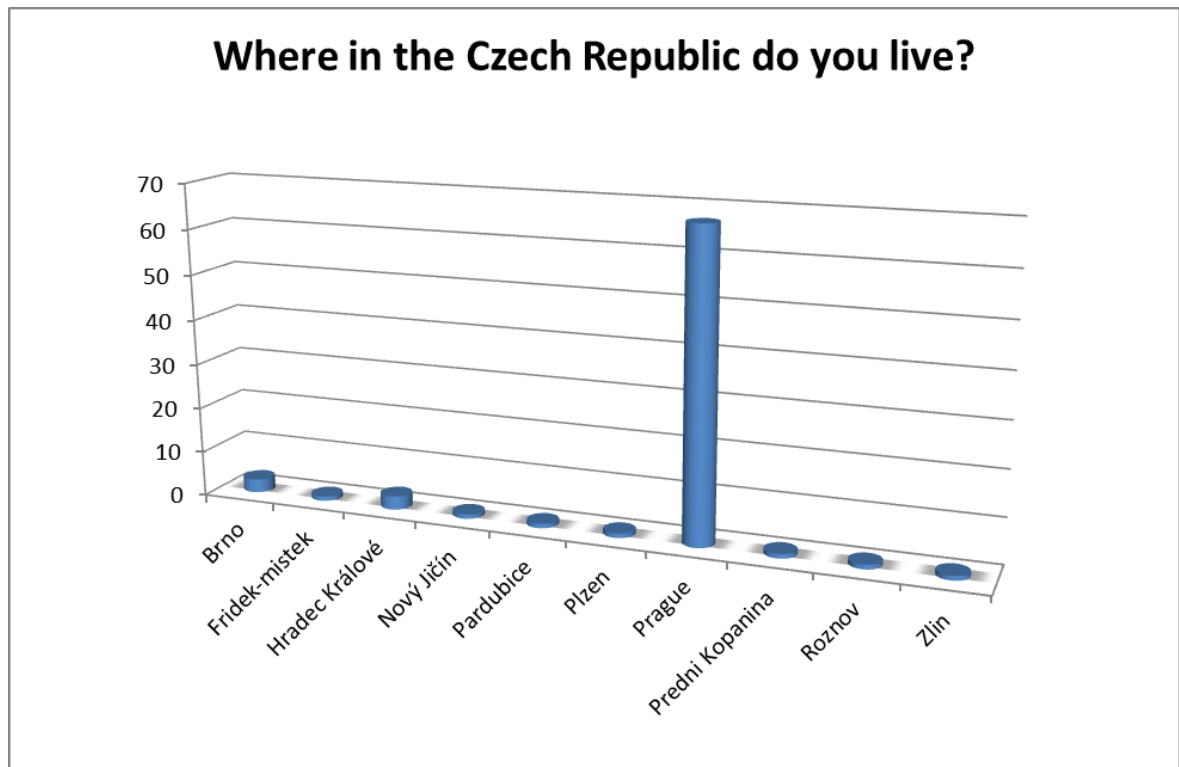
Depending on which part of the Czech Republic a foreigner lives, he/she will experience different treatments. There can exist various cultures in distinct regions within the same country. Figure 17 demonstrates that more than half of the Mexican immigrants who responded to the questioner are living in Prague.

Usually in capitals and big cities natives are most likely to expect foreigners. Prague is a destined area for many tourists. Knowing this, we could say that people living in Prague speak more English than those who live in small town and villages. But not everywhere in Prague do natives speak English.

Due to the fact that Prague is a tourist city, that may influence the behavior of natives towards foreigners. Some may be positive, while others negative. Living in a city with many tourists can take a toll on Czechs. Tourists sometimes do not respect the country they are visiting nor its people. They are on vacation and do not always think about how their behavior affects other people, thinking mostly about themselves. Immigrants can sometimes be labeled as tourists, so negative attitudes that Czech people may have can be directed against immigrants.

Prague also represents a city of opportunities. There is a larger diversity of people and population than in any other city in the country.

Prague also represents a city of opportunities. There is a diversity of people and a larger population than other cities in the Czech Republic.



