



Integration of immigrants in the city of Pardubice

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INTRODUCTION

The city of Pardubice was chosen as a case study on local integration and on integration courses offered in the Czech Republic. Pardubice is a regional capital; therefore, it is also the administrative centre of the Pardubice Region. Two institutions that are in charge of policy-making (including the integration of immigrants) reside in the city – the city council and regional authority.

There is clear reasoning behind picking Pardubice for this study. The city (meaning Pardubice City Council) and the region (Pardubice Region) are both reasonably active in the field of integration of migrants. This means (considering Czech specifics) that Pardubice is one of the few cities (and regions) which actually does something about the integration of immigrants. Other examples are Plzeň and Brno. Local authorities usually leave the responsibility for integrating immigrants to the Ministry of the Interior (MoI). Municipalities and regions are beginning to put this topic on their agenda but it is in no way a priority.

In recent years, several new factories have been built in the Pardubice Region. Immigrants make up a large portion of their personnel. We can name Foxconn as an example of such a company, but it is not the only one. Other factories and manufacturers have also appeared. Many migrants have come to work at these new factories. They have long-term residency permits but they have been living in the Czech Republic for less than five years. Thus, they fall within the main research category of the PROSINT Project.

Integration of migrants, who intend primarily to make money as factory workers, is a new challenge. The government Concept does not exclude any group of migrants when defining the target groups of integration; however, it focuses primarily on migrants who intend to stay in the Czech Republic indefinitely. People who only come to make money for a few years, therefore, often end up left out from the integration programmes.

In Pardubice, problems arising from the consequences of the economic crisis were anticipated. The city council, therefore, initiated the creation of a working group focused on combating problems related to sudden job losses of immigrants. Together with the MoI, the Pardubice city council also organised a programme (a so-called emergent project) focused on keeping the migrants informed and fostering their language skills.

Besides that, an NGO which specialises in helping and advising migrants has been operating in Pardubice for quite some time (Most pro lidská práva, MLP). This organization has already

developed some sort of "integrative infrastructure" and has remarkable experience in the field of integration in the Czech environment. Lastly, a predominantly government-funded regional integration centre has been founded recently (Centrum pro integraci cizinců, CPIC). This centre has become another key player in matters of the integration of immigrants. It also significantly altered the power balance between respective pro-migrant service providers.

Thus, Pardubice is an example of a city which has recently experienced a large inflow of foreigners who came to work in its factories. Local authorities are reasonably active and the two organizations helping migrants operate there. Importantly, no serious problems between the migrant communities and locals have arisen in Pardubice.

Twelve thousand migrants with a residency permit are registered in the Pardubice Region. This figure makes about 2% of the whole regional population (on June 30th, 2010). About half of these people live in Pardubice, making up 3% of its inhabitants. In the whole of the Czech Republic, migrants make up about 4% of the population, which is slightly more than in Pardubice. The largest minorities in the Pardubice Region come from the Ukraine (38%), Slovakia (21%), Vietnam (15%), and Mongolia (4%). About one half of the migrants living in Pardubice have a long-term residency permit, which most likely means that they have been living in the Czech Republic for less than 5 years.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

In the first phase of the research, the relevant interview partners were identified and information interviews were held to identify relevant informants and topics. Key informants represented research institutions and NGOs experienced with migration research or with other activities in the field of immigrant integration. Simultaneously, relevant studies, articles, official documents and information on integration courses and activities in Pardubice and the Pardubice region were analysed. On the basis of this groundwork the respondents were identified and addressed. The situation in Pardubice, especially the newly founded integration centres led us to slightly adapt our interview guidelines and to focus on negotiation and power relations in the field of local integration.

Similarly to the authors of the only other Czech study on the local level of the integration of foreigners (Rákoczyová et al., 2008), we faced the fact that very few people are competent in the agenda of integration of foreigners. From the methodological point of view, we can consider it as an advantage: the research could address all the competent people. As concerns the outcome of the research, the fact also can be understood as indicating that at the local level, the agenda of the integration remains merely a marginal topic for local policy.

The key informants from Pardubice represented

- the city of Pardubice (civil servant, the head of community services dept., and local politician, the deputy Lord Mayor of the city),
- the Region of Pardubice (civil servant, the consultant for the Roma and immigrants),
- the NGO Most pro lidská práva (further MLP, the director)
- the Integration Support Centre for Immigrants (CPIC) in Pardubice (the head of the Centre).

The informative interviews were held with the academic (Masaryk University Brno, Charles University Prague), Czech language teachers, NGO workers (implementers of integration courses, people in contact with CPIC) and migrants, beneficiaries of integration courses.

Even though the respondents were familiar with the general topic of the research, we identified a great difficulty when researching the impact of the integration courses: the lack of experience. The respondents, even the people working with migrants every day, predominantly hesitated to assess the impact of the courses on trajectories of migrants.

In the Czech Republic, the major topic of the research, the integration courses, are not part of any national policy or programme for migrants. The integration courses stem from the *Concept of Immigrant Integration* where the linguistic competence, economic self-sufficiency and socio-cultural orientation in the society are identified as the main goals of the integration.

LOCAL MIGRATION-INTEGRATION POLICY FRAMES – AN OVERVIEW

Integration policy on national and regional level

The first idea of integration was introduced only in 1999, when the first governmental documents on this issue were adopted. Those were the *Principles for the Concept of Immigrant Integration in the Territory of the Czech Republic* followed by the *Concept of Immigrant Integration* endorsed by the Government in December 2000. The integration of foreigners, in these documents, was viewed as rather theoretical concept without any concrete measures focused on migrants. The documents established cooperation among ministries in the field of –called in those days– “relations among communities”, exchange of information and data on migration and migrants, and funds for migration research.

