Enhancing Awareness of Democracy in the Czech Republic

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By

Connor Norton

Clarissa Casilla

Elina Barrows

Report Submitted to:

Advisor, Professor Bland Addison

Prague Project Center

Co-Directors, Professors Mary Keller and Aaron Deskins

Worcester Polytechnic Institute

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Abstract

The 2020 Enhancing Democracy in the Czech Republic IQP group pursued the goal of advocating for democracy in the Czech Republic by creating a documentary highlighting the current decline in some democratic practices in the Czech Republic. Due to travel restrictions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, the project was completed remotely, and not in Prague as originally planned. We contacted a student at Charles University in Prague to learn about current threats to democracy, participated in a discussion with former ambassador Adrian Basora on the rise of authoritarianism in Eastern Europe, and investigated Czech organizations and movements aimed at promoting democracy through public debate, protests, and education. Investigating current Czech political opinions and analyzing data trends served as a foundation for making an educational video on the nature of democracy and democratic activism. By circulating our video online, our goal is to raise the public's awareness about the essential aspects of a democratic government, while also studying strategies that would make our video more accessible and widespread for the citizens of the Czech Republic.

Acknowledgments

Executive Summary

Project Goals

Since 1989 and the fall of the Soviet Union, the world has steadily seen an increase of democratic nations. The Czech Republic, which arose after the dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1992, followed this trend. Recently, however, the integrity of the democratic system has been under attack because of the spread of increasingly authoritarian ideology. Due to recent corruption scandals and a lack of political transparency, the ranking of the Czech Republic has declined in several global metrics for measuring democracy to the point of being labeled a "flawed democracy."

Our project aimed to explore the nature of democracy and Czech political views to provide recommendations to increase civic engagement with democratic practices. Our research was compiled into a short documentary on the nature of democracy. In the future, we hope that it can be shared on social media and with selected non-government organizations from the Czech Republic that work to promote democracy. We hope that this video will also promote democracy and political engagement in the Czech Republic as well as inform citizens of their individual role in democratic government.

Methods

To accomplish our goal, the team planned to consult and interview international democratic institutions, local Czech organizations, and Czech community members. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting travel restrictions, our consultations and

interviews were conducted remotely. Our contacts helped us gain a better understanding of the past and present political issues of the Czech Republic and the nature of democracy and allowed us to explore the personal perspectives of Czech citizens to help determine the most effective social media solution to strengthen democracy and political engagement. Next, we analyzed trends on Czech social media usage and video usage in order to make an informed decision on how to effectively make our documentary. Lastly, we used our acquired knowledge to create a short documentary compiling all the research we have done on the nature of democracy.

Results and Finding

Due to COVID-19, the group had to be flexible with our contacts in the Czech Republic to work around time differences and technological challenges that we were faced with. All of our meetings and interviews were conducted over Zoom and international meetings had to be planned with the six hour time difference in mind. We conducted interviews with a student from Charles University in Prague and with a representative from the non-government organization, the National Democratic Institute (NDI). The interviews were all recorded so that clips, audios, and quotes could all be included in our documentary. We also got to speak with the former ambassador to the Czech Republic, Adrian Basora, and hear about his experiences working in the Czech Republic.

We decided that we wanted to discuss Czech history, past and present, as well as the implications of the Czech Republic's low ranking on democracy indexes. After evaluating our options, we chose to animate our video. Powtoons was chosen and each group member worked on portions of the animation in order to visually depict concepts related to democracy such as voting, protesting, and celebrating diverse voices. After finishing the animations, we recorded

voice-overs to narrate our animations and spliced the animation and audio together using iMovie. Our video was then published on our project website and shared with our classmates from the Prague 2020 IQP site.

Conclusion

Democracy indexes show that Czech democracy has stagnated over the past few years (Democracy Index, 2019; Freedom House 2020). As long as government corruption continues to permeate Czech government, and the Czech people remain complacent about it, democracy in Prague may continue to decline. We wanted the Czech people to become more aware of what we saw to be issues in current democratic practices, inspiring them to vote and be more active politically so that they can combat their "flawed democracy" status. Likewise, we want to help the citizens of the United States better understand ongoing democratic struggles in Prague. While many organizations within the Czech Republic work to promote democratic principles in the nation, we believe it would be useful to have a short piece of shareable information to help them spread awareness on social media platforms where it will reach the most people. By creating a documentary, we expect to inform more people - both in the United States and in the Czech Republic - about the struggle between authoritarianism and democracy in the Czech Republic.

Introduction

Since 1989 and the fall of the Soviet Union, the world has steadily seen an increase of democratic nations, reaching a total of 99 countries with either an electoral or liberal democracy in 2018. The Czech Republic is one such democracy, which arose after the dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1992 after the Velvet Revolution of 1989. After many years of being subjugated to Nazi facism and the USSR's communist regimes, the Czech Republic's adoption of a democratic government allowed its citizens to actively participate in the political decision-making process, provided better economic well-being through free enterprise, and enforced protections of basic human rights (Roser, 2013).

Democratization of the Czech Republic was widely accepted by its citizens. Recently, however, the integrity of the democratic system has been under attack from an increasingly authoritarian ideology. Due to recent corruption scandals and a lack of political transparency, the ranking of the Czech Republic has declined in several global metrics for measuring democracy to the point of being labeled a "flawed democracy" (Freedom House, 2020; The Economist's Intelligence Unit, 2019). Many Czech organizations, like DEMAS and the Czech Center for Democracy and Human Rights, have been established to promote democratic ideals, such as gender equality, racial tolerance, general and fair elections, and to actively oppose this democratic degradation. While non-governmental organizations (NGOs) promote democratic goals, a broader awareness of the public's role in democratic processes is not widely appreciated.

Our group created an animated video that discussed Prague's political history and stressed the importance of maintaining democratic processes in the Czech Republic. By creating a documentary, we presented nonpartisan information about the nature of democracy. This public service video can be shared with the organizations we have contacted over the course of our IQP,

such as the National Democratic Institute (NDI), A Million Moments for Democracy, several Charles University students, and former Ambassador Adrian Basora, allowing our video to be seen by a wider audience.

Our project aims to share the importance of participating in democratic processes in the Czech Republic. To meet this goal, we developed the following objectives: 1.) Assess current political opinions within Czech organizations and among Czech students, 2.) Create a visual representation of our research in the form of a video documentary, 3.) Investigate and analyze how our video may be effectively distributed in the future. By investigating and reporting on the nature of democracy and making our video more accessible to citizens of the Czech Republic, we hope to raise the public's awareness about the current threats to Czech democracy.

Background

The first two sections of this chapter include information necessary for understanding the history and the current democratic system of the Czech Republic, and the ongoing corruption and scandals that block the Czech people from being represented transparently by elected officials. The third section of this chapter includes explanations of the Freedom House and the Economist Intelligence Unit metrics for measuring democracy, highlighting the specific causes of the democratic degradation in the Czech Republic over the past few years. The fourth section of this chapter examines the role social media has on shaping public opinion on democratic issues, in as much as public knowledge about the current political situation is spread by social media. The fifth section of this chapter explores the role of video in political advocacy, detailing its use by politicians and activists alike. The sixth section of this chapter discusses various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in the Czech Republic, and what steps they have taken to improve democracy and political representation for all Czech peoples.

I.   Post WWII Czechoslovakia

Following WWII, Czechoslovakia formed its first democratic government since its occupation by Nazi soldiers, who dismantled the previous democratic government to subjugate the Czechoslovakian people to a facist dictatorship. The election of President Edvard Beneš in 1945 brought hope that the surrounding Soviet-backed governments would recognize Czechoslovakian sovereignty. By 1948 however, Soviet influence strengthened the Czechoslovakian communist party known as Komunistická strana Československa (KSČ), who

silenced popular calls for a western-style democracy (American Friends of the Czech Republic, 2012).

Communism and the Prague Spring of 1968

Communism in Czechoslovakia remained the dominant political ideology until the 1960s, when Alexander Dubček was promoted to the head of the KSČ. Dubček championed liberal civil and political reforms in an attempt to develop "socialism with a human face" (Balík et al., 2017). Under this new socialism, citizens were given more personal freedoms, and Dubček proposed a more open economic system than the rest of Eastern Europe's state-controlled economies. While Czechoslovakian citizens embraced these reforms, the rest of the Eastern Bloc, that is countries under USSR control in the Warsaw Pact, saw the Prague Spring as a threat to communist rule. The result was a Soviet invasion of Prague in 1968 to suppress these reformers, arrest the current leaders, and undo Dubček's liberalization of Czechoslovakian communism. Public protests, including self-immolation and petitions, rallied Czechoslovakian citizens into an almost two decade long push to oust the communist politicians and reestablish a democratic republic (Stoneman, 2015).

The Velvet Revolution and Velvet Divorce

In 1989, the Communist regime in the Soviet Union and its satellite states was steadily declining. As a result, university students marched on Wenceslas Square in Prague and demanded that communist leaders step down and free elections be held. Although beaten and attacked by police forces, the demonstrators did not abandon their vision for an independent Czechoslovakia, increasing the intensity of the protests for the next ten days. On December 29, 1989, the communist leaders were forced to resign and Václav Havel, a prominent leader of the

1968 protests, was named president (Hill, 2017). The Communist policies were immediately

dismantled and economic reforms were put into place. However, one final issue remained:

Growing nationalism and differences in political and economic attitudes between Czech and

Slovakian communities upset the already fragile relationship between the two. These concerns

finally came to a head during the "Hyphen Debate" of 1990, a parliamentary debate about the

placement of a hyphen in the new name of post-communist *Czecho-Slovakia*. This grammatical

debate further emphasized the political and cultural disparities between the Czech and Slovakian

ethnic groups. Two years later on January 1, 1993, the Czech and Slovakian governing bodies

agreed to split the country into the Czech and Slovak Republics, respectively (Hill, 2017; Krapfl,

2013).

II.   Modern Day Czech Republic

The idea of self-determination by the people was not a foreign concept to the Czech

citizens and the early Czech Republic's leaders. Prior to its occupation by the Nazis,

Czechoslovakia was a parliamentary democracy born from the dissolution of the

Austro-Hungarian empire at the end of World War I. As explained in the previous section, the

Czechoslovakian citizens continually pushed for liberty and democracy in the face of various

authoritarian claimants to Czech leadership. This struggle for democracy continues to this day.

Recently, corruption and scandal have become too common in the Czech political sphere,

shifting the country away from its democratic foundation and moving it towards

authoritarianism.