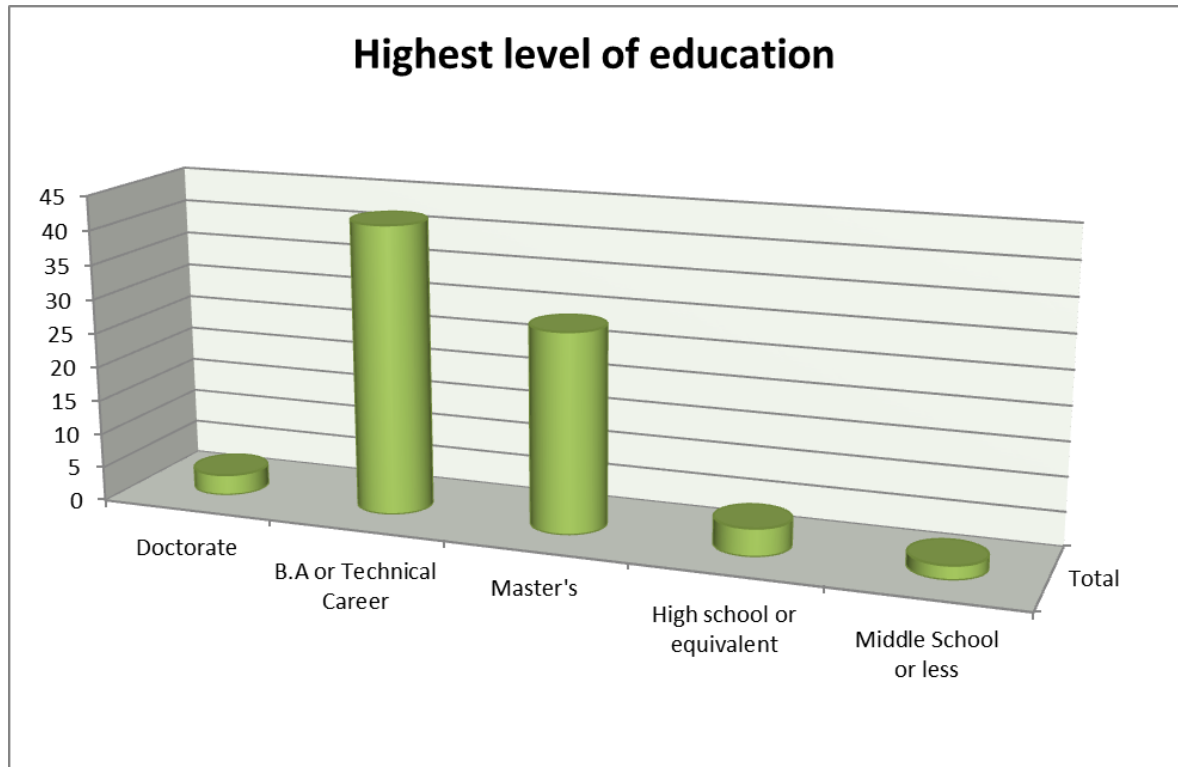
**Figure 17**

Having a higher level of education may help in the process in adaptation, thanks to the knowledge and sensibility acquired from a person's studies. In most countries it is necessary to take language programs through college studies. Those languages can be put to use when traveling to another country.

Through a person's studies, it is possible to gain worldwide information. For example, if an individual studies a Bachelor's or a Master's program on Economics or Business, he is most probably going to learn about different markets in specific countries, about ethical behavior and cultural.

So when someone decides to migrate to another country, the knowledge they gained will come with that person and be even unconsciously applied. In Figure 18 we can observe that more than four-fifths of the Mexican immigrants in the Czech Republic hold a university degree. It is then expected that Mexicans will not be lost and closed minded when it comes to discovering new things outside of their country and handling themselves in unknown situations.





**Figure 18**

### **8.8 Marital Status. Couple's nationality**

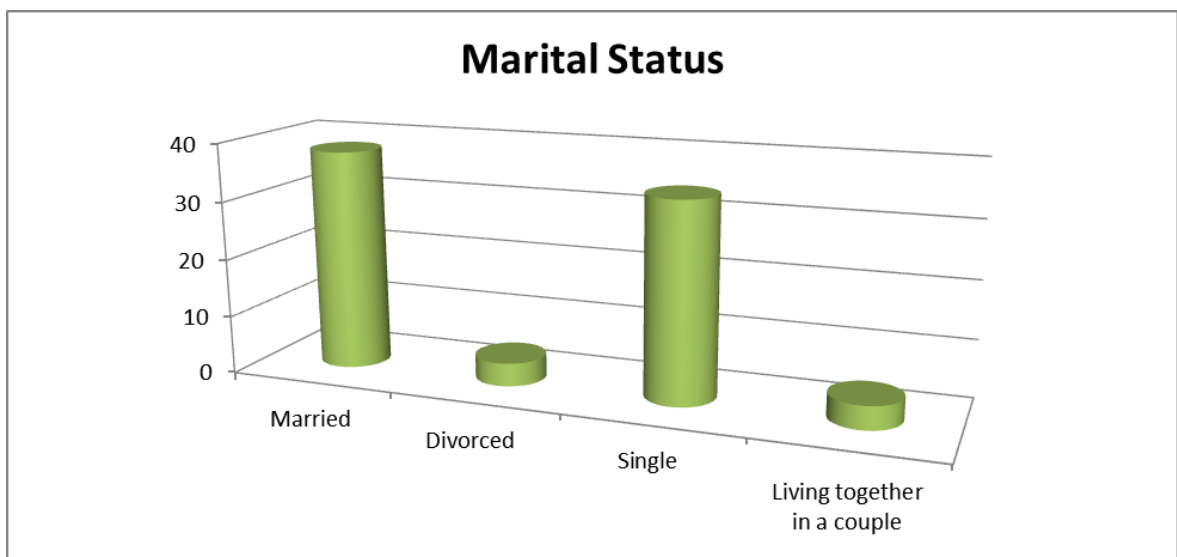
Marital may play a role in adaptation. I have learned throughout my life that being with one's family can get people through anything. A person's family is like a support system. Married individuals have their partners permanently with them. They could have their children with them as well. When emigrating to another country with a family entails a concerted, solidary effort in the process of adaptation, for one is not alone. If a Mexican national has a Czech partner, the process should be even softer.

