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**Presenting Prague: Visions of a City through Western
Guidebooks**

Master's thesis

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Declaration

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Abstract

Over the past 30-35 years, Prague has witnessed significant changes in its government, economics, and social policies. Following the 1989 revolutions, vast swaths of Westerners were allowed to visit the Czech capital for the first time. It quickly developed into one of Europe's most visited cities, boasting millions of tourists each year. This master's thesis is a case study that aims to use English language, Western published guidebooks to determine how Prague is presented to Westerners and how that affects Western perceptions into the city. Perception is not determined by a single factor and is influenced by numerous variables. This study seeks to highlight how guidebooks contribute towards the West's perception of Prague. It analyzes 17 guidebooks published from 1994 to 2019 and uses the various descriptive elements of each. The focus is on the narratives they offer and how those narratives change over time through the use of discourse analysis. The main question of this research is to answer how Prague's presentation in guidebook has changed over time, and how this affects Western perception of the city. What do Westerners think about the city? Is Prague a quirky place that is only notable for its architecture, or is there something else alluring about the Czech capital? How does Prague fit in with debates surrounding what is considered culturally "Eastern", "Central", or "Western" Europe? The study concludes that guidebooks change their presentation of Prague from a beautiful, relatively unknown city that is full of mystery, yet lacking modern amenities and services, to a city that re-establishes Central Europe into the consciousness of the West, with amenities on par with any other Western city.

Abstrakt

Za posledních 30-35 let prošla Praha významnými změnami v oblasti státní správy, ekonomiky a sociální politiky. Po revoluci v roce 1989 mohly poprvé navštívit české hlavní město velké masy lidí ze Západu. Rychle se z ní stalo jedno z nejnavštěvovanějších evropských měst, které se každoročně pyšní miliony turistů. Tato magisterská práce je případovou studií, jejímž cílem je na základě anglicky psaných, na Západě vydaných průvodců zjistit, jak je Praha prezentována západním turistům a jak to ovlivňuje vnímání města Západem. Vnímání není určeno jediným faktorem a je ovlivněno mnoha proměnnými. Tato studie se snaží poukázat na to, jak průvodci přispívají k vnímání Prahy Západem. Analyzuje 17 průvodců vydaných v letech 1994 až 2019 a využívá různé popisné prvky každého z nich. Zaměřuje se na narativy, které nabízejí, a na to, jak se tyto narativy mění v čase, a to pomocí analýzy diskurzu. Hlavní otázkou tohoto výzkumu je odpovědět na to, jak se prezentace Prahy v průvodcích měnila v čase a jak to ovlivňuje vnímání města na Západě. Co si lidé ze Západu myslí o městě? Je Praha bizarním místem, které je pozoruhodné pouze svou architekturou, nebo je na českém hlavním městě lákavé ještě něco jiného? Jak Praha zapadá do debat o tom, co je považováno za kulturní "východní", "střední" nebo "západní" Evropu? Studie dochází k závěru, že průvodci mění svou prezentaci Prahy z krásného, relativně neznámého města, které je plné tajemství, ale postrádá moderní vybavení a služby, na město, které znovu zavádí střední Evropu do povědomí Západu, s vybavením srovnatelným s jakýmkoli jiným západním městem.

Keywords

Guidebook, Perception, Western, Tourism, History, Presentation

Klíčová slova

Průvodce, Vnímání, Western, Turistika, Historie, Prezentace

Název práce

Prezentace Prahy: vize města prostřednictvím západních průvodců

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Introduction

The opening up of Central and Eastern Europe following the Velvet Revolution allowed Westerners to visit Prague, en masse, for the first time. Western tourists were keen to visit a city that had largely been hidden away for the better part of 40 years. This "hidden" nature of Prague made the city more attractive to Western tourists seeking something new or different. However, this is not unique to Prague. Traveling into what was considered "Eastern Europe" has long been a fascination to the West. Gephardt writes about late 19th century Western European travel into Eastern Europe as an "Enchanted Garden" of sorts. This was put into the context of Bram Stokers Dracula, stating that "At the turn of the 20th century, parts of Eastern Europe were yet to be explored by Western travelers... [the] initial reaction is to categorize and, thus, to contain his experience of traveling into 'one of the wildest and least known portions of Europe'" (Gephardt 2005).

Prior to the 1990s and due to its position under Communism, Prague was viewed as part of this unknown portion of Europe by the West. Following the collapse of Communism, the city was described as a place steeped in history, a time capsule of "old Europe", and containing numerous vibrant post-communist youth cultures. Guidebooks offer a unique perspective into how these popular perceptions evolve. They help establish place identity and influence how tourists view a destination. However, guidebooks are without their flaws. They are susceptible to the cliches of other travel literature which "attempt to mystify the mundane; amplify the exotic; minimize the misery; rationalize the disquietude; and romanticize the strange" (Lew 1991). One thing that sets guidebooks apart from other travel literature stems from the fact that they are consciously sought out and purchased. "Because they are purchased, instead of being obtained free of charge, their utilitarian value and reliability are perceived to be higher. Therefore, actual tourist behavior may be more strongly linked to guidebook representations of places than with promotional literature content" (Lew 1991). Guidebook writers' presentations of Prague also holds more weight because they are perceived as experts for the region and are trusted. The status as a "trusted expert" is one that many guides will advertise to legitimize their opinions and writings.

Popular guidebooks in the 1990s such as Lonely Planet, Fodor's, and DK Eyewitness herald Prague as the epitome of a quirky, cheap, yet beautiful travel destination for Westerners. A city that is ripe with fairy-tale beauty, beer, and historical Gothic spires. However, as more Westerners became familiar with Prague and it began to lose its "hidden gem" status, different interpretations of the city were presented to Westerners. In a 2007 edition of Lonely Planet Encounter: Prague, British author Sarah Johnstone begins her guide with "the outside world thinks it knows Prague pretty well. It's drunk the peerless beer, read a little Kundera and Klima, and crossed the Charles Bridge. But besides Prague Castle, the Old Jewish cemetery, and the chiming Astronomical Clock, how much is understood about the original Kafkaesque town, really?" (Johnstone 2007).

The tonal shift starting in the mid-2000s exemplifies a presentation transition [post-EU acceptance] where Westerners began to look past Prague's quirky, historical, or mysterious aspects and begin to view it as a more modern, European city. A new Western presentation of Prague was on the rise and revealed that the city had more to offer than the typical medieval, post-communist, historical aspects that travel writers raved about in the 90s. This research hypothesizes that as time progressed and as more Westerners became familiar with the city, Western perception changed, and Prague was no longer seen as a quirky, cheap, and distant "other" European city but a familiar "modern" European city, while still retaining its distinct beauty, cultures, and traditions. By using guidebooks, the researcher hopes to have a better understanding of how Prague's identity has changed in the Anglo-sphere Western imagination over the past 30 years.

This research aims to answer how the Western Anglo-sphere presentation of Prague changes in guidebooks from the 1990s to the 2010s. It is a qualitative case study using guidebooks to determine how Western presentations of Prague differed over time. This study does not focus on analyzing why presentations changed over time, as that reaches beyond the scope of this case study, but rather on documenting and commenting on what changes took place and how they reflect the West's perception of Prague. This study will also not comment on what is considered "Western" or "Non-Western". For simplicity, "Western" is defined in this study as the Anglo-sphere countries/peoples in Europe and North America, that were not communist

during the 20th Century. All guidebooks analyzed were written in English and published in English speaking countries.

1.1 Historiography of Guidebooks in Academic Literature

There have been few academic studies using guidebooks as a source, but they have been referenced in numerous studies since the beginning of tourism as a researchable discipline in the 1960s. "While it needs to be acknowledged that the topic of travel and tourism has fascinated some scholars long before the 1960s, it can be claimed that tourism, as a distinct field of study, has only emerged in this period" (Ateljević 2014).

“Tourism research is best thought of as an ongoing process with varying emphases and foci at different times, beginning with essentially factual case studies, followed by a period of extensive if somewhat shallow theoretical development, and the current situation with its paradoxes and fallacies” (Butler 2015).

Studies using guidebooks typically fall under the subcategory of Social Studies research concerning tourism and travel literature, including guidebooks, memoirs, articles, journals, brochures, and advertisements. However, the use of guidebooks in academic research is not specific to tourism studies. They have been used as a source of data in many other academic research fields such as geography, history, and cultural studies (Nelson 2012). As Peel and Sørensen point out in a comprehensive work on the use and impact of travel guidebooks, historians have long valued the use of guidebooks as a means of deciphering Western consumer interests as well as their impact on tourist engagement with cultures (Peel, Sørensen 2016).

The first studies using guidebooks as a source began appearing in the 1980s and early 1990s: Marx 1983, Lew 1991, Koshar 1998, and Gilbert 1999. Marx's study on shifting attitudes in New York in guidebooks notes how guidebook authors offer a more picturesque description of a city and how their writings contribute to tourist attitudes (Marx 1983). If a city or parts of a city are described as grimy, historic, or breathtaking, those descriptions will color a tourist's gaze once visiting said location and implant a preconceived notion about how to interpret a

destination. Guidebooks are often a foreigner's first in-depth view into a place they are about to visit and interact with. Thus, their role in shaping a tourist's crucial first experience needs to be scrutinized and their impact taken seriously.

Guidebooks are not without their detractor though, as Kosher points out in his study on the use of guidebooks in shaping national identity in Germany, “guidebooks have been criticized as superficial and formulaic. This negative attitude stems from a broader cultural critique that links tourism with new patterns of consumption” (Kosher 1998). Gilbert argues that guidebooks should not be viewed as simple travel cliché but as critical cultural texts that play a significant role in millions of tourists' popular perceptions and practices (Gilbert 1999). This idea is further developed in Michalski's study using guidebooks to interpret the 19th-century urban experience in San Francisco. "The guidebook's representation of the city is analyzed as a contributing force in the social construction of the city. Guidebooks inform 'how to see' or 'how not to see'" (Michalski 2004). Michalski notes how the highly codified and conditioned structure of tourists' experiences to San Francisco are not natural but constructed. The guidebook played a role in the creation of that structure and shaped how tourists interacted with the city. This conclusion is also reflected in Gilbert's 1999 study on London, stating how guidebooks and tourism play "a significant but often unacknowledged role" in the construction of the city as a place to be seen and experienced (Gilbert 1999).

In a 2005 study conducted by Sarah Quinlan titled 'Never short of a smile', guidebooks are analyzed for their ability to present "objective authoritative information on important attractions" (Quinlan 2005). Quinlan notes that her research does not cover any impact that guidebooks may have on the "influence of guidebook information on tourist knowledge and attitudes" (Quinlan 2005). There is a gap in scholarly research using guidebooks to gauge how a region or city is perceived. Apart from Michalski and Gilbert, most research conducted using guidebooks is focused on the importance and efficacy of guidebooks as a source. The various roles guidebooks, and travel writing more broadly, play form many perceptions of a place and help define a destination. As Bracewell states in her bibliography of Eastern European travel writing, “travel writings have linked communities of humanists or scholars; helped to define the boundaries of the nation; popularized vernaculars and contributed to the development of literary

traditions; spread new ideas; or addressed dangerous subjects in forms that evaded the attention of the censor” (Bracewell and Drace-Francis 2008).

By the late 2000s, more studies began to emerge using guidebooks to reflect how a city is presented and how that reinforces or changes the perception of a place. Mecca's 2009 study on the image of Sicily in tourist guidebooks states that "guidebooks can be manipulated by editors and translators in order to meet their target readers' expectations and appeal to culture-bound prejudices and stereotypes" (Smecca 2009). Guidebooks can make a place seem more alluring or exotic to potential tourists by exaggerating certain aspects of a culture, region, or city. By exoticizing or orientalizing a place, tourists are more likely to seek a novel or hidden gem destination to create a feeling of true "exploration" in a globalized world. Smecca notes a distinct difference in how Sicily is portrayed within different translations of guidebooks in English and Italian and how English translations are more prone to exoticization. Her study stresses how "the idea people often have of Sicily is based on a construction and is only partially based on the real conditions of the island" (Smecca 2009). Another study conducted in 2016 by Anna-Lou Dijkstra denotes a similar conclusion about Wales and how Dutch and French translations of the Eyewitness guidebook series exoticize the region and downplay its national and international significance (Dijkstra 2016).

At the time of writing this case study, there have been no significant contributions in the Social Sciences academic literature using guidebooks to gauge Western place perception for Prague. Additionally, using guidebooks as a reflection of foreign perception is also less explored. This can partly be attributed to the need to develop guidebooks as a valid source for academic research in previous decades and the relative waning of guidebooks' influence since the advent of smartphones and mobile applications. However, as guidebooks fade into obsolescence in the information age, the impact they had/have on modern place perception, both historical and current, is still relatively unknown and underrepresented. This study will contribute to the expanding academic use of guidebooks as a source in the field of Social Sciences and provide an insight into how Prague's presentation to Westerners has changed over the last 30 years.

1.2 Research Design

This study was conducted using discourse analysis, which can be defined in the Cambridge dictionary as the analysis of spoken or written texts that contain more than one sentence, including their social context. As there are multiple approaches to conducting research following discourse analysis, this study will follow the empirical approach outlined by Hodges, Kuper, and Reeves, describing different approaches to discourse analysis in qualitative research published in the British Medical Journal. Rather than using highly structured methods to code language, the researcher is looking for themes and functions of language to analyze similarities, patterns, changes, and narratives concurrent throughout different guidebook brands and comparatively over time (Hodges, Kuper, Reeves 2008). Images are similarly not systematically categorized but referenced in how they either enhance or diminish the discourse presented to the reader. The interpretive nature of discourse analysis blends well with the goals of this study and allows the researcher to focus on the purpose and effects of different types of language used in Prague guidebooks as well as how assumptions about Prague are communicated to Western Anglo-sphere readers.

The researcher analyzed two major aspects within each guidebook and separates them out into chapters, the history/introductory sections and the recommendation sections. These sections were chosen by the researcher as they are included in all guidebooks used for this study. There is also a third interpretive analysis chapter that contributes to ongoing debates surrounding the "rediscovery of Central Europe" West as well as a reflection on the possible reasons for the changes in Western guidebooks presentation of Prague over time. This interpretive section also serves as an insight into how Western guidebooks contribute to the misunderstanding of Prague, reinforce/dispel stereotypes, and shape overall perception. As many Westerners would be introduced to Prague for the first time through reading their guidebooks, their perception of Prague is inherently linked to the information provided in these sections. As Lew states in a similar study on place perception using guidebooks for Singapore:

"Golledge and Spector point out that 'to exist in and to comprehend [the world], people learn to select and organize critical subsets from the mass of experiences..."

(1978:406). Travel literature is specifically written to assist in this selection process.

Thus, travel literature not only helps shape the expectations, but also the destination behavior of tourists as they seek to create a restorative experience" (Lew 1991).

As guidebooks and other promotional literature shape a tourist's sense of place before visiting, they are inherently biased by the authors, editors, and organizations. These biases can bleed into how guidebook readers perceive a place. Velek states in a study on a guidebook from Prague around the turn of the 20th century "its author... worked to prove the age-long 'Czechness' of Prague based on 'historical facts'" by omitting references to the city's German heritage" (Velek 2006). This study did not witness the same kind of historical biases, but did notice a slight difference between Czech writers in comparison to their Western counterparts.

The guidebook sections analyzed in this study were the introductory, history, top recommendations, food, shopping, accommodation, and entertainment/nightlife. They were selected by the researcher to be analyzed for patterns, themes, and shifts that reflected how Westerners perceived and interacted with Prague. This analysis was conducted using different guidebook brands and comparing how they changed over time. For instance, in the history sections, there was a notable shift from guidebooks in the 1990s to guidebooks in the 2010s regarding Prague's pre-communist history. This is particularly evident in the DK Eyewitness series of guidebooks, as more attention is focused on the medieval and Baroque histories prior to the mid-2000s. After the mid-2000s, DK Eyewitness began to feature less content focused on the "historical" aspects of Prague and more on the city's modern features, stating that "Prague is a city that sprawls well beyond the medieval confines of the centre" (Soukup, Di Duca 2019). This shift in historical focus signals to the reader that while the Prague of the 1990s was a city steeped in old traditions, architecture, and history, the Prague of the later 2000s and 2010s is a modernizing "European" city in line with any other major West European city. This process of picking out similarities, patterns, changes, and contexts are applied to each of section analyzed.

The first chapter focuses on the introduction and history sections of each guidebook. Every guidebook researched contained both an introduction to Prague as well as a history section. This allowed a consistent analysis across guidebook brands to better analyze how they differ both laterally and chronologically. Both sections provided the most pages devoted solely towards the interpretations of Prague and its history. These sections are also grouped together

because they provide information on how a tourists should think and perceive the city. Within the introduction sections, various narratives and themes were identified and analyzed.

The second chapter analyzes the sections containing various recommendations for narratives or changes that tailor certain activities, places, or recommendations for the reader to explore. This included any section devoted to ranking or listing Prague's top attractions as well as the recommended food, shopping, accommodation, or entertainment/nightlife. These sections were grouped together because they provide information on how a tourist should interact with the city . For instance, the 1997 edition of Fodor's Pocket Prague begins its section by stating that, "despite the relative shortage of quality clothes – the capitol is a great place to pick up gifts and souvenirs". This implies to the reader that Prague is not only lacking in shopping opportunities, but also that the only things worth buying are small gifts and souvenirs.