Early Days of the New Czech Republic

The newly formed Czech Republic immediately set out to establish a constitution and parliamentary government, as well as privatize state-owned industries to promote economic growth. The new constitution resembles that of the United States, in which it recognizes a "Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms," which protects human and civil rights and establishes a 81 member Senate and 200 member Chamber of Deputies headed by a prime minister and president. In the years following the separation, the Czech Republic saw economic growth unlike all other Eastern European countries. Regional governments and mayoral systems were put in place and general elections of the legislature and presidency were established. Likewise, embassies from countries like the United States were created, and ambassadors like the US ex-ambassador Adrian Basora (1992 – 1995) helped promote further democratic and economic growth. This progress allowed the Czech Republic to join the National Atlantic Trade Organization (NATO) in 1999 and the European Union (EU) in 2004 (Hills, 2017).

Political Upheaval in Contemporary Czech Republic

Today, the Czech Republic's political sphere is composed of seven main political parties that range from far-left to far-right. In the early part of the 2010s, a large scale investigation of Prime Minister Petr Nečas of the Civic Democratic Party (ODS) resulted in his, and several of his officers, removal from government after accusations of bribery, illegal surveillance, and corruption (Oxford Analytica Daily Brief Service, 2013). Political upheaval and party turmoil ensued as members of parliament sought to persuade President Milos Zeman to appoint Miroslava Nemcova as prime minister, at least until the next elections in 2014, or allow an earlier parliamentary election date. However, public approval of the ODS party was steadily declining and dropped even more on Necas's resignation. Going against both sides of the Czech

Parliament, Zeman chose to appoint Jiří Rusnok as Nečas's successor. Taking office in July, Rusnok quickly lost parliamentary support, and about two months later, the Chamber of Deputies was dissolved (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2016; Oxford Analytica Daily Brief Service, 2013).

Czech citizens backed the newly formed Action of Dissatisfied Citizens Party (ANO 2011), which ran on an anti-corruption, anti-establishment platform, leading to the election of the wealthy Andrej Babiš as prime minister and continued support for President Zeman. Despite his anti-corruption platform, Babiš remains under fire for conflict of interest allegations, media censorship, and other corruption scandals (Eisen et al., 2020). Likewise, President Zeman claims to be the "president of the people," but given his great wealth, many ordinary Czech citizens do not respect his leadership. By using populist ideas to demonize and "other" his enemies, as well as openly supporting Russian interference in Czech affairs, President Zeman has been accused of undermining the current democratic system in the Czech Republic. These allegations of political corruption and the feigned populist nature of the president have not gone unnoticed by younger generations of voters (Naxera and Krčál, 2018 and 2019). Many social scientists believed that democracy would not last long in Eastern Europe after the fall of communism (Bunce, 1990). While the Czech Republic quickly developed strong local governments, politicians failed to consider public opinion on many matters such as urban policies, transportation, infrastructure, and instead conducted politics behind closed doors (Horak, 2007). Because of this, the Czech Republic's democracy rating on several world-wide scales has seen a sharp decrease in recent years, falling into a "flawed democracy" category. A "flawed democracy" is a nation that allows citizens to vote and recognizes basic civil liberties, but gives them relatively little insight into or power over what actually happens within the government. "Flawed democracies" also lack high

levels of political participation, accompanied by a distrust of the government's legitimacy (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2019).

III.   Measuring Democracy

There are two widely used methods to measure democracy: *thin* measurements and *thick* measurements. Thin measurements use the common definition of democracy, focusing solely on electoral processes and the right to vote. However, social scientists and political analysts have begun to accept a wider set of metrics that affect the representation of individual voices in government and the protection of human rights beyond elections, known as thick measurements. Thick measurements consider social factors, such as political participation and social justice (Carr, 2008). Two different organizations have published their analysis on the state of democracy in the Czech Republic over the past few years: Freedom House uses thin metrics and the Economist Intelligence Unit uses thick metrics (Kakic, 2007).

Freedom House Metrics

Freedom House has been publishing reports on the democratic status of nations using thin democracy metrics in some form since the 1950s, and today they analyze 195 countries and 15 territories in their annual report. Their metrics are derived from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which the UN adopted in 1948 (Freedom House 2014). Four specific criteria are used to define an electoral democracy:

> 1. A competitive, multiparty political system. 2. Universal adult suffrage. 3. Regularly contested elections conducted on the basis of secret ballots, reasonable ballot security and the absence of massive voter fraud. 4. Significant public access of major political parties to the electorate through the media and through generally open campaigning (Kakic, 2007).

Freedom House offers an overall freedom score based on the combined scores of a country's political rights and civil liberties, regardless of a country's geographic or economic situation.

Figure 1: The above chart shows Freedom House's grading rubric. After scoring a nation on its civil liberties and political rights, the two scores are combined, as seen above, to determine its rating (Freedom House Methodology).

There are 10 indicators of political rights and 15 indicators of civil liberties (see Appendix A), and each indicator receives a score out of 4, adding up to the overall score out of 100. Indicators range from a citizen's ability to fairly participate in elections to their trust in the government (Freedom House, 2014). A characterization of Free, Partly Free, and Not Free are given based on the grading system seen in Figure 2 (Freedom House Methodology, 2020).

Freedom House focuses more on electoral process and political pluralism than other democracy indexes but has demanding rules for a nation to be considered an electoral democracy (Kakic, 2007). Freedom House rarely changes a country's score from year to year unless significant political events limit or create new freedoms, or accumulating gradual change has occurred over time (Freedom House, 2014).

Czech Republic

FREE

91 /100

| Political Rights | 36 /40 |
| Civil Liberties | 55 /60 |

Figure 2: An excerpt of Freedom House's 2019 Report on the Czech Republic. Earning a score of 91/100, the Czech Republic is considered a "free nation" (Freedom House, 2020)

In their 2019 report, Freedom House gave the Czech Republic a score of 91/100, declaring them a "free nation." This number comes after a gradual decrease in recent years, with a score of 94 in 2017, 93 in 2019, and 91 from 2018 to now. Freedom House attributes this decrease to an overall rise in corruption as Prime Minister Andrej Babiŝ continues to surround himself in scandal. Some other areas where the Czech Republic lost points were minority representation (specifically Romani people), women, corruption, government openness, freedom of religion, freedom of media, equal justice in laws, and human trafficking (Freedom House, 2020).

EIU Metric

The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) has been publishing their reports on the levels of democracy across the world using thick metrics since 2006. Unlike other metrics for democracy, they consider more than just basic constitutional freedoms in their analysis. The EIU uses five different categories: electoral process and pluralism, functioning of government, political participation, political culture, and civil liberties. There are 60 indicators used to further analyze each nation (see Appendix B) and gives each nation a score out of ten for each category. This

score is then averaged to give each country a single metric to rank against each other. A nation's score can be further affected if they have noticeable losses in scores in the following areas: "1. Whether national elections are free and fair; 2. The security of voters; 3. The influence of foreign powers in government; 4. The capability of the civil service to implement policies."

Other criteria taken into account are public opinion surveys and other national surveys, participation and voter turnout, and the overall balance between legislative and executive branches. A score of 8-10 is a full democracy, 6-8 a flawed democracy, 4-6 a hybrid regime, and below 4 is an authoritarian regime (Kakic, 2007). Though the EIU has reported that around 48.4% of the world's populations live in a democracy of some kind, only 5.7% of the population live in a full democracy. The remaining 42.7% of these citizens live in a type of democratic nation known as a "flawed democracy."

	Overall Score	Rank	Electoral process and pluralism	Functioning of government	Political participation	Political culture	Civil liberties
			Full democracy				
Norway	9.87	1	10.00	9.64	10.00	10.00	9.71
Iceland	9.58	2	10.00	9.29	8.89	10.00	9.71
Sweden	9.39	3	9.58	9.64	8.33	10.00	9.41
New Zealand	9.26	4	10.00	9.29	8.89	8.13	10.00
Finland	9.25	5	10.00	8.93	8.89	8.75	9.71
Ireland	9.24	6	10.00	7.86	8.33	10.00	10.00
Denmark	9.22	7=	10.00	9.29	8.33	9.38	9.12
Canada	9.22	7=	9.58	9.64	7.78	9.38	9.71
Australia	9.09	9	10.00	8.93	7.78	8.75	10.00
Switzerland	9.03	10	9.58	9.29	7.78	9.38	9.12
Netherlands	9.01	11	9.58	9.29	8.33	8.75	9.12
Luxembourg	8.81	12	10.00	8.93	6.67	8.75	9.71
Germany	8.68	13	9.58	8.57	8.33	7.50	9.41
United Kingdom	8.52	14	9.58	7.50	8.89	7.50	9.12
Uruguay	8.38	15	10.00	8.57	6.11	7.50	9.71
Austria	8.29	16=	9.58	7.86	8.33	6.88	8.82
Spain	8.29	16=	9.58	7.14	7.78	8.13	8.82
Mauritius	8.22	18	9.17	8.21	5.56	8.75	9.41
Costa Rica	8.13	19	9.58	7.50	6.67	7.50	9.41
France	8.12	20	9.58	7.86	7.78	6.88	8.53
Chile	8.08	21	9.58	8.57	5.00	8.13	9.12
Portugal	8.03	22	9.58	7.86	6.11	7.50	9.12
			Flawed democracy				
South Korea	8.00	23	9.17	7.86	7.22	7.50	8.24
Japan	7.99	24	8.75	8.21	6.67	7.50	8.82
United States of America	7.96	25	9.17	7.14	7.78	7.50	8.24
Malta	7.95	26	9.17	7.50	6.11	8.13	8.82
Estonia	7.90	27	9.58	7.86	6.67	6.88	8.53
Israel	7.86	28	9.17	7.86	8.89	7.50	5.88
Botswana	7.81	29	9.17	7.14	6.11	7.50	9.12
Cabo Verde	7.78	30	9.17	7.36	6.67	6.88	8.82
Taiwan	7.73	31	9.58	8.21	6.11	5.63	9.12
Czech Republic	7.69	32	9.58	6.79	6.67	6.88	8.53
Belgium	7.64	33	9.58	8.21	5.00	6.88	8.53
Cyprus	7.59	34	9.17	6.43	6.67	6.88	8.82
Italy	7.52	35	9.58	6.07	7.78	6.25	7.94
Slovenia	7.50	36=	9.58	6.79	6.67	6.25	8.24
Lithuania	7.50	36=	9.58	6.43	6.11	6.25	9.12

Figure 3: The top 36 nations on the 2019 EIU Democracy Index, notably classifying both Czech Republic and the United States as "flawed democracies" (Democracy Index, 2019).