In Figure 19 there is a graph indicating the Mexican residents' marital status. The chart reveals that they are evenly divided, since 46 percent are single and 44 percent are married. Which means that thirty-four Mexicans are married. There was another questions regarding the partner's nationality (see Figure 20). Interestingly, we can observe that almost all the married Mexican are married to a Czech person. This of course softens Mexicans' adaptation because they are in an intimate relationship with a native. Being in a couple of two different nationalities means learning more in detail about of the cultural characteristics and differences enabling a better understanding of the Czech people.

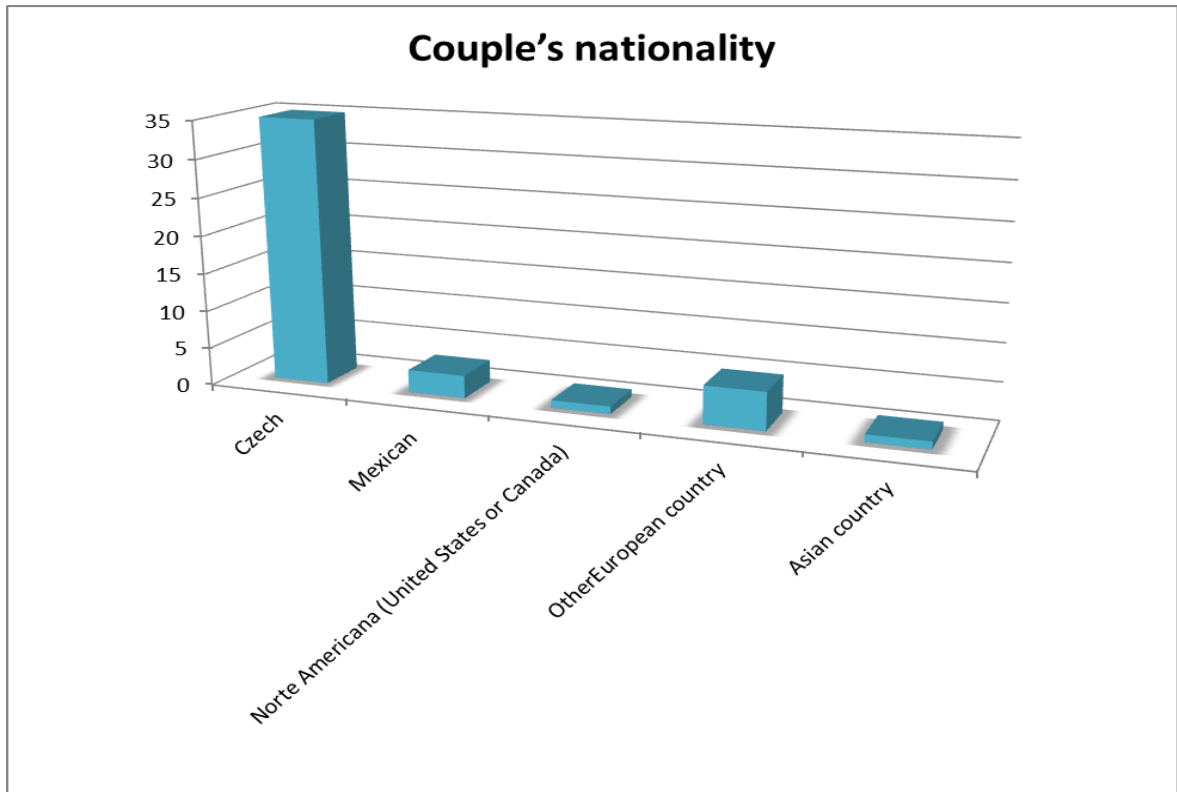
It is true that a relationship with a Czech in terms of marriage or dating is different than the treatment you receive from a Czech stranger. But in the process of getting to know your

partner, it is likely that they also will struggle with some cultural differences, such as having distinct perceptions and values.

From some experiences I have witnessed with Czechs and Mexican couples, it is not unusual that they speak English with each other when they do not master each other's language, or use Spanish when the Czech couple is fluent in it. The latter type of Czechs, of course, are quite different from the majority of their fellow countrymen because they have had varying degrees of exposure to other cultures and put that experience to use in helping their loved ones adapt to their country.



