

## CULTURAL ADAPTATION OF CZECH CITIZENS IN THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

JIŘÍ ČENĚK



Faculty of Regional Development and International  
Studies, Mendel University in Brno, Zemědělská 1, Brno,  
Czech Republic

**E-mail address: [jiricenda@centrum.cz](mailto:jiricenda@centrum.cz)**

MARTIN HRABÁLEK

Faculty of Regional Development and International Studies,  
Mendel University, Zemědělská 1, Brno,  
Czech Republic

**E-mail address: [martin.hrabalek@mendelu.cz](mailto:martin.hrabalek@mendelu.cz)**

### ABSTRACT

This article relates to the process of adaptation of Czech citizens to Turkish culture. The article explores the perception of Turkish culture by Czech citizens, problems they encounter in the Turkish society and the ways of their adjustment to the host culture. The empirical research on 10 Czech citizens was conducted using the method of semi-structured interviews. The article addresses the most important issues connected with the process of cultural adaptation.

**Key words:** acculturation, adaptation, adjustment, cultural shock, culture

### INTRODUCTION

Globalization processes, which connect continents and regions economically, socially, politically, culturally and technically, cause increased mobility of people around the globe. People from different cultural backgrounds; people with different values, attitudes and models of behaviour, interact with each other on a daily basis. They differ in ways they think, in their lifestyles, in their verbal and non-verbal communication. Travellers, immigrants and sojourners encounter with culturally determined patterns of behaviour that are substantially different from what they are accustomed to, and what they would expect. In this paper we will try to explain that different individuals have different patterns of reactions to new social and physical environments.

The goal of this paper is to present the current theoretical framework connected with the processes of individual cultural adaptation to the host environment, and to present results of our research on cultural adaptation of Czech expatriates in the Republic of Turkey.

The term culture is used in many scientific disciplines and as such has various definitions. According to Průcha (2010) these definitions could be divided into two conceptions of culture. In broad conception the term culture encompasses all that is being created by the human civilization, such as material artefacts (houses, machines, crops) and intellectual creations (art, religion, customs). A narrower definition would connect culture to human behaviour, thus to the culture of a certain society (customs, common values, language rituals, shared experience and others). This concept is most commonly used in anthropology or in intercultural psychology. Hofstede and Hofstede (2007) say that culture has a collective nature because it is always to a certain extent shared by people that live in a common social environment in which they adopted it. Matsumoto and Juang (2013) indicated that concept culture can have a different meaning in other cultures and that there is no accepted definition of culture. According to Triandis (1989) culture specifies designs for living that have proven effective in the past, ways of dealing with social situations, and ways to think about the self and social behaviour that have been reinforced in the past. Culture is not something inborn, people adapt to it during their life inside certain social environments through the processes of enculturation and acculturation.