In 2019, the Czech Republic's overall score was a 7.69/10, earning a 9.58/10 in Electoral Process and Pluralism, 6.79/10 in Functioning of Government, 6.67/10 in Political Participation,

6.88/10 in Political Culture, and 8.53/10 in Civil Liberties. Relatively few countries ranked

higher than an 8.0/10.0 and are considered to be a full democracy, for example France, 8.12/10,

and Norway 9.87/10. The Czech Republic ranks 32 overall, the second highest Eastern European

nation, and is nevertheless considered to be a *flawed* democracy along with the United States,

7.69/10 and 25th overall (Democracy Index, 2019).

	Overall score	Global Rank	Regional rank	I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties	Regime type
Estonia	7.90	27	1	9.58	7.86	6.67	6.88	8.53	Flawed democracy
Czech Republic	7.69	32	2	9.58	6.79	6.67	6.88	8.53	Flawed democracy
Slovenia	7.50	36=	3=	9.58	6.79	6.67	6.25	8.24	Flawed democracy
Lithuania	7.50	36=	3=	9.58	6.43	6.11	6.25	9.12	Flawed democracy
Latvia	7.49	38	5	9.58	6.07	6.11	6.88	8.82	Flawed democracy
Slovakia	7.17	42	6	9.58	7.14	5.56	5.63	7.94	Flawed democracy
Bulgaria	7.03	47	7	9.17	6.43	7.22	4.38	7.94	Flawed democracy
Hungary	6.63	55=	8	8.75	6.07	5.00	6.25	7.06	Flawed democracy
Poland	6.62	57	9	9.17	6.07	6.11	4.38	7.35	Flawed democracy
Croatia	6.57	59	10	9.17	6.07	5.56	5.00	7.06	Flawed democracy
Romania	6.49	63	11	9.17	5.71	5.56	4.38	7.65	Flawed democracy
Serbia	6.41	66	12	8.25	5.36	6.11	5.00	7.35	Flawed democracy
North Macedonia	5.97	77	13	7.00	5.36	6.67	3.75	7.06	Hybrid regime
Ukraine	5.90	78	14	7.42	2.71	6.67	6.25	6.47	Hybrid regime
Albania	5.89	79	15	7.00	5.36	4.44	5.00	7.65	Hybrid regime
Moldova	5.75	83	16	6.58	4.64	6.11	4.38	7.06	Hybrid regime
Montenegro	5.65	84	17	5.67	5.36	6.11	4.38	6.76	Hybrid regime
Armenia	5.54	86	18	7.50	5.36	6.11	3.13	5.59	Hybrid regime
Georgia	5.42	89=	19	7.83	3.21	6.11	4.38	5.59	Hybrid regime
Kyrgyz Republic	4.89	101	20	6.08	2.93	6.67	3.75	5.00	Hybrid regime
Bosnia and Hercegovina	4.86	102=	21	6.17	2.93	5.56	3.75	5.88	Hybrid regime
Russia	3.11	134=	22	2.17	1.79	5.00	2.50	4.12	Authoritarian
Kazakhstan	2.94	139	23	0.50	2.14	4.44	4.38	3.24	Authoritarian
Azerbaijan	2.75	146	24	0.50	3.21	2.78	3.75	3.53	Authoritarian
Belarus	2.48	150	25	0.92	2.00	2.78	4.38	2.35	Authoritarian
Uzbekistan	2.01	157	26	0.08	1.86	2.22	5.00	0.88	Authoritarian
Tajikistan	1.93	159=	27	0.08	0.79	1.67	6.25	0.88	Authoritarian
Turkmenistan	1.72	162	28	0.00	0.79	2.22	5.00	0.59	Authoritarian

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

Figure 4: Ranking of Eastern European states on the basis of democracy. Of the 28 nations analyzed from Eastern Europe, not a single is considered a full democracy, including 11 EU member nations that are all considered flawed democracies. Czech Republic falls second overall, only behind Estonia (Democracy Index, 2019).

In addition to overall global rankings, the EIU also breaks countries up by region. The

report notes that democracy in Eastern Europe has stagnated over the years as a result of public

skepticism in democratic proceedings. In general, Eastern Europe has struggled to maintain

public interest in politics, enforce laws, and avoid corruption within the government. Some Eastern Europeans citizens feel that democracy is too slow a process and therefore reject "liberal" democracy in favor of authoritarian or hybrid regimes. Because of this *authoritarian* political unrest, Eastern Europe falls behind the global average in both political culture and functioning of government (Democracy Index, 2019).

(Index score out of 10, 10 being best)

Global average · Eastern Europe

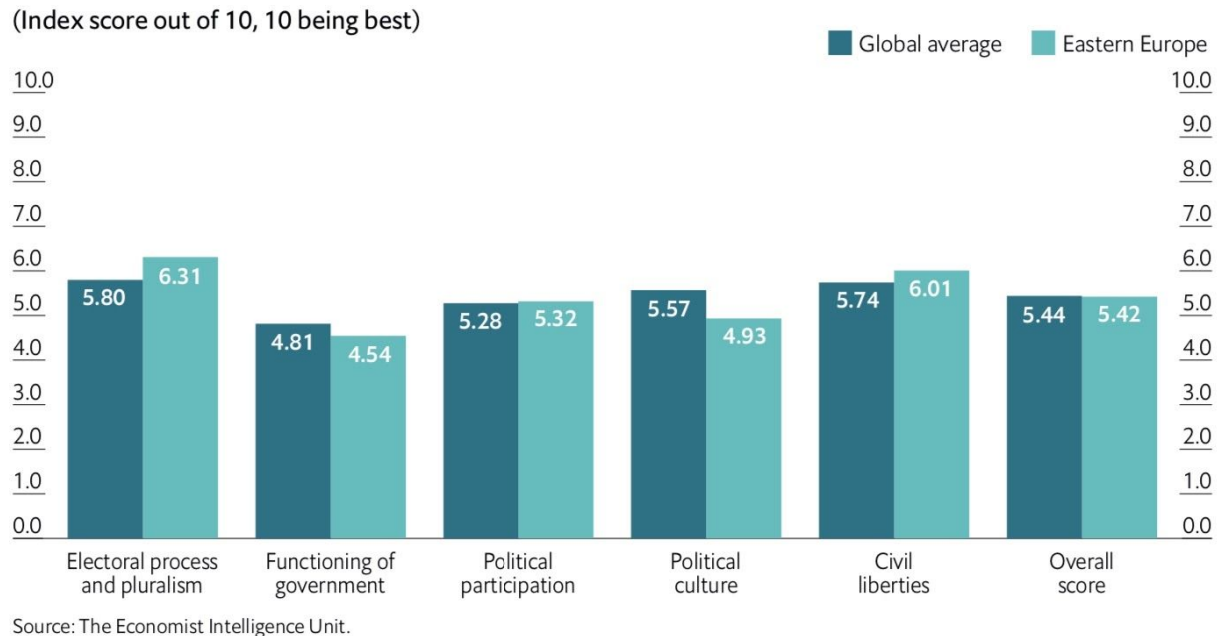|	Electoral process and pluralism	Functioning of government	Political participation	Political culture	Civil liberties	Overall score
Global average	5.80	4.81	5.28	5.57	5.74	5.44
Eastern Europe	6.31	4.54	5.32	4.93	6.01	5.42

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

Figure 5: A comparison of the global average for democracy score compared to the average score of Eastern Europe. Eastern Europe noticeably lacks in the functioning of government and political culture as they struggle to enforce democratic principles within their nations (Democracy Index, 2019).

Based on both thin and thick metrics for democracy, it is evident that democracy within the Czech Republic is threatened. Over the past two decades, democracy in the Czech Republic has slowly declined.

Though the electoral process may proceed as normal, the Czech Republic suffers from an ineffective government, and rather than blame the government, the Czech people have begun to lose faith in democracy itself. As authoritarian governments promise bigger and better prospects, the Czech Republic has accepted corruption as a seemingly necessary evil in order to maintain

order in a failing democracy (Horak 2007). For these reasons, the Czech Republic can be considered a flawed democracy.

IV.   Czech Social Media

Social media plays a major part in giving citizens political information. Social media and democracy work collaboratively. A nation with a full democracy respects and honors freedom of speech, allowing open and unfiltered broadcasts of political actions and personal opinions. The accessibility of information through social media creates trust among citizens and an overall positive impact in democracy by inciting public interest to vote and participate in politics. On the other hand, social media can also be misused to spread biased and falsely interpreted information. Therefore, a democratic country has the responsibility to encourage conscientious and educated use of such popular media.

Usage of Social Media in Czech Republic

Social media has internationally become an essential platform for political advertisement. In the US, the amount of money spent on presidential campaign social media advertising increased from $0.16b in 2012, to $2.90b in 2020 (Statista, 2020). Politicians are well aware of the impact social media has over citizens. Another study conducted in 2019 shows that 47% of Czechs agree that online social networks can get people interested in political affairs (Statista 2019). For that reason, most regional governments in the Czech Republic have established social media accounts to promote their work as shown in Figure 8.

Recent studies have been made measuring how much social media and the internet is used in Czech Republic. 9.4 million Czech people have access and use the Internet on a daily

basis. That's 88% of its population (Digitals News Report, 2019). Among the internet users, 61% of them have a smartphone in which they can access the internet and 80% of internet users visit social media networks. According to research, 24% of Czechs watch news and political videos within the past week, making it the third most popular video topic. As of 2020, the leading social media websites in the Czech Republic are Facebook, with 51.44% usage, and Pinterest, the second most visited with 28.98% usage. Furthermore, Seznam is the second leading search engine in the Czech Republic, after Google which only recently became number one (Statcounter GlobalStats, 2020).

Facebook

Facebook is considered a "mixed social network," which means that it is used for multiple purposes. In the Czech Republic, its most common usage is to stay in touch with friends, according to a survey conducted in 2016 (Novotová, 2016). Other motivations for using Facebook include being part of society and not feeling "left out," to entertainment, and staying up to date with the news. Facebook, as well as other social media networks, has become a source of news for many people. As the leading social media network, Facebook has also been used in the past to promote political campaigns and ideas. All of the regional governments in the Czech Republic have at least a Facebook account as shown in Figure 8.

