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MIGRATION AND EVERYDAY RACISM IN EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE

Editors: Mario Rodríguez Polo – Jaroslav Šotola

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MIGRATION AND EVERYDAY RACISM IN EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE

Editorial Note

Mario Rodríguez Polo – Jaroslav Šotola

Recently, the discussion about migration in the East-Central European region has been framed in the terms of the increasing hysterical paranoia aimed at migrants under the blurring common label of "refugees". Paradoxically, everyday reality is far from the announced "refugee invasion", and the migration ratios are comparatively low. Sadly, xenophobic attitudes are maintained and performed not only by extremist political parties, but also by prominent figures in charge of key institutions, such as the Ministry of the Interior, police departments, and even reaching the prime ministers and presidents of the countries. Not only institutional figures actively contribute to the portrayal of migrants as a hazard to the region. Mainstream regional media also continuously provide bizarre and surreal xenophobic materials that spread through social networks, contributing to a social imaginary opposing migration. The impact and social consequences of such irresponsible behaviour is frequently muted. On one hand, only a few episodes of discrimination, racial aggressions, or criminal hate manifestations (constituting clear episodes of racism) get media coverage, while on the other hand, the everyday forms of racism remain muted and unconsidered.

Civil society confronting xenophobic attitudes tends to frame the situation in historic terms, remarking on the post-socialist inheritance. But racism as the expression of interaction on the basis of race – "understood as a system of social meanings and cultural classifications, which is created and sustained through relationships of power and hierarchy" (Alexander – Knowles 2005: 11) – persists in the region, and it is constructed through everyday experience. Following this understanding, the present issue will try to avoid the promotion of macro views insisting in a historic post-socialist determination or the inevitable backwardness of the region in comparison to a "better" Western Europe (Hann et al. 2002). Such Orientalist approaches should be criticised by anthropology, characterised by its attempt to avoid failing into ethnocentric biases.

The articles in this issue oppose the thesis of the eternal transition state supposedly characterising Eastern societies, arguing that the complexity of social hierarchies must be still totally uncovered with the help of post-colonial approaches, which seems to be underrepresented in local literature (Lánský 2014). Dominant discourses negate the possibility of a colonial interpretation and racialisation, claiming that the region is not part of the traditional colonial arena. Authors such as Fanon (1967) or Santos (2007) have clearly proven how concepts, such as the zones of being and non-being, may be extrapolated to a diversity of contexts, for example, to modern metropolises, in order to better understand hidden social hierarchies. We must be aware that even in countries without a clear colonial past, migrants or constructed others also inhabit a space that has been already constructed by a long history of power relations, racial/ethnic hierarchies, and gender oppressions (Grosfoguel – Oso – Christou 2014). The current studies analyse episodes of everyday racism as embodiments where the "coloniality of power" manifests (Quijano 2000). The experience of everyday racism proposes an alternative framework to understanding the incorporation of migrants into East-Central European societies.

In his article, Mario Rodríguez Polo offers an analysis of everyday racism in East-Central Europe through focusing on the hidden hierarchies of power dominating the urban space. Firstly, space and spatial embodiments of collective memory are discussed, and their supposed neutrality is deconstructed. Secondly, narratives and stories of everyday racism are exposed, revealing a racial social hierarchy presented as a key element in understanding current migration processes in the region. It is remarkable how dominant discourses insist in the need of a foreigner's cultural integration, while everyday life proves that the problem is on the side of the normative. Even when dominant discourses are used instead in the challenges of sociocultural integration of any constructed "other", it seems that the problem is closer to be on the other side. If someone has to challenge his or her cultural values, they tend to be the one who performs aggressions and practices discrimination.

In their article, Nicola Raúl and Jaroslav Šotola explore through narrative interviews how migrants of non-European origin are constructed as the "ultimate other" by Czech seniors. Using inspiration from *whiteness studies,* the main focus is insisted on the biographical plane of different encounters with otherness; attitudes towards migrants are thus embedded in collective memory processes, and also in rhetorical figures, which should prevent accusations of racism. In contrast to the absence of the topic of "race" in local academic

writing, the authors show that the foreigners' visual difference places them – as members of an essentially constructed group – on a scale scoping from limited acceptance to rejection. However, the presence of this imagined racial hierarchy has to be understood as a way of dominating and controlling an ethnically and racially defined space, in which only those manifestations of otherness that are subordinate to the dictates of assimilation and submissiveness are accepted.

In their text, Petr Lang, Olga Čejková, and Daniel Topinka deal with the topic of international skilled labour migration, expatriates. The study is based on the dataset of in-depth interviews with Indian high-skilled migrants, who are staying in Brno, the second largest city in the Czech Republic. At this local level, the Brno Expat Centre (BEC) is involved in the definition of expatriates on a practical scale. Its definition emphasises the aspects of work qualification, the achieved education, language skills, as well as the fact that expatriates are usually employees of large multinational corporations. This text focuses on the conceptualisation of expatriates using four basic attributes that refer to their life strategies, the temporary aspect of their residence, their professional or working skills, and their motivation to migrate. The position of these expatriates reflects their activity in the field of international organisations that is focused on employee performance, as well as the problematic social phenomena and lifestyle interactions that take place in the daily life environment of the city, which cross the borders of multinational "ghettos".

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CZECH ASSOCIATION FOR SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

The Czech Association for Social Anthropology (CASA) is a civic association of professional academics in social anthropology, graduates and students in social anthropology and supporters from related disciplines. It is part of the academic community of the Czech Republic. CASA has been a member of Council of Scientific Societies of Czech Republic since 2010 and a member of World Council of Anthropological Associations since 2012.

The aims of CASA are

- to support the development of scientific research and education in social anthropology;
- to represent Czech social anthropology in relation to the government, public and non-governmental organizations and on international anthropological forums;
- to popularise the achievements of social anthropology among wider public;
- to create and cultivate relations among social anthropologists and specialists of related disciplines in the Czech Republic and internationally;
- to maintain contacts and establish cooperation with similar professional organizations in the Czech Republic and abroad.

To attain its aims, the association organizes specialized conferences, lectures and seminars and prepares and produces publications. It elaborates and presents suggestions concerning the improvement of education and research in social anthropology, and offers the findings produced in social anthropology for practical implementation while respecting scholarly standards and ethics. The association assists its members in research and other scholarly activities, actively cooperates with similar organizations abroad and participates in the global development of social anthropology.

CASA welcomes applications of new potential members including but not limited to students and graduates in social anthropology and related disciplines who would like to participate on the development of the discipline.

LIVING IN THE BEAUTIFUL CITY
Everyday Racism in East-Central Europe[1]

Mario Rodríguez Polo

Abstract: ***This paper presents a view of a Central European city as a space where memory processes provide the context for understanding everyday racism. Participatory research gave voice to otherwise muted experiences of constructed "others" living in the Beautiful City as they navigate and experience racism. Their experiences under the disciplinary gazes of those constructed as a hegemonic population and its occasional violent aggressions give account of how the urban space remains an essential part of a mechanism of subjugation for visible "others". The hegemonic population perceives urban space as neutral, considering racism a marginal or an accidental phenomenon. On the contrary; the analysed experiences are only possible to explain under the hidden existence of a racial hierarchy, based on the locals' performed right of belonging to the city. Such a hidden hierarchy constitutes a key element for understanding racism in East-Central Europe.***

Keywords: ***everyday racism; migration; urban space***

Racism, or should we say racisms (Goldberg 1990) persist as a crucial aspect in understanding migration and integration processes. In current ethnographic work within diverse research participants, such as migrants or social minorities living in East-Central Europe, we have often learnt about their experiences and stories of racism[2]. The researcher realised that the consistency and cumulative character of their narratives, often articulated as personal accounts or life stories, slowly become a testimony of what Philomena Essed has come to call

[1] Financial Support from Specific University Research (IGA_FF_2016_049).

[2] The author's approach to racism is an expression of interaction on the basis of race "understood as a system of social meanings and cultural classifications, which is created and sustained through relationships of power and hierarchy" (Alexander – Knowles 2005: 11).

everyday racism (Essed 1991). Essed introduces everyday racism as "a *process* in which (1) socialized racist notions are integrated in meanings that make practices immediately definable and manageable, (2) practices with racist implications become in themselves familiar and repetitive, and (3) underlying racial and ethnic relations are actualized and reinforced through these routine or familiar practices in everyday situations" (Essed 2002: 208). This article presents an analysis of the testimonies of everyday racism taking place in a Central European City, and attempts to uncover local relationships of power and hierarchy between the hegemonic population and those recognised as "others", those who are not allowed to belong to the city.

The current study focuses on a concrete local manifestation of racism. A micro-perspective is needed in order to contextualise the social construction of local racism. Urban space and the manifestation of its temporalities will become remarkably significant in the attempt to localise and understand the social scenario where interactions – those which may be considered embodiments of racism – take place. In other words, the current study aims to approach racism as the product of social interaction under hierarchic meanings, which are socially constructed on the basis of race in a concrete place and in a concrete time. Social interactions are fixed and settled in a symbolic space where meanings and significances are modelled through time and memory processes. In doing so, ethnographic efforts together with participants will navigate through the space and daily tempo of a Central European City. Cities have become a predominantly anthropological place. The city is understood as an arena where social interactions take place, reproducing and limiting the social interactions of their inhabitants. The urban plan also configures the concrete order in which interactions are bounded (Augé 1995). The city, in its diachronic existence, is subjected to the processes of memory for recreating and reconstructing its own past in order to endow sense to its own present (Halbwachs 1980; Assmann 1988).

For the purpose of anonymity, the city has been labelled by the metaphoric name of the Beautiful City[3]. The metaphor points to the dominant binarism, which conforms society in opposite terms: "we" and "others", "good" and "evil", "nationals" and "migrants", "Europeans" and "foreigners to integrate". In

[3] To anonymise the city was a crucial compromise between the researcher and the participants, who fear the potential impact of directly opposing the dominant discourses in their everyday lives. The so-called "Beautiful City" counts with nearly 100,000 residents and a floating population of 30,000 university students.

Postcolonial Studies, the authors state: "Perhaps one of the most catastrophic binary systems perpetuated by imperialism is the invention of the concept of race. The reduction of complex physical and cultural differences within and between colonized societies to the simple distinction between black/brown/yellow/white is in fact a strategy to establish a binarism of white/non-white, which asserts a relation of dominance" (Ashcroft – Griffiths – Tiffin 2000: 27). In doing so, the ethnocentric understanding of the Beautiful City through the dominant population is a metaphor of an inexistent homogeneous, "right" and "beautiful" society, which will be confronted through participants' narratives, conveying a reality of oppression and violence against that which is different. The metaphor articulates the tendency in Central European cities to hide their conflictual and violent racialised past and present under the constructed image of a romanticised past. The researcher adopts an "ethnographic attitude" (Clifford 1988: 19) understanding "culture and its norms – beauty, truth, reality – as artificial arrangements susceptible to detached analysis and comparison with other possible dispositions." Even when cultural homogeneity is an illusion, it constitutes the pillars of a strong feeling of belonging for the hegemonic population, creating tensions against those who are considered not to belong to the city. The impact of racism in the European cities and in the racialised lives of European inhabitants has deeply marked social reality. East-Central Europe is not an exception. As many other cities of the region, the Beautiful City has been one of the scenes of the Holocaust, the everlasting marginalisation of Roma, and a consistent exercise of white supremacy often covered by nationalistic discourses.

The present work is the result of long-term ethnography research focused on social interactions, sometimes conflicting between the hegemonic population of the Beautiful City and those who are perceived as "others". The hegemonic population is characterised by a strong feeling of national belonging, and has historically exercised its white supremacy over other inhabitants of the city, such as Jews, Roma, or the Germans, conceptualised as local minorities. The "others" in the current research are a heterogeneous group formed by the resident and non-resident population (such as temporary students, short-term migrant workers, or visitors) of the Beautiful City, and present certain characteristics that construct them as "foreigners", having a non-hegemonic visual aspects, such as skin colour (different than white) or physical appearance, speaking a different language than the official nation-state language, having international backgrounds, for example, citizens of the United Kingdom whose family origins

are in the former colonies, or having been subjected to a restricted legal status or fragmented citizenship according to policies based on the limited boundaries of the nation-state. Research participants do not fulfil the established criteria to be considered migrants or foreigners according to the confusing legislative framework, within which, always in the strict margins of methodological nationalism (Wimmer – Glick Schiller 2002), the population is divided into nationals, European Union (EU) members, third country nationals, and asylum seekers or holders[4]. The current study engages in an anti-racist anthropological approach (Mullings 2005), and, being aware of the freedom of discourse in academia, the author does not wish to reinforce or perpetuate categories that are neither analytical nor descriptive, which, in fact, serve to divide and limit population rights. Most of the participants were EU citizens; some of them inherited a background from their parents which ties them to former western colonies. Their differentiating mother tongue and visual aspects construct them as foreigners in the eyes of the dominant population, and the growing intolerance in the region transformed the religion of some participants into a problematic element for the hegemonic population. All of them have lived and experienced the Beautiful City because of their studies, careers, or family situations.

The bodies of participants are not only strongly racialised in the context of the Beautiful City, but bodies are also gendered. Intersectionality emphasises the ways in which sexuality intersects with other axes of power and identities (Crenshaw 1989). Recent studies exploring how sexuality intersects with race show the relevancy of such an approach in understanding everyday life still in current societies (Collins 2004).

The subjectivities of the participants are the protagonists of the text at hand, and the author's main role is to act as mediator for the reader. Using the knowledge acquired through participant observation and public engagement in common activities with migrants living in the Beautiful City, several sessions were organised, providing a comfort zone for the participants, allowing them to express and articulate their views on the topic. Participative encounters took place throughout 2016, and interactions were organised in small groups. The compositions of the groups were diverse, not only in terms of the age and gender of the participants, but also in the numbers, varying from two to ten participants. A network of participants was created through contacts shared

[4] Such a division is common in European Union states, and conforms to the basic categories for integration policies.

between academic institutions, civil engagement activities, and social networks related to migrants living in the Beautiful City. The final discussions or sessions with the participants served to fully saturate the sample, and to partially prove the working hypothesis and etic conceptualisations that emerged during the ethnographic process.

Narratives and quotes from these sessions make up the structure of the paper[5]. Our aim is to respect the participants' views, and to let them speak on their own. The references to participants' backgrounds correspond to their emic articulations.

Emic articulations provided by the research participants served as a starting point for deeper analysis. Each articulation, some of them forming solid narratives, was codified and organised into a larger framework of etic concepts, as pieces of a larger puzzle. During the process, a working hypothesis was shared and discussed with colleagues and students. The first drafts found the emic articulations to be exaggerated, as the selection was made giving preference to conflict situations instead of articulating all varieties of interactions in everyday life, and by doing so, created a bias for research. Such a discourse proves how deeply the experiences of "others" are muted. In doing so, dominant discourses reproduce the status of "others" as a contemporary subaltern (Gramsci 1991). The fake neutrality of the urban landscape portrays the disbalance of power as natural and arbitrary. In that way, oppressive forces are normalised, and their articulation becomes taboo. The acceptation of emic discourse, or even its consideration, implies an unmasking and revealation of a taboo, which contradicts the logics of normativity. The discourse emerging from the research became an uneasy rupture in an environment designed to avoid portraying any difference. So it is not surprising that the first readers were shocked when confronted with a radically different point of view, a point of view that is systematically muted.

The aim of this paper is to unmask how such experiences are muted and not exaggerated, in order to show the hidden patterns of a society that allows racism to happen.

Understanding racism as a performative act is a key element in our methodology. Racism is not understood as a problem of attitudes coming from the

[5] Preference for migrants' articulations simplified the understanding of the local population, who appears as a monolithic agent. Obviously, reality on the "white side" must be more complex and full of nuances then as it appears in a narrative where racism is the main topic. We acknowledge the limits of our study in this aspect, and would like to use this opportunity to remark on the importance of such a research line emphasising whiteness for the future.

dominant population or from some of its members, but instead racism is systemic (Bonilla Silva 2006). It is our effort to describe the systemic structures and mechanisms of everyday racism, approaching it as a social construction through those who are able to see it and recognise it, and the ones who suffer from it. As Mullings stated, "Anthropological research has the potential to uncover the systemic and dynamic nature of racism and to identify the subterranean mechanisms through which racial hegemony is both perpetuated and deconstructed" (2005: 685). Through observation and analysis, the current paper unmasks the fake neutrality of the urban landscape, as racism not only happens, but it happens in a place.

The discussion follows the work of Heath Pearson, who describes how racism matters in a small town (Pearson 2015). Space becomes a landscape for racism to occur in, and that generates what Pearson's work calls a "vibe", "a thing that lingers". The bodies of "others" must be rooted in such landscapes, and are needed in order for racism to materialise. The vibe is not always clearly articulated, and it does not constitute a clear discourse for everyone. Through experience, the "others" feel and learn to recognise the real face of the inhabited landscape. Once the vibe is tangible, the city becomes oppressive, as it is only a matter of time until racism will occur again. It is the recognition of such a constructed landscape – that which allows racism to occur – that the next part of the text tries to describe, attempting to unmask the oppressive face of the Beautiful City.

The Beautiful City is any city located somewhere in the heart of East-Central Europe. Like most of the towns in the region, it has a rich history embodied in an old city centre formed by tiny and winding streets. It is this romantic image of history that gives the city the specific reputation as an "overlooked destination", yet a "real Central European city of beauty" among the locals and occasional tourists. The city is also a favourite destination for domestic university students searching for an atmosphere which is friendly to student life that goes beyond their academic curriculum. Down-town life is characterised by a rich cultural offer, open-air festivals, and street markets. A variety of student pubs, concert halls, cinemas, theatres, and restaurants frame a dynamic social sphere, within which the local and temporary inhabitants meet. Life takes place down-town, surrounded by magnificent scenery as most of the building facades, streets pavements, and square ornamentations are meticulously maintained. The idyllic historic atmosphere seems to be that of a children's fairytale set among the imaginary "clean" ancient buildings. Colourful Baroque facades stand recently

renovated, and one has the impression that the city was formed by a collection of colourful pieces of cake. The pieces of cake are, in reality, the product of a growing market of local shops and tenant properties, whose owners exert an effort to maintain a good image. The beauty of the centre contrasts with the functionality of the surrounding suburbs where most of the population lives.

Historic beauty is performed in a landscape where the romantic creation of a positive image is both the goal and the method. In doing so, any critical episode in the city's history that could constitute a blemish on the innocence of the city is omitted. An acritical attitude towards local history results in a public space created around historic buildings, but without memory. As with many other cities from the region, the ethnic composition of the local population was drastically transformed in the period after World War II. A huge number of the original population was forced to leave the city as part of a European-wide process of post-war ethnic and religious relocation. The result is preserved to the present in a clear ethnic supremacy, created by the logic of a hegemonic nation-state imposing homogeneity. The city erased almost every trace of its previous inhabitants; no trace of their languages or their culture remained, as if they never existed. It is even difficult to find any monument or memorial honouring the local victims of the Holocaust or of other episodes of ethnic violence and religious persecutions which took place in the city. The recent historic episodes are muted, such as the conflicting facts of the local riots burning the old synagogue, the odysseys of Jewish families surviving thanks to the solidarity and complicity of their neighbours, hidden in nearby forests during the war years, or the post-war massacre of several hundreds of ethnic Germans not far from the Beautiful City. The city mutes its darkest times in favour of an empty and acritical past.

A similar process occurred after socialism. With the new democratic regime, any trace of its socialist past disappeared, especially from the city centre. Socialist paraphernalia, monuments, and memorials were dismantled almost in totality. The Russian soldiers who used to serve in the city and who drank beers with the locals in down-town pubs left the city, and no-one talked about them again. Their accommodations were transformed into various public institutions, and even the Russian lettering on the local airport was dismantled. Squares and streets changed their names once again, and the city's appearance was recreated under the combination of modernity in the suburbs and nostalgia for a visually gentle past, which probably never existed, the appearance which became dominant in the down-town area.

Absences and muted passages of the city's history, and the lack of memory embodied in the reformulation of the public space and the city's appearance, are far from being an innocent causality or a neutral occurrence. The neo-liberal transformation of public space cannot be marked as neutral, as it frames and provides the contextualisation for everyday social interactions, while at the same time being ts landscape and a testimony to its past temporalities (Červinková – Golden 2014). The public space constructs and reproduces the prevailing isomorphism orchestrated by the current dominant imaginary. The Beautiful City's construction of a neutral public space is a fallacy, as traces of diversity are cautiously muted in favour of uniformity. It is remarkable that absences and old symbols are mostly supplanted by a vacuum rather than replaced by new relevant motifs. However, silence is a powerful discourse of negation, which serves dominancy. Homogeneity is constructed as a normative landscape, and in doing so, is different, thus forced to constitute a rupture of the seemingly "natural" isomorphism.

The Beautiful City did not escape the impact of globalisation, which is pushing it to a certain type of transnational diversity. In its malls and streets, new stores with international brands open, and shops and restaurants convey English names or serve ethnic menus. This tolerated otherness serves different goals, often related to market pragmatics – marketing, social prestige for consumers, or the exoticisation of certain products. These minimal traces of diversity do not challenge the homogeneity of the city, as they serve as "ornamental dissenters" (Nandy 1983: xiv). Instead, their presence reinforces the illusion of the space being neutral, and covers hegemonic homogeneity. In such a way, the logic of dominancy is not challenged by those elements, but is rather reproduced and even reinforced by them.

Life takes place in this settled scenario, and constructed others are forced to disrupt the normative landscape, their mere existence breaking into the imposed isomorphism that was described earlier. In the next section, the participants' experiences and subjectivities will come to the fore. The analysis will follow the participants' experiences in navigating the city, which means entering an urban landscape where dominancy will be exercised by a hegemonic population that manifests its belonging and its own identity in relation to the explicit control of space. The "others" are at first identified on the basis of visual markers, such as skin colour or language. When recognised as an alterity, they are exposed to strict social pressures exercised in a disciplining gaze, in hate speech manifestations, or even physical violence. At the same time, the gendered bodies of

the "others" turn into both a trigger and a target for the occurrence of racism. A classic coping strategy could be the selection of safe paths, but the experiences of movement cited by participants point to the idea that the hazards spread throughout the whole city.

Navigating the city, using public transport, or just walking in the street are activities that create a specific urban landscape, where numerous encounters take place under the normative gaze (Foucault 1973). Participants stressed how their visible difference constantly attracts the attention of locals. Their difference is observed and their presence is constructed from this simple act. During the interviews, experiences in the street or in public transport often were framed in sentences with "*people stop and stare*", referring to a continuous feeling of being observed and pointed at as a disrupting element to normality. On occasions, the difference understood by the hegemonic population is a manifestation of curiosity: "*Kids approach me asking – Can we take a picture? – Because I am black.*" But, the perception of the difference also leads to aggressive and violent reactions. On the micro level, this means that being continuously the target of looks is a type of pressure that is difficult to get accustomed to.

> [The] first days when I was walking through town, I realised that everyone was looking at me. I asked myself what is going on. I went to the restroom to check my face.
>
> *Female university student, 23 years old, African background*

> [One of the international students] was wearing these specific Muslim clothes. [...] The guy was waiting for the tram. We were also waiting at the other end. And next to us was a group of six or five males [locals]. They didn't look like skinheads, but as regular workers, they had on these work clothes, work trousers. They were in their forties or fifties. They were very rude. They were looking at this guy... directly looking at him. It was obvious that they were speaking about him. We did not understand them. When the tram came, they did not get on the same train. The men tried to get into the same one, but the young boy went to the other, passing each other on the way. So they were trying to go after him and he was trying to avoid them. So it was very nasty.
>
> *Female university student, 20 years old*

The second narrative shows how the vibe, acting as a pressure on difference, is noticed by participants even when others are the target of the looks. Alexander

and Knowles clearly state how race not only constitutes the landscapes in which we navigate, but it also "*features the calculations involved in the balancing of tolerance and terror and the connections drawn between places by bodies crossing borders"* (2005: 16). As a paradigmatic example, the fact of simply wearing different clothes motivates a persecutory reaction in the dominant population. Probably motivated by their inability to accept the difference and feeling empowered by an identity of belonging, they do not hesitate to perform their self-proclaimed superiority.