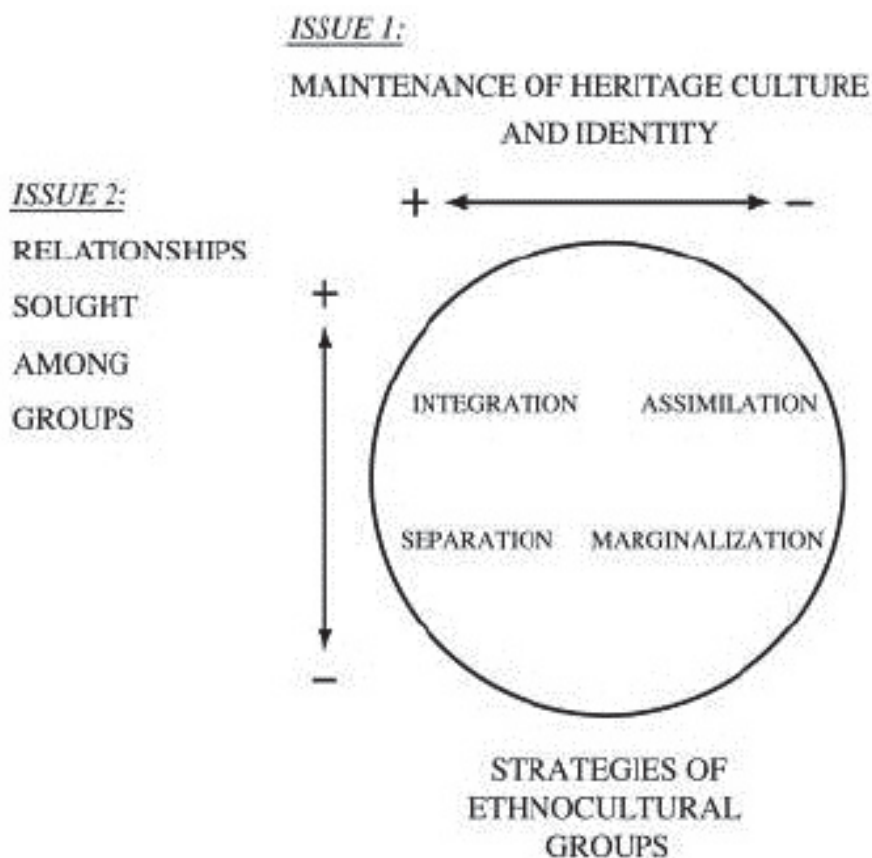
## TRANSMISSION OF CULTURE

Enculturation is a process during which an individual is integrated into a respective culture. During this process the individual absorbs certain values, ideas, convictions and patterns of behaviour. In other words, it is an acceptance of culture standards, during the development of an individual. The concept of enculturation has been developed within the discipline of cultural anthropology, and was first defined and used by Herskovits in 1948 (Bryan, Annie, & Lam, 2009). As the term suggests, an individual is encompassed or surrounded by culture, the individual acquires, by learning, what the culture deems to be necessary. The process of enculturation involves parents, and other adults and peers, in a network of influences (vertical, oblique, and horizontal), all of which can limit, shape and direct the developing individual. The end result (if enculturation is successful) is a person who is competent in the culture, including its language, its rituals, its values, and so on (Berry, Poortinga, Breugelmans, Chasiotis & Sam, 2012). Choi Y. et al. (2013) indicate that the process of enculturation is intertwined and reshaped by acculturation and that these two processes are not only simultaneously occurring.

Views on the concept of acculturation are not unanimously perceived, over the years many different views and definitions of this concept have been revealed. Originally acculturation was considered to be a unidimensional process, however these days authors such as Berry (2005) perceive acculturation as a multidimensional process.

Acculturation is a process that occurs in the case of contact of two or more cultures and involves cultural and psychological changes including various forms of mutual accommodation, leading to longer-term psychological and sociocultural adaptations between both groups. Contact and change occur for a number of reasons, including colonization, military invasion, migration, and sojourning (such as tourism, international study, and overseas employment); it continues long after initial contact in culturally plural societies, where ethnocultural communities maintain features of their heritage cultures (Berry, 2005). Phoko et al. (2014) describe acculturation as a multidimensional phenomenon which can occur at the group or individual level and it may impact the affective, behavioural, cognitive and attitudinal function of the individual or a group.

Ward and Rana-Deuba (1999) have stated that there are two fundamental dimensions of acculturation: maintenance of original cultural identity and maintenance of relations with other cultural groups. Furthermore, there are four acculturation attitudes or strategies, which should be distinguished: integration, separation, assimilation, and marginalization. Every acculturation strategy can have differing consequences for emotional and physical health of the individual or group. In Figure 1 you can see the four acculturation strategies according to Berry et al. (2012).



**Fig. 1.** Acculturation strategies

Source: Adapted from Berry et al. (2012)

**Integration:** According to Berry (1997) the integration strategy is only possible under certain conditions. The individual should have sufficient skills to learn a new culture and a new language in order to participate fully in the new society. The values and habits of the culture of origin should not be in strong contradiction with the values of the dominant society. And the host society should be open to the *newcomers*, and avoid discrimination.

**Separation:** Cabassa (2003) defined separation as a pattern of acculturation in which individuals retain and have a strong orientation toward their culture of origin while rejecting and avoiding interaction with the dominant culture. According to Ryder (Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000) separation involves maintenance of heritage culture without intergroup relations. Bowskill (Bowskill, Lyons, & Coyle, 2007) states, that separation is contrastingly defined by the negative response to the possibility of cultural contact and by positive response to the maintenance of culture.

**Assimilation:** The aim of this strategy is to become merged with the dominant cultural group, and to try to resemble it to the point of internalizing the dominant culture and denying one's own difference. This implies renouncing one's own identity and trying to resemble the dominant population as much as possible, both physically and culturally (Berry, 1997). According to Tadmor (Tadmor, Tetlock, & Peng, 2009) assimilation involves relinquishing one's cultural heritage and adopting the new culture. Alba and Nee (1997) define assimilation as a process of interpretation and fusion in which individuals and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other individuals and groups by sharing their experience and history that are incorporated in a common cultural life.