The following updated *Integration Concept* identified four key prerequisites for successful immigrant integration under the conditions of the Czech Republic¹. The definition of integration priorities can be considered progress of thought in the field of incorporation of migrants. At the same time, the *Concept* did not contain any specific pro-integration measures. Government’s approach to integration was reflected only in the laws that govern the residence of the migrants and their conditions of employment. This is an important fact in explaining the relation between state and local levels of integration. The laws define the general rules applicable throughout the country (for example, the migrant without permanent residency, who loses his/her job and is not able to immediately find another one and maintain employment continuity, must leave the territory), and simultaneously, other concrete integration activities are not defined. Such activities gradually emerge as particular initiatives of non-governmental organizations, though often with financial and political support of the state, especially the Ministry of Interior. The state is thus a kind of guardian of the rather strict and complex rules concerning residency and work, rather than the author of integration rules, which would simplify the lives of migrants in the country.

Migrant integration has always been the domain of the state and its authorities. The state determines the target group of integration and the integration activities that it will promote. Simultaneously, up to 2011, the *Integration Concepts* were not specific as far as the involvement of regions in the integration of migrants. The *Updated Concept* from 2005 specified very vaguely cooperation between the central level of the state and the local levels of regions and municipalities. The Czech Republic has also gone through regional transformations (the abolition of former districts and transformation of regions), which also led a lack of clarity in the role of regions in the process of integration of migrants. This

¹ The key prerequisites were: 1) knowledge of the Czech language; 2) immigrant’s economic self-sufficiency; 3) immigrant’s orientation in society; 4) immigrant’s relations with members of the majority society. For detailed description of the development of the state integration policy see the section I of WP2.

vagueness resulted in the assumption of the regions that the integration of foreigners is a responsibility only of the state.

In addition, since 2000, there have been several shifts between ministries in the responsibilities of integration (the agenda shifted from the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and back to the Ministry of Interior – for more information see Babicka: 2010). The cities and regions did not have a sound institutional partner for possible development of their own concepts or approaches. Consequently, they waited and used the individual projects of both Ministries, which offered partial funding of integration activities within various and irregular one-year projects. These projects focused mostly on counselling and field work with migrants who had either been laid off in connection with the phasing out of production in times of economic crisis, or who were deceived by intermediary agencies.

The newly introduced *Integration Concept* in 2011 defines specifically the intended role of the regions in the integration of migrants. The new *Concept* introduced, as one of the objectives, the extension of the integration policies at the regional and local level. The Integration Support Centres for Immigrants, which should play the role, in the words of the Concept, of a competent partner to administrative bodies and regions, serve as an instrument of integration policies in the regions. The Centres provide information to migrants and to the public, they provide and organize the integration courses, they should promote the creation of regional strategies towards integration in accordance with government policy. The *Concept* seems to endow the Centres with almost official authority. The role of the Centres is still unclear and will be subject to further negotiations, both between the government and the regions, and between the government and the NGOs dealing with integration in regions.

In addition to the specification of the role of regions, the new *Concept* from 2011 brings further changes in integration policy that affects the role of regions: the definition of the target group of integration, which is aimed at integrating all migrants from third countries, regardless of the length of stay in the Czech Republic, and, in appropriate cases, migrants from EU countries. While the previous *Concepts* assumed that integration refers to migrants living in the country longer than 1 year (in real terms, however, more than 5 years, because there were no integration measures of the migrants without permanent residence), this new concept abandons the criterion and recognizes that integration is important right at the arrival of the migrant. This new definition simplifies who the integration measures consider and does not put obstacles in who they target, which can probably facilitate the regions' own process and implementation.

The study of the integration in Pardubice was carried out at a time when the regional integration agenda was formally introduced, but in practice was still considered a matter of the state. The regions and cities at their level only addressed the biggest problems, or, as in the case of Pardubice, supported the experienced and established NGO, which was engaged in designing and implementing local integration activities.

The main actors

Three types of subjects take part on the process of integration of migrants in Pardubice:

- 1) Local and regional authorities: regional office of Pardubice region and municipality of Pardubice city
- 2) Implementers of integration activities: the NGO MLP and the Integration Support Centre for Immigrants (CPIC)
- 3) External suppliers

Regional office of Pardubice region and municipality of Pardubice city

Both institutions play several roles in the integration of migrants. They are potential policy-makers and implementers of local policy. Simultaneously, the city of Pardubice is an implementer of the national policy. Both institutions give the financial support for some concrete integration activities (courses and counselling).

Approximately three years ago, the agenda of the integration was incorporated into the agenda of the municipality of Pardubice. After refusing to develop their own regional concept on integration of foreigners, the whole agenda was incorporated into the Community plan of the development of social services from 2008 to 2011. The agenda of integration was merged with the agenda of Romas. This practice, as argued by Rákoczyová and Trbola (Rákoczyová et al., 2008), shows the very frequent hesitation of local administrative bodies on how to cope with the agenda of the integration of foreigners as concerns the choice of a competent administrative body. Joining the two agendas is considered problematic. Many stereotypes are associated with the Romas, mainly concerning their purported strategies of misusing social benefits. Extending such stereotypes on migrants could have very negative consequences, which could lead to discrimination and the rejection of migrants by the majority. On the contrary, the respondent from the municipality finds an advantage in merging the agendas: in the time of the special Roma agenda, the Romas were particularly separated; while actual consolidation of the agendas under the multicultural cohabitation could actually help the marginalized Romas.

