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**The educational system of the US in and out of the country
with a comparison to the Czech republic**

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Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně s využitím uvedených pramenů a literatury.

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Podpis autora práce

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Introduction

The main target of this bachelor thesis is to describe in detail the educational system of the United States of America and that of the Czech Republic with a focus on the comparison of both of them. Attention will be given especially to secondary education (high school education) and tertiary education (higher university education). Elementary education will be mentioned as well even though it will not be analysed as thoroughly as secondary and tertiary education. Each type of school will be analysed in a different approach, secondary education will be analysed entirely on the basis of personal experience, whereas tertiary education according to relevant literature.

Similarly, the practical part of the thesis will focus on overseas educational system of the United States of America while the theoretical part will target the system directly in the country. At the end of each of these main chapters, a summary and comparison to the Czech Republic will be given.

The areas of interest will be the educational system in the United States of America in general, describing no special area of the country. Core part of the thesis will target the description of the educational system in countries overseas that do not fall entirely within the US authority but are founded in the spirit of American education. The educational system overseas will be analysed in two specified areas – military bases in the Kingdom of the Netherlands and in the Kingdom of Belgium.

The first main part of the bachelor thesis (the theoretical one) will be depicting the history and development of the tertiary education in the United States as well as in the Czech Republic lapped into the present period. Attention will also be given to the current form of education in both countries. It will discuss in detail the American and Czech educational system directly in the country. The first main part will also describe the whole educational systems in general. Major changes and characteristics will be presented.

The second major part of the thesis (the practical one) will be dedicated not only to the high school system in overseas areas but also to elementary education in areas overseas. This section will be produced only on the basis of personal experience during a total of a five year personal participation in the educational system of the United States overseas at two military bases.

At the end of each main chapter or throughout the chapters, a brief summary and comparison of the systems will appear. Highlighted will be differences as well as similarities to the educational system of the Czech Republic.

There are several questions that the thesis is trying to answer. How does the educational structure of both countries look like? In what ways are the systems similar and how are they different? What are the types of schools and from which sources are they financed? Which are the most prestigious schools and how were they formed over the years? What are the differences between public and private schools? Apart from these basic questions, interesting facts about the US system will be provided. Strengths as well as weaknesses of both the educational systems of the United States of America and of the Czech Republic will be discussed in the final parts of the bachelor thesis.

1. Overall Structure of Education in the USA

The following chapter will describe the current structure of the educational system in the United States of America and it will also give a brief depiction of each of the three main levels of the system. The educational system of the United States is structured into primary education, secondary education, and post-secondary education, which is in some sources referred to as the “tertiary education”. Regarding the basic division of schools, they are either private or public. A majority of public institutions is sponsored by the government whereas private institutions are established by private groups or persons and financed directly by students' sponsors.

1.1. Primary Education

The very first step in education in the US called preschool education is a nursery school, closely followed by pre-kindergarten. Nursery and pre-kindergarten schools are for children between the age of 3 and 5 years and the duration of each of them is only one year¹.

As for the next step, there is a compulsory elementary (or primary) school. It is mandatory for all American children from the age of 6 to 16². Primary education includes kindergarten, which is a year-long educational step that prepares small children for next education. The five grade years that follow kindergarten are the same as first five years of Czech primary education where children obtain general knowledge in the most important subjects. Grades 6-8 however belong to the middle school, eventhough there is no real difference between the education of elementary schools and between middle schools.

1.2. Secondary Education

When middle school is over, children are ready to take the next step – high school education. The main goal of a high school is to obtain a high school diploma and enter college or university where students choose their specialisation. Students receive a high school diploma after a total of 12 years of formal education (elementary, middle, and high school altogether). Before college enrollement, students can also apply for scholarships, which are given on the basis of PSAT test results³. High school education is mandatory as well, eventhough in some states, it is possible to end school before entering high school or before

¹ BRENDLOVÁ, S., Reálie anglicky mluvících zemí, pg. 94.

² BRENDLOVÁ, S., Reálie anglicky mluvících zemí, pg. 95.

³ US Department of Education 2008

turning 16. Regarding structure, there are 4-year high schools (for children aged between 14 and 17 years), junior high schools (children aged between 11 and 14 years), senior high schools (children aged between 15 and 17 years), and combined junior-senior high schools (children aged between 11 and 17 years). For more information on structure, see Attachment 1.

1.3. Tertiary Education

Students who have completed high school, apply for post-secondary education. They can choose between applying for university or applying for college. Post-secondary education is segmented into Undergraduate Programmes, where students obtain bachelor's degree or a master's degree. When students obtain a master's degree, it is possible to proceed to their doctoral studies, and postdoctoral study associated with research.

The structure of universities in the United States is divided into faculties, departments, and different areas of study. Universities use two types of tests as a standard for the comparison of students. First test is SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test), it measures verbal and mathematical skills. Second test is an ACT (American College Testing), which evaluates English, math, social and natural sciences skills ⁴

2. Historical Development of Higher Education in USA

This section will closely outline the history of American higher education in the United States of America. It will depict its origins as well as each period of time which represents considerable milestones in the formation of the tertiary education. The development of the most prestigious and best known universities will be described. Individual parts of this section will focus in detail on each period, provide detailed facts about important milestones and significant changes.

Various authors present different opinions when depicting which milestones are more important and therefore how the education has been formed.

The process of shaping higher education can be divided into several periods. Different authors give importance to different events eventhough the main framework remains the same within each. In light of this thesis, the most exact appears to be the division by A. M. Cohen: The first momentous period of time is the establishment of higher education institutions in

⁴ BRENDLOVÁ, S., Reálie anglicky mluvících zemí, pg. 95.

colonial America. The very historical milestone period stretches all the way back to year 1636 when the first university was founded⁵.

According to Cohen, the next step in the development of education is the enlargement of small “colleges” after the emergence of the new nation; therefore, the period of time between 1790 and 1869. The significant trait of this period of time is that a great number of new institutions was founded. They were also more diverse due to the fact that various immigrant groups came to the United States of America.

The third level of formation is known as the transformation of universities in the times of the industrialization (between the years 1870 and 1869). During this period of time the universities in the United States were transformed into a more present day form throughout many social and territorial changes.

The fourth important milestone according to Cohen is the mass higher education. It began in the year 1945 and continued until 1975. This period of university development is associated with two important historical milestones – World War 2 and the Cold War. Both of these wars stood behind the evolution and improvement of American tertiary education, mainly on the financial level.

The fifth step in development goes by the name of The Current Form of the American Higher Education depicting the years following 1976 and continuing into present times with a focus on the current appearance of the educational system.

2.1. The Establishment of Higher Education Institutions in Colonial America

The analysis of the history of tertiary education in the United States extends all the way back to the year 1636. All authors involved in the historical development of education agree that this is the first step in the forming of American higher education.

Even the first settlers of the New World contributed to the foundation of universities. In the year 1636, which is only 16 years after debarkation in Massachusetts Bay, first university was established by Puritans in current United States.

This oldest institution of higher learning is in present times one of the most prestigious universities bears the name Harvard University. The university was called Harvard College at the times of its foundation. This university was named after John Harvard from Charlestown

⁵ RIPKOVÁ, H., Vysoké školství v USA, pg. 18.

who has been the greatest sponsor and had bequeathed to the university a half of his property and also donated his library⁶.

From the most notable institutions next came Yale College, present day Yale University in the year of 1701, College of New Jersey (today known by the name of Princeton University) in 1746, and King's College today called Columbia University in the year 1754. Various Christian offshoots stood behind the establishment of these institutions. The basic goal of these institutions was to educate young clergy as well as future generation of state office holders. Due to the Puritan belief that stressed the ability of individual Bible reading over church authority, emphasis was placed on general literacy as well⁷.

The term college was used to denominate present day universities in the period of time until the year 1869. First university that bears the traits of present days universities was the Cornell University with its structure divided in faculties, different study areas and the presence of scientific research.

2.1.1. Financing in the Colonial Period

Universities were financed from many different sources from their very beginnings. Money was donated from private sponsors, via indirect state contributions, or from church communities. From the very beginning of university founding, the system was trying to be independent from direct state financing so as to remain independent in its decision-making and free from any kind of influence⁸. In connection with the topic of university financing, a tradition of fund-raising commenced, meaning that one of the functions of the college president was to obtain needed sum of money⁹.

2.2. The Enlargement of small colleges after the Emergence of the New Nation

Not long after declaring the new nation, the trend of university establishment expanded westward. The British restriction of colonizing regions west from the original territories had ceased to exist and the number of inhabitants increased dramatically. Hand in hand with the acquisition of new territory came the idea of founding new institutions of higher learning. Eventhough this newly emerged freedom and new land brought many opportunities,

⁶ RIPKOVÁ, H., Vysoké školství v USA, pg. 20.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ SPRING, J., American Education, pg. 223

⁹ RIPKOVÁ, H., Vysoké školství v USA, pg. 22

many new immigrants, especially the Irish, had to deal with a great amount of discrimination in educational structures¹⁰.

