

## **International Migration and Migrants' Integration – Selected Aspects (Czech Republic in a Broader Central/Eastern European context)**

*(Comments on professors' Hirschman and Perez's and Kalter and Granato's papers)*

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My comments on professors' Hirschman and Perez's and Kalter and Granato's papers will reflect Central/Eastern European countries' (CEEc) post-communist experience, in general, and reality in the Czech Republic (CR - the country I come from), in particular. My goal is to choose several important aspects from the former paper while discussing their relevance in a light of what is going on in CEEc. In fact, key topics of the Hirschman and Perez's paper revolve around forming and development of the US migration and, to some extent, integration policy (historical perspective) vis-a-vis internal conditional factors (namely, nativism) and external aspects – mostly global economic and demographic ones. Concerning the latter paper, my role is much more complicated. The point is that this paper focuses upon structural assimilation process of the immigrants' second generation in selected Western European countries and the US, with special respect to immigrants' integration into the labour market. The problem is that due to the overall isolation for more than last forty years (drastically limited normal international migration movements and immigrants' settlement) CEEc do not have the second generation of immigrants<sup>1</sup>. In other words, these are rather very young children also creating, in quantitative terms, so far rather small groups (e.g. Dimensions 2005, Janská 2007). For this reasons, I cannot discuss aspects of the given Kalter and Granato's paper. What I will do, instead, is that I will introduce selected results of rather exceptional two studies done in CR. These studies shed some light on integration of the immigrant children and youths of the second and 1.5 generations into Czech schools and Czech society.

Before elaborating on some selected aspects, several remarks have to be devoted to post-communist CEEc and its migratory patterns (see more e.g. in Górný, Ruspini 2004, Wallace, Stola 2001, Drbohlav 2006). "CEE countries have been at the historical cross-roads of invasion, migrations, and the rise and fall of empires" (Castles 1995). Due also to their already mentioned „isolationist experience“ that went hand in hand with rather very limited

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<sup>1</sup> „Normal migratory movements“ with all related issues came along with radical changes of political and economic regimes in the very end of the 1980s, and, at the very beginning of the 1990s.

numbers of international immigrants<sup>2</sup>, no wonder that the CEE countries (along with many Western European ones) perceive themselves as culturally homogeneous. To some extent, a xenophobic and nationalistic backlash against the idea of multicultural societies is being strengthened. Now, what may also contribute to this fact is an existence of the following two tensions formulated in Wallace 2001: „The tension between a monocultural ideal and a multicultural reality“ and „the tension between increased integration into the European and global economy at the same time as newly found statehood“. Despite having many common features, because of many other aspects like, historical patterns, socioeconomic factors, geographical position, etc. there is no one homogenized CEE! Let us pinpoint, for example, in this regard different migratory links that have been established and developed throughout history in selected CEE countries (see Drbohlav 2006): e.g. between Bulgaria and Turkey, CR and Slovakia, Poland and Germany, the USA, the former Soviet Union, Romania and Moldova, Hungary, Slovenia and countries of the former Yugoslavia. Accordingly, also the current international migration patterns vary: Let us mention only one example: whereas, in 2002, stock of foreign labour force represented in Hungary 49,800, in Slovenia 36,000 in Poland 24,600 and in Slovakia 9,000, it was 162,000 in CR (see e.g. Drbohlav 2006). On the other hand, what obviously again unifies CEEc is almost no experience of immigration and its managing.

### **Elaborations on some aspects mentioned in Hirschman and Perez's paper**

I will comment on four mentioned, very important aspects in the light of CEEc' (and CR's) perspective:

- Migration/integration policy in general
- Move towards more liberal immigration policies
- Dependency on international migrants for economic and demographic needs
- Fear of foreigners (xenophobia, racism)

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<sup>2</sup> In addition, for example, CR between 1945 and 1947 (at that time within former Czechoslovakia), lost its multicultural element/environment when almost three million Germans were expelled from Czechoslovakia to Germany.

1) The current developed immigration countries are typical of three traditional, but “outdated” models of immigration/integration policies. We can characterize them in a very simplistic form (see more in Castles 1995) as follows:

- Multicultural model – support for the minority cultures vis-a-vis those of the majority population;
- “Differential exclusion” model - based on the temporary stays and circular movements of foreigners;
- Assimilation model - based on a “mandatory,” quick, and “simple” integration into society with the loss of the minority’s culture.