Thirdly, the interpretive analysis section focuses on the data gathered in the previous two chapters and comments on the narratives, themes, and changes across each. This section focuses on the relationship between the different sections and comments on some of the various possible reasons as to why the presentation of Prague changes over time.

Lastly, the conclusion will state the findings of the paper, as well as outlining various complications of research. This section will also state the researcher's conclusions on the role Western guidebooks play in changing perception as well as their place in the modern era and potential use in future studies.

1.3 Sources

The guidebooks chosen for this study were selected based on their popularity and sales figures. According to a report from Nielson BookScan in the "World Travel Guides Market" for the U.S. market, publications such as Fodor's, Frommer's, Lonely Planet and DK Eyewitness sold well above 20 million copies in 2007. The four aforementioned guidebook brands (Fodor's, DK Eyewitness, Frommer's, and Lonely Planet) were selected for this study, as well as two other brands, TimeOut and The Rough Guide, that reached similar sales figures. The publishing country also played a role in the selection process. Each publication is based in numerous English-speaking countries such as the U.K., Australia, or the U.S. In total, 17 guidebooks were analyzed.

Table 1: List of guidebooks researched

Lonely Planet	1994	2001	2007	2017
DK Eyewitness	1994	2002	2006	2019
TimeOut		2002	2009	2014
Frommer's		2002	2006	
Fodors	1997			2017
The Rough Guide	1996		2006	

As there are many kinds of guidebooks and variations, David Michalski's study using guidebooks delineates two broad categories: vade mecum and belles-lettres. The vade mecum guidebook is a non-linear narrative that allows the reader to finger through the book at their own pace and usually have indexes at the beginning rather than the end (Michalski 2004). There is also a stronger emphasis on visual material as well as varying text sizes to draw more visual attention. In contrast, the belles-lettres guidebook is a linear narrative that is designed to be read more like a traditional book in a unidirectional fashion with a more uniform and coherent textual design (Michalski 2004). Guidebooks that fall under the vade mecum categorization are DK Eyewitness, Lonely Planet, and TimeOut. These guidebooks typically exhibit a more entertainment focus, with an extra emphasis on visual material. They are designed to grab the readers attention and draw them into the city to encourage travel. Guidebooks that fall under the belles-lettres categorization are Fodor's, Frommer's, and The Rough Guide. These guides are far more textual based and exhibit fewer visual materials. They emphasize a more authentic, expert reviewed, in depth look at Prague with the intent on providing the most accurate information.

The selection of guidebooks that focus on the visual and those that focus on text allowed the researcher to distinguish between content primarily serving to entertain and material primarily serving to inform. They also represent different demographics of readers as more visual guidebooks would appeal to a younger audience more than a text-based guide. It is crucial to understand how tourists and readers will use their guidebooks in order to make claims on their influence (Peel and Sørensen 2016). When considering the reach of guidebooks influence, it is also important to note their overall sales figures. Guidebook sales steadily rose to a peak in 2005, with estimates ranging from 220-240 million U.S. dollars in the U.S. market alone. Their popularity amongst readers ensured a wide range of the Western market would have been

exposed to these books in some capacity. The high numbers of sales reveal that guidebooks reached and influenced large swaths of the Western public and cannot be denied as irrelevant or insignificant.

Chapter One: Presentation of Prague in Western guidebook Introductory & History sections

As with most European cities, Prague's history is both ancient and storied, with numerous empires, peoples, rulers, and regimes shaping its history. Likewise, histories of the city have shifted over the centuries from presenting it as a quintessential German Habsburg city to the capital of Czech culture and, after the second world war, a vanguard for radical socialism to the epicenter of resistance to Communist-Marxist dictatorships. Western guidebooks play a critical role in the presentation of this history. Whether it be in the introductory remarks and their brief, condensed explanations of culture, history, and peoples, or in the organizational structure to present what is deemed important at the forefront, or as an afterthought in the back. Notably, every guidebook used in this study provides at least one specific section on the history of Prague. While these historical overviews and introductory sections are invariably short, their brevity makes them even more revealing because they are forced to highlight what the authors regard as especially important.

As many Western tourists to Prague learn about the city for the first time through their guidebooks, the historical narratives highlighted and popularized by them shape broader western perceptions of the region. The concept of Prague's identity or through what lens it should be viewed is shaped or informed by the influence of guidebooks. The history of Prague is often abbreviated into two main sections, the introductory sections and the dedicated history sections. These two sections are analyzed in this chapter for their narratives, presentations, and assumptions made about the city that would influence and inform Western readers how to conceptualize the city. This chapter will dissect the many ways in which guidebooks have introduced Prague, presented the history of the city, and how those interpretations helped form Western perception.

2.1 Introduction Sections

Virtually every guidebook researched in this study, except for a 2017 "pocket" edition of the Lonely Planet series, offers an introduction to Prague section. The following sections are an analysis of the narratives found in Prague guidebook introduction sections. Four critical narratives were consistently written about within every researched guidebook's introduction section: rebirth, cheap, Czech society, and history as background. These narratives were overreaching and changed over time. These specific narratives are only exhibited in the introduction sections, as they are the only sections where authors try and condense the city in a few short paragraphs.

It is crucial to analyze the introductory segments of each guidebook as they are essential in giving the reader an overview of the city, while simultaneously hinting at the history and culture one should expect to find/experience. Their brief explanations and insights into the city are significant as they are typically the first thing readers will be exposed to when picking up their guidebooks. Thus, the narrative themes that appear will invariably influence the opinions of Western readers. "By focusing the traveler's attention on a limited range of features, the guidebook ... [can] overpower the influence the landscape has on the traveler" (Michalski 2004). Introductory sections help color the remaining pages of the guide and set the tone for how readers will interact with not only their guidebooks, but also how they interact with Prague itself.

2.1.1 Rebirth

Earlier guidebooks from the 1990s to early 2000s often prefaced Prague as an ideal destination to see Medieval, Gothic, and Baroque architecture and an example of old Europe preserved before vast swaths of the continent were bombed during the the Second World War. There are also many stereotypes of the region like "cheap", "low-quality goods", and "backwards" mixed in between descriptions of Gothic and Baroque towers. For example, *Fodor's Pocket Prague 1997* introduces the city by describing a possible encounter with one of Prague's young poet socialites, Jachym Topol. In one of the Shmíchov district's many pubs, this imaginary encounter depicts a scene with "rickety" wooden chairs, Czechs sipping beer, and smoking their way through "a pack of Spartas or Petras or some such horrible brand of local cigarettes." It's a

description of the city that highlights the kinds of experiences Westerners should expect to find in Prague during this time. An earlier 1994 *Lonely Planet* guidebook describes a city that "In Summer, the hotels of this former Eastern-bloc backwater are now stretched to breaking point" (Nebesky and King 1994). However, both authors then go on to describe how Prague is alive, young and rapidly changing despite these downsides. This introduction of Prague as a city rife with young poets, romantic ex-pats, smokey back rooms, and beer halls is endemic to Prague guidebook introductions of the 1990s. As depicted in these earlier introduction sections, Prague was reinventing itself after years of communist rule and becoming a haven for the young, new, and cultured.

Prague emerged from the Cold War in Central and Eastern Europe as the poster child the West expected to succeed. As the 2017 edition of Fodor's Travel states, "in yearbook terms, the country would have been voted 'most likely to succeed'" (Johnston, Rigby, and Tizard 2017). Due to the political realities of changing governments, social policies, and economic ties, Prague, and the Czech Republic more broadly, entered a new political reality following 1989. The "rebirth" of the city is reflected in many introduction sections, particularly in the 1990s and early 2000s. It was used to allure Western tourists to see a city that was entering into a new age. Guidebooks romanticized this perception by making analogies to other prominent European cultural "rebirths".

One such analogy contributing to the "rebirth" narrative was the insinuation of a new "Left Bank" being created in the city. Prague was fast becoming a hub for young Western socialites and students, replacing wine, cocktails and the Eiffel Tower for beer, Charles Bridge, and Gothic cathedrals. "Thousands of twentysomething Westerners have settled down here as artists, consultants and entrepreneurs, leading journalists to effuse about a 'new Left Bank'" (Nebesky and King 1994). The introductory sections of *Lonely Planet* editions from 1994 and 2001, Fodor's from 1997, and Frommer's from 2002, all mention this new "Left Bank" idea. The idea was promulgated and distributed throughout many Western media from the LA times to Prague's own Western media outlet, The Prague Post, which claims to have coined the term. The idea of Prague becoming the Left Bank of the 90s portrays Prague in a light that elicits a youthfulness to the city and highlights the beginning of a new era full of hope and high expectations for the future. By associating Prague with the Parisian Left Bank of the 1920s, these

introduction sections present the city as a new oasis for Westerners where art, politics, and literature are converging. However, the Frommer's 2002 and 2006 editions mentions of Prague as the "Left Bank of the 90s" is relocated to the back of the book, in the history section. It is also a more pessimistic, or perhaps realistic, description. "Prague hasn't replicated the rebelliousness of the Left Bank of Paris in the 1920s or San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury in the 1960s" (Mastrini 2002). Mastrini does, however, recognize the cities rebirth, but also what she describes as "labor pains of inflation, traffic jams (with new Western cars), and the ever-present pounding of construction crews" (Mastrini 2002). This is a key difference as the Fodor and Lonely Planet editions were by Western authors, while the Frommer's editions were written by a Czech author.

Coupled with the image of Prague emulating the "Left Bank" of Paris is the emphasis on Prague's emergence into a "new age" following the revolutions of 1989. This recurring theme is primarily found in guidebook introductions of Prague from the 1990s. If the guidebook introductions to Prague in the 1990s was indicative to the "Left Bank of the 90s", the Prague of the early 2000s was indicative of a "new golden era". The juxtaposition between descriptions of ancient or medieval history immediately before describing how Prague is entering a "new" era is intended to impress the reader with the image of an old, fairy-tale esque city, hidden away from the rest of the world, only to reemerge just as glorious and beautiful as it was in the days of Charles IV. This is made all the more evident with every guidebook from the 1990s and early 2000s referencing how Prague is entering a new "renaissance".

The introductory sections of the 1994 and 2001 editions of *Lonely Planet Prague*, while changing quite considerably, emphasize the "new" Prague emerging and throwing its communist past aside. This new inherently "Western" era of Prague's history is heralded as a "Golden Age" with a bright and colorful future. DK Eyewitness proclaims in its 2002 and 2006 introductions that "Prague today is on the threshold of a new era" (Soukup, et al. 2002). The 1997 edition of Fodor's Pocket Prague ends its brief summation of Prague's history by highlighting the importance of Vaclav Havel and how he "set the stage for the city's renaissance" (Lore, et al. 1997). During the early 2000s, the "rebirth" of the city is reflected in TimeOut's 2002 introductory section stating that "visitors to Prague will encounter a renaissance on the restaurant and bar scenes, a full calendar of top-notch symphony performances, dozens of dance clubs, a burgeoning cyberculture" (Tizard, et al. 2002). The use of words like Renaissance and

burgeoning are indicative of how Westerners viewed the city as a "rising star" of sorts. The presentation of Prague during this period emphasizes that Prague has reemerged from the shadow of the Cold War to move on to a better and brighter future in conjunction with the West. This narrative, prefixed by descriptions of how the city spent "several hundred years languishing under the dominance of more powerful states" portrays a Prague that historically (with the exception of the interwar Republic) was rarely in control of its destiny, but has now regained that control (Lore, et al. 1997).

By the latter half of the 2000s, the "rebirth" of Prague slowly fades out of guidebook introduction sections. Having been a premier Western tourist destination for well over a decade, with millions of tourists visiting the city every year, Prague guidebooks adopt a more familiar and intimate approach. The 2007 edition of Lonely Planet begins its introduction section with the title, "Shock news: Prague is the new Prague", the author then goes on to proclaim that readers have "drunk the peerless beer, read a little Kundera and Klima, and crossed the Charles Bridge" (Johnstone 2007). However, she then asks how well readers truly know the city, apart from the now-famous landmarks. This edition of Lonely Planet expects, or rather assumes, that readers have already visited Prague, but should "consider it anew" (Johnstone 2007). There is a greater emphasis on portraying a more authentic travel experience from Prague by highlighting that the city has much more to offer than the traditional sightseeing highlights that are typically written about. Ornate coffee houses, absintheries, and drinking "sweet Becherovka" are all heralded as "unsung" highlights of the city (Johnstone 2007).

The 2009 edition of TimeOut also drops the rebirth narrative written about in its previous 2002 edition, stating that "you may begin to wonder whether these stressed-out New Europeans recognize the beauty of their hometown" (Tizard, et al. 2009). Apart from the assuming nature adopted towards Czech society, which will be discussed further in a later section, the emphasis on "New Europeans" is telling as this guidebook is suggesting that Praguers, and Czechs more broadly, only recently entered earned the title of "European". A later edition of TimeOut from 2014, will state that the Czech Republic has found "its way back into mainstream Europe" (Tizard, et al. 2014). The connotation in this excerpt is that the Czech Republic has now, at least in part, joined the "Western" sphere of Europe and possibly even a reflection on how Czech's view themselves.

In a later edition of Lonely Planet: Prague and the Czech Republic, from 2017, the introduction for Prague begins with four separate, paragraph-long sections titled: Cradle of Culture, Castles and Chateaux, Folklore and Tradition, Where Beer is God. The Cradle of Culture section highlights how "everyone who visits the Czech Republic starts with Prague, the cradle of Czech culture and one of Europe's most fascinating cities" (Di Duca, Baker, and Wilson 2017). The section then briefly describes how Prague offers 500 years of near-intact medieval and Gothic architecture but that "the city is not just about history; it's a vital urban centre with a rich array of cultural offerings, and a newly emerging foodie scene" (Di Duca, Baker, and Wilson 2017). The narrative of Prague being on the threshold of a new era or ripe with young poets, writers, or artists, is not represented in these latter guides. Instead, Prague has fully entered this "new era" written about in the 1990s and early 2000s. The DK eyewitness guidebooks to Prague from 2019 state that "Prague has firmly established itself" (Soukup and Di Duca 2019).

2.1.2 Cheap

Another narrative that is peppered throughout the introduction sections of Prague guidebooks is how the city is cheap. This narrative is useful for guidebook authors as tourists seek ideal destinations that will not cost them a fortune yet still provide a beautiful and fun experience. Indeed, part of Prague's appeal to Westerners following the 1989 revolutions was that the city provided all three criteria. It was a destination that was not only beautiful and exciting, but also relatively cheap for Western tourists. By describing the city as cheap or in some way economically inferior to the West, guidebook authors are appealing to that ideal travel destination for Western tourists. This narrative is primarily found in earlier guidebooks from the 1990s, and as time progresses less is written about the city's "cheap" aspects. Already by the 2000s, guidebooks begin to warn tourists that hotel rates are rising and are on par with Western cities, but that the love for cheap beer hasn't changed. In fact, references to Prague's cheap food and beer is one of the few mainstays in all of the guidebooks researched. This section will analyze the different ways in which Prague has been marketed and presented to Westerners as a "cheap" destination in the introduction sections of Prague guidebooks.

An early presentation of Prague's "cheap" identity was in the 1994 edition of Lonely Planet, which describes Prague's hotels as "former Eastern-bloc backwaters" (Nebesky and King 1994). This implies not only that the quality of said hotels is questionable, but that their prices

will reflect their “backwaterness”. Prague is presented as a place where Westerners can come, enjoy the beauty of the city, and spend money without much worry to their wallet. By 2001, Lonely Planet: Prague recommends travelers to "keep away from the tourist traps on Old Town Square" as other areas offer places to "eat and drink well for very reasonable prices" (Nebesky, King, and Wilson 2001). There is an acknowledged shift, however, in the representation of Prague's hotels as cheap or "backwaters". The guide states how shortages in tourist accommodations of prior years have been alleviated, but with it comes hotel rates that are "now on par with Western European capitals" (Nebesky, King, and Wilson 2001). The emphasis here is that while Prague is moving up in economic standings and sprucing up its tourist accommodations, it still remains a relatively cheap city to go out, have dinner/beer, and rest in hotels with "Western" standards. This representation of cheap food and beer persists through the 2000s. The 2007 edition of Lonely Planet states that "pint-sized Prague will deliver...a reasonable priced booze-filled time" (Johnstone 2007).

The 1996 Rough Guide to the Czech and Slovak Republics boasts of Prague's "visual feast and its cheap standard of living" (Humphreys 1996). There are also references to widespread prostitution and recent drops in living standards that present the city as a grimy/cheap destination. The outskirts of Prague are described as having typical Eastern European "half-built, high rise housing estates" (Humphreys 1996). Similar to their Lonely Planet counterparts, there are references to the areas outside of Prague as "rural backwaters", which again depicts the region as economically inferior to Western Europe. This representation of Prague as a cheap destination is mostly absent from the 2006 edition of The Rough Guide Prague. Instead, descriptions are much milder. The same suburbs, a decade earlier labeled as Eastern European half-built, high-rise housing estates, are simply described as suburbs "developed only in the last century or so" (Humphreys 2006). However, there are some derogatory references, as the areas outside of Prague are still depicted as "rural backwaters" (Humphreys 2006).

Fodor's 1997 Pocket Prague edition offers an entire section in the introduction about what Westerners can expect to pay when visiting the Czech capital. "Despite rising inflation, the Czech Republic is still generally a bargain by Western standards" (Lore, et al. 1997). It is, however, quickly noted that Prague is the only exception to this relative cheapness. They site

hotel prices as "frequently meet[ing] or exceed[ing] the average for the United States and Western Europe" (Lore, et al. 1997). They do note that cheap private accommodation can still be found, but one will have to look a bit harder to find it.