Visible differences may also be interpreted by the dominant population as a suspicious indicator related to theft or criminality. Participants described numerous experiences where they were considered suspicious in the eyes of security personnel in shops and supermarkets. Experiences narrate how activities, such as shopping at the mall, became a stressful situation, as they were constantly followed by shop personnel. To be treated and considered as a potential thief is also enforced by the behaviour of certain older people, who hide their bags or cross to the other side when meeting participants in the street.

So far, we have considered racism on the basis of visible bodily differences, such as a different skin colour or other visual aspects. One participant helped us understand how bodily difference materialises in everyday life, determining one's possibilities in life, or transforming a common activity into a situation where your difference is placed into the spotlight. Exposing bodily differences to dominant gazes becomes a key factor in everyday life. As participants cannot become invisible, their lives must try to be outside of the gaze, so that their interference in the public space is dramatically restricted.

> I am used to going swimming once a week, but I cannot do it here. Definitely in the locker room I am always the only brown person and the only foreigner there. Once, there was a bunch of kids. They were all laughing and playing, but when they saw me, they just stopped laughing and playing, and just stared at me. They froze up.
>
> *Male student, 18 years old, Asian background*

This is how race matters in the Beautiful City. There is no need for a sign proclaiming "only for whites", or for official apartheid policies. The normativity of whiteness lingers in the landscape, in which restrictions of the movement of racialised bodies occurs through the "natural" behaviour of "ordinary" people, who are constructed in this landscape as being privileged. Their right to access the public space will never be questioned.

Similarly to how racism finds correlation in the body's difference in appearance, the fact that bodies are gendered should also be clearly stressed. In doing so, we may better understand how racial prejudices and local deviant interpretations of gendered bodies operate, giving the dominant population a feeling of legitimate supremacy in imposing dominancy also through their sexuality.

> We went to [a local gay pub]. As soon as we crossed the door, a lady saw C.'s husband, and she was so interested in him. She wanted to buy him champagne: – *Please come with me. My brother is going to love you*. -The lady was all the time, come, come. C. was angry: – *Come on, he is my husband*. She did not want him for herself, but for her brother: – *Because my brother is going to like you since you are black*.
>
> *Female biologist, 35 years old, Afro-American*

> It happens everywhere, like in the tram. Sometimes it is more direct, like someone tells you: – *You are unique* – which could be fine. Another time, I was with some friends in the tram. The boys were there also. Some guys started looking at me. One of them approached me. He was coming up to me as if he wanted to pass by, so I moved back, but he said to me: – *You single?* I was really scared. He had kind of creepy eyes. I said: – *No, I am sorry*. And I went in front with the boys. It is too scary. [...] The thing with black women in [the Beautiful City] is that we are kind of fetishised sexually. Sometimes, it is innocent, some of them, let's say, have a preference, but sometimes is more in the way of jungle fever, like "I want to have that girl." [...] It happens to me also walking in the street, and once a guy came up and said to me: – *I want to go to bed with you*. [...] Also, we were a group of friends, and a guy came speaking in [local language], and we couldn't understand so he made this gesture [oral sex].
>
> *Female university student, 23 years old, African background*

The male body is exotified in an eroticisation formed on the basis of stereotypes. The exotic body brings the attention of the lady in the first narrative, who saw the participant's body as a desirable object for her brother to possess. These bodies are constructed as objects of desire, subjected to racial hierarchy. The objectification of bodies also leads to the extreme expression of patriarchal hierarchy in situations where male desires of possession materialise in aggressive situations, as in the encounters narrated in the second narrative. Patriarchy and racism unite in performing the oppression of the constructed others in

an example of the intersectional character of sexuality. According to Collins, sexuality and violence are not only part of representations of Blackness, but global representations circulate through mass media in a climate of "sexualized violence" (Collins 2004: 120).

Power exercised over difference is not only motivated by bodily differences, but it is also identified through the mastering, or lack thereof, of the national language. Speaking another language constitutes a clear marker of alterity, providing a reference to distinguish a "we" (meaning the normative and deserving citizens) and a "they" (the constructed others). It is not only language which acts as the marker, but language proficiency within very strict boundaries that limits tolerance to other accents or phonetics. So, the isomorphism is also ruptured by the simple fact of speaking a different language or of not being able to speak the national language correctly. "People shout at us when we talk: Speak [national language]!" A similar manifestation is the negation of services in shops and businesses. Participants related how shop assistants even turned their backs to them when they politely asked if they speak English, or the telephone is hung up when they order a taxi at night, or, even while speaking the local language at a good communicative level, one of the participants could not manage to make an appointment with a mechanic.

Obviously, such situations generate long-term frustration in participants, and their perception of the host society rapidly deteriorates. For them, life in the Beautiful City becomes a chain of unpleasant events, where their condition as the "other" continuously locates them in a lower hierarchical level in comparison to the hegemonic population, whose dominant behaviour is muted – in that it is neither perceived, nor experienced, by the non-foreign population.

Navigating through public space has become an even more unpleasant activity ever since politicians found a profitable magnet for votes in practising hate speech and in demonstrating their intolerance. Since the "war against terrorism" and "the need to protect our country from the migrant invasion" became common mottos for almost every political actor, the public space has been infected by xenophobic billboards and even xenophobic public demonstrations and acts. Several demonstrations against migration took place in the down-town area, orchestrating anti-migrant mottos and applying clearly Nazi-inspired paraphernalia, including marches and fascist parades. It is difficult to understand the lenience of the city authorities – who permit and facilitate hate events – allowing such demonstrations of hate against a specific part of the city's inhabitants.

Articulations of hate do not take place only during radical events; instead, they find a way to enter into *a priori* neutral activities, such as garden festivals or cultural events taking place in the parks of the city. Their presence in the public space lowers their perception as a radical discourse, and normalises hate mottos and arguments.

> It was the beginning of spring, and the local garden festival was taking place in the park. I went there with my family because we had planned to buy some seeds for our two-year-old kid. He would plant the seeds at home and experience how a plant grows. But at the entrance of the festival, we couldn't believe what we saw. One of the growing nationalist parties had a booth at the main entrance showing a huge banner: No Immigrants. I felt annoyed, and I could not understand how the town could allow something like that. The xenophobic militants of the party were collecting signatures against migration and to my surprise common people stopped by the stand and openly signed it. Then I saw that one of the mums I met every day at the playground was also signing. I felt depressed and disappointed. I felt embarrassed in front of my son. They are not extremists, they are our neighbours, the parents of the kids that are supposed to play with our children or attend daycare together. Somehow, at that point, we decided not to stay here. I know we will be leaving from here.
>
> *Male industrial engineer, 39 years old*

Two considerations expressed by the participants were significant for current research. Public expressions against migrants are tolerated and, up to a certain extent, legitimised by authorities as they take place under their auspices and occupy meaningful spaces in the everyday life of the city. Xenophobic discourse has been normalised to the point that hate acts are performed by families with prams and not only by skinheads. In the context of similar political booths promoting xenophobic positions and propagating hate messages, several conflicting encounters occurred in the Beautiful City. Conflicting encounters led to an increasing atmosphere of hate, encouraged by the local media and rapidly spread through social networks, aligning migrants with "radical Islamists," and them with terrorists. As a result, every "darker skinned" person was perceived as a dangerous terrorist, which soon became manifested in street insults and several incidents. Respondents narrated numerous episodes where they were just walking down the street and someone called them "terrorists", or an unknown person made a joke in public: "Hey, you look like you're from Syria. Where are your bombs?"

Tolerance is subjected to very limited boundaries, and any small incident could rapidly escalate into a violent situation. Triggers may arise in any casual situation or encounter, when the background of participants suddenly becomes the main motive for conflict. For example, one of the respondents articulated his difficulties playing football normally in a non-professional, local team. Anytime he was involved in a foul, the adversary immediately reacted by calling him "illegal immigrant" or claiming with sarcasm that he is going to "lose his papers". Another example of how a common situation is reframed in xenophobic terms is presented in the following narrative:

> I just parked my car in the mall when this guy, who looked completely normal, approached and asked me something. I just said to him: – Sorry, I do not speak [national language]. He spit and called me "migrant".
>
> *Male student, 21 years old*

Both situations demonstrate how racism is latent in the host society, waiting for a minimal trigger to become articulated. The vibe is always there, even when it is not apparently visible, just small conflicts and tensions rise to the surface and racism turns into the dominant framework, reconfiguring the situation.

An urban landscape which has turned into an oppressive arena forces the "others" to try to answer to the following question: how to safely navigate the city? Their only coping strategy is to try to not be visible or to be as little visible as possible. An unarticulated reaction to the constant pressure on them is to avoid navigating the city alone and to fix "secure" itineraries. Stories narrating racist episodes on the basis of their individual difference being exposed in public, wearing different clothing than the locals or an afro haircut, tend to occur at the beginning of their stay in the new country. Rapidly, locals make it clear that certain boundaries should not be crossed and the newcomers learn that navigating the city alone is a risky activity. Participants are not only aware of the existent segregation marked by the "vibe" in an abstract way, but the urban map becomes a mosaic of "safe areas" and "forbidden areas" (Back, 2005). The Beautiful City does not count on any ethnic enclave or any neighbourhood where the ethnic or religious composition could challenge the logic of dominancy as other European cities do. The oppressive pressure spreads through the whole city, and normativity is performed everywhere. As is described below, the limits between safe and unsafe itineraries are relativised according to the time of day

and night, and other circumstances. If the Beautiful City is not a really friendly place for foreigners during the day, it transforms into a dangerous nightmare during the night, when insults and racist behaviour turn into explicit physical aggressions. The urban map turns out to have two faces, as the unsafe areas spread through the city at nightfall.

> I was heading back home after the cinema. I was already in my street, and a young couple was walking behind me. They were in their twenties, and it was obvious that they also came from a pub or an event. They started to say something in [national language] about my dark hair. I did not really understand, and did not even look back. Then, they started to call me gypsy and shout at me. They just looked young and normal to me… I do not understand…
>
> *Female language teacher, 45 years old*

Eventually, symbolic aggressions escalate into physical ones, sometimes propelled by a generally increasing anti-migrant discourse in the media, or connected to the utilitarian use of anti-migrant moods by local politicians.

> "During those days that [the] media got crazy [about] refugees and local politicians insisted [on] calling us terrorists, things got very bad. I was walking in the centre when a guy chased me with a knife. I do not have much to say. I just ran away."
>
> *Male student, 19 years old, Asian background*

For the dominant population, skin colour is a visible component for detecting diversity. Shielded by the night, they felt legitimated to articulate and exercise violence towards any other alterity. Again, a patriarchal hierarchy based on the perceptions of belonging or not belonging to the territory creates a map of confrontation where the hegemonic population turns into aggressors. It is remarkable that the violent episodes were performed by "normal" people. The participants' descriptions insisted on remarking on the normality of the aggressor's appearance. It was a disturbing fact to them, as they could not differentiate the potential aggressors from common people. They became afraid of everyone at night, or at least suspicious. According to participants, even when you are not afraid, you learn to avoid certain streets in the city; you always walk with friends if you go down-town, a taxi is better than public transport to come back late at night, and sometimes, you stop talking and keep silent when you pass by a group of people, so that they will not hear you speaking in another

language. In other words, they are aware of the risks of walking in the dark side of the Beautiful City, and they know that the best camouflage is to mute their alterity. There is no lack of reasons that evoke their fear. In addition to general hostility, participants were also victims of extremist attacks. Several right-wing radical groups are active in the Beautiful City. Radicals performed racist incidents in buses and in the streets of the city centre, and even chased some students all the way to their dormitories. Participants reported the various aggressions to the police, such as getting insulted by white power mottos or being kicked out of buses by skinheads; participants were also chased and persecuted by skinheads with baseball bats and knifes. Communication with the police is poor, and participants have the impression that they do not put big pressure on these groups.

> The police came. We told them the entire story [a group of foreigners had been chased by skinheads with knifes and baseball bats until they got into their dormitories]. And they said. – *Ok, so go to sleep now.* They just asked if they were still there. They arrived late. Obviously they were not there any longer. And all they say is that. – *Ok, now go to sleep.*
>
> *Male student, 19 years old, Asian background*

A significant number of the international population living in the Beautiful City is concentrated in the university dormitories. Racism is constructed socially, and materialises in the space of everyday, common activities. For a number of foreigners living in the Beautiful City, the experience of racism starts early in the morning, when they pull up the blinds of their dormitory windows and read "Fuck Islam" sprayed on the wall in front of their college. It not only reminds them that they are not welcome in the Beautiful City, but the presence of the hate message under their windows tells them that not even the university dormitories are a safe area for them. Spraying fascist sniper signs and other xenophobic symbols is a common practice used by skinheads to mark "their territory" as they increase the symbolic pressure on their target population. To a certain extent, the institution did not alleviate the situation, as formal complaints demanding the hate message to be erased from the area had to wait a long time for a positive response.

At this point, the presence of hate messages sprayed on walls belonging *a priori* to "safe areas", such as the international dormitories, turned into symbolic aggressions. The vibe was materialised and its embodiments spread

through the city, blurring the division between safe and unsafe areas. Now the aggressions had reached the last frontier, the place where they live. To put it in participants' words:

> Skinheads crossed the line, and they made it [to] the place where we are living, where we sleep, or hang out at nights.
>
> *Male student, 22 years old, Asian background*

The pressure on "otherness" is omnipresent, and symbolic violence also materialises in the common domestic tasks taking place in the common areas of the dormitories. As a previous narrative proves, international students avoid encounters with local students, but sometimes sharing common spaces is inevitable. In such encounters, the vibe transforms into face-to-face domination and violence.

> [..] I took my laundry. There is a laundry place in the [dormitories area]. I opened the door and then... this guy sitting in a chair. I think he was a skinhead. He gets up, shouts something in [national language], and smashes the door... It was really bad. I was so scared. He gives me the devil look. A guy living in the dormitory!
>
> *Female university student, 21 years old, Asian background*

Segregated space and symbolic pressure became relatively naturalised through everyday experience, but its significance emerges when contrasting with previous life experiences or with other reference frameworks. For example, the unacceptability of everyday acceptance of local racism is manifested in the fact that international students try to avoid parent visits.

> What if your parents come to visit you and they see this [hate message sprayed] in front of the place you live in. They will tell you: We do not want you to study here.
>
> *Male university student, 22 years old*

Conclusions

For a different understanding of racism, the current paper opted for its articulation through the performance of everyday situations. Racism happens in a place (Pearson 2015), and cities have a long tradition of being understood as anthropological places. For the study at hand, this concrete East-Central

European city was a setting where racism could happen. The city is identified only by the metaphoric name of The Beautiful City. The name refers to a paradoxical dichotomy between the ideal image of the city, which promotes it as the perfect place for living, and the reality of oppression for "others" living under the described dominancy. The analysis focused on how the urban landscape has been formed through a strict selection of its physical aspects: making some visible while removing others. The logic of such a selection process partially resides on the economic pragmatism of the current neo-liberal era. Such logic is not openly articulated, but is hidden in the image of beauty. The beauty of the city is not a neutral value – it is a powerful mechanism of subjugation under a fundamentalist regime of mandatory white male neo-liberal supremacy. The fake neutrality of public space is covered by exercised power and mutes any critical voice.

In a similar way, the city selectively remembers or forgets the very different cities that preceded it. Memory is constructed also by selecting concrete moments of history and completely muting others, which become almost taboo. Acritical memory reconstructions and imperative economic logic rule the configuration of the current city. The urban landscape is now constituted on the basis of two fallacies: fake neutrality and unreal homogeneity. The result of such a process is an imperative isomorphism constituting a set of normative patterns. Normativity sets the scenario where the lives, experiences, and possibilities of the inhabitants of the Beautiful City take place. A strong discourse of fake neutrality covers subjacent normative patterns, and the dominant population seems to be blind to them. But the "others", as is the case of the research participants, feel the oppression of non-articulated normativity, of what Pearson calls the vibe of the city, the "thing that lingers". The vibe is, in Foucault's terms, the prison of the "others".

Simply the presence of the "other" constitutes a rupture in the normative isomorphism. The mere existence of the constructed others in the Beautiful City challenges its normative homogeneity. Any rupture or any challenge acts as a trigger for racism to occur. A different skin colour, exotic clothing, some ethnic haircut, a different accent or different language, or any other sign of difference will be disciplined and punished, as the prisoners were for Foucault (1979). The body of the "other" will suffer the embodiment of violence. Bodies of the "other" are turned into the markers of difference and into targets: to punish in racial aggressions, to point and stare at under the gaze of locals, who have become the guards of normativity, to possess as exotic objects of desire, eroticising them,

or to discriminate them under the legitimacy of double standards, discerning between deserving and non-deserving citizens.

Inhabitants of the Beautiful City are subjected to a normalised hierarchy on the basis of their belonging, or non-belonging, to the normative homogeneity. This hidden hierarchy is exercised through power and has become manifested in interactions. The "other" becomes a subaltern under the local dominancy. A clear ethnic supremacy exists under the logic of the hegemonic nation-state imposed homogeneity. Power is held in the agency of the privileged locals, and resistance or options to subvert the logic of power are strongly restricted.

Similarly to other European cities, radicals exercised violence in the city by performing xenophobic attacks and aggressions. Often, they hide their actions in the darkness of the night. But violence in the Beautiful City is neither limited to the night hours nor to extremist aggressors. Participants narrated how tolerance for difference is put under very limited boundaries and any small incident could rapidly escalate into a violent situation. Racism happens during the day in open public spaces, such as squares or parks, in public transport, at the mall, or in small cafes, bars, or pubs. Racism happens everywhere and at any time in the Beautiful City. One aspect present in the participant narratives and analysed in the text should be clearly stressed in the conclusions: not only race matters. Gender matters. As Spivak put it, to be a female subaltern is to be twice a subaltern (Young 2004: 357). The hidden hierarchy of power is still more imbalanced when the other is a female and the aggressor is a man, as patriarchal imperatives unite with xenophobic approaches.

A parallel could be established between the research participants and racist aggressors. Participants were not radical "others", being neither religious fundamentalists nor extreme cases of cultural distance. As a methodological decision, the researchers did not reproduce or reinforce the state categories of alterity, being under the legal status of third country national or refugee condition. Instead, the majority were EU citizens, working or studying in respectable positions in the Beautiful City. In parallel, the majority of aggressors were not skinheads or members of xenophobic radical groups. According to participants, the aggressors were common people among the locals who did not correspond to any concrete pattern. They were male and female, young and old, from the upper class strata all the way to the lower ones. Actually, this fact reinforced the insecurity among foreigners and the perceived "others" living in the Beautiful City. To anticipate and recognise an aggressor is an impossible task. The aggressor could be any local. The perceived "normality" of locals who exhibited

racism confirms that racism is not a marginal or accidental phenomenon; on the contrary – all described emergences can only be explained under the normalised existence of a racial hierarchy, based on the locals' performed right of belonging to the city. Such a hidden hierarchy creates a scale of power which is exercised in everyday contexts, constituting a key framework for understanding the life experience of constructed others in East-Central Europe.

The Beautiful City has a vibe that turned the life of "others" into a living nightmare. For them, the everyday experience of racism is a continuous suffering. It is something present everywhere in the city, in its streets, in its inhabitants. Something from which they cannot escape. Living there and being different means that it is merely a question of time before racism will be encountered.

> Every time I leave [the Beautiful City] I can feel the difference. When I arrive to the train station in [home country] and I see so many different people and no one stares at me, and I am not afraid to talk to someone or to walk in the streets – then I finally breathe.
>
> *Female student, 24 years old*

Mario Rodríguez Polo, social anthropologist, is currently assistant professor at the Department of Sociology, Andragogy and Cultural Anthropology of Palacký University Olomouc. He focuses on the ethnographic accounts of migration and of the incorporation of minorities in current European societies while attending to questions of power, and usually remarking on the participants' understanding, their copy strategies, and their contentions.

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MIGRANTS AS VISITORS: A COLOUR-BLIND APPROACH AND IMAGINED RACIAL HIERARCHY[1]

Nicola Raúl – Jaroslav Šotola

Abstract: ***This article provides the results on research into the attitudes of Czech seniors towards foreigners of non-European origin. It is based on an interpretation of ten semi-structured interviews of a biographical nature, focused on the participants' encounters with otherness. Regardless of the political regime and the period of time, the main feature of this contact is distance and separation from foreigners. From the point of view of seniors, migration is an unnatural and only temporary phenomenon that has to be controlled and restricted by the state. Negative attitudes towards foreigners in the narrations are concealed by seemingly neutral statements that are subject to an effort of not providing any reason for being labelled as a "racist". Nevertheless, it is still possible to uncover the idea of self-evident power superiority over categories of people understood as racially different. Although the seniors expressed various levels of sympathy, indifference, or antipathy towards the individual non-European groups, we believe that these differences are not a manifestation of selective acceptance, but rather a manifestation of imagined racial hierarchy in which groups perceived as submissive are preferred.***

Keywords: ***racial hierarchy; attitudes towards migrants; colour-blind approach; power asymmetry; Czech Republic***

The aim of this article is to explain the ways in which images of racially different groups of foreigners are constructed by Czech seniors. Race is understood here not only as a social construct (Šmausová 1999), but also as social practice

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focused on the detachment or subordination of groups of people to the dominant population based on their visual features (Alexander – Knowles 2005). From this point of view, we strive to gain insight into the everyday nature of this asymmetrical relation through the analysis of narrations in semi-structured interviews. The presented qualitative research is based on work with ten participants from a town located in eastern part of the Czech Republic. Personal experience with people of non-European origin was determined as the main topic of the interviews with participants. Due to the focus on the ways of constructing racial images, in which the aspect of the visibility of physical differences played an important part, we chose three categories: Blacks/inhabitants of sub-Saharan Africa, Arabs, and the Vietnamese, as all of these categories correlate with the past occurrence of non-European migrant groups in Czechoslovakia during socialism.[2] These categories are perceived differently in measurements within long-term sociological investigation (Šmídová – Vávra – Čížek 2017).[3]

We believe that the content and character of narrations about personal encounters with people bearing a marker of visual difference enable us to clarify the current "racial imaginary" in the Czech Republic as part of the current "immigrant integration imaginaries" in Europe (Schinkel 2017). The investigated accounts and stories are not only a reflection of participants' experience. Human experience – in this case encounters with otherness – is also structured by power relations, and only then is reflection possible (Scott 1992). Rather than only analysing the attitudes, this article therefore deals with an analysis of the power relations where foreigners of non-European origin are placed into an inferior position by the dominating population. Finally, we argue that different attitudes towards each racial or ethnic group do not indicate the level of tolerance or xenophobia of Czech society, but rather cover the hegemonic nature of inter-racial relationships, as the various levels of acceptance are based on the presumed submissiveness of essentially perceived groups of migrants, leading

[2] We are aware that each of these categories is constructed in a different way and mixes racial or ethnic status along with the designation of a group of people from almost the entire continent or language sphere. Our choice is primarily based on emic conceptualisation.