Tab. 2: Regional governments in the Czech Republic and in Slovakia and selected measures about Facebook and YouTube (2019)

Regional governments	Social Media					No of inhab. thousand	Facebook		YouTube		
	F	I	T	Y	Other SM		Year	Followers	Year	Subscri-bers	Number of views thousand
The Capital City of Prague	1	1	1	1	Snap Chat, Live ch.	1308	2011	66603	2010	1140	1981
Hradec Kralove region	1	1	1	1		551	2014	11145	2011	377	310
Central Bohemian region	1	0	0	1	RSS	1369	2012	11543	No info	16	No info
Pardubice region	1	0	0	0		520	2014	10953	2010	229	227
Liberec region	1	0	0	1		423	2012	7532	2013	319	181
Vysocina region (Jihlava)	1	0	1	1		509	2012	4772	2010	583	454
Usti nad Labem region	1	1	0	1	RSS	821	2014	8091	2012	181	108
South Moravian region (Brno)	1	0	0	0	RSS	1188	2012	4595	-	-	-
Karlovy Vary region	1	0	0	1		295	2010	7327	2011	45	21
Olomouc region	1	1	1	1	G+, Flickr, issuu	632	2011	5395	2011	321	199
Pilsen (Plzen) region	1	0	0	0		585	2011	3634	2014	121	39
Zlin region	1	0	0	1	RSS	583	2013	3115	2013	No info	175
South Bohemian region (Ceské B.)	1	0	0	1		642	2013	13055	2011	70	41
Moravian-Silesian region (Ostrava)	1	1	0	1		1203	2014	17750	2011	803	579
Bratislava self-governing region	1	1	1	1	Flickr	655	2010	52069	2010	173	266
Trnava self-governing region	1	1	1	1	RSS, LinkedIn	523	2012	5967	2017	50	9
Trenčín self-governing region	1	1	1	1	RSS	587	2014	5378	2012	232	214
Nitra self-governing region	1	0	1	1	RSS	678	2014	530	-	64	-
Žilina self-governing region	1	1	0	1	ISSUU, Flickr	692	2014	14284	2010	873	902
Banská Bystrica self-gov. reg.	1	1	0	0	RSS	649	2014	10506	-	-	-
Prešov self-governing region	1	0	1	1	RSS	824	2018	3720	2012	56	206
Košice self-governing region	1	0	0	1	RSS	800	2013	1835	2018	18	2

Note. F = Facebook, I = Instagram, T = Twitter, Y = YouTube

Figure 6:Shows the usage of social media within regional governments in Czech Republic, with the number of followers on Facebook.

A large percentage of Czech citizens believe in social media as a beneficial source for spreading political information. A democratic country uses social media to promote interest in voting and engagement in the decision making process of a country. Even though all regional

governments in the Czech Republic have Facebook accounts with a great number of followers, not all accounts are active on the platform. A full democracy should allow the usage of media to not only promote political campaigns, but also communicate to its citizens about decisions being made, important changes, and even misconducts committed by the government. Citizens of a full democracy should be aware that any state-owned social media is subject to propagandistic distortions of information. For example, Facebook has become the main source of news for Czechs and allows for individual expression of political opinion. However, Facebook and other social media sites have been used in countries like the United States to disrupt democratic practices among their citizens. For social media to be used to embrace and enhance democracy in the Czech Republic, citizens must remain well-informed of the current happenings in their country from multiple different media outlets, instead of a single news source.

V.   Video Usage for Political Advocacy

Since the 1960s, video has been used to express and share opinions, educate, and efficiently promote awareness about political issues. Filmmaking such as documentaries and short films has served as a great tool for activists to spread information, news, and advocate the public's involvement in social and political issues. One of the key capabilities of videos is the intellectual and emotional power they have over viewers, making it easier to bias opinions and generate engagement on political issues. Politicians repeatedly exploit the video platform to create a favorably biased view of their own merits and accomplishments. In addition to inflating their image, underlying discriminatory and bigoted attitudes can be used to solicit support from prejudiced voters. Despite its shortcomings however, in countries where freedom of speech is very limited and independent news sites are banned, it is only through investigative and critically

thinking media that the public has become aware of the nature of their political reality. Video can be a fundamental resource in creating political awareness and generate pressure to promote improvement in democracy.

VI.   Non-governmental Organizations for Promoting Democracy

Amid the creeping authoritarianism and political corruption in the Czech Republic, many organizations and movements have been established to uphold democratic values and advocate for those without a voice in government. By creating continuous local and international pressure, these groups aim to hold corrupt politicians accountable and inspire new generations of voters to be active members of their political communities.

National Democratic Institute (NDI)

Founded in 1983, the National Democratic Institute is a nonpartisan and nonprofit organization that supports democratic practices throughout the world, seeking to uphold the principles defined in the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The NDI supports the idea that democracy is a human right. The organization works around six different regions including Latina America, Eurasia, Asia-Pacific, Middle East and North Africa, and Central and Eastern Europe. While they are an international organization, the NDI has a Czech Republic and Slovakia branch. In 2009, they partnered with the Czech parliament to help improve democratic practices. The organization has also helped combat discriminatory practices like xenophobia, and religious and ethinic based discrimination among citizens (National Democratic Institute, 2020).

DEMAS

DEMAS is a collection of 11 independent NGOs that was founded in 2008 that seeks to foster and support democracy, civil liberties, and human rights in the Czech Republic and the world. Established through the principles of civil engagement, communication, and democracy, DEMAS serves as a platform for cooperation and knowledge exchange to protect the civil and human rights of all people. They also assist countries that are struggling to defend their democratic practices or are transitioning into a democracy from another form of government. In 2019, DEMAS organized several public debates and lectures to educate the general public on the goals of democratization in Czech foreign policy. Likewise, they have openly supported organizations like the EU and Human Rights Watch and the improvements these organizations have made to their human rights policies (DEMAS, 2019).

Czech Centre for Human Rights and Democracy

A member of DEMAS and the Association of Human Rights Institutes (AHRI), the Czech Centre for Human Rights and Democracy is an academic research institution that uses social science and international law to protect human rights and democracy. They coordinate with various academic institutes and NGOs to examine the whole range of human rights protection, while also focusing on international criminal justice and policy. Like DEMAS, the Czech Centre also hosts seminars and discussions on human rights and democracy, but they also publish monthly bulletins, news articles, studies, and other analyses of human rights and democracy throughout the year (Czech Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 2019).

Milion Chvilek Pro Demokracii (A Million Moments for Democracy)

Established in 2018, a Million Moments for Democracy is an anti-corruption political movement that seeks to cultivate democratic culture, civil engagement, and public debate in the Czech Republic. Without any ties to a political party or political agenda, a Million Moments for Democracy uses small, private donations to organize protests and demonstrations demanding that Czech politicians be held accountable for their actions. In their attempts to educate the public on democracy and politics, a Million Moments for Democracy has developed the "Four Red Lines" that should not be crossed by anyone in the political world. Should a politician attempt to control the judiciary branch, the media, abuse their political powers, or enter a conflict of interest that hurts the Czech Republic, the demonstrators of a Million Moments for Democracy promise to protest and demand change. Those seeking to help the movement can do so by volunteering, donating small amounts of money, and/or signing a petition to remove the prime minister accused of such violations (as is the case with Andrej Babiš, the current prime minister) (Milion chvilek pro demokracii, 2020).

After decades of subjugation to communist thought, the formation of the Czech Republic gave Czech citizens the ability to create a self-determining government that embraced the will of the people. Thirty years later, these founding democratic principles remain at the cornerstone of the Czech government, however political corruption and increasing authoritarian ideology threaten to undermine the democratic integrity of the Czech Republic. Measurements of political pluralism, effectiveness of government, and political participation and culture from Freedom House and the Economist Intelligence Unit both indicate the gradual decline of Czech democracy in the past several years. Movements and NGOs, such a Million Moments for Democracy and the NDI, are actively combatting this democratic decline through demonstrations and informational events. As members of the smartphone age, Czech citizens gather information about their political climate, national news, and international happenings through social media platforms like Facebook. On these social media platforms, activists and politicians alike attempt to engage with their audience with postings and videos. It is through unbiased media, a well-informed and politically active populace, and the efforts of democratic movements and NGOs that democracy remains as a fundamental pillar of government in the Czech Republic.

Methodology

Our project aimed to explore the nature of democracy and Czech political views to provide recommendations to increase engagement with democratic practices via an informational video. To accomplish this goal, the team planned to consult and interview international democratic institutions, local Czech organizations, and Czech community members. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting travel restrictions, our consultations and interviews were conducted remotely. Such interviews provide a better understanding of past and present political issues in the Czech Republic and the nature of democracy. Next, we used our acquired knowledge to create a short documentary compiling all the research we have done so far on the nature of democracy. Upon finishing the video, our group shared it with members of the 2020 Prague Project Center cohort. We analyzed trends on Czech social media usage and political polls. Doing so allowed us to explore the personal perspectives of Czech citizens and help determine the most effective social media solution to further promote democracy and political engagement in the Czech Republic.

Objective 1: Assessed current political situation from reliable Czech sources

As we couldn't be in Prague in person, it was important to contact Czech citizens and residents to interview and survey them to gain a better understanding of local public opinion and political interests. First we connected with nonpartisan, local Czech organizations and found sources of information about political opinions. Our team contacted board members from selected organizations, found volunteers and students that shared their experiences and opinions. Since we do not have a sponsor in Prague, these organizations served as sources of information. We drafted emails explaining our project and sent them directly to members of the NDI

(National Democratic Institution), the Czech Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, and the League of Human Rights. The team discussed the mission of each organization and found a way to work along and collaborate by proposing methods of improvement, such as a documentary video spreading awareness and reaching out to a wider audience.

We contacted the NDI, which was the organization that best fitted with our project objective, and conducted an online interview with one of their representatives from Slovakia, Ondrej Poduska (a sample of our interview questions can be seen on Appendix C). Poduska grew up in the Czech Republic and now works in both the Czech Republic and Slovakia teaching youth about the importance of democracy. One of his purposes working in the NDI is to connect Polish, Czech, Slovak and Hungarian youth to get them politically active and to support their future political careers. Ondrej believes there are no systematic threats to democracy, but some key factors attempt to thwart western democratic practices in favor of autocratic methods, such as Zeman's encouraging Russian and Chinese influences.