**Figure 19**

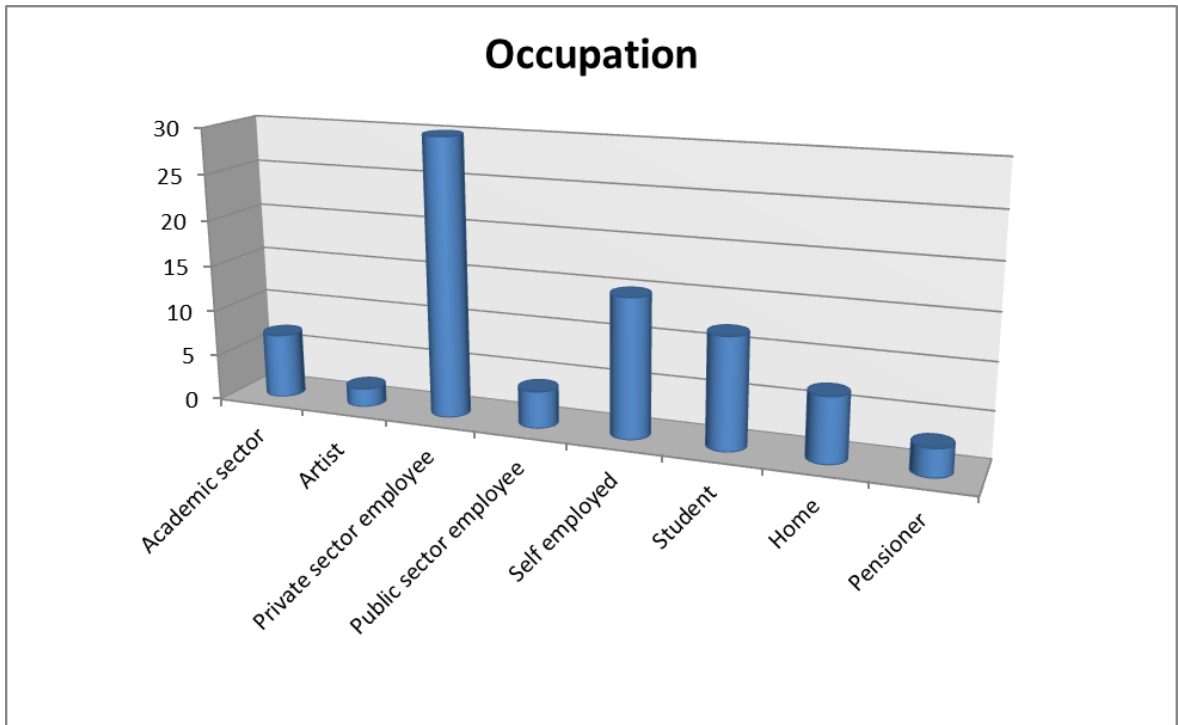


**Figure 20**

### **8.9 Occupation. Sphere of activity. Monthly income (after taxes).**

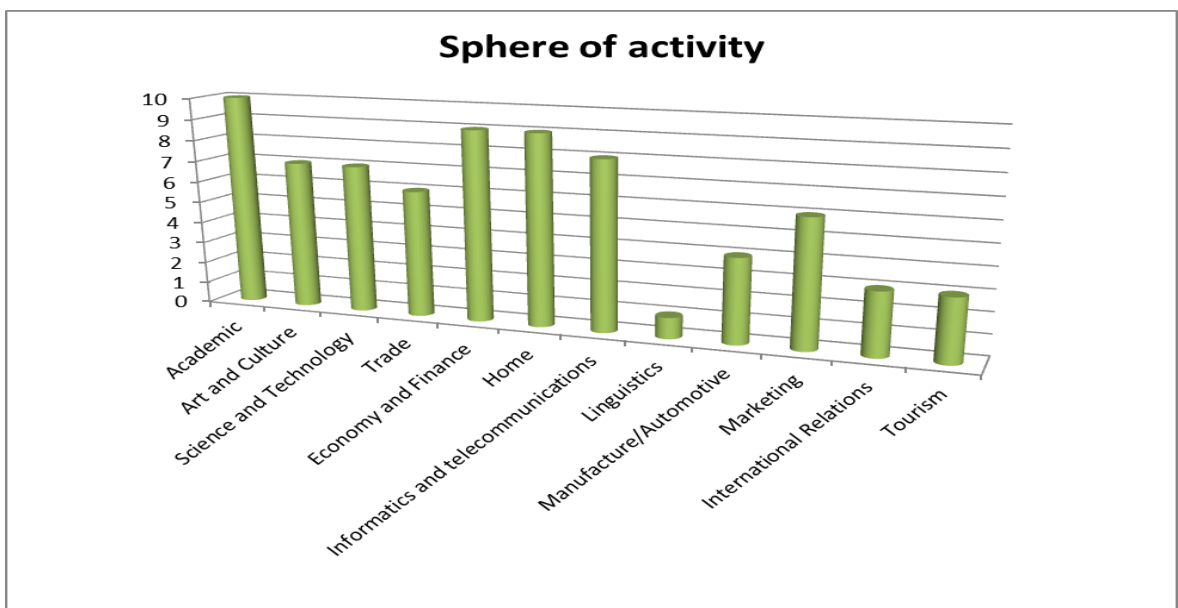
As it would be expected from the high levels of education enjoyed by the majority of the Mexican community living in the Czech Republic, most of their occupations are sophisticated and economically productive. Therefore, far from being a nuisance to the Czech society, they contribute to its well-being. That plays for acceptance and integration, for they are economically and socially active members of the guest country's productivity.