[3] There are differences in the focus of the existing literature on the attitudes to each category in the Czech Republic: we can find several texts about attitudes towards the Vietnamese (Kocourek 2001, Brouček 2003, Bezouška 2016), an increasing number of studies dealing with islamophobia (see Topinka et al. 2016), but deeper research on attitudes towards people from sub-Saharan Africa is missing.

to the reproduction of imagined racial hierarchy. At the same time, the shift of attention towards a discussion on the alleged qualities of foreigners enables the speaker, a representative of the dominant population, to avoid any accusation of racism. In this text, we therefore strive to fill in the knowledge gap related to a certain taboo of the topic in East-Central Europe (Nowicka 2018), as well as to the methodological basis and traditional approaches to research in attitudes towards otherness.

The main theoretical framework for the analysis of this asymmetrical relation in accounts on others is built by the Anglo-American *whiteness studies*. The concept of whiteness is focused on clarifying the ways "white" populations are constructed as the privileged ones over non-whites, including the legitimisation of this asymmetry as a natural one (Doane – Bonilla-Silva 2003). It is thus concerned with more than just attitudes; these are hidden mechanisms of social exclusion on the basis of a shared distinction among people according to the group characteristics attributed to them. Another topic of whiteness studies is the investigation of the impacts of this distinction on the lives of people classified as racially different from the dominating population in various aspects, such as movement in the area, identity, or embodiment (Clarke – Garner 2010, Garratt 2017).

As emphasised by the concept of *new racism*, the present way of constructing differences is not as straightforward as the biology-based racism of the first half of the twentieth century: the inherited higher or lower status according to one's physiology has been replaced by cultural differences. The expression of racist attitudes, strengthening social inequality, is also subjected to the logic of seeming correctness (Bonilla-Silva 2003). In relation to this, Bonilla-Silva talks about "colour-blind racism"; that is, the attitude where the speakers rhetorically emphasise their counter-racist thinking, but in fact still build their image of the world on the *entitlement* of the members of their own group. In contrast to previous historical periods, racial dominance is concealed as non-existent, and its public manifestations and consequences are belittled as marginal phenomena connected only to limited groups of right-wing extremists (Desmond – Emirbayer 2009). The topic of racist constructions and the related inter-racial relationships are also understood as obsolete and not corresponding to the significant shift in the understanding of equality regardless of origin or skin colour.

Research Methodology

The measurement of attitudes of the domestic population towards foreigners is a standard area of sociological research in general, and fully applicable to the Czech society (Chaloupková – Šalamounová 2006, Havlík 2007, Leontiyeva – Vávra 2009, Šmídová – Vávra – Čížek 2017, research series of CVVM).[4] There is also a tradition of comparing European countries, in which the Czech Republic shows – similarly to the other nations of East-Central Europe – high rates of negative attitudes towards migrants over the long run (Leontiyeva 2015). A high proportion of the Czech population considers migration a risky factor in the development of society on the communal level. These people expect foreigners to assimilate, and to abandon introducing a different ethnic identity into the public space. Many research projects are focused on creating a ranking of the (un)popularity of foreign ethnic groups, usually followed by a scale interpreted on the basis of the perception of stereotypically ascribed economic and cultural attributes increasing or decreasing the ostensible feeling of threat or indifference. The stated topic is then complemented by a search for connections between the socio-demographic characteristics of the particular respondent and the alleged qualities of migrants and their country of origin. It is of interest for our study that particularly the search for correlations between attitudes and the status of the particular respondent reveals a very low standard deviation (Leontiyeva – Vávra 2009: 72).

The long-term observation of trends in attitudes may provide interesting information especially in a temporal-spatial comparison, and may call for an interpretation of differences and possible factors influencing these attitudes. At the same time, however, we realise the disadvantage of performing a quantitative survey on the topic of the measurement of attitudes towards migrants: numerous discussions on this topic have taken place, including those on the theoretical and methodological difficulties related to this effort (Bourdieu 1995). Here, our aim is only to briefly point out some of them. It is paradox that the focus on the identification of factors intervening in the form of opinions (typically in the form of variables most often including socio-demographic characteristics) diverts us from the construction of the opinion in and of itself: opinions are frequently

[4] CVVM stands for Centrum pro výzkum veřejného mínění (Public Opinion Research Centre), available at: https://cvvm.soc.cas.cz/cz/.

reduced to statements within the offered scale, which reduces the complexity of the attitudes. A potential shift towards more positive statements expressed over time is not necessarily an indicator of an actual change in the construction of "the other", but captures a change in the social climate, in which it is becoming less acceptable to publicly express xenophobic opinions.

We have consequently decided to apply a qualitative methodology which, instead of measuring the attitudes, enables us to focus on comprehending the perspective of the investigated actors and gaining an insight into it. Rather than searching for correlations and influences, we strive for the (re)construction of the image of others in a way that captures the internal coherence of this image. This is also why we are deeply interested in the actors' ways of ensuring the legitimacy of statements on otherness. We have noticed that the authority of the speakers is very often interlinked with their biographical experience. Attitudes towards migration are not only some kind of impersonal opinions on a topic of public discussion. The case of the so-called refugee crisis, where there are almost no refugees physically present in the Czech Republic but the topic of migration virtually dominates the Czech public space, provides an interesting insight into how the topic is becoming socially significant. We therefore consider it essential to investigate the placement of the actors – the authors of the accounts – inside their own "conceptual framework", which they construct through their accounts and reproduce by repeating them. We want to emphasise the positionality of the speaker that refers to the relational nature of the investigated "attitudes" and the significantly power-based character of this relationship. In our case, we have noticed the power asymmetry regarding the subject (our participants) providing statements about the object, which is detached from the subject as these statements are repeated (Foucault 2002).

We chose the constructivist version of grounded theory as our particular research design. In our view, its main advantage is flexibility and the interconnection of the individual research phases together with a certain rigorousness which occurred particularly in the coding phase. As Charmaz (2006: 130) puts it, the "... constructivist approach means learning how, when and to what extent the studied experience is embedded in larger and, often, hidden positions, networks, situations and relationships. Subsequently, differences and distinctions between people become visible as well as the hierarchies of power, communication and opportunity that maintain and perpetuate such differences and distinctions". We believe that this focus on detecting those hidden relationships and relations through the negotiation of interpretations

within an interview is an advantage when analysing the actors' perceptions of the bearers of otherness, which are incomprehensible without a wider context.

The target group for the selection of research participants was determined as senior citizens of the Czech Republic. The reason for this focus was an effort to observe the interconnection between the actor's personal biography and the construction of their image of otherness and ways of its legitimisation. We were also interested in the form of personal memory in relation to both the political regimes in which the speaker lived, and which could provide different contexts for the forms of their contact with foreigners. The interviews were conducted with a total of ten participants – six women and four men aged 65–88. Five of them were recruited on the basis of a volunteer practice of the first of the authors in a retirement home. The composition of the participant´s second group was based on the snowball method started by the grandmother of the same researcher.[5] All of the interviewees live in a middle-sized town (less than 20 thousand inhabitants) in the eastern part of the Czech Republic. The region of origin of the participants is characterised by one of the lowest numbers of migrants in the country. However, the strong industrial face of the town led to migration from non-European countries already during the era of socialism.

A key element for the implementation of the research has proven to be the establishment of rapport with participants. Mistrust was often apparent at the beginning in relation to the certain sensitivity of the topic, which was manifested in participants' statements claiming that they did not know anything about the topic, and as such, were not suitable for the research. Nonetheless, they agreed in all cases to the interview. Subsequently, after being assured that each piece of information was important and that none of their opinions were incorrect, their initial fears dissipated. Before beginning the research, the researcher spent some time with every participant (ca. 90–120 minutes) to establish a certain intimate bond. One of the main risks identified, at the onset of the research, was the honesty of the participants. We were concerned that the participants would not be honest and willing to tell the researcher their negative opinions, should they have some. After the rapport was established, however, the participants felt free to provide their accounts and express their opinions, no matter what they were. The next limitation of the research that we were faced with was the specific positionality of the first author and her connection

[5] All interviews were conducted in 2016 by the first author during her work on her bachelor's thesis.

to our topic. The father of the researcher had migrated from Africa to the Czech Republic in the 1980s. Because of her different appearance, she was the victim of racial and xenophobic abuse many times. Otherness often causes unexpected reactions, whether positive or negative, and because of this, we kept in mind even the possibility that potential participants might be reluctant to develop a relationship with the researcher based on her visible physical appearance. However, these initial worries were not fulfilled, and it became almost invisible for participants, as if they did not even realise the aspect of her visual otherness, which they condemn in case of immigrants.[6]

The interviews were recorded, except for one female participant who did not give her consent to recording the interview. Some participants were brief in their answers, while others were very communicative. The length of the interviews ranged from 45 to 90 minutes. The first two interviews were conducted in order to "get familiar" with the field and the topic, and also to test the pilot outline of the interview. After the first coding, slight adjustments were made to the outline, and another eight interviews were conducted. The theoretical saturation was thus achieved, as we no longer found any new information in the interviews. We deem the relatively strong homogeneity in the accounts a very significant phenomenon indicating social consensus, at least on the level of the oldest generation.

We tried to create a varied sample of participants; the research sample includes individuals covering a time span of 23 years. As per socio-demographic characteristics such as education or profession: one woman earned a university diploma, three participants finished their graduation exam (secondary school), and the rest had a vocational or elementary school education. Six of them worked in one large factory, which was one of the two main employers in the town, but in distinct parts and positions. The rest worked in different professions like teacher, official, accountant, or cook. Participants were also distinguished from each other by the scale of contacts and their experience with immigrants of a non-European origin, and they also slightly differed in the manner of the presentation of their own conceptualisation of otherness.

[6] However, as it turned out, the visual appearance of the researcher that suggests her foreign/non-European origin helped uncover other aspects of constructing pictures of migrants. Based on the testimony of the majority of participants, we can assume that due to their personal experience with the researcher, they extracted her from the generalised group of migrants, which they had constructed prior to that encounter on the basis of available (and mostly second-hand) information.

Memory of the Socialist Past

In the interviews with seniors, we tried to embed the topic of their relationship to otherness into a biographical context with the aim of understanding to what extent their attitudes were rooted in their personal experience. We were interested in their occupation: whether they used to be in contact with members of other ethnic groups. Another question was whether their attitude towards people of non-European origin had changed significantly or not since 1989. The majority of the participants used to work in a factory where they used to meet foreigners who worked in the region. This type of contact was related to the Czechoslovak policy of that time, where a lack of workforce led to hiring foreign guest labourers from economically less-developed countries as cheap labour (Drbohlav 2001, Alamgir 2013).[7] Foreigners thus worked in second-rate or physically demanding occupations in factories or tanneries. Experience with people of non-European origin was thus derived from the state programme for controlled migration. Direct contact was nonetheless very limited, as shown below, and this separation was and still is perceived as something "natural". This distance also enabled the participants to assume a tolerant attitude, which was, however, challenged if a foreigner came into closer contact with the participant.

The participants in our research emphasised Cubans, as these were the first people of a different skin colour with whom they came into contact with. Although the Czechs worked in the same factory as the majority of the Cubans, mutual contact was considerably limited, as they worked separately and the work migrants were represented by interpreters. Foreigners were separated from the majority, not only at work, but in everyday life as well; they used to spend most of their time in separate collective hostels or dormitories with their own programme.

> Well, and then a lot of Cubans started working at the plant, you see. Here it was, it was here like that at some time, but not that I would know someone personally, I didn't. And otherwise, I don't remember that we would have it at work like that, not really.
>
> *Diana, 70, worker*

[7] It is true that state-controlled migration had various forms, even short-term internships or study stays. However, with regard to the working environment of the majority of participants, the contact was limited to the environment of factories.

The majority of participants kept a distance from the Cuban people, referring to their insufficient language skills, supposedly low work ethic, or the belief that these foreigners "had a lower work load". While it is true that the participants perceived, for instance, an effort to learn the language, they emphasised the deficiencies, as if they wanted to point out that the Cubans were inferior to the majority.

From the participants' accounts of people from a non-European environment that they encountered at their workplaces, it is apparent that the collective memory reflects their spatial separation, which was even related to a certain mental separation. Groups of foreigners were perceived as a certain aspect of the socialist regime and its internationalism, which, however, remained isolated. From the point of view of present-day seniors, the presence of otherness in their lives in this particular form did not "disrupt" in any way their existing way of life or their perspective of the world. The fact that, from the viewpoint of the participants, the Cubans, as well as for instance the Vietnamese, did not draw attention to themselves in any way, was considered a manifestation of the foreigners' adaptation to the system. The closed nature of the foreigner communities, which was connected with the very low minority acceptance level on the part of ethnic Czechs, was understood as a natural phenomenon (similar see Kocourek 2001). As clarified below, it would seem that this manner of inter-ethnic co-existence became a certain normative element by which all further otherness, entering the public space or the privacy of the participants themselves, was measured. Foreigners whose living space was significantly restricted by work in a separated production, in a factory with a separated hostel, were not perceived as a threat.

The existence of normative mechanisms, to exclude visually different foreigners into a separate environment, manifests itself in situations where otherness suddenly involved the participants themselves. A woman who used to come into contact with foreigners even before 1989, in particular with an African man and his daughter, a multi-racial child, can serve as an example. Although the existence of a person of a different skin colour was rare, the participant emphasised her neutrality:

> Well, the girl was a mulatto with curly hair, so she was like... I have never been a racist. I've never felt any kind of... strong aversion or something, you see. We took it as a normal thing, but it was rare here.
>
> *Vilma, 65, cook*

Everything changed later, as her daughter married an African. Here we can observe how attitudes towards otherness change when it involves the participants themselves:

> Well,... because at that time it wasn't here at all, you see... the thing, like dark-skinned races and stuff. Before '89 it was a complete taboo here, you see. So when it happened to us, it was like, what will the others say, how will they look at the situation, and how will we cope with it. Well, it wasn't easy at all. I'd never thought it would be so hard.
>
> *Vilma, 65, cook*

The shock of the encountered otherness, which is still present in the memory, may be clearly perceived in this account. It is apparent that this sincere dismay is not connected to the presence of people of a different skin colour in Czechoslovakia. As we have seen earlier, the woman "did not mind" their isolated presence. Everything changed radically, however, when a foreigner crossed the defined boundary and became a relative of the speaker, who did not like the more intimate contact. It also broke the taboo which threatened the speaker, because the impact of disciplinary sanctions for breaking the separation – "what will the others say" – applied to the speaker herself.

Contact with Otherness after 1989

The fall of the communist regime in 1989 brought about an opening of borders, and resulted in the gradual arrival of more immigrants into Czech society; the Czech Republic consequently became an immigration country. The official amount of foreigners in Czechoslovakia was 30,000 at the end of the 1980s, whereby their numbers increased to 100,000 by the mid-1990s (Leontiyeva – Vávra 2009). Foreigners currently make up more than 4% of the total Czech population. Even after the borders were opened, the participants rarely came into contact with foreigners. The nature of the separation after 1989 was, however, different from that in the era of socialism. The borders were closed in the past and immigrants only came here within state-controlled migration. Their lives in the Czech Republic were therefore controlled, with a separation embedded in the system. At present, the situation is different. It is nonetheless obvious from the interviews that the emphasis on separation still remains in the minds and social practice of the participants. It is evident from the interviews that

the distancing of the majority group is based particularly on a fear of otherness significantly restraining mutual contact.

Participants emphasised having either no or only little experience with foreigners of non-European origin, resorting to a selective choice of only a few pieces of information, on the basis of which they regard these foreigners. Their awareness of the issue was often based on information they have received from the news (for instance, in relation to terrorist attacks in France or Germany, infectious diseases in Africa, etc.). They subsequently regard all members of the particular nation on the basis of such news, and typically search for negative aspects and problems in otherness, as it is not familiar to them as a matter of fact. The certain unfamiliarity with otherness and the fear of it cause participants to perceive immigrants as a negative wave that needs to be avoided. Despite being aware of immigrants in this country, the participants regard them as some kind of taboo that they need to be distanced from. As a consequence of the lack of reliable information, they a priori assumed a negative attitude, which is, however, frequently a result of their own uncertainty.

The situations in which the participants had to deal with people from other ethnic groups occurred most frequently at work or in shops. Some of the Vietnamese workers left the factories in the 1990s and began to turn their interest to trade, which led to the establishment of new shops and markets. The participants visited and still continue to visit such places, which is why they primarily come into contact with the Vietnamese. Apart from them, some participants also come into contact with Africans (in the neighbourhood or within the family, as in the case mentioned above). It should be noted that these neighbourhood or family relationships were entirely accidental: the participants did not choose them. The individual participants adapted their behaviour towards African people or the Vietnamese in order to meet their categorical generalisation of the particular ethnic group as a whole. In the case of personal contact, they tended to avoid it or restrict all interaction with members of another ethnicity to the minimum:

> We only greet them, sometimes we talk a little, but otherwise nothing special.
>
> *Oskar, 83, foreman*

It is apparent from the research that although they came into contact with otherness more in the present, the participants only enter into interaction with people of non-European origin briefly or try to limit it to a minimum, as

otherness still poses a problem for them. Brief contacts at work, in the shop, or on the street are rarely sufficient to overcome the inner separation. In spite of a significantly different collective experience, the Czech environment displays features of racial segregation and isolation of the majority group from the minority similar to those reported by sociological research dealing with the US environment (Bonilla-Silva – Goar – Embrick 2006). It is thus possible to reconstruct the *white habitus* as an aspect of the existence of light-skinned individuals in a society distancing itself from people of a different origin and skin colour. This residential and social segregation limits the opportunity for white people to establish a relationship with a visually different person. The *white habitus* promotes solidarity within the one ethnic group, which subsequently supports the maintenance of a negative or stereotypical view of a group of people seen as racially different. In the interviews, the manifestation of distancing based on skin colour was read between the lines, and came to the surface rather as a mistake, as in following statement:

> My daughter has an American husband, but I do not mind because he's a white man.
> *Zora, 80, official*

Participants in our research did not perceive separation as a serious problem, on the contrary, they expected and presented it as totally "natural". It is true that the interviews revealed hints of the fact that the former regime prevented them from contact with otherness, and suggest that the current young generation, which has had the opportunity to travel more and explore otherness in its natural environment, has a more tolerant attitude. The question remains, however, as to whether the participants would actually be interested in getting to know the foreigners in the countries of their origin were they in the position of the present young generation, as they immediately confirm that they do not mind separation and limited contact with members of another ethnicity, nor do they seek out this contact in any way.

> I could imagine it similarly to America. A Chinese district, a black district, another one next to it. Like in England. And I'd leave them somewhere to the side.
> *Balthasar, 87, foreman*

The analysis of biographies enables us to look into specific moments of crossing the separation and thus intensifications of mutual contact. We assume

that the specific nature of these encounters enables a better understanding of distance mechanisms on the basis of white habitus, because they do not lead to the reassessment of the stereotypical opinions as well as mental separation. This is well illustrated by the statements of Balthasar, who worked as a foreman in the factory, and in comparison with the rest of participants, his encounters with people from the non-European countries happened on a daily basis. The content of his statements was different from others, as he did not try to camouflage his xenophobic opinions. This particular memory is (among others) a case in point:

> I worked in (name of the factory) all my life, and I stayed there, even though I had there all sorts of Mongolians, Angolans, and whatnot. All these strange people basically.
>
> *Balthasar, 87, foreman*[8]

It is obvious that the participant's long-term contact with workers of different nationalities did not deepen his empathy or prompt his willingness to maintain closer relationships with them. Moreover, Mr Balthasar addressed very negatively even the Vietnamese, which made him an exception among the other participants, who commonly referred to the Vietnamese as examples of "successful integration". However, due to personal reasons and a positive personal experience with a Vietnamese girl, this participant applied an individual evaluation instead of a general category, where he accepted only one representative of an ethnic group while simultaneously rejecting the group as a whole.

> The Vietnamese? Well, not that! The girl, yes. But those Vietnamese in general rather... well, those military occupations of theirs, everything they burnt and so on. So, there, I'd stay away from them. For example like neighbours, in fact I've got them here... There they are (he points from the window at a building).
>
> *Balthasar, 87, foreman*

We registered this strategy of expressing tolerance of only one particular person from a different ethnic group in the case of two other female participants, whose biographies cover more intense contact with otherness. One of them was the aforementioned woman whose son-in-law was a man from southern Africa.

[8] The English translation does not convey the pejorative air of the original expressions used by Balthasar. Specifically, the terms Angolan and Mongolian are, in their original form, far more offensive – as opposed to their English equivalents („...vydržel jsem tam, i když jsem tam během svého života měl všelijaké různé Mongoláky, Angoláky a já nevím, co všechno to bylo").

The second case is a woman who occasionally took care of a little girl living nearby who had Vietnamese parents. In both cases, this experience was understood as something personal and extraordinary, when an opinion regarding otherness and migration generally remained unchanging. In addition, the social context of both experiences gives us insight into the normativity of separation and distance in Czech society: the woman taking care of the Vietnamese girl mentioned unfriendly looks and insults by some people in her surroundings. As a result, she decided to go with the pram to another part of the city. The separation of inhabitants cannot be considered as natural or as a random phenomenon. It is reaction based on social norms, the abidance of which is monitored by the surroundings and possibly penalised if breached.

The Colour-Blind Approach

The research has shown that the participants, in an effort to present their views, use various rhetorical strategies enabling them to avoid the accusation of racism, while at the same time maintaining their distance from otherness. A similar approach is discussed in research on the white population in the USA, where the respondents report to the researchers that distinguishing between the individual racial groups does not matter to them at all; they behave, that is, in the same way towards everyone. This *colour-blind approach* is a reply to the civil rights movement and the internalisation of the attitude that distinguishing on the basis of race is socially unacceptable (Bonilla-Silva – Goar – Embrick 2006). This contradiction between the presented neutrality (and the speaker's correctness) and the actual distance is manifested in a form of the conceptualisation of diversity and also in social life. In spite of the different social context in the USA, it is possible to observe in the accounts of participants a persistent effort not to say anything that might be taken as explicit racism. This suggests that the interviewed seniors – apparently under pressure – react to the social consensus on the unacceptability of the conviction that one social group is superior to another. This is closely related to the phrases and constructions of the strategies used by the participants to justify or mitigate the negative accounts concerning otherness. A typical example is the statement: "I am not a racist; I don't mind it, because it doesn't concern me personally." They use such phrases in situations that are difficult for them, but they do not want to give the impression of being racists (a similar situation are Poles living in Britain; Nowicka 2018). In many cases, it was difficult for the participants to talk directly or at all about why

otherness or a closer contact with it poses a problem (for instance, otherness in a family) or to explain their worries, such as in the following statement:

> I don't know, I'm not a racist, but they just bother me being here; I can't explain why.
> *Vilma, 65, cook*

If the participants wanted to express their negative attitude towards otherness, they often used vox populi – that is, the people around them – and presented their own opinions through it, so that their attitude remained non-racist, such as in statements "My neighbours say that..." or "We don't want such people here." The same applied when the participants spoke for themselves. They used various means in their statements enabling them to mitigate the negativity of their statements in an effort to maintain the colour-blind approach. If they wanted to point out something negative, they used a positive reference at first, in order to give their statement the impression of a certain "balance". This is a way of creating ostensible objectivity, which appears, for example, in journalism; here, however, it sounds rather ironic:

> Well, I don't mind the black people, I like jazz, but like, they don't have to be here either.
> *Balthasar, 87, foreman*

The participant chose a certain ornament on the exotic object to which he expressed his sympathy, but in fact, this partial attitude did not change anything in their relationship to the target group. The aforementioned ornament – jazz – only plays the role of an indicator of the speaker's humanity and culture, and as such is not a demonstration of the relationship complexity in the inter-ethnic context. On the contrary, these and similar statements exhibit the great distance to otherness, which in the speaker's view has no place in their own environment.