We reached out to students in liberal arts colleges, and Czech students studying political science, and received few replies. We contacted the Charles University in Prague, where students research politicization of society and public controversies (Čísař). We conducted a semi-structured interview online via Zoom App with a humanities student, Barbora Bělohlávková, and the answers were recorded with her permission. During the interview, she mentioned her participation in movements, disagreements with the current government, and her overall definition of democracy. Ms. Bělohlávková provided us with great insight on a younger generation's views on politics.

According to the Pew Research Center, The Czech Republic, along with Poland, is one of the only Eastern European countries in which younger citizens are more in favor of democracy

than their elders (Starr, 2020). We interrogated Ms. Bělohlávková to see if she agrees or

disagrees with this research, and if she found that younger Czechs are more in favor of

democracy than older Czechs. As a result, she agreed with the statement and expressed that

younger people are more able to catch manipulative media from the populitstic political party in

power, than older people do.

Objective 2: Created a visual representation of our research in the form of a short documentary, and examined student responses to our documentary and the information it presents

Our group created a short documentary to narrate the political history of Prague, analyze

the nature of democracy, and conclude by giving recommendations about how Czechs can help

promote democracy. Our documentary was filmed using clips, images of the data sets we found

during research, as well as stock footage of Czech cities and landmarks. Each member of the

group narrated over the footage and provided explanations of the visuals on screen to better

inform the audience of what was being seen.

Figure 7: Screenshot of a video clip of the River Vltava in Prague, taken by user Svetjekolem, available for download at Videvo's website (Svetjekolem).

Since we were not able to be in Prague personally, we used high quality royalty-free stock video from websites like Videvo. We also added royalty free music to our documentary found on the website Free Stock Music.com (Electronica). The group tested both the audio and video clip websites and found them to be a free alternative to taking first hand video clips in Prague.

Our group recorded video and audio using our personal devices, and it was edited using iMovie. We consulted the WPI Global Lab for resources on editing and recording, as well as attended other training sessions, such as "The Making of a Project Video Workshop," attended by a member of our team (WPI Global Lab). We also consulted with Global lab staff to learn how to use animation software.

Our group was also interested in animating portions of the video to better dramatize the concepts discussed. The group met with a representative from the Global Lab on campus to discuss the use of professional software available through campus computers and to get advice on how to successfully animate what we needed. We also evaluated some online options such as Powtoons. While Powtoons charged a monthly fee, it gave us the option to complete our video remotely. If coronavirus restrictions increased, or a member of the group needed to leave campus for any reasons, this gave our project more flexibility and would still allow us to make a professional looking video.

Before posting our video, it was evaluated by both our peers at WPI, other members of the Prague project site, and with the Czech student interviewed from the Czech Republic. We used their feedback to make further improvements to our video as well as added further clarity to any sections of the video that viewers found confusing.

Objective 3: Investigate and analyze the effectiveness, benefits, and disadvantages of the use of social media in political campaigns.

Our team's third objective was to investigate and analyze the effectiveness, benefits, and disadvantages of the use of social media in political campaigns. Due to its rise in popularity and availability in the smartphone age, younger generations often turn to social media as a source of information. One study found that 53% of Americans engage in social activism via social media outlets, with many stating that these platforms help bring awareness to many causes that would otherwise be left out of other media sources like TV news or printed publications (Anderson et al., 2018). Although the media can be an outlet for partisan misinformation distributed under a democratic pretense, our project focused on describing and illustrating a scholarly overview of democracy as a whole, and not on any specific political decisions currently being debated in the Czech Republic. We strongly believe that the Czech people should make their own informed decisions about what they want from their own government. Our goal was to raise awareness about the democratic process of making collective political decisions and to encourage Czechs to become active members of civic decision-making. To avoid making specific political evaluation and recommendations, we believe our project was completed in a nonpartisan and informational way. In the scope of this project, social media was only used to disseminate our project. Social media will only be used to share our project, a video that actively encourages viewers to make their own decisions about government.

Results and Findings

Due to COVID-19, the group had to be flexible with our contacts in the Czech Republic to work around time differences and technological challenges that we faced. All of our meetings and interviews were conducted over Zoom and international meetings had to be planned with the six hour time difference in mind. While it was a different experience than if our interviews had been conducted in person, our interviews were still a useful tool to gain a better understanding of Czech culture. We conducted interviews with a student from Charles University in Prague, and with a representative from the non-government organization, the National Democratic Institute (NDI). The interviews were all recorded so that clips, audios, and quotes could perhaps be included in our documentary. We also got to speak with the former ambassador to the Czech Republic, Adrian Basora, and hear about his experiences working in the Czech Republic.

To start the process of making our documentary, the group created a storyboard of what concepts we wanted to include in the video. We decided that we wanted to discuss Czech history, past and present, as well as the implications of the Czech Republic's low ranking on democracy indexes. In addition to sharing our research on democracy, we also wanted to propose actions Czech citizens could take to combat this and give them resources from non-government organizations that they could use to learn more.

After evaluating our options, we chose to animate our video. While we originally had consulted with the global lab to use their animation software, Adobe Illustrator and Adobe Premiere Pro, heightened coronavirus restrictions on campus meant that we had to find a remote option to complete our video. After evaluating our options, Powtoons was chosen and the group invested in a month of their premium subscription to avoid water marks and to gain access to their editing and animation software. Each group member worked on portions of the animation in

order to visually depict concepts related to democracy such as voting, protesting, and expression of public opinion. After finishing the animations, we recorded voice-overs to narrate our animations and spliced the animation and audio together using iMovie. Our video was then published on our project website and shared with our classmates from the Prague 2020 IQP cohort.

In the future, our video could be expanded upon to include more information and translated into Czech. Areas for expansion could include updated versions of the EIU and Freedom House indexes as they are released each year. Another area that could be updated regularly is the list of government and non-government information and resources. The current political situation in the Czech Republic could change when they have their next legislative elections in 2021 and they potentially could select a new prime minister. The impact of COVID-19 may also continue to affect the Czech Republic and future projects should expand on the political ramifications of this consequence.

Conclusion

There were many ethical concerns related to our project, especially since our project was about promoting democracy in the Czech Republic and supporting the creation of the fullest type of democracy possible. For this reason, it was important for us to be open about all aspects of our project and about our basic assumptions in starting the project. One important ethical concern in our project was to maintain impartiality in terms of political affiliation within the Czech Republic. This is a matter for Czech citizens. When dealing with democracy and voting in a multiparty system like the Czech Republic, it was important to not express opinions or favoritism towards any one party or specific type of political thinking and to withhold judging any viewpoints. Rather than choosing or endorsing a certain side, our goal was to advocate for democracy without any political endorsements or partnerships with any political philosophy. Our group approached the topic of democracy in the Czech Republic as a nonpartisan effort and gave recommendations, rather than definitive answers, on how to promote democratic principles as we understand them as expressed by Freedom House and the Economist Intelligence Unit. While the people we talked to may not agree with all aspects of democracy, we still listened and learned from all participants in our research, regardless of their beliefs, so as not to hold a confirmation bias. Moreover, steps were taken to protect participants' anonymity and provide a secure place to voice their opinions without fear of judgment.

To ensure that our interviews and surveys were conducted ethically, participants were required to sign an informed consent form (See Appendix D) detailing the use of their answers in our project and guaranteeing their anonymity. Our project adopted similar guidelines to one's currently set in place for 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations in the United States, who for similar reasons, are not legally allowed to express political opinions. Since 1954, Congress has withheld

tax deduction eligibility for donors of charitable organizations that do not remain nonpartisan in elections (NonProfitVote.org). As a result, our project will not be affiliated with any party, candidate, or ideology, nor will we make contributions to any political campaigns, but we will make our final project equally available to all viewers, regardless of political affiliation.

However, it cannot be ignored that as students studying at an American university, we held an implicit bias towards democracy. We also acknowledge that the United States itself is a "flawed democracy" and does not have the answers to creating a perfectly democratic nation (Democracy Index, 2019). Regardless, we believe that citizens and residents have an inherent right, a *human right*, to have their voice heard in government and that this right should be protected by government. We believe that regardless of political affiliation or party, these rights should still be upheld. An important part of democracy is the right to disagree and to voice complaints against government, so it would be impossible to promote democracy while simultaneously advocating to silence the voices of those pushing for different forms of democracy. This project acts on the observation that tendencies in the Czech Republic pose threats to democracy, and these threats seem to be authoritarian, and that under these circumstances, a citizen's right to voice their opinion cannot be upheld. We consider this a violation of human rights, and therefore advocate against these authoritarian practices.

Our project does not acknowledge alternatives to democratic governments and their potential benefits from a Czech perspective. While we may try to remain nonpartisan, the truth remains that we are not Czech and we will never wholly understand the wants of Czech citizens or what they might choose *democratically* as their form of government.

Democracy indexes show that Czech democracy has stagnated over the past few years (Democracy Index, 2019; Freedom House 2020). As long as government corruption continues to

spread within Czech government, and the Czech people remain complacent about it, democracy in the Czech Republic may continue to decline. In order to combat this, we have sought to inform the Czech people on the importance of democratic practices, such as voting and political activism. Likewise, we want to help the citizens of the United States better understand the rich history of Czech democracy and its current struggles. Many organizations within the Czech Republic work to promote democratic principles in the nation, and it would be useful for them to have a short piece of shareable information about the structure and benefits of democracy to spread public awareness. By creating a documentary video about the essential features of democracy, we hope to inform our audience on the importance of their role in a democratic nation, and give them resources to stay active and updated on Czech politics. As former President Václav Havel once said, "freedom and democracy include participation and therefore responsibility from us all" (New Year's Address to the Nation, 1990). We hope that all citizens, including in the United States and Venezuela, not just Czechs, will see our video as a call to action to fight for their right to have their voices be heard.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Freedom in the World 2019 Methodology

Freedom House uses questions similar to these every year to award each country a score on their freedom index. The total points are combined to give an overall rating out of 100, as well as level of freedom based on the balance of the two scores (Freedom House Methodology, 2020). Click here to return to the [Freedom House Metric](#).

POLITICAL RIGHTS (0–40 points)

A. ELECTORAL PROCESS (0–12 points)

A1. Was the current head of government or other chief national authority elected through free and fair elections? (Not\e: Heads of government chosen through various electoral frameworks, including direct elections for president, indirect elections for prime minister by parliament, and the electoral college system for electing presidents, are covered under this question. In cases of indirect elections for the head of government, the elections for the legislature or other body that chose the head of government, as well as the selection process for the head of government itself, should be taken into consideration. In systems where executive authority is formally divided between a head of state and a head of government, greater weight should be given to elections for the official with the most executive authority.)