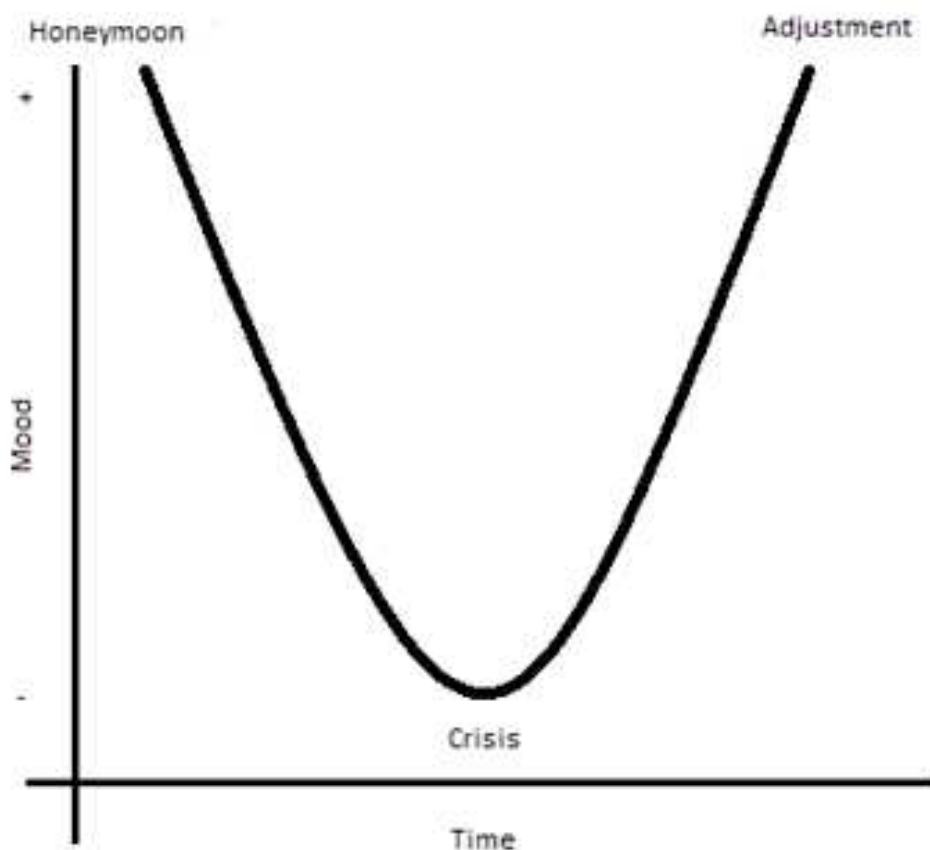
**Marginalization:** Marginalization strategy is generally adopted by individuals who do not have an opportunity or intention to preserve their own culture and do not have any need to be in a close contact with the dominant culture. Berry (2005) states that in the case of marginalization, cultural conflict and misunderstanding is a common feature of daily life, and it is usually resolved by seeking little involvement in either culture. Dutta (2008) indicates that marginalization reflects an array of practices through which the social structures limit the resources and opportunities for participation in certain communities and cultures. Ryder et al. (2000) argue that marginalization involves non-adherence to either old or new culture and also leads to the worst outcomes.

## CULTURAL ADAPTATION OF AN INDIVIDUAL

Průcha a Veteška (2012) state that cultural adaptation is a process through which the members of a certain cultural or ethnic group adapt to another culture. Ting-Toomey (Ting-Toomey, & Oetzel, 2001) defines intercultural adaptation as an extent of changes that emerge once a person moves from a known environment into an unknown one. Adaptation is a gradual trans-

formative process and it takes certain time for an individual to go through all of its phases. There are multiple theories of cultural adaptation; we will mention two of them.

Lysgaard created a *U-curve* model in 1955 to describe how foreign students adapt to the culture of the host country (in Pedersen, 1995). He explains that the process has the shape of U-curve where the honeymoon stage is located at the starting point, crisis stage at its bottom and then an adjustment stage at the final point (Lai, 2010). In the honeymoon stage an individual experiences an initial arousal due to the arrival to new environment. This phase is characteristic with mostly positive feelings (Brown & Holloway, 2008). In next phase (hostility) an individual realizes the cultural differences, finds some of them unnerving, and experiences feelings of hostility and stress. In the final stage an individual regains his or her psychological balance, accepts cultural differences and acquires basic skills needed in the different cultural environment. The U-curve model is presented in Figure 2.