One might notice that the participants, in the previous utterances, expressed themselves in various ways on the topic of acceptance or rejection of people of non-European origin: this language game of "I mind" or "I don't mind" seemingly gives the impression that the speakers stated various aspects of their opinions. It is also possible that the seniors-respondents would select various options of their attitudes in a potential survey. One can assume, however, that these statements are actually closer to each other than may seem at first glance, as all of them are built on the grounds of distance and indifference

towards somebody who does not belong to the ethnically delimited "us", as for example in this statement:

> Well, those niggers, I don't mind it.
>
> *Boris, 77, worker*

This is also true for the speakers' strategies based on the "neutral" attitude. The neutral attitudes mostly apply to non-prominent objects, or even those that are entirely unfamiliar to the subject. The participants in our research expressed it most frequently with the following words: "I don't know, neither this nor that, I don't think anything about it."

> As for my activities, I never came into contact with them, and so I don't have anything against them.
>
> *Oskar, 83, foreman*

These wishfully neutral views concealed a satisfaction with the separation that occurred at other interview sites; the manner of narration often acknowledged that distance was desirable and normal. Thus, this attitude can be understood as fully integral in the participants' agency, and not an expression of neutrality: showing indifference can be in this context namely understood as an active life attitude.

One of the strongest discursive means of distancing oneself identified within our research is the usage of demonstrative pronouns – most frequently the pronoun "it". Its frequent usage demonstrates the great detachment with which the participants build the image of the object in their accounts. A foreigner of non-European origin is not perceived through the prism of their personal uniqueness, but as an impersonal item, with whom it is impossible to have any relationship with. Usage of demonstrative pronouns emphasises the visibility of a certain element of strangeness entering a highly familiar environment, and at the same time, enables the speaker to emphasise the distinct boundary between the speaker and the different individual. Referring to an individual as "it" implicitly emphasises the individual's inferiority and denies their humanity. One of the women who struggled with her daughter's marriage to an African, remarked:

> But I had never imagined that it could ever happen even to me and that I would have it at home.
>
> *Vilma, 65, cook*

Stereotyping and Racial Hierarchy

The participants had the distorted idea that the origin of an individual or their physical features reflected a different experiencing of the world (mentality) and way of living (culture). Their attitude to the mentality of immigrants revealed a high modality according to which each ethnicity has its essential quality that cannot be changed. In their view, an individual member of a particular culture is then inevitably a bearer of the group essence, and culture was a result of the common life of these individual bearers (Barker 2002). Although the majority of the respondents claimed that they were not influenced by any prejudice and that all of their opinions were exclusively their own, the contrary was true. When comparing their individual accounts, it was apparent that they were more or less comparable, and stemmed from a historically typical prejudiced image of the hierarchy of individual "races" in Czech society. The Vietnamese were thus perceived mostly as adaptive, and as hard-working traders. Dark-skinned people from a variety of African countries, in contrast, were poor, backward, and uneducated. Finally, the Arabs were perceived as non-adaptive, dangerous, confrontational, "slobs", or religious fanatics. It is obvious that the participants tended to distinguish between ethnic and racial groups according to their perceived characteristics in the context of "entitled natives". The resulting hierarchy is thus a means of discursive power over non-European migrants.

The Vietnamese earned the greatest respect in the participants' eyes due to their ability to succeed as traders, as they proved their independence from the Czech economic system in a certain way, which was pointed out as a problem in the case of other ethnicities. The reason for the more positive attitude on the part of the participants towards the Vietnamese was that in their view, the Vietnamese removed their culture and traditions from the public space and did not ask for any public recognition of their culture or religion. Apart from that, their assimilation tendencies were appreciated – such as learning the language, as they have thus become invisible in our society.

> There, I'd already take them normally, like our people, not like those Muslims.
>
> *Oskar, 83, foreman*

In spite of the participants' appreciation of the Vietnamese adaptability, they were glad not to have to come into any closer contact with them. They were aware that the Vietnamese lived in their surroundings, but they did not know where

exactly. An interesting fact is that even though the participants stated they accepted the Vietnamese, they accepted them only to some extent and only at markets, in factories, or in the neighbourhood, where they were used to them. They would not, however, accept them in closer interactions – as friends or family members.

As already mentioned above, sub-Saharan Africans were perceived by the participants as uneducated, poor, backward, and in particular, due to the colour of their skin – as "the black ones". The unified image of the inhabitants of Africa is influenced especially by the media, which portrays their lives in this way. Although they had practically no information about the people from the African countries, their attitude towards them was fairly positive. In cases where they expressed their opinions on them, the participants constructed their ideas based on the depictions in travel documentaries portraying the poorest parts of Africa. In this light, it is not surprising that such depictions lead to strong generalisations, where all inhabitants of the continent are perceived as poor, uneducated, backward, coming from a rainforest or dirty slums, but are ultimately optimistic. In one case, it was determined that due to their home environment, the participant associated all Africans with diseases and dirt, and they were therefore afraid of any contact with them.

The above-mentioned depiction raises something that may be called limited sympathy in the participants. They partially sympathise with the hard living conditions of the inhabitants of Africa. In this connection, they often mentioned the conditions under which they are willing to accept those people in their country. They maintained the idea that "backward" Africans needed to be educated and cultivated, as these opportunities were denied to them in their country. For this reason, they were willing to accept them, for instance as part of an internship or a job that would teach them something, and thus enhance the quality of their life. However, there always was the condition of their returning to their own country, so that they could further use their skills to improve the living conditions in their homeland. It is apparent that the participants were applying the scheme of the Third World development aid programmes dating from the era of socialism.

As already stated above, four participants had an African neighbour. They stated that they did not mind these people, as they were decent, and the participants believed that they had adapted to the system. The people from African countries were accepted as neighbours, because the participants were used to them. They greeted each other, exchanged a few words, but they would not establish any closer relationships with them. In general, the participants do not mind these foreigners if they did not come into contact with them too

frequently or if they encountered such a contact only rarely in the scope of necessary communication on a casual level.

The perception of the Arabic people is influenced by the discourse of Orientalism, which forms their perception. In Western films and in the news, "Arabs" are deprived of their individuality, personal features or experience; they are mostly connected with lechery, unequal treatment of women, religious fanaticism, or a bloodthirstiness realised through terrorist attacks (Said 1979). They were perceived in the same way by the participants in our research, in whom this depiction raised a collective wrath. The participants were accustomed to obtaining mediated information about the negative aspects of Arabs or Islam, and were therefore not reluctant to state negative things about them. The strategy of hiding negative attitudes ceased to be necessary in this case. We suppose this is related to a high degree of social consensus, when "Arabs" and "Muslims" in the Czech Republic (Topinka et al. 2016) have become the target of collective hate in the public space.

The participants mentioned Arabs and their religion most frequently; with statements about them also being the most negative ones. All of their statements were connected with an image of violence and the threat that Islam posed according to them. The attitude towards Islam did not differ among the individual participants, being negative in all cases. Islam is perceived as the Arabic lifestyle, where all actions, behaviour, or thinking are realised under the influence of the religion. Islam became a fundamental problem for the participants, as the understanding of the faith was connected to Allah, who only encouraged violence through enforcing the faith. It followed that Arabs were only religious fanatics, and as such, could threaten the participants' lives.

> Well, I would be a bit afraid, like that they could harm me.
>
> *Stela, 65, accountant*

Another aspect pointed out in relation to Islam was the clothing of women, which was connected to one of the main symbols of the Islamic threat in present-day Europe. The participants perceived it as a threat, as well. Veiled women evoked negative feelings such as uncertainty, worries, or misunderstanding. They also aroused feelings of darkness and subordination, where a woman is subordinated to her husband, brother, or father. This strong gender inequality was seen as an important example of the incompatibility of Muslim culture with European standards.

> I really hate that those women are there like... um... veiled, that they have to be and they are inferior and I hate this the most about Islamic countries. That they are like a skivvy, like nobody! That only men everywhere.
>
> *Diana, 70, worker*

It is paradoxical that none of the participants had ever actually met anybody from Arabic countries, nor were they aware of any "Arabs" present in their surroundings. Despite this fact, they spoke about what Arabic people are like with great certainty. All characteristics of Arabs were significantly affected by the media images, which lead the participants to worry about potential contact with them as a dangerous ethnic group. On the basis of mediated experience, Arabs were attributed the essential quality of being "idlers", not adapting to anything at all, and, according to the participants, they "would never work in our country". The stereotypical view of these people, underlining their presumed quality of being "non-adaptive", can be clearly seen below:

> Yes, they would never adapt here, they'd want to be the masters and command, those Arabs.
>
> *Zora, 80, official*

It is very important to realise here that this perception does not merely display a completely negative attitude on the part of our participants, who are manipulated by the massive influence of the local media. We interpret this and similar sentences as a demonstration of the hidden and taken-for-granted dominance of white and European "natives". Unlike "Asians", who were perceived as submissive, "Arabs" did not fit into the power scheme of the participants as members of the "superior West". Arabic people, in their imagination, were escaping from the inferior position that is attributed to them. This supposed "ignorance of Western dominance" by "Arabs" was consequently perceived as a threat to the participants as Westerners. We believe that this may be an explanation for the massive surge of islamophobia in Central Europe targeted at anyone identified by the local population as a Muslim or an Arab.

From this point of view, we would like to explain one paradox and provide a different perspective on quantitative research, which is built upon the presentation of a scale of attitudes to various groups of foreigners living in the Czech Republic. We argue that this variability is not a manifestation of tolerance or at least a differentiating approach based on specific individuals. As demonstrated

above, the perception of non-European migrants is burdened by a strongly stereotypical view emphasising their group essence. This is related to their restricted place in the social space based on mutual separation, the limited opportunities of migrants, and their general subordination.

Participants shared essentially established opinions on the different races/ethnicities living in the Czech Republic and thus created, or confirmed, a specific scale of acceptance. This racial hierarchy is imagined – i.e. without a real basis, but real in its consequences through social performance, and is based on the idea of limited acceptance of the individual groups that are classified according to their alleged qualities in relation to the nationally delimited space. We believe that the key concept for the comprehension of allocation of the individual groups within this imaginary scheme of acceptance is their alleged submissiveness. While masked as the ability/willingness of migrants to learn Czech, work hard, or become invisible, understanding the interconnection of all of these with the ability to assimilate and the dominant position of the participants enables for an insight into the existing power-based conceptual framework. The "hard-working Vietnamese" and the "non-adaptive Arabs" are in fact only the two opposite sides of this limiting hierarchy and the imprint of this scheme in the collectively shared images by Czech seniors.[9]

This racial hierarchy is also in perfect harmony with the colour-blind approach: the seemingly differentiating view of migrants allows the speaker to manoeuvre extremely well and resist the accusation of being racist by pointing out those migrant groups which the speaker "does not mind". The effect of this strategy is a rhetorical emphasis on the alleged qualities of individuals belonging to vaguely defined racial categories, distracting attention from the subject matter – the dominance of white Europeans (Hall 1980). The position of the speaker, who in fact constructs the entire hierarchy by the requirements for assimilation, is thus being hidden.

Orientalism and Rejecting Migration

Because of this reason, we consider it important to involve the position of speakers (our participants) in this assessment of non-European groups in order to understand the nature of the expressed relationships. It is obvious that despite

[9] Alena Alamgir (2013) discusses a similar hierarchisation of minorities in the case of the Vietnamese and Roma people.

the expressed differences in opinions, the participants identified themselves with the Orientalist idea that they, as members of the West, occupied a significantly higher position in this described social hierarchy. It is particularly the concept of Orientalism that enables us to explain the form of cultural hegemony of the West over the East. The East, that is the non-Europeans, is considered a non-developed and intellectually immature region in need of the guardianship of the West (Barša 2011). According to Said, the issue of the Orient is in fact an issue of the West talking about "the Orient" as an undeveloped place incapable of modernisation (Said 1979). It is clear from the aforementioned facts, as well as from the following statements by the participants, that the mainstream's belief is that there is no other way than to cultivate the backward Orientals.

> *Interviewer*: So you say blacks have their own culture, how do you imagine it?
> *Participant*: Well, I don't know, but I think that today they are at last adapting, like to the Europeans here. In the past, we used to take them, or I used to take them as Africa, as a whole. Simply as an undeveloped place, like that they live there in some of those villages, in the rainforest. But now, when I see it on TV, there are now big cities, modern, you see. So, well, it is growing more alike.
>
> *Oskar, 83, foreman*

If we think about the meaning of the expression "at last", we come to the conclusion that the participant is evaluating and emphasising the long-term development of the East lagging behind the West. The superiority of the West is perceived as natural and inevitable. It should be noted that in this case, the topic is only the development of the "undeveloped" East, not colonialism, exploitation, or slavery.

Despite the acknowledgement of the development of countries outside Europe, the dominant framework into which "the Orientals" are placed is backwardness. This may be perceived in situations where an encounter with a foreigner disrupts routine cognitive schemes. One of the interviewed women vividly described her encounter with a dark-skinned man who asked her for advice on the street, having lost his way:

> Once I went from the shop, down the hill, and a car was moving along, a black one with black glass. The car pulled to a stop and there was a Negro inside... But he was black, like really totally black, like... Well and when he rolled down the window, I became really startled, I was really startled by him and he was asking me

> something. And I was so unhinged that I wasn't able to answer. And he started to roll up the window and told me 'you see black man' and something like that I was being unhelpful and he left. But I wanted to help him, but I was so startled by him and I was so surprised, so alarmed... and he was offended. But he was some kind of classy one; he was looking for something.
>
> *Stela, 65, accountant*

This passage documents the shock from otherness and the subsequent distance described earlier. The woman was taken aback because she experienced a difference in her familiar environment. Also of interest is that the critical component of the surprise is not merely the presence of a visually different person, but the entire situational context – an expensive car, smart clothes – raised a cognitive dissonance with the deeply rooted idea that a dark-skinned man is a poor person dependent on the help of others.

The presupposition of the West's superiority over the East has even influenced the perception of the position which migrants might occupy within the Czech society. In the view of the participants, they are excluded into non-attractive occupations under the supervision of Czech workers, and this position is perceived as natural and fair. Any crossing of this delimited space is, similarly to the cognitive dissonance mentioned above, commented on with incomprehension, or even condemnation, as in the case of one participant irritated by the fact that after 1989, his Vietnamese co-workers wanted to abandon shift work and start a business.

> Well, the Vietnamese, I used to call all of them Vietcong, well, these people, not that they would not work at all. But as soon as they got to know the job [i.e. working position in the factory] and found out after a short time – one or two months, they came to me pleading that they wanted to leave, that they didn't want to work in shifts. And so they understood it in some way that they can come here and can do whatever they want, but they didn't understand that it's not like that.
>
> *Balthasar, 87, foreman*

This statement may be interpreted as an illustration of thinking based on a clear separation of citizens of one country, on the basis of the belonging principle, from foreigners, who constitute the subordinate group. From the participant's point of view, the main issue is their own agency, which could remove them from their subordinate position. The existence of foreigners is

admitted exclusively in terms of power and control, but not in the form of social equality.

The participants presented without embarrassment a fairly hard statement of assimilation, and their willingness to accept members of a different ethnicity to their country under the specific conditions set by them. It can be stated that they are willing to offer equality to those intending to be like "us" – Czechs – and adapt to the system of our society. In case of cultural assimilation, this involves mastering the Czech language, as well as a compliance with the customs of society, such as respecting the alleged belief that religion does not belong in the public space. Apart from this, another demand is complete inclusion in the labour market as working migrants, whose presence is a benefit to the economic system of the receiving country (similar results show Šmídová – Vávra – Čížek 2017).

A minority insisting on a complete, or at least a partial, preservation of their own culture is considered an enemy, with their chance for tolerance by mainstream society decreasing rapidly. The participants in this study believed that co-existence with such "enemies" was impossible, and therefore required an obliteration of the difference or at least its detachment from the public space. For an ethnic group of non-European origin to be tolerated in the Czech Republic, there is a demand for its social subordination, which shall be manifested in its assignment to a particular narrow segment of work, as could be seen above in case of the perception of controlled migration from the countries of the former Socialist block.

In their attitudes towards migrants, the participants reproduced this directive approach based on their own dominance:

> If he [a Vietnamese worker] wanted to leave for a different position, I'd try to emphatically explain to him where his place is. And he'd better stay in that place.
>
> *Balthasar, 87, foreman*

If, from the viewpoint of the Czech majority, the immigrants decided not to respect the conditions for assimilation expected from them, the participants are willing to accept them here only for a certain amount of time. The immigrants were thus perceived as visitors coming to the Czech Republic for a better education or better economic situation, or fleeing a war conflict for a certain time. Their behaviour was consequently expected to reflect this, as the participants considered them only visitors here. Longer co-existence without their assimilation was out of the question.

> Well, I'd take them as visitors, but they visit you and behave here as if they were at home. They don't understand they're only visitors here.
>
> *Oskar, 83, foreman*

The image of an immigrant as a short-term visitor corresponded fully with the requirement for forced assimilation. Any otherness present in Czech society is for the research participants thus "put into its place" and is admitted only temporarily. It should become "a sponge" absorbing the influence of the dominant and superior culture, which the temporary migrants later use in the country of their origin, to where they are expected to obediently return.

> Well, when they just come from their country for a visit, a holiday, or to spend some time with a family for instance, then I agree. But... or to study here or for internships, that's alright, but when they leave the country when there's misery and poverty and they are just searching for something better somewhere else, they should search for something better where they are, they should be helped where they are. They'd better stay in their country and be provided with what they need or be helped so that they can live in their country and could... Well, because they simply know that environment and I think that everyone feels best at home, in their own place.
>
> *Alice, 83, worker*

It is apparent from the cited passage to what extent it is influenced by the practice of controlled migration in the socialist era, which focused on help to "fellow countries" in the form of educating future experts. What is more interesting in our view, however, is the fact that this statement can work fully in the present public discourse, which is based on the legitimisation of anti-immigration and nationalist attitudes (Foner – Simon 2015; Horáková Hirschlerová 2017). The demand within the current surge for the self-determination of nationally delimited entities thus coexists well with reflections of internationally targeted help to countries of the Third World during the Cold War. There is a clearly evident rejection of migration as a relevant social phenomenon. If this ahistorical belief is embedded in the context of the history of emigration from the Czech Lands in the twentieth century, the selectivity of the historical memory, based on significant social distinctiveness, makes a bizarre impression.

The research participants expressed their alleged helplessness in situations connected to the perceived increase in the number of immigrants and their "non-adaptability" and to the political situation in the Czech Republic,

which they cannot influence in any way. They also understood immigration as a manifestation of retribution to the white people for the past colonisation of the immigrants' original territory, and they simultaneously fear that the immigrants are coming to the Czech Republic to gain what was taken from them in the past. The participants deliberately put themselves into the position of a victim in order to legitimise their anti-immigration mood. They thus reversed the power hierarchy: the "rightful citizens" rhetorically put themselves into a worse position than the socially vulnerable migrants. They talked with high modality about the fact that the "immigrants" wanted to assume the power in the state through violence (those practices are mostly ascribed to "Arabs"). This is the reason why instead of sympathy and the effort to empathise with the situation of the immigrants, they stylised themselves into the position of victims and saw migration more like an invasion:

> Well, and then, when they [people from former colonised countries] recover, they'll assassinate all of us white people here. Europe will come to this anyway. But if you take it like that... Well, the whites also used to occupy all of the countries.
>
> *Maxim, 72, worker*

Conclusion

It would be a mistake either to perceive Czech seniors as a generation of racists on the one hand, or as passive victims of historical developments, including xenophobic media and politicians, on the other. This study offers a more complex view, and points out more how perception frames of otherness are reproduced on the basis of the idea of a community claiming a rightful demand on an exclusively shared space. This imaginary of belonging comprises the dominance of the Czech – and in the wider perspective also the European and the white – national and cultural identity. Throughout the research, we were repeatedly surprised by the great level of cohesion among the individual accounts of our participants, who represent a sample of seniors from one Moravian town. The significant saturation of the sample and the minimal occurrence of different opinions can be interpreted as a consequence of a deeply rooted and widely shared belief of the superiority of an identity-defined nation and white race. This self-positioning as a member of western (white) civilisation in relation to the people of non-European origin is stronger than any differences between the participants in the sample.

The participants distance themselves from otherness through creating the "us" image as something deeply different than "them". In our paper, we focus on the underlying mechanisms in the participants' reasoning in which they take a predominantly negative attitude towards foreigners. It is of interest that although the majority of participants have no deeper contact with members of the three groups discussed above, these people nevertheless pose a problem for them. The reason may be found in the conceptualisation of otherness itself. The way in which the participants build the image of people of non-European "origin" obviously tempts them to, a priori, perceive "them" as an issue. Those labelled as the "racial other" have also little opportunity to leave this framework, because the distancing in the social praxis presents a trap from which they cannot escape.

In this respect, the participants' rhetorical strategies presented in the study are understood as a way of legitimising attitudes towards non-European immigrants, which are based on the requirement of separation and assimilation. Thanks to this legitimisation, the requirements for non-European migrants are presented as completely justified and natural: they obtain the implication of normality. The colour-blind approach through the emphasis on the imaginary neutrality of testimonies also helps to cover a significant power asymmetry between speakers and immigrants. Pressure in the form of the requirement for the assimilation of any otherness is not in any contradiction to the differentiation of attitudes to individual nationalities, because only those groups are accepted that are perceived as willing to accept the rules of the game set by the dominating natives. A field of interest for further research is the way in which the allocation of different racial and ethnic groups into the framework of the imagined racial hierarchy influences the particular social interactions of various actors by – even in the context of the generally inferior position – partially privileging some, while stigmatising, others.

Nicola Raúl is a graduate of Cultural Anthropology and French Philology at Palacký University in Olomouc, where she currently continues in her master's studies. Her interest is focused on everyday racism, questions of power, and post-colonial studies. Last year, she received the Rector's Award of Palacký University for the best academic bachelor's thesis.

Jaroslav Šotola is Assistant Professor at the Department of Sociology, Andragogy and Cultural Anthropology, Palacký University in Olomouc. He earned a Ph.D. in

Anthropology at Charles University in Prague. His main fieldwork experience is from Roma neighbourhoods in eastern Slovakia. He is co-author of the book *Ethnography of the Social Mobility. Ethnicity, Barriers and Dominancy*, which focused on the upwards social mobility of Roma people from Slovakia. Besides this ethnographic research, he is also interested in qualitative research methodology, Muslims in the Czech Republic, and the informal initiatives and international volunteers helping the refugees on the "Balkan route".

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SKILLED LABOUR MIGRATION: A PROPOSAL OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY OF EXPATRIATES IN BRNO[1]

Daniel Topinka – Petr Lang – Olga Čejková – Michaela Ondrašinová

Abstract: ***Expatriates are one type of international skilled labour migration. This text will focus on conceptualising and defining categories of expatriates for research purposes. A closer examination requires a definition that reflects theoretical definitions, but also takes into account the local delimitation and even the self-concept of the immigrants themselves. In this text, these perspectives are laid out side by side. Our conceptualisation is comprised of four basic attributes that refer to the centre of personal life (life strategies), the temporary aspect of residence, professional or working skills, and the motivation to migrate. At the local level, the Brno Expat Centre (BEC) operating in the South Moravian Region, is monopolistically involved in the definition of expatriates on a practical scale. The processes of globalisation- and trans-nationalisation have led to the diversification of forms of labour migration, which, together with interdisciplinarity, has resulted in a considerable ambiguity of terms and concepts. Thus, for research purposes, one must bear in mind that despite the uniform designation, we are dealing with a very diversified phenomenon. If expatriates are distinguished from skilled migrants, we usually emphasise the undefined length of their stay as opposed to permanent residence and the very important self-concept of expatriates. Brno has become one of the most important places of concentration of expats in the Czech Republic. From the pre-research of the Indian expats case, it shows that the different transnational strategies are very diverse. For further research, it is important to explore the social and demographic characteristics of expats, and we need qualitative research that focuses on the structural conditions of the life of expats and the self-evaluation of expats themselves,***

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considering ethno-cultural factors and gender. Their family members also cannot be ignored.