- Did independent, established, and reputable national and/or international election monitoring organizations judge the most recent election for head of government to have met democratic standards?
- Was the most recent election for head of government called in a timely manner, without undue, politically motivated delays or an accelerated schedule that unfairly limited campaign opportunities for some candidates?
- Was the registration of voters and candidates conducted in an accurate, timely, transparent, and nondiscriminatory manner?
- Were women allowed to register and run as candidates?
- Could all candidates make speeches, hold public meetings, and enjoy fair or proportionate media access throughout the campaign, free of intimidation?
- Did voting take place by secret ballot?
- Were voters able to vote for the candidate or party of their choice without undue pressure or intimidation?
- Was the vote count transparent and timely, and were the official results reported honestly to the public?
- Could election monitors from independent groups and representing parties/candidates watch the counting of votes to ensure its honesty?
- Did voters have equal access to polling places and opportunities to cast ballots?
- Has the most recently elected head of government been removed from office through violent, irregular, unconstitutional, or otherwise undemocratic means? (Note: Although a bloodless coup may ultimately lead to a positive outcome— particularly if it removes a head of government who was not freely and fairly elected—the new leader has not been freely and fairly elected and cannot be treated as such.)
- Has the head of government's electorally mandated term expired or been extended without new elections?

- In cases where elections for regional, provincial, or state governors and/or other subnational executive officials differ significantly in conduct from national elections, does the conduct of the subnational elections reflect an opening toward improved political rights in the country, or, alternatively, a worsening of political rights?

A2. Were the current national legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections?

- Did independent, established, and reputable domestic and/or international election monitoring organizations judge the most recent national legislative elections to have met democratic standards?
- Were the most recent legislative elections called in a timely manner, without undue, politically motivated delays or an accelerated schedule that unfairly limited campaign opportunities for some parties or candidates?
- Was the registration of voters and candidates conducted in an accurate, timely, transparent, and nondiscriminatory manner?
- Were women allowed to register and run as candidates?
- Could all candidates make speeches, hold public meetings, and enjoy fair or proportionate media access throughout the campaign, free of intimidation?
- Did voting take place by secret ballot?
- Were voters able to vote for the candidate or party of their choice without undue pressure or intimidation?
- Was the vote count transparent and timely, and were the official results reported honestly to the public?
- Could election monitors from independent groups and representing parties/candidates watch the counting of votes to ensure its honesty?
- Have members of the most recently elected national legislature been removed from office through violent, irregular, unconstitutional, or otherwise undemocratic means? (Note: Although a bloodless coup may ultimately lead to a positive outcome—particularly if it removes a legislature that was not freely and fairly elected—an appointed postcoup legislative body has not been freely and fairly elected and cannot be treated as such.)
- Has the legislature's electorally mandated term expired or been extended without new elections?
- In cases where elections for subnational councils/parliaments differ significantly in conduct from national elections, does the conduct of the subnational elections reflect an opening toward improved political rights in the country, or, alternatively, a worsening of political rights?

A3. Are the electoral laws and framework fair, and are they implemented impartially by the relevant election management bodies?

- Is there a clear, detailed, and fair legislative framework for conducting elections? (Note: Changes to electoral laws should not be made immediately preceding an election if these changes infringe on the ability of voters, candidates, or parties to fulfill their roles in the election.)
- Does the composition of election commissions ensure their independence?
- Are election commissions or other election authorities free from government or other pressure and interference?
- Do adult citizens enjoy universal and equal suffrage?
- Is the drawing of election districts conducted in a fair and nonpartisan manner, as opposed to malapportionment or gerrymandering for personal or partisan advantage?
- Has the selection of a system for choosing legislative representatives (such as proportional versus majoritarian) been improperly manipulated to advance certain political interests or to influence the electoral results?
- Are procedures for changing the electoral framework at the constitutional level, including referendums, carried out fairly and transparently, with adequate opportunity for public debate and discussion?

B. POLITICAL PLURALISM AND PARTICIPATION (0–16 points)

B1. Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, and is the system free of undue obstacles to the rise and fall of these competing parties or groupings?

- Do political parties encounter undue legal or practical obstacles in their efforts to form and operate, including onerous registration requirements, excessively large membership requirements, etc.?
- Do parties face discriminatory or onerous restrictions in holding meetings or rallies, accessing the media, or engaging in other peaceful activities?
- Are laws and regulations governing party financing fair and equitably enforced? Do they impose excessive obstacles to political and campaign activity, or give an effective advantage to certain parties?
- Are party members or leaders intimidated, harassed, arrested, imprisoned, or subjected to violent attacks as a result of their peaceful political activities?
- In systems dominated by political parties, can independent candidates register and operate freely?

B2. Is there a realistic opportunity for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections?

- Are various legal/administrative restrictions selectively applied to opposition parties to prevent them from increasing their support base or successfully competing in elections?
- Are there genuine opposition forces in positions of authority, such as in the national legislature or in subnational governments?
- Does intimidation, harassment, arrest, imprisonment, or violent attack as a result of peaceful political activities affect the ability of opposition party members or leaders to increase their support or gain power through elections?
- Is there a significant opposition vote?
- Did major opposition parties choose to boycott the most recent elections rather than participate in a flawed process?

B3. Are the people's political choices free from domination by the military, foreign powers, religious hierarchies, economic oligarchies, or any other powerful group that is not democratically accountable?

- Do such groups offer bribes or other incentives to voters in order to influence their political choices?
- Do such groups offer bribes or other incentives to political figures and/or parties in order to influence their political choices?
- Do such groups intimidate, harass, or attack voters and/or political figures in order to influence their political choices?
- Do major private or public-sector employers directly or indirectly control the political choices of their workers?

B4. Do various segments of the population (including ethnic, religious, gender, LGBT, and other relevant groups) have full political rights and electoral opportunities?

- Do national political parties of various ideological persuasions address issues of specific concern to minority or other relevant groups?
- When other parties fail to address the interests of certain groups, are political parties that are focused on those groups—provided they espouse peaceful, democratic values—legally permitted and de facto allowed to operate?
- Does the government inhibit the participation of certain groups in national or subnational political life through laws and/or practical obstacles—for example, by limiting access to voter registration or failing to publish public documents in certain languages?
- Are the interests of women represented in political parties—for example, through party manifestos that address gender issues, gender equality policies within parties, and mechanisms to ensure women's full and equal participation in internal party elections and decision-making?
- Are there unusually excessive or discriminatory barriers to acquiring citizenship that effectively deny political rights to a majority or large portion of the native-born or legal permanent population, or is citizenship revoked to produce a similar result?

C. FUNCTIONING OF GOVERNMENT (0–12 points)

C1. Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government? (Note: Because the score for question C1 is partly dependent on the presence of a freely elected head of

government and national legislative representatives, under most circumstances it will not exceed the average of the scores for questions A1 and A2.)

- Are the candidates who were elected freely and fairly duly installed in office, and were they able to form a functioning government within a reasonable period of time?
- Do other appointed or non–freely elected state actors interfere with or prevent freely elected representatives from adopting and implementing legislation and making meaningful policy decisions?
- Do nonstate actors, including criminal gangs and insurgent groups, interfere with or prevent elected representatives from adopting and implementing legislation and making meaningful policy decisions?
- Do the armed forces or other security services control or enjoy a preponderant influence over government policy and activities, including in countries that are nominally under civilian control?
- Do foreign governments control or enjoy a preponderant influence over government policy and activities by means including the presence of foreign military troops and the use of significant economic threats or sanctions? (Note: If a treaty was signed and ratified by a freely elected government, adherence to that treaty is typically not considered an improper external influence on policymaking, even if it limits a government's options in practice.)
- Is the freely elected government able to implement its decisions across the entire territory without interference from nonstate actors?
- Does the executive exhibit excessive dominance over the legislature?
- Has partisan polarization or obstructionism seriously impaired basic executive or legislative functions, such as approving a budget or filling important vacancies?

C2. Are safeguards against official corruption strong and effective?

- Has the government implemented effective anticorruption laws or programs to prevent, detect, and punish corruption among public officials, including conflicts of interest?
- Is the government free from excessive bureaucratic regulations, registration requirements, or other controls that increase opportunities for corruption?
- Are there independent and effective auditing and investigative bodies that function without impediment or political pressure or influence?
- Are allegations of corruption involving government officials thoroughly investigated and prosecuted without prejudice or political bias?
- Are allegations of corruption given extensive and substantive airing in the media?
- Do whistleblowers, anticorruption activists, investigators, and journalists enjoy legal protections that allow them to freely and safely report abuses?

C3. Does the government operate with openness and transparency?

- Do citizens have the legal right and practical ability to obtain information about state operations and the means to petition government agencies for it?
- Does the government publish information online, in machine-readable formats, for free, and is this information accessible by default?
- Are civil society groups, interest groups, journalists, and other citizens given a fair and meaningful opportunity to comment on and influence pending policies or legislation?
- Are elected representatives accessible to their constituents?
- Is the budget-making process subject to meaningful legislative review and public scrutiny?
- Does the state ensure transparency and effective competition in the awarding of government contracts?
- Are the asset declarations of government officials open to public and media scrutiny and verification?
  ADDITIONAL DISCRETIONARY POLITICAL RIGHTS QUESTION:
  ADD Q. Is the government or occupying power deliberately changing the ethnic composition of a country or territory so as to destroy a culture or tip the political balance in favor of another group? (–4 to 0 points)
- Is the government providing economic or other incentives to certain people in order to change the ethnic composition of a region or regions?

- Is the government forcibly moving people in or out of certain areas in order to change the ethnic composition of those regions?
- Is the government arresting, imprisoning, or killing members of certain ethnic groups in order change the ethnic composition of a region or regions?

CIVIL LIBERTIES (0–60 points)

D. FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND BELIEF (0–16 points)

D1. Are there free and independent media? (Note: "Media" refers to all relevant sources of news and commentary—including formal print, broadcast, and online news outlets, as well as social media and communication applications when they are used to gather or disseminate news and commentary for the general public. The question also applies to artistic works in any medium.)

