

Securitization of Migration in the Czech Republic - Immigration or Europe?

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A much discussed topic of today's Europe is surely the question of migration. Europe is facing a complex of questions connected with the topic of migration in general. For example migration from the new EU member states to countries which have adopted the proclaimed ideas of the EU and which have opened their job markets. The seniors who migrate from the north of the EU to the south. There is brain drain in favour of the USA and other overseas destinations. Such examples of migration we would find many, nevertheless the most sensitive one seems to be the migration to Europe and its countries from outside the EU. In the Czech Republic the question of migration is still not seen as one of the key topic for public debate and for politics but the sensitivity towards this phenomenon is growing and there is no reason to believe that with the increasing number of immigrants we would not copy the "western model". Then even in the Czech Republic migration will become one of the dividing lines which will co- influence the results of elections and the feelings of solidarity for one or other political and social pole.

As an example we can see the results of the EU Eurobarometer survey from spring 2007, we will find out that only 5% Czech citizens , compared to 15% all EU citizens (27 states), see migration as one of the key problems faced by today's Czech Republic. To the question: What should the EU institutions stress?" the Czech citizens answered in 17%: "The questions of migration".

The average percentage in answers of all 27 member states was then 29%. (According to Czech citizens the EU institutions should stress on: the fight with crime 41% of answers, environmental questions 40% of answers, social questions 31% of answers. In the whole EU the questions of migration were favoured to social questions that got 25% of answers. ¹

Though immigration still is not the dominant topic of public discussion in the Czech Republic, in media we are more often confronted with pieces of information (sometimes only

emotions) on migration politics. The news consumers however receive double-face information about the given topic. On the one hand is immigration introduced as a real threat to Europe, we are confronted with waves of illegal immigrants, with problems of crimes or even terrorism, threat of being jeopardized by foreign environment and values which cannot be “compatible” with the European ones. On the other hand the media consumers are informed about proven decrease in number of inhabitants in Europe and about a lack of work force in many areas of production, services and also in modern technologies.

Illustration of above mentioned attitude can be even statutory, news - oriented, station Czech Radio Rádio Česko (part of the Czech public radio system) which in its broadcasting from 13.9.2009 while reading from the international news informed the listeners about the “controlled opening of Europe”, about the introduction of so called blue cards by former Vice President of the European Commission, Mr. Franco Frattini.

Because Europe is ageing and the lack of work-force is already visible, it would be necessary to open the job market to millions of workers from Asia and Africa- this is how the blue card project was introduced (a European parallel to American green cards which allow moving in to the USA), to continue with the quotation of an article from German newspaper Berliner Zeitung, in which it was mentioned that Europe probably would not be able to absorb such a great wave of foreigners but to its own pity. In Europe, in Germany, continues the presenter in reading the Berliner Zeitung, is a foreigner seen as a threat. Meeting of different cultures is for all who take part a great challenge but what is more threatening is the narrow-mindedness and ageing of our society, concludes the quotation.

On the same day, on the same station an interview with ing. Jaroslav Hanák, chairman of Czech Transport Association was being held on the topic of overpaying the workers caused by a lack of qualified employees. The chairman of Czech Transport Association talked about thousands of lacking drivers, about the decrease in population curve, about the fact that the Association had done maximum when promoting the so-called green cards and he also expressed that:” ...the elaborated study says that by the year 2020 there must come (to the Czech Republic) forty thousand and by year 2030 eight hundred thousands people from abroad. The number of people would not be born in the Czech Republic and they would be missed here.”²

Richard Sennett writes in an interesting way about the dilemma of western society between the fear of immigration and at the same time its economical need to welcome foreigners. He describes immigration as an object of so-called recontextualization, where on one side immigrants do jobs which the Britons or Germans would not do and on the other side those “needed outsiders” can be transferred to a different category-Sennett literally says: ***“to make political capital out of their presence, these necessary outsiders are repackaged so that they fit into the same box of culture as unproductive asylum seekers.” Or we can “sell” them as immigrants who cleverly colonise the society from the below. (Sennett 2006: 166).***

In January 2004 Kofi Annan, Secretary-general of the United Nations, was awarded the Andrej Sacharov prize for the freedom of thinking. On the occasion of this highly honourable prize given by the European parliament he delivered a speech there. The speech served as an appeal for the EU to change its attitude towards immigration. Kofi Annan mentioned that without immigration the population of extended EU which is now 452 millions of people will decrease to less than 400 millions in 2050. Thanks to this could “the job positions stay unoccupied, services undelivered, economies could grow smaller and stagnate”.