The 2002 edition of TimeOut Prague states how "eminently" affordable the city is and "cheaper still to enjoy" (Tizard, et al. 2002). Prague is presented as a cheap destination that Western tourists can feel free to spend money in without worrying about the price. By 2009, however, TimeOut focuses on rising affluence in Prague rather than its status as a cheap destination. Stating, "let the Praguers strive, succeed, study and firm up their market share. Your job is to get away with something crazy and beautiful" (Tizard, et al. 2009). In this 2009 edition, there are no direct references to Prague being a "cheap" destination, but there are indirect references. Stag parties and other "behaviour you wouldn't countenance at home" are encouraged (Tizard, et al. 2009). The reference to stag parties is particularly interesting because it reveals the audience to be mainly British Westerners, as "stag party" is predominantly British slang, for a bachelor party. As large groups of young men looking for a fun getaway will typically look for a destination that is affordable, or cheap.

By the 2010s, Prague is no longer presented as a "cheap" destination in the guidebooks researched. The 2014 edition of TimeOut references the city's various bike paths, river embankment, and rapid rises in consumer spending to describe how Prague is growing and becoming a more modern/"Western" destination. More is written about new markets, organic farms, and improved living standards, than cheap beer or "backwater" hotels. The 2017 edition of Lonely Planet and the 2019 edition of DK Eyewitness also mirrors this shift, as there are no references to Prague being a cheap destination. Instead, Prague is presented as a new modern city that "has firmly established itself" within the European sphere (Soukup and Di Duca 2019). This shift in presentation could partially be attributed to the genuine rise in prices in Prague over the past thirty years and the prevalence of Western authors to shy away from descriptions of a destination that might be considered offensive in more recent years.

2.1.3 Czech Society

Insights into people's social habits and overall society are written about and used to add intrigue or uniqueness to the destinations guidebooks write about. Prague is no exception. The

extent to which guidebook authors detail and write about the various insights into Praguers social habits or personalities is heaviest in the 1990s and early 2000s. Social habits concerning alcohol consumption and youth culture are particularly high in this era. Many of these early guidebooks will also offer advice on how to interact with the locals or what to expect when talking to an average Prager. However, as guidebooks enter the latter half of the 2000s and the 2010s, less focus is given to speculations about Czech society and its characteristics. The only exception that persists throughout all guidebooks researched is that Praguers love beer. By the late 2010s, there were no mentions of advice on how to interact with the locals or what personality traits Praguers might exhibit. This could be the result of overall increased interaction between Westerners and Central/Eastern Europeans since 1989 and the Czech Republic's subsequent acceptance into the European Union. This section will analyze the various representations of Czech society, personalities, and characteristics that guidebook introduction sections describe.

One of the first descriptions of Czech social habits comes from the 1994 edition of *Lonely Planet Prague*, portraying how Czechs are always "enjoying the best beer in the world" in "backstreet pubs" (Nebesky and King 1994). The preponderance of Czechs and beer drinking remains a constant in all guidebooks researched. There is also a depiction of the city as being "incredibly youthful", associating the drinking of beer in pubs as a common activity enjoyed by many young Praguers. Apart from the beer-drinking habits of Czechs, Prague is presented as a center for the arts. "Known already for its musical and literary life, and in this century for ground-breaking visual arts and cinema, the city has also become a magnet for top-flight jazz, rock and post-rock" (Nebesky and King 1994). This 1994 edition of *Lonely Planet* focuses on these three aspects of Czech society in their introduction section to introduce Westerners to the culture and habits of the locals. It presents an image of Prague as a young and creative city that spends its evenings drinking beer in old Czech pubs.

The 1996 edition of the *Rough Guide to the Czech and Slovak Republics* recommends that one follows the "Czech routine: rise early, eat your biggest meal of the day at lunchtime and drink yourself into the ground in the evening" (Humphreys 1996). There is also a section warning tourists of a recent rise in racism within the city. Stating that "racial tensions, suppressed under the Communists, have surfaced once more" (Humphreys 1996). They describe how "skinheads" have been harassing Prague's "considerable Romany community" and suggest that

local authorities are "powerless or unwilling to prevent" (Humphreys 1996). These descriptions of Prague offer a specific speculation into how the people of Prague might view potential tourists (particularly minorities). The highlighting of racist activities towards Romanies implies that Praguers have a certain disdain for Romani populations.

The 1997 edition of Fodor's Prague continues to depict Praguers as beer drinkers by describing how one can typically find the locals dividing their time between "pubbing" and working (Lore, et al. 1997). They also introduce the region by quoting a young Czech novelist/poet Jachym Topol, by saying that the city is an "exciting world of black marketeers and concentration camp survivors, incompetent hitmen and journalists on the take" (Lore, et al. 1997). The guide goes on to describe how Prague's street culture is "still-young" and full of Jazz trios, art galleries, and high culture performances like Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. This presentation of Prague mirrors other guides of the decade, which highlight the city's youth culture and beer consumption as indicative of how locals view and interact with Prague.

As we move into the early 2000s, guidebooks seem to increase their interpretations about Prague society and habits. The 2002 edition of Frommer's Prague describes how Praguers have been obsessed with style since the Velvet Revolution. The author notes how the "blur of loud polyester mini-dresses that used to dominate the streets..." have been replaced by "the latest fashions looks from Europe's catwalks" (Mastrini 2002). There are descriptions of evenings where one can find "a typical Bohemian playing cards with friends at the neighborhood hospoda or pivnice or debating at a kavarna" (Mastrini 2002). Atheism is also highlighted as an interesting fact about Czech society, stating that "more Czechs believe in UFOs than believe in God" (Mastrini 2002). Insights into how Czechs respond to gay and lesbian couples are also detailed, as Mastrini acknowledges that Czechs maintain a "live-and-let-live" attitude.

In the sub-section titled "Society & Conduct" within the introductory section of 2001's edition of Lonely Planet Prague states that "Czechs tend to be polite, mild-mannered people with a good sense of humor, not inclined to argue or fight" (Nebesky, King, and Wilson 2001). This image of Czech society is in contrast to a later TimeOut guide from 2002 that writes rather unflattering comments about Czech personalities. The presence of a description on Czech

personalities from 2001 implies that Czech's were still viewed as a relatively unknown people, at that time.

The 2002 edition of TimeOut Prague writes that "Czechs in general tend to be shy, perhaps even a bit cagey, arguably as the result of endless foreign occupation" (Tizard, et al. 2002). This is interesting as it depicts a Western generalization about Czechs that is presented as fact and uses history to back its claim. The guide goes on to describe how "people often dismiss the frostiness commonly encountered in Prague's shops, or the fawning manner you run into in high-end restaurants, as the result of 41 years of communism. Yet citizens of other former Eastern bloc nations are notably warmer" (Tizard, et al. 2002). Within the first couple of paragraphs, Czechs have been depicted as shy, cagey, and cold. This guide does not offer many positive interpretations of Czech society and actively perpetuates stereotypes and misconceptions common in West to East relations. For instance, after stating how easy it is to fall in love with the city's architecture and historical heritage, TimeOut says that "falling in love with its people, however, usually takes longer...like the Czech herbal tippie Becherovka...it is a taste that needs cultivating" (Tizard, et al. 2002). The author goes on to include even more unflattering interpretations about Czechs by insinuating that they are immature. "Perhaps the inner child just has a bit more of a prominent role in Czech society than it does in most. A taxi driver will speak baby talk to a cop when he's pulled over. Grown, married Czech men will want their mother's approval for their choice of holiday destination" (Tizard, et al. 2002). The author then transitions by recommending the quickest way to impress a Czech, "guzzle[ing] a beer or seven" (Tizard, et al. 2002). These rather specific and negative interpretations of Czech society are not reflected in other guidebooks researched in this study. They do, however, reveal potential stereotypes held by Westerners towards former Eastern bloc countries.

The 2007 edition of Lonely Planet offers few interpretations of Czech society. However, there is an assumption made in this guidebook that the reader has already interacted with the city and its people to some extent. By stating that the city "is not just about free-flowing beer in traditional pubs", the author assumes that readers are aware of Prague's status as a beer loving city (Johnstone 2007). This marks the beginning of the shift away from speculations made about what one should expect from meeting Czechs or how to interact with them. There are no speculations made about how Czechs exhibit certain personality traits or what their daily habits

look like. TimeOut Prague 2009 similarly reflects this shift by dropping most of its previous generalizations and opting for a tamer description of Czech society. Praguers are described as "stressed-out New Europeans" striving towards a better economy and living standards (Tizard, et al. 2009).

The decreased emphasis on Czech social habits or how to interact with the locals continues into the 2010s. The 2017 edition of Lonely Planet titles one of its introductory pillars "Where beer is God", but this is more in relation to the high number of breweries and unique drinking establishments within Prague and the Czech Republic. This, again, can be partly attributed to the increased interaction between Prague and Westerners. As the city loses its mysterious appeal, with more Westerners being aware and acquainted with the city and its people, there becomes less of a need to speculate about the social habits of Prague's occupants. The guide does, however, continue to depict Czechs as fashionable people, stating how they are "style-conscious and take pleasure in looking good" (Wilson and Baker 2017).

Other guidebooks researched from the 2010s do not offer any descriptions of Czech society or personalities apart from drinking beer. By omitting negative comments on Czech personalities or society in guidebooks from this era, guidebooks imply that tourists should expect Czechs to be similar to any other Western European peoples. Additionally, through the addition of statements relating to fashion or style, guidebooks from the 2010s are positively associating Czech society with high culture and sophistication.

2.1.4 Selling History

History, as with many other cities, both European or otherwise, has long been used as a selling point for tourism companies. In the case of Prague, many guidebooks use the histories prior to the communist era to help color the setting of the city. Introductory sections of guidebooks are often full of references and highlights to this unique history. Various eras and historical figures from Jan Hus or Habsburg rule to Charles IV or the Premyslids are referenced in almost every guidebook researched across publishers and time. The references to these histories are used to depict the visual and architectural aspects of the city with a more knowledgeable insight. Naturally, readers learning how Prague Castle was built under the

Premyslids would be presented this information as if it was the most important aspect of the building. It is much less common to emphasize their relevance in relation to the present.

Similarly, when walking over the Charles bridge for the first time, guidebook readers would have the knowledge of Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV, from which its namesake is taken. These references of ages long past are heavily used in every guidebook until the 2010s and represent a significant lens from which Westerners learn about and view Prague. The historical emphasis of an ancient medieval city, spared from the bombs of the Second World War, is one that fascinated Western readers as they sought out "authentic" or "hidden" travel experiences. The history of Prague serves as background to influence Western readers on how they should view the city. It represents a significant narrative thread, common in every guidebook researched that uses the city's history as a selling point for potential tourists and influences Western perception of the region.

What little mention there is for more modern periods are either glossed over or prefaced with loaded interpretations. In the case of Lonely Planet guidebooks from 1994 and 2001, the use of sensationalist phrases like "kidnapped by neo-Stalinism/Communism" was present in every Lonely Planet edition researched in this study until 2007. The references to the collapse of Soviet power and communism only serve as political setting descriptions. The focus always lies in the ancient or medieval histories of the city. Depictions of ancient courtyards, Gothic cathedrals, and dark alleyways pepper these introduction sections painting a picture of Prague as a city stuck in time. *DK Eyewitness* guidebooks from 2002 through 2006 devote their entire introduction section towards the histories of Prince Wenceslas, Charles IV, Jan Hus, and Habsburg rule, only devoting a few short sentences to histories past 1900. This medieval focus remains a constant in Prague guidebooks well into the mid-2000s but is particularly strong in the 1990s and early 2000s. This section will delve into the ways in which the brief histories presented in the introduction sections of Prague guidebooks use history as a means of place description, thereby ensuring that readers view the city through a historical lens.

In Lonely Planet's 1994 Prague guidebook, with the country fresh off the heels of the Velvet Revolution and subsequent divorcing of the Czech and Slovak republics, there is an understandable focus on recent political developments. The section begins with a description of

how "Communist regimes fell like dominoes in 1989" (Nebesky and King 1994). The first two paragraphs are solely devoted to descriptions of then relevant or current events like the Prague Spring, Vaclav Havel, and the "Velvet Divorce". However, the rest of the introduction is about the cities much older histories. It is full of references to "1100-year-old castle(s)" watching over the city and "compact medieval centre(s)" (Nebesky and King 1994). These descriptions are provided to lure Western travelers to Prague in order to experience a city that "remains for most of us a fairy tale come true", with the "us" being directed toward Western audiences (Nebesky and King 1994). In the 2001 edition of Lonely Planet Prague, the sections do not begin with descriptions of the 1989 or 1993 events but instead on the possibility of the country entering into the EU or NATO in the near future. This suggests that Lonely Planet, at least in the editions from 1994 and 2001, uses the first part of the introduction to briefly describe current events before delving back into the city's medieval heritage. Apart from the different descriptions of current events, the introduction section remains largely the same, with only minor changes in sentence structure or word placement. The majority of the section is still heavily focused on the various aspects of Prague that depict a city "untouched by the ravages of war" which allows its medieval character and history to guide the tourists' experience (Nebesky, King, and Wilson 2001).

The Rough Guide guidebook series introductions from 1996 and 2006 use history much in the same way as their Lonely Planet counterparts, by using history to describe the city and briefly describing current events. However, in this introduction, the description of current events is at the end of the section. It begins by describing Prague as "the least 'eastern' of European cities you could imagine" (Humphreys 1996). There is an emphasis on the "some six hundred years of architecture virtually untouched by natural disaster or war" and how the city is nearly unrivaled in its beauty anywhere in Europe because of this anomaly. There are numerous mentions of the city's uniquely intact medieval heritage and the rich adornment of Baroque architecture. The guide then goes on to provide an entire "brief history" within its introduction that details the legend of Libuše and the establishment of the Přemyslid dynasty. Charles IV, the Reformation, and the Battle of Bílá Hora are all described, with only a small paragraph at the end describing the city under Communism post World War II. The focus is on the ancient, not the recent.

Fodor's 1997 introduction continues highlighting pre-communist histories of Prague in order to portray the city as a place stuck in time. Half of the introduction is dedicated to the historical heritage of Prague, with only two sentences written about the history of Prague after the Second World War. Alongside the historical settings painted in this guidebook, there is a line referring to the "peculiar melancholy of Central Europe" and how the "sense of history...remains mostly uncluttered by the trappings of modernity" (Lore, et al. 1997). This highlights the particular way in which Western guidebooks would use Prague's ancient past, gothic architecture, and lack of destruction from the Second World War as a means of presenting the city as a museum, of sorts, for medieval and pre-war European history and architecture.

DK Eyewitness guides from 2002 and 2006 have an identical introduction section; both devote the entire section to the histories of Přemyslids, Charles IV, and the Habsburg rule. Only one sentence briefly acknowledges the communist period stating that "World War II brought occupation by the German army, followed by four decades of Communism" (DK Eyewitness 2002 & 2006). The narrative throughout this introduction emphasizes how Prague retains its ancient heritage. History is used to inform the reader about the region and introduce Western readers to a part of history that had largely been forgotten in the West. Echoing Tony Judt's assertion that Central Europe had largely disappeared from the consciousness of the West during the forty years the region was under communist rule. All of the guidebook introductions from this era read more like textbook histories that teach the reader something about the city while conveying how that history can be reflected in one of Prague's immaculately preserved architecture. The history in these introductions from the 1990s to early 2000s is used to not only teach Westerners about the rich and ancient history of the region, but also as a way to remind Westerners that despite the communist period, Prague shares deep cultural and historical ties with the rest of Europe. There is even a noteworthy comparison made of Prague under Charles

IV to other major Western cities, stating that "under the auspices of this wise and cultured king, Prague grew into a magnificent city, larger than Paris or London" (Soukup 2002).



Image 1: Soukup, V., David, P., Dobrovodsky, V., Lowry, N., Phillimore, P., & Turner-Kadeckova, J. (2002). DK Eyewitness: Prague. London: Dorling Kindersley Limited.



Image 2: Soukup, V., David, P., Dobrovodsky, V., Lowry, N., Phillimore, P., Turner-Kadeckova, J., & Turp, C. (2006). DK Eyewitness: Prague. London: Dorling Kindersley Limited.

Guidebooks begin to deemphasize history in the latter half of the 2000s and onto the 2010s. It's clear that in the previous guidebooks, history played a major part in the identity of the city, as it is integral to the introduction of numerous guidebooks from the 1990s and early 2000s. However, as time passed and more Western tourists became familiar with the city, history is more of an interesting side note. Frommer's, written by Czech native Hana Mastrini, was the earliest to reflect this shift in both editions from 2002 and 2006. The introduction sections of these guidebooks reference how the city has always been under the "hooves of king's horses, the jackboots of Hitler's armies, and the heaving wheels of Soviet tanks", along with a brief description of the cities 1,000 year old architecture. (Mastrini 2002). However, this is also mixed in with descriptions of "decaying masterpieces and [the] rebuilding of facades on many forgettable follies" (Mastrini 2002). Her descriptions of Prague are less of a "fairy-tale"/picturesque city and one that was perhaps more realistic and grounded. Descriptions of

spreijer (sprayer) graffiti artists desecrating communist neglected facades are in stark contrast to the images of the golden Medieval Prague in earlier guidebooks.

