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**Expectation and Reality:
Crossing Borders of the Czech Republic**

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Guided Migrations from 1989

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The term guided migrations mean mass transfer of inhabitants assisted by one or several states or by specialized institutions financed from the state budget. Migrants, objects of guided migrations, are provided with specific migration facilities and their resettlement in target countries is made easier by offers of accommodation, work and loans. Guided migrations often parallel significant social changes and were noticed also after the European „iron curtain fall“ in 1990s. Big groups of Germans from Romania, Hungary, Ukraine, Russia and other states of the former Soviet Union expressed their will to be transferred to Germany. Jews from Russia, Belorussia and Ukraine removed to Israel. Poles migrated from Ukraine and Russia to Poland and also Czechs „returned“ from Ukraine, Belorussia, Russia, Kazakhstan. Following the direction of the migration flows the above mentioned guided migrations can be considered a part of extended East – West migration flows that were typical in Europe of 1990s. Paradoxically, noticeable diversification of possibilities to migrate after 1989 enhanced also a process of cultural homogenization in some source countries of migration especially in the Balkans and countries of CIS.

Prerequisites of guided migrations to the Czech Republic

West – East migration

In 19th Century the Czech Lands were one of the most industrial part of Hapsburg monarchy and they were affected by strong emigration. Both Czech and German speakers of the Czech Lands were part of:

- international migration flows
- migration flows to the less urbanized and industrialized parts of Austrian monarchy

The most preferred target destinations for the international migration were as follows:

- America
- Russia (nowadays Ukraine, Russia, Moldova, Belorussia, Kazakhstan)
- Western Europe
- (later on) Australia
- (later on) Africa

The most preferred target places for inner migration were as follows:

- so called Military border (nowadays Banat in Romania, Slavonia in Croatia, Banat in Serbia)
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- big industrial cities: Vienna, Zagreb, Prague, Ostrava, Maribor, Gratz etc.

Immigrant groups created enclaves in target spaces. In some target regions were soon culturally assimilated in other regions they kept their distinctive linguistic and cultural peculiarities.

The processes of adjustment and assimilation of Czech minorities abroad summarize the following table:

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| USA | Linguistic and cultural assimilation, in some cases contacts with the source country. |
| West Europe | Very often linguistic and cultural assimilation, in some cases contacts with the source country. |
| Slovenia | Assimilation. |
| Romania | Original language and traditional economic activities are preserved in compact Czech settlements. |
| Croatia | Original language is preserved. Culturally it is a mixture of local and imported customs and traditions. |
| Serbia | Czech language, customs and traditions are partially preserved. |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | Czech language is used in original Czech villages, rarely in Bosnian cities. |
| Ukraine, Russia, Kazakhstan | Czech language and traditional way of life were partly preserved in villages. In large settlements the ancestors of Czech immigrants were Russified. |

In Russia some Czech immigrants expressed the will to return just at the end of 19th Century, then after the WW I and then after the WW II. They became minorities in the states they do not migrate to.

Re-migration

We could notice two extended migration waves of Czech immigrants and their families from East and Southeast Europe to the Czech Lands:

1. After 1945
2. After 1989

Immigration flow 1945 - 1947

The immigration followed forced resettlement of a part of German population from the Czech lands to Germany after the WWII. The depopulated areas near German frontiers were repopulated partly by people from central parts of Czechoslovakia, partly by population of Czech and Slovak origin abroad. Composition of foreign population describes the following table:

| Source country | Number of immigrants |
|----------------|----------------------|
| Soviet Union | 27 600 |
| Romania | 21 000 |
| Austria | 16 000 |
| Yugoslavia | 11 000 |
| Germany | 6 000 |
| Bulgaria | 1 500 |

Second Wave of Re-Migration after 1989

Guided migrations were organized by the Czechoslovak government and then by the government of the Czech Republic:

1. from Ukraine from 1991 – 1993 (approximately 2 000 people)
2. from Kazakhstan and Russia from 1994 – 2004 (approximately 1 000 people).

The guided migration flows paralleled spontaneous migration of Czech descendants from the Balkan countries, especially from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Romania.

The following stages were observable during the pre-migration, migration and post-migration process among the objects of the guided migrations:

1. Ethnic mobilization
2. Establishment of close contacts with target countries
3. Preparation of transfer
4. Migration
5. Cultural shock
6. Adjustment to new conditions

1. Ethnic Mobilization

It was initialized by both external and inner conditions.

Main external hints:

- a) Transformation of accepted identities (dissolving of the Soviet identity, stress to ethnicities, rise of nationalism and nation state building).
- b) New minority policies (minority support by the nation state).
- c) Economy crash.