Immigration is a part of the solution for this problem according to Annan. Then he talked about difficulties today faced by European asylum system, which is overloaded by asylum applications also by people who are not real refugees, but economical migrants and who use the asylum process because they cannot see any other possibility of getting into Europe. He also mentioned problems of the others who in case to get to Europe put their lives into the hands of smugglers with people, many of them become victims of human trafficking and they end up in illegal networks of forced prostitution etc. Above mentioned Annan named it a “Silent Crises of Human Rights”. The idea of the whole speech was appeal to open Europe for legal migration which will be profitable for all the involved parts. Europe will gain skilled and unskilled work force which it needs. It will benefit from the contribution which the immigrants bring to the science, art, sport etc. Even the immigrant origin countries will profit thanks to remittances, money which people who have moved out send back home. In year 2002 emigrants from developing countries officially sent back at least 88 milliards of dollars which is 57% more than the sum 57 milliards which the developing countries received as development aid, says Annan (on the other hand they can loose their best talents.) Simply by words of the Secretary-general:” The message is clear. The migrants need Europe. But Europe also needs migrants. Closed Europe can become smaller, poorer, weaker and older Europe.

Open Europe will be better, richer, stronger and younger Europe-under the condition of well-managed, controlled migration”

Kofi Annan also mentioned difficulties which follow migration, in his speech he quoted words of Swiss author Max Frisch who commented on programmes aiming at earning foreign workers for Western Europe in the 60's this way: “We wanted workers, but the people came”. Immigrants bring into the host society different cultures, habits, different languages and religion. Presumption for both-side beneficial co-existence must than be, according to Annan, integration of immigrants into the society they come into. They have to adapt to the host society but the host society has to adapt too.³

The decrease in number of inhabitants and the ageing of Europe is a well-known fact, as said in the UN study from the year 2000. For keeping the current number of working inhabitants there should be by year 2050 80 millions of new migrants to Europe, which means 1.4 million of arrivals a year, which is double the number of current migrants (Joppke 2002: 259).

From these numbers it is clear that immigration can be really just a part of the solution for the problem of ageing and decrease of population, as mentioned by Kofi Annan. Economical rationality is a clear argument for the opening of the EU borders and demand for unskilled and skilled work force is obvious. Nevertheless political moods influenced, often in populist way, by public opinion are in favour of the opposite solution.⁴ If we take as an example today's Germany, we can quote Horelová study published in the journal *Integrace*: “On the contrary of high unemployment in Germany it is facing the inability to cover for over a million of unoccupied job positions the reasons being either the unwillingness of its own inhabitants to accept these positions or the lack of proficiency” (Horelová 2003: 83)

The same argument is used by Christian Joppke who mentions that German employers are seeking 1.5 million of migrants-workers who would keep the German economy competitive (Joppke 2002: 275). Similar is the situation in Great Britain and France, also Spain and Italy demand workers, especially unskilled season workers for agriculture.

In opposition to rationality of the market is, as has already been mentioned, the public opinion. Among population of Europe there is an increased opinion expressing the fear of migration, often based on not very successful integration of many minorities living in Western Europe. Unsuccessful integration is often supported by many simplified myths, which exist on both sides. The situation differs from country to country of the continent and individual specifics depend on identity concept forming the given national state, from colonial history,

standard of living, extent of social benefit system and on many other factors. To demonstrate the types of threats which some of the EU citizens feel we will quote the work of Jef Huysmans „The European Union and the Securitization of Migration“ which examines the relationship between immigration and the EU societies. His conclusions can be sum up as exclusion of certain groups of immigrants from belonging to the national and also European society when this exclusion is motivated by the need to protect the “risks” resulting from the immigration.

Jef Huysmans, who works in the London Centre of International Relations University of Kent, in his work wrote, in the 50’s and the 60’s of the 20th century were the immigrants in western countries seen as an extra- work force. The economical situation and job market needed a cheap work force which had not been available at local market. Motivation programmes for attracting foreign workers had mostly France, Germany and Netherlands. It is interesting as proved by Huysmans that the legal status of the coming immigrants was not then, compared to today’s situation, a politically sensitive issue. Immigrants often did not have a clear status, or even according to Huysmans, when nothing else their illegality was by implication wanted as it in the eyes of their employers made even more flexible and useable.