As seen in Figure 21, a large proportion of Mexicans handle themselves in private business. Having observed the occupation of most Mexicans in the Czech Republic, we can move on to see their sphere of activity

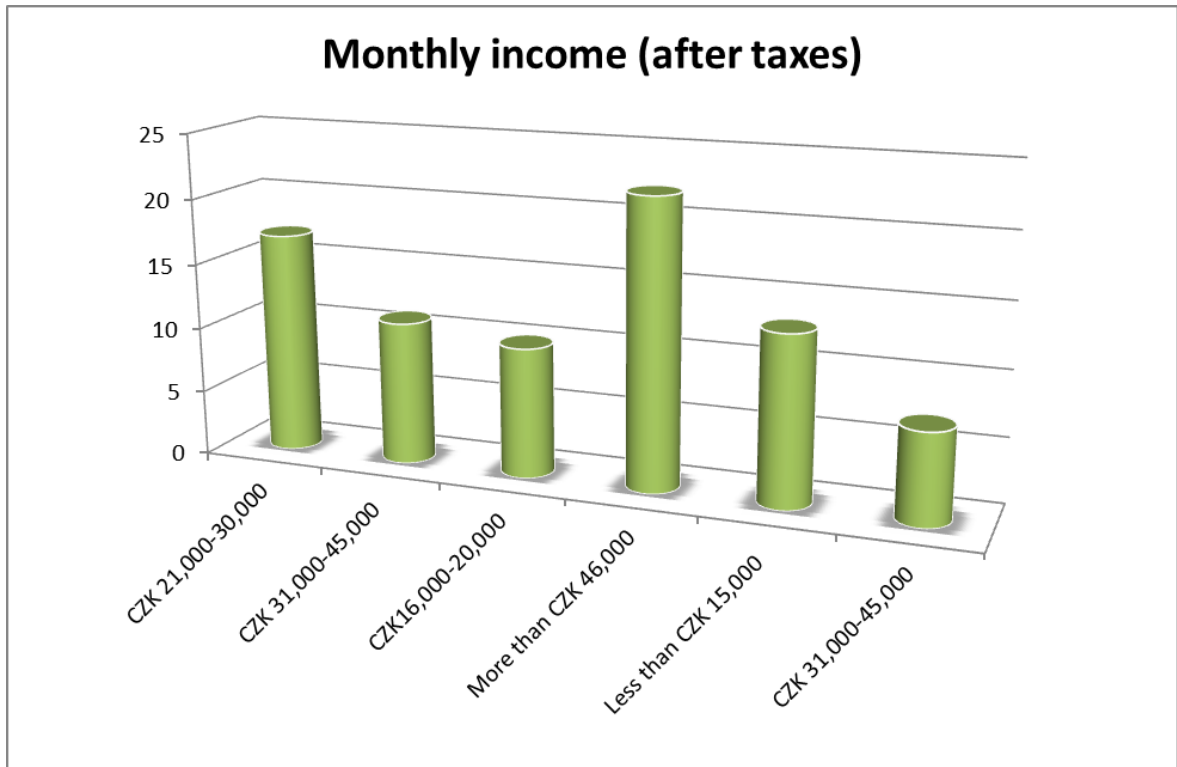


**Figure 21**

As shown in Figure 22, Mexicans display their abilities in the most diverse areas of specialized activities, ranging from the highly technical to the public relations oriented and the humanities. This is also a clear reflexion of the richness of variety that characterizes Mexican society



**Figure 22**



**Figure 23**

Figure 23 confirms the fact that the vast majority of Mexicans living—and working—in the Czech Republic are productive guests of the host society. Monthly average wage in the Czech Republic is CZK 20.000. As we can see, while only 29 percent of the total make up to that amount, the rest of Mexicans, 7 out of 10, have higher earning than the regular Czech citizen. Moreover, 30 percent of them are in the higher income branch of more than CZK 46.000 per month. This, of course, plays well for adaptation, for it is not a concern of the majority of Mexicans to provide themselves with the minimum standards of living; quite the contrary.

## 9 INTERVIEWS

The interviews done for this thesis consist of twelve questions. These include issues involving, among others similarities, differences privileges, and advantages and disadvantages regarding Mexico and the Czech Republic. There are also questions concerning the relationship each individual has with the Czech people and, based on their own experiences, recommendations they would provide to a Mexican planning to relocate in the Czech Republic.

Obviously, these questions do not have a right or wrong answers. They simply reflect the views and opinions of each individual. Some opinions may be similar, while others differ. Unless otherwise mentioned, the answers to each of the questions will represent what the majority or the interviewees stated.

### **9.1 Before moving to the Czech Republic, did you know anything about it? Why did you decide to live in the Czech Republic? Do you believe you made a good decision by moving to the Czech Republic? Why?**

When moving to another land, people may or may not know something about that country. Having some information about it may not necessarily mean that an individual will have an easier time adapting, but at least it will allow them not to enter the country blindly. They might have some expectations resulting from the information they have received.

Not knowing at least something may signify a lack of interest and that lack of interest in investigating some basic factors about a country can make someone's stay in the country more difficult. Their interest may only be the motive for their immigration.

When asking the question about knowing something about the country before coming to the Czech Republic, three Mexicans honestly responded that they did not know anything, while the others provided historical facts, such as having been once Czechoslovakia, having gotten out of the communist era, its location in Europe and so on.