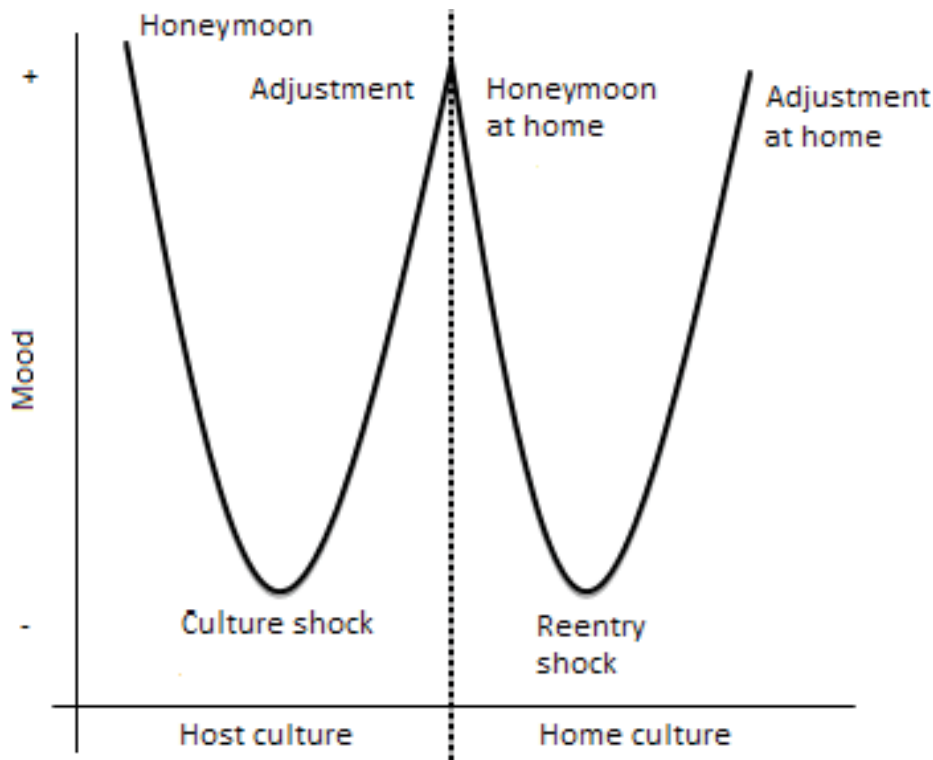


**Fig. 2.** U-curve model

Source: Adapted from Štěpánková (2014)

A similar model was developed by Oberg (1960), and later was extended by Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963), who developed so called W-curve model of adaptation of expatriates (Fig. 3). The W-model adds to initial three stages in the U-model another three stages of readjustment, which occurs when an expatriate arrives back to his or her home culture.





**Fig. 3.** W-curve model of adaptation

Source: Adapted from Štěpánková (2014)

Even though the concept of culture shock has a very long history, its understanding is not unanimous in the fields of social and cross-cultural psychology. Pedersen (1995) describes culture shock as a process of initial adjustment to an unfamiliar environment. In a multicultural context, culture shock can be described as a more or less sudden immersion into a nonspecific state of uncertainty where the individuals are not sure of, what is expected of them or what they can expect from the individuals around them. Mirada (Mirada, van Tilburg, & Vingerhoest, 2005) states that the concept of culture shock implies that the experience of visiting or living in a new culture is an unpleasant surprise or shock, partly because it is unexpected, and partly because it may lead to a negative evaluation of one's own or the host culture. Lukšová (Lukšová, Kutnogorská, & Vrublová, 2012) argues that after returning to the country of origin there can occur so called re-entry shock. Problems caused by this type of shock are usually unexpected and their range depends on, how successfully the individual went through the adaptation in host country. Individuals can recognize that they cannot orientate in the environment they grew up and lived in anymore, which can cause the feelings of anxiety and uncertainty. Both culture shock and re-entry shock can express itself by physical or mental symptoms, which can in higher or lower degree harm the normal functioning of an individual.

Berry (2005) prefers to use the term *acculturative stress* instead of the *cultural shock* for two reasons. Firstly, the notion of shock carries negative connotations. Secondly, in the field of health psychology, the term stress has both

positive (eustress) and negative (distress) valence. Because acculturation has both positive (e.g., new opportunities) and negative (e.g., discrimination) aspects, the stress conceptualization better matches the range of affect experienced during acculturation. Stewart and Leggat (1998) indicate that four stages of culture shock can be identified, and the cultural adjustment process takes approximately a year. They distinguish these stages: incubation, crisis, recovery and full recovery.

## METHOD

### Goal and research questions

The aim of the research is to describe and analyze how the Czechs adapt to the Turkish culture and to find out how the people perceive Turkey and its inhabitants and how they are able to adjust to it. Our research questions are following:

- 1) How do the respondents perceive the Turkish cultural environment and Turkish inhabitants?
- 2) Do the respondents try to adapt to the Turkish environment and the Turkish way of life?
- 3) What are the biggest cultural misunderstandings the respondents face and what are the biggest problems and barriers?

### Data collection

Our data was collected with the method of semi-structured interview, so the respondents could express their individual feelings and go deeper in the description of their emotions, thoughts and motives. The interviews were conducted with ten individuals. The answers were recorded by a mobile phone and subsequently transformed into a written form. The length of the interviews varied between 30-60 minutes. The structure of the interview was inspired by the research of Kelley and Meyers (1995) and is based upon the dimensions of Cross Cultural Adaptability Inventory.