Next to the potential stereotypes and prejudices against the migrants, there is one more possible negative consequence of subordinating the migrant agenda under the social and welfare agenda; a slower transformation in understanding of integration by local authorities. The social-level understanding is characterized by the tendency to treat integration by solving only critical situations, by defining integration as ensuring only basic needs and by preventing an extreme social exclusion, or by organizing parades and multicultural festivals. The existing agenda was targeted this way: counselling and problem-solving projects. It seems unlikely that under the post-economic crisis conditions, the municipality would introduce measures other than those solving fatal economic problems of individuals or families.

Similar to the city of Pardubice, on the level of the Pardubice Region, the agenda of integration of foreigners is included in the agenda of social services (under the Medium-term development plan of social services in the Pardubice Region). While the region disposes of its own budget and is able to fund some activities in the field of the integration, the city of Pardubice does not invest its own money to the integration and consequently only redistributes the subsidies and grants from the MoI. In this respect, the activities of the city are factually dependent on the focus of subsidies, determined by the MoI. Although the donator is the city, the effective policy maker is the MoI.

The city of Pardubice and the Pardubice Region do not cooperate and do not coordinate their activities. Both institutions establish workgroups within the social development plans. The members of the groups represent the city and the region, the police (including Alien police), labour offices, big employers and NGOs. After the respondents, the workgroups are platforms of sharing of information, discussing actual measures and planning the cooperation (Fraňková, 2010) (Lidermannová, 2010).

Implementers of integration activities: the NGO MLP and the Integration Support Centre for Immigrants (CPIC)

The MLP is an NGO, living on grants and subsidies. The CPICs, including the one in Pardubice, are run by the SUZ (Refugee Facilities Administration) that is institutionally subordinate to the MoI. The CPIC is far more financially stable than the NGO and is perceived to be almost a state office, respectively a representative of the MoI.

Both organizations offer social and legal counselling and integration courses to migrants. The counsellors or the lecturers are employees of the organizations or experts hired on the basis of order. Both organizations are represented in the workgroups of the city and the region.

The NGO MLP functions in Pardubice from 2004. MLP got its name, acquired the trust of the clients and is accredited under the Law on social services – which allows the MLP to provide social services and counselling. The CPIC was established in 2009. After it set up a pressing problem occurred during defining the competences of both the two organizations. The scopes of their activities were practically the same and according to the account of the director of the MKP, CPIC takes over the activities of MLP. In terms of sustainability, the situation of CPIC is more advantageous than the situation of MLP. The declared purpose of the establishment of all CPICs was a coordination of integration activities in their respective regions, however in Pardubice we can talk about competition or (after the director of MLP) extrusion of the non-governmental rival.

External suppliers

As the third type of actor in integration activities are external suppliers: Czech language teachers, interpreters, lawyers and other experts, who conduct or supervise the integration courses. The Czech language teachers are in most cases experienced in teaching the Czech language as a foreign language and in teaching low-threshold language courses.

The migration-integration nexus

Main documents

In Pardubice (similarly to other regions), the practice of the integration of migrants is based on the Aliens Act², on the national *Concept* of immigrant integration and on the legislation regulating the social services³. Although the respondents considered the agenda of the immigrant integration important, neither the Pardubice Region nor the city of Pardubice developed specific regional concept of immigrant integration. In 2008, the discussions on the concept were led, but finally, the concept was not developed due to minor concerns of local politicians (Lidermannová, 2010). Thus, the agenda of immigrant integration was not assessed as important enough to deal with it separately and specifically.

² Act No. 326/1999 Coll., Aliens Act (Act on the Residence of Aliens in the Territory of the Czech Republic)

³ Act No. 108/2006 Coll., Act on Social Services

The immigrant integration in the city of Pardubice is incorporated into the *Community Plan of the Social Services Development from 2008 to 2011* (Pardubice, 2007). Community planning is managed by a system of workgroups. The workgroup for immigrant integration is called “Foreigners, national and ethnic minorities”. As mentioned above, the vast majority of the workgroup agenda is composed from the Roma projects. Only three out of twelve measures deal with migrants; these are “maintenance of social and legal counselling for foreigners” (focused on qualified migrants), “creating interconnections in leisure-time activities among the majority, the Roma minority and foreigners”, and “support of integration courses for migrants”. The mentioned activities are funded by grants from the MoI.

On the regional level, the main document for the immigrant integration is the *Medium-term Development Plan of Social Services in Pardubice Region from 2008 to 2010*. The advisory body is the workgroup “Ethnic minorities and the foreigners”. The plan defines goals, and measures activities funded by the regional budget. Out of the eight measures, four are specifically or generally aimed at immigrant integration. The emphasis is given on supporting counselling – it is the only priority really funded by the regional budget. The field social work and multicultural education remain limited in terms of goals and are not really funded.

For all the respondents, the national *Concept of Immigrant Integration* remains the main conceptual document from which stem the priorities of the city and the region. Neither the city nor the region bring any new measure exceeding the framework of the national *Concept*. The local bodies do not define any specific target groups of migrants for integration measures. The specific treatment is used only in cases of *ad hoc* situations and projects.

The number of migrants in Pardubice is quite low and simultaneously, two organizations in the city offer their counselling services. The representatives of the administrative and the counselling organizations assess the situation in the field of integration as satisfactory. They are sure that they are able to react in case of any great need, be it a need for counselling or a new integration course under the framework of existing projects. The policy and practice are based mainly on monitoring the situation and outcomes of the workgroups. According to the respondents, the cooperation good and the integration measures are introduced when needed.