Lonely Planet 2007 continues the deemphasis of historical interpretations as it introduces the city as somewhere people are already familiar with. “The outside world thinks it knows Prague pretty well” (Johnstone 2007). This introduction’s only reference to history is in the well-known architectural eras like Gothic, Baroque, and Art-Nouveau. The emphasis here is how Prague has more to offer than just its rich reservoir of historical buildings and traditional offerings. “A former Habsburg city, it’s not just about the free-flowing beer in traditional pubs, but also the ornate coffeehouses...” (Johnstone 2007). The lack of history presented in this introduction suggests that, while Prague retains its “fairy-tale” aesthetic, history is no longer a major driving force for Western tourists to the city. More sentences are written about the uniquely Czech activities one can do while in the city than of the Hussite revolution or Charles IV.

The 2009 edition of TimeOut Prague further deemphasizes the use of history in its introduction. The emphasis is instead placed on how the city is a mixture of the old and new. It begins by describing, as many guidebooks previous have done, the numerous “spires and cobbled lanes” but transitions into how you can “find yourself lost and disorientated in this medieval Gothic maze, before magically reemerging onto some smartened square” (Tizard, et al. 2009). There are more references to exciting experiences Westerners might have in the city than those about history. The shift towards more experience-based travel writing rather than sightseeing is notable as Westerners are less intrigued by the lure of seeing a city locked away by communism and more interested in the unique offerings the city has to entertain. History and architecture are used lightly to describe the setting with which Western tourists are meandering.

In the 2014 edition of TimeOut, the introduction section is a lengthy description of current events within the Czech capital titled “Prague Today”, including a tribute to the recently deceased Vaclav Havel. This section highlights various aspects of the city, including the many pop-up bars, grills, and “DJ decks” along Prague’s river embankment (Tizard, et al. 2014). The inclusion of history as a setting or as a way to describe the city is entirely absent from this introduction. Prague is presented as a modern European metropolis full of farmer’s markets, bike

paths in the countryside, and increased living standards. Stating that the “Czech Republic [has found] its way back into mainstream Europe”, with “mainstream” being indicative to Western European standards (Tizard, et al. 2014).

History is briefly used in the 2017 edition of Lonely Planet to provide a setting for the reader, stating how the "near-intact medieval core of Gothic architecture...can transport you back 500 years" (Wilson and Baker 2017). However, the following sentence writes how "the city is not just about history; it's a vital urban centre with a rich array of cultural offerings, and a newly emerging foodie scene" (Wilson and Baker 2017). Like its competitors during the 2010s, Lonely Planet describes Prague by using the various activities and experiences one can have in the city rather than the various historical monuments/buildings. There are no descriptions of Jan Hus, Charles IV, or Habsburg rule except when giving brief descriptions of buildings or other attractions later in the guide. History as a selling point or setting has all but faded into the sidenotes by the late 2010s. Fodor's from 2017 would say that Prague has "a new air of maturity, and people realizing that the city can no longer rely on its architectural and historical Laurels." (Johnston, Rigby, and Tizard 2017).

Lastly, DK Eyewitness 2019 rounds out the decade with the series' shortest introduction thus far. The brevity in which DK Eyewitness describes the city is revealing as the series focuses much more heavily on the vivid images it presents. Both pages of the introduction are filled with a large picture of Staroměstské náměstí, with the text part of the introduction fitting neatly at the top of the page in two paragraphs. The brief place descriptions, which include references to cobbled lanes and "medieval splendor", are in contrast to much longer and more detailed entries from the series a decade prior. No era, person, or place is singled out or "taught" within its historical context. The various landmarks in the city that are noted in the introduction are only referenced by the era in which they were constructed, such as "Gothic Charles Bridge" or "Baroque St. Nicholas Cathedral". DK Eyewitness does differ from other guidebooks during the 2010s, as it does not detail as many experiences as Lonely Planet or TimeOut in their introductions. Instead, the focus is on the visual beauty of Prague. The design and layout of the guide is very colorful, and the images take up most of the space on the page. Each photo is

smartly framed and usually taken around sunset or sunrise. The approach seems to be in revealing Prague's beauty rather than teaching readers about the city's history.



2.2 Historical Sections

Historical sections in the guidebooks researched for this study mirrored a similar shift to the introduction sections. That being an increased emphasis on history prior to the mid-2000s and a decline in historical emphasis leading into the latter half of the 2000s and 2010s. Guidebooks after this mid-way point either have shorter historical sections or relocate their histories to the back of the book. In the 1990s and early 2000s, history sections tended to be much longer and located at the beginning of the guide. Guidebooks like DK Eyewitness, Lonely Planet, and TimeOut feature their history sections prominently in the front of the book. These

same guidebooks, by the late 2000s and 2010s, relocated their history sections to the back of the book or removed them entirely. This shift could be the result of waning Western interest in the history of the Czech capital, as its status as a fascinating, beautiful, and relatively unknown city fades away with increased tourism. Alternatively, there could also be a general travel culture shift from historical sightseeing travel towards more activity/experience seeking travel, with guidebook writing reflecting this market shift.

The historical presentation of Prague in guidebooks during the 1990s displays a significant emphasis on Prague's pre-communist era and Medieval heritage. The "City of a Hundred Spires" is portrayed as an ancient medieval city untouched by war and modernity alike. Westerners were allured by an appeal to escape their cluttered, bustling, modern cities and discover this new fairy-tale-esque land hidden away for 40 years. Many of the 1990s and early 2000s guidebook introductions are littered with references to bygone eras, kings of old, and cobblestoned streets. Guidebooks from the 1990s and early 2000s that include a dedicated history section present the information as if the reader is discovering and reading about this region for the very first time and therefore needs to be "taught" about the region. Central Europe had all but disappeared in the minds of Westerners from 1945 to 1989, so the history and peoples of Central Europe were mysterious to many. Of course, Westerners were broadly aware of Vaclav Havel and events like the Prague Spring, but they were not intimately familiar with the city or its history. Before the reopening of Central/Eastern Europe in the 1990s, there was little to no Western interest in the region apart from a few in academia. What little interest there was of Central Europe in the West, was often misinterpreted or misunderstood. Sayer writes extensively about this misrepresentation in his book titled the "Coasts of Bohemia", referencing Shakespeare infamous line from "The Winter's Tale" and exemplifying how the West doesn't understand the geography of the region, let alone the nuances in culture or history (Sayer 1998). "In the cultural baggage of the West, Central Europe has long been an optional extra" (Judt 1990).

This unfamiliarity with the region and its history was used as a selling point for many guidebooks offering detailed and comprehensive summaries of the history of Prague. The introduction section would often precede the history section by introducing the city as a fairy-tale-esque land with a unique preservation of its medieval and gothic heritage. Guidebooks would then proceed to explain this medieval history in greater detail with a comprehensive

history section. Many of these earlier history sections from the 1990s also serve the purpose of putting Prague back into the story of overall European history. "Prague's history has echoed not only through the Czech lands but across Europe" (Nebesky, King, and Wilson 2001). By associating the city's history more with eras prior to the communist takeover, guidebooks remind Westerners that "Europe" has always included Central Europe and that the communist era does not define the entirety of this region. The histories of Jan Hus, Charles IV, and Prague under the Habsburgs are used to link Prague with the broader histories of Europe.

By the early 2000s, history sections reach their peak in length and descriptiveness. For instance, the 1994 edition of Lonely Planet Prague describes 11 eras, 7 of which are about the history of Prague prior to 1945. By 2001, the Lonely Planet Prague guidebook featured 15 eras, with 9 describing Prague's history prior to 1945. This is also reflected in the Rough Guide series, which includes 20 eras in its 1996 edition, 14 of which focus on pre-communist histories. The history sections of all guidebooks researched became slightly larger and more detailed into the early 2000s. By 2006 The Rough Guide series includes 29 eras, with 18 focusing on pre-communist histories. DK Eyewitness guidebooks from both 2002 and 2006 feature extensive history sections at the beginning of the guidebook. They cover 8 different eras, with each era offering 2 full pages worth of content. The 2002 edition of TimeOut writes about 23 eras in its history section, with only 6 dedicated to the communist period. The 2002 and 2006 editions of Frommer's Prague includes twenty eras in their historical section. Interestingly, Frommer's is unique amongst other guidebooks from the 2000s, as it is written by a Czech author and focuses more heavily on the communist period than the pre-communist period. Half of the eras written about in the Frommer's guides are dedicated towards the communist period.

During the latter half of the 2000s (post-EU ascension) and into the 2010s, history sections begin to dwindle or disappear from the guidebooks researched in this study. Prague's identity as a romantic, gothic, medieval city steeped in history is far from gone, but the explanation of that history begins to take a backseat. Prague is no longer an unknown hidden gem that needs to be "taught" to Western tourists but one of Europe's most visited and popular cities. The history sections of these latter guidebooks reflect this shift, as readers are presented with a more nuanced history that focuses less on older time periods like medieval Prague. Instead, the histories presented are shorter and edited with a cleaner, more modern focus. This is

also when the organizational structure changed in guidebooks from the late 2000s and 2010s. The history section is often buried at the back of the book or placed somewhere within the "culture" section. In comparison, earlier guidebooks presented their city histories at the beginning.

The 2007 edition of Lonely Planet is the first in the series to place its historical section in the back of the book and only writes about 8 eras. Similarly, the 2009 edition of TimeOut decreases the number of historical eras written about from 23 in 2002 to 19 by 2009. However, unlike the Lonely Planet series, the history section is still located at the front of the guidebook. By 2014, TimeOut includes the same 19 eras written about in 2009 but relocates them to the back of the book within the "In Context" section. The 2017 edition of Lonely Planet includes a detailed history section with 12 eras. However, they are also placed in the back of the book as part of the "Cultural" section, which provides insights into various other aspects, including Czech life, architecture, and the arts. The 2017 edition of Fodor's does not contain a historical section and the 2019 edition of DK Eyewitness, which previously emphasized history throughout their guide, only contains a brief history section offering a few sentences describing 9 eras.

Chapter Two: Presentation of Prague through Western guidebook recommendations

The sections analyzed in this chapter deal with the various activities, places, or attractions recommended to Western guidebook readers to explore once they arrive in Prague. The introduction and history sections offered guidebook readers a conceptual framework of what to expect before they arrive. The recommended sections are directly dealing with how Westerners should interact with the city. Five key guidebook sections were analyzed for this chapter: sightseeing/top recommendations, food/restaurants, accommodation, shopping, and entertainment/nightlife. These sections represent the bulk of what many guidebooks contain. This chapter will not be overly concerned with the specific restaurants, clubs, hotels, etcetera that guidebooks recommend, although some will be noted when consistently recommended, but will instead focus on how these sections describe and depict the various aspects of the city. Each section was analyzed for changes or consistencies that develop in each section from the 1990s to the 2010s. These changes are a reflection of how Westerners perceive different aspects of Prague. Does the restaurant section describe the city as having good customer interactions or is the city represented as a place with bad “communist” era customer service? Do the hotels in the city have what these guides would consider “Western” standard amenities, or do they represent the city as lacking in this regard? Is Prague represented as more of a classical entertainment city, i.e., opera, theater, and ballet, or is it a more modern destination full of clubs, concerts, and adult venues? Many of the differences and/or constants analyzed throughout these sections would undoubtedly influence how Westerners interact with Prague. Based on what is recommended or not recommended, Western tourists could have a completely different experience.

For instance, in the “Nightlife” section of the 2002 edition of DK Eyewitness, the author notes how “nightlife in Prague is not as extensive as in other European capitals” (Soukup, et al. 2002). However, by 2006, the guide changes, as it states that the “nightlife in Prague is now as lively as in other European cities” (Soukup, et al. 2006). In this relatively short amount of time

(during which the Czech Republic formally joined the EU) this guidebook publisher changes their presentation of the city quite drastically. There is also a shift from recommending mainly classical music, opera, and ballet offerings in the 1990s, to more modern clubs and disco offerings leading into the 2000s and 2010s. This could have a profound effect on what Western tourists visiting Prague choose to do. If the city gains a reputation for having either a classical or modern nightlife, Western tourists might choose to interact with the city in a very different way.

Another example, but from the shopping section, is how Prague during the 1990s is represented as only having a “a vast array of souvenirs for sale, with some quality work among the junk” (Nebesky and King 1994). Yet by the 2010s the same guidebook publisher, Lonely Planet, marvels at how “In the past decade or so, Prague’s shopping scene has changed beyond recognition” (Wilson and Baker 2017). This chapter will analyze how guidebooks differ over time in their presentation of various aspects of Prague.

3.1 Top Recommendations

This section looks at each guidebook’s top recommendation section. These sections typically break down the city into its various neighborhoods/districts and recommend the best things to see in each area. There are descriptions of various buildings, squares, and statues, as well as brief histories of each district. All guidebooks analyzed in this study from the 1990s and 2010s tend to focus more on Prague’s physical aspects and recommend architectural or historical highlights. These sections change leading into the late 2000s and mid 2010s, however, as guidebooks begin to recommend more abstract activities and or lesser known attractions. By the late 2010s, however, guidebooks return to recommending mainly architectural/historical landmarks in their sightseeing sections. Every guidebook recommends a few major sightseeing attractions including Prague Castle, St. Vitus Cathedral, Charles Bridge, Old Town Square, the Jewish Quarter, and the Astronomical Clock. This section will not heavily analyze the various individual places that guidebooks recommend (as many of them remain the same), but rather how they describe Prague to the reader and what their recommendations say about Western perception.

The 1994 edition of Lonely Planet begins its city recommendations by stating that “Prague’s prime attraction is its physical face” (Nebesky and King 1994). They write about

Prague's various architectural laurels such as "stodgy Romanesque, sublime Gothic, handsome Renaissance, dazzling Baroque, 19th Century revivals... and mouthwatering Art Nouveau" (Nebesky and King 1994). They also note various activities that the city offers like: classical music, opera, jazz/rock music, museums, and "world-famous Czech beer" (Nebesky and King 1994). Recommendations are sectioned out by neighborhood, beginning with Prague Castle, Hradčany, and Malá Strana. The guide briefly describes the location of each neighborhood before recommending various aspects, typically of historical significance, in the area worth seeing. Classical music is emphasized as one of the premier entertainment aspects of the city that needs to be experienced, recommending the Smetana Hall and Rudolfinum.

The 1996 edition of the Rough Guide to the Czech and Slovak Republics takes a similar approach as the 1994 Lonely Planet series as it recommends various historical landmarks within each neighborhood of Prague. The focus in this guide is on the aspects of Prague that are primarily historical in nature, even giving a brief description of each neighborhood's history within the city. Areas like Hradčany, Malá strana, and Staré Město are the first to be described, as well as the various aspects within each that are recommended. The Old Jewish Cemetery, Astronomical Clock, St. Vitus Cathedral, and Charles Bridge are major landmarks represented not only in this guide, but in every other guide researched for this study. Classical art museums and historical landmarks take center stage. The guide is written less like a list of noteworthy places, but rather as a narrative that is presenting the reader with various historical facts. The places recommended to the reader are presented within the text as if the reader is mentally walking through the city with the guide holding their hand.

Fodor's 1997 edition of Pocket Prague begins its recommendations with the Old Town and notes how "you'll find an odd assortment of cafes, discos, ice-cream parlors, and movie houses, all seemingly unfazed by the passage of time" (Lore, et al. 1997). There is also a reference to how the square can change at night with "crowded discos and leather jacket cronies crowd[ing] around the taxi stands" (Lore, et al. 1997). Vinohrady is described as a place being transformed into "upscale flats, slick offices, eternally packed new restaurants, and a range of new shops unthinkable only a half-decade ago" (Lore, et al. 1997). Most of the recommendations within each district are either museums, palaces, churches, or squares.

The 2001 edition of Lonely Planet mirrors its 1994 edition by stating that Prague's main attraction is its physical face. The guide is nearly identical in its recommendations to both Prague's sightseeing opportunities. There is no "Top Sights" list, and the organizational structure of recommendations does not change either. The guide still describes each district of Prague and recommending various historical landmarks/cathedrals/palaces, beginning with Prague Castle, Hradčany, and Malá Strana. Museums and art galleries continue to be emphasized as the premier tourist attractions. Classical musical venues retain their importance as "must-see" attractions and again recommends both the Rudolfinum and Smetana Hall.

The 2002 edition of TimeOut begins its sightseeing section by describing how Prague takes you on a "visual trip through every period over the last millennium" (Tizard, et al. 2002). Their recommendations, similar to other guidebooks, take each district and recommend the various aspects worth seeing. When describing the Nové Město district the author claims that it "shows off the face of New Capitalism in Prague" (Tizard, et al. 2002). This is followed by a depiction of strip club promoters, and upgraded shops that have now been "privatized, glamorized, and outfitted with McDonald's counters" (Tizard, et al. 2002). Similar to the 1997 edition of Fodor's, this guide offers an insight into how the city, and its landmarks, are changing. The recommendations, however, continue to be historical and architectural landmarks.

During the same year, the 2002 edition of Frommers Prague and the Czech Republic offers the most unique recommendations out of any guidebook researched. While the usual recommendations of historical landmarks are still present, there is a unique section titled "Frommer's favorite experiences in Prague & the Czech Republic" (Mastrini 2002). One such experience on the list is "having a cup and a debate at the Kavarna Slavia, and taking a slow boat down the Vltava", while another experience is "visiting a large Communist era housing estate" (Mastrini 2002). While the recommendations themselves may not be very revealing, they do offer one of the first examples of guides recommending different kinds of sightseeing/activities outside of historical/architectural landmarks. The 2006 edition of Frommer's does not change its recommendations and is indistinguishable from the 2002 edition.