In the 60’s and 70’s of 20th century immigrants had become more and more the focus of public interest. The loose migration policy changed towards the restriction one aimed at the control and functioning as the protection of local work force. The immigrants were still mostly seen as “guest work force”. The efforts to stop the job migration towards west could be observed (especially in connection with economical crises caused by the oil shocks), but the inflow of immigrants continued as family members of the first immigrants started to come. In that time migration still was not the priority for European Community. The EC interest in this issue increased with the Great Britain, Ireland and Denmark entering the EU in 1973. The first step towards common strategy of the Commission was approval of a programme in favour of migrating workers and their families in the year 1974. In EC migration was dealt with mostly towards social and economical rights and towards a construction of shared job market, this view was changed in the 80’s as Huysmans writes. Immigration became to be more and more political thanks to the question of asylum, or more precisely thanks to certain chaos in questions of asylum and immigration. Asylum became an object of political debate being an alternative way for economical migration into EU. The question of immigration was also influenced by the process of Europeanization in the 80’s when the institutionalised international European cooperation started, among others at the

police level- Schengen group, Single European Act (SAE), followed by Maastricht Treaty TEU (Maastricht, 1992) when the so-called Third pillar was formed- justice and home affairs. In the 80's of the 20th century immigration became more and more prominent in political discussions about the protection of public order and preservation of home stability, more and more is then seen the security dimension of migration and the opinion that immigration is dangerous to "home society" becomes stronger. Migration was identified as one of the key factors weakening national traditions and social homogeneity. It is seen as inner and outside threat for the survival of national community, or even western civilisation. This identification excludes migrants from a normal structure of society; it does not see them only as foreigners but as foreigners dangerous for the reproduction of existing social structure, system. The dangers which are by the politicians and the public attributed to the immigration Huysmans divides into three main areas- inner security, cultural security and the crises of the welfare state.

Immigrants are simply identified as one of the key factors of weakening the national traditions and social homogeneity, never mind how real or virtual the threat is: "They are objectification of inner and outside threat for the survival of national community or western civilisation." (Huysmans 2000: 758)

Securitization of migration⁵

Huysmans describes that the securitization of migration in process, meaning that from a normal topic of public discourse it becomes a public threat which should deserve a special care and attention from the politicians united with citizens by their approval and support (the term securitization will be explained later on in the text), can lead towards the idea that the origin of the effort for securitization of migration is the matter of a small segment of society, for example only the matter of the extreme right party members, eventhough the process involves different agents e.g. national governments, ordinary citizens, European transnational networks, media etc. Securitization in Europe roots in three interconnected topics: inner security, cultural security and the crises of a welfare state as have already been mentioned above. Today migration is a key point in inner security of individual EU states it has the potential to combine the questions of security with questions of national and cultural identity. It is also a big European Union topic. "Fortress Europe" means removing inner borders but tighten up outside borders. New member states had to accept Schengen acquis and dealt with

demands of the old member states which were given in light which in their eyes the migration represents in connection with security risks. EU Migration policy is not coherent Huysmans argues, the way it deals with the fear from the comeback of the times of the old Europe when extreme nationalism caused into two world wars. On the one side europeanisation of migration indirectly holds nationalist and xenophobic reactions towards immigrants on the other hand EU support the campaigns against nationalism, racism and xenophobia, writes Huysmans. For the questions connected with the welfare state the access to social and economical rights is also important. These rights are often deprived to the immigrants. This way the immigrants are then excluded from the redistribution of sources.

In today's Europe migration has become an important part of political fight. It is a mighty topic through which are then other topics connected and dealt with, e.g. visa policy, asylum application, migrant's integration, social rights distribution, cultural diversity management etc. The speeches and the steps of governments marking immigrants, asylum seekers and foreigners as a threat play a great part in connecting diverse topics. The securitization was also helped by Europeanisation of Europe, by forming the so-called "Fortress Europe".

In this light it is sadly logical, argues Jef Huysmans that the strategy of securitization directly or indirectly makes inclusion of immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees to European society even more complicated. (Huysmans 2000: 753)

Securitization of migration in the Czech Republic

When it comes to immigration the Czech citizens are put in front of the phenomenon, which until quite recently was in its extent almost unknown to them. The phenomenon of migration on the other hand is compared to the passed more favourite when it comes to attention of Czech politicians, political parties, interest groups, mass media and also ordinary citizens. International organisations play an important part when dealing with this issue, in case of the Czech Republic it is especially the European Union trying for a shared common migration policy. For all these potential agents of securitization immigration can be seen as a threat of territorial integrity, national identity or social stability.