As in the case of the questioner where most respondents placed the reason for their transfer to the Czech Republic, it does not come as a surprise to learn that the majority of the interviewees also answered this question with the majority of the respondents: half of the Mexicans interviewed came to this country following their sentimental partner. This allows us to conclude, with a high degree of certainty, that the most common reason for Mexican immigration into the Czech Republic is love.

It is worth noticing that coming from so far, Mexicans are attracted by specific reasons, be it together with their loved ones, enrich their education or fulfill a labor goal.

This differs greatly from Mexican immigration into the United States, for example, where Mexicans are blindly drawn by blurry expectations of improving their living standards. To put it clearly, Mexican immigration into the Czech Republic is mostly a conscientious decision.

Having gone through the struggles of integrating and adapting to a country, the correct questions to ask to the experienced Mexicans is whether they think they made a good decision to immigrate to the Czech Republic. All the interviewees, with one exception, said that they thought they made a good decision. Curiously enough, the only contrasting answer was not negative but doubtful: it is not possible to say whether the decision was good or bad because it is unknown how life would have turned if the decision had been to stay in Mexico; yet, was very content to be living in the Czech Republic.

The response on the reason why these Mexicans are happy with their decision does not necessarily involve opportunities or better quality of life, but personal growth and development: by moving to another country, they have learned how a new culture opens minds. They have learned and experienced so many things that they otherwise would have never known about.

When traveling to different countries and staying there for some period of time, people encounter differences that sooner or later they will come to understand and perhaps even make them their own. This may not mean that they will expect these differences but at least try to live with having to deal with them in certain occasions.

**9.2 What differences do you observe between Mexico and the Czech Republic? What similarities do you observe between Mexico and the Czech Republic? What advantages does the Czech Republic have over Mexico and vice versa, what advantages does Mexico have over the Czech Republic?**

Questions involving both Mexico and the Czech Republic can reveal subconscious feelings towards each country. They can also reveal knowledge about each country. By observing their appreciation on differences between countries—positive or negative—we can determine what particular aspects they like or dislike about each country. On the other hand, not identifying similarities between these two countries may imply impossibility to compare the home land and the adopting land.

There were various answers assessing differences between Mexico and the Czech Republic. They would focus first on one of the countries, and then continue with the other stressing pros and cons of each. As far as Mexico is concerned, judgements included

opinions such as the following: Mexican people are very open, welcoming and warm; the country has nice weather and more variety of food, both prepared and found in nature. At the end of each difference, they would add a comment like, “not in the Czech Republic.”

While stressing points that the Czech Republic has and Mexico lacks, they would allude to things like security and better education. Only one person brought up negative aspects about the Czech Republic, specifically its citizens: closed mindedness and the lack of hygiene. Addressing difficulties in the process of adaptation, people may only look at the differences between their country and the country they are currently living in. They sometimes only focus on what things are better in one country than in the other. This poses difficulties to go beyond differences and trying to find at least one similarity.

Actually, three Mexican had a hard time thinking of about similarities and ended by recognizing that they could not think of any similarity. The other seven Mexicans agreed that both countries experience corruption, are filled with culture and history, and have Greek and Roman roots. Finding similarities can help people realize that each country may not be so completely different and that we all share some common things. This, in turn, facilitates people relate to other people.

Some people may think that in some aspects a country can have specific advantages that the other lacks and vice versa. Advantages that Mexico has over the Czech Republic, according to the people interviewed, are: friendly atmosphere, climate, diversification and having larger food selection in markets. Advantages Czech Republic has over Mexico, are: public transportation, level of education, discretion in social status, and easier means to travel.

Mexico is regarded as a third world country still developing and that is linked to advantages of the Czech Republic over Mexico.

### **9.3 What privilege and benefits do you obtain by living in the Czech Republic? What difficulties have you confronted by living in the Czech Republic?**

By moving to a different country, individuals may gain privileges, but also confront difficulties. Privileges, of course, increase motivation for people to relocate. Difficulties, on the other hand, are a disincentive. One thing about confronting difficulties is that individuals with enough will and drive can overcome them. In fact, emigrants have traditionally been the most courageous and adventurous citizens a society can have. Among



the privileges and benefits Mexicans can get when moving to the Czech Republic is security.

Even if temporary, currently security is something Mexicans cannot count with when living in Mexico. The situation Mexico is going through nowadays regarding mafia and drug dealers, makes Mexicans very cautious about where they go, at what time they go and with whom they go. Getting involved with the wrong people or being at the wrong place at the wrong time may have serious consequences, like getting shot. Being in a country with the privilege of walking down the street and knowing you have nothing to fear is a very good feeling, which influences the decision of some Mexicans to stay in the Czech Republic.

Another privilege includes the opportunity to have a better quality of life and being able to travel. Because the Czech Republic has a fair level of development, people can enjoy a good standard of living in the Czech Republic. Privileged geographical location in the heart of Europe enables better traveling opportunities. By driving a couple of hours or by taking a short flight in any direction, people are offered an array of tourism possibilities.

One difficulty confronted by all the interviewees was the Czech language. To Mexicans—and most anybody---it is a very difficult language. Yet learning it is a challenge that pays dividends: besides being able to communicate with all natives, it gives a sensation of achievement. Two individuals commented on the following confrontations: climate, food, cultural differences and negative attitudes of Czechs towards foreigners.