The institution of slavery was still strong in this period of time so the African Americans were naturally excluded from university participation. Eventhough present day standard is that educational opportunities should be equal, it was not always like this back in the days when minority discrimination and racial prejudice played a key role in the society¹¹.

During this period of time, both women and free African Americans appealed for higher education, but their admission for higher education was denied in most cases. It was not until the 1830s that women were able to get enrolled in university programmes. The first college that admitted women was the Oberlin College in the year 1833 but the number of women that applied has been very low¹². The situation of the African American population has been even more complicated than the situation of women.

In the Southern states it has been a criminal act to teach former slaves to read and write, even in the Northern states it was not widely common to educate the black population. The first African American college graduate has obtained his bachelor's degree in 1826. Not long after that, African American colleges emerged. Amongst those were the Cheyney University founded in 1837 and Lincoln University founded in 1854, both are located in the state of Pennsylvania¹³.

In the period between 1790 and 1869, many new schools emerged, known by the definition of "college", those schools were back then compared to nowadays universities eventhough the level of education could be compared to specialized centers for professionals in certain fields, for example technicians.

The religious diversity was projected into college establishment, each group focused on building its own institution since the governance by another would be impermissible. With each new immigrant group coming, new cities were being founded. This factor goes hand in hand with the idea of giving more prestige to it by founding an institution of higher learning and increasing its status as a whole.

Due to the fresh possibility of westward expansion, the potential of the area had grown and options seemed endless. A great deal of new schools had been built, sometimes the number of it being endlessly high and pointless in purpose. At the same time, the number of

¹⁰ RIPKOVÁ, H., *Vysoké školství v USA*, pg. 25

¹¹ SPRING, J., *American Education*, pg. 109

¹² RIPKOVÁ, H., *Vysoké školství v USA*, pg. 31

¹³ *Ibid.*

students was surprisingly low and therefore the fact of such a hasty and uncoordinated school establishment was quite absurd¹⁴.

Higher education in USA has been neither controlled nor regulated by any legal authority. No means of quality surveillance were established eventhough American presidents proposed university control measures. No act was passed by the Congress during this period of time¹⁵.

Another significant change of this period of time was that subjects taught at universities were more diversified. The early 19th century was a time of great study subject enhancement, where apart from traditional subjects such as philosophy, history, religion, and classic languages, new ones emerged. Among those new study subjects were for example agricultural chemistry, discrete geometry, and cartography¹⁶. More and more people called for a broader variety of subjects as years passed and society evolved, so as to meet their needs.

2.3. The Transformation of Universities in the Times of the Industrialization

The end of the Civil War meant a new beginning in further development of higher education as well as the evolution of the United States. The society kept changing rapidly with the huge increase of population. The national infrastructure was built, the territory expansion ended with the Alaska Purchase and all these factors contributed to an even greater university establishment.

In means of financing, tertiary education was highly influenced by the Morrill Land Grant Act which consisted of progressive taxing of the richest population and layed ground rules for later massive grants for reseach and education. Not only the end of the Civil War but also World War 1 helped the United States with regards to funding. The enormous exports during the Great War increased by billions the money income into the country. In the times of industrialization, changes which have occured contributed to the diversity of newly established colleges and transformation of the current ones into a model that could be compared to universities how we know them in our times.

The following factors have made it possible to achieve such transformation and improvement. The influence of the church has been diminished whereas the relations with professional groups has been heightened. Emphasis on natural sciences was accentuated and

¹⁴ RIPKOVÁ, H. Vysoké školství v USA, pg. 33.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ RIPKOVÁ, H., Vysoké školství v USA, pg. 32.

the role of humanities was reduced. Apart from these changes, a system of elective subjects was newly established and even new degrees were defined, among these the doctorate and master's degree¹⁷.

The modified version of a university was not to be a mere place to learn but more importantly it was a place where scientific research played an important role of everyday life. At the turn of the century, institutions of present day university structure emerged.

The Association of American Universities was founded in 1900 and it combined 15 universities that defined basic standards. Universities that were established after this period of time were founded based on these standards. Among those 15 universities there were five state institutions of higher education – California, Michigan, Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin; five universities established during the colonial times – Yale, Harvard, Princeton, Pennsylvania, and Columbia; and at last five newly established universities – Chicago, Cornell, Johns Hopkins, MIT, Stanford and later even CalTech¹⁸.

2.4. Mass Higher Education

Both the end of the World War 2 and the Cold War contributed to the development of higher education. The years following both of these wars were the years of stable economic growth that influenced the tertiary educational system in many ways.

During the Cold War years, particular focus was targeted at scientific research programmes as well as at other industrial sectors of education. The research was aimed at improving military equipment and at the study of techniques used in the American army¹⁹. The race between the United States and the Soviet Union led into even greater investment into research programmes and the number of involved people rapidly increased as well. The interest in acquiring a tertiary education degree reached almost massive numbers. This development goes hand in hand with desegregation of American universities. Also a greater women involvement has been registered as well²⁰. Eventhough the desegregation process was quite successfull, tendencies to maintain so called “historically black colleges” is still pretty high even in the present period.

A significant trait of the mass higher education is that financial resources were acquired more easily and student loans were widely common among a majority of university

¹⁷ RIPKOVÁ, H., Vysoké školství v USA, pg. 34

¹⁸ RIPKOVÁ, H., Vysoké školství v USA, pg. 35

¹⁹ RIPKOVÁ, H., Vysoké školství v USA, pg. 44

²⁰ RIPKOVÁ, H., Vysoké školství v USA, pg. 45

students²¹. The government funded university education and therefore the institutions had the necessary resources to spread their study areas and develop new programmes, especially programmes in doctorate studies.

A major development during this period of time was the establishment of community colleges with their two-year long educational programmes. They were founded at the beginning of the twentieth century and they usually had the word “college” included in their titles. As an example of these institutions there are the Junior College, City College, People's College, and Democracy's College²². These community colleges experienced the biggest development in comparison with other institutions of higher learning.

During the period of time preceding World War 2, a majority of these two-year colleges appertained to the secondary educational system and functioned as a programme following graduation to enhance students' abilities in certain domains. Among courses that were proposed by these institutions were practical classes in general subjects as well as in specialised courses. Later on, two-year colleges were established at a greater basis and they functioned as independent institutions in the 1950s. The participants of this type of learning are not only students who have just graduated from high school, they are also people who are already working but wish to continue their studies and acquire additional certificated education²³. Another major trait of this period of the Mass higher education is that in the years following World War 2, the number of students dramatically increased. The interest shifted from private to public schools.

2.5. The Current Form of the American Higher Education

Post-secondary education consists of either college studies or university studies. As well as in the case of secondary education, the years of higher education are known by terms freshmen, sophomore, junior, and senior years.

Regarding the current form of the tertiary education, individual states are responsible for its own formation and the central government does not influence their decision-making. The higher education institutions are being monitored so as to find out if their quality and prestige is still maintained. Changes in financing also occurred during the last decades. The golden age of American education and science was over and specialists turned their attention

²¹ Ibid.

²² RIPKOVÁ, H., Vysoké školství v USA, pg. 46

²³ RIPKOVÁ, H., Vysoké školství v USA, pg. 46.

to the insufficient financing of tertiary education in the United States. This problem results from the decentralisation of school financing (due to low central government involvement) and even the permanent increase in tuition fees does not help the situation²⁴.

A majority of graduate students leave their studies and enter into their professional lives in serious debt which they can not pay back for many years after their university graduation. That is one of the major problems of the contemporary higher education in the United States. In comparison to the Czech Republic where fees have not been established yet and the education is still free that problem is unimaginable.

3. Basic Characteristics of Current American Tertiary Education

According to Cohen, ten basic characteristics of the American tertiary education could depict present day universities. Those characteristics reflect the current status of American universities.

The first of these principles is a high demand for education (the author is convinced in the usefulness) at the tertiary system. Two thirds of the population enter any kind of tertiary education, thus a majority of population does not end their studies with high school education but continues²⁵.

The second significant trait of the tertiary school system is the importance of private sector in tertiary education. Eventhough about 75% of students study at a state university, private schools still have an essential importance. Education of the highest quality is given through private prestigious universities²⁶.

The third characteristic of the tertiary education deals with the general education in the undergraduate level of learning. During the first years of education students are able to study whatever they wish to study and they pick their specialization all throughout the programme, sometimes even after graduating.

Next feature of the higher education is the credit and modul programme. The basic unit of each university programme is a modul with its sub-units which consist of credits. Each modul has a predefined number of credits which must be acquired in order to pass it sufficiently²⁷.

²⁴ RIPKOVÁ, H., Vysoké školství v USA, pg. 57.