The political parties generally do not incorporate the topic of integration into their program. The migration and integration is not publicly discussed much. We can deduce that as long as the foreigners stay more or less invisible (and their eventual problems stay concealed), they do not become much of a topic for politicians. The migrants only became the political topic after they were defined as a so-called security threat. After such a threat was identified, various institutions started to act. Otherwise, immigrant integration stays out of the political mainstream, both on the local and regional level.

The respondents were not specific concerning the comparison of local and national policy, although theoretically, the local integration concept is analogous to the national one. The reason can lie in the fact that neither national nor local policies are specifically formulated. In this aspect the local integration policy is similar to the national one, it does not develop the theoretical level; instead, it functions by reacting in the case of need by tailoring a concrete measure for a specific situation.

Target groups of integration measures

The *Community Plan* of the city of Pardubice defines the target group of social services in the field of immigrant integration as “persons, who affiliate to specific national or ethnic minority, or are considered as members of the minority, and people living in the Czech Republic, who are not citizens, having long-term visa or asylum seekers”. The definition seems to exclude the permanently residing migrant and EU citizens. Conversely, both the

responses of the respondents and the logic of the whole document suggest that the target group really covers all migrants. The *Middle-term Plan of the Pardubice Region* uses this broad definition of the target group as well. The target group defining only the Roma people was broadened to all other citizens except for the Czech ones.

The definition of the target group in both local documents is broader than the definition in the national *Concept*, as it covers all the migrants. Due to the system of funding of integration activities from the programmes of the MoI and European Integration Fund, the target group is in effect reduced and the EU citizens are excluded.

The Aims and Dimensions of Integration

Local strategies are specifically focused on social issues. Various activities of the local and regional authorities predominantly aim at preventing social exclusion of migrants and at fieldwork. Local strategies for integration do not specifically mention the priorities set in the governmental *Concept for the Integration of Foreigners*. However, the proposals and measures found in the local documents prove that local priorities are in agreement with governmental priorities.

Four key governmental priorities in the integration field are: a) knowledge of the Czech language, b) economic self-sufficiency, c) understanding the Czech society and d) mutual relations between immigrants and locals. The main focus lies in the socio-economic and cultural aspects of integration.

A migrant's economic self-sufficiency is not just a priority set in the governmental *Concept*. It is also a legal condition for the migrant's stay in the country. Migrants without a permanent residency permit have to be financially independent of the state. If this is not the case, they have to return home. This precondition is legal (it is included in the Foreign National Residence Act) and it also complies with the idea of what the Czech majority regards as legitimate migration. If a migrant (without a permanent residency permit) loses a job or stops running a business, his or her residency permit expires automatically. Migrating students and family members have to prove that they have enough money to live off. A migrant without a permanent residency permit has to be financially independent to avoid dependency on the Czech public sector. Only permanent residency permit holders (or migrants with granted asylum) are eligible to social security or unemployment benefits.

The local documents available focus on two main issues: On economic independence of migrants (which is not questioned at all) and their social inclusion. Social inclusion can be divided into several topics. Firstly, it is a matter of social exclusion of migrants. Social exclusion is considered problematic⁴, especially when voluntary. Asian migrants, for instance, are perceived as people living predominantly in their own communities. They segregate themselves through both language and space (they live close to one another and concentrate in areas where they can hire several flats at once). Another case of an undesirable exclusion is caused by a lack of knowledge about Czech society and language. Such exclusion often leads to the migrants' dependency on middlemen (also called "agents"). These agents are often dishonest and their terms of service are likely to be so inconvenient for the migrants that it suggests modern slavery.

⁴ Information based on interviews with respondents, see the list of respondents in the end of report.

On top of the socio-economic dimension, there is another significant dimension to integration. It is related to culture and it also has something to do with the coexistence of migrants and locals. Migrants are expected to “cause no trouble” and to integrate. This statement means that they will be able to take care of themselves economically, when dealing with Czech institutions and also while in public. These expectations of no troubles can be seen in the safety issue. Safety was stressed by respondents representing local and regional institutions. The task of a city (or a region) is to ensure safety. The respondents claimed that the public views immigrants as a threat to its safety. Petty thefts and potential homelessness due to job losses are major sources of concern (third country nationals cannot really become homeless though). Some members of the Czech majority do not feel safe due to the mere presence of foreigners and their different culture. Especially the elderly feel threatened by foreigners. This feeling originates from their lack of exposure to different cultures and lack of experience in coexisting with migrants.

THE OFFER OF INTEGRATION ACTIVITIES AND COURSES

Integration Courses in the Czech Republic – a brief history

Generally, the integration of migrants in the Czech Republic is divided into two areas: the integration of the recognized refugees and the integration of foreigners (all other migrants are meant). In 1990s, the first integration courses for refugees organised by NGOs and funded by the state authorities were developed, in particular for those who remained in the Czech Republic after the Temporary Residence Project for refugees from the former Yugoslavia had finished. Also, the State Integration Programme for refugees was introduced. In comparison to the integration of refugees, the *Concept on Immigrant Integration* and integration activities towards other migrants were several years delayed. Until 2005, no specific integration courses were offered to migrants. The vocational-retraining courses offered by Labour offices could be perceived as non-specific integration courses open for the migrants with permanent residency. However, according to experts (Popović, 2011), re-training courses were not used nor implemented, specifically because of their financial cost. The courses were offered by the Labour offices, but eventually were not really accorded to all interested participants.