The interview consists of 19 questions. The first three are directed at basic information about the respondents, the next 16 questions are split into three areas. The first area is directed to general information about their stay in Turkey - why the respondents came, how long they are staying in Turkey and what is their occupation. The second area deals with their perception of Turkish culture and people - what are their feelings, what they think about the Turks and their culture. The last area is directed at the process of adaptation to the Turkish environment and at the respondent's relation to Czech culture. In this paper we present the selected and most interesting results.

### Research sample

The respondents had to fulfill the following criteria: they had to be Czech citizens and their stay in Turkey had to be at least 2 years. The 2-year mini-

imum is based on the research of Black and Mendenhall (1991) who state that 2 years is the average time for a person to reach the phase of adjustment.

We obtained the respondents through the method of deliberate choice in cooperation with two Czech-Turkish organizations - *ČeskoTurecko/ÇekTürk* and *Spolek českých občanů v Istanbulu*. There are several groups of Czechs living in Turkey, spread all around the country. Most of them live in Istanbul and in Western and Southern Turkey. Interviews were conducted with Czechs living in Istanbul and Bursa - 9 women and 1 man. Table 1 contains the basic information about the respondents.

**Tab. 1.** Participants

Partic- pant	Sex	Age	Length of stay in Turkey	Reason of coming to Turkey	Job	Family/partner
A	F	28	5 years	Work	Employed	Turkish boyfriend
B	F	35	3 years	Husband's work	Maternal leave	Georgian husband and kids
C	F	33	3 years	Boyfriend	Maternal leave	Turkish husband
D	F	25	4 years	Erasmus stay	Employed	Turkish boyfriend
E	F	38	10 years	Work	Employed	Turkish husband and son
F	F	27	3 years	Husband	Maternal leave	Turkish husband and daughter
G	F	39	8 years	Work	Maternal leave	Turkish husband and kids
H	M	43	4 years	Work	Employed	Turkish girlfriend
I	F	28	3,5 years	Boyfriend	Employed	Turkish boyfriend
J	F	25	2 years	Boyfriend	Employed	Turkish boyfriend

Participants were between 25 and 43 years old. The length of stay was between 3 and 10 years and the average length was 4.5 years. Five participants came to Turkey for employment. Four participants came because of a romantic partner and in one case the reason to come to Turkey was Erasmus student exchange program attendance. Six respondents are currently working and four are on maternity leave. Nine respondents currently have a Turkish romantic partner and one respondent has a Georgian husband.

## RESULTS

### Feelings after the arrival in Turkey

Most of the respondents had positive feelings after their arrival in Turkey. Only one participant described her feelings as really negative. Few respondents had known the Turkish environment before coming and thus had no unpleasant feelings. Participant G answered the question about her feeling



after arrival *I had generally positive feelings. I was wondering what was or was not to happen. In Turkey I knew only Istanbul from my earlier business trips, during which I was provided with a lot of comfort. Because of this fact my imagination of what was to happen was a bit distorted. But my initial feelings were great. I knew the people with whom I was supposed to be, I had a job to do, and I knew everything had been arranged, so my feelings were extremely positive.* Respondent F had very negative feelings from the start, but then became reconciled with the situation. *My feelings after the arrival were horrible. In the first week I was crying constantly. I did not want to stay here; I did not want to be far from my family in the Czech Republic. But we just moved here and then I got used to it and I was trying to look at the good side of things in Turkey. Finally, I got used to the life here somehow...* Respondent H stated: *When I came, I had no time for any feelings. From the airport I went straight to work and from the work back to the airport to fly elsewhere. The first three months before I decided to stay here permanently I was flying between Prague, Germany, Cairo and Istanbul. Then I settled down, but my feelings did not really change as I had so much work that I had no time left for feelings.* Participant C was undergoing two major changes at the same time, as she was pregnant when she moved to Turkey. She stated: *My memories for past then are distorted as I was pregnant and I would say the feelings I had were affected by the hormonal change inside of me. I had ups and downs.*

Most of the respondents state they had no prejudices towards the Turkish society. Participant S said: *I had no prejudices, because I had not known much about the Turkish culture. Not so much into detail.* Respondent D admitted she had had prejudices as everybody has them. Three respondents said they had had certain prejudices and stereotype images, but had changed their opinion quite soon. Respondent C answered: *Maybe I had some. I was afraid of health complications, particularly of diarrhea. So I brought pills with me that I eventually did not use. In this case I might have had prejudices, because I thought that due to the heat the food it would not be good or we would not be used to it and might have some problems of this character. And I must say we never had such problems.*