²⁵ RIPKOVÁ, H., Vysoké školství v USA, pg. 60.

²⁶ SPRING, J., American Education, pg. 5.

²⁷ RIPKOVÁ, H., Vysoké školství v USA, pg. 60.

The following attribute of university education is the career growth of academic professionals has a fixed set of rules and is less hierarchized the same time. This means that university teachers assume to obtain a professor status within years of his functioning. The hierarchy is quality-based.

The sixth characteristic deals with the fact that no federal ministry of education exists to interfere with the autonomy of universities. The central government functions only in setting conditions on bases of which students are able to receive loans from federal funds.

An important trait of the tertiary system is that the president of the university has a great variety of competences. He answers only to the school board and meanwhile he has a chief administrative function. He also has the status of the highest academical professional²⁸.

Another attribute deals with the duty of the school board to ensure responsibility to its community. Two-year colleges are a part of the tertiary educational system in the United States. They either have a specific status within the higher education community or they are a part of the secondary educational system.

The last characteristic of the higher education is that it has responsibilities towards the public. Universities ensure that the students graduating from them are able to come across a job after finishing the university.

4. Financing of the American Tertiary Education

The financing of American tertiary education is very decentralised, complicated and comes from various sources – fees paid by students, federal and state government contributions, sources from local authorities and grants (private sector). Universities also acquire money on the bases of sale and from providing their services²⁹. Higher fees are paid in private universities. Student loans are granted to everyone and they are to be repaid after the completion of tertiary studies. Student enter their professional life in debt and it takes them many years to repay their loans³⁰. For more information on the extent of fees, see Attachment 2. The United States of America is a country with very high tuition fees³¹. The expenses on individual student studies at a university range to more than 10 000 USD per year in the United States³². Of those expenses on tertiary education, most of them come from private

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ RIPKOVÁ, H., *Vysoké školství v USA*, pg. 58.

³⁰ RIPKOVÁ, H., *Vysoké školství v USA*, pg. 59.

³¹ KLEŇHOVÁ, M., *České školství v mezinárodním srovnání*, pg. 88.

³² KLEŇHOVÁ, M., *České školství v mezinárodním srovnání*, pg. 64.

sources. Tertiary education in the United States cost in average twice more in comparison with other countries. For more information on average expenses on a student per year see Attachment 3.

A recent trend in college financing is President Obama's Student Loan Forgiveness Program since debts trouble thousands of graduates who already joined the work force. It is directed to graduates who finished their university education up to 10 years ago and they are still in huge debt. This program is targeted on those who are still struggling to pay their student loans even after 10-20 years from graduation. If they borrowed money from the federal government, they can apply for loan forgiveness. A huge benefit of the loan forgiveness program is that loan forgiveness will not bring tax penalties. In previous loan debt forgiveness plans, the amount written off had to be added to tax return as taxable income. As a result, the former plan was not efficient³³.

The plan for loan repayment and forgiveness was proposed in 2011. Through a Pay As You Earn repayment program borrowers save hundreds to thousands of dollars per month³⁴. The program also offers comprehensive student loan forgiveness once 20 years of full, on-time, scheduled monthly payments have been made. Borrowers who work in public service (for example for a Nonprofit organization) are offered student loan forgiveness after they repaid 10 years of on-time payments³⁵. Program also seeks to help borrowers refinance their loans so as to pay a more preferable interest rate and also reduce both monthly payments and total debt at the same time³⁶.

³³ WordPress, 1.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

5. Overall Structure of the Educational System of the Czech Republic

The system of education in the Czech Republic consists of primary education, secondary education, and tertiary education. Each level of education will be presented in the next 3 subsections.

5.1. Primary Education

Primary education is composed of a nine-year study plan and the attendance is compulsory for all children by the government. Before the year 1990, the number of years was 8. Pupils could attend a basic school or a multi-year grammar school. For those attending a multi-year grammar school, their education at a basic school ends in their 5th year of study, they continue their sixth year at a multi-year grammar school³⁷.

Basic schools have two levels: first to fifth grades and sixth to ninth grades. Generalist teachers are responsible for tutoring the first level, second level however is taught by teachers who specialise in two subjects. Education in basic schools is free of charge and the textbooks are provided and financed by the Ministry of Education³⁸. The Education Act of 2005 set a Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education which is mandatory for all basic schools and in the first year of an eight-year grammar school. It also set a framework timetable that describes which educational areas and fields should pupils learn and in what amount of time (see Attachment 4). There are public as well as private elementary schools.

A special “type” of education is home-schooling. In September 1998 home tuition was approved and in 2005 codified by the New Education Act³⁹. Only pupils at the primary level of education can be home-schooled. 376 pupils were educated at home in the year 2008⁴⁰.

5.2. Secondary Education

After completing basic education, a student may proceed to a traditional 4-year grammar school, secondary professional school, secondary vocational school, or a conservatoire depending on the individual area of interest, abilities, and skills⁴¹. Framework educational programmes for the primary as well as secondary level of education are

³⁷ BROŽOVÁ, S., *The Educational System of the Czech Republic*, pg. 29.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ ŠEBKOVÁ, H., *Tertiary Education in the Czech Republic*, pg. 150.

developed by the Ministry of Education of the Czech Republic ⁴². Secondary schools are usually public and thus free of charge. Fees are paid only at private secondary schools.

The first type of a secondary school is a grammar school. Pupils that study at a 4-year grammar school are usually aged from 15 to 19 years. They can attend a 4-year grammar school after the completion of compulsory basic education. Eventhough secondary education is not mandatory, in the years 2007 and 2008, 97% of all 19-year-olds completed high school education ⁴³. The aim of grammar school's general education is to provide quality education and to develop knowledge and skills obtained within basic education. Another aim is to prepare students for university studies. The Ministry of Education is responsible with the creation of curricula and also sets a number of lessons per week and what subjects should students learn (see Attachment 5 and Attachment 6).

Secondary vocational schools provide education which ends in an apprenticeship certificate and they are very practically and professionally oriented. At first, they were run by companies but after 1990 they came under the control of the Ministry of Education ⁴⁴. When studies are finished, graduates are not permitted to enter university education. Lately, reforms are sought so that secondary vocational schools are finished with a high school diploma that would permit graduates university admission ⁴⁵.

Secondary technical schools are aimed at pupils who would start working immediately after school, because they provide practical and intermediate level of qualification. Secondary technical schools teach how to develop and apply acquired technical knowledge and skills in practise ⁴⁶. Graduates finish school with a diploma that permits them to pursue university studies.

Conservatoire is a special type of school that is aimed at artistic excellence in music, danse, singing, and drama. In order to be admitted, a pupil must demonstrate certain talent in form of an aptitude test. Conservatoire education lasts for 6 years ⁴⁷. Pupils are taught in groups or individually and the Ministry of Educations approves their study plan. Differently

⁴² BROŽOVÁ, S., The Educational System of the Czech Republic, pg. 13.

⁴³ BROŽOVÁ, S., The Educational System of the Czech Republic, pg. 39.

⁴⁴ BROŽOVÁ, S., The Educational System of the Czech Republic, pg. 56.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ BROŽOVÁ, S., The Educational System of the Czech Republic, pg. 51.

⁴⁷ BROŽOVÁ, S., The Educational System of the Czech Republic, pg. 60.

from other types of schools, graduates from conservatoires are awarded with a “qualified specialist” degree⁴⁸.

5.3. Tertiary Education

After high school graduation, there are also several options for the students. They can choose between tertiary professional schools and bachelor's studies. Both of these studies last up to 4 years. Among other tertiary school options are long-cycle master's studies which are attended for a maximum of 6 years. An example of such studies is the law or medicine school. A follow-up to the bachelor's studies are master's studies that are usually completed after two years of study. When master's studies are completed and a degree is obtained, a student can apply for a doctoral studies programme⁴⁹.

Higher education institutions are classified as public, private, or state (military and police establishments) institutions. The initial difference in these types of institutions is whom they are subordinated to. State institutions are subjects of control to the Ministry of Defense or the Ministry of the Interior. Military and police higher education institutions are therefore entirely state-funded whereas public institutions (state-subsidised) manage their property, have a wide-ranging autonomy and receive financial support from sponsors different from the state⁵⁰. Private institutions answer to legal entities who had received a permission from the Ministry to establish it⁵¹. Public universities depend on the state government but at the same time they are independent in its own policy-making.

6. Historical Development of Education in the Czech Republic

6.1. Establishment of Universities

The roots of higher education in the Czech Republic can be found in the medieval times. Charles University, the first university in the Czech Republic, was established 3 centuries before the first institution of higher learning in the United States, more precisely in the year 1348⁵². Even in this period of time, this university was very prestigious and well-known in other present day European countries for its quality education that continues into the current period.

⁴⁸ BROŽOVÁ, S., *The Educational System of the Czech Republic*, pg. 60.