None of these models works well. Regardless of the particular model, across all developed countries many immigrants suffer from high unemployment, ethnic discrimination, social and residential segregation etc. and tensions between minorities and majority populations are omnipresent, sometimes violent. Some EU countries, being „confused“ while seeing not functioning of their system, search for a new migration/integration regimes. Apparently, at this moment, there is little to lean on for the CEEc. One can see in some European countries (e.g. the Netherlands and Austria) including CR<sup>3</sup>, a sort of a shift, reorientation toward the “civic integration<sup>4</sup>” model (Baršová, Barša 2005, Lachmanová 2007). This model is characteristic of:

- respect for cultural plurality but with a focus on the individual migrant and common attributes combining immigrants with the majority population;
- respect for both democratic and egalitarian principles, but immigrants must learn a national language. Nevertheless, immigrants are not forced to accept a new way of life or culture.

2) The migratory and integration policies in CEEc are in an immature stage. Although 17 years have passed from Revolutions, migratory trends have not fully crystallized, not to mention, policies. Moreover, “migration policies have been introduced to a great extent from

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<sup>3</sup> In the 1990s, CR declared pushing a sort of a multicultural model.

<sup>4</sup> The civic integration model leads to a convergence in terms of naturalization policies, broadening of civic rights for long-term immigrants, „mainstreaming“, launching mandatory integration tests etc.... (see more in Lachmanová 2007).

outside, even contradicting national interests and inclinations (... in the field of migration, as in other fields, reforms are determined to a great extent by supranational bodies such as the World Bank, the IMF, the EU and so on” (Wallace 2001). Also, we cannot directly learn from the US experience since the US, during its history, went through all of the above three mentioned migration/integration regimes! Their current “individualistic multiculturalism” is, in harmony with other countries, far from perfect as also seen from Hirschman and Perez’s paper.

The thesis that there are the moves toward more liberal immigration policies in the US as stressed by Hirschman and Perez is not fully acceptable in the EU. Europe did not become „more inclusive of peoples from different lands and cultures“, the philosophy of restriction dominates new policies. Conditions for „getting in“ are difficult for third-country nationals (in fact, only very limited and demand-driven „entry channels“ are open – namely, for selected economic migrants, or migration based on a family formation or reunion). Moreover, also a labour force from new EU member states has not been allowed to freely work in some old EU countries (there are still bans within waiting periods – see e.g. in Germany). Nevertheless, it is true that due mostly to economic and demographic gaps the EU harmonized migration/integration policies and practices as a whole and also within individual countries (namely in three areas where the EU role is suppressed - naturalization, economic migration and modes of integration) are more „liberal“ than one could in Europe, in general, but mainly in CEE, in particular, envisage.

3) “The outcome of projections, the baseline scenario indicates that the pace of labour force and employment growth in the EU25 ... will turn negative over the period 2018 to 2050. This is mainly the outcome of projected declining trends for the working – age population and a shift in the age structure of the population towards older, less participating groups – a consequence of the baby-boom generation approaching retirement and the succeeding lower-birth-rate cohorts reaching working age<sup>5</sup>“(Carone 2005). See also other pressing economic policy challenges for the EU as mentioned in Carone et al. 2005, including factors like investment into human capital formations, pension reforms and related prolonging working lives, or, all in all, new welfare state policies that are sustainable in the face of uncertain demographic and economic developments. CR’s future has to face the same challenges.

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<sup>5</sup> While the EU15 is to grow from 383 to 388 mil. between 2004 and 2050, the EU10 (including CR) is to shrink from 74 to 66 mil. at the same time (European 2005).

Hence, in CR immigrants are starting to be seen as people who could contribute to building country's wealth by complementing the domestic labour market that is suffering from various shortages. Migration is now seen in terms of management and assessment of migration needs. Just demographic and economics concerns provided the impetus to design the first steps of an active immigration policy in CR (so far a rather exceptional activity in CEE).

First, the ageing and shrinking of the population has created a major challenge for future sustainability (Burcin, Kučera 2003). Thus, what is the future role of international migration movements in the country vis-à-vis demographic problems? Via adopting the "Replacement Migration" concept (see e.g. Replacement 2001) Burcin, Drbohlav, Kučera (forthcoming) shed light on the needed volume of migration to eliminate changes to the country's population number and age structure caused by expected negative natural growth. There is no doubt that migration in CR context is not able to prevent or even cure population of demographic ageing (see similar results across Europe in Bijak et al. 2005). All that migration of realistic dimension can do is to offset expected population decline caused by the insufficient natural reproduction and slightly reduce the most radical demonstrations of the demographic ageing process. Any higher expectations are unrealistic<sup>6</sup>. (For example, to save the productive age population of CR cumulative number of net-migrants would have to reach 103.3 million in 2065!).