- • Are the media directly or indirectly censored?
- • Is self-censorship common among journalists (the term includes professional
- journalists, bloggers, and citizen journalists), especially when reporting on sensitive issues, including politics, social controversies, corruption, or the activities of powerful individuals?
- • Are journalists subject to pressure or surveillance aimed at identifying their sources?
- • Are libel, blasphemy, security, or other restrictive laws used to punish journalists who scrutinize government officials and policies or other powerful entities through either onerous fines or imprisonment?
- • Is it a crime to insult the honor and dignity of the president and/or other government officials? How broad is the range of such prohibitions, and how vigorously are they enforced?
- • If media outlets are dependent on the government for their financial survival, does the government condition funding on the outlets' cooperation in promoting official points of view and/or denying access to opposition parties and civic critics? Do powerful private actors engage in similar practices?
- Do the owners of private media exert improper editorial control over journalists or publishers, skewing news coverage to suit their personal business or political interests?
- Is media coverage excessively partisan, with the majority of outlets consistently favoring either side of the political spectrum?
- Does the government attempt to influence media content and access through means including politically motivated awarding or suspension of broadcast frequencies and newspaper registrations, unfair control and influence over printing facilities and distribution networks, blackouts of internet or mobile service, selective distribution of advertising, onerous operating requirements, prohibitive tariffs, and bribery?
- Are journalists threatened, harassed online, arrested, imprisoned, beaten, or killed by government or nonstate actors for their legitimate journalistic activities, and if such cases occur, are they investigated and prosecuted fairly and expeditiously?
- Do women journalists encounter gender-specific obstacles to carrying out their work, including threats of sexual violence or strict gender segregation?
- Are works of literature, art, music, or other forms of cultural expression censored or banned for political purposes?

D2. Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief in public and private?

- Are registration requirements employed to impede the free functioning of religious institutions?
- Are members of religious groups, including minority faiths and movements, harassed, fined, arrested, or beaten by the authorities for engaging in their religious practices?
- Is state monitoring of peaceful religious activity so indiscriminate, pervasive, or intrusive that it amounts to harassment or intimidation?
- Are religious practice and expression impeded by violence or harassment by nonstate actors?
- Does the government appoint or otherwise influence the appointment of religious leaders?
- Does the government control or restrict the production and distribution of religious writings or materials?
- Is the construction of religious buildings banned or restricted?
- Does the government place undue restrictions on religious education? Does the government require religious education?
- Are individuals free to eschew religious beliefs and practices in general?

D3. Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free from extensive political indoctrination?

- Are teachers and professors at both public and private institutions free to pursue academic activities of a political and quasi-political nature without fear of physical violence or intimidation by state or nonstate actors?
- Does the government pressure, strongly influence, or control the content of school curriculums for political purposes?
- Is the allocation of funding for public educational institutions free from political manipulation?
- Are student associations that address issues of a political nature allowed to function freely?
- Does the government, including through school administration or other officials, pressure students and/or teachers to support certain political figures or agendas, including by requiring them to attend political rallies or vote for certain candidates? Conversely, does the government, including through school administration or other officials, discourage or forbid students and/or teachers from supporting certain candidates and parties?

D4. Are individuals free to express their personal views on political or other sensitive topics without fear of surveillance or retribution?

- Are people able to engage in private discussions, particularly of a political nature, in public, semipublic, or private places—including restaurants, public transportation, and their homes, in person or on the telephone—without fear of harassment or detention by the authorities or nonstate actors?
- Do users of personal online communications—including direct messages, voice or video applications, or social media accounts with a limited audience—face legal penalties, harassment, or violence from the government or powerful nonstate actors in retaliation for critical remarks?
- Does the government employ people or groups to engage in public surveillance and to report alleged antigovernment conversations to the authorities?

E. ASSOCIATIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL RIGHTS (0–12 points)

E1. Is there freedom of assembly?

- Are peaceful protests, particularly those of a political nature, banned or severely restricted?
- Are the legal requirements to obtain permission to hold peaceful demonstrations particularly cumbersome or time-consuming?
- Are participants in peaceful demonstrations intimidated, arrested, or assaulted?
- Are peaceful protesters detained by police in order to prevent them from engaging in such actions?
- Are organizers blocked from using online media to plan or carry out a protest, for example through DDoS attacks or wholesale blackouts of internet or mobile services?
- Are similar restrictions and obstacles used to impede other public events, such as conferences, panel discussions, and town hall–style meetings?
- Are public petitions, in which citizens gather signatures to support a particular policy or initiative, banned or severely restricted?

E2. Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations, particularly those that are engaged in human rights– and governance-related work? (Note: This includes civic organizations, interest groups, foundations, think tanks, gender rights groups, etc.)

- • Are registration and other legal requirements for nongovernmental organizations particularly onerous or intended to prevent them from functioning freely?
- Are laws related to the financing of nongovernmental organizations unduly complicated and cumbersome, or are there obstacles to citizens raising money for charitable causes or civic activism?
- Are donors and funders of nongovernmental organizations free from government pressure?
- Are members of nongovernmental organizations intimidated, arrested, imprisoned, or assaulted because of their work?

E3. Is there freedom for trade unions and similar professional or labor organizations?

- Are trade unions allowed to be established and to operate without government interference?
- Are workers pressured by the government or employers to join or not to join certain trade unions, and do they face harassment, violence, or dismissal from their jobs if they fail to comply?
- Are workers permitted to engage in strikes, and do participants in peaceful strikes face reprisals? (Note: This question may not apply to workers in narrowly defined essential government services or public safety jobs.)
- Are unions able to bargain collectively with employers and negotiate agreements that are honored in practice?
- For states with primarily agricultural economies that do not necessarily support the formation of trade unions, does the government allow for the establishment of agricultural workers' organizations or their equivalents? Is there legislation expressly forbidding the formation of trade unions?
- Are professional organizations, including business associations, allowed to operate freely and without government interference?

F. RULE OF LAW (0–16 points)

F1. Is there an independent judiciary?

- Is the judiciary subject to interference from the executive branch of government or from other political, economic, or religious influences?
- Are judges appointed and dismissed in a fair and unbiased manner?
- Do judges rule fairly and impartially, or do they commonly render verdicts that favor the government or particular interests, whether in return for bribes or for other reasons?
- Do executive, legislative, and other governmental authorities comply with judicial decisions, and are these decisions effectively enforced?
- Do powerful private entities comply with judicial decisions, and are decisions that run counter to the interests of powerful actors effectively enforced?

F2. Does due process prevail in civil and criminal matters?

- Are defendants' rights, including the presumption of innocence until proven guilty, protected?
- Do detainees have access to independent, competent legal counsel regardless of their financial means?
- Are defendants given a fair, public, and timely hearing by a competent, independent, and impartial tribunal?
- Is access to the court system in general dependent on an individual's financial means?
- Are prosecutors independent of political control and influence?
- Are prosecutors independent of powerful private interests, whether legal or illegal?
- Do law enforcement and other security officials operate professionally, independently, and accountably?
- Do law enforcement officials make arbitrary arrests and detentions without warrants, or fabricate or plant evidence on suspects?
- Do law enforcement and other security officials fail to uphold due process because of influence by nonstate actors, including organized crime, powerful commercial interests, or other groups?

F3. Is there protection from the illegitimate use of physical force and freedom from war and insurgencies?

- Do law enforcement officials beat detainees during arrest or use excessive force or torture to extract confessions?
- Are conditions in pretrial detention facilities and prisons humane and respectful of the human dignity of inmates?
- Do citizens have the means of effective petition and redress when they suffer physical abuse by state authorities?
- Is violent crime common, either in particular areas or among the general population?
- Is the population subjected to physical harm, forced removal, or other acts of violence or terror due to civil conflict or war?

F4. Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population?

- Are members of various distinct groups—including ethnic, religious, gender, LGBT, and other relevant groups—able to effectively exercise their human rights with full equality before the law?
- Is violence against such groups considered a crime, is it widespread, and are perpetrators brought to justice?
- Do members of such groups face legal and/or de facto discrimination in areas including employment, education, and housing because of their identification with a particular group?
- Do noncitizens—including migrant workers and noncitizen immigrants—enjoy basic internationally recognized human rights, including the right not to be subjected to torture or other forms of ill-treatment, the right to due process of law, and the freedoms of association, expression, and religion?
- Do the country's laws provide for the granting of asylum or refugee status in accordance with the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, its 1967 Protocol, and other regional treaties regarding refugees? Has the government established a system for providing protection to refugees, including against *refoulement* (the return of persons to a country where there is reason to believe they would face persecution)?

G. PERSONAL AUTONOMY AND INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS (0–16 points)

G1. Do individuals enjoy freedom of movement, including the ability to change their place of residence, employment, or education?

- Are there restrictions on foreign travel, including an exit visa system, which may be enforced selectively?
- Is permission required from the authorities or nonstate actors to move within the country?
- Do state or nonstate actors control or constrain a person's ability to change their type and place of employment?
- Are bribes or other inducements needed to obtain the necessary documents to travel, change one's place of residence or employment, enter institutions of higher education, or advance in school?
- Is freedom of movement impaired by general threats to physical safety, such as armed conflict?
- Do women enjoy the same freedom of movement as men?

G2. Are individuals able to exercise the right to own property and establish private businesses without undue interference from state or nonstate actors?

- Are people legally allowed to purchase and sell land and other property, and can they do so in practice without undue interference from the government or nonstate actors?
- Do women face discrimination in property and inheritance rights?
- Are individuals protected from arbitrary expropriation, and do they receive adequate and timely compensation when property is seized?
- Are people legally allowed to establish and operate private businesses with a reasonable minimum of registration, licensing, and other requirements?
- Are bribes or other inducements needed to obtain the necessary legal documents to operate private businesses?
- Do private/nonstate actors, including criminal groups, seriously impede private business activities through such measures as extortion?

G3. Do individuals enjoy personal social freedoms, including choice of marriage partner and size of family, protection from domestic violence, and control over appearance?

- Are personalized forms of violence—including domestic violence, female genital mutilation/cutting, sexual abuse, and rape—widespread, and are perpetrators brought to justice?
- Does the government directly or indirectly control choice of marriage partner or other personal relationships through means such as bans on interfaith marriages, failure to enforce laws against child marriage or dowry payments, restrictions on same-sex relationships, or criminalization of extramarital sex?
- Do individuals enjoy equal rights in divorce proceedings and child custody matters?
- Do citizenship or residency rules undermine family integrity through excessively high or discriminatory barriers for foreign spouses or transmission of citizenship to children?