⁴⁹ ŠEBKOVÁ, H., *Tertiary Education in the Czech Republic*, pg. 150.

⁵⁰ BROŽOVÁ, S., *The Educational System of the Czech Republic*, pg. 12.

⁵¹ ŠEBKOVÁ, H., *Tertiary Education in the Czech Republic*, pg. 22.

⁵² ŠEBKOVÁ, H., *Tertiary Education in the Czech Republic*, pg. 19.

Similar to the development in the United States, this first institution of tertiary education was designed to teach new clergymen and this university was financed as well by the church who had a complete control over the institution.

6.2. The Educational System in the Czech Republic 1740-1938

The following four subchapters describe major changes and trends not only in university education but also in primary and secondary education. Main characteristics and interference in the development of education will be discussed. Analyzed will be: types of schools that were created, what was the tutoring language, who held responsibility and authority over the schools, what subjects were taught and what laws concerning education were enacted. Attention is given to the changing position of the German language and attempts for a shift towards Czech equalization which marked the 18th and 19th century.

6.2.1. Development in the Second Half of the 18th Century

In the second half of the 18th century, a turning event occurred in education. Maria Theresa enacted mandatory school attendance and at the same time, she aspired for no influence of the Catholic Church on education. In December 1774, basics of a modern educational system were established and the same model remained almost unreformed in course of the next 100 years⁵³. Instruction was arranged to form 28 hours per month and every child was obligated to attend school for a total of 6-7 years. Children in the age of 9-13 from the countryside attended elementary school between December and March so that they were able to help in the field works in the warmer months whilst younger children (ages between 6 and 8) attended school only during the warmer months⁵⁴.

In accordance with the Terezian School Order, three types of schools were established, they were the – “trivial” schools, “main” schools and “norm” schools. Trivial schools were located near the pastorate and they taught three basic (trivial) subjects – reading, writing and arithmetics. Main schools were located in the cities and they educated students not only in the three trivial subjects, but also in Latin, geography, history, science, geometry and art. Norm schools aimed to educate future teachers and they were located only in Prague and Brno. In the first years of education, children were educated in the Czech language. On the contrary,

⁵³ JANIŠ, K. – VRABCOVÁ, D., Vybrané kapitoly z vývoje novodobé české školy, pg. 11.

⁵⁴ JANIŠ, K. – VRABCOVÁ, D., Vybrané kapitoly z vývoje novodobé české školy, pg. 12

the lessons of higher grades were run in the German language. Norm schools used only German as the tutorial language ⁵⁵.

6.2.2. Major Changes in 1791-1848

The turn of the century is marked by a continuing resentment against German influence in education. Various revivalist movements begin to develop. During this period of time, demands on equality of the Czech and German languages in authorities as well as in schools can be seen. Teachers seek for reform so that education could be provided in both languages. These attempts escalated in the establishment of the Department of the Czech Language at the Prague university in 1791 and also in the issue of the 1849 Law of University Organisation. There were attempts to enable independent development, freedom and the right to teach without restrictions ⁵⁶.

When it comes to secondary education, the year 1816 is significant, because a decree was released and it assured that only teachers who could speak Czech were able to teach at grammar schools. Another important event in the formation of secondary education occurred in 1849. Secondary school reform was declared and as a result, the whole structure and organisation of secondary education was changed. A grammar school consisting of 8 classes was created and Latin was no longer a tutoring language. Non-mandatory subjects such as modern languages, art, music and physical education were introduced. This year is also important because the final exam was introduced ⁵⁷.

6.2.3. 1849-1890

Despite the attempts for reform in education of the past years, in the second half of the 19th century German influence was restored and the influence of the Catholic Church intensified. Education was subordinated to the surveillance of the Church. For example, the approval of school textbooks by the Catholic Church was needed. The Catholic Church had a high position in decision-making (decided which teachers could teach at schools and which could not). Until 1866, the Czech language remained a teaching language only in trivial schools and in the lower levels of main and norm schools. The German language dominated in secondary education as well as in tertiary education. Teaching in the Czech language was

⁵⁵ JANIŠ, K. – VRABCOVÁ, D., Vybrané kapitoly z vývoje novodobé české školy, pg. 13.

⁵⁶ JANIŠ, K. – VRABCOVÁ, D., Vybrané kapitoly z vývoje novodobé české školy, pg. 22.

⁵⁷ JANIŠ, K. – VRABCOVÁ, D., Vybrané kapitoly z vývoje novodobé české školy, pg. 25.

restored in the year 1866, Czech specialized study literature was published, Czech grammar schools were founded and the Czech university was restored⁵⁸.

Mandatory school attendance was extended in 1869 up to 8 years of education, which concerned all children from 6 to 14 years of age (with no difference regarding gender). Schools were also divided into public and private in this period of time⁵⁹. It was constituted, that any child could visit a public school and would not be neither judged nor discriminated on the basis of religious views. The role of the Church weakened, the Church was still responsible for religious teachings at schools. On the contrary, superior surveillance over a school was held by the state⁶⁰.

6.2.4. 1890-1945

Fights against germanization in the border region was ended through a law enacted 3rd of April, 1919. A national school was established in every commune. A law of 1922 decreased the number of students in class and it also gave parents the opportunity to deregister their children from religious teachings⁶¹. During the Second World War, all institutions of the tertiary education were closed down. Plenty of teachers as well as students were persecuted in the times of the German occupation⁶².

6.3. Development of the Second Half of the Twentieth Century

During both the German and communist rule of the country, the university education in the Czech Republic has changed due to drastic political and social development. Since the year 1968 known for the communist takeover of the Czech nation by the Soviet Union, situation of the tertiary education in the Czech Republic worsened. The Soviet Union had almost complete control over all areas of life, naturally over the tertiary education too. The university at this time served the purposes of the communist regime and any opposition was suppressed drastically. The takeover was followed by a great wave of emigration and student demonstration, teacher persecution, imprisonment of intelligence, and violence against them of all kind⁶³.

⁵⁸ JANIŠ, K. – VRABCOVÁ, D., Vybrané kapitoly z vývoje novodobé české školy, pg. 33.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ JANIŠ, K. – VRABCOVÁ, D., Vybrané kapitoly z vývoje novodobé české školy, pg. 34.

⁶¹ JANIŠ, K. – VRABCOVÁ, D., Vybrané kapitoly z vývoje novodobé české školy, pg. 41.

⁶² ŠEBKOVÁ, H., Tertiary Education in the Czech Republic, pg. 19.

⁶³ Ibid.

6.4. Characteristic Features and Major Changes After the Year 1989

As a result of the social and political changes following the communist regime, the Higher Education Act was passed in May 1990. This act restored academic freedom together with self-governance of the institutions of higher learning even though they still fell under the control of the state⁶⁴.

Academic Senates were introduced and participated in the governing mechanism of universities. After the changes brought by the year 1989, many new institutions were built, many new faculties were established and a great number of new degree programmes were introduced or advanced. The number of university students increased. Meanwhile, the Accreditation Commission has been developed as a new body with its responsibilities of a curriculum development⁶⁵.

Current higher educational system of the Czech Republic is well known for its free education of public schools as well as for their quality education. Meanwhile, the tuition fees for private schools are a lot smaller than those paid in the United States.

In comparison with the United States, where private schools provide students with more quality education, the situation in the Czech Republic is reversed. In the Czech Republic a rule applies that the public education which is cheaper is of a higher quality than the education provided by private schools.

The current statistic in the number of schools also proves that state universities have a much greater position than the private ones. The number of public universities at present times is 25, whereas private universities have 40 higher learning institutions. Nowadays, there are only two state higher education institutions – the University of Defense in Brno and the Police Academy⁶⁶. In comparison with the number of universities in the United States, the number in the Czech Republic is well balanced, showing that public universities carry a greater significance throughout the population.

The current educational system also focuses on international relations with other European schools. This is done by the means of student Erasmus programmes where students live in a different country and attend a particular foreign institution of higher learning. The European Union is funding these study stays in order to increase the intellectual potential of

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ ŠEBKOVÁ, H., Tertiary Education in the Czech Republic, pg. 20.

⁶⁶ ŠEBKOVÁ, H., Tertiary Education in the Czech Republic, pg. 24.

students and also to increase a sense of united Europe. According to the European Union, the educated population is a pillar of economic prosperity⁶⁷.

7. Current Characteristics of the Tertiary Education of the Czech Republic

The current traits of the higher education in the Czech Republic is demonstrated in the next 4 subchapters as well as trends that dominate in the decades after year 1989 and nowadays. Tertiary education is characterized by being autonomous and independent of the state (in financial issues to a certain extent)⁶⁸. Next important change is the division to a bachelor's degree studies and master's degree studies. In the past there were long-time study programmes. PhD study programmes did not exist until recently, tertiary professional schools were introduced as well. Another important trait as well as problem is that the amount of university students dramatically increased and speculations about the decline in the quality of education arose⁶⁹.