#### Turkish culture and mentality

In this area we could identify both positive and negative perceptions of Turkish culture. Some of the respondents answered that they liked some aspects of Turkish culture. Respondent A stated she had neutral feelings about the Turkish culture and she did not care much. Three respondents said that they still do not understand the Turkish mentality. Two respondents said that only later they were able to identify some of the common features of Turkish culture. The answers differed based on where the people lived and with whom they were in contact. Nine respondents have a Turkish partner and are in contact with their Turkish families. Traditions and customs of the families differ. Respondent I named a few typical aspects of Turkish culture but then said: *It is really hard to define as there are millions of scenarios. It is given by the size of the country and by so many influences from*

*different cultures and so on. So I think that the culture or the customs do not have a solid framework. Several respondents have addressed the fact that the community life is very important in Turkey and as well as the family, and that its members are really close to each other compared to the Czech culture. Respondent G stated: There are differences based on the social strata or it depends on education of the people and so on. As regards mentality in general I don't know. Sometimes I think I do understand it already and sometimes I think I never could in my lifetime. They are just different; they really have a different type of upbringing, different type of thinking.*

Several respondents answered in the same or similar way to the question *What do you think of the Turkish people?* Respondents agreed about Turkish people being religious, open, friendly, hospitable, helpful, patriotic and caring about their families. Twice we received an answer that Turkey is a big country and that it is impossible to generalize. Some respondents tried to compare Turks with Czechs in their answers. Some respondents mentioned also negative features of Turks – egoism, reserve and suspicion. Respondent E stated: *I really don't like to generalize. I think you cannot generalize about any country, less so if it is so large. But if I have to say something, Turks are proud people. They are people that don't care what others think about them. They are people that are open and helpful on one side but closed and suspicious on the other. It heavily depends on the locality, on a given situation, on the reactions of their social environment. They are people of strong beliefs and I don't mean religion. When they hold certain values, they are able to do truly a lot for them. They are people that are not afraid to stand up for something. They are also subject to hierarchy and patriotic influences of Turkish society due to the fact they constantly seek approval from the outer social environment. Respondent F spoke about how she perceives Turkish women: I am not a big fan of Turkish women. I think they are insincere and backbiters. They are like – oh, honey, I like to see you – and when you go behind the corner they start to slander. I don't have a single Turkish friend among girls as I think they are insincere.*

#### Sources of stress and conflict

Six respondents stated they had a conflict or stress in their workplace. Respondent H told us: *Many times the client came late. This disrespect for others, this notion that you can come late, this is something very strange. They don't even pick up a phone. We ask them whether they are coming or not, and they are able to tell you that in two hours. But they don't tell you in advance so you spent three hours sitting and waiting. So yes, I had a conflict, but mostly due to disrespect and unfairness. I never had a conflict for any other reason. Turkish family or the lifestyle of the Turkish families of the respondents is another source of stress. Participant E stated: There are misunderstandings and conflicts in the families as it is in the family, where the Czech individualism meets the Turkish community-based nature. Some other specific problems emerged, such as the poor quality of public traffic in Turkey, dress style, Muslim feasts or harassment in the bus or on the street. Participant B stated: Driving in traffic in general could be a negative*

experience; it is very stressful in this city. And I really think it is because of their nature that projects into the way they drive, sometimes it can be really dangerous. They drive through the stop sign at 30 kilometers per hour; they don't stop at the red lights and so on... Participant J said: *The biggest problem I have had was when I went by bus to the Asian side of the city and I felt a lot of fear. I was the last in the bus and the driver turned off the lights and put down the bus sign and wanted to drive me to the spot I wanted to go. I was to get off the bus at the previous stop but he told me he would take me there. I told him several times I wanted to get off, but he just didn't listen to me. Luckily I had a phone with me so I called my boyfriend and described him the directions we were heading.*

### Language

Most of the respondents said that they learned to speak Turkish at least partially and they continued to learn. Two respondents stated they spoke good Turkish and they didn't feel any language barrier. Participant F thinks that there is always a way to communicate with the locals. She said: *I didn't have a problem with the language barrier. I am a very communicative person and I learned Turkish step by step, even though it was not easy. I think there is always a way how to communicate.* Two respondents said that they spoke no Turkish at all, but one of them had recently started to learn. We can thus say that all but one respondent have learned some Turkish. In two cases the main reason to learn is their children. Respondent E said: *The reason I need to speak better Turkish is that I have a kid and I need to be able to communicate with his surroundings in a way that he would be able to become a part of it. So the kid is the strongest factor that forced me to speak Turkish.*

### Positive experience

Five respondents expressed their positive experience from Turkish environment. Two of them stated that the Turkish people are friendly and helpful to foreigners. Participant B also mentioned their kind relationship to children: *A positive thing that surprised me... They like children a lot. They are very friendly to them. For example in the shop they are able to help you with the kids, they don't have to care about mum with baby-carriage but they help you anyway. Sometimes it even gets strange or bothering. For example, when my daughter was small, I turned and saw how somebody took her from her carriage and I felt quite uncomfortable with that. And that was not the only case. But you get used to that and those few extra bacteria probably don't hurt anybody. So their attitude to kids is certainly different, open, more positive than in the Czech Republic.*