Keywords: ***skilled migration; expatriate; conceptualisation of labour migration; adaptation of expatriates; Indian expatriates***

Introduction – Skilled Labour Migration

The intensifying globalisation processes, led by the expansion of the capitalist economy, and the continuous development of technology infrastructures that allow for the rapid overcoming of huge distances, are among the most important factors that, in the long run, are behind the growing volume of international labour migration. Although labour migration represents a phenomenon in academia that research attention has been devoted to for decades, researchers rather examine unskilled or less-skilled migration (and, in addition, mostly from the global South to the global North) much more systematically than skilled or highly qualified migration. This has placed some constraints on studying migration as a whole, and has limited our discovery process a bit. "Consequently, one critique of mainstream Migration Studies literatures might be that they are producing somewhat skewed notions of 'who migrants are', leading to rather particular and limited notions of the migration process as a whole" (Fechter – Walsch 2010: 1198). On the other hand, "migrants (...) at the bottom of the economic scale (...) have been largely ignored in business literature, which concentrates on highly skilled and privileged migrants, often discussed in terms of brain drain and brain gain" (McNulty – Brewster 2018: 39).

The beginning of the establishment of research activities focused on the migration of skilled workers can be dated to the early 1990s (Vertovec 2002: 2). At present, such studies are part of many different disciplines within a wider range of social sciences – starting with sociology, anthropology, psychology, on to social geography and ending with disciplines such as business studies, (international) human resources, and enterprise management (Przytuła 2015: 93), for which, compared to other disciplines, the interest in the given category of migrants is undoubtedly the liveliest. The diversification of research orientations in the listed disciplines, hand in hand with the diversification of forms of labour migration, is obviously manifested by considerable conceptual diversity, which can sometimes make things a bit confusing (McNulty – Brewster 2018: 21).

Astrid Eich-Krohm (2014) states that highly skilled migrants are distinguished by having special skills, subject to their field of study and higher education. She links highly skilled migration to the dynamic development of the global economy over the last fifty years. Researchers have focused on key actors in the migration process: the nation-state, multinational corporations, and the migrants themselves. This phenomenon does not only apply to developing countries, but it also affects developed countries, and is part of the global competition for highly skilled employees. It involves many aspects, such as the strategy of nation-states or the individual motivation of migrants in terms of career development. Although at first glance, highly skilled migration may look like "successful" migration, it is affected by the dynamics of global labour markets, such as discrimination, unemployment, the offshoring of skilled jobs, and non-transferable degrees.[2] Conditions for this category evolve over time, and often change rapidly according to new information technologies. Emerging markets create new incentives and lead to the relocation of workers on a global scale.

There is also a change in the gender distribution for migration, but despite the increasing share of migrant women, this area has not been explored much thus far (Docquier, Lowell, Marfouk 2009). According to Astrid Eich-Krohm (2014), the ethnicity of migrants is also influencing the formation of supply and demand – and it also affects their acceptance and integration in new environments. The definition of the concept of highly skilled migration is rather problematic, especially if it is derived exclusively from the tertiary education of migrants; the concept itself has many variations and uses different classifications. Critics of the term *highly skilled migration* generally point to the fact that the term refers to various forms of transnational elites, transnational knowledge workers, skilled transients, qualified immigrants, or immigrant professionals (McNulty – Brewster 2018: 39, Nowicka 2014).

Expatriates are usually also considered as one of the types of skilled migration. Our study will focus on them. Our text deals with the possibility of exploring in depth the so-called expatriates in the city of Brno. It reacts to the fact that since 1989, the Czech Republic has become an immigration state, whereby the dominant type of migration is work migration, and so far, little data and information has been collected about the economic and social impacts of the activities of these migrants (Drbohlav 2010: 110). Economic immigration

[2] Compared to their status in their home country, many migrants experience an improvement, but in reality, they will retain a worse status and worse conditions than the domestic population.

has gradually developed in urban agglomerations and industrial zones, and one of the most important places that has become attractive for labour migration is the city of Brno.

Our text is a preparation for broader research of the expatriates residing in Brno, and it aims to describe this category and aims to understand the various aspects of their residing and life in the city. Therefore, the following text is rather descriptive and also contains qualitative pre-research.

First of all, with the help of specialised literature, we will introduce the conceptual definition of expatriates, and afterwards we will compare it with related categories of labour migrants. Following this, we will introduce the expert definition of expatriates of the Brno Expat Centre, which has been providing consultation services to expatriates in Brno since 2010. At the same time, we will place this actor's definition into juxtaposition to our definition, which is used in professional literature. And in the last part of our text, we will present the first results of our qualitative research in the environment of Indian expatriates in Brno, which aims at understanding the basic aspects of life of these expatriates, summarising the relevant topics, which are important for these persons, and collecting information for the creation of a hypothesis for the subsequent quantitative research.

The Conceptual Framework of Expatriates

As has already been suggested, there are a great number of ways of categorising international labour migration; it depends on the criteria that the researchers attribute crucial importance to, and those which they, on the contrary, choose to neglect. This, of course, also applies to the category of expatriates. In order to bring the specificity of the category of expatriates more to the surface, we contrast it with two other categories of labour migration: sojourners and frequent travellers, which, although they should be analytically distinguished, in some cases are mixed in with expatriates. This passage will thus contribute to bringing the necessary conceptual clarity.

Expatriates

The word expatriate comes from the Latin word "expatriatus" where "ex" means "out" and "patriā" means "homeland" (Przytuła 2015: 94). "In the last century, the term 'expatriate' was historically used to describe Westerners who have lived abroad for varying lengths of time (...), including artists, musicians,

colonials, writers (...), and generally anyone else (...) with a mission of some kind" (McNulty – Brewster 2018: 22). Contemporary English dictionaries define the meaning of expatriate or expat as "a person who lives outside their native country" (e.g. the Oxford Dictionary[3]). This broad meaning is narrowed down by some socio-scientific dictionaries to a meaning that underlines the importance of labour qualification: "A person settled outside their country of origin (... and in practice) the term is generally applied to professionals, skilled workers, or artists from affluent countries (...), rather than all immigrants in general" (Castree et al. 2013: 143). It may well be seen in this context that it moreover reflects the idea that expatriates are often limited to migrants from the rich "West", and/or that they are migrants from the higher social strata.[4] However, the current course of research in the matter of expatriates systematically disrupts this notion, since it no longer focuses solely on "Westerners" and "elites" (Scott 2006).

In expert discussions, the category of expatriates is most often defined with respect to four basic attributes. The first two attributes relate to the type of stay abroad and the planned length of stay. In principle, it can be stated that the new residence becomes "the centre of their personal life" for expatriates, but the intended length of stay abroad is planned as short or as long-term, yet in any case temporary and not permanent (e.g. Gärtner – Drbohlav 2012: 386; von Koppenfels 2014: 24; Przytuła 2015: 104). The third attribute takes into account the level of professional or working skills and, as mentioned above, they are usually qualified or highly qualified migrants (e.g. Gärtner – Drbohlav 2012a: 386; Gatti 2009: 13).

The fourth attribute – the motivation to migrate – must be described in more detail, because expatriates are divided into two sub-categories based on it: assigned expatriates and self-initiated expatriates. A so-called traditional expatriate is considered to be an expatriate sent abroad by his employer (mostly a multinational corporation) to take up a job in one of the employer's branches in

[3] See the link: https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/expatriate

[4] This historical legacy, which the concept of expatriate still bears in many respects, is often criticised based of the use of this term in professional discourse. (Fechter – Walsch 2010) In some cases, even foreigners (expatriates) themselves distance themselves from the use of the concept or designation of expatriate, most often because they attribute a negative connotation to it. (Fechter 2007: 3–6; Cranston 2017) However, there are cases where migrants expressly enjoy this labelling. (Fechter 2007: 3–4) Researchers should therefore be cautious because of the nature of their work, as Fechter expresses it pointedly (2007: 6), "the term 'expatriate' is socially contested, politically and morally charged, ambiguous, and is linked to particular notions of ethnicity and class."

the host country and work on a predetermined task. For this type of expatriates, specialised literature has adopted the term assigned (or organisational) expatriates (AEs). The second sub-category, which appeared in specialised literature for the first time in the late 1990s (Bonache et al. 2010: 268) and which is currently widely used, is the term "self-initiated expatriate" (Doherty – Dickmann, Mills 2011; Przytuła 2015; McNulty – Brewster 2018). These expatriates "take responsibility for their careers without the direct support of (any) organization (... thus, as we have mentioned above) the key distinction between SIEs and AEs is the initiative for the move" (Przytuła 2015: 96). One thing can be said about the category of expatriates as a whole: although the overwhelming majority of research focuses on expatriates in the private sector, many researchers now extend the research boundaries to the public sector, including government officials, army officers, university educators, etc. (Fechter 2007: 2; Przytuła 2015: 95). In any case, expatriates receive wages for their work.

Expatriates compared to sojourners and frequent travellers

It has already been said that the forms of labour migration are undergoing a diversification process. For this reason, it is necessary to analytically separate the category of expatriates from related forms of labour migration in order to avoid confusing them. The first related category consists of sojourners. A more comprehensive definition states:

> people who voluntarily and temporarily travel to a foreign country for a non-business purpose such as short-term unpaid missionary and charity work, tourism, exile, education, retirement, or simply to see and experience the world (...). Sojourners may work – in legal or illegal paid employment – but do so predominantly, and often intermittently, to fund their travels and/or stay, as in the case of a gap year before or after university, or during retirement. Like expatriates, sojourners do not travel abroad for the purposes of permanent settlement. Sojourners include students studying abroad who may do so for a few weeks, a semester or their entire degree. (McNulty – Brewster 2018: 37)

The main difference between expatriates and sojourners is thus that any work done in the host country is not paid; and when it is paid, the sojourner will invest these means into further travel and/or will cover their stay before leaving the country. From the definition, it is also clear that migrants who do not work at all in the host country are also included in this category of sojourners.

The second category of migrant workers, which needs to be distinguished from expatriates, are frequent travellers (sometimes referred to as flexpatriates). They are workers who "travel to a foreign country for a purpose determined by their work role (...), but they only stay there for a short time, usually ranging from a few hours and overnight to a few days or weeks (...). This includes those typically conceived as executives travelling in business class and staying in good-quality hotels whilst they visit subsidiary operations of their company, or customers or suppliers" (McNulty – Brewster 2018: 39).[5]

The proposed definitions are not complete and cannot be complete. In fact, the designation "expats" contains various life circumstances and internally different categories of persons. As written in the *Research Handbook of Expatriates* (2018), there are several types of expatriates, such as self-initiated expatriates, LGBTI expatriates, inpatriates, female expatriates, millennial expatriates, international business travellers, and others. Expatriates also differ in their specialisation and the environments in which they operate.

If expatriates are distinguished from skilled migrants, it is usually the undefined duration of their stay that is emphasised as opposed to permanent residency, which is characteristic for skilled migrants and the self-image of expatriates who consider their stay as temporary and initiated by their own will (McNulty – Brewster 2018: 39). Skilled migration is associated with a more complex form of migration, where the migrant goes through the entire migration process, developing a long-term or permanent conception of stay. It happens on a more individual basis, while being more privileged and desirable.

Trends and Research Options

Astrid Eich-Krohm (2014) states that the research on highly skilled migration offers several fundamental issues. These are brain drain processes, detailed analyses, and comparative analyses. In addition to structural change, the micro-level, the motivation to migrate and possibly the motivation for returning, discrimination, gender and age issues, the impacts of migration on migrants' lives, adaptation processes (not only the migrants themselves, but also their families), and cultural identity are also of importance. There is theoretical contribution related to assimilation and transnationalism theories. Phyllis Tharenou

[5] If for expatriates the host country becomes the "centre of their personal life", which in many cases highlights the fact that their partners, and even children, join them in the host country, this does not apply for frequent traveller.

(2018), in a text oriented on the methodological aspects of expatriate studies, compares the research methods used in three categories: assigned expatriates, self-initiated expatriates, and skilled (im)migrants. They represent different forms of long-term skilled international mobility. When analysing empirical studies, she notes four different components. For us, the first is important for now: conceptualisation. Studies usually distinguish the three above-mentioned categories. Assigned expatriates are professionals or managers trained by their organisation, which arranges and supports the move, and, at the end of a set period (1-5 years), they are usually repatriated back. Self-initiated expatriates are professionals or managers who move abroad temporarily on their own initiative to seek work. They move without the support of an organisation, usually for over a year. They repatriate, often within a decade. Skilled (im)migrants are managers, professionals, or technicians who usually hold a tertiary degree or other advanced qualification, and move on their own accord from one country to another, intending to settle over the long-term or permanently. Although this is a fairly simple division, the reality is more complex. Contextual definitions, researcher preferences, overlapping concepts and interpretations of individual dimensions and relationships between concepts play their part. We also find inconsistent interpretations within these three categories, which should lead researchers to a more careful conceptualisation that is related to the quality of research.

What types of direction in expatriate research can be observed? Kathrin J. Hanek (2018) states that the challenge is, above all, individual differences in cultural identity, and she highlights the development of bicultural identities, the creation of "third cultures" and adaptation processes. She emphasises mainly the themes of creativity, the formation of new cultures, and intercultural competences.[6]

Expatriates in the Czech Republic and in Brno

Only a few academic studies on expatriates in the Czech Republic have been carried out in recent years. Let us look at the themes that were discussed in these texts. In her text "How Americans see the Czech society", Lucie Hrdličková (2008) dealt with Americans who had moved to Prague at the turn of the millennium for

[6] Traditional research focuses on the expatriate cycle: selection, training, relocation and adjustment, pay and performance, and return. Other directions and topics of expatriate research are, for example, the management of expatriates or expatriation processes in regions (Morley – Heraty – Collings 2006).

a temporary stay to gather experiences, wanting to live in a European country for a while, to teach English, play theatre, or to study here, using stays at universities or other schools for this. Besides this, business people also appeared – some being representatives or ambassadors for companies and international corporations. The study focused on the American view of Czech society and on the interaction of Americans with it. In terms of our topic, paragraphs dealing with self-evaluation and the assessment of professional career opportunities in the Czech Republic are especially interesting. The author also examined the wives of expatriates. Věra Rádyová (2006) focused on French managers and their reflections on the Czech environment. She studied managers working in Czech companies in management positions. It is an ethnographic study that conveys the concept of the French managers' own position as foreigners in a specific position, and presents their reflection on the Czech environment – both socially and culturally. She observed the forms of interaction between foreigners in leading positions and the Czech employees of companies, which point to the trans-nationalisation of corporate culture in the Czech Republic and the typical phenomena of expatriates in the Czech labour market. From the point of view of expatriates, the most important are the reflections on interpersonal relationships in and outside of the workplace, the working and social environment, and the self-concept of French people as progress bearers. The expats in the study "have accepted their job in Central Europe as part of their career path or as their first job, or possibly as one of the forms of civil service or volunteer work." (Rádyová 2006: 107) Two other texts from authors Michal Gärtner and Dušan Drbohlav (2012a, 2012b) deal with expatriate acculturation in the Czech environment. The acculturation of expatriate executive managers was examined in a sample of 16 sojourners transferring managerial know-how to companies in Czechia, using a structured longitudinal interview survey including in-depth personal interviews. The interviews were conducted six and 18 months after the arrival of respondents in Czechia. The respondents were contacted as they became available during the period 2006 to 2010. The results indicate that acculturation of sojourners in Czechia proceeded, as expected, according to international literature, broadly in line with Hofstede's acculturation "U" curve. The qualitative analysis points to several problems as dependence on communication in English, cultural distance, lack of openness limiting the Czech ability to form a broader world view, lack of mutual respect among Czech co-workers, a degree of Czech xenophobia, and an underestimation of certain predictors of successful acculturation, such as social engagement with the Czech hosts.

The selected studies share that they are empirical and are devoted to expats in different environments. They illustrate the different kinds of expat segments that can be encountered.

Expatriates in Brno: From numbers to the definition

The statistical data of the Czech Statistical Office shows that the number of foreigners in Brno is growing. In 2017 (as of March 31, 2017), 28,072 foreigners resided in Brno, while in 2013, the number of foreigners was 22,099. This is an increase of 27%. Between 2013 and 2017, the number of foreigners has increased, foreigners being both from the EU and non-EU countries.[7] As of March 31, 2017, foreigners from a total of 150 countries were living in the city of Brno. This represents a very varied spectrum of foreigners. The top ten most numerous nationalities in the city of Brno are made up of citizens of four EU countries (Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Poland), and citizens from outside the European Union: the Ukraine, Vietnam, Russia, the USA, India, and Kazakhstan. Foreigners are economically very active. As of December 31, 2016, a total of 35,613 foreign nationals were active on the labour market in Brno[8]. The 4,203 foreigners with a business license must also be added to this number. Thus, we can say that at the end of 2016, there were 39,816 legal foreign workers in Brno's labour market.

The fact is that the total number of foreigners in the labour market in Brno has been growing rapidly since 2011 – mainly due to the increasing number of workers from EU countries. The structure of foreigners on the labour market changed during the economic crisis in 2008. While the number of EU and third-country workers in 2008 was almost equal, currently almost four-fifths of foreigners registered by labour offices are EU or EEA citizens. Thus, the economic recession has, to some extent, caused the arrival of foreigners who do not need a work permit. Almost two-thirds of foreigners in the labour market of Brno are EU, EEA, or Swiss citizens.[9] Thanks to the fact that Brno is a university city, there is also a growing proportion of highly qualified Slovaks who

[7] Foreigners residing in Brno mainly come from non-EU countries (63%), but we see a more progressive increase for foreigners coming from EU countries (a 42.2% increase from 2013 to 2017). For non-EU foreigners, there was an increase of 19.6%.

[8] Report on the situation on the regional labor market, implementation of active labor policies (APZ) in 2016 and labor strategies for 2017.

[9] The largest share of this labour force is attributed to citizens of Slovakia, who are most often employed as workers in engineering, construction, and agriculture. Moreover, due to the absence of language barriers, they also find opportunities in business, services, and healthcare.

remain here after graduation and look for a job (e.g. doctors or IT specialists). In the case of foreigners from other EU countries, they are a highly qualified workforce, with IBM being the largest employer of foreigners. Among non-European foreigners, Indians are also employed here. Other foreigners also work in the city of Brno in highly qualified positions, especially as managers, foreign language teachers, and university professors and educators. The educational profile of foreigners also points to the presence of a highly qualified workforce: almost one third of all foreigners in Brno have a university degree.

Statistical data points to the presence of so-called expats in Brno, however, there is a lack of information about their application in the labour market and their needs. On the other hand, statistics show that the Czech Republic is one of the leading countries considered as a popular destination for expats from all over the world; in 2017, it ranked 11th in popularity of countries in the Expat Explorer international survey.

As we have already mentioned, the conceptualisation of highly skilled migration as well as expatriates is problematic. In the case of expatriates living in Brno, there is no academic definition yet. This is mainly because the category of expatriates has not become the subject of more comprehensive research, whether qualitative or quantitative. Two sources that are involved in somehow defining the city's expatriates play an important role on the practical level. In the first place, they are statistical data, which provide a quantitative dimension (albeit with considerable limits) based on migrant education data and the qualifications they hold. Secondly, in practice, there is a definition of expatriates produced by the Brno Expat Center (BEC), which offers their services to the said group of people. This conceptualisation may not be overlooked because it has a communication aspect, it has penetrated the wider environment of local actors, and it can also take part in the self-concept of expatriates who use the services of this organisation.

Let us first look at the statistical data. According to data from the Labour Office of the Czech Republic, of the foreigners registered by the Labour Office in the Brno-City District as of December 31, 2017, 8,796 persons hold the highest level of education (including a master's degree and higher). The proportion of those highly educated is thus about a quarter of all registered (25.4%). As a point in case, on the opposite end of the scale, there are 6,515 persons with just basic education, i.e. less than a fifth of all registered (18.8%).[10] However, we cannot

[10] The figure that highlights the importance of gender research shows that 5,184 men and 3,612 women are among the highest educated people. Within the category with the highest education, we find 41% to be women.

interpret the situation by designating all persons belonging to the category with the highest level of education as expats.

More precise information is provided by one of the most widely used expatriate definition criteria, which is employment in a position requiring high professional qualification. In this respect, the Czech version of the CZ-ISCO international categorisation of employment can be used, namely its first three categories: (1) legislators and managers, (2) specialists, (3) technical and professional staff. The table below lists the sums for different categories of expats. By December 31, 2017, the number of expats amounted to 13,923. Compared to the situation as of December 31, 2010, when there were 6,101 expats in Brno, their number has more than doubled. Female representation is around one third: 32.9% in 2010 and 33.9% in 2017.

Table 1: Summary of expatriate employees in Brno (foreigners from categories CZ-ISCO 1–3)

	at 31. 12. 2010		**at 31. 12. 2017**	
	Males, Females	**Females**	**Males, Females**	**Females**
Expatriates – EU/EEA and Switzerland	4 971	1 684	11 396	3 904
Expatriates – others, do not need a work permit	481	173	1 561	623
Expatriates with a permit	649	152	966	192
Employee card	×	×	897	185
A work permit	643	152	48	3
Blue Card	×	×	21	4
Green Card	6	×	×	×
Total (registrations of expatriates at labour offices)	**6 101**	**2 009**	**13 923**	**4 719**

Source: Úřad práce Brno-město.

If we look at the most common nationalities within this classification, we find that the most numerous categories are people from Slovakia, followed by Romania, Russia, the Ukraine, and Poland. Other nationalities are represented by just dozens of people. Outside of the European Union, four nationalities are dominant: Russia, the Ukraine, India, and the USA.

Table 2: Expatriate employees (category CZ-ISCO 1–3) according to the most common nationalities in the city of Brno as of December 31, 2017.

non-EU	**Males, Females**	**Females**
1. Slovakia	8 155	3 041
2. Romania	529	202
3. Russia √	389	177
4. Ukraine √	377	169
5. Poland	340	132
6. Italy	313	62
7. Greece	284	62
8. United Kingdom	264	30
9. India √	254	43
10. Spain	221	48
11. Bulgaria	218	69
12. France	181	29
13. Germany	164	46
14. USA √	149	30
15. Hungary	139	38
Total others	1 946	541
Total (registrations of expatriates at labour offices)	**13 923**	**4 719**

Source: Úřad práce Brno-město.

As of the end of 2016, 4,203 foreigners were registered with the Business Licensing Office in Brno, but it is not possible to tell the percentage of expatriate business people from the available statistics, i.e. foreigners doing business in highly qualified sectors.

The second source of data is the aforementioned Brno Expat Center (BEC), which specialises in providing services to expatriates. First, we will deal with the definition that this organisation is successfully promoting in the city environment. Then we will present some figures.