7.1. The Emergence of Tertiary Professional Schools

Tertiary professional schools were recently included into tertiary education, more precisely in 1992, and since 1995 they are a part of the educational system⁷⁰. This type of schools focus on a practically oriented education and it lasts 3 years of full-time study. Requirement for admission is the completion of secondary education (along with the acquisition of a high school diploma) and passing an entrance test. Most of the tertiary professional schools charge fees.

Education is organised into 2 terms – winter and summer. Each school prepares its own educational programme structured into modules. There is a theoretical as well as practical part of the study programme. Theoretical part is taught through lectures, seminars and consultations whereas practical training can be organised in school laboratories or in work places owned by corporations and/or individuals⁷¹. Tertiary professional education ends with an absolutorium, which is an examination of theoretical as well as practical skills and

⁶⁷ BRDEK, M. – VYCHOVÁ, H., *Evropská vzdělávací politika*, pg. 27.

⁶⁸ BROŽOVÁ, S., *The Education System of the Czech Republic*, pg. 15.

⁶⁹ PRUDKÝ, L., *České vysoké školství*, pg. 14.

⁷⁰ BROŽOVÁ, S., *The Education System of the Czech Republic*, pg. 68.

⁷¹ BROŽOVÁ, S., *The Education System of the Czech Republic*, pg. 70.

knowledge and also a defense of a thesis. Graduates are awarded with a degree of a “qualified specialist” abbreviated as DiS (positioned after the name)⁷².

8. The Financing of the Czech Tertiary Education

It is fixed by law, that public tertiary education in the Czech Republic is free of charge with only few following exceptions. Fees for administration of certain administration proceedings are paid by students as well as fees for prolonging the duration of study beyond a set limit⁷³. The base for fees is 5% of the average cost for a student that is paid to the higher education institutions by the Ministry of Education from a state budget in a calendar year⁷⁴. Spendings on a student's tertiary education in the Czech Republic range in average around 8 209 USD per year which is 2.4 times more than expenses on primary education of an individual⁷⁵. In the Czech Republic, a total number of educational expenses formed 4.6% of GDP in 2007, of those expenses 1.2 % of GDP was given on tertiary education⁷⁶. Public spendings on tertiary education form 83.8%, remaining 16.2% is financed from private sources⁷⁷. One-time fee is paid for entrance tests, later fees are paid if a student exceeds the standard duration of the bachelor or master degree programme by one year. When a holder of a degree wishes to study another bachelor or master degree programme, he is charged a full fee. Foreign students that study in Czech universities can be charged special fees if they are taught in a language other than Czech.

As mentioned earlier, military and police tertiary education institutions are entirely state-funded, whereas public institutions receive financial support from other sponsors different from the state⁷⁸. Private universities can fix their own fees and they do not fall within the limits of fees fixed by the Ministry of Education⁷⁹.

⁷² BROŽOVÁ, S., The Education System of the Czech Republic, pg. 71.

⁷³ BROŽOVÁ, S., The Education System of the Czech Republic, pg. 76.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ KLEŇHOVÁ, M., České školství v mezinárodním srovnání, pg. 65.

⁷⁶ KLEŇHOVÁ, M., České školství v mezinárodním srovnání, pg. 74.

⁷⁷ KLEŇHOVÁ, M., České školství v mezinárodním srovnání, pg. 81.

⁷⁸ BROŽOVÁ, S., The Education System of the Czech Republic, pg. 12.

⁷⁹ BROŽOVÁ, S., The Education System of the Czech Republic, pg. 76.

8.1. The Financing of Research

The financing of higher education in the Czech Republic is closely connected to the research domain. Financial sources that a university obtains stem from the financing of science projects. Considerable university incomes from research are comprise financing of so-called “specific research”⁸⁰. 60% of all financial means on this type of research are distributed among the four largest universities in the Czech Republic, thus the recipients are: Czech Technical University and Charles University (both located in Prague) and in Brno the Univesity of Technology and Masaryk's University. Other universities share the remaining 40% of financial sources to finance their research⁸¹. The criteria for the acquisition of money are: participation of a university on Research and Developement, suitability of structure of research workers and participation of students on the research. Based on these criteria, money is distributed. However, at present times there is an aim for reform of “specific research” since it is non-transparent to what intention are financial means used. There are problems with the dispatching of financial means between faculties and their utilization within faculties⁸².

Another type of financing through research is through “project financing”. Public as well as private financial means are distributed to Czech universities through Research Centers when the goal is to finance an international programme⁸³. International financing of research continues to increase in present times as Czech universities participate into the international network of universities. Universities receive significant financial means from the European Union, regional and local public resources finance research only insignificantly compared to resources obtained from abroad⁸⁴. Recent analysis showed, that Czech research is competitive with regard to research of other European universities. Despite the increase in international financing in the past years, Czech universities are still dependent on obtaining financial support from institutions in the Czech Republic – for example from private centers and donators⁸⁵.

⁸⁰ PRUDKÝ, L., České vysoké školství, pg. 100.

⁸¹ PRUDKÝ, L., České vysoké školství, pg. 100.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ PRUDKÝ, L., České vysoké školství, pg. 102.

⁸⁴ PRUDKÝ, L., České vysoké školství, pg. 103.

⁸⁵ PRUDKÝ, L., České vysoké školství, pg. 104.

9. Comparison of Higher Education of Both Countries

Differently from the Czech Republic, the primary education includes kindergarten, which is a year-long educational step that prepares small children for next education.

The structure of both Czech and American universities is divided into faculties, departments, and different areas of study.

Both the United States and the Czech Republic have a very long tradition of universities, even though that of the Czech Republic is 3 centuries older. Similarly, the intention of establishing such institutions came on the behalf of the church representatives and thus the first faculties comprised rather theological teachings.

The main focus of education in those early times was to teach new clergy who would continue in the footsteps of their predecessors and carry on handing down their knowledge to younger churchmen.

Each university system had to deal with the changing social, economic, and political environment and along with these changes, the focus of university teachings stopped being influenced by the church.

The curriculums shifted from humanities and theological subjects to more scientific and professional studies and the institutions were more in the hands of the nonclerical population. The number of universities also increased and still continues to increase nowadays in both countries. Over the years of university formation, research became one of the essential activities of each university.

Whereas the Czech university education was storm-beaten by chaos during the second half of the twentieth century, the tertiary education in the USA was untouched by dictatorships of foreign countries and its evolution was stable and continuous without interruptions of any kind.

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10. Overseas Education of the United States of America

Having lived at two American military bases, I have visited several institutions of learning. The topic of the first chapter in this section will be the first school I have attended which is called AFNORTH International School and on the basis of this experience I will describe the elementary school system of the United States overseas.

The second chapter of the practical part section will contain the depiction of the secondary education system, this time concerning the experience obtained through the period of time spent at the SHAPE American High School.

10.1. Elementary School Education

The first institution of education I have attended is called AFNORTH International School. It is located in the Kingdom of the Netherlands, in the province of Limburg, city of Brunssum. This region is well known for its continuous longterm NATO military presence, meaning the school is as old as the tradition of relations with this region itself. This school meets the American education requirements and is inspected regularly by the American Department of Defense Education Authority. Due to the fact that this school was an international one, there were four main sections – The American Section, the Canadian Section, British Section, and German Section with each of it having its own curriculum. The following text is written on the basis of the American Section experience.

The elementary school system begins with the kindergarten year. This one year long education is a pre-school preparation for American children for basic education. When children pass the kindergarten study programme, they enroll in for primary education as we know it in the Czech Republic. Up until grade 5, children attend the elementary school and when they advance to sixth grade, they are referred to as middle schoolers.

The middle school period lasts for only two years and that is different from the Czech Republic where there is no such thing as the middle school, but primary education continues to 9th grade. Another essential difference is that the American school hours differ from the Czech Republic, depending on the age of the student and the national section in which he or she is enrolled. The school day normally starts at 9:00 am and ends at 2:00 pm. Whereas in the Czech Republic, school days start at 8:00 am and they last in the afternoon in accordance with the schedule that differs each day. At an American school, same subjects are taught everyday, only art, music, and PE classes rotated.

All overseas education institutions of the United States are financed from the army budget as well as from individual members of the army who pay a certain percentage of fees.

The United States do not have a system of grammar schools like the Czech Republic has, therefore a student cannot leave school at fifth grade in order to enter the secondary education but needs to finish elementary education at first before entering secondary education.

10.2. High School System in the United States

The focus of this chapter is to describe in detail the SHAPE American High School, SAHS in the abbreviated form, and its educational structure. For a period of two years this has been the educational institution that I have been visiting on a daily basis, being one of the most remarkable experiences of my life at the same time. This school is located in Casteau, Belgium near the city called Mons. There I have lived between the years 2008 and 2010. This high school is a part of a whole network of schools that educate the children of American soldiers as well as other non-American kids whose parents work at the military base. This network of schools is known by the name of The Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoDDS). The whole school system is located in countries other than the United States, being the tenth biggest American school system at the same time.