Integration courses specifically developed to help immigrants integrate into economic and social life in the Czech Republic were offered only since 2005 (Solařová, 2009). The first courses were ICT courses, language courses and various targeted social integration courses. The courses were initiated and provided by NGOs. The development of integration courses was enabled by the possibility of the Czech Republic to draw on financial resources initially from the European Social Fund and gradually from the European Integration Fund as well. The projects funded by European funds aimed at designing, evaluating and implementing of the integration courses for immigrants in the country. The partnerships cooperating in the projects were initiated, generally, by NGOs dealing with migrants throughout the country. Since 2005, when the first projects developing integration courses started, almost all NGOs working with migrants included courses among their regular activities and many have specialized. The direct integration courses for migrants are provided as well as courses aimed at training teachers in schools to work with migrant children, courses aimed at teaching teachers of Czech language as a foreign language, and courses for teachers working with foreigners and so on.

In addition to integration courses provided by NGOs, language schools also offer a broad selection of commercial Czech-language courses.

Since 2009, the Integration Support Centres for Immigrants were introduced. The Centres provide both language and integration courses. The role of Centres is to ensure the regional availability of integration courses.

Furthermore, since 2009, the applicants for a permanent residency permit have to prove their knowledge of the Czech language at A1 level of the Common European Reference Framework of Languages (more about the exam and residence permit in Babicka, 2010). The providers of language courses offer specific preparatory courses for the mandatory test.

A new *Concept on Immigrant Integration* (2011) introduces a requirement to complete an integration course. This requirement is currently formulated only vaguely like a blueprint for the future. It is not clear whether it will be required to complete an integration course or pass a test.

Integration courses in Pardubice region

Various regional, local and governmental sources finance integration activities offered by the providers. The activities are chosen according to the priorities of the governmental integration concept, local experiences with migration and responses of the majority to migrants. The main focus is on language courses, socio-cultural education and legal and social aid and advice for migrants. Czech society demands the assimilation of foreigners, our contacts say. The most preferred situation is when migrants keep a low profile and integrate to such a degree that they become able to live within the framework of the Czech society. The courses should help migrants to meet these targets. Crucial in this is mastering Czech and the ability to handle common everyday situations without the need for special treatment. Among these situations are, for example, shopping, seeing a doctor, using public transportation, dealing with the paperwork necessary for residency and work, bank visits, etc.

In Pardubice, one can find language courses and seminars on various topics supporting social and cultural integration of migrants. Migrants also have two advice centres available where they can consult matters of residency, occupation, family life and other legal and social issues.

The target group of integration courses and consultancy are all migrants from third countries. This is a specification based on the governmental *Concept for the Integration of Foreigners*. In spite of the fact that the majority of grants aim only at third country nationals, EU citizens can always seek advice from the NGO (MLP) or from CPIC (governmental Centre to Support the Integration of Foreigners). However, EU citizens cannot participate in the Czech language courses. This choice of the target group has proven to be questionable especially because of the case of Romanian and Bulgarian migrants. Bulgarians and Romanians arrive as work migrants and often substitute those third country nationals who did not have their work permit extended. Their lack of orientation in the society and dependence on agents is often comparable to third country nationals. The integration courses could often be very beneficial to them.

There are no specific integration measures introduced for specific groups. The main arguments for integrating all migrants on the local level are prevention of negative phenomena, securing safety and “smooth operation” (Fraňková, 2010). Negative phenomena mean in particular the inability of a family or an individual to sustain themselves and the risk that the Czech society will have to take care of them. Currently, accepting such social responsibility for migrants is basically unacceptable.

The reasoning behind introducing specific courses is different at both organisations. The NGO “Most pro lidská práva” went through several years of development. Various approaches to teaching Czech as well as to teaching socio-cultural courses were tested during this period and it cannot be said that the courses should stop developing now, since the situation of migrants

is constantly changing. People from different countries are coming and there is also a need to respond to the crisis. We can say that the Czech language courses have become stabilized. However, there is no method of teaching these courses that could be set indefinitely without change (Kudrnová, 2010). MLP prepares its courses according to the migrants' needs, in compliance with its past experience and according to experiences arising from preceding projects (for example from the "Work in Czech" and "Work in Prague" project by EQUAL).

The government-funded organization CPIC was founded "from scratch". Based on what CPIC representatives said, their programme is defined mainly by the project. This means that the directions of the MoI and the principles of the governmental *Concept for the Integration of Foreigners* are crucial. Some critics claim that it is unclear whether CPIC takes advantage of the methods that have been developed in the past integration projects.

The integration courses provided can be divided into two main categories: 1) Czech language courses and 2) socio-cultural courses. These two focuses of the courses are derived from the *Concept of the Integration of Foreigners*. Both major course providers in Pardubice (MLP and CPIC) offer both types of courses. The initiative, especially when it comes to language courses, comes from various directions; from the city and its community planning department, from the MoI, which offers subsidies for some courses, from the CPIC project, from MLP projects and analyses, and also from migrants, who, for example, passed the course and later organise a group of migrants who then attend the course together.

Usually, the course is carried out solely by the organisation responsible for the content, smooth running of the course and by teachers. The teachers are experts in language teaching who have passed special courses for running low-threshold Czech language courses. In smaller municipalities, local administration sometimes also participates in organizing the course, as happens when the course takes place in a local library or in a school.

Czech Language Courses

Types of Courses

Czech language courses have two basic forms: 1) a low-threshold course and 2) a systematic course. A low-threshold course is open to any migrants interested, a systematic course focuses on a certain level of knowledge – it is aimed at migrants with this language knowledge.