Next, let us turn to one of the examples of a definition of expatriate in the Czech Republic within a specialised organisation operating in the South Moravian Region, which is unique in the Czech Republic. The Brno Expat Centre (BEC)[11],

[11] https://www.brnoexpatcentre.eu

established in 2010 and based in Brno, is an economic instrument of the city of Brno and the South Moravian Region, whose role is to support the interest of foreign investors to relocate their activities to the South Moravian Region, and thus to develop strategic economic sectors of the region. At the same time, it should be mentioned that Brno is one of the places most affected by immigration and its consequences in the Czech Republic. The nearly 30,000 foreigners in the city account for more than 7% of the population, and expatriates constitute an important category that cannot be neglected in integration strategies (Analysis of social services for foreigners in the city of Brno 2018: 241). The primary client of BEC are thus the South Moravian Region, the city of Brno, and on the basis of contractual partnerships, also the foreign investors doing business in certain strategic fields, for whose employees (but not exclusively) BEC provides advisory and assistance services. BEC is a sub-project of the *Regional Innovation Strategy of the South Moravian Region* (RIS JMK) valid for 2014–2020. According to this strategy, BEC's stated objective is to "provide support to expatriates, i.e. to highly qualified foreigners who work or plan to work in Brno" (RIS JMK 2014: 47).[12]

Given that BEC is the only organisation working with the category of expatriates, it is interesting to observe how it conceptualises this category and what kind of implications it has for our topic. That is why we turned to one of the BEC executives who, during a research interview, defined the expatriate category as follows:

> These are foreigners who come to Brno to work in the knowledge economy, mainly in research and development and for international companies. (...) So we're talking about big corporations like IBM, Infosys, AT&T, Red Hat, Honeywell, Lufthansa, and Kiwi. They are recognisable by the fact that they speak English – English being their working language[13], which also differs them from people of the same nationality, same income class and same education, but who are working for a Czech or a foreign company, but who use a non-English working language.

[12] In another document of the South Moravian Region, the *Human Resources Development Strategy of the South Moravian Region 2016-2025,* it is also stated that "for the economy of the region it is (...) important to create conditions for the life of qualified foreign workers", whereby BEC is mentioned as an important player in this respect, which provides institutional support for the integration of such foreign workers (GaREP 2016: 112).

[13] In that regard, it must be added that BEC is essentially focusing on expatriates with English language skills, which is also given by the language skills of the BEC staff.

> That is one recognisable feature. Another is that they are skilled. (...) they have completed at least their secondary education and work in skilled positions with average or above average earnings.
>
> *Representative of BEC*

In the quote, when defining a prototype expatriate, the BEC representative attaches relevance to the attributes of work skills, education, language skills, as well as the fact that expatriates are usually employees of a large multinational corporation. When it comes to an expatriate arriving in Brno sent by their company, BEC calls them "core expatriates" – we have coined the term "assigned expatriate" for them.

For a certain number of expatriates, especially young graduates, Brno is not the "final destination", but, rather, they come here for the temporary acquisition of work and life experience:

> Brno is not their final destination, it is more a transfer station where they come after college or even when looking for a career, they gain experience here, and some remain, but most of them move on again or just return back home. (...).
>
> *Representative of BEC*

For the presented conceptual definition of expatriates further in this text, the aspect of "intended length of stay abroad" plays an important role; we do not consider those foreigners who intend to stay abroad for a long time as expatriates. However, it is not entirely clear from the interview with the BEC representative what plans for staying in Brno their clients actually have. We can see room for exploring this area through empirical research. On the other hand, it is obvious that for BEC clients, the city of Brno becomes "the centre of their personal life". According to BEC, most expatriates arrive alone – as singles, however, some come with their family, or they establish their family in the second largest city of the Czech Republic.

Thus, to summarise the most important characteristics of expatriates, as defined by BEC, they are mostly foreigners who come to work in multinational companies operating within the strategic economic sectors of the South Moravian Region. These foreigners are usually sent here by their employer (assigned expatriates) or they come from their own initiative (self-initiated expatriates). They either come alone, with their family, or they find a partner here, or they establish a family with a partner who joins them here. The communication

and working language of these foreigners is English. This also means that they do not need to learn the Czech language, but on the other hand, because English is enough for them in their ordinary working and social life, they often encounter a language barrier in the Czech environment (life situations when visiting authorities or in general contact with the Czech majority). These foreigners have completed their secondary and tertiary education, and are looking for medium to highly qualified positions. A specific feature for BEC is the fact that its target group also includes foreigners who only use English in their work and social life, but who work for a foreign employer active in the South Moravian Region in positions that do not require special skills; however, such foreigners are not considered as expatriates. It is equally worth pointing out that for the identification of expatriates, BEC does not distinguish their nationality or ethnic background.[14]

Concerning the data on the services provided, between 2010 and March 2018, BEC has assisted clients in more than 6,000 cases on a variety of matters. Clients who are employed in the Czech Republic most often work for IBM, AT&T, Red Hat, Honeywell, Lufthansa, Infosys, Masaryk University, Dixons-Pixmania, and Kiwi. Kristína Babíková (2016) states: "... a project manager from BEC said that their estimation of 'highly-skilled' professionals here in Brno is around 5,000 people which is almost one-fifth of the total amount of foreigners living in Brno. He describes his estimation as their target audience, and for him it means foreign people working non-manually, speaking fluently in at least two languages, mainly working in international companies, research and development institutions or being freelancers in many fields. Their statistics of clients don't fit the five most common citizenships calculated by ČSÚ for 2015. This statistic doesn't tell us the 100% truth about nationality composition of 'high-skilled' workers in Brno but can give us an approximate view of the issue" (Babíková 2016: 420).

Example: Indian expatriates in Brno

As mentioned above, in connection with the preparation of a survey among expats in Brno, we conducted qualitative pre-research in a selected group – Indian expatriates. The aim was to understand the basic aspects of the life of expatriates, to gather the topics that are important for the examined group, and to obtain the basis for a hypothesis that will be verified in quantitative research.

[14] Ms Babíková interviewed BEC on a similar topic (2016).

In the Brno area, Indian citizens fully correspond to the expatriate categorisation, fulfilling all four attributes (see above). As of 31 March 2017, 447 of them lived in Brno. They are part of a more recent immigration – since 2013, the number of Indians in Brno has been steadily increasing. In 2013 (31 March), there were 191 foreigners with Indian nationality, while in 2017, there were 447, so we are witnessing an increase of 134 %. The average year-on-year increase is 23.7%. Most of the Indians belong to the expat category. By the end of 2017, according to the "narrower" definition of employee categorisation (category CZ-ISCO 1-3), there were 254, of which 43 were women. Though we are talking about roughly four hundred people, Indian immigration is the fastest growing and most dynamic one in the city. The proportion of men and women is considerably unbalanced compared to other immigrant groups and accounts for around 70:30 in favour of men. Thus, women are also involved in labour migration, and we see a steady increase over time in their case, as well (Analysis of social services for foreigners in the city of Brno 2018: 36).

In particular, those who are coming to Brno are individuals who are employed in highly qualified positions, while after a certain period of time (after the termination of their contracts), they often return to their home country, or they move on to another EU country. In any case, the work incentive and not the place of residence is of key importance for these workers. It is clear from the interviews that one of the mechanisms of relocation initiation is to receive a job offer that takes the form of a "placement" and is connected to the current needs of globally operating employers. Then the name of the destination comes, which is usually unknown, and is just set in a wider context (e.g. Europe). So, the foreigner searches for information about the destination and starts finding out what it would mean for him.

The following results are based on qualitative semi-structured interviews with expatriates, whereby a total of 12 were carried out in Brno. Nine men and three women participated in these interviews. For their analysis, we focus on the key aspects of the expatriates' stay in Brno and their own interpretations and concepts that are directly related to the expat categorisation. The structure of the interview followed the classic pattern of examining expats as a process: we asked about their arrival, their conditions of residence, employment, housing, social relationships, and leisure time. We were aware that the choice is mainly driven by national-state identification and is based on an emphasis on a supposedly shared ethnicity. We used the findings of other research (Topinka et al. 2018) as a basis. It analysed the social networks of the Indians, and concluded that the

network is relatively dense (63%), that it centres on their fellow compatriots, and that a significant role is occupied by "alters" of Indian nationality in support networks. The aim was not to identify new and revolutionary topics, but to gather information on the basic aspects of life of expats in Brno, and to find out how the participants view them.

The immigrants from India are very similar in type. They are highly educated people who usually come to Brno for work at the initiative of their employer, or respond to study incentives. Most often, Indians work in the area of IT. At the time of our research, our participants worked in the multinational environment of IBM, Red Hat, and AT&T. Two were university students, and in the case of the three women, they were a yoga instructor, a doctoral student, and a postdoctoral scientist. In the analysis, we focused on identifying key categories that are relevant to expatriates for the understanding of their own position and life situation. Here are the main ones.

Purpose of the stay: employment and study

Employment is usually closely related to the stay of our informants. The job offer initiates the decision making, which is then followed by moving to the respective city. This mechanism has different forms. It is initiated by an employer, an employee, or by a job seeker. In the case of an employer, it can offer its employee a job at one of its branches abroad. The employee receives an offer for a specific position, which reflects the current needs of the employer. This is also when the employee gets to know the destination country for the first time. In these cases, Brno is usually situated in Europe, which is normally sufficient for the decision making. Another situation is the offer of a "local" company that searches e.g. for IT specialists on the global transnational labour market.

> *Interviewer:* Why did you choose Brno, Czech Republic?
> *Participant:* Actually, I don't even know. Before I came here, I worked in India for Mercedes Benz, so I went to Stuttgart, Germany. So, I said great, I like it here, and then I somehow got an offer from AT&T and from IBM for a job in Brno. I chose AT&T and so here I am.
> *Interviewer:* Did you have any contacts here in the Czech Republic before arriving?
> *Participant:* No, only at AT&T, at the HR department.

But migration does not always have to be a leap into the unknown. Another immigration mechanism is based on "networked" migration, where Indians

come to Brno based on the suggestion or direct recommendation of those who are already working there.

> *Participant:* Before I arrived, I already had some friends here with whom I had been in contact with, and one of them recommended me for work at Red Hat.
> *Interviewer:* So, you moved here for work?
> *Participant:* Yes. I finished my master's, and before I moved here, I had lived in the Netherlands.

In addition to workers, we also see the arrival of Indians for the purpose of studying, whereby we view studies as job preparation – the position of a doctoral student has the character of transition between the world of study and employment. Students are tempted to study in Europe because of the relatively low living costs. In the case of doctoral students and one post-doctoral student, studying in the Czech Republic was interesting especially because of the well-equipped laboratories and also their professors and trainers, who invited them based on transnational academic cooperation.

> EU scientists join together, finance their endeavour, and hire scientists from other countries. It works in a way that, for example, a Czech university cannot hire a Czech scientist – it must be someone outside of the Czech Republic. So surely, the scholarship was one of the factors. The second factor was the reputation of the trainer, which is really high in his area of interest, which helped me to decide. I did not know much about the Czech Republic, but hearing that life is good here and that they have well-equipped labs helped.
>
> *Participant*

Participants also state that they get their first important contacts through their employment. In the case of students and academics, the departments and institutes where they are active are a great benefit. In this environment, they find their acquaintances and friends, and also housing providers. For employees, the key is the organisations where they work. They are a source of social status, and provide assistance to their employees who are moving to Brno. We are talking about the assistance in getting the right documents, dealing with authorities, providing interpreting, or, in some cases, helping employees with accommodation. Companies also work with job agencies that care for their employees, such as in this case.

Interviewer: And who helped you the most after your arrival?
Participant: Surely Manpower. They were my only contact and they helped me with the paperwork, for example when registering for the stay or when I went to get my biometric card. (...)
Interviewer: And how and with whom did you first meet?
Participant: With my friends and a woman from Manpower, who helped me with everything. How to fill in forms and so on.
Interviewer: And did you generally have any problems with coming to the Czech Republic?
Participant: Not exactly. Of course, when I had to deal with authorities, I found out that people don't speak English. But fortunately, this lady came with me and she helped me with everything.

Participants see their stay in Brno connected with their work. Those who work in multinational companies consider their migration to be a natural part of their profession, which is fully integrated into transnational labour markets. For students, any additional stay depends on finding long-term and stable work to ensure financial independence.

Stabilisation in the urban area: ensured housing

A related category important for relocating to Brno is housing. It sometimes happens that participants have met with the reluctance of landlords to rent out to a foreigner. Indians do not interpret this as a systemic issue of a dysfunctional housing market in the city and a lack of housing, but rather as a communication problem. Owners do not want foreigners because they, themselves, do not understand English, or not enough, and are ashamed to speak.

> When I was looking for an apartment, I found three places and I visited them by myself and it was fine, but, again, I searched on sites that are also for the English-speaking, the offers are from Czech people who are able to speak English. Of course, I know that there are many more sites for Czechs, but when you contact them through Czech colleagues, they often don't answer. They feel unsure, so they don't answer.
>
> *Participant*

For students, the situation is easier when they live in student dormitories. The university helps them. But there can also be some difficulties.

> My first housing was in the dormitory and my first problems occurred there. My arrival was confirmed, and the lady knew that I was coming. However, on the day of arrival, the lady at the reception desk claimed that there was no mention of me and started screaming at me, she was very aggressive, and she spoke only Czech, which of course I did not understand. Fortunately, I had a colleague with me who explained everything to her, and she finally realised that it was her mistake, and everything could be cleared up, but yes, my first impression was not the most pleasant.
>
> *Participant*

Multinational companies also tend to help their employees with accommodation and/or housing. They are aware of the unfavourable situation on the housing market, and try to lower this barrier for their employees to avoid losing them. Participants interpret this as their employer's interest in them. Most of the participants searched for housing and found housing through formal and informal networks created around their key organisations: on the Internet via free flats advertising (bezrealitky.cz) or with the help of real estate agencies and paid web portals. Social networks are also important – namely Facebook and its specialised groups. Apart from subleasing, several families bought their own apartment with the prospect of staying in Brno or as a suitable property investment.

Just finding housing is not enough – important is also settling. Renting or home ownership brings new obligations along with it. And again, the language barrier is there as well.

> Now that I own my own apartment and have a family, and I have to take into account what they need, the language barrier appears again.
>
> *Participant*

Participants describe day-to-day situations where they need to organise the garbage collection service, communicate with a plumber, or discuss modifications in the flat with the owner. In such cases, communication is often difficult and requires the presence and interpretation of a friend or acquaintance.

Adaptation

The considerable linguistic barriers encountered by expatriates from India, especially in contact with the environment outside their jobs, have led to criticism of the linguistic incompetence of the Czech institutional environment, as well as

their own lack of effort to learn the basics of the Czech language. Expatriates have problems in day-to-day situations.

> We had a Tesco operator or something like that, and whenever we had a problem and I went to some branch, there was nobody who would speak English. I always got stuck on that problem until someone from our company came and helped me (...) occasionally, when we go to a vegetable shop and don't understand the bill, there often isn't anyone that can help us. I don't blame these people. It is of course caused by the language barrier, it's not their fault. As I have already mentioned, the language barrier is the biggest problem for us.
>
> *Participant*

Of course, most participants tried to learn or plan to learn Czech. Not in order to master this, for them, very exotic language, but to be able to handle everyday situations. Some have even tried repeatedly, but when they saw Ukrainians and Russians, who could advance extremely fast as their languages are related, they gave up. Their workload and consequently the lack of energy to learn a language is also limiting.

> (...) I don't have so much free time and if I have some, I use it doing something else besides learning Czech. I think this is a problem for most foreigners here. Living the everyday routine and then still trying to find some extra time and mental energy to engage in language learning.
>
> *Participant*

Expatriates normally speak English at their workplace, so they do not need Czech for their job, whether they are foreign students, academics, or IT specialists. Problems only start when the interviewees have to go to a doctor, to a restaurant, when they travel to smaller towns, or deal with the authorities. The transnational environment creates institutions that eliminate language barriers.

> *Participant:* (...) Of course, when I had to deal with authorities, I found out that people don't speak English there. Fortunately, the lady from the agency came along and helped me with everything.
>
> The interviewees actually often express their surprise that even in such institutions there are not enough people who are able to speak English:
>
> *Interviewer:* Do they also speak only Czech?

Participant: Yes, they speak only Czech, which is really surprising, because this place is meant for foreigners. But I used the help of my colleagues, so somehow, we were able to manage.

Adapting does not only concern the expatriates themselves, but also their family members. It is connected with areas of family life and the involvement of children in education, and also other aspects, such as finding raw ingredients for the preparation of Indian food.

Indian expatriates are generally satisfied with life in Brno. They appreciate the quiet and safe city with uncrowded streets (due to the small population) and excellent public transport coverage. The distinct and aforementioned limitation is a lack of English language knowledge, which keeps Indians confined to their transnational fields to a large extent, and even sometimes leads to their leaving for another destination.

(...) I know a lot of Indians who did their PhD here, then they left, but they wanted to come back, they got a job here and founded a family and so, but if they don't speak Czech, the quality of their life will never be too great. They will never be full members of society. So, they are currently considering moving away.

Participant

Some manifestations of intolerance with a possible racial undertone are also limiting. Indians have experienced incidents of being screamed at in the street or in public transport.

One time we went out down town in the evening, and there was a Czech guy who shoved me in a nasty way. But again, I read in the news that Czechs are generally quite racist, so one could expect this. But you don't meet bad people every day – it differs.

Participant

As part of the phenomenon of intolerance, participants count the "disrespect for vegetarians", which is considered to be a part of local culture and a value issue.

Participant: (...) I rather mind that people here disagree that being vegetarian is right. You eat meat all the time – cows, and that's really not good. Not only cows,

but also pigs and that's really not possible – you cannot survive without being vegetarian.
(...)
Interviewer: And how do you perceive Czech society in general?
Participant: I think you should cultivate your habits.
Interviewer: Which for example?
Participant: You should believe in something that is beyond you, you should respect new people, members of society, despite their skin colour or appearance. Everyone is somehow unique and has some talent. Respect for this talent and not just being a racist or something we could see in the past. If that doesn't happen, you will destroy yourself, because good people will leave. They won't want to stay here. Because you don't respect either cultural or eating habits.

If we examine expats from India based on the four basic attributes, they fulfil the basic characteristics of expats. They are in Brno, they define their stay as temporary, they exhibit different forms of professional or working qualifications, and they define themselves as assigned expatriates or self-initiated expatriates. It is obvious that it would be wrong to view this category of people as a homogeneous group defined solely on an ethnic basis. Pre-research shows that the different transnational strategies are very diverse.

Conclusion

Expatriates are usually considered as one of the types of skilled migration. The definition of this category is quite broad. We have come to the conclusion that if we want to examine this category, we need a definition that reflects theoretical definitions, but also takes into account local delimitations, as well as the self-evaluation of the immigrants themselves. In our text, we have laid out these perspectives side by side.

Qualified migration research was neglected, both abroad and in the Czech Republic. The intensity of foreign research has risen since the 1990s, and it has been carried out across various disciplines. The processes of globalisation and trans-nationalisation have led to the diversification of forms of labour migration, which, together with interdisciplinarity, has resulted in considerable ambiguity of terms and concepts. Researchers have been struggling with this problem from the beginning of their research, and research in the Czech Republic is no exception. The exploration of highly skilled migrants tends to focus on

key actors: the nation-state, multinational corporations, and migrants themselves. A great impact on the life situations of highly skilled migrants comes from the quickly changing global market environment. Both the ethnicity of migrants (Eich-Krohm 2014) and gender aspects play a role in the formation of supply and demand (Docquier – Lowell – Marfouk 2009). The definition of the concept of highly skilled migration is rather problematic, especially if it is derived exclusively from the tertiary education of migrants; the concept itself has many variations and uses different classifications, which sometimes meet with critical voices (McNulty – Brewster 2018: 39, Nowicka 2014). Skilled migration is associated with a more complex form of migration, referring to the aim at long-term or permanent residence patterns and a more individual nature of migration.

The conceptual definition of expatriates reflects the basic broad definition of labour migration, and is usually defined with respect to four basic attributes. They refer to the importance of the stay in relation to the centre of personal life, the temporary period of stay, the level of occupational or job qualification, and the migration motivation (assigned expatriates and self-initiated expatriates). Thus, for research purposes, one must bear in mind that despite the uniform designation, we are dealing with a very diversified phenomenon. If expatriates are distinguished from skilled migrants, we usually emphasise the undefined length of their stay as opposed to permanent residence and the very important self-concept of expatriates (McNulty – Brewster 2018). Exploring the self-concept could be a good starting point, probably much better than the initial grasp of the colourful expat world by means of a predefined category. Researchers usually resort to the distinction of assigned expatriates, self-initiated expatriates, and skilled (im)migrants (Tharenou 2018). However, in research reality, they may become problematic, because they could overlap. The researcher must therefore be cautious when using them, and carefully weigh the individual variables and review the decisions that accompany migration. In this respect, the importance of qualitative research is growing; it can capture the individual diversity of situations, and, at the same time, put them in context.

In the Czech Republic, only a few academic studies on expatriates have been done in recent years. They are empirical in nature, and show how varied the range of expats can be. Brno has become one of the most important places of concentration of expats. This is related to migration processes and growing demands for skilled labour, especially from multinational companies and

Czech companies that enter global markets. The fact is that the total number of foreigners in the labour market in Brno has been growing rapidly since 2011 – mainly due to the increasing number of workers from EU countries. Complex research of expats in Brno continues to be a big challenge, because we are witnessing the continuous expansion of this category with all the consequences that it brings for the city. Statistical data, although based on categorisations that are problematic (e.g. CZ-ISCO job categorisation), covering various categories of expats, estimates a total of almost 14,000 persons. From the point of view of nationality, Slovakia dominates, and other nationalities are represented in the order of hundreds and dozens of persons. It is a question of the extent to which gender or ethnicity applies to the self-evaluation of expatriates in the transnational and city contexts. The Brno Expat Center (BEC), which specialises in the provision of services to expatriates, is establishing a monopoly for defining this category with practical implications for many actors in the city, as well as for organisations and the expats themselves. It is necessary to understand this definition, which has arisen through the interconnection of international definitions and the local experience, simply because it affects the self-concept of those who use the services of this organisation. This definition emphasises the following aspects. It paints expatriates as foreigners that are working for multinational corporations and are sent here by their employer (assigned expatriates), or who come on their own initiative (self-initiated expatriates). They come either alone, with their family, or they find a partner here, or they establish a family with a partner who joins them here. The communication and working language of these foreigners is English. This also means that they do not need to learn Czech, but on the other hand, since English is enough for them in their ordinary working and social life, they often encounter a language barrier in the Czech environment. Expatriates have completed their secondary and tertiary education, and are looking for medium to highly qualified positions. A specific feature for BEC is the fact that its target group also includes foreigners who use only English in working and social life, but who work for a foreign employer active in the South Moravian Region in positions that do not require special skills; however, such foreigners are not considered to be expatriates.

From the testimonies of expats from India, which our pre-research focused on, it is obvious that they actually consider themselves to be expatriates, and they reflect the relevant theoretical definitions in their lives and strategies. They are proof that the old immigration concept that expatriates are Western and

elitist does not correspond to the social reality. Brno is becoming the centre of personal life for Indian expatriates, they are aware of the temporary length of their stay, which is marked by strong links to their family background abroad, they are characterised by a higher level of professional skills, and the motivations for migration in reality are represented by both types simultaneously: assigned expatriates and self-initiated expatriates.

The Indians work mostly in the transnational environments of large companies and universities. Thus, they are further deepening their transnational ties. In most cases, their stay depends on their employment and its assessment. In the context of the outlook for the future, we have heard testimonials such as: "I will stay here three, four years, and then I will see", "If I have work here, I will stay, I like it here, but maybe I will have to move somewhere else", "I will still work here for a while, gather experience and then I will return home", and "I will work here for two years and then I'll move to some Western country". Indian expatriates live in rental housing, in dormitories, or in their own homes. They face difficulties connected to housing, which they interpret not contextually, but relate it to language barriers and complicated communication. The position of expatriates reflects their activity in the multinational field of larger, mostly international companies and organisations that is focused on the employee performance, as well as problematic social phenomena and lifestyle interactions that take place in the daily life environment of the city and across the borders of the aforementioned multinational fields. Pre-research shows that the different transnational strategies are very diverse. For further research to take place, it is important to explore the social and demographic characteristics of expats, which can be done by evaluating the BEC's client database and to conduct quantitative queries among expats working in different companies. The resulting picture also needs to be confronted with the aforementioned category definitions, or maybe even try to create one's own definition of this category of persons. Furthermore, the need for qualitative research might be needed: on one hand, the need to focus on the structural conditions of life of expats, i.e. the transnational environment of companies and the stay of expats in the city, especially the interaction with the national environment, and on the other hand, an examination of the self-evaluation of the expats themselves, considering the ethno-cultural factors as well as gender. Their family members also cannot be ignored. Research must track how the differences are construed, which ones are becoming relevant in a particular setting and which ones not, and the transnational strategies of expats.