### Similarities and differences between Czech and Turkish culture

All respondents feel the difference between Czech and Turkish culture. One participant does not see these differences as vast. Respondent B answered: *Once we stayed here for Christmas with my husband as I was close to the birth of my second baby. My son was born here in Istanbul. We couldn't fly, so I gave birth here and we stayed here for Christmas. For us, Christians, Christmas is an important*

day in a year. Here 24<sup>th</sup> December is a normal working day and the only thing that is Christmassy is maybe Starbucks where they play carols but otherwise it is an ordinary day. As I said, the Turks have a different nature. They are livelier; sometimes in a positive, sometimes in a negative way. And she added: I don't see any elementary differences based on the fact I am from other country. The life here is very similar. People go to work, have families, care about their families, come home, have to take care of their kids, prepare some meal and so it goes days, weeks, months. At first sight it is very similar. Respondent F on the other hand sees the differences as huge: I think it is a totally different world. As I said already, Turkey has its own style of living. I think how the Turks always say how they advance, how they are the same as Europeans, it is not true. I think they have it rooted in their heads. For example girls cannot wear short skirts, as it would be frowned upon and the mums have to stay at home with the kids and they just have to take care for the family. Women cannot go in the street alone in the night as it would be a disgrace. Respondents often mentioned that the Turks are livelier and use more gestures; they perceive family and family life differently and have different feasts and customs. Participant I said: *The concept of family is different here for sure. As my husband is 32 years old, he has friends of the same age. And he is the only one that doesn't live with his family. Although they have high positions in their companies, they still stay with their family, their moms iron for them and so on. This is a crucial thing. They are not independent. And they would still call their moms, whether they are coming home for dinner or not. I find this foolish.*

### Friends

Most of the respondents have some Turkish friends. Four respondents directly answered they had Turkish friends. The others said they had a few of them or that they rather had acquaintances than friends among Turks. Respondent I said: *I have a lot of acquaintances, but acquaintances are not friends.* One respondent answered he had no Turkish friends. On a number of occasions the problem of making friends with Turkish women was mentioned. Respondent D said: *I have struggled to make Turkish friends among girls for four years and then I realized that it was not possible. I don't know if they were just jealous or if I just was not all right with the degree of their hypocrisy. They are frivolous, they can tell you how pretty you are and they can flatter you and just when you turn around they backstab you. They are raised in that way and they just behave so. They have one way they behave in front of their parents, where they have to act like virgins and be the nicest and kindest, and then they have a second way, where they defend their position in society outside of the family. On the other hand, this conflict of roles is difficult, so I don't wonder they are as they are.*

Almost all of the respondents have friends among other Czech expats. Some are in contact with Czechs via the internet only; others meet them regularly in person. Respondent G took part in establishing a compatriot society in Istanbul. She stated: *Experience of other expats was important for me as an expat. From the start I had sought other foreigners and then I reached a stage when I started to contact compatriots. I reported my address and contact at the consulate and*



so I started to receive invitations for certain events. There I met fellow countrymen with whom I stayed in contact and I was there when we started compatriot society that I presided over and I think I know at least three quarters of Czech citizens, who live here, at least those in Istanbul. Either I do personally, or at least virtually. With some of them I am in personal contact. Actually, I have some friends here, so now I have kind of fellow countrymen community here. One respondent doesn't know any Czechs in Turkey and has no contact with fellow countrymen. Respondent H is in contact with one Czech woman only and respondent J knows some fellow countrymen, but doesn't meet them.

### Quality of life

Three respondents have a feeling of fully-fledged life in Turkey and don't feel limited in any way. Two respondents qualified their life as adequate and one participant answered she couldn't be herself in Turkey and didn't live fully-fledged life there. The problem is that the respondents understood something different under the term "fully-fledged". Respondent D hasn't found yet how fully-fledged life would look like for her. The answer of respondent C is influenced by her parenthood: *There is not much of a fully-fledged life on maternity leave as it is heavily influenced by the needs of the kid, not my own needs.* Respondents listed a few things that limited them to a certain extent. Respondent H mentioned the lack of possibilities to practice sports and high prices in the sport facilities. Respondent J said that living a fully-fledged life in Turkey is possible *if one has a good job and is surrounded by the right people. There are such people that are educated and have some values. But it depends a lot on political situation.*

### Adjustment to Turkish culture

Most of the respondents try to adjust to the Turkish culture to certain extent. Respondent J answered: *I try to follow their rules and proceed according to them, so I don't offend anyone. But I don't try to be a typical Turkish girl.* Three respondents answered they didn't adjust as there was nothing that was forcing them. Respondent I said: *I don't try to adjust, but I tolerate their culture and I have started to be more interested in it than ever before, as it is basically interesting to learn new customs and so on. But I prefer to watch it from a distance. That is given by the fact that my husband is not orthodox in his beliefs at all. He just isn't a typical Turk.* Twice we received an answer that the respondent had to adjust everywhere he lived and that was his duty to adjust.