Second, there is a miss-match between supply and demand in the Czech labour market. The Czech educational system produces professions/occupations that are not in demand. Furthermore, there is no systematic and flexible system that would harmonize the demand and supply of the Czech labour market. Currently, there is a desperate need for technical specialists: namely, machine engineers for development, technology, and construction; software engineers; highly specialized IT experts; customer services specialists; database developers; business professionals; managers in different fields; executive professionals; and sales representatives. Also, one can see a permanent high demand for skilled medical staff: skilled nurses and doctors with primary and secondary attestation (particularly those specializing in internal medicine, anaesthesiologists, gynecologists, obstetricians and pediatricians). Importantly, if juxtaposing demands in CR to the demands in the European

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<sup>6</sup>Also migrants are getting older in the course of time and their contribution to population ageing must be compensated by new net immigrants to keep selected parameters unchanged.

labour market - both labour markets suffer from identical shortages (see Vavrečková 2006, 2007).

In contrast to “demography” where their role is rather very limited, migration movements may be of high use via filling at least some gaps on the Czech labour market. As a reaction to unfavourable situation, in 2003 the Czech Government launched a more flexible arrangements (program) for highly skilled and educated immigrants (see so called “Selection of Qualified Foreign Workers – Pilot Project” – e.g. Janská, Drbohlav in print) that is to bring to the country needed qualified and highly-qualified foreign labour force. Furthermore, a “green card” program that would even more liberalize an entry of flexible foreign workers to the Czech labour market is now being discussed and prepared. In this regards, the US experience like that of some other EU countries (like e.g. the UK or Germany) may be of high use too. Thus, one can only support Hirschman and Perez’s words that „underlying the change in immigration policies were broad economic and demographic forces”.

4) There is an omnipresent fear of having foreigners or strong ethnic minorities across CEE and in the CR<sup>7</sup> as well. Based on the results of opinion polls conducted by the Centre for Opinion Polls (within the Sociological Institute of the Academy of Sciences) - 59 % of respondents<sup>8</sup> think that immigrants should adjust to “our” living style as much as possible; 35 % call for adjusting to some extent in this respect, and 4 % argue that immigrants should have the opportunity to live according to their habits and customs (as of February 2005). In the same survey, 20 % argue that CR needs immigrants (certainly or rather yes) whereas 69 % proclaim that it does not need them (rather and certainly yes). Out of the selected ethnic groups, Slovaks (as a minority living in CR) are by far the most popular for the Czech majority, followed by Poles. On the other hand, Vietnamese and immigrants from the Balkans, from the former Soviet Union and Romas are the most unpopular. Among groups with negative attitudes towards foreigners belong mainly those with a basic education, auxiliary workers, unemployed persons, pensioners, those with pretty bad or very bad living standard (measured via a “subjective self-evaluation”) and sympathizers with the Communist Party. On the other hand, those with rather good and very good living standard (measured via

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<sup>7</sup> As indicated above, the Czech model of national identity logically tend to try to maintain ethnic purity and cultural homogeneity rather than pluralism.

<sup>8</sup> It was a representative sample.

a “subjective self-evaluation”), businessmen, university-educated persons, and voters for the Civic Democratic Party (right-wingers) tend to have more positive attitudes toward foreigners.

It seems that in CR anti-foreigners atmosphere has, to large extent, to do with xenophobia – fear of foreigners due to lack of experience and information ..., there has been no deep and firmly rooted nativism shaped against any foreign element, by the way, xenophobia and racism has no support via any established and more important political parties. Perceptions of immigrants in the Czech society may improve given enough time and interactions between migrants and the majority of the population (see a „contact hypothesis“ in Germany or Austria – in Drbohlav 2004, but see also in Poland - Koryš 2005).

Generally, xenophobia vis-a-vis foreigners in CEE is above the EU average (e.g. Rabušic, Burjanek 2003). However, it changes over time. While ethnic intolerance increased in countries such as Poland, Russia, Belarus, and Hungary between 1990 and 1999, it has decreased in CR, Slovenia, Romania, and Slovakia<sup>9</sup> (Nyíri 2003). Just Nyíri arrives to important results that xenophobia levels in CEE don't seem to be correlated to living standards, cultural-historical experience, education, civil society patterns, or even the number of immigrants (Nyíri 2003). He points out that “more attention should be paid to the role of political communication and public discourse” (Nyíri 2003), similarly Wallace (1999) argues that ... „it is a question of how the migration issues are dealt with in public political discourse (Wallace 1999). In other words, more publicizing, more objective information on what the migration, migrants and their integration into majority society really means (also more mutual activities where different cultures can enrich each other) may decrease hostility towards foreigners.