The 2002 and 2006 editions of DK Eyewitness are identical in their top recommendation sections, but are some of the first guides to include a dedicated "must see" list. There are ten items on the list, and include the Old Town Square, National Theatre, Church of St. Nicholas,

Charles Bridge, Old Town Hall, Wallenstein Palace and Garden, Old Jewish Cemetery, St. Vitus's Cathedral, Prague Castle, and St. Agnes's Convent. Museums, galleries, churches and synagogues are labeled as "the best Prague has to offer visitors" (Soukup 2002). The emphasis remains on the city's architectural and historical landmarks.

As we move into the late mid 2010s, a slightly different offering of Prague begins to be recommended. In addition to the major recommendations offered in every guidebook researched (Prague Castle, Old Town Square, Charles Bridge, etc...), the 2014 edition of TimeOut Prague has a new set of recommendations. One of which is called "Prague Fringe" which is described as one of Prague's finest theatre festivals full of "crazed indie troupes of actors, comics, acrobats and multimedia mavens from all over gather in the city, filling unconventional venues from churches to dive bars and the occasional circus tent with irreverent performances" (Tizard, et al. 2014). There are also other recommendations like Lucerna Music Bar and Blue Light bar. These kinds of recommendations are usually reserved for the food or entertainment sections, but their inclusion in the top recommendations section hints at Western guidebooks for Prague moving away from purely historical and architectural recommendations. These recommendations may signal to Western readers that Prague is more than its collection of Baroque and Art Nouveau buildings.

During the latter half of the 2010s, however, guidebooks "top recommendations" return to an emphasis on Prague's historical/architectural highlights. The 2017 edition of Lonely Planet has six "top sights", which include Prague Castle, St. Vitus Cathedral, Charles Bridge, Jewish Quarter/museum, Old Town Hall, and Vyšehrad Citadel. This is also reflected in the 2017 edition of Fodor's Prague, which recommends Pražský hrad, Karluv Most, Staromestké Náměstí, Chrám Svatého Vítá, and Židovské Muzeum as the top five recommendations. The 2019 edition of DK Eyewitness also reserves its "top sights" for mainly historical/architectural recommendations, recommending the same structures present above.

The consistency with which all guidebooks recommend Prague's various historical/architectural icons suggest that the staying power of these structures is very high in the Western perception of the city. Westerners not only expect to visit these landmarks, but the landmarks themselves may be the reason many Westerners visit the city. The image of Prague

Castle hanging over the Vltava and the Charles Bridge is intrinsically linked with the Western perception of Prague.

3.2 Food

Each guidebook analyzed for this study provides a dedicated section to the food options available in Prague. Many will highlight various eating establishments as well as an overview of the service and cuisine to be expected when arriving. Some guides offer an in-depth analysis on Czech food, while others describe the state of restaurants in the city. During the 1990s and early 2000s Prague is not described as a particularly great destination for “foodies”. However, as guidebooks progress into the 2000s and into the 2010s, food in Prague is portrayed in a much better light and more options are recommended to the reader. There is also a noticeable change in how the service received in restaurants is presented. During the 1990s and early 2000s, restaurant service is described as cold or lacking, while in later guidebooks, restaurant service is presented as either improving, or no comment is made. This section will be analyzing these recommendations as well as how Western guidebooks write about food within the Czech capital.

The 1994 edition of Lonely Planet describes the cuisine in Prague as “very filling, with meat, large portions of dumplings, potato or rice topped with a heavy sauce, and usually served with a vegetable or saukraut” (Nebesky and King 1994). They go on to detail how “Prague’s restaurant situation is changing fast, with new ethnic and international restaurants as well as fast-food outlets like McDonald’s... [and] Chinese restaurants now seem to be around every corner” (Nebesky and King 1994). There is an emphasis towards the inclusion of ethnic or international foods as some of the best the city has to offer, describing them as some of the only “good restaurants serving more exotic cuisine” (Nebesky and King 1994). This insinuates that if you want good quality food, it’s better to stick with international cuisines. Lastly, a warning is placed for travelers when paying the bill, claiming that Prague is “notorious for over-charging” (Nebesky and King 1994). The authors cite a commercial survey of Czech people which stated how “seventy percent of meals eaten by Czechs are overcharged, so you can imagine what happens with foreigners” (Nebesky and King 1994).

The 1996 edition of the Rough guide to Prague and the Czech Republic states that every “restaurant, pub and wine bar in Prague has either closed down or been privatized at some point

in the last five years, so as far as eating and drinking are concerned, there are currently enormous variations in price and quality” (Humphreys 1996). However, unlike the Lonely Planet guide before it, this guide states that “few ethnic eateries have started up” and that “Czech food still predominates” (Humphreys 1996). Cafes and bars make up the majority of the food recommendations like *The Globe*, *Kavarna Slavia*, and *Red, Hot and Blues*. The emphasis is placed on café and bar culture within the city. Prague is presented as a city mainly full of bar food, Czech food, and cafes.

In the 1997 edition of Fodor’s Pocket Prague, the author notes how “dining choices in Prague have increased greatly in the past year” (Lore, et al. 1997). They caveat this, however, by stating that “quality and price very widely” (Lore, et al. 1997). Similar to the 1994 edition of Lonely Planet, this guide also warns that readers should be wary of price differences offered on Czech menus versus foreign language menus. The offerings on the Czech language menus are described as “cheaper and fresher” than those on foreign language menus for the same restaurant (Lore, et al. 1997). This implies that Western travelers should accustom themselves to a certain degree of restaurant service malpractice and the potential for being ripped off.

The 2001 edition of Lonely Planet also warns readers about the service awaiting Western travelers once they arrive in Prague. “Older Prague waiters still suffer from that affliction of the Communist-era service industry: surliness. It’s nothing personal, and Czechs tend to ignore it” (Nebesky, King, and Wilson 2001). Food within Prague, like its earlier 1994 counterpart, is described as meat and dumpling heavy, with everything being “washed down with alcohol, mainly beer. Diet food it isn’t” (Nebesky, King, and Wilson 2001). There is a dedicated vegetarian sections, however, which lists several restaurants that offer vegetarian options.

The following year, the 2002 edition of Frommer’s gives an in-depth description of Czech food. It is described as an amalgamation of various German, Hungarian, and Polish influences that are as “delicious as they are hearty” (Mastrini and Crosby 2002). This section, unlike many of the other guides which precede it, writes quite endearingly about the cuisine in Prague. There is, however, still references to the generally bad restaurant service Westerners should expect while in the city, stating that while service is improving with increased competition, but “many have yet to master the art of non-intrusive service” (Mastrini and Crosby 2002). This is also the first guide to list their food recommendations by cuisine, and not by

district. There is a large selection of international and local cuisines recommended to the reader including Italian, American, Kosher, Seafood, Mexican, Yugoslav, Cajun, and even wild game restaurants. The DK Eyewitness Prague guidebook, from the same year, also writes quite favorably of Czech cuisine, offering a full two-page description of the different kinds of Czech dishes and what they look like. This is improved upon in the DK Eyewitness Prague edition a few years later in 2006, which offers another two-page description of Czech food, but with updated descriptions and arguably more visually appetizing photos.



Image 4: Soukup, V., David, P., Dobrovodsky, V., Lowry, N., Phillimore, P., & Turner-Kadeckova, J. (2002). DK Eyewitness: Prague. London: Dorling Kindersley Limited.



Image 5: Soukup, V., David, P., Dobrovodsky, V., Lowry, N., Phillimore, P., Turner-Kadeckova, J., & Turp, C. (2006). DK Eyewitness: Prague. London:

During the same year, the 2002 edition of TimeOut Prague states how “dining out in Prague, once considered a hazardous sport, has finally come of age” (Tizard, et al. 2002). The author praises how “new places standing alongside the old guard eateries now feature genuinely cosmopolitan menus” (Tizard, et al. 2002). Different cuisines from “giddy jazz brunches to bagel shops, and Cajun cooking to California cuisine, there are rich and reasonable offerings to be had all over... these days diners can stop off for authentic Indian, Thai or Afghan food” (Tizard, et

al. 2002). While acknowledging how the food scene in Prague was not good in the past, it hints at the city's improvement in recent years.

The 2007 Lonely Planet Encounter Prague guidebook contradicts the optimism seen in other guidebooks from the decade and returns to a more pessimistic view of the city's restaurant offerings. "Eating out in Prague is a seriously hit-and-miss affair" (Johnstone 2007). The author also quotes a review from prominent English language newspaper *Prague Post* stating that "many Prague restaurants can be horribly inconsistent" (Johnstone 2007). However, the author does note that things have been slowly improving in the city over the past decade, and that international cuisines are slowly making an impact. Thai and Vietnamese restaurants are recommended as some of the best international cuisines in the city, as well as stating that "vegetarians find it pretty easy to eat in Prague today" (Johnstone 2007). This guide also has a unique approach towards their recommendations, as they are segmented into categories such as "best for views", or "best for romance". However, Western tourists are warned that everything comes at a price, and to "wave away items you didn't order or want, such as baskets of bread and condiments" (Johnstone 2007). No mention is made towards the quality of service in the city.

Moving into the 2010s, guidebooks present the city as having exponentially more options for food and the quality of said food is not questioned. For instance, in the 2017 edition of Lonely Planet, the author states how within the last decade the "number, quality and variety of Prague's restaurants has expanded beyond all recognition" (Di Duca, Baker, and Wilson 2017). They go on to detail the numerous kinds of cuisines that can now be found in the city, including Afghan, Argentinian, Korean and Vietnamese. There is no lengthy section detailing the state of restaurant service, price gauging, or tourist traps. After a brief description of how the options in Prague are more numerous and varied, the guide goes directly into a long list of recommended places with the kind of cuisine clearly labeled next to the name (Burgers, Gastropub, European, Italian, Czech, etc...).

During the same year, the 2017 edition of Fodor's Prague offers a detailed and flattering set of descriptions of an array of Czech dishes. "Traditional Czech food has developed over centuries and reflects the fresh fruits, vegetables, and animal products available locally from the land, lakes, and forests" (Johnston, Rigby, and Tizard 2017). Each dish name is spelled with the correct Czech spelling and is carefully detailed and described. The author notes how previously

Prague has garnered a bad reputation for its culinary scene stating that “Prague generally gets high remarks for architectural beauty and decidedly low marks for the quality of the food” (Johnston, Rigby, and Tizard 2017). They go on to highlight how this was a relic of the 1990s when “finding a decent meal really was something of a challenge”, but that the food offerings in the city have grown considerably since that low watermark. There is even a subtle nod to Shakespeare’s famous line “along the coasts of bohemia” when stating that “since then, the global slow-food, fresh-food revolution has washed up onto the shores of Bohemia” (Johnston, Rigby, and Tizard 2017). There is, however, still a note about the service within the restaurants, stating that even though English is widely spoken, the service can be brusque.

In the 2019 edition of DK Eyewitness, the food section is relocated to a section titled “Prague for foodies” in which it states how “Prague’s food scene is thriving with Czech eateries serving hearty traditional fare and a gaggle of internationally flavored restaurants adding flair and exotic ingredients” (Soukup and Di Duca 2019). The presentation is significantly better than previous editions, with photos highlighting traditional Czech dishes such as vepřo-knedlo-zelo, desserts, and farmers markets. The author also notes how Prague “has a long café tradition with some fine 19th-century establishments serving coffee and cakes in the central European way” (Soukup and Di Duca 2019). This is followed by recommending five of Prague’s “top traditional cafes” including Café Slavia, Café Savoy, Grand Café Orient, Municipal house, and Café Louvre. These cafes are described as “glorious authentic relics of an age gone by” (Soukup and Di Duca 2019). There is no dedicated section for restaurant recommendations, instead opting to showcase various restaurants throughout the guide in small windows titled “Eat”. There is also a section titled “Prague on tap”, in which the authors describe the drinking culture within the city. They describe “lifting a dewy half litre of golden Czech lager” as a “quintessential experience” (Soukup and Di Duca 2019). The pubs and bars that are recommended to the reader, similar to the restaurants, are relocated to small windows titled “Eat and Drink”. There is no

mention of the quality of food or restaurant service, implying that they will not be an issue for tourists.



Image 6: Soukup, V., & Di Duca, M. (2019). DK Eyewitness: Prague. London: Penguin Random House.

3.3 Accommodation

The accommodation options within Prague has been portrayed as lacking or backwards, particularly in the 1990s and early 2000s. Guides from these decades continually referenced how the supply of quality hotels and rented apartments with “Western” amenities were severely behind the demand. Guidebooks warned Western travelers that the accommodation offered in Prague was either top luxury, with the price to back it, or backwards and disappointing, without many options in between. It’s not until the late 2000s and 2010s that the city’s hotels and accommodation offerings begin to meet the demand and are presented as more modern in both

their amenities and services. This section will analyze the different ways in which Western guidebooks present Prague's accommodation offerings.

The 1994 edition for Lonely Planet describes how one can “find something habitable” in most seasons. However, the guide warns that during the high season of April through October, one must book at least a few weeks ahead to find a space in a “top-end” hotel (Nebesky and King 1994). The types of accommodation are listed as campsites, hostels, pensions, private rooms, and hotels. The only recommendations provided, however, are hostels, hotels, and a few campsites. The hostels that are recommended are described as “anything from a zed-bed dorm in a gymnasium to a double room with shower” (Nebesky and King 1994). Hotels are recommended on a bottom-end, middle-end, and top-end basis, with a majority falling under the bottom or top-end brackets. By omitting description of nicer hotel options and highlighting the more lackluster accommodation offerings, the guide is insinuating that Western tourists should not expect to find many comfortable accommodations.

The 1996 edition of Rough Guide's Czech and Slovak Republics states that “except in high season, finding a place to stay in Prague is no longer a real problem”, but that “the city still suffers from a shortage of cheap hotels” (Humphreys 1996). The state of hotels within the city prior to 1989 are detailed as “much of a muchness: 1950's décor, a radio permanently tuned to the state channel, very 1984, and sporadically hot showers” (Humphreys 1996). The inclusion of a description of the hotels prior to 1989, and the subtle comparison to George Orwell's 1984 paints a particular picture of the accommodation offered in Prague. One that is drab, grey, and depressing. They do, however, note that matters have improved, and that all hotels have modernized “to some degree” (Humphreys 1996). This does not paint a pleasing picture for the city but does try and alleviate Western travelers worries about finding decent accommodation.

By 1997, the Fodor's Pocket Prague guide warns travelers that “visitors are frequently disappointed by the city's lodging options” (Lore, et al. 1997). The guide goes on to state that while Prague has been fast to attract thousands of visitors, it has “been much slower in raising their facilities to Western standards” (Lore, et al. 1997). Hotels are described as mediocre, at best, whereas private rooms/apartments are described as “cheaper and often more interesting alternatives” (Lore, et al. 1997). The presentation of Prague's accommodation offerings in this guide is one that is not only skeptical of the quality but makes a note to compare the general

mediocrity of hotels with being below “Western” standards. This makes it clear to the reader that while one can possibly find accommodation in the city, they should not expect said accommodation to be on par with “Western” standards.

The 2001 edition of Lonely Planet has little to say about the accommodation offerings in Prague. What little is said details how “many places in the budget and middle ranges charge foreigners up to three times as much as they do Czechs” (Nebesky, King, and Wilson 2001). Similar to how restaurants are presented, foreign travelers are warned about the high potential of being charged extra, simply for being foreigners. Pensions, which are described as “high rise hotels that want to sound homy” are a recommended alternative, but are labeled as pricey (Nebesky, King, and Wilson 2001). Camping grounds, hostels, and private rooms are also recommended as potential low-cost options.

Frommer’s Prague and the Best of the Czech Republic 2002 edition again warns travelers that finding accommodation in the city is more difficult than it should be. The author begins with a personal anecdote about her husband being told “not to expect to find a hotel bed easily and certainly not to expect to find a very affordable one” (Mastrini and Crosby 2002). Unlike other guides from this period, Mastrini attempts to explain why the city has poor accommodation services. She notes that “during Communism, rooms rarely were available because the government strictly controlled the number of properties that could be built” (Mastrini and Crosby 2002). She then states that in more recent years, full-service “Western” standard hotels are beginning to catch up with the increase in privatization and introduction of competition, but that rooms are still more expensive than in other European hotels of similar or better quality. Mastrini also acknowledges poor service issues stating that hotel staff “while much more attentive than they were soon after the revolution, still often act as if you were invading their turf” (Mastrini and Crosby 2002). The presentation of Prague’s accommodation in this guide portrays a city that is generally overpriced and still has a long way to go before the the quality of services provided should be praised.

During the same year, the 2002 edition of TimeOut begins its accommodation section by warning travelers of the high price for decent boarding. They label Prague as “one of the former Eastern bloc’s most expensive cities to sleep in” (Tizard, et al. 2002). The guide states that rooms are priced at a premium, but competition is slowly increasing the standards. TimeOut goes

on to stress that finding a place to stay will not be an issue, stating that “the days of scarce amenities are long gone” and that “few European capitals can claim a better range of well-appointed lodgings” (Tizard, et al. 2002). Although this is one of the first guides that breaks away from presenting the city’s accommodation as lacking, they do note that in the summer months, despite new “accommodation that has sprouted, rooms in Prague have still not caught up with summer demand” (Tizard, et al. 2002). Similar to other guides from this period, the customer service at hotels and other lodgings is still presented as stiff or backwards. The author notes that although service at higher-end hotels is comparable to any other European capital, the more moderate options “can give you the impression that it is your privilege to stay with them”, and not the other way around (Tizard, et al. 2002). Overall, this presentation of Prague’s accommodation options is one that while increasing in number, still needs more affordable options with better staffing services.