## SUMMARY

### How the respondents perceive Turkish cultural environment and Turkish inhabitants?

Most of the respondents had positive feelings from the start. Some of the respondents already knew the environment as it was not their first visit. The



respondents have both positive and negative feelings of the Turkish culture and Turks. There was often mentioned a list of things that the respondents liked and a list of things they didn't. On the positive side we could put the attitude to children, family relations, some feasts and traditions. Negatively perceived was the strict hierarchy in the Turkish society, low level of sincerity among people, tendency of family members to meddle in all aspects of personal life, big dependence on family and non-ecological thinking. According to the respondents Turks are open, hospitable, friendly, helpful, warm and nice. On the other hand they are suspicious, closed, over-reacting and egoist. Turkish women were described as insincere and backbiting. Some respondents said they didn't understand Turkish mentality and were not sure if they could ever understand it. Most of the respondents perceive Czech and Turkish environment and culture as totally different. Among the biggest differences is family life, social relations, feasts and traditions, beliefs, character and the overall perception of the world.

Do the respondents try to adjust to Turkish environment and Turkish style of life?

Almost all respondents know at least basics of the Turkish language and they continue to learn. Only one participant has no ambition in learning Turkish. Most of the respondents have some Turkish friends. In some cases the participants said they had acquaintances rather than friends. The problem of making friends with Turkish women was also mentioned, as they have other values and are insincere and too competitive. All respondents know some fellow countrymen in Turkey and most of them are in contact with them. In Istanbul the Czechs have a compatriot society that organizes certain events. Most of the respondents try to adjust to the Turkish culture and lifestyle to a certain extent. We can thus conclude that most of our respondents actively try to integrate into the Turkish society.

What are the cultural misunderstandings the Czechs face and what are their biggest problems and barriers?

All respondents have faced conflict or stressful situations in Turkey. Most of these situations occurred at the workplace or inside the family. The biggest problem in the workplace is the Turkish way of working that was described as slow with low efficiency and tendency to postpone tasks, and poor time management. Unfair or insincere behaviour was also mentioned. In the family the conflicts are often connected to the different conception of family life, as the Turkish family is more collectivistic. Family habits and customs are also different. Traffic, dress style or harassment in the street or in the bus was also mentioned. For most of the respondents the cultural differences are not a major obstacle for a good quality of life in Turkey.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The outcomes of this research are not applicable to other cultural environments and according to our opinion it would be difficult to apply them even to Turkey as a whole. Turkey is a large and very heterogeneous country and the differences between the west and east are huge. Most of the respondents live in Istanbul, which is a cosmopolitan city, where a lot of cultures meet and mix and one could easily live a rather European and anonymous lifestyle.

We found out that most Czechs are in contact with fellow countrymen and meet them. All respondents regularly come back to the Czech Republic. The respondents also have Turkish friends, but they don't have many of them and in some cases they rather consider them acquaintances. Some respondents have a majority of Czech friends in Turkey, but some have friends also among the foreigners. All but one respondent knows at least basics of Turkish language and have the ambition to learn it. Some respondents said they had no need to adjust as nothing forced them. Language, social relations and family life might be the main factors that have a positive influence on the adjustment process. Only one respondent doesn't have a Turkish partner (has a Georgian one) and it was her that spoke about no need of adjustment to Turkish culture. Twice we heard the argument that one can live an anonymous life in Istanbul and can independently decide the way of life.

We consider the social environment in which a person lives as a fundamental factor of adaptation. Mostly the family of Turkish partners and the level of contact with them would play an essential role. We can see the attempts of the respondents to adjust to Turkish lifestyle, but at the same time we could see the tendencies to keep their Czech traditions and customs. Generally we can conclude that the Czechs are trying to integrate into the Turkish environment. They keep their cultural patterns but they are trying to adjust to the Turkish environment to certain extent.

We are not able to conclude, if the respondents have undergone the cultural shock as described by Oberg (1960). One respondent described negative feelings after the arrival to Turkey, but it didn't endure into later phases of the adaptation process. Other respondent said that she had a several crises and it took her three years in the country to start feeling satisfied with her life. In the case of the rest of the respondents it was difficult to conclusively identify this crisis phase in their timelines. We have the opinion that future researches based on the same or similar methodology should concentrate more on the changes of respondent's feelings over time.

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