- Does the government determine the number of children that a couple may have, including by denying access to or imposing birth control, or by criminalizing or imposing abortion?
- Does the government restrict individuals' choice of dress, appearance, or gender expression?
- Do private institutions or individuals, including religious groups or family members, unduly infringe on the personal social freedoms of individuals, including choice of marriage partner, family size, dress, gender expression, etc.?

G4. Do individuals enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from economic exploitation?

- Do state or private employers exploit their workers through practices including unfairly withholding wages, permitting or forcing employees to work under unacceptably dangerous conditions, or adult slave labor and child labor?
- Does tight government control over the economy, including through state ownership or the setting of prices and production quotas, inhibit individuals' economic opportunity?
- Do the revenues from large state industries, including the energy sector, benefit the general population or only a privileged few?
- Do private interests exert undue influence on the economy—through monopolistic practices, concentration of ownership, cartels, or illegal blacklists—that impedes economic opportunity for the general population?
- Do laws, policies, or persistent socioeconomic conditions effectively impose rigid barriers to social mobility, generally preventing individuals from rising to higher income levels over the course of their lives?
- Is the trafficking of persons for labor, sexual exploitation, forced begging, etc., widespread, and is the government taking adequate steps to address the problem?

Appendix B: EIU Model

The EIU uses these 60 indicators across five different categories to award countries a score out of 10, which is then used to rank each nation against each other, within their region and against the global average (as cited in Kakic, 2007). Click here to return to the EIU Metric.

I Electoral process and pluralism

1. Are elections for the national legislature and head of government free?

Consider whether elections are competitive in that electors are free to vote and are offered a range of choices.

2. Are elections for the national legislature and head of govern-

3. Are municipal elections both free

4. Is there universal suffrage for all adults?

5. Can citizens cast their vote free of significant threats to their security from state or non-state bodies?

6. Do laws provide for broadly equal campaigning opportuni- ties?

7. Is the process of financing political parties transparent and generally accepted?

8. Following elections, are the constitutional mechanisms for the orderly transfer of power from one government to another clear, established and accepted?

9. Are citizens free to form polit- ical parties that are independent of the government?

10. Do opposition parties have a realistic prospect of achieving government?

11. Is potential access to public office open to all citizens?

12. Are citizens free to form po- litical and civic organisations, free of state interference and surveillance?

II Functioning of government

13. Do freely elected representa- tives determine government policy?

14. Is the legislature the supreme political body, with a clear su- premacy over other branches of government?

15. Is there an effective system of checks and balances on the exer- cise of government authority?

16. Government is free of undue influence by the military or the security services.

17. Foreign powers do not de- termine important government functions or policies.

18. Special economic, religious or other powerful domestic groups do not exercise significant political power, parallel to democratic institutions?

19. Are sufficient mechanisms and institutions in place for as- suring

government accountabil- ity to the electorate in between elections?

20. Does the government's au- thority extend over the full ter- ritory of the country?

21. Is the functioning of govern- ment open and transparent, with sufficient public access to infor- mation?

22. How pervasive is corrup- tion?

23. Is the civil service willing and capable of implementing government policy?

24. Popular perceptions of the extent to which they have free choice and control over their lives

25. Public confidence in government.

26. Public confidence in political parties.

III Political participation

27. Voter participation/turnout for national elections.

28. Do ethnic, religious and other minorities have a reasonable degree of autonomy and voice in the political process?

29. Women in parliament.

30. Extent of political participa- tion. Membership of political parties

and political non-governmental organisations.

31. Citizens' engagement with politics.

32. The preparedness of population to take part in lawful demonstrations.

33. Adult literacy. 1 if over 90%

34. Extent to which adult population shows an interest in and follows politics in the news

35. The authorities make a serious effort to promote political participation.

IV Democratic political culture

36. Is there a sufficient degree of societal consensus and cohesion to underpin a stable, functioning democracy?

37. Perceptions of leadership; proportion of the population that desires a strong leader who bypasses parliament and elec- tions.

38. Perceptions of military rule; proportion of the population that would prefer military.

39. Perceptions of rule by experts or technocratic government; proportion of the population that would prefer rule by experts or technocrats.

40. Perception of democracy and public order; proportion of the population that believes that de- mocracies are not good at main- taining public order.

41. Perception of democracy and the economic system; pro- portion of the population that believes that democracy benefits economic performance.

42. Degree of popular support for democracy.

43. There is a strong tradition of the separation of church and state.

V Civil liberties

44. Is there a free electronic media?

45. Is there a free print media?

46. Is there freedom of expres- sion and protest (bar only gener- ally accepted restrictions such as banning advocacy of violence)?

47. Is media coverage robust? Is there open and free discussion of public issues, with a reason- able diversity of opinions?

48. Are there political restric- tions on access to the internet?

49. Are citizens free to form pro- fessional organisations and trade unions?

50. Do institutions provide citi- zens with the opportunity to successfully petition the government to redress grievances?

52. The degree to which the judi- ciary is independent of govern- ment influence.

53. The degree of religious tol- erance and freedom of religious expression.

54. The degree to which citizens are treated equally under the law.

56. Extent to which private prop- erty rights protected and private business is free from undue gov- ernment influence.

57. Extent to which citizens enjoy personal freedoms. Consider gender equality, right to travel, choice of work and study.

58. Popular perceptions on human rights protection; pro- portion of the population that think that basic human rights are well-protected.

59. There is no significant dis- crimination on the basis of peo- ple's race, colour or creed.

60. Extent to which the gov- ernment invokes new risks and threats as an excuse for curbing civil liberties.

Appendix C: Potential Interview and Survey Questions

Interview Questions:

- What are your connections to the Czech Republic?
- Have you lived in the Czech Republic? If so, for how long?
- How comfortably do you feel that your voice is heard by the Czech government?
- Do you feel that your vote matters? Why or why not?
- Do you feel comfortable expressing your political opinions online via social media? Why or why not?
- How would you explain Czech politics to an outsider? In your own opinion, how does it compare to other countries?
- What's your opinion on the current political situation?
- In your opinion, how do political views differ depending on age in Czech Republic?
- Could you propose some ideas on how to enhance democracy in your country?
- What's your opinion on immigration and minorities status currently in Czech Republic

Survey Questions:

- What's your age? Under 18, 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 54+
- Are you a resident of the Czech Republic, United States, or Other (please specify):_____
- What are your connections to the Czech Republic? Business/Work, Family in the Czech Republic, Immigrant, Citizen, Cultural Identity as Czech
- On a scale of 0-10, how much do you enjoy watching TV shows? How about documentaries?
- What video streaming sites do you use most often? Please circle all that apply: YouTube, Facebook, Netflix/Hulu, Other (please specify): _____
- Documentaries are a valuable way to learn about a certain subject. Strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree.
- On a scale of 1-10, 1 being never and 10 being every time, how likely are you to recommend a good show to a friend or colleague?

- How likely are you to vote in Czech elections? Not Likely, Maybe, Likely, I am unable to vote
- How often do you find yourself checking social media websites like Facebook? Please circle one: Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Very often
- On a scale from 0-10, rate how comfortable you feel that your voice is heard by the Czech government?
- Do you feel that your vote matters? Yes, No, Maybe, I don't know, I can't vote
- Do you feel comfortable expressing your political opinions online via social media? Yes, No, Maybe, I don't know

Appendix D: Informed Consent Letter

Title: Enhancing Democracy in the Czech Republic

Principle Investigator and Contact Information: Professor Bland Addision (addison@wpi.edu)

Student Researchers: Elina Barrows (WPI Class of 2022), Clarissa Casilla (WPI Class of 2022), Connor Norton (WPI Class of 2022)

Purpose of Study:
We are a group of three college juniors from Worcester Polytechnic Institute and we are currently completing our university's Interactive Qualifying Project, better known as an IQP. An IQP is a team based social science project designed to solve a project or need whose solution requires both science and society. Our project is promoting democracy in the Czech Republic by creating a non-partisan social media campaign. We would like to know more about social and political culture in the Czech Republic, and how Czechs participate in politics and elections.

Procedures: (include either procedure for survey or interview)
You will be asked to complete an online survey questionnaire that will ask you about your participation and experiences in both social media and Czech politics. We are also interested in your opinions on how these experiences compare to what you know or may have seen about other European nations and the United States.

You will be asked to participate in an interview via Zoom that will ask you about your participation and experiences in both social media and Czech politics. We are also interested in your opinions on how these experiences compare to what you know or may have seen about other European nations and the United States.

Confidentiality:

All the information you provide will be strictly confidential, and your name will not appear on the questionnaire unless you choose to disclose it. Your name will only be visible to the principal investigators and student researchers and will not be published in the final report unless you have explicitly given written approval for us to do so. We will not be sharing your contact information. We will neither ask, nor publish your voting history nor political affiliations. Once you have completed your survey, you may hit submit.

All the information you provide will be strictly confidential, and your name will not appear on the report unless you choose to disclose it. We will be recording the interview for the purpose of documenting your answers. Your name and the recording of our interview will only be visible to

the principal investigators and student researchers and will not be published in the final report unless you have explicitly given written or (recorded) verbal approval for us to do so. We will neither ask, nor publish your voting history nor political affiliations. We will not be sharing your contact information.

Note about Voluntary Nature of Participation and Statement About Compensation:

Your participation is voluntary at all points during the survey. You may refuse to participate or discontinue your participation at any time during the course of the survey, and you also may decline to answer certain questions of your choosing. While we cannot compensate you, your participation will be invaluable to our project as we seek a better understanding of social and political culture in Prague, and how our team can promote democracy.

Your participation is voluntary at all points during the interview. You may refuse to participate or discontinue your participation at any time during the course of the survey, and you also may decline to answer certain questions of your choosing. While we cannot compensate you, your participation will be invaluable to our project as we seek a better understanding of social and political culture in Prague, and how our team can promote democracy.

Information about the Survey:

If you have any questions or concerns, you can reach out via email to the principal investigator, whose contact information is at the top of this letter. All inquiries are confidential.

Participants Agreement Statement:

If you agree to participate in our study, we require that you sign your name and date to this form and send it back to us prior to completing the survey.

If you agree to participate in our study, we require that you sign your name and date to this form and send it back to us as soon as possible, and at least 24 hours before your scheduled interview time.

I have read the information provided above and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. After it is signed, I understand and will complete the survey honestly and to the best of my ability.

_____   _____
Name   Date (Month/Date/Year)

Thank you.

Sincerely
Elina Barrows, Clarissa Casilla, Connor Norton   Professor Bland Addison