DK Eyewitness Prague’s 2002 edition continues the trend of presenting the city’s accommodation as lacking and overpriced. They begin their “Where to Stay” section by stating that “despite investments in new hotels, helped by huge injections of foreign capital, the city is struggling to meet the demand” (Soukup, et. al 2002). Hotels are described as old, but undergoing facelifts, with few cheap/mid-tier options for budget travelers. The author notes that even though some hotels are receiving facelifts, those refurbishments are largely superficial and only include the reception areas. Rooms are not upgraded in any significant way, and the refurbished impression “quickly fades as you climb the stairs” (Soukup, et. al 2002). The few cheap options that are available are described as “old-fashioned” and located in the city centre or “pension-type hotels in the suburbs” (Soukup, et. al 2002). This presentation of Prague’s accommodation options highlights the ineptitude of the city’s offerings and the general lack of decent affordable options. Western tourists should not expect all the comforts of “Western” style accommodation.

By 2006, the DK Eyewitness Prague guide changes. The authors now present the city’s accommodation offerings as “meet[ing] every tourist[s] need[s]” (Soukup, et. al 2006). They write about how hotel renovations have taken full effect and are “fully re-vamped” (Soukup, et. al 2002). The rooms are described as “smart as any in Europe”, but also noting that “they are just as expensive” (Soukup, et. al 2002). Prague is being presented as a city with every comfort

necessary, but with a price-tag to match any other major European capital. The ongoing assumption that Prague hotels and accommodation services are overpriced for what they offer is beginning to fade.

The 2007 edition of Lonely Planet Encounter Prague doesn't write much about the accommodation within the city but does state that there are plenty of options for low-budget and high-budget travelers. The recommended hotels, hostels, and private rooms are grouped into categories such as "best luxury", "best romantic", and "great personnel service". These categories contain hotels that fit low, mid, and high budgets. There is a particular reference to what the guide calls the "greatest excitement in the Prague hotel world" with the opening of the luxury hotel, Mandarin Oriental, in 2006 (Johnstone 2007). The emphasis in this guide is that Prague is on par with most European cities, and that finding a well suitable accommodation should not be an issue.

By 2009, many of the hotel and accommodation gripes concerning quality and availability from the past two decades seem to be fading away completely. The 2009 edition of TimeOut Prague states that "the Czechs are well ahead of their Central and Eastern European counterparts in the style stakes, with modern, sometimes outlandishly 'designer' lodgings throughout the capital" (Tizard, et al. 2009). There are, however, still noticeable complaints written about the state of customer services. The guide repeats the earlier complaint from the 2002 edition stating that "service is less impressive at some of the city's more modest hotels, where staff – not all of whom speak English – sometimes give the impression that it's your privilege to stay with them rather than their responsibility to look after their guests" (Tizard, et al. 2009). The presentation of Prague's accommodation in this guide depicts a city that is on par with other major Western European capitals, but where service is still suffering behind.

In the 2014 edition of TimeOut, the accommodation section removes all of its gripes from the previous entry and describes the city's lodgings with very colorful language. The author states that while choosing where to stay can be a daunting task, "this small city has got at least two dozen charming little inns, often with historic architectural features, and just as many comfortable, sleek, modern options, all competing on price and service" (Tizard, et al. 2014). They also reiterate from the previous entry that Czechs are stylish people, and how it translates to Prague lodgings stating, "Czechs' innate sense of style means a growing crop of modern, often

high-tech lodgings throughout the city” (Tizard, et al. 2014). The guide also recognizes previous complaints about amenities and poor service stating that “characterful no longer means draughty rooms and cranky staff, with sensitive restoration reclaiming more and more grand inns all the time” (Tizard, et al. 2014). The emphasis in this guide is that Prague provides a stylish, modern, and charming offering of accommodation options.

The 2017 edition of Fodor’s Prague mirrors the compliments placed in the 2014 edition of TimeOut by highlighting how “Prague is chock-full of charming places to stay...from beautifully restored monasteries to a capsule room at the top of the communist-era television tower, there’s a remarkably wide range of choice for all budgets” (Johnston, Rigby, and Tizard 2017). The complaints and warnings of decades prior are nowhere to be found in this guide. Prague seems to have fully matured in the eyes of Western guidebooks as they write about the interesting and exciting accommodation options in the city. The service gripes of decades prior are replaced with descriptions of how “hotels in Prague are more family-friendly than ever before” and that “staff are almost invariably charming and knowledgeable” (Johnston, Rigby, and Tizard 2017). Comparisons are made to the United States, acknowledging the authors potential target audience, by stating that properties “offer the same options they do on the other side of the Atlantic” (Johnston, Rigby, and Tizard 2017). The presentation of Prague’s accommodation in this guide is one of glowing recommendations and compliments.

3.4 Shopping

The Czech Republic’s past as a former communist country has left Prague with an assumption that the city has little to offer for shoppers. Guidebooks from the 1990s would often describe goods as drab or basic, with scarce opportunities to shop for anything more than Czech glass or crystal. Services are presented as rude or unfriendly, and the quality of goods is consistently questioned. This persisted well into the 2000s and only begins to significantly turn around towards beginning of the 2010s where shopping in Prague develops into a unique experience with many shops and services available to tourists. By the 2010s, Prague is no longer presented as a drab, uninspiring experience and is instead an opportunity to find the unique and stylish Bohemian fashions, homemade boutiques, and high-quality goods. Designs become “cutting edge”, and whether one is looking for small quaint shops full of handmade souvenirs or large “western” style shopping centers with familiar Western brands and labels, Prague will not

disappoint. This section will analyze how the shopping opportunities have been presented in Western guidebooks over time.

In the 1994 edition of *Lonely Planet*, shopping is not presented in a way that would entice tourists to shop. The guide writes about shopping in the city as a drab experience where only basic goods can be found “most of the time” (Nebesky and King 1994). They link this reputation to Prague’s history as a communist country and note how “supplies were erratic and goods were of poor quality”, for the past 40 years (Nebesky and King 1994). Wenceslas Square is presented as the main area for shopping along with “three streets around the edge of Stare Mesto” (Nebesky and King 1994). The guide also gives advice on what items to buy while visiting Prague: antiques, artwork, books, glass, crystal, junk, music, souvenirs, and sporting goods. The “junk” category is of particular interest, because by including a category of goods as “junk” implies that the things one can buy in Prague are of no particular use or appeal. Instead of recommending clothing/fashion shops, hardware stores and broken antique shops are among the recommended list. “You may not need a doorknob, rusty bed springs or a cracked teapot, but drop in anyway at Dlouha 32 and look around the wonderful old hardware/household-equipment shop” (Nebesky and King 1994). This presentation of Prague is one that portrays the city’s shopping opportunities as quirky, junky, and drab. It does not seem to offer any silver linings and sets the tourists expectations for shopping very low.

In 1997, *Fodor’s Pocket Prague* guide begins its shopping section by stating how the city has a “shortage of quality clothes” and has “a long way to go before it can match the shopping meccas of Paris and Rome” (Lore, et al. 1997). Unlike the 1994 edition of *Lonely Planet*, however, Prague is described as a “great place to pick up gifts and souvenirs” (Lore, et al. 1997). Bohemian crystal and porcelain are praised for their “reputation for quality” and notes plenty of shops that offer “excellent bargains” (Lore, et al. 1997). The presentation of Prague’s shopping in this guide is not very flattering, but it does differ from earlier guides that explicitly call the goods on offer as “junk”.

The 2002 edition of *TimeOut Prague* starts its “Shops and Services” section off by stating that “long gone are the days that once inspired a television commercial suggesting that you could trade a pair of Western jeans for a car in Prague” (Tizard, et al. 2002). The guide compares the state of Western shopping culture with that of Prague and finds the city lacking, “the city’s

shopping culture still hasn't caught up with the West" (Tizard, et al. 2002). Shops are described as inconvenient and rude, with odd working hours and no refunds. However, the author does go on to write "that things have improved greatly in the last two years" (Tizard, et al. 2002). Credit cards are widely accepted and if you know where to look, "shopping can be a genuine pleasure" (Tizard, et al. 2002). It is also the first guide to note a distinct and unique Czech fashion style, stating that "designer clothes shops are less common but worth seeking out for truly original fashions and high quality" (Tizard, et al. 2002). The Hradčany district is not recommended for shopping, except for "camera film, jester hats, and postcards", but the Malá Strana district is described as a more rewarding experience with boutiques and fashions "for the heart of Bohemia" (Tizard, et al. 2002). However, for "serious shopping", TimeOut suggests Nové Město as the best area for anything from "filling the freezer...[to] a new wardrobe" (Tizard, et al. 2002). This guide presents the shopping in Prague as one that is not known to have the greatest reputation, but is rising to meet demand, and if one knows where to look, can be quite rewarding.

During the same year, the 2002 edition of DK Eyewitness makes a point to note how leading "US and West European firms" have made a strong foothold in the city. The quality of goods has improved dramatically, and the number of shops is ever increasing. Apart from noting the general increase in the quality and quantity of goods and shops within the city, no reference is made to any potentially negative portrayals of the city. This presentation only focuses on the slow, but steady, increase that Prague has made since transitioning to a market economy a decade prior.

The 2002 edition of Frommer's Prague and the Best of the Czech Republic describes a city full of "expensive boutiques and specialty shops" that cater to the "nouveau riche" that has cropped up due to a post-communist wage growth. Western style shopping malls offer anything an excited shopper might want, while the city hosts a selection of "world-renowned labels is beginning to rival that of many Western European cities" (Mastrini and Crosby 2002). There is no reference to low-quality goods, or a lack of shopping opportunities in this guide. The presentation of Prague's shopping experience in this guide is highlighting how Prague can be just as good as any other European city and has a growing number of international shops/goods to choose from. The 2006 edition of Frommer's Prague, written solely by Mastrini, does not change anything in its description of Prague's shopping opportunities.

The 2007 edition of Lonely Planet Encounter Prague states that the city “doesn’t initially seem a particularly inspiring shopping destination” (Johnstone 2007). Bohemian crystal, garnet jewelry, and wooden marionettes are recommended as the most typical souvenirs and are described as “overly-flamboyant and old-fashioned” (Johnstone 2007). The author notes that an abundance of Russian nesting dolls, “which have little to do with the city”, and an “embarrassing rash of Kafka T-shirts” plague the city’s shops and souvenir market. International high-street chains are described as colonizers, that offer goods and shopping opportunities that aren’t “much cheaper or any different than at home”, with “home” implying England in particular, as the author is from London (Johnstone 2007). The presentation of Prague’s shopping opportunities in this guide is a city that is full of cheap, uninspiring souvenirs, and “Western” style shopping centers that don’t differentiate themselves from their counterparts in Western Europe. This is an interesting comparison, as the Czech author Hana Mastrini for the 2002 and 2006 editions of Frommer’s describes these “Western” style international shops and shopping malls as a positive development. Whereas Johnstone portrays the same phenomena as “colonizers” that somehow take away from the authenticity of the city.

The 2009 edition of TimeOut warns readers that “if retail therapy is high on your list of holiday activities, you’ll need to think strategically when you visit Prague” (Tizard, et al. 2009). This implies that tourists should not think of Prague as a “shopping” destination. However, the author goes on to note how “designers, craftsmanship and a slow improvement in service” has been occurring over the past few years. Czech fashion is also noted for its uniqueness and how you no-longer need to “visit Paris or Milan for...[a] dose of couture” (Tizard, et al. 2009). The emphasis in this guide is that, much like other guides from the 2000s, Prague is slowly, but surely, progressing its shopping opportunities and becoming more like other “Western” European cities.

By the 2014 edition of TimeOut Prague, shopping is not included in any section. This is only notable in that every edition researched before includes a dedicated description or update on how shopping fairs in the city. This could either be a simple editing choice or a deeper implication that Prague offers more than enough opportunities to shop and any recommendations or descriptions would be redundant. Regardless, it’s not until the 2017 edition of Lonely Planet Prague that shopping appears again in the guidebooks researched for this study. This Lonely

Planet guide describes a city that would be unrecognizable in previous guidebooks a decade earlier. The author begins the “Shopping” section by stating that “in the past decade or so, Prague’s shopping scene has changed beyond recognition” (Wilson and Baker 2017). Malls are described as “glitzy”, and the city’s main shopping streets look “like those of any other European capital” (Wilson and Baker 2017). Czech fashion is noted for being young and unique, with numerous designer boutiques and shops popping up in and around the backstreets of Stáre Město. “The elegant avenue of Pařížská is lined with international designer houses including Dior, Boss, Armani and Louis Vuitton, while the backstreets to its east are home to lots of little boutiques operated by Czech fashion designers” (Wilson and Baker 2017). However, the guide does complain about the “winding lanes between Old Town Square and Charles Bridge...[which] are thronged with tacky souvenir shops” (Wilson and Baker 2017). Overall, this presentation of Prague describes a city that is developing a high fashion industry, quaint boutiques, and unique fashions, all discoverable in one of Prague’s many shopping areas, malls, and streets.

During the same year, the 2017 edition of Fodor’s Prague writes about shopping in the city as akin to an adventure. “Shopping in Prague still feels like an adventure. Around one corner, you’ll find a crumbling shop front and a glimpse of a stooped jeweler hard at work restoring an ancient pocket watch. Around the next, a cutting-edge designer boutique selling witty Czech-made home accessories” (Johnston, Rigby, and Tizard 2017). Much like the Lonely Planet guide, Czech fashion is again noted for its punky and edgy designs. “In recent years Czech fashion and design has come of age. While it’s no Paris, there’s a funky, even punky, edge to many of the clothes and objects on offer that will stand out anywhere in the world” (Johnston, Rigby, and Tizard 2017). This guide presents Prague as a place full of unique and interesting goods to purchase and does not present any potentially negative interpretations of the city’s shopping opportunities.

Lastly, the 2019 edition of DK Eyewitness describes shopping in Prague as “outstanding” (Soukup and Di Duca 2019). Prague is not just a city to find interesting, traditional, or hand-made souvenirs, but also a place to find fashion designs wholly unique to the city. “Prague is an outstanding place to shop, not just for its traditional take-home items and souvenirs but also for its quirky, vintage and design pieces you won’t find anywhere else” (Soukup and Di Duca 2019).

The shops in the city vary from large trendy malls to “tiny independent shops”, and fashion boutiques. There is no shortage of options in the city and Prague will certainly please Western shoppers seeking the fashionable, unique, or interesting. The emphasis in this guide is on Prague’s unique offerings and designer fashions. No mention of bad service, “junk” goods, or tacky souvenirs is found anywhere in the guide.

3.5 Entertainment/Nightlife

Each guide researched in this study has a section dedicated to either the entertainment or nightlife offerings in the city. During the 1990s and early 2000s, it was more common for guides to simply have an all-encompassing “entertainment” section that included anything from ballet and cinemas to cabaret clubs and hockey rinks. As time progressed, guidebooks began to replace their entertainment sections with a nightlife section or separate them into two different sections. These sections usually gave descriptions and recommendations for the various clubbing, music, and drinking scenes in the city. Prague during the 1990s and early 2000s was more likely to be presented as a city full of classical nighttime entertainment offerings such as opera, ballet, and classical music. However, during the latter half of the 2000s, Prague’s various Jazz, Rock, and dance clubs moved to the forefront of the city’s entertainment and nightlife sections. There is also a significant portion of most entertainment/nightlife sections that write about a growing gay and lesbian scene in the city. This section will analyze how Western guidebooks present Prague’s entertainment and nightlife offerings to its readers.

The 1994 edition of Lonely Planet details nine areas in its “entertainment” section with anything from classical music, opera, ballet, to jazz, rock, and post-rock. Each entertainment option is presented as a new way to interact with the city, and as exciting tourist activities. Classical music, Opera, and Ballet are highlighted for how often they are hosted and their historical and cultural significance. “There are half a dozen [classical] concerts of one kind or another almost every day in summer” (Nebesky and King 1994). These classical concerts are presented as the premier “soundtrack” to go along with “the city’s visual delights” (Nebesky and King 1994). Presenting these classical mediums as Prague’s soundtrack implies that classical music and entertainment (Opera and Ballet) are synonymous with the city. However, the guide does note that the city is known “as much...for jazz, rock and post-rock as for classical music” (Nebesky and King 1994). The rock and post-rock scene is described as “high-energy”, with

“plenty of rock, metal, punk, rap, and uncategorisable” (Nebesky and King 1994). The guide describes these clubs and music venues as “grotty, structurally unsound, and/or dodgy” (Nebesky and King 1994). The emphasis in this presentation of Prague’s nightlife/entertainment offerings is one where classical entertainment reigns supreme, but has a grimy club scene sporting rock, post-rock, and punky music.