#### **9.4 Have you returned to Mexico since your first arrival in the Czech Republic? How many times and for what reasons?**

Being so far away from one's country can cause homesickness and missing the family. If having the availability of economic means, people will make the option of going to Mexico a regular possibility. Mexicans, as people from collectivist societies, do what they can to meet the needs of the people in their group, such as family.

Consequently, the ten Mexicans interviewed have gone to Mexico to visit their families. Some go more frequently than others (from once every six years to even twice a year; whenever given the opportunity, they do what they can to go. It is a fact that although Mexicans continue to live in the Czech Republic and have the desire to stay there for longer time, they cannot forget about the place that used to be their home and is still part of their lives.

#### **9.5 What is your relationship with the Czech community?**

So what might be the relationship between Mexicans and Czechs? As it was previously mentioned, some of the interviewees immigrated into the Czech Republic to get reunited with their sentimental partners.

Three of these people are married to Czechs and have families. Others keep colleague relationships, although in their work places half of the interviewees clarified that even if they may have this type of contact, which does not mean that their relationships go beyond there. Even if their relationship with Czechs may be to low key, they have what they need to be happy.

Yet, lacking a deeper relationship with Czechs causes limitations in the Mexicans' process of learning about the people and culture, thus making it more difficult to adapt. By interacting with Czechs on a friendly basis, one gets involved in their reality and eventually makes it part of one's own life.

### **9.6 What recommendation would you give to someone who is planning to move to the Czech Republic?**

Having experienced the process of going to another country and facing difficulties and misunderstandings, people are better positioned to help others to confront a similar situation by sharing thoughts and tools to have an easier landing in a country other than your own. Such being the case, I asked the interviewees what advice and recommendations they would give to Mexicans who would contemplate moving to the Czech Republic.

Learning the Czech language was one of the strongest recommendations. Living in a country different from you own is already difficult and becomes much harder when not knowing the language, for it limits the opportunities for interaction. Other recommendations included having an open mind, always being positive, learning to respect diversity, understand that you are the one that has to adapt, and not the other way around. Another recommendation concerned immigration: Mexicans need to know all the procedures they must undergo in order to become legal immigrants. Practical recommendations were also brought up: what papers you will need, where you plan to live, what you are going to do when arriving etc.

All these recommendations would certainly facilitate Mexicans a harmonious arrival and stay in the Czech Republic. If others before them had given them the same advice they now give to the newly arrived, that would greatly have eased their process of adaptation

## **CONCLUSION**

There could be many cultural differences between two distinct countries. Those may be influenced by various elements, such as history, language, being independent or interdependent and the perceptions individuals have towards intimacy and trust. These differences and the actions people take in either accepting them by learning about them or refusing to accept them, expecting people from that country to change, will impact the degree of difficulty in adapting to different cultures and societies.

There exist many different motivations why Mexicans emigrate to the Czech Republic. Depending on whether those motivations are strong even though, and taking into consideration the motives that drove the decision to emigrate, Mexicans will continue to live in the Czech Republic. Throughout their stay in the country they will experience many struggles and they will have to learn how to approach those struggles in order to make their stay more enjoyable and, at the end, really make of the Czech Republic, their home.

It is fine to have differences; that is what makes an individual unique. But people have to learn to understand these differences and to avoid hard judgments towards those who we see as different.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Axetell, Roger E. *Gestures: The Do's and Taboos of Body Language around the World*. Revised and expanded edition. Canada. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 1998

Bažant, Jan, Nina Bažantová, and Frances Starn. *The Czech Reader: History Culture, Politics*. Durham and London: Duke University Press 2010.

Bennet, Milton J. *Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication: Selected Reading*. Yarmouth, Me: Intercultural Press 1998.

Carroll, John B. *Language, Thought and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 2012

Fitzgerald, David. *A nation of Emigrants: How Mexico Manages its Migration*. London, England: University of California Press 2009.

Geddes, Andrew. *The Politics of Migration and Immigration in Europe*. London; Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE Publications, 2003

Kasulis, Thomas P. *Intimacy or Integrity: Philosophy and Cultural Differences*. United States of America: University of Hawai'i Press 2002.

Lustig, Myron W. and Jolene Koester, *Intercultural Competence: Interpersonal Communication across Cultures* Boston: Pearson Education Inc. 2006

Merrell, Floyd. *The Mexicans: A Sense of Culture*. United States of America: Westview Press 2003.

Myers, David G. *Psychology*. New York, NY: Worth Publisher 2010.

Ribbens, Geoff and Richard Thompson. *Understanding Body Language*. Hauppauge, NY: Barron's. 2001

Ting-Toomey, Stella. *Communication across Cultures*. New York, London: The Guilford Press 1999.

Triandafyllidou, Ann and Ruby Gropas. *European Immigration: A Sourcebook*. Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company. 2007

Tylor, Edward Burnett. *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art, and Custom..* Cambridge University Press 2010.

Uichol, Kim. *Individualism and Collectivism: A Psychological, Cultural and Ecological Analysis*. NIAS Publications: Copenhagen S, Denmark. 1995.