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<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, „ethnic stereotypes“ (a relatively stable pattern as to which ethnic/immigrant groups are popular and unpopular) are typical of the Czech society (and other CEEc) as well as for the US (see Drbohlav 2004 and Schaefer 1998).

## **Putting professors' Kalter and Granato's paper into the Czech context**

As it has been stipulated, due to the short time that has elapsed since the CEEc Revolutions, the second generation of immigrants is minimal and "very young"<sup>10</sup>. Most of the representatives of the second and 1.5 generations attend kindergartens or basic and high schools. Hence, we cannot evaluate and measure their participation on the labour market.

What I will do is to very briefly introduce some results of rather unique studies on children and youths' integration into Czech schools and society (see Drbohlav, Černík, Džúrová 2005, Janská 2007). No in-depth investigation of this sort has yet been carried out on foreign children in CEEc. There is very limited data and very little information (both in quantitative or qualitative terms) on the degree of adaptation of young immigrants' into CEE societies, including the Czech one.

The first study done by Janská (2007) focuses upon ascertaining what way of inclusion into the Czech society immigrant groups practice<sup>11</sup>. The survey analysis brings new evidence in the study of integration of the second generation of foreigners, i.e. children between 3 and 6 years (mostly Slavs from surrounding countries and Vietnamese). Leaving aside for this purpose specific behavioural features tied to individual immigrant groups and their integration modes (e.g. Western immigrants with their "transnational patterns", or Vietnamese who seem to follow segmented assimilation theory), obviously, children attending kindergartens have very good preconditions for adaptation into the majority society because of the social position of their parents. The majority of the surveyed children's parents have high school or university degree and manifest the tendency to stay in the country for longer periods of time or permanently. The optimistic future prospects for majority and minority coexistence are supported by positive response of good adaptation into the majority society by more than half of the parents. The role of kindergartens proved to be significant for acculturation and socialization of foreign children. A significant improvement in language skills in the course of

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<sup>10</sup> For example, as of December 31, 2005, 37,186 foreigners younger than 20 years officially stayed in CR. Vietnamese and Ukrainians are the largest immigrant groups in kindergartens and primary schools. Russians and Slovaks are the most important groups in secondary schools.

<sup>11</sup> Respondents - 326 foreign children along with their parents and teachers throughout CR were selected via a quota sampling in 2004 and 2005; a questionnaire survey was applied; quantitative approach, specifically - Chi-square test was used.

school attendance as well as assimilation into peer groups and participation in cultural and educational programmes organized by kindergartens were observed. Foreign children's starting position for further education is thus at least comparable with Czech children. Knowledge of the majority language is the key element for integration of foreigners into the majority society and it seems that foreign children's school attendance and participation in the majority children's group is the solution for successful integration of the second and the following generations. The foreign children's language level tends to be higher than that of their parents. This proves the hypothesis that children's language assimilation is easier than adult's one. The statistical analysis shows that a higher quality of life of respondents is related to good Czech language skills and perception of a successful adaptation into the majority society.

Also the empirical survey focusing on Post-Soviet and Asian (Vietnamese and Chinese) children in Prague was to show the current situation in terms of foreign children's degree of adaptation into Czech (basic and high) schools and consequently into Czech majority society. Moreover, the goal was to find factors that explain the success or failure of their adaptation and, consequently, to identify any relevant problems and to recommend some remedies for either improving or solving those problems (see Drbohlav, Černík, Džúrová 2005)<sup>12</sup>.