The 1996 edition of Rough Guide’s Czech and Slovak Republic again offers an overall “entertainment” section instead of a dedicated “nightlife” section. The guide writes about an explosion of clubs and venues in the city following 1989, but that “the dance craze has yet to hit Prague in any significant way” (Humphrey’s 1996). The clubbing and music venue options are compared with other Western European capitals, stating that “Prague still has nothing like the number of clubs you’d expect from a [Western] European capital” (Humphrey’s 1996). The guide goes on to proclaim that “for many Praguers, entertainment is confined to an evening’s drinking in one of the city’s beer-swilling pivices”, which suggests that for many Czechs, nightlife simply consists of beer drinking at one of the city’s many pubs (Humphrey’s 1996). Rock, jazz, and pop music are highlighted as the city’s preferred musical club genres. “Major Western bands are beginning to include Prague in the European tours” (Humphrey’s 1996). There is also, for the first time observed in guidebooks researched for this study, a dedicated gay and lesbian nightlife section. The clubs and music venues recommended in this section are labeled as gay/lesbian friendly. Lastly, the guide includes an entire section dedicated to Prague’s many opera houses and highlights them as a traditional cultural experience. However, unlike the Lonely Planet guide before it, there seems to be no special significance placed on classical entertainment. The emphasis provided in this guide highlights a growing presence of club, music, and dance centered nightlife, while still signifying that pivnice are the preferred nighttime activity, with classical entertainment beginning to take a back seat.

The 1997 edition of Fodor’s Prague creates a “Nightlife and the Arts” section dedicated towards recommendations of various cabarets, discos, bars, and clubs. Jazz clubs are particularly noted for how they “gained notoriety under the Communists as a subtle form of protest” (Lore, et al. 1997). The range of jazz clubs are noted for featuring anything from “swing or blues to modern” sounds (Lore, et al. 1997). The guide also notes how the city is accumulating a new area for drinking, the bar and lounge (as made distinct from pubs which offer usually only beer

and traditional Czech beer food). These bars and lounges are described as “not traditional Prague fixtures” that serve modern mixed drinks and hard alcohol and are “liberally sprinkled throughout the city” (Lore, et al. 1997). Traditional pubs come highly recommended, stating that “tourists are welcome to join in the evening ritual of sitting around large tables and talking, smoking, and drinking beer” (Lore, et al. 1997). The presentation of Prague in this section highlights the city’s various options for jazz clubs and traditional pubs, while simultaneously noting that there is a growing number of other nightlife options such as bars and lounges popping up in the city.

By 2001, the entertainment section of the Lonely Planet Prague guide does not emphasize any of its previous classical entertainment options to the same degree, only offering a few paragraphs worth of recommendations. Instead, there are 6 categories, taking up 5 full pages, from clubs/discos, gay and lesbian, and rock venues to jazz, alternative, and folk/traditional venues. The club and disco scenes are described as catering towards “teenagers weaned on MTV Europe and techno/tribal beats” (Nebesky, King, and Wilson 2001). The gay and lesbian scene is noted for its fast pace of change and high number of venues. Rock venues are again described as a high-energy scene, and as offering some of Prague’s best clubbing experiences. The emphasis in this guide seems to be in the rapid development of new and interesting options for nighttime entertainment, with a particular reference for rock clubs in the city.

The 2002 edition of DK Eyewitness Prague offers a dedicated “nightlife” sections that details all the city’s various nighttime offerings. The number of clubs in Prague are again compared to other Western European capitals stating that while “Prague is not as extensive”, it is “rapidly catching up” (Soukup, et. al 2002). Rock, jazz, and pop clubs are highlighted as the city’s most prevalent music types with particular reverence for rock, stating that “lovers of rock music are well served” (Soukup, et. al 2002). Jazz is also noted for holding a special relevance and significance. The guide writes about the long and rich history of jazz in Prague stating that “the roots of Jazz...can be traced not only to the American tradition but also to the pre-war heyday of Prague’s famous jazz players, such as Jaroslav Ježek” (Soukup, et. al 2002). Furthermore, like other guides before, the gay and lesbian scene within the city is highlighted as lively and burgeoning. DK Eyewitness states that while it is mostly a gay dominant city, “the buds of a lesbian scene are just beginning to peep through...” (Soukup, et. al 2002). Prague’s

nightlife in this guide highlights the club scene in the city and presents the city as a predominantly rock/jazz music city, with the beginnings of a vibrant gay/lesbian presence.

The 2002 edition of Frommer's Prague titles its nightlife section as "Prague after dark" and offers the largest selection and description of Prague's various nightlife offerings than any guide before it. Frommer's begins its section by stating, like the 1996 edition of Rough Guide before it, that "for many Czechs, the best nighttime entertainment is boisterous discussion and world-class brew at a noisy pub" (Mastrini and Crosby 2002). For those seeking something different, Mastrini recommends descending into one of the city's "dark caverns" for a "fine jazz club or the black light and Day-Glo of a hot dance club" (Mastrini and Crosby 2002). However, it is the classical entertainment options that are highlighted as Prague's longest and most prestigious nighttime entertainment. "But Prague's longest entertainment tradition, of course, is classical music" (Mastrini and Crosby 2002). The guide goes on to describe how "Mozart reportedly shocked the Viennese when he once scoffed at his Austrian patrons, claiming 'Praguers understand me'" (Mastrini and Crosby 2002). Opera is promoted as a "relatively affordable gamble", even if you are not a fan (Mastrini and Crosby 2002). Dance is presented as the most accessible, from "classical ballet to innovative modern dance, there are several options each week that demonstrate an enjoyable mix of grace, beauty, and athleticism" (Mastrini and Crosby 2002). Theaters are noted for their long tradition and highlighted for the critical role they played during the 1989 revolutions. "Its enormous influence was reconfirmed during the revolutionary events of 1989, when theaters became the focal points and the strategy rooms for the opposition" (Mastrini and Crosby 2002). Similarly, the author notes how underground rock clubs, "kept the braver Czech sonic youth tuned in to something more than the monotones of the party during the grey 1970s and 1980s" (Mastrini and Crosby 2002). Pubs and gay/lesbian clubs on the other hand are described as "Prague's preferred late-evening entertainment" (Mastrini and Crosby 2002). The gay and lesbian scene is portrayed as "small...[but] growing in its openness and choices for nightclubs and entertainment" (Mastrini and Crosby 2002). The presentation of Prague's nightlife in this guide highlights a strong and well-established historical tradition for the classical arts, while also noting the recent historical significance and developing role of rock/jazz clubs and a growing gay/lesbian scene.

Moving on to the latter half of the 2000s, the 2006 edition of Rough Guide's the Czech and Slovak Republics begins its entertainment section by describing how "most Praguers go to bed pretty early, [but] a dedicated minority, including many of the city's expats and tourists, stay up until the wee small hours" (Humphreys 2006). Late-night pubs, bars, and clubs are presented as the city's main options for servicing these late-night groups. The first recommendations are clubs and live venues. They are described as "half-decent", with a good variety and selection. Various rock, pop, and dance clubs are recommended. Jazz is noted for its "surprisingly long indigenous...tradition" in the city and recommends a selection of 6 clubs (Humphreys 2006). The selection of jazz clubs is followed by a description of the "small, but burgeoning gay and lesbian scene" (Humphreys 2006). This guide also gives the gay and lesbian scene a center, placing its "spiritual heart in leafy Vinohrady and neighboring Žižkov" (Humphreys 2006). Lastly, the guide signifies the importance of classical music and culture in Prague, stating that "Mozart had strong links with the city, and of course the Czechs themselves produced four top-drawer classical composers" (Humphreys 2006). This is followed by a selection of opera houses and theaters. The presentation of Prague's nightlife in this guide highlights the rock, jazz, and gay/lesbian clubs while still placing significance on classical entertainment.

The 2007 edition of Lonely Planet does not have a dedicated "nightlife" or "entertainment" section, but instead has a "snapshot" section that collects various aspects of the city and recommends things based on their category. From the various categories, the "opera, music, theatre and ballet", "clubbing", "gay and lesbian", and "jazz and rock music" were analyzed. The "opera, music, theatre, and ballet" category notes, like many guides before it, the long tradition for opera and classical music in Prague. "As the city where Mozart chose to premiere *Don Giovanni*...Prague has a long, proud tradition of opera and classical music" (Johnstone 2007). However, the author goes on to state that "this reputation is only partially deserved...[as] international experts say the standard of performance is quite variable – a message borne out by our own experience" (Johnstone 2007). The guide also notes how many theatres suffer from "terrible management troubles" (Johnstone 2007). Prague's club scene is commended for their abundance, but states that the city is not known for having a vibrant nightlife. "No-one would come to Prague for serious, cutting-edge clubbing, particularly when hipper Berlin is so near" (Johnstone 2007). This Lonely Planet guide no longer presents the gay/lesbian nightlife scene as small, but instead as "medium-sized...which locals describe as

having picked up enormously recently” (Johnstone 2007). Jazz and rock music scene are still noted for their long presence in the city, and reference how former US president Bill Clinton once “revealed his skill with a saxophone” in Prague (Johnstone 2007). Prague is presented in this guide as a city with a mixture of classical, jazzy, and rock based nightlife that, while not on par with other Western European capitals, offers a wide range of entertainment options.

A few years later, the 2009 edition of TimeOut Prague devotes 25 pages out of 64 towards various “nightlife” offerings in its arts and entertainment section, including clubs, music venues, and gay and lesbian scenes. Gay and lesbian travelers are recommended to be “out and proud in this gay-friendly town”, where “gay men and lesbians will find themselves right at home” (Tizard, et. al 2009). Photos of disco balls and shirtless men are included with the descriptions. Prague is presented as having “always been liveliest at night, with after-dark venues acting as both the social glue and the social balm that lifts the moral of Czech society” (Tizard, et. al 2009). A full 8 pages are reserved for club recommendations alone and include photos of patrons drinking. It is also the first guide to recommend various “adult clubs”. The city’s various adult clubs and prostitution scenes are presented as not only a reason to visit, but also one generously supported by Czech people, stating that “Czech lawmakers enjoy skirting the issue of prostitution” (Tizard, et al. 2009).



Image 7: Tizard, W., Cox, J., Skochova, I., Slivis, S., Swire, D., Kadlecova, K., ... Balinova, H. (2009). TimeOut: Prague. London: Time Out Guides Ltd.

In the 2010s, Prague’s nightlife is presented as one of the major reasons one should visit the Czech capital. The 2014 edition of TimeOut Prague states that “the city isn’t known for its top-notch dance clubs, but the scene is certainly uninhibited; a raft of casinos and adult clubs offer more after-hours decadence” (Tizard, et al. 2014). Disappearing into a cellar refuge after dark is proclaimed to be an “ancient Prague tradition”, whether that means to drink after the pubs close or to settle “into a discreet little space for other nefarious goings-on” (Tizard, et al. 2014). The clubs, gay/lesbian, and rock/jazz recommendations take up a full 16 pages within the arts and entertainment section and include more images of dance floors, neon lights, and performers than the 2009 edition. Classical entertainment, on the other hand, is relocated to its own “performing arts” section, with 11 pages dedicated to opera, theatre, and classical concerts. This presentation of Prague places an emphasis on the city’s large offering of clubs and music venue, while still emphasizing the city’s history and range of classical entertainment.

Nightlife

Disappearing into a cellar refuge after dark is an ancient Prague tradition, whether to keep drinking after the pubs close – still around 11pm, as ever – or to settle into a discreet little space for other nefarious goings-on (something never in short supply in old Bohemia). The city isn't known for its top-notch dance clubs, but the scene is certainly uninhibited; a raft of casinos and adult clubs offer more after-hours decadence. Meanwhile, jazz acts can be enjoyed in their more natural setting, cosy cellar pubs all over town.



Clubs

Prague's clubbing scene runs from uber-sleek and splashy to thoroughly grungy, but the Roxy and Akropolis have won and kept clubbers' hearts over the years thanks to their character and thoughtful programming. Late-night counter-culture venues such as **Cross Club** add to the mix, while **Yes Club**, **Saxa** (see p164) and the newly expanded **Vebe** on Václavské náměstí show off the tidiest crop. **Duplex** is still a good bet for the early wealthy to show off their winter tanks, air-gel and flat-top lines. Other impressive venues, such as **Retro Music Hall** (Rincouzská 4, Prague 2, 222 510 592, www.rtopaha.cz), are only open for events but it is epic if your timing is good. Prague's unique anarchy extends to activities if it rarely spot elsewhere for reasons of good or serious drug use enforcement. Bar-hopping, crawling walks and rampant rampant use can all be found in Staré Město on Friday night. That said, you're on your own if you're caught with drugs. Recent laws have had a generous level of personal possession an infraction but you never know when you're stung, and your embassy may take interest in your story.

Day Bar & Club
 Na 13, Old Town, Prague 1 (222 324 040, konej-bar.cz). Metro Staroměstská/ 8, 8, 24, 26, 51, 54, 56. **Open** 7pm-4am

Time Out Prague

Mon, Wed, Sun, 7pm-6am. **Tues**, 7pm-6am. **Fri, Sat**, Admission free. **Map** p312 M3.

A grown-up option in Prague's semi-dormant district, this upscale Indian dining room heats up at night into a raucous spot for salsa dancing and hours. Exhibitionists take note: unlike most other city clubs, the action's pretty much on full display from the street.

Bukowski's
 Borsojova 86, Žižkov, Prague 3 (no phone). Metro Náměstí Miru tram 9, 11, 26, 51, 55, 58. **Open** 8pm-2am daily. **Admission** free. **No credit cards**. **Map** p317 L2.

Launched as an alternative to the Žižkov district's countless beer pubs, this self-billed dive bar is a magnet for mischievous expats, bohemians and party much everyone else for whom the name might add some appeal. Owner Glen Emery, a local haecing legend, makes good times just about guaranteed at this rollicking little joint, done out in class: British pub style (plus the odd arty glass light fixture).

Chapeau Rouge
 Jakubská 2, Staré Město, Prague 1 (222 316 328, www.chapeaurouge.cz). Metro Náměstí Republiky tram 5, 14, 26. **Open** noon-Sun. **Mon-Tue**, noon-6am. **Fri, Sat**, 4pm-2am. **Sun**, Admission free. **Concerts** 150-350 Kč. **No credit cards**. **Map** p312 M3.

Surely Old Town's loudest, smookiest, tightest space for students to meet up and score white or full-thrust they haven't found in class, this gritty but well-kept

clubbing institution is at least consistent with its boisterous interiors, cast of dodgy characters and cellar rock show series.

Lo Clan
 Dubovská 23, Žižkov, Prague 3 (phone: 602011111). Metro Náměstí Miru tram 11, 51. **Open** 2am-7am. **Tue, Fri, Sat**, noon-Sat, Sun. **Admission** varies. **Map** p317 A3.

Offering the sort of insider exclusivity yet with a surprisingly democratic ethos, Lo Clan only advertises itself at street level with a small glowing cross-section and a red lit buzzer. However, it's a true downtown and a real hit buzzer. However, it's a true downtown and a real hit buzzer. However, it's a true downtown and a real hit buzzer. However, it's a true downtown and a real hit buzzer.

Cross Club
 Pevňová 23 (mobile: 775 541 430, www.croze.com). Metro Národní Hotel tram 5, 15, 16, 17, 18, 22, 24, 26, 51, 55, 56, 58. **Open** 2pm-2am. **Mon-Tue, Sun**, 2pm-6am. **Fri, Sat**, **Map** p316 F4.

It may look like a cat parts shop, but don't be deceived as you hike north from the metro station to find it. This magnet for arty types is a centre for music, film, dance and drink, and every surface has been welded or moulded, gallery arty, into what is the city's hippest art bar.

Double Trouble
 Mladobouzská 17, Staré Město, Prague 1 (221 632 614, www.doubletrouble.cz). Metro Můstek or Staroměstská tram 3, 6, 9, 14, 18, 22, 24, 26, 51, 55, 56, 58. **Open** 5pm-4am. **Mon-Tue, Sun**, 8pm-Sun. **Fri, Sat**, Admission free-180 Kč. **No credit cards**. **Map** p312 L4.

Although it's on the main tourist route, this stone-walled subterranean space has reclaimed a patch of the local clubbing scene with its reliable parties, normally free entry and well-trained bar staff. Not mention the go-go girls and utter lack of decorum as the night rolls on.

Duplex
 Václavské náměstí 21, Nové Město, Prague 1 (mobile: 722 221 111, www.duplex.cz). Metro Můstek tram 3, 9, 14, 24, 51, 52, 54, 55, 56, 58. **Open** Café 10am-midnight daily. **Restaurant** noon-midnight daily. **Club** 10pm-Sun. **Wed-Sat**, Admission 150 Kč. **Map** p313 N6.

Reclaiming its location on New Town's main drag, Duplex sincerely aims at the broadest (sparsely demographic and doesn't pretend to offer inspiring original DJ programming. That said, the crisp sound system and eye of bars and dancers in a glass night out over Wenceslas Square make for a unique mix, plus wacky theme parties, can make for enjoyable old-school fun. There's dining on site and a full-out space on the terrace. *Photos* p194.

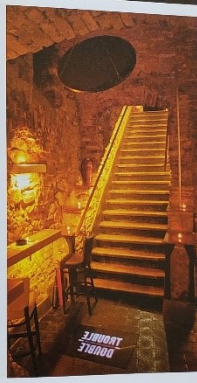


Image 8: Tizard, W., Purves, G., Skochova, I., Theisen, M., Meyer, J., Nessmith, M., ... Lewis, P. (2014). TimeOut: Prague. London: Time Out Guides Ltd.

Image 9: Tizard, W., Purves, G., Skochova, I., Theisen, M., Meyer, J., Nessmith, M., ... Lewis, P. (2014). TimeOut: Prague. London: Time Out Guides Ltd.