In the Czech Republic, low-threshold courses were introduced not long ago (the first courses were tested in 2005-2006). They focus on mastering the basics of a language, the ability to understand common situations and on elementary vocabulary. Apart from language progress, another aim of the courses is to pass on the experience that by systematically studying, language can be learnt much more efficiently than just through everyday use. The low-threshold course is aimed at people who do not have any previous experience with courses and who had never studied any foreign language. It is intended to motivate people to study further.

The providers of the courses sometimes choose to target a low-threshold course at one migrant language group in particular (e.g. the Ukrainians or Vietnamese). It has certain advantages; for one, an interpreter can be used. The interpreter helps during the lessons; explains grammar using the grammar the students know and translates what is necessary. However, this advantage can turn into a disadvantage; the interpreter can essentially dominate the course, participants pay more attention to the interpreter than to the teacher, and they do not progress as fast as they could. Therefore, this model with a homogenous group is not

supported in general. Some course-providers, though, take a different stance on this issue (CPIC uses interpreters more often). Nonetheless, courses aimed at a specific language groups are still rather rare. As such, there is no exclusion of other migrants from access to courses. Courses aimed at all language groups are always available.

The target of the systematic courses of Czech is: Progress of migrants at mastering Czech on a specific level or in a well-defined area (writing, reading, and speaking). The content of these courses is planned with respect to textbooks of Czech as a foreign language and according to the demands on the language proficiency of the respective migrants (relevant vocabulary, being able to fill out necessary paperwork, etc.). MLP introduced a significant change to its courses in the past years where the courses became significantly shorter. In 2009, their duration was cut from 100 hours to 50 hours. The original setup (100 hours) aimed at achieving significant progress with the participants. However, the reality proved that a course that was too long or had too many lessons per week has undesirable consequences. Migrants either do not finish the whole course or they do not even start attending it. The biggest changes can thus be seen in the duration of the courses. Both providers now offer courses comprising of 50 hours in total (roughly three months). The courses take place once or twice (for advanced participants) a week. They usually take up two to three lessons.

The timetable is adapted to the daily routine of the working migrants. With more advanced groups, one can be sure that the participants will adapt to the timetable of the course to a certain extent.

Financing

The courses are fully funded through a system of grants from the state budget or the budget of the European Integration Fund.

The courses are provided at no cost to participants. MLP, like other NGOs offering language courses, considered introducing a relatively low participation fee meant as an incentive (for example, 20–50 CZK per hour). CPIC, a new actor in the field, however started to provide courses free of charge, and thus MLP could not introduce the “motivation fee”, as it would lose all the clients who would immediately switch to CPIC. Opinions regarding the fees differ fundamentally; opponents say it would completely discourage migrants from attending the course, while those in favour of the fees want the migrants to assume more responsibility as co-financing can, according to proponents, lead to a greater activity in the studies.

The Target Group

The target group of the Czech language courses are all migrants from third countries who are interested in them. Migrants are informed by leaflets made available at the Immigration Police and at large employers or found in consulting organizations. In 2009, a major information event was organized, during which the vast majority of migrants in the city of Pardubice were approached. This field event was part of an emergent project of the MoI. Migrants were informed about integration opportunities, consulting options, as well as integration courses.

Even though no group of migrants is explicitly excluded from the courses (except for EU citizens), it is clear that family breadwinners or people who do not take care of small children make up most of the participants. Despite the fact that both course providers offer babysitting during the courses, there is not much demand for it according to the staff. It can be inferred

from this that parents and especially mothers of young children participate in the courses to a lesser extent than migrants in different family constellations.

The Binding Character

The Foreign National Residence Act imposes on migrants applying for permanent residency the obligation to prove that they passed a Czech language exam at level A1. An exception to this requirement are adult migrants who studied at Czech schools, migrants older than 60 years of age, migrant children, or mentally handicapped migrants. There are no mandatory language courses, not even the ones focused on the preparation for this test.

The low-threshold courses provided in Pardubice are not mandatory, they are completely open; migrants may join at any time, there is no quota to be met and no minimum number of hours. Following the opening of the course, migrants can begin coming or stop going at any time.

Systematic courses are designed in such a way that the participants improve as much as possible. Therefore, it is necessary that they attend the course on a regular basis. Yet, at the same time, everything is entirely up to them and they cannot be prevented from not attending the course. There is no obligation to attend integration courses. In fact, it is the course-providers who introduce various measures to encourage migrants to attend the course until its very end. A systematic course opens after the registration of a sufficient number of participants (about 12).

Dropouts are not penalized. The course is terminated earlier when less than five participants attend. As a result, course-providers encourage migrants to participate because it is very difficult to join courses with low numbers of participants (in order to keep a larger group and make it economically viable to pay the teacher). Prematurely terminated courses also represent a considerable problem when filling in indicators on integration projects.

The main motivation for migrants to attend is the fact that the course time schedules are adjusted to those of migrant workers. Courses take place outside of working hours, in the evening or in the morning, some courses are held on weekends. If there is a group from one factory in the course, even shifts are sometimes taken into consideration.

Certificates

Participants who take part in minimally 60% (or 70%) of the course hours receive a certificate. Although the certificate is not very useful in practice, it can serve as a proof of the migrant's participation but has no legal or administrative value; it is not recognized by employers or authorities as a document of any value. The certificate is rather a symbolic evidence for the participant.