Wahstrom, Billie J. *Perspectives on Human Communication*. Brown Publishers 1992.

Ward, Colleen, Stephen Bochner and Adrian Furnham. *The Psychology of Cultural Shock*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group 2001.

**LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1: How many years have you lived in the Czech Republic?.....	39
Figure 2: How many years have you lived in the Czech Republic? How long do you plan to stay in the Czech Republic?.....	40
Figure 3: How long do you plan to stay in the Czech Republic?.....	41
Figure 4: Has the length of your stay in the Czech Republic been constant or accumulated?.....	41
Figure 5: What was the reason for you to come to the Czech Republic?.....	43
Figure 6: What was the reason for you to come to the Czech Republic? How many years have you lived in the Czech Republic?.....	44
Figure 7: What are the things you like and dislike about living the Czech Republic?.....	45
Figure 8: Do you speak Czech?.....	46
Figure 9: Do you study or have you ever studied Czech?.....	47
Figure 10: What are the main nationalities of most of your main friends?.....	48
Figure 11: From the previous groups, please name your predominant groups of friends...	49
Figure 12: Do you know who Krtek is?.....	50
Figure 13: Have you ever gone mushroom-hunting with Czech friends?.....	51
Figure 14: Have you ever felt belittled because of your condition of foreigner here?.....	52
Figure 15: Gender.....	53
Figure 16: Age.....	55
Figure 17: Where in the Czech Republic do you live?.....	56
Figure 18: Highest level of education.....	57
Figure 19: Marital Status.....	58
Figure 20: Couple's nationality.....	58
Figure 21: Occupation.....	59
Figure 22: Sphere of activity.....	60
Figure 23: Monthly income (after taxes).....	61

## APPENDICES

P I      Questioner

P II     Interview Questions

## APPENDIX P 1: QUESTIONER

How many years have you lived in the Czech Republic?

- 1-3 years
- 4-6 years
- 7-10 years
- More than 10 years

How long do you plan to stay in the Czech Republic?

- 1-4 years
- 5-10 years
- More than 10 years
- Not sure

Has the length of your stay in the Czech Republic been constant or accumulated?

- Constant
- Accumulated

What was the reason for you to come to the Czech Republic?

- To study
- Sentimental partner
- Job offer
- Looking for job opportunities
- Other:

What are the things you most like about the Czech Republic?

- Life quality
- Geographic location



- Job opportunities
- Social environment
- Culture/National idiosyncrasy
- Other:

What are the things you most like about the Czech Republic?

- Culture/National idiosyncrasy
- Social environment
- Communication difficulties
- Other:

Do you speak Czech?

- Not at all
- Fair
- Good
- Very good

Do you study or have you ever studied Czech?

- Never
- Less than a year
- A year or more

What are the main nationalities of most of your main friends?

- Mexicans
- Other Latinos/Hispanics

- Czechs
- Other expat (foreign) communities

From the previous groups, please name your predominant groups of friends (e.g., 1 and 4)

Do you know who Krtek is?

- Yes
- No

Have you ever gone mushroom hunting with a group of Czech friends?

- Yes
- No

Have you ever felt belittled because of your condition of foreigner here?

- Never
- Occasionally
- Frequently

What do you think the motive of this is?

Gender

- Male
- Female

Age

- 18-25 years old
- 26-34 years old
- 35-49 years old
- 50-60 years old
- More than 60
- Other:

Where in the Czech Republic do you live?

- Prague
- Brno
- Other:

Highest level of studies

- Middle School or less
- High School or equivalent
- B.A. or Technical Career
- Master's
- Doctorate

Marital Status.

- Single
- Married

- Living together with a couple
- Divorced
- Widow/ Widower

Couple's nationality

- Mexican
- Czech
- Norte American (United States or Canada)
- Asian country
- Other European country
- Latin American or Caribbean country
- Does not apply

Occupation

- Student
- Home wife
- Academic sector
- Public sector employee
- Private sector employee
- Self employed
- Other:

Sphere of activity

- Academia and Teaching
- Arts and Culture
- Science and Technology

- Trade
- Economy y Finances
- Home
- Informatics and Telecommunications
- Marketing
- Tourism

Monthly income (after taxes)

- Less than CZK 15,000
- CZK16,000-20,000
- CZK 21,000-30,000
- CZK 31,000-45,000
- More than CZK 46,000

## **APPENDIX P 2: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. Before moving to the Czech Republic, did you know anything about it?
2. Why did you decide to live in the Czech Republic?
3. Do you believe you made a good decision by moving to the Czech Republic? Why?
4. What differences do you observe between Mexico and the Czech Republic?
5. What similarities do you observe between Mexico and the Czech Republic?
6. What advantages does the Czech Republic have over Mexico and vice versa, what advantages does Mexico have over the Czech Republic?
7. What privilege and benefits do you obtain by living in the Czech Republic?
8. What difficulties have you confronted by living in the Czech Republic?
9. Have you returned to Mexico since your first arrival in the Czech Republic?
10. How many times and for what reasons?
11. What is your relationship with the Czech community?
12. What recommendation would you give to someone who is planning to move to the Czech Republic?