Internal hints

- a) Search for new identity.
- b) Eligibility for support from the state budget (in state of residence and also in the state of ancestors).
- c) Culture activities of ethnic (national) minorities.
- d) Building a space for negotiation with the states of ancestors about support and resettlement.

2. Establishment of close contacts with target countries

Both Czech minorities, in Ukraine and in Kazakhstan launched before re-migration Czech cultural associations. Subsequently the heads of the associations asked the Czech government for help. It is not quite easy to find migration bridges and find the way how to permanently remove to the Czech Republic. It cost a lot of money and citizens from the East non EU states usually use mediation by specialized firms. The Czech cultural associations could convince Czech government that the Czech compatriots in Ukraine and Kazakhstan are in need and should be removed. In the case of Ukraine it was for ecological conditions (Chernobyl disaster) and in the case of Kazakhstan it was due to ethnic tensions.

3. Preparation of transfer

Usually, minorities are not single minded. Not all of their members want to remove, not all of their members are poor and helpless. The first task for the Czech cultural association members in Ukraine and Kazakhstan was to induce minority members to migrate. Originally only some of them wanted to do so. Following questionnaire survey only 30% of respondents declared their own decision to migrate. Others were influenced by children, relatives, and friends. Some of them answered they could not determine their future because all the community prepared for moving. Most of them started to learn Czech. Communication with relatives also became more intensive. Many families lived dispersed but before moving they rejoined again and usually they chose one common place in the Czech lands not regard they had different professions, skills and interests.

4. Migration

Immigrants came by buses, airplanes, by their own cars. First wave came from the contaminated area near Chernobyl. People followed advice of the Czech government and took almost nothing from contaminated zone. They fell to serious troubles because they had not enough money to buy all our equipment again. Other migration waves removed all they took either in was from contaminated zone or not.

5. Cultural shock

Immigrants from the former Soviet Union usually imagine situation in Central Europe more positive then it really is. In surveys they usually positively evaluate goods and services, health care, sometimes less corruption then in their home countries. On the other hand they are surprised by thefts, and interpersonal relations. In the interviews, they did not evaluate Czech society negatively; however, they were of the opinion that it was rather 'cold', formal, that in the town there were few cultural enjoyments and that Czechs do not know how to enjoy themselves. People of Czech origin were shocked they were not considered to be Czechs but Russians and Ukrainians. Some of them were and still are shocked how low respect has their "home country"- Ukraine and their neighbors and relatives, Ukrainians in the Czech Republic. Another problem is in communication. The rural population of Ukraine is not used to formalized communication by means of written contracts and agreements. They assume the validity of various informal oral promises which provide a lot of room for various

interpretations or dishonest negotiation. When we asked one of the families of immigrants about their coexistence with the majority population members they said that it was good overall; only it was a pity that Czechs had the negative characteristic that they do not keep their word. Simply to say, if some agreement is not formalized they do not hesitate to break it.

6. Adjustment to new conditions

It could be submitted an extended typology of adjustment. Generally speaking, the first generation rarely fully integrates into the majority society. School children have no problems with communication and their integration seem good. Adult people often cannot express themselves in written form of language and their loss of qualification and social status is considerable. However there are some high qualified professions where the immigrants are able to compete in the labour market. Surgeons and qualified technician can return to their work after two, three years of stay in the Czech Republic. Problems have people in humanities, mass media, and education system.

Conclusion

The above – mentioned text supports the following statements:

1. Migration of people from Western and Central Europe to the East and South East as 19th Century settlers (colonizers) was highly inefficient from the present-day point of view. They rarely assimilated, rarely influenced considerably their social surrounding but frequently remained isolated. Their children or grand children frequently returned to the country of their ancestors.

2. As for Czech Republic (Czechoslovakia) is concerned, its attraction for compatriots drop down. Whereas after the WW II it was attractive also for western Czech minorities, after 1989 considerable amount of Czech migration came only from the East. It seems to me a good measure of credibility, prosperity as well as living standard.

3. As for efficiency of migration back to the Czech Republic of the above mentioned groups is concerned, it seem to be extremely high (only few people returned to Ukraine). Nevertheless, guided migration cannot prevent people against cultural shock and cannot cause full assimilation in the first generation of migrants. Adult people after all have problems with writing form of language. Despite of the fact the people frequently finished secondary education they are half illiterate.

We are making enquiries among second generation now and among immigrants after ten years of stay in the Czech Republic. We noticed considerable differentiation among single localities where the settlers live. Certain of the settler's communities are quite isolated. On the contrary, in some of them we could notice appropriate spatial and social mobility. Results of these enquires will be completed in two years.

Literature

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