Leaving aside theoretical and conceptual frameworks on which the study was based, the research brought several findings. First of all, there were not many significant differences between the two foreign groups and the Czech control group, whether concerning academic grades or perceptions and opinion related to their lives and the lives of their families. Second, both foreign groups claimed they were generally satisfied with their situation in CR and most of them even stated that their family's status has improved since arrival. Third, most foreign respondents viewed their family as "rich" or "neither rich nor poor" compared to the average

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<sup>12</sup> The quantitative research approach was applied, a structured, standardized, questionnaire was used, the survey was carried out between September and November 2004. The sampling method was "purposive," organized, and systematic. Thirteen schools of all types with the largest foreign communities in a capital city of Prague (in absolute terms) took part. The respondents were composed of two groups of the 1.5 generation immigrants: Foreign children - aged 10-15 (in basic school), and youth - adolescents aged 16-18 (in secondary school). Those living in Prague and staying in CR more or less uninterruptedly, for at least three years, could participate. Respondents created three groups: a) Citizens of Vietnam and China (N=35); b) Citizens of the European part of the former Soviet Union (including Russia) (N=45), and c) "Czechs" as a control group (N=47).

Also, 15 interviews with specialists in the field of foreign children/youths' adaptation processes were made.

Czech family. Four, and most importantly, the survey did not identify any serious social problem at all. Finally, both foreign groups and the Czech control group demonstrated a very marginal involvement in institutional structures of any kind.

Overall, the surveyed foreigners proved that they were quickly able to adjust to new conditions and, in fact, both foreign groups seemed to socialize fairly well both with members of the Czech majority group and with other immigrants (although it is true that, to date, such contacts have been rather superficial). Despite the lack of serious social problems and a degree of multicultural interaction, however, it is abundantly clear that foreigners in CR are struggling to overcome widespread xenophobia and discrimination in the majority society.

While it is true that there are many more similarities between the answers given by the Post-Soviet and Asian samples, there were also some differences. It is certainly worth noting that Post-Soviets seem to be less firmly rooted in the country than Asians; this relative "rootlessness" is shown in many ways: for example, their families are more often incomplete or divided, with some members residing in CR and others in the country of origin.

The findings lead to the following policy recommendations. In order to improve foreign children and youths' adaptation into Czech schools and society, it would be useful to:

- 1) design specific sub-policies (sub-practices) aimed at the different immigrant groups/ ethnicities present in CR;
- 2) combat discrimination, xenophobia and racism in the majority population;
- 3) launch a new type of a complex intercultural education system; when designing it, all levels of public administration should cooperate and coordinate their actions;
- 4) systematically organise effective Czech-language courses for foreign children/ youths;
- 5) show greater respect for the breadth and depth of foreigners' religious beliefs;
- 6) better support foreign families and promote the potentially crucial role they play in furthering their children's education (including, for example, by informing them about school "strategies", activities, and programmes);
- 7) make better and greater use of foreigners' human and cultural capital.

This study represents a first attempt (and functions, therefore, as a sort of introduction) to penetrating more deeply into foreign children/youths' adaptation processes in Czech schools and society. Additional studies (also in other CEEc) should be carried out soon and contribute to developing both theoretical and practical knowledge in the field.

## Conclusion

When summing up, what lessons can be learned from the US migration/integration experience in Europe, and in particular the CEEc? Being inspired by the given US experience, one may formulate the following useful migration/integration policy goals:

- 1) To have a vision!
- 2) To clearly declare and then respect migration/integration policies elaborated in respect to social, economic, political, demographic and geographical structures of the majority society
- 3) To design an active migration policy - namely, regarding economic immigration
- 4) To study the US “multicultural model” – its changes, the determinants of these changes, and its strengths and weaknesses
- 5) To work on improving migration/integration statistics
- 6) To publicize and openly discuss migration/integration issues
- 7) To pay more attention to intercultural learning and intercultural communication.

Finally, what is worth mentioning here is that migratory patterns in CR have recently converged with those of the most developed democracies (Drbohlav 2002). This rapid convergence is indicated by: 1) number of immigrant – “stocks and flows”, 2) conditions and mechanisms of migration (theories and concepts) and 3) development and current status of migration policies and practices (as already indicated above). Good message is that some of the well known migration theories are, to some extent, applicable to the situation in CR (and in other CEEc): see e.g. neoclassical economic theory, world system theory, dual labour market theory, network theory and institutional theory (see more in Drbohlav 2004). When trying to explain immigrants’ integration patterns in CEE, it seems reasonable as well to apply theories/concepts that have mostly been used by American researchers, like: ethnic residential segregation model (Massey 1985), segmented assimilation model (Portes, Zhou 2000), acculturation strategies model (Berry 1990), or, „S”-curve model (Martin, Taylor 1995) etc. ... (see e.g. in Drbohlav, Džúrová, Černík 2005). Hence, making use of the US research experience in the given field (theories, concepts, research results including their application into practice, assessing the mechanisms of managing migration issues) is always useful for Europe.

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