Evaluation

We cannot speak of a tradition of language courses and of a standard way of teaching yet. While the method of teaching Czech is quite codified, there are several Czech language textbooks as well as training courses for teachers of Czech for foreigners; there is little experience with the outcomes of the courses. Course-providers depend to a large extent on foreigners registering for a course. According to the group, they prepare a specific course (it can vary in the language level, vocabulary areas, approach to participants, use of an interpreter, etc.). We cannot talk about any standard course types which migrants would register for and which would deliver verified results yet.

Course evaluation takes place among teachers, who visit one another's lessons and discuss their ways of teaching, and through feedback from participants. Participants are asked about the ideal form of the course and what they expect from it with respect to the use of language in practice. Longer-term monitoring of the language level of course "graduates" does not take place.

Integration courses

The contents of integration courses are based on the priorities of the state *Concept of the Integration of Foreigners*. Besides the knowledge of Czech, this *Concept* puts emphasis on the orientation of migrants in the social environment of Czech society and on his or her economic self-sufficiency. Integration courses are thus aimed at providing essential information about the Czech Republic, conditions for employment and entrepreneurship and health, social and education system information. Some courses include information and workshops on Czech history, traditions and holidays. Migrants are taught how to communicate with the authorities, how to react properly in everyday situations (shopping, restaurants, seeing the doctor, travelling) and how to understand Czech culture. The courses are designed differently, which is why their names differ as well; business integration courses, courses on social adaptation, socio-cultural courses and the like are examples of the specific names they have.

The socio-cultural courses have undergone significant development in the Czech Republic, and so it has been the case in the region of Pardubice as well. Since 2004, MLP had been providing socio-cultural courses organized in a way similar to language courses; the number of lessons was predetermined, for example, 30–50 hours, and the curriculum, which contained a great number of topics, was also set beforehand. But it turned out that most participants of this course were not satisfied as such a course is very time-consuming. In addition, many migrants prefer to learn only about issues they currently need in solving everyday tasks. Nowadays, it is a trend in Pardubice to organize socio-cultural courses in the form of crash courses focused on a specific theme (such as long-term stay; residency permit; pregnancy, childbirth and the health insurance of foreigners; entrepreneurship in the Czech Republic; labour regulation laws, etc.). The course is lead by an expert on the subject, or it is held jointly by an expert on the subject and an expert on the life of immigrants in the country. External experts are invited both from the government (the Police, DAMP, job centres) and the private sphere (taxation, business environment).

The course lasts two to three hours and consists of a lecture and a debate, in which participants can discuss their experiences related to the subject.

The contents of the socio-cultural courses had been tested in several projects of partner NGO networks from all over the country. When preparing both long-term and one-session courses, it is possible to make use of these resources. The target group consists of migrant workers mostly from third countries. The current form of one-off workshops targets mostly migrants from third countries, but migrants attend these seminars according to the theme which is being discussed. Migrants from EU countries are not excluded from participation in these courses.

The Number of Courses Provided

Since 2004, MLP has provided 57 Czech language courses for adults, 3 Czech language courses for children, 2 PC courses, 3 courses on social adaptation and 2 courses on business integration. The number of Czech language courses gradually increased up to 25 courses in 2009, which were attended by 262 participants.

For 2009, CPIC records 497 new clients in language courses and 11 participants in socio-cultural courses (CPIC was established in July 2009). In the first half of the year 2010, CPIC registered 373 and 73 new clients respectively.

THE PERCEIVED IMPACT OF INTEGRATION COURSES ON IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION STRATEGIES

The language courses are considered very important by all the respondents. The linguistic competence and ability to independently solve situations in Czech is one very important expectation of the majority on the part of foreigners. Whilst the migrants from Russian-speaking countries can rely on the similarity between their language and the Czech language and try to communicate with only a basic knowledge of Czech, the situation of migrants from Asia is quite different. According to linguistic experts, the Vietnamese and the Czech languages are in all respects different (Vasiljev, 2006). Therefore, the language courses are crucial for migrants from Vietnam, China and Mongolia who would like to act independently in Czech society. An increase of independence is a very significant impact of the courses next to the improvement in linguistic competence. In recent years, migrants in the Czech Republic have faced a problem of heavy dependency on agents. The agents provide permissions to stay and to work for migrants – be it informal individuals or official agencies. The services of the agent are naturally charged with a significant fee. The migrant pays to the agent and without reasonable knowledge of the language is not able to even monitor his actions and cannot assess whether the agent had fulfilled what s/he promised. The migrants intending to stay in the Czech Republic longer especially understand that the courses are a means of getting rid of the agents.

The respondents mentioned other non-linguistic impacts of the language courses. During the courses, the migrants come into contact with new people they would not have met, and visit the places they would miss or would be hesitant to visit. Mainly in smaller places where the course-providers may not have stable offices, the classes are rented in the spaces of local administration or in local libraries. The migrants then regularly enter public places, get familiar with them, and find out that they are open to them.

Concerning the evaluation of courses, the respondents did not mention any type of systematic feedback. The course-providers evaluate courses with respect to the satisfaction of participants with the lecturer and compare the lecturers' reports on courses with the aim of courses.

When reflecting on the impact of integration courses, the respondents emphasized that the courses cannot stand alone. The integration must be supported not only with the courses but also with counselling, interventions in case of need and other activities directed at the Czech majority as well. Only the whole complex of activities can promote full integration. The migrants should be multilaterally encouraged to reach the main goal of the integration: good orientation and independence in the society. A secondary consequence of complex activities is better awareness of the Czech majority on migrants' lives in Pardubice. For many inhabitants of the Czech Republic the presence of migrants is still unusual – for some even illegitimate. The integration courses, PR activities or multicultural events bring the opportunity to show the migrants in a positive way and abandon the stereotype and negative image of migrants.