The process of securitization can be understood as a process of transferring of one concrete problem from the "normal politics" level to the sphere of fear for the referential object (in our case the Czech Republic-its national integrity, security and social standard). If

the majority identify themselves with this process we can talk about the securitization movement which will lead towards securitization of given issue (Zeman et al. 2002). The results of such a process are special arrangements causing the change of current situation in a view of given problematic- the new rules are being formed (accepting appropriate legislative), change in public opinion etc. The process of securitization has its originators-they are the agents of security policy. This term is also used in connection with the effort of politicians to transform certain questions exactly to the sphere of security as they want to increase their influence in certain area. It is obvious that politicians (power holders) can use the process of securitization quite easily for their own purpose. The process of securitization can then be seen as artificially constructed one by announcements and continuous warnings about certain problematic by different agents (security policy agents) (Waewer 1997).

I suppose that if the economic of the Czech Republic will grow even in following years, we will be the witnesses of migration securitization attempts in the sense of the factors introduced above. At the same time the economic lobby will be using strong arguments and will force the Czech politicians to open Czech job market to more foreign workers. This will mean, in case of the wages in the Czech Republic in parts of industry with great demand for foreign labour, the necessity to open the market to those coming from countries outside the EU, or even outside the Europe. The whole complex problematics as we know it from discussions in western societies will be developed in the length with possible consequences which we have tried to describe above.

Immigration or Europe

Summary:

In the Czech society is the immigration still not seen as a hot political problem number one, as we can see it from the political discussion in some western societies. Besides even the numbers from cited Eurobarometer survey from spring 2007 show that the importance of the topic of immigration is not great in CR compared to the average of the whole European Union, where it is seen as very urgent one. Though there is no reason to believe that the importance of the immigration perception as a public debate topic will not grow. The Czech Republic today in many ways copies the situation of the west decades ago as strong investments into the Czech economy hand in hand with strong economic growth in years

2005-2007 had brought a big pressure on the Czech society in sense of opening the job market to foreign workers. All this in context of demographical dying out of Europe as has been proved in the text above by quotation of the UN study from 2000. In my work “Immigration or Europe?” I tried to introduce the idea of Richarda Sennett about recontextualized perception of immigration by populations of the developed western world. Sennett notices a sad paradox that on the one side the immigrants are seen as a necessary work force on the other hand if you want to gain political potential it is necessary to speak about them as a threat. (Richard Sennett in his book *The Culture of the New Capitalism*). The question of a threat to society is then analysed through the text by Jef Huysmans who in his work describes the fear from immigration as a fear from threatening of inner security, cultural and the welfare state security. A sad and paradox fact is that if we try to securitize immigration in a sense of transferring a certain phenomenon into a different interest group-in our case the Czech Republic- then the so much wanted integration of immigrants becomes more difficult and complicated and postponed.

Notes:

¹ Euro barometer 67.2. Public opinion in EU countries. Spring 2007, National report Czech Republic. To be found on:

In Denmark immigration was a hot topic in pre-election campaign even for 2001 parliamentary elections. The topic of immigration and refugee policy was followed by the topic of social state extent and the problematic of taxes. See Kopeček, L.: *Proměny dánské politiky*. In: *Politologický časopis* 3/2003.MU Brno, s. 243 – 261.

When it comes to earlier Euro barometer research, in Euro barometer 2004.1 in the part devoted to elections to EU parliament we can find out that the preferred topic by the EU voters are: number one-unemployment, number two crime, number three- immigration, beating topics like environment, agriculture and education. Quoted according to Euro barometer 2004.1. National report, Czech Republic, published in July 2004.

² Author of this text can provide audio recording of both the programmes from 13. 9. 2007 on Rádio Česko.

³ The speech was delivered in European Parliament on January 29, 2004, and can be downloaded from the OSN website:

⁴ Various surveys of public opinion show that from 55 to 65% of population are against even quite small programme for so called green cards in Germany. This programme should have attracted IT experts who are rare in Germany. The situation in Germany is presented through public opinion see Joppke. (Joppke 2002:275).

⁵ The question of securitization in the Czech Republic for the needs of this text was consulted with Michael Murad, a student of Security and Strategy Studies at Social Studies Department at Masaryk University in Brno.

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