SAHS is attended by children under sponsorships of their military active parents, employees of the NATO military base Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe. The American High School provides children with a typical United States curricular and extracurricular programme. It has a tradition since the year 1967 due to the fact that the headquarters moved from French Paris to Belgian Mons (SAHS 2013). This school is a great example of a multicultural environment with participants from various European as well as non-European countries, where people from many cultures and people speaking different languages find a place to learn.

10.2.1. High School Structure and Description of the System

The high school system in the American section begins at grade 9, which is the first year of high school in the Czech Republic. Similarly to Czech grammar schools or secondary professional schools, the students are preparing themselves for colleges and universities during a four year period before taking their final exams (before graduation).

At the beginning of the school year, the school day is assigned. There are 7 different classes throughout the day but the same subjects occur at the same time every day of the week. So for example if a student is due to take class in mathematics 7th period, he will have to take it every school day for the rest of the year, which is a little bit disastrous when it is

taken into account that a great deal of concentration is needed for this subject but the hour in which it takes place is not suitable.

There is a special terminology for each grade. The 9th graders are referred to as “freshmen”, a 10th grader usually answers to the term “sophomore”, 11th graders are called “juniors” and students of the final year of high school are known as “seniors”. This denomination for students is typical for US overseas high schools as well as in the country, it is used by students themselves, teachers and even parents.

The structure of secondary education is similar to the university education structure in the Czech Republic. At the beginning of each semester, each student has an arranged meeting with the school's counselor. With the help of the counselor, the student enrolls in mandatory courses as well as courses he is interested in or would like to specialise in. The mandatory courses include every subject at the very easiest level and they must be taken and passed successfully by every student. The aim of mandatory courses is to acquire general education. Subjects from all fields must be passed at least at the basic level, thus the easiest, therefore the student has basic knowledge of all sectors – in mathematics, physics, etc. In comparison with the Czech tertiary educational system, those subjects can be referred to as “A courses”.

Once the counselor and the student agree upon the A subjects, they try to fill in the remaining gaps in the schedule (if there are any). Such gaps intend to fulfill student's interest or simply a favorite “leisure” subject such as Physical Education (P.E.) or maybe Art, Music, or Drama.

It is possible to receive a half of a credit or one credit for each course, depending on whether the course is occurring for only a semester or for two semesters. In order to graduate, a certain number of credits must be achieved as well as attendance requirements. The important part of each semester is dedicated to exams, once again a similarity to the Czech university education system. Exams are scheduled during a specific period of time at the end of the winter semester as well as at the end of the summer semester. If a student passes all final exams, he receives credits for all of the subjects.

Eventhough smaller tests are written all throughout the semester, essays and homework assignments are submitted, the exams must be taken and students must all pass them, otherwise they have to enroll in the course again. Differently to the Czech university system, even when the student does not pass the course the second time he is enrolled in it, he is still able to attend the school next year.

When a student manages to complete all his A subjects, he has plenty of space for making decisions so as to what study next. The student really chooses the subjects where he

expects to deepen his knowledge in a certain area of interest that is crucial in the means of passing entrance exams for college and later university. If the student does not repeat any subjects, it is possible that at the beginning of the junior year he has this kind of opportunity. At this exact moment, another consultation with the counselor is needed. Options for schedule arrangement are discussed as well as each individual student's wish in what he would like to specialise in. Still, there are A subjects even in junior and senior years, but those make up only about 3 courses per year, some of them being only half-semester ones.

Another important part of the senior year are SAT exams. These are exams which can be compared to the Czech "SCIO" tests. During a predetermined week in the semester, students who wish to take those exams, take them. The exams are divided into mathematics, language, and sciences. The successfulness is evaluated in percentage received and the result is compared to all students even in the United States (non-American students as well). Students are admitted to college on the basis of these results as well as their GPA (Grade Point Average), their entrance essays, and even by their certificates obtained after passing their AP courses. Advanced Proficiency courses also known by the abbreviation AP courses are un compulsory subjects that were much harder than those that were mandatory and the major purpose of those classes is to help students with college preparation.

During the first three years of high school study – freshmen, sophomore, and junior years – students prepare themselves to take the SAT exam via PSAT exams, which are mandatory to take and students obtain approximate knowledge of the structure and content of the future SAT exams. SAT exam results are also taken into account when students apply for scholarships, which is a huge topic for American children since quality university education and life expenses are both quite expensive.

When the students passed all their mandatory and selective objects being in the last moments of their senior year, the last event that remains is graduation. The graduation begins by prom, which is the last school dance, analogical to the Czech graduation ball. Unlike in the Czech Republic, the American graduation ball occurs in June. Differently to the Czech Republic, Americans do not prepare a special programme like Czech students. The graduation ball in the United States consists of a dinner as well as dancing, but contrary to the Czech graduation balls, parents do not have permission to attend the ball, nor did the students who were younger than the junior and senior students. The graduation ball in the Czech Republic is thought-out during a semester long period of time and have a special topic on the basis of which the students are dressed according to the theme. The only requirement for an American prom is a full dress code, no theme costumes were necessary.

The topic of race and segregation was very frequent during the development of the educational system in the United States, but in the present period no such prejudice and discrimination occurs, and in case there is some, the school would intervene. During my studies I have never seen even any slight glimpse of such a thing because any act of discrimination was to be severely punished. In the Czech Republic this issue is not as sensitive as in America, where schools (especially higher education institutions) have quotas as in what percentage of students can be of a certain race. Differently to the United States, I have never come across anything like this in the Czech Republic.

10.2.2. Enumeration of Mandatory Courses – Comparison to the Czech Republic

As already mentioned, some subjects of the American High School are of a similar nature as the subjects in the Czech Republic. Eventhough in the Czech Republic the course name is simply “Mathematics”, in the American educational system there is a number of courses corresponding to this one in the Czech secondary educational system. On this example I would like to illustrate the American approach to this subject.

In accordance with the target focus of the subject and difficulty, the American high school system differentiates 6 types of mathematics classes. Among those that are mandatory are: Algebra 1, Geometry, Discrete Maths, and Algebra 2. Each subject is taken at a different grade level as students advance in their studies. If a student is interested in math and would like to pursue a career in it, he can choose to enroll in advanced courses, firstly in a Pre-Calculus class and later on in AP Calculus which is the most difficult level of math he can take in high school.

Another difference when comparing the two systems is the approach to computer science. Whereas in the Czech Republic students get a general overview of different applications and they learn basic facts about each, the computer studies at an American high school is taught in a more practical way. There are one semester courses that are aimed directly at one particular application. On a daily basis, students learn basic as well as advanced features of each application – excell, word, and power point – and get a more detailed education in each. Those courses end in certificate exams where students receive certificates directly from Microsoft after passing them. That way they can enhance their CVs and also get additional points when applying for higher education.

Economics is also a course that the Czech Republic doest not include in high school curriculum plans, but is regularly taught at American high schools. Similarly to the Czech

Republic, there were courses that are the same in both countries – for example chemistry, history, and physics.

Thanks to having attended Masaryk's Grammar School for the first two years of high school, before moving to Belgium, I have received credits for a majority of mandatory objects, for example Physics, Biology, Math, and some others. But even though I already received those credits, I had to take other mandatory and above that voluntary courses. Among mandatory subjects, there was the ESL4 course. This was mandatory for all students, whose mother tongue was not English even though the level of this language met the requirements for not having to have to take the course. Although they have had English in their past education, no credits were received from it. The knowledge of the English language was evaluated by an entrance test, on the basis of which the particular student was placed between ESL1 and ESL4 courses. Those who had none or minimal knowledge of English were automatically placed into the ESL1 course. At the end of the year, exams had to be taken in order to pass to the next level or to be declared as a “English Native Speaker” and when they obtained such status, the teachers would not excuse them in other subjects for not understanding. They treated them equally with the Americans, no excuses whatsoever were taken into account.

Along with the ESL courses, Americans as well as other international students had to take LA (Language Arts) courses. These courses did not depend on the English level, but on the grade level. For me, that meant starting with LA11 course and then continuing in LA12 course. Those were analogical to the Czech language courses at Masaryk's Grammar school targeting literature education. But apart from the Czech system, we did not learn about a great number of authors along with the enumeration of their works. Here in Belgium, main focus was at specific works. In practise, the course was about reading approximately 4 books per year in class and elaborating handouts, homework exercises and essays each week. Attention was aimed at individual reading as well as reading in groups, the major goal of this course was to enhance vocabulary at a mother tongue level of English.