Petr Lang is currently completing a master's degree in Sociology at the Faculty of Social Studies of Masaryk University in Brno and a bachelor's degree in Religion at the Faculty of Philosophy of the same university. He works as a researcher at the SocioFactor research organisation. Contact: lang@sociofactor.eu

Olga Čejková is currently completing a master's degree in Religion at the Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University in Brno. She works as a researcher at SocioFactor in the field of applied research in the social sciences. Contact: cejkova@sociofactor.eu

Daniel Topinka studied Sociology and Religion at Masaryk University in Brno and defended his doctoral thesis at Palacký University in Olomouc. He is an assistant professor at the Department of Sociology, Andragogy, and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts at the Palacký University in Olomouc, and also works at the SocioFactor research organisation. Contact: topinka@sociofactor.eu

Michaela Ondrašinová studied Religious Studies, Philosophy, and European Studies at Masaryk University, and gained a Ph.D. in Religious Studies at the same university. She works as a specialist at the Department for the Study of Religions, Masaryk University, and collaborates with SocioFactor as a researcher of the project "Expats in the South Moravia Region". Contact: ondrasinova@phil.muni.cz

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THE INVISIBLE CITY: THREE STORIES ABOUT URBAN MARGINALITY FROM SAN CRISTÓBAL DE LAS CASAS, MÉXICO[1]

Marie Heřmanová

Abstract: ***The so-called Zona Norte on the outskirts of San Cristóbal de Las Casas in the south of México represents a typical "poverty belt" described in the literature on Latin American favelas and slums. An area densely populated by Tzotzil- and Tzeltal-speaking people, migrants from the rural communities from the surrounding highlands, Zona Norte is, in many ways, a typical example of an informal urban settlement, and it bears the stigma usually attached to these places – a lawless, dangerous, no-go zone. The aim of this article is to present three different examples of how this territorial stigmatisation (Wacquant 2008) is experienced, lived, reconstructed, and deconstructed by three generations of inhabitants in Zona Norte. Central to all the stories is the metaphor of "invisibility" or the "invisible city", which is analysed using concepts from current anthropological literature on urban informality. The article is based on an extensive ethnographic fieldwork conducted in San Cristóbal de Las Casas between the years 2008–2015.***

Keywords: ***urban informality; urban marginality; rural-urban migration; urban poverty; México; Chiapas; indigenous people***

On a very early sunny morning in September 2013, I was walking on a steep footpath between *colonia* La Hormiga and the neighbouring *colonia* San Juan del Bosque with María and her grandson Juanito. We were taking Juanito to school, located at the edge of La Hormiga, one of the highest places in the Zona Norte. *Colonias* are neighbourhoods of Zona Norte, an extensive belt of settlement at the North-West of the city of San Cristóbal de Las Casas in

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Mexico's southernmost state of Chiapas. From where we walk with María, we have a view over the whole city – the lower parts of Zona Norte in the flatlands around the *periférico*, main highway circling the city, the old colonial city centre with its palaces and churches and colourful houses with thatched roofs. When we reach the playground in front of the school, we spot a few other women with their children and the teacher standing among them, talking animatedly. It turned out that the school was closed because the teachers had decided to join the national strike against the reform of the educational system in Mexico that President Peña Nieto was trying to implement. Massive protests were taking place on the main square in Mexico City, and it seemed that the strike had reached even such remote corners of the country as San Cristóbal's suburbs. After a short negotiation with the teacher, María announced: "Well, it looks like we have nothing to do here today, so let's take a walk! I heard there are some new houses over there!" and she was already ten metres ahead of me on the pathway. We were walking in the direction of San Antonio del Monte, one of the *colonias* founded in 1980s by the refugees from the municipality of Chamula. Religious conflicts between the new Protestant churches represented by missionaries from the US and Canada and the traditional cargo system in the indigenous communities based on the syncretic tradition of *catholicismo tradicionale maya* were among the main reasons that caused the first wave of rural-urban migration in Chiapas – the converts left the communities and founded the first *colonías* at the suburbs of the city.

I have previously synthetised the general reasons of the internal migration and consequently the suburbanisation of San Cristóbal and the creation of Zona Norte, in the process finding the three research areas discussed in most of the studies on the topic (Heřmanová 2010). They are, however, strongly interconnected and mutually dependent: 1) Changes in the sociopolitical organisations in the region of Altos de Chiapas led to changes in ownership structures, to the creation of agricultural cooperatives (*ejidos*), and in some cases, to conflicts over the most important resource in Chiapas: land. The consequence of the conflicts, together with other land-concerning aspects of development (the construction of roads and general infrastructure in the region), led to an overall reorganisation of economic structure, employment structure, and the creation of new economical elites. 2) The differentiation of the economic sector significantly influenced the complex system of political administration in the communities, which is closely connected to religion through the practice of the system of cargoes. At the same time, the missionaries started to work in the

region, and conversion to other confessions became frequent – in some cases, this led to expulsions of the converted families from the communities. The new churches also played a significant role in the settlement of the refugees in the suburbs of San Cristóbal. 3) The global market economy reached Chiapas through an unprecedented influx of tourism, in this case ethnic and cultural tourism, which led to both the empowerment and the impoverishment of indigenous migrants in the city through the commodification of their cultural identity.

María's story was in this context rather typical in many aspects – she came to San Cristóbal when she was eighteen years old (or at least she guessed she might have been around eighteen then – I never got to know her exact age, because I doubt she knows it herself). She came with her mother and her eldest son Alejandro, and she left her drunken and violent husband behind, in a small village in the municipality of Chamula called Ichilhó. Ichilhó has around fifty inhabitants, and a third of them are María's relatives. The main means of subsistence in Ichilhó is agriculture – corn and coffee planting – but mostly people have just enough corn and hens to make just enough tortillas and eggs to feed themselves. Except for the eldest, Alejandro, all María's four other children were born in San Cristóbal, and they didn't know much about her life in Ichilhó. As she explained to me, she "wasn't religious" back in Ichilhó – meaning that she belonged, like everyone else, to the cargo system based on traditional Maya beliefs blended with Catholicism. She met a pastor of her current church (the Pentecostal movement founded in the US) on her visits to the city, and once she decided to convert, she came into conflict with her family (and was beaten by the village authorities). That, together with the alcohol addiction of her husband, made her leave the small community where she was born and head to the city.

The story of the colonisation of San Cristóbal's suburbs by migrants from indigenous communities from the surrounding Highlands of Chiapas in many ways mirrors similar processes in other parts of Latin America, as well as elsewhere in the world, described by a significant body of anthropological literature on urban informality and marginality. Many studies explored, for example, the inner socio-political organisation of informal urban settlements (for example Goldstein 2003), the role of gender or the presence, symbolism, and significance of violence (for example Shepher-Hughes 1992). In my own research, I have focused on the dynamics of the relationships between the marginalised urban area, which Zona Norte certainly represents, towards the city

outside of it, and I have explored the dualism of "the city" and "the non-city"[2]. How do the inhabitants of the marginalised urban areas place themselves in the infrastructure of the city, and how do they negotiate their place in the urban space were some of my main research questions. In this article, I'd like to present three different stories based on the narratives of three different generations of the inhabitants of Zona Norte, and use them to illustrate the complex dynamics of the relationships of the suburbs and the city centre, the formal and the informal city, the centre and the periphery. Central to all of these stories is the metaphor of invisibility, or the "invisible city", which will be analysed in the conclusion.

1. Juana María's Story and the Colonisation of La Hormiga

Juana María Ruiz Ortiz is one of the original founders of La Hormiga, and one of the first wave of inhabitants of Zona Norte. She now teaches at the Chiapas Autonomous University (Universidad Autonoma de Chiapas), and she has recounted the story of the first settlements in Zona Norte in various books and academic articles (Ruiz Ortiz 1996). She represents one of the rare indigenous voices in the academic research on the indigenous presence in the city of San Cristóbal de Las Casas. I met with her on a sunny afternoon in her office on the university campus, and she told me the story of how she came to live in San Cristóbal.

"There are many voluntary migrants. The people came for jobs, many came to complete their education. Mostly, we left the villages because there just wasn't anything for us anymore. The land was scarce, and there is no other way to survive up there in the mountains. We came out of necessity," she recounts. Juana María is one of the three original owners of land in La Hormiga – today on of the biggest colonias located on the northern hillside, right above the periférico, the main highway encircling the city centre on its southern side and cutting right through the middle of Zona Norte. Many of the colonias built during the first wave of migration between 1975 and 1985 were built on the steep stretch of land lined by the periférico to the south and the main road to San Juan Chamula on the western edge.[3] La Hormiga and San Juan del Bosque

[2] In reference to Marc Augé's non-places (Augé 1995).

[3] The *periférico*/city circle wasn't built until 1976, and before that the hillsides surrounding the valley of Jovel, where the colonial city of San Cristóbal was located, were mostly inaccessible.

are the two oldest and best-known colonias, built there approximately at the same time. Juana María started to negotiate the purchase of her own piece of land in 1980, but it took a whole two years for the legal matters to be settled. In her recounting of the foundation of La Hormiga (Ruiz Ortiz 1996: 11), she remembers the three owners of the land she and two other Tzotzil men wanted to buy, all three of them heirs to the land from old colonial families. Juana María was one of the first buyers, together with Domingo Lopéz Angel, the leader of religious refugees from Chamula and founder of an organization called CRIACH (Consejo de Representantes Indígenas de Los Altos de Chiapas), which plays a significant role in the organisation of colonias to this day. Juana María, Domingo Lopéz Angel, and all of the original buyers of land in La Hormiga and the neighbouring colonias have paid for their plot – Juana María told me that the amount of money (around 3,000 pesos in 1980) was astronomical for them at the time, "but we had no other option then to get the money together. We had to do it, I had no other place to go," she says. Hvostoff (2001) also recounts many similar stories of the first migrants, who sometimes stayed in rented rooms and saved money for a small piece of land in one of the colonias. Hvostoff mentions that the relationship between the indigenous tenants and the *ladino* owners who rented to them was very tense, and the living conditions were horrible. The most infamous case of a settlement in the Calle Francisco Guzman, equipped with four toilets and three washbasins and rented to 450 indigenous families, is also documented in Juana María's story (Hvostoff 2001: 48, Ruiz Ortiz 1996: 14).

The hardships of acquiring financial resources and building a house were not the only concerns of the new inhabitants of the city. The relationship of the *ladinos* who inhabited the city centre to the indigenous population, which used to be problematic even in times when the indigenous people merely visited the city and its markets to work there, started to shift – the *indígenas* started to be perceived as a threat and a danger to the order of things, and the cultural racism of local elites developed sharper contours. The complex relationship between the mestizos, the ladinos, and the indigenous in the era before the suburbanisation and colonisation of Zona Norte was brilliantly analysed in the now classic article by van den Berghe and Benjamin N. Colby, "Ethnic Relations in Southeastern Mexico," published in American Anthropologist in 1961. Van den Berghe and Colby describe how the *coletos*, the local upper-class families, prided themselves on being genetically of Spanish origin, being sometimes also called *gente bien* (good people), *la crema* (the cream), or *los blancos* (the whites). They ruled over the middle class of mestizos, the "mixed ones", and most importantly over the

indios, the lower class. But as the authors point out, genetic characteristics were not the primary criteria of social status: "While the town is rigidly stratified, and its inhabitants strongly class-conscious, wealth (as indexed by dress, landownership, type of house, number of servants etc.), education (as shown by literacy, correctness of speech, university degree, manners, etc.) are more important than the physical appearance in determining one's status" (Van den Berge – Colby 1961: 772). Even though racial and class criteria overlap here, the most important aspect of the organisation of the hierarchy of the city was not the strictly racial point of view, but rather the cultural one. The ladinos (even the most liberal ones) had taken their superiority for granted, but they never based it on genetics (even though they prided themselves on their "Spanish origins"): "The rationalization of the superiority is almost always cultural . . . the ladino group is characterized by its possession of the local variant of Spanish culture, not by any racial traits" (Van den Berghe – Colby 1961: 774, 783). The physical appearance of a mestizo and an indígena would be hard for any outsider to discern – so an indigenous person, if he or she learns to speak Spanish fluently and dress accordingly, could sometimes pass as a lower-class mestizo. Most indigenous people were, of course, due to their poverty, excluded from the middle and upper class, but the ideology provided the opportunity for social mobility, at least in theory. That is why Van den Berghe and Colby label the ethnic relationship between the indigenous and non-indigenous population in Chiapas as "paternalistic": the ladinos treat the indigenous as primitive, uncultured, but with a touch of affection – as unreliable, childish, and ignorant, but not dangerous (Van den Berghe – Colby 1961: 789). But this, of course, changed when the indigenous people started to build permanent settlements in the city – the paternalistic relationship changed to an openly racist one, and the indigenous element started to be perceived as dangerous. According to the stories of my informants, Juana María included, and stories gathered by other researchers (most notably Aubry 1991), the deterioration of interethnic relations was manifested on two levels – in the very dismissive attitude of the municipal government to the new settlements, and as well on the personal level, in everyday interactions.

If La Hormiga is again to be taken as an example, the attitude of the government is symptomatic. Since 1982, the inhabitants of the colonia, Juana María among them, tried to negotiate the construction of infrastructure in La Hormíga. All attempts at acquiring access to the municipal electricity and the potable water network were in vain. Juana María recounts one of many

negotiations with the city officials: "They wouldn't hear about it. They showed us the map of the city, and of course La Hormiga wasn't on the map. One of them, I don't remember his name anymore, but I think he was a lawyer, told us, 'As far as I am concerned, this place doesn't exist.' Can you imagine that? I invested all my money, everything I had in that house. And this man was telling me that it doesn't exist!" I answered honestly that I was not able to imagine such a situation and I just wondered why the government was so stubborn about it. Juana María smiled bitterly: "Why? I asked them why they didn't want us here and I wish I hadn't. The lawyer started to shout at us, saying that we are *pinches indios* (fucking indigenous) and that we only contaminate the land there, that we contaminate the natural resources that belong to his city. But we didn't come here to contaminate! We came out of necessity. But they told us that we were here to contaminate their land." Juana María recounts that she encountered the racism everywhere, not just at the offices of the municipality. "You know, just the fact that we can walk the streets today is a success. We couldn't walk the same streets as ladinos back then. We were treated as dirt, and there are a lot of people who still remember it very clearly," she says.

The struggle for electricity took an unexpected turn in 1994. The network was already built, but the city hall refused to connect it to the municipal source. And then – Juana María makes a dramatic pause here, when she tells me this story – the Zapatistas came[4]. The masked indigenous guerilla from the jungle, led by the charismatic Subcommandante Marcos, turned attention to San Cristóbal not only from the federal Mexican government, but also from the whole world, international media, and the international anti-globalisation movement (for example Speed 2007, Guiomar 2009). "And that was it – they saved us. We had electricity like the next day probably. We weren't hopeless

[4] The Zapatista movement was born in the Lacandón jungle in the 1980s, but only became known to the world on 1 January 1994 – on this day, the masked indigenous guerilleros left the jungle and seized 7 different cities in Chiapas, including San Cristóbal. There was never any open armed conflict between the Zapatistas and the Mexican Federal Army, but there was – and still is – violence and conflicts around the Zapatista autonomous territory, spread in small islands in the Lacandon jungle. The meaning of the Zapatista movement however lies mostly in its global popularity – they were by far the first social movement to fully take advantage of the internet. They use magical realism symbolism for their fight for social justice and indigenous rights (see later in the text), and dispose of a vast network of international supporters, including many Zapatista support groups in Europe and the United States. "Revolutionary tourism" is now omnipresent in San Cristóbal. For the general history and the socio-economic context of the Zapatista movement, see, for example, Collier (1994) or Díaz (1996), for a more in-depth analysis of the international Zapatista network, for example Leyva Solano (1998) or Mentinis (2006).

anymore. The municipal officers saw what could happen if they ignored us – so they just couldn't ignore us anymore. And we have the EZLN to thank for the fact that our houses aren't dark in the night anymore." The water infrastructure, however, was never negotiated with the municipality. The inhabitants of La Hormiga collected money among themselves and paid for the conduit that is connected to the public wells. "We are independent." Juana María smiled. "We built it, it's ours, and we do not depend on city hall anymore."

The story of the settlement of La Hormiga and the negotiations of the settlers with the local authorities about how the colonia can (or cannot) be connected to the city infrastructure provides a good example of the relationship between the colonias on the periphery and the old colonial city centre. The new indigenous settlers were seen as parasitic, dangerous, and unwanted. At the same time, their presence in the city presented a significant economic asset for the local economy – not only did they represent a significant new workforce, they also played an important role in the developing tourism industry in the region. San Cristóbal is praised as being the heart and the mecca of ethnic tourism, and the indigenous presence in the city is often described in tourist guides as the "mystic" aspect that makes the city so popular with tourists (see also Robledo Hernández 2008, Heřmanová 2010, 2018). Indigenous women in traditional *trajes* (costumes) are as much a part of the atmosphere of San Cristóbal as are its cobbled streets and picturesque houses. San Cristóbal's indígenas are being marketed as one of its many charms. Yet they are also the unwanted and unwelcome denizens of Zona Norte, stigmatised as being unpredictable and parasitic. It requires a system of complex power distribution to hold the indigenous element in its dual position – on the outskirts, in the "poverty belt", yet simultaneously in the centre, where it is demanded by the visitors and, subsequently, by the economic ecosystem of the whole city, which relies on tourism. That is what María's story is about.

2. María's Story and the Negotiations with City Hall

Many hours of my fieldwork were spent at San Cristóbal's main square, the *zocalo*, talking with the indigenous women and their daughters who worked there as so-called *vendedoras*, or vendors. They specialised in handcrafted souvenirs – embroidered blouses, woolen sweaters, scarves, bracelets and necklaces made from dried corn and coffee beans. The selling could be done in two different ways – first, as so-called *comercio ambulante*, practised mostly

by younger girls. They carried all their merchandise with them, on their backs, bracelets and necklaces wrapped around their hands, as they walked on the main pedestrian zones in the city centre, stopped by in cafés and shops, talked to the tourists, offered them their goods. The mothers, the older vendedoras, would come in the evening. While the girls were walking, the mothers would bring big sheets of plastic with them, which they would spread out on the ground, at the zócalo or in the nearby park. The children came with them – they stumbled and toddled around, being cared for collectively by everyone in the group. The women worked in groups and they obviously knew each other – they took the same position on the square every day, gathered their daughters, and started to display all the goods on the sheets. The organisation of the work throughout the day flowed smoothly, and from the outside, it seemed like an organic process. However, it was, in fact, a highly organised one, requiring hours of negotiations with city hall and complex organisation among the indigenous women themselves.

In 2008, indigenous women vendors were allowed to walk around city centre during the day and lay out their merchandise on the ground to form an improvised marketplace every day after 6:00 p.m. In 2010, they were only allowed to sell "on the ground" only after 8:00 p.m., with different times during national holidays. In 2013, they were banned from selling in the city centre altogether, unless they walked and carried all their merchandise with them. The sight of a mother skilfully arranging dozens of sweaters on one arm, holding a bundle of necklaces on the other, and carrying a baby in a scarf on her back was not unusual – women walked the streets of the city centre like this all day long, every day, even when it rained. Many of the younger ones complained about it a lot. "If it weren't for my mum, I wouldn't go selling like this," said María's daughter Cristina. "I dislike this kind of job so much – you have to approach people and you only sell so little." However, if she were allowed to just pack all her merchandise, go to the city centre, and spread a sheet of plastic at the zócalo, she would go gladly – because she knew she would make money. Cristina argued with María about this regularly, but María was adamant – the money was needed every day, never mind the rain, the tiredness, and the need to approach hundreds of tourists.

The opportunity to sell officially, on the zócalo and "on the ground", was extremely important for the vendedoras. As Cristina and all the others knew, if they could display the sweaters, scarves, blouses, and jewellery on the big plastic sheets, it was very probable that people would stop, chat, and then buy

something. It was different from just walking around and trying to stop passers-by and force them to look at their goods. For Cristina and many other girls her age who did not have the resilience of their mothers, this way of working was awkward, uncomfortable, and annoying. But their mothers had to fight constantly with city hall to get permission for "on the ground" selling. This permission was never granted, and it made them anxious every time a permit ended, the official's decision changed, and their future became, once again, unsure. In December 2013, when the authorities completely banned selling in the city centre, the majority of the families I knew from the colonias became desperate. Selling is the means of subsistence for almost every woman in the Zona Norte and even for a few men – although men usually do not sell clothes, but rather cheap quesadillas and sweets. As Robledo Hernandéz (2009) notes, women became the main providers for many families throughout the process rural-urban migration. Selling in the city centre is a female occupation, and it is the one most easily accessible to the indígenas from Zona Norte – and very often also the only one. The ban on the selling activities in the city centre was thus a severe blow for many families, who lost their main source of income overnight. "We saw it coming," Verónica, one of the vendedoras, told me right before Christmas, which was usually the busiest tourist season in San Cristóbal, when Mexicans from all corners of the country came to Chiapas on family holiday. The domestic tourists, from the capital or the northern part of the country, spent the most, as Chiapas was cheap for them. Verónica was desperate, because she had hoped up until the last minute that she and her colleagues and friends, the other vendedoras, would win and they would be allowed to sell their merchandise, even if just for a few hours, a few times a week. "I still hope we can negotiate. They need us, the tourists come for us as well," she said confidently, but her anxiety was obvious.

Verónica was right – tourists came for the merchandise and for the atmosphere that she and her friends, with their colourful *trajes* and indigenous chatter, brought to the city centre. Ethnic tourism is the main type of tourism that generates income for the city. Yet the officials at the city hall and the mestizos in the city centre still would do a lot to prevent it. What looked from the outside like a rather spontaneous process – women arranging their goods on the ground, with children running around them and tourists walking through the crowd and picking up stuff – was rather a highly organised system of negotiations. Its main aim was to put the indigenous element in the city centre in a place where it could be controlled, regulated – and banned, if needed. It was also highly

organised and hierarchised on the other side, among the vendedoras themselves – the negotiations forced them to create formal groups, cooperativas, and elect leaders who could speak for the entire group. María was one of them – she was the head of the biggest cooperative and, as she very proudly recounted to me, went herself a few times to negotiate with the major. To untangle and describe the vendedoras' struggle for being able to move freely in the city centre and make their living thus sheds light on the complex relationship of the city to its peripheries and their inhabitants. It is a relationship based on economic needs, but burdened by racism, discriminatory practices, and manifestations of power. Through the practice of selling, the unwanted and informal space of Zona Norte that the *ladinos* do not want to see, reaches out towards the formal, colonial city, and the inhabitants of Zona Norte become part of the everyday life in it – and as much as this process is inevitable and might seem natural for the disinterested observer, it is also regulated, systematised, and hierarchised in order to reflect the power structure of the whole city.