Evaluation and efficiency of the integration courses

The time schedule of the courses is being adjusted to go down well with the time regime of migrants. Two respondents (representing the NGO and the region) pointed out that the adjustment is sometimes exaggerated; the teachers teach at almost extraordinary hours, i.e. early in the morning or during the weekends. Generally, the respondents expressed their satisfaction with the quality of courses and appropriate evaluation that helps maintain this quality.

The respondents did not compare the local system of migrant integration with alternative concepts. The comparison is mostly bound to their own previous experience (MLP). The representatives of the new organization CPIC refused to reflect on their work and outputs, holding to the argument that they must fulfil the overall project for all the CPICs.

The alternative concepts were discussed by experts (Krchová, 2010), who criticized the way integration activities are funded. The alternative approaches are very hard to enforce, particularly by the NGOs, who are in many cases members of international networks of partnerships and try to inspire themselves abroad. The new approaches could turn to a disadvantage in the grant competition rendered by the MoI; only such projects can win which can respond to ideas of the state and its somewhat static notion on basic courses and counselling.

The respondents find their experience too short-term to be able to assess the impact of courses and integration measures on the whole society and its integration and cohesion. The history of integration courses is approximately five or six years and, thus, it is difficult to recognize more general impacts. The foreign experience and their own partial knowledge comprise the basis for the respondents' confidence that the present direction of integration activities is right and enriching for migrants and the majority.

Beneficiaries of the courses

One group of beneficiaries of the courses are labour migrants. The most favourable are courses held directly in the lodging houses for migrants in hours adapted to the schedule of their work shifts. Such courses were organized within the emergent project of the MoI and the city in 2009 to prevent possible negative consequences of the economic crisis and dispossessed migrants. The second group of beneficiaries that can be identified are migrants who prepare all the requirements for an application for a permanent residency permit and who have to pass an obligatory Czech language exam. This group is particularly motivated to attend the course and does not need any extra incentives.

CONCLUSION

Besides the official documents and priorities of the *Concept of Immigrant Integration*, two approaches to the relationship between the stay of migrants and their integration can be distinguished in the accounts of the respondents. These approaches are not bound with the legal type of residency. Much more, they reflect how informants perceive migrants and their plans and behaviour in the Czech Republic. The first approach is typical of migrants intending to stay in the Czech Republic for a longer time and who actively participate in integration and accept the integration measures. These migrants are regarded to be the target group of the integration measures.

The second approach to integration is found in the behaviour and attitudes of some labour migrants. Their primary goal of staying in the Czech Republic is their earnings and, as a result, their intention of incorporation and integration potential are low.

The distinction between these two approaches to the stay and integration is to a considerable extent a consequence of the expectations of the Czech society from migrants. The Czech society is still considered to be at the beginning of an era of cohabitation with migrants; therefore, the society expects migrants to show genuine effort and activity toward integration. The majority expects to see visible and acknowledged steps to integration and to the situation when migrants are accepted as legitimate members of the society. Concurrently, some migrant groups do not fulfil these expectations. The two perceived approaches to integration are based on the two mentioned elements: expectation of the activity toward the integration and the experience that some migrants do not fulfil the expectation. The first relation goes down well with the expectation of local officials. The migrants are interested in integration and can be addressed by the integration measures offered by the local administration. The second type does not convene and suggests that it is the migrants who are not interested in integration, sometimes even in communication. The reasons for avoiding integration activities are two: firstly, the above mentioned attitude of labour migrants and, secondly, membership in a community of migrants from Asia (in the Czech context, this means Vietnam) which is perceived as closed.

No respondent questioned the second approach to integration in context of existing integration measures and what society offered. We believe that the latter approach can indicate that the actual integration programmes address only one group of migrants and the other group could drop out of the institutional integration scope.

The existing local integration policy, represented by the above mentioned integration measures, can be described as defensive. It acts by reacting to concrete situations. The workgroups do not develop their own ideas of the integration. Neither the City Board nor the City Council actively design the measures, in fact they seem they ignore the whole agenda of integration. As long as the migration situation in the city runs smoothly, they do not feel any need to deal with the topic.

The respondents representing the local politicians informed us of the influence of the opinion (possibly dangerous and populist) of the generation of older citizens. During public discussions, seniors express their concern for their security and the overall security of the city in relation with the migrants. During the communist era, the foreigners were well organized and controlled by the Czech government and their own embassies. The free movement of migrants is a phenomenon that scares many people, particularly the seniors. The very fact of the presence of migrants in the city produces resentment and tokens of xenophobia.

The danger of the policy of ensuring security lies in the consequence that the integration becomes the process able to solve, to some extent, the actual situation, but does not bear nor implement any concept explicitly designed to converge the majority and the migrants and to support mutual social acceptance and cohesion.

The city is going to run the multicultural club. We hesitate to consider an activity like this to be a more effective way to support multicultural society. The club used to be a leisure-time club for the Roma children and the project was not successful. Actually, the Czech government introduced a plan to cut it down. Presumably, the funding of integration project will be reduced. The multicultural club is an example of activity run by the city and without the support of the MoI. It explains the concern about the future of local integration funding and the possible range of integration activities.

The scope of local integration courses is in effect defined by the MoI. In Pardubice there are two implementers of the courses and the amount of courses and participants is considered appropriate. The coexistence of the implementers brings the migrants more courses and more possibilities of where to take part in official integration.

In Pardubice, the massive field campaign led to sufficient awareness on integration courses among migrants. Nevertheless, attendance to the courses shows that only few migrants perceive courses as part of their integration trajectory.

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