10.2.3. Courses Different from the Czech Republic

Then, there are courses that do not have any tradition whatsoever in the high school education of the Czech Republic. First of these is for example a one-semester course called “US Government” or “Model United Nations”. Both of these courses were aimed at learning through mock situations created in the classrooms. In the US Government class, various laws,

jurisdiction, and the American Constitution were studied as well as its amendments. Through mock tribunals, the students studied major law cases.

Model United Nations was another course that is not taught at a high school level in the Czech Republic. The major idea of this course was to act out the General Assembly of the United Nations Organisation, where each day a student had to represent the ideas of a country he or she picked at the beginning of class. The aim was to discuss UN resolutions and act out the interest of that particular country on the specific topic.

Yearbook Production is another special course that is not common within the country of the Czech Republic but in the United States plays an important role due to longterm tradition. This two semester course was targeted at putting together the yearbook of a particular year. Students enrolled in this class were preparing the yearbook for other students during both semesters, in general that means they were working on graphic design, they were going to various school sport competitions, trips, school dances, and other events in order to take pictures which they would later on add in the book. The final document was sold to other students and teachers at the end of the school year.

The last of special courses that are not common in the Czech Republic is a subject called JROTC. It is a course where students wishing to pursue and continue in the military footsteps of their parents take. It is part of only overseas study programmes. American high school located in the United States do not teach this subject.

10.2.4. High School Sports

Sports play a very important part of everyday life of a great number of students. With this aspect, I found interesting that all sports were performed on a daily basis but only seasonally, meaning for a period of time of only two months. Also, if a student was active in one sport of the season, he was not permitted to participate in another, because it would coincide with the membership of the first one. Among available and most favorite sports there was cross country, American football, volleyball, tennis, cheerleading, swimming, basketball, wrestling, track and field, soccer, baseball, and softball.

When a student was active in one sport during one season, he performed other sports as well in the next season, thus enhancing his abilities in a variety of activities. Each weekend, competitions were organized with other schools of the region or in neighbourhood countries. These competitions were taken very seriously. Contrary to the Czech Republic, even if a high school had its own team, it was not as connected to the school as it was in the SHAPE

American High School. As a curiosity, the girls basketball team won the European Championship in the year 2012.

Student results remained the main interest of the school eventhough the sport tradition at an American high schools is high. When a student had poor school results, he was denied participation in school competitions no matter how great a sportsman he was untill he improved his work.

12. Comparison of the High School Systems

In comparison to the Czech Republic, the high school education was more about practise than about learning study materials by heart. Also I see a great advantage in the ways that some courses were taught. The number of students in each classroom was smaller (usually about 8-10 students per class) than it is in the Czech Republic, thus giving more opportunities to discussion. Also due to the low number of students per classroom, teachers had more time to address individual students and help them with their difficulties more than it is in the Czech high schools. The number of students in a typical Czech classroom is sometimes three time bigger than in an American classroom, therefore there is almost none or very limited space to address individual issues and problems with the study materials.

Also, the goal of the education was to fullfill mandatory courses in the first two years of education so as to acquire general knowledge, but later on pick out the major subjects of interest. That way a student participates only in courses he would like to pursue in later studies. In the Czech Republic, all subjects are taught throughout the whole period of education eventhough the student knows that he will not pursue a career in majority of the subjects, but it is mandatory to learn them anyway.

Another major difference of the two systems is that there are not many universities that admit student only on the base of their entrance exam results or SCIO testing results. In the American high schools, emphasis is put on the four years of education as a whole. The student submits his whole high school education results along with his university application, therefore the student is not evaluated on the basis of one test, but attention is given to all his study years.

Great significance is given to homework assignments. They are taken into account when a teacher is deciding which final grade to give. Whereas homework assignments are not graded in the Czech Republic and only responsible students complete them, they do not play a key role for all students.

Same rule applies when receiving grade for their subjects. The system of grading is complex. It includes homework assignments completion that makes 10% of final grade as well as smaller tests and final exams. That way, if the student is hardworking, it is more important than if he passes only few tests throughout the semester.

Special attention was given to individual discussions with students and that reflected in the subjects they were studying. Some of the subjects were even aimed at the development of debate abilities. No subject of this kind is studied in the high school educational level in the Czech Republic.

A major difference between the two countries is the schedule and time management. Whereas the school week in the Czech Republic is very diversified, the American high school schedule seems rather dull. That would probably be one of the disadvantages and weakness of the US system overseas as well as in the country worth mentioning.

In my opinion, the structure of the American high school system is better and well thoughtout eventhough one major weakness was mentioned, that of the schedule being the same every day, the system would be better if the hours of the classes rotated. Overall I find many weaknesses in the secondary educational system of the Czech Republic. Although being a country with a longterm quality education, it should modernize and change some of the approaches to learning. Students at grammar schools are taught a great amount of information in each course, but as a result all of them forget the knowledge obtained in the courses they do not continue with in their university studies and the extent to which they learn in each subjects therefore loses its meaning and is somewhat pointless.

An important difference between the Czech and American high school system is that the final exams on the basis of which a student obtains high school diploma were not the same nature. Whereas in the Czech Republic four subjects are chosen by each student and from these subject he need to pass the final exam having learned the knowledge, in the system of the United States the exam was of a completely different nature. The final exams in the American high school consisted of regular end of semester exams. Also the student had to have all the credits needed for high school ending, but no special exam had to be taken in order to receive the diploma, no essay needed to be written. Both of the educational systems have their strenghts as well as weaknesses and additional attention should be given in the process of modernisation of each.

Conclusion

The core chapters of the thesis answered the questions asked in the introduction. The bachelor thesis depicted in detail both the educational system of the Czech Republic and the educational system of the United States of America. Special attention was paid to the structure of each educational system, with a more detailed explanation of the elementary school system, high school system, and university school system referred to as the primary education, secondary education, and tertiary education. The thesis also described the ways how school financing has changed over the years from private sponsors to various state benefits and gave a brief summary in each main chapter.

A major part of the theoretical part of the bachelor thesis was dedicated to the historical development of the tertiary education both in the United States of America and in the Czech Republic. Outlined were the most important historical milestones that have had an impact of the formation of the university systems as they are known nowadays.

Within these milestones, the very beginning of tertiary education is mentioned, followed by the enlargement of small colleges. The following parts led to another transformation until the present times. Mentioned was the transformation of tertiary education during the times of the Industrial Revolution, the mass higher education, and also the current form of the American higher education.

In both the theoretical and practical part special attention was given to the significant differences as well as similarities of the educational systems of high schools. The practical chapter has been written on the basis of personal experience that was used to describe both school systems. Both the strengths as well as weaknesses were mentioned throughout the bachelor thesis either at the end of each chapter as a summary or directly in the chapters. A considerable part of the practical chapter of the bachelor thesis was dedicated to the enumeration of the subjects that are taught at the secondary level of education, highlighted were interesting facts about some of them. The subjects and structure of education at the American high school were compared to those in the Czech high school system.

Various aspects that are related to education were analysed as well. Among these, the question of financing was presented. Also minor topics such as sport and its significance in secondary education found its place.

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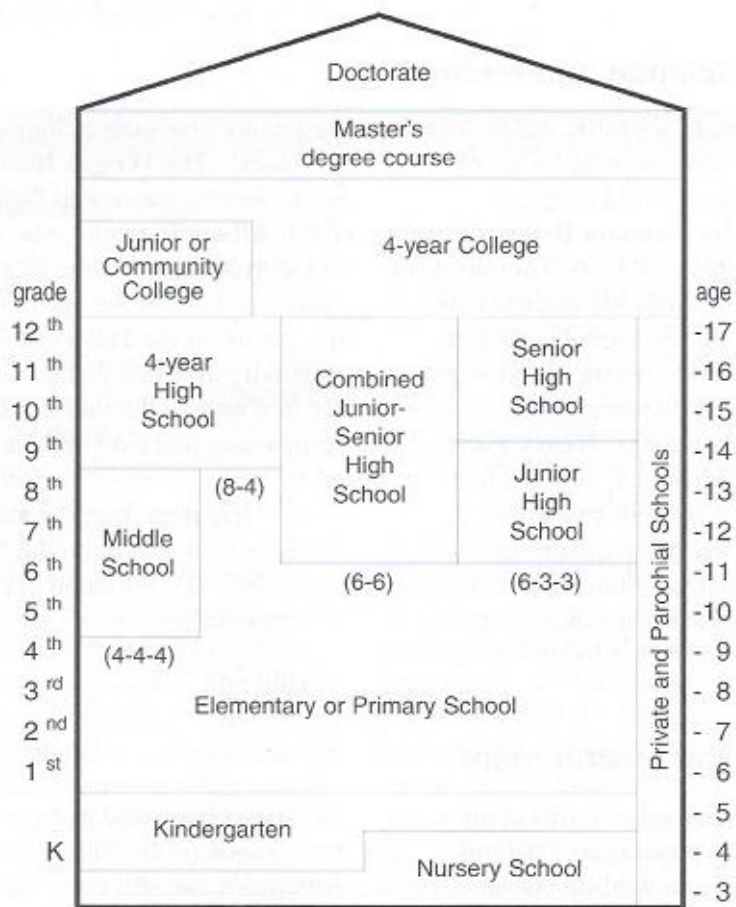
Résumé

This bachelor thesis gives a detailed depiction of the educational system of the United States of America and the educational system in the Czech Republic. It is divided in two major parts. The first major part is theoretical, describing tertiary educational system of both the United States and the Czech Republic. The systems are analyzed on the basis of relevant literature. The historical development of both systems is depicted. Throughout the text as well as in a special chapter at the end of the theoretical part, summary and comparison of both systems is given. The second part is the practical part which emphasises individual personal experience acquired during study stay in the institution of American secondary education. This part of the bachelor thesis is focused on the secondary education in the overseas territories of the United States of America. Analogically, summary and comparison of the Czech Republic is given throughout the text as well as in the last chapter of the practical part.