By 2017, in the Fodor's Prague guide, the nightlife section represents one of the largest sections in entire guide. Like the 2014 TimeOut guide before it, there are separate sections for the "performing arts" and "nightlife" recommendations, with the performing arts receiving 11 pages and nightlife receiving 16. The guide highlights the significance of pubs and beer culture as a significant contributor to the city's reputation for vibrant nightlife. "Prague is a city that takes its liquid refreshment, and its after-dark entertainment, seriously" (Johnston, Rigby, and Tizard 2017). The guide also notes how in the past, bars used to close by ten o'clock in the evening, but that "Czechs have taken cheerfully to all-nighters spent discussing philosophy...listening to jazz in cavernous underground clubs, or dancing on tables in avant-garde clubs" (Johnston, Rigby, and Tizard 2017). Each area of the city is broken down into various categories including bars/pubs, clubs, gay and lesbian, jazz, and rock, that offer recommendations. Prague's various performing arts are described as "world-class" and the

venues as “jaw-droppingly gorgeous” (Johnston, Rigby, and Tizard 2017). Classical entertainment retains its significance in this guide and is presented as one of the cultural hearts of Prague. The emphasis in this guide is that there are more than enough options to fulfill any tourists’ expectations for after-dark activities and entertainment, whether it be in the newfound prominence of clubs and modern music, or in the rich traditions of more classical entertainment.

Chapter three: Interpretive analysis

4.1 Analysis of Introductory sections

The introductory sections of guidebooks provide perhaps the most insightful writings into how Western guidebooks interpret and view the city. Through the analysis of the four key narratives that change and develop in these sections (rebirth, cheap, society, and selling history), Prague develops from a city that is relatively unknown to the Western world and needs to be taught about its customs, habits, prices, and history, to a city that is modern, established, and comparable to any other Western European capital. The stereotypes and cliches that are found in earlier guidebooks fade away in favor of more positive descriptions. By writing more positively or negatively, introduction sections influence how Western tourists will perceive and interact with not only the guide, but the city itself. “The marketing of symbols and images also influences the functional behavior of tourists in a place. International tourists often arrive with limited knowledge of the spatial and symbolic environment of a destination” (Lew 1991). By providing an all-encompassing overview of Prague, the narratives and assumptions placed in introductory sections influence the spatial and symbolic environments perceived by Western tourists.

In this study, Prague is presented as a very different city from the 1990s to the 2010s. The city is consistently presented as improving or “on the rise”, until the late 2010s when it considered comparable to any other Western European capital. This presentation follows a very real development, as Prague transitioned into a market capitalist society and refurbished/built many new shops, apartments, or restaurants, but also a change in how Westerners view the city. The waning use of stereotypes like “backwards”, “cheap”, or “unfriendly” is indicative that through increased interactions and awareness of the peoples in the region, the use of stereotypes decreased. This could also be the result of an increase in political and social awareness in guidebook writing, as stereotyping became less common. That is not to say that they disappear altogether, as every region/country is somewhat associated by its various stereotypes, but their decreased use in Prague guidebooks can be an indication that Westerners are viewing Prague as less of an “Eastern” city and more as a “Central” or even “Western” city.

Something also must be said about how the region of Central Europe slowly became recognized as a distinct region apart from Eastern Europe, and through this recognition, Westerners began to recognize more distinctions between the various regions and peoples. This distinction of what is considered “Western”, “Central”, or “Eastern” is a reflection on how the region of Central Europe is slowly being uncovered and may have fully re-established itself. Central Europe was no longer, as Susan Sontag would state at an international writer’ conference in Lisbon 1988, “an American [sic] metaphor, an anti-Russian concept to explain that the countries of the Soviet bloc were not appendages of the Soviet Union but that some even preceded it” (Judt 1990). This leftover influence the Cold War developed, cannot be understated, as the many stereotypes for the region grew and became solidified in popular culture. The isolation of East and West reinforced these assumptions until the two spheres were able to fully interact with one another after 1989. The introduction sections to Western guidebooks for Prague reflected that growing interaction between the historical East/West divide, and the trend towards more positive perceptions.

4.2 Analysis of History sections

The large historical sections from the 1990s and early 2000s, that emphasize a pre-Communist history, re-established Prague within the consciousness of Western readers who would have been largely unfamiliar with the city. It informed Westerners that Prague has always been a part of the history of Europe, and at many times the heart. By emphasizing this historical past, Prague is again put on the map and subtly reminds Westerners that the differences between what was considered “East” or “West” during the cold war, does not necessarily reflect reality. In the case of Prague, “Central” Europe needed to be placed back into the consciousness of Westerners. This need to re-define and re-establish Prague in the minds of Western guidebook readers was used to sell the city as a new exciting destination full of mystery and beauty, waiting to be discovered.

Historical sections from the 1990s and early 2000s period of Western Prague guidebooks also fall into the tendency of travel literature to mystify a destination in order to attract readers. In the case of Prague, the consistent use of “fairytale” like descriptions and a heavy emphasis on Medieval histories placed a specific lens with which Westerners perceived the city through.

By emphasizing particular attractions and characteristics of a place, guidebooks provide "propositional assertions" of what a place is like and what is worth seeing and experiencing. In such a way, they define desirable and undesirable experiences. By way of omission, they also influence the content of the known and unknown realms of a place. Possibly even more important than the factual information they contain, guidebooks provide is a framework for experiencing a place and relaying that experience to others upon returning home (Lew 1991).

By describing the city in a certain historical, medieval, or fairytale/picturesque manner, Western readers' perception of the city will reflect that depiction. This is then propagated when Westerners return home and use similar ways of describing Prague. Prague was a city to be seen for its beautiful architecture and interesting history, not necessarily a city to be interacted with or experienced.

However, as guidebooks began to de-emphasize the historical aspects of Prague, they frame the city in a new light. More emphasis was placed on Prague as a rising European city that was more linked with overall European trends than its ties to ages long past. The historical features of the city do not entirely leave guidebooks but become less important. History was no longer a major selling point for the city, there was art, beauty, grand hotels, food/beer, nightclubs, and various other ways to experience the city that lured tourists in and received greater emphasis. By de-emphasizing history in guidebooks, a new image of Prague emerged. Prague became a city that was highlighted more for its mixture of beauty, entertainment, and liveliness, rather than its history and mystique.

4.3 Remarks on Czech versus Western authors

It was critical to analyze the differences and similarities between Czech and Western guidebook authors to see if the perception of Prague by a native Central European would differ from a Westerner. While many guidebooks researched had numerous Czech collaborators, only the Frommer's guidebooks from 2002 and 2006 was written mostly by a Czech author. The 2002 edition was co-written by Hana Mastrini, a native to Karlovy Vary, and Alan Crosby who is an English journalist, while the 2006 edition was entirely written by Mastrini. Since there was only one Western guidebook brand that featured a Czech author, the comparisons between Czech and

non-Czech authors were limited, but nonetheless revealing. It should also be noted that while there are differences in the way Mastrini writes in comparison to other non-Czech writers, the differences cannot be solely attributed to her status as a Czech native. The Frommer's guides in particular, are noted for advertising a "local" vantage point, stating that tourists should "experience a place the way the locals do" on the back of their guides. Therefore, it must be highlighted that the differences observed could also be attributed to a local versus non-local comparison as opposed to a difference in "Central/Eastern" versus "Western" perception.

Regardless, the first difference observed between Czech versus non-Czech guidebook writing is a tendency to be more self-critical and aware as opposed to Western authors tendency to romanticize and embellish. For instance, in the introduction sections, Mastrini describes the city in much the same way as Western authors but does so in a more self-critical way. Prague is still described as a city full of cobblestone lanes, gothic towers, and historical significance, but then states how those same narrow alleyways and cobblestoned streets are not conducive to a large tourist industry. "This town wasn't built for mass tourism" (Mastrini 2006). Western guidebook writers do not speak about congestion in the city. Similarly, as Western guidebook writers proclaim that the city has developed a new "Left Bank" society full of writers, poets, and artists, Mastrini writes the opposite. Her assertion is that the city is not a reflection of the "Left Bank" of 1920s Paris, but a city that has problems and is still "cleaning up the grime on decaying masterpieces and rebuild[ing] facades" (Mastrini 2006). Mastrini recognizes the comparisons made by Westerners in the city to the "Left Bank", but outright denies any validity towards those claims and saying that "Prague hasn't replicated the rebelliousness of the Left Bank of Paris in the 1920s" (Mastrini 2002).

There is also a difference in the significance placed on the communist history of the city versus its pre-communist history. Mastrini emphasizes and weaves in references more from Prague's communist period between 1948-1989 than its pre-communist history under the Habsburgs or before, whereas Western writers reference Prague in relation to its pre-communist history more often. This difference may simply be due to Mastrini's own life experience under the Communist Party, and Western writers lack of similar familiarity. It could also be a difference in how a Czech author views Prague and the importance that the communist period played on the city, whereas a Western author, having not experienced or recognized the role

communism played in shaping Prague's identity, might view the city only in relation to the architectural monuments left from ages long past.

Unlike Western authors, Mastrini also does not make broad generalizations about the characteristics or personalities of Czechs. During the sections describing how Czechs interact with tourists, there is little written about the shyness or unfriendly reception that can be found in many Western authors' guidebooks like TimeOut or Lonely Planet. This is likely due to either Mastrini not experiencing these differences as a native or Western authors proclivity to differentiate between what is considered normal in the "West" as opposed to the "East", even though shy people and unfriendly reception/service is not a unique characteristic of the region.

4.4 Analysis of guidebook recommendations

The recommendation sections make up the largest portion of most guidebooks researched in this study. Their ability to influence and guide a reader towards one aspect of the city over another significantly impacts the way tourists interact with the city. Western perception of Prague is linked with how favorable or non-favorable different aspects of the city are recommended, and how they are described. It is a cyclical relationship, as the city grows, guidebook recommendations reflect that growth, and as recommendations become more prominent or positive, some areas and activities become more popular and thus more linked with Prague's identity. The various recommendations of Prague (top recommendations, food, accommodation, shopping, entertainment/nightlife) that develop present a very different city from the 1990s to the 2010s. Once berated for its lack of accommodation and poor shopping opportunities in the 1990s, Prague is praised for its designer hotels and world class designs in fashion by the 2010s. Within each recommendation section, the city became more associated with positive developments that further bolstered the West's perception of what Prague has to offer.

During the section analyzing Prague guidebooks "Top Recommendations" sections, there was not much of a difference observed in how guides recommended the most important things to see in the city. Overall, they remained consistent in recommending certain historical and architectural landmarks. The few guides that differentiated from this pattern were the 2002 and 2006 editions of Frommer's and the 2014 edition of TimeOut which added a few clubs, bars,

cafes and festivals to the list. Overall, the Western perception concurrent throughout all guidebooks observed was that the most significant and striking aspects of the city were its architectural/visual landmarks.

The evolution of Western guidebooks food recommendations from the 1990s to 2010s is one of growth, expansion, and gradual progression. Guides that once described the food scene within the city as “hit-or-miss” or of questionable quality/service in the 1990s, begin to show the city in a better light by the 2010s. This, in junction with most guides stating how the food/restaurant scene is continually getting better, paint an image of a city that is gradually increasing both the quality and amount of decent dining options. The presentation of Prague in this way would have helped shape Western perception of Prague in a similar manner. The Western perception of Prague in these sections is a city that, while continually getting better, is still behind other major European cities in terms of their food offerings.

The presentation of Prague’s accommodation evolved from descriptions plagued with bad service, poor quality, and few options, to glowing recommendations and comments on how stylish/modern the city has become. This evolution would undoubtedly play a role in how Western guidebook readers view the city, as one of their main interactions with Prague are with accommodation services. If readers are introduced to a city described as stylish, modern, and family friendly, they are more likely to be excited about visiting and form more positive opinions. The opposite would be true with the descriptions from the 1990s and early 2000s, as the city’s accommodation offerings had a reputation for being backwards, unfriendly service, and overpriced, prompting Western readers to have more negative preconceptions.

Shopping in Prague guidebooks developed over the thirty years analyzed in this study from a lackluster, minimal variety, and rude experience, to one full of glitz, fashion, and uniqueness. Favorable accounts of the shopping in Prague were few and far between until the late 2000s, and completely shifted in the 2010s. Guidebook’s presentations of Prague’s shopping opportunities would have influenced not only where tourists would shop, but also what they should expect to buy once they arrive. Western tourist’s expectations were tied to the descriptions they read in their guides, and thus subtly swaying tourists to spend less or more money. If a guide describes the goods in the city as “junk” tourists are less likely to purchase them as opposed to being described as “vintage” or “cutting-edge”. It’s also particularly

interesting that over the span of thirty years, Prague (and the Czech people) developed a reputation for trendy fashion designs. Fashion is not mentioned in the earlier guides from the 1990s or early 2000s, but somewhere in the mid-2000s, Prague rose to prominence in the fashion world and gained a reputation as a place full of unique designs and edgy fashion. The Western perception of Prague's shopping elements progress from descriptions of junk to a city full of fashion, designer shops, and beautiful boutiques.

Western guidebook presentations of the entertainment and nightlife offerings in Prague develops from a city mostly known for its classical entertainment, to one that has gained a reputation as one of the best dance, rock, jazz, and adult entertainment cities in Central Europe. However, Prague's growing reputation as a city with excellent modern nightlife did not diminish its place as a bastion for beautiful classical performances. Western guidebook authors placed more significance on the city's classical entertainment during the 1990s and early 2000s, but as time progressed, guidebooks began to include longer and more detailed sections about the various clubs, music venues, and dance places in the city. This could be the result of a genuine increase in the amount of quality clubs/music venues throughout the city, an attempt to link the city towards a more "Bohemian" lifestyle, or simply as a way to attract younger tourists who were perhaps less interested in seeing an opera as they were a dance floor. The presentation in these guidebooks emphasizes that Prague has more than enough entertainment and nightlife offerings to satisfy (and exceed) Western tourists' expectations. The Western perception of Prague by the 2010s is a city full of beautifully orchestrated classical music, ballet, and opera, but also some of the best clubs/nightlife in Central Europe.

Conclusion

The various presentations of Prague in Western guidebooks over the years have had one common thread over time; the city is constantly improving and developing into a modern European capital that is both beautiful and interesting. Prague guidebooks from the 1990s present a city that was hidden away by communism for fifty years only to re-emerge as a place steeped in Medieval European history, immense architectural beauty, and vibrant youth cultures. Westerners were eager to see what lied beyond the elusive Iron Curtain and experience what the cultures and cities were like. However, due to its past under the Eastern Bloc, Prague also inherited a reputation for poor service, cheap goods, drab fashion, and questionable food. During the 2000s, Western guidebooks begin to note how the city is being turned around and write with more familiarity, but often contradict each other with stereotyping and descriptions. TimeOut may describe Praguers as “cagey” or “unfriendly”, while Frommer’s presents them as fashionable. Similarly, DK Eyewitness may depict the food in Prague very positively, while Lonely Planet portrays it as a hit or miss affair. Overall, however, every guide noted some area of improvement over time, whether it be in their accommodation sections or their introductions, Prague is never labeled as a stagnant city. Negative stereotypes of the city become less frequent, and guidebooks write less about Medieval history, cheap goods, or poor accommodation. By the 2010s, Western guidebook presentations of the city become much more positive and depict a city full of fashion, excellent beer, uniquely beautiful architecture, and full of nighttime entertainment. Prague is no longer presented as a city that needs to be “discovered” after years behind the Iron Curtain but as a full-fledged European capital that has more in common with “Western” Europe than it does with “Eastern” Europe.

Analyzing these narratives and themes concurrent throughout each guidebook presented various issues. For instance, the introductory and historical sections were written very differently from the recommendation sections. Introduction sections sought to inform Western readers how to conceptualize Prague as an entity, whereas the recommendation sections sought to influence how one should directly interact with the city. It was necessary to break apart the introduction sections into various narratives in order to extrapolate the common narrative themes throughout. Each recommended section (shopping, food, etc...) presented a very specific view into one aspect of Prague that developed into the overall narrative being analyzed.

There was also the looming question as to whether the changing presentations of Prague in Western guidebooks caused Western perception of the city to change, or whether guidebooks themselves merely represented a reflection of those changing attitudes and assumptions over time. This question is touched on in a similar study conducted on the Catalan coast and the impact guidebooks had in shaping the Image of Catalonia stating “although it is not a linear process, we believe that image may be a propeller of tourism changes and that tourism changes lead to image transformation” (Marine-Roig 2011). The conclusion reached in this study is of a similar vein. The researcher concludes that Western guidebook’s role in changing perceptions is a non-linear process. They represent both a reflection of the times as well as pushing the envelope on what can be considered interesting or new in Prague. By writing more positively about the food, shopping, nightlife, or stating that Prague is in the midst of a new Golden Age, guidebooks created a feedback loop that both reflects a real growth in the city as well as promoting new and different perceptions of the city.

However, this ability for guidebooks to change or reflect perception into a region is quickly diminishing. As online travel media, smartphones, and social media seeks to replace the traditional guidebook, their relevance fades. New ways to present a city are fast emerging in the online sphere such as YouTube, Instagram, Google maps, and various other online platforms that offer a much more compelling, and in many ways overwhelming, presentation of a destination. The researcher hopes that future studies will take the findings in this thesis to ascertain whether or not the perceptions present in Western Prague guidebooks persist into the future with online media. There is also room for similar studies to use the conclusions made in this case study and compare with Western guidebooks for other Central European cities to gauge Western perception at the regional level.

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