Abstrakt

Bakalářská práce poskytuje podrobné znázornění vzdělávacího systému ve Spojených státech amerických a v České republice. Je rozdělena do dvou hlavních částí. První část je teoretická, charakterizuje vzdělávací systémy Spojených států a České republiky a historický vývoj obou systémů. Tato část je zpracována na základě odborné literatury. Druhá část je praktická, zdůrazňuje vlastní zkušenosti o vzdělávacím systému na základě několikaletého studijního pobytu na zahraniční střední škole. Dále se věnuje otázce financování vysokého školství jak ve Spojených státech, tak v České republice. Cíl práce je porovnat oba vzdělávací systémy na základě různých kritérií.

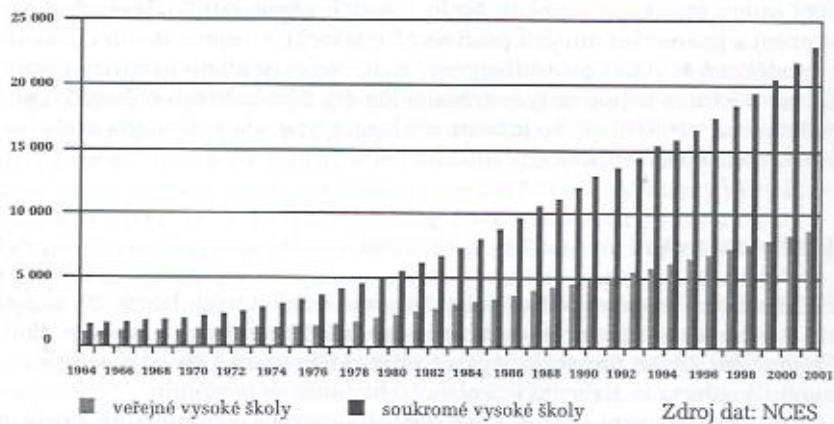
Attachment 1



Source: BRENDLOVÁ, S., Reálie anglicky mluvících zemí, page 94.

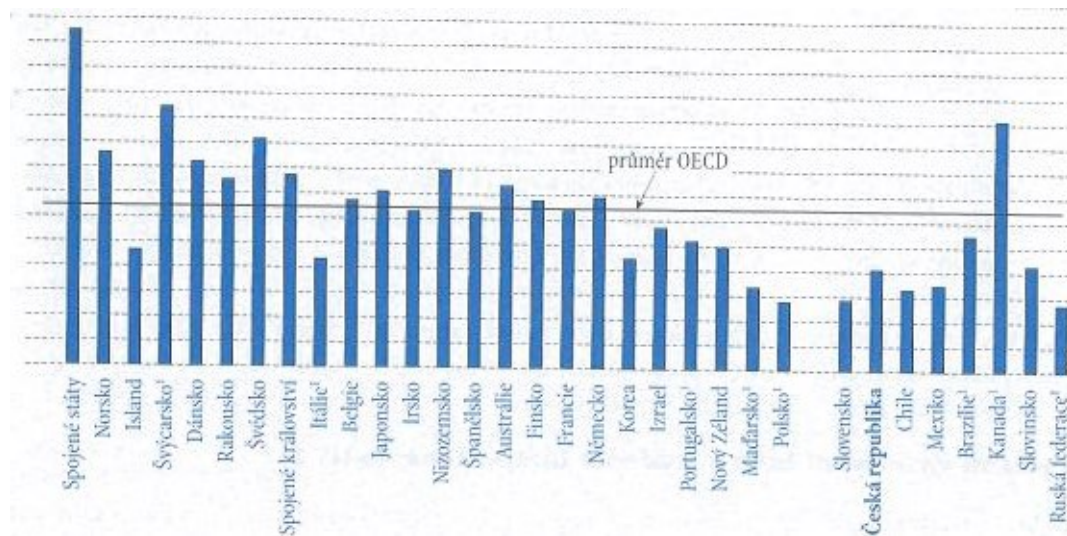
Attachment 2

Školné na veřejných a soukromých vysokých školách v USA (v USD)



Source: RIPKOVÁ, H., Vysoké školství v USA, page 58.

Attachment 3



Source: KLEŇHOVÁ, M., České školství v mezinárodním srovnání, page 66.

Attachment 4

Framework timetable

Educational areas	Educational fields	Minimum number of hours		Additional notes:
		1 st stage years 1–5	2 nd stage years 6–9*	
Language and language communication	Czech language and literature	35	15	must be taught in every year
	Foreign language	9	12	compulsory from year 3 (at least 3 hours a week in every year); may be taught from the year 1
Mathematics and its application		20	15	must be taught in every year
Information and communication technology		1	1	is taught at least once at the first stage and once at the second stage
People and their world		12		is taught at first stage only, in every year
People and society	History	-	11	
	Citizenship education			
People and nature	Physics	-	21	
	Chemistry			
	Biology			
	Geography			
Arts and culture	Music	12	10	must be taught in every year
	Fine art			
People and their health	Health education	-	10	at the first stage included in the educational area of People and their world
	Physical education	10		must be taught in every year, at least 2 hours
People and the world of work		5	3	must be taught in every year
Cross-curricular themes (Personal and social education, Education for democratic citizenship, Education towards thinking in the European and global context, Multicultural education, Environmental education, and Media studies)		P	P	need not to be included in every year
Disposable hours		14	24	
Total compulsory number of hours		118	122	

P = must be included at the given stage and disposable hours can be used

* or lower years of multi-year *gymnázia*

Source: BROŽOVÁ, S., The Educational System of the Czech Republic, page 33.

Attachment 5

Timetable of gymnázium (2007/08)

Number of lessons per week in years 1 to 4

	1	2	3	4	Total
Czech language and literature	3	3	3	3	12
Foreign language 1	3	3	3	3	12
Foreign language 2	3	3	3	3	12
Latin	R	R	R	R	R
Basics of social sciences	1	1	2	2	6
History	2	2	2	R	6
Geography	2	2	R	R	4
Mathematics	3	3	2	2	10
Descriptive geometry	R	R	R	R	R
Physics	2	2	2	R	6
Chemistry	2	2	2	R	6
Biology/geology	2	2	2	R	6
Information and computer technology	2	R	R	R	2
Aesthetic education	2	2	R	R	4
Physical education	2	2	2	2	8
Optional subject 1	R	R	2	2	4
Optional subject 2		R	2	2	4
Optional subject 3			R	2	2
Optional subject 4				R	R
Total of set lessons	29	27	27	21	104
Lessons added by school head (R)	4	6	6	12	28
Total	33	33	33	33	132
Non-compulsory subjects					

Source: BROŽOVÁ, S., *The Educational System of the Czech Republic*, page 45.

Attachment 6

Framework timetable

Educational area	Educational field	Total number of teaching hours during the study	Note
Language and language communication	Czech language and literature	12	obligatory in each year
	Foreign language 1	12	obligatory in each year
	Foreign language 2	12	obligatory in each year
Mathematics and its application		10	obligatory in years 1 to 3
People and nature	Physics	36	obligatory in years 1 and 2
	Chemistry		
	Biology		
	Geography		
	Geology		
People and society	Civic and social science essentials		
	History		
	Geography		
People and the world of work		X	during years 1 to 4
Arts and culture ³	Music	4	obligatory in years 1 and 2
	Fine arts		
People and their health	Physical education	8	obligatory in each year
	Health education	X	during years 1 to 4
Information and communication technology		4	during years 1 to 4
Optional educational activities ⁴		8	obligatory in years 3 and 4
Cross-curricular themes		X	during years 1 to 4
Available hours		26	fully in responsibility of school head ⁵
Total compulsory number of hours		132	

Source: BROŽOVÁ, S., *The Educational System of the Czech Republic*, page 47.