The negotiations of the representatives of indigenous vendors with the local authorities have a long history. In a document sent to the governor of the State of Chiapas in October 2012, the cooperative Grupo de Artesanas Tejedoras de San Cristobal de Las Casas,[5] of which María serves as a president, states that they have been working since 1984 as "vendedores ambulantes" (on the streets, walking), and that they have been registered since 1998 as a "company." The document reacts to the fact that the municipal leader of San Cristobal at the time, Martínez Pedrero, was trying to severely limit the opportunities for selling: "He has left 148 families without jobs, and what's even worse, these families don't have any other sources of income. The only income is from the commercial activities, and it is the only source that supports our alimentary needs. The decision deprives us of our right to work, which no other previous administration has ever limited." The document is signed by four representatives of the group: two men and two women (María is one of them, and she also provided me with the documentation). It is accompanied by a list of all 148 members of the group, with signatures or with fingerprints (for those who cannot write). It is not entirely true that there had been no previous limitations – since the beginning (i.e., since the registration in 1998 that enabled women to sell on the ground and not only "ambulantly"), the "commercial activities" were limited there in various ways – mostly spatially (by assigning places where the

[5] The group of artisan weavers of San Cristóbal de Las Casas.

merchandise can by displayed) and temporally (by limiting the on-the-ground sale to evening hours). But the first attempt to evict the vendedoras from the city centre altogether came in 2012. The then-president of the municipal council, Martínez Pedrero, is a member of a well-known mestizo family that owns many hotels and other services in the city centre. The Pedrero family was sometimes labelled as "mafia" by some of my informants, and there were many complaints about their activities ("they can buy anything they want, they own half of the city already," one of my friends told me.) He was a difficult opponent for María and her peers, and it took a lot of courage for her to openly complain about him – but given the fact that she and the rest of group did not exaggerate by stating that their families depended on the income from their sales to survive, she did not have much of a choice.

Since 2012, the vendedoras' activities were limited to national holidays only – probably because, as mentioned above, it is a high tourist season for San Cristóbal, with many Mexicans from all over the country coming to visit and buy cheap artisan products. In 2013, the group sent another request, this time to Pedrero personally, to demand the option of selling for another two years, not only during national holidays, but every day. Again, the documents mentioned that selling in the city centre was the only source of income for the families, and that they should have the same right to work as any citizen of Mexico. It also referred to the statement of the state Governor Manuel Velasco Coello, mentioning "a Chiapas that is united in its social, economic, labour, educational, and health services development. [...] We are sure that you, Mr. President, are on the same side with our governor. We want to remind you that our families do not need to eat only during national holidays, but every day, and this is why we ask you to reconsider our situation," the authors of the request pleaded.

This request was not successful. The city administrators issued a permit for commercial activities in the park in front of city hall during the summer holidays (the months of July and August) from 6:00 p.m. until midnight. There are five other restrictions included in the official document: the vendors cannot use any rugs, tables, or chairs, they cannot enter the city hall itself unless it is raining, they have to clean the area daily, and they are obliged to obey any instructions issued by the representatives of public authority present. The formal groups of vendors who received the permission were not allowed to sell ambulantly, during the day, for the period covered by the permit (and if they were to get caught doing so, the permit would cease to be valid immediately). There were

five registered groups of vendors in 2013, and when I visited San Cristóbal at the end of 2013, all of them were still waiting for their permit to sell during the Christmas holidays. The story of negotiations with city hall ended up in 2013 with the opening of a new marketplace, called Mercado de la Zona Norte – a vast space of permanent halls and stands, in the middle of Zona Norte, with direct access from the Periférico Norte. From a practical and physical perspective, it was much better than the plastic sheets on the ground in front of the Palacio Municipal or in the park. Concrete structures sheltered the vendors from rain (a frequent occurrence in San Cristóbal during the winter season) and other weather conditions. It was spacious and there were some basic services (like toilets, for example). But, as of the end of 2013, it was mostly empty. In the following years, they slowly became filled with vendors, artisan products, handmade products, fruits and vegetables, and tortillas. The Mercado of Zona Norte is operating – and the official city website put it on the list of places worth visiting in San Cristóbal. But while it means safer working conditions for the vendedoras, it also means that they were effectively sent back to Zona Norte, pushed out of the city centre and out of the sight of both locals and tourists. *Vendedoras ambulantes* still walk the streets of the city centre, representing the kind of ethnic tinge the city needs, in order to remain an important spot on the tourist map of Mexico.

The many obstacles and limits that direct what seems to be, to an outsider, a free movement of people around the city, could be analysed as manifestations of deep structural inequalities embedded in the socio-political system of the city. For example, Ann Varley (2012) writes about *postcolonialising informality* – a process that happens in many different informal settlements all around the world. The power distribution in places like San Cristóbal is influenced by the global market economy, in which the indigenous people and their culture are simply a commodity to be sold to the tourists, as well as by the historical context of colonialist cultural racism. The ethnographic evidence of the most obvious manifestations of this process – like the struggle of the indigenous women for their place in the urban economy, and through it, in the physical space of the city itself – then needs to be seen through the context of both recent (federal development programmes and the politics of indigeneity in México and all around Latin America) and not-so-recent (colonialist ideology) history.

3. Raymundo's Story and the Reclaiming of the Urban Space

The formation of the *cooperativas artesanales*, like the one María belonged to, is one of the most important steps in the process of organising the relationship of the colonias and the city centre. Once the women were able to gain a position of respect inside the community itself, they could also step out of it – and fight for their position outside of the domestic space. The cooperativas are also one of the many manifestations of the fact that the colonias are not, in fact, "lawless zones" or places without any social control and structure, as they are seen from the outside. There are other organisations operating in the colonias, representing its inhabitants in conflicts with city hall. I met a leader of one of them at a lecture given in San Cristóbal by a famous sociologist and supporter of the Zapatista movement, John Holloway. After the lecture, a friend introduced me to Damaso, a local activist and political leader and also the founder of the organisation called COCIDEP – Comité Ciudadana por la Defensa Publica (Civic Committee for Public Defence). As Damaso explained to me, "Our organisation is for the people and about the people from every barrio and colonía in this city." COCIDEP is formed by representatives of various districts of San Cristóbal – not only colonias, but also barrios, the old quarters of the colonial city centre. Damaso later explained to me that Zona Norte has its own coordinator and its own meetings, as their problems are different from those of the rest of the city – they are, however, still part of COCIDEP as a platform for organising the denizens of the city and solving their problems. The platform was founded in the hectic year of 1994, when the Zapatista uprising inspired many similar activities "from below." Its aim is to represent the interests of the people, as Damaso stated, as well as to unite them in their struggles against the municipal authorities. In practice, this means solving problems like ensuring access to drinking water in all parts of the city, organising civic protests against new development projects that could damage the quality of living in the existing settlements, and starting negotiations over public transport routes. Members of COCIDEP meet every second Wednesday in a small room in barrio San Diego, one of the oldest parts of Zona Sur, where Damaso himself lives. Sometimes the meetings were urgent and direct action needed to be planned (as was the case with potable water when I met Damaso), but sometimes it's just a friendly meeting of old friends and comrades.

Damaso was very excited about presenting me to Raymundo. He called him "a very bright young man" and sounded very excited about how he is "just the

right person for you to talk to". Raymundo and his sisters Jeanette and Karina together created the organisation La Voz de La Rockcultura, with the aim to organise demonstrations and provide space for alternative culture. Raymundo presented himself to me as a "Zapatista anarchopunk and anticapitalist, proud Tzeltal", and carefully asked me about my political background. We then started a really long discussion about the Zapatista movement, anarchism in Europe, anarchism in Mexico, and Raymundo's opinion about the hundreds of activists coming to San Cristóbal from Europe. In the course of this discussion, I asked him about his motivation for political activism: "They are occupying our space. Even you are. I don't blame you. I don't blame all the people who are here to help us, nor do I blame the tourists, they bring us money. But what used to be indigenous land is now a tourist attraction. Some parts are just sold as an attraction and some parts are forgotten. You should see the place where my mother was born. Two hours away from here, and it's the end of the earth. No job, no future there, people are starving and nobody cares! All they see in the Zapatistas is the revolution, according to your standards. I believe in revolution, but of a different sort. I believe that the revolution will give us back what is ours. I am a Zapatista and an anarchist, because I am going back to my own roots."

Raymundo's proclaimed "Zapatista punk-anarchism" is certainly based on his own "roots", as he calls them – on his Tzeltal origin and also of his working-class background (his mother is a cook, cleaner, and seamstress, who worked all her life in the households of the richer inhabitants of San Cristóbal and comes from the village of Yochip, a remote place high in the mountains about a three hours ride from the city. Her sisters still live there, in a wooden house with an open fireplace and very limited access to anything outside the community). It is, however, also strongly influenced by the global indigenous imaginary that the Zapatistas so skilfully spread through their media and online communication. I have analysed elsewhere (Heřmanová 2010, 2016, 2018) the individual and collective imaginaries that the visitors of San Cristóbal bring with themselves when they come to visit Chiapas – a blend of mystic, spiritual, "indigenous" culture, exotic, but still comprehensible, "manageable sort of Otherness that plays to our insidious preconceptions of primitives with potential – an understandable, manipulable sort of hybridity," as Edward Fischer notes (Fischer 2014: 154). The magical realism of Zapatista's communiqués (see below) and the – for the Western visitor – fascinating mix of political activism with "tradition" is nothing less than a skilful subversion of this hybridity into a political tool. Raymundo and his peers are aware of all the stereotypes of

"noble savages" still present in the Western discourse, but they internalise it and re-construct in ways that are purposeful to them. The following is just one of many examples of this process.

A few days later, Raymundo took me on a walk through Zona Norte together with his friend Paolo. I asked him if he could show me the place, because I was still disoriented there and I wanted to take a few pictures and record what he knows about the colonias. We met at the zocalo, which on the official map issued by the tourist office is called "Plaza central" or "Plaza 31 de Marzo". Raymundo however called it "Plaza de La Resistencia". As Damaso explained to me: "We have our own names, because these places have importance for us." We walked through the pedestrian zone full of souvenir shops to the public market. "This is the mercado, the real one", Raymundo pointed out to me. Usually, the "mercado" is located in the area around the Santo Domingo church, where hundreds of booths with clothes, bags, Zapatista t-shirts, and hand-crafted jewellery are sold. But according to Paolo and Raymundo, this is not the real Mercado. "The Mercado is not there, it's where the vegetables, shoes, and clothes for local people are sold. The things that local people need", Paolo explains. We walked past the marketplace, crossed the river, and entered the Zona Norte in the colonía 14 de Marzo. We walked for two more hours, bought cigarettes and water in a small grocery shop in colonía Progresso, and climbed up the hill up until San Antonio del Monte. A splendid view over the whole city opened itself below us. Raymundo started to point out important places – this is where my mother lives, this is where Paolo lives, there's the mercado, there's the Plaza de la Resistencia, there's the best pub in town...he never used the official names of the street, he never pointed out the famous churches or historical landmarks. He showed me "his" San Cristóbal.

Raymundo's map wasn't always in accordance with the official one (not only because some places existed on the first one and not on the second). For example "Plaza de la Resistencia" was guarded the whole day by the city police and social services, and the presence of indigenous vendors on it was the focus of the complex negotiations described above. But Raymundo was not much interested in negotiating, though he appreciated the efforts of his older compañeros and respected Damaso very highly. He did not want to negotiate – he simply claimed what was his by renaming it. His proclamations about "going back to the roots" (which were often used also in the speeches of his older compañeros from COSIDEP) were strongly connected to the discourse of the official Zapatista's communiqués and Marcos speeches. The subcommandante

uses a complicated, colourful language full of metaphors and stories, and Raymundo often quoted some of his phrases and collocations. The importance of language and the symbolic acts of reclaiming the urban space through it was also demonstrated by one particular event organised by the Zapatista movement. The EZLN[6] does not makes itself visible very often – in fact, it only presented itself on the streets of San Cristóbal on a very few occasions since the actual uprising on 1 January 1994. But in 2012, they made an exception. On the "magic" date of 21 December 2012, the date that according to many was a doomsday predicted by the old Mayan calendar, thousands of Zapatista soldiers appeared in the city centre of San Cristóbal. But what was most interesting about this particular event was the absence of any explanation – there were no speeches, there was no music, nothing. The masked guerilleros just walked through the city, in complete silence, with Subcommandante Marcos leading the silent march. A few hours later, an official communiqué of Marcos appeared at the Zapatista website, stating: *Did you listen? / It is the sound of your world crumbling. / It is the sound of our world resurging. / The day that was day, was night. / And night shall be the day that will be day.*[7]

"You see? This is also how you use the language to take back what is yours. By saying no words at all," Raymundo then wrote to me in a Facebook message. The Zapatistas in fact did say something, in the communiqué issued later that day, but said so in their usual symbolic, not really comprehensive way. This aspect was particularly important for Raymundo, Paolo, and their group – it is not important if anyone else understands it, we do. It is not important how you call this street, because we know its real name and therefore it is our street, our space. That was the message they wanted to send, as they explained to me.

While Juana María and the first generation of settlers used hard work, precious money, and the help of lawyers to be able to stay in the city, María and her peers, who came later, used organisation, negotiations, and peaceful and lawful protests to be able to stay. Raymundo and his friends, who were born in the city, used political activism, symbols, and language inspired by the

[6] Ejercito Zapatista de la Liberación Nacional, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation, the military and also the most visible fraction of the Zapatista movement. While the EZLN still exists and is often associated with the movement as such, the Zapatistas are – for the moment – claiming to be non-military and a non-armed movement.

[7] "*¿Escucharon? Es el sonido de su mundo derrubándose. Es el sonido de el nuestro resurgiendo. El día que fue el día, era la noche. Y noche será el día que será el día.*" Published on 21 December 2012 at http://enlacezapatista.ezln.org.mx/, translated from Spanish by the author.

Zapatista movement to make themselves visible and to claim their place in the urban infrastructure. Yet all of their stories are marked by the same struggle of living in the city that is their home and that also needs them as an important element in the local economy, but at the same time, whose officials and other inhabitants only very reluctantly acknowledge their presence in it and develop a complex system of restrictions and limits to their visibility in the urban space.

4. A Place that Does Not Exist on The Map – The City and The Non-City

The practical (in)visibility of the colonias and their inhabitants in the urban space can be illustrated by the difficulties of one seemingly very simple task – acquiring a map of the whole city. At the beginning of my fieldwork in San Cristóbal, in the early autumn days of 2008, I was trying to gather as much information as possible about the colonias and the people who live in them. I went to libraries, to bookshops, and to the municipality offices in the Palacio Municipal and asked for information: How many people live here? Could you give me a map? Do you know some organisations that work here? After almost a month, I was starting to feel quite hopeless – no one knew anything. I was not able to find one single organisation that worked in the suburbs. I was waiting for permission from the office of "Planeación y desarrollo urbano" (planning and city development) to obtain a map of the whole city of San Cristóbal, because on the maps available in bookshops and tourist offices, the city seemed to be much smaller than in physical reality. Zona Norte was not displayed on these maps. The streets ended with the public market in the north-west and with the highway circle in the south. After endless consultations, official stamps, and a letter from both my supervisor in Prague and my supervisor at Metropolitan Autonomous University (UAM) in Mexico City, I was finally introduced to a lady in the office of urban development. She gave me a sheet that she called "memorandum" and gave me further instructions – I had to go to the bank, pay 170 pesos, then go to the cashier's desk at the city office. There they gave me an official stamp confirming that I had paid and with the confirmation, signed memorandum, and two recommendation letters from my supervisors, I was finally allowed to hand in my flash-disk and come the next day with the promise that they would give me the USB back with a map on it. It took me a whole month to accomplish such a seemingly simple task – to get a map of the city with all the streets and suburbs. And during this month, I asked myself

many times: How many people are willing to go through this process? Do these people in the shops and restaurants even know how big their city is? Or did I just imagine the colonias and they are not really there – because no one seems to know anything about them?

My informants also often spoke about the feeling of being "invisible." Belissario, a local leader from Zona Norte, told me during an evening festival at the zócalo that he felt invisible every time he went to the municipality offices. "They don't care about us there," he said. "Everything we have, we built ourselves – they sometimes promised to do something, but never fulfilled those promises. It's like we don't matter. We don't really exist." Juana María summed it up in one of our conversations, when she said, "How are you supposed to live in a city like this? Look at the map." She points to my documents on the table before us. "Look, Zona Norte is now bigger than the rest of the city. We work here, they depend on us, on our work – but they still pretend we don't belong here."

But it's not only when dealing with the city officials that indígenas from Zona Norte feel invisible. I once took María's younger daughter Cristina to go shopping with me – I needed some warmer clothes, as the winter was coming and I had hoped she could help me find something not too expensive. She took me to a few places and showed me some really cheap clothing stands at the public market. I asked her if this was where she went when she needed something and she shrugged. "Where else would we go? When I have some money, like during Christmas break when we sell a lot of stuff to the tourists, I would love to go to the shops at Real de Guadeloupe. But I can't. I tried once, but the lady told me to go away. Maybe she thought I didn't have money because I am indígena. But I had money. It's mostly that they just don't want to see us. We cannot go where the white people belong. They don't want to see us."

On another occasion, María said a very similar thing. We were sitting at the zócalo (the main square in front of the cathedral) in the evening. The vendedoras were only allowed to place their things on the ground after 8:00 p.m.; during the day, they had to walk with all their goods on their backs and make offers to the tourist in the pedestrian zones. After 8:00 p.m., however, the zócalo became a makeshift market full of indigenous women and their kids surrounded by blankets and sheets of plastic with colourful blouses, necklaces, and wool sweaters. I was helping María fold her blouses and sort out the tangled necklaces and we were talking about her negotiations with the municipality office. She was concerned about the prolongation of the permission for street

sale. María is a representative for a group of vendedoras and she was leading the negotiations at the time. When I asked her how it was going, she just shrugged and said, "You know, it's difficult. I know that they don't want us here." "But why?" I asked. "The tourists come here because of you. They would be disappointed if they came and there was no market during the night . . . It's good for the city, when it makes the tourist happy, isn't it?" I said, smiling. But María didn't smile. She just shook her head and said, "I know it's good. It pays, I told them many times. But even the money is not enough. They don't want to look at us. They think we don't belong here. They don't want to see us. They want us to remain invisible." As these examples show, the metaphor of "invisibility" was used frequently by the people from the colonías, and not only in reference to the non-existence of their homes on the map, but also in relation to how they (do not) interact with people from the city centre in their everyday life.

The British anthropologist, political theorist, and fantasy writer China Miéville very accurately captures this distinction between what is visible and what is invisible in his novel *The City & The City*, set in the fictive European city of Beszél and its "twin" city of Ul Qoma. Beszél and Ul Qoma occupy the same geographical space, but by the means of the "unseeing" practised by their denizens, they are *perceived* as two different cities. There are areas that are "total", which means they belong entirely to the home city of the resident, and then there are the "alter" areas, which are completely in the *other* city and also "crosshatched" areas – the most tricky ones, where residents of both cities may pass each other, walk along each other side by side – yet they cannot see each other, or buildings or things that belong to the other city, even if they are just inches away. Little children are taught to "unsee" the things, buildings, and people from the other city without actually seeing them. There is only one place in both Beszél and Ul Qoma where the border can be legally crossed. To ignore the separation, to see things that belong to the other side, is a crime worse than murder – and that is also the reason why movement in Beszél and Ul Qoma is so complicated for foreigners who are not trained in unseeing. They would mostly stay in their respective areas to avoid the breaching of the code – just like the foreigners in San Cristóbal, who never go further than the crosshatched area of public market. And what is also interesting is that places that exist in both cities have different names in each of the languages of the twin cities. They are and yet they are not the same place.

This dualism, so captivatingly explained in Miéville's novel, is also clear in the story about the encounter of Juana María with the lawyer who told her

that as far as he was concerned, her house did not exist (as quoted in one of the previous chapters). The people from the city cannot consider the suburbs as part of their urban space because in their perception, nothing would make Zona Norte "urban" – infrastructure, hierarchy, order, economy. They are also trained to unsee the houses and streets of Zona Norte, the ghost city that is – in their perception – not really there, because it's not a *city*.

The interpretation of the non-existence of Zona Norte on the common maps of San Cristóbal as a sign of the symbolic "invisibility" of the space is thus the most obvious one, and it is also partly shared by the people who live there, as illustrated above. The implications of this idea are, however, complicated. Ann Varley (2013: 13) notes that the omission of informal settlements from the city maps is quite common, at least in the context of Latin America (Berenstein Jacques 2002, Brillembourg and Klumpner 2005, Gouverneur and Grauer 2008 – in Varley 2013, 13nn). According to Juáregui, slums, shantytowns, and "*cinturónes de miseria*" that "often go unrecorded in official cadastral maps, represent the negative image [la imagen *noire*] of society: what no one wishes to know about, non-places, intervals, 'dead time' in journey across the city" (Juaregui 2014 cited by Varley 2013: 30). Varley points out that Juáregui's (and others') concept of the settlements of urban poor (Brazilian favelas in his case) as "negatives" or "non-places" is based on an implicit dualism: it places "the city" and "the non-city" as opposites (2013: 11nn) and characterises them accordingly – as a space with proper urban infrastructure versus space that has no infrastructure; as an economically productive space vs. a space with no culture of production depending on black market and criminal strategies; or as an organised space with an embedded hierarchy and order vs. a chaotic, dangerous, lawless zone of a non-city. Besides the theoretical implications that are discussed below, this also practically leads to the confirmation of common stereotypes about marginalised areas, as Loïc Wacquant sums them up: "'lawless zones,' the 'problem estates,' the 'no-go areas' or the 'wild districts' of the city, territories of deprivation and dereliction to be feared, fled from and shunned because they are . . . hotbeds of violence, vice, and social dissolution" (2008: 1). Logically then, these places are invisible, because no one wants to see them – and the people in them are supposed to be invisible as long as they do not cross the border to the other city. And they might be prevented from doing so, because they could bring their disorder, chaos, and heterogeneity with them and disrupt the hierarchy of the official urban space.

The distinction between a city and a "non-city"[8] is also the basis for many interpretations of urban informality and urban marginality in recent academic literature. In the earlier years of the studies of urban marginality, dating back to the famous Oscar Lewis study *The Children of Sánchez: Autobiography of a Mexican Family* (first published 1961) and the concept of the culture of poverty, there is always a strict dichotomy of informality and formality. In classical works such as Kenneth Clark's *The Dark Ghetto* or even Ulf Hannerz's *Soulside,* the formal serves as a reference group for the informal.[9] For example, there is the "white" city, as opposed to the dark ghetto. Varley quotes Rebecca Biron, who sums the widely held views of Mexico City (which Biron herself rejects): "The city embodies two dichotomous [. . .] worlds: on the one hand, a pre-modern, indigenous, informal, poverty-based squatter culture; and on the other hand, a hyper- or post-modern, multi-cultural, tele-connected, globalized, or world city" (Biron 2005 quoted in Varley 2013: 12).

In recent decades this approach has, however, been heavily criticised for two reasons: First, for being an embodiment of a post-colonial way of thinking, and second, because the reality of the so-called informal settlements has changed. The theoretical debate about the post-colonial dimension of the discussion and its critique from a mostly post-structuralist point of view, based on the observation that the way in which urban poor are depicted in scholarly works is very similar to the way in which the "noble savage" and "the Other" used to be depicted, is explained in Varley's study (2013). She mentions the concern with "negative alterity" that is created by such dualistic thinking. Non-places inhabited by urban poor are what jungles and deserts inhabited by noble savages were to previous generations of anthropologists and the exoticisation and simplification that follows from this thinking prevents the understanding of structural conditions of urban informality.

The physical changes in the social, political, and economical infrastructure of the ghettos, slums, and informal settlements were described by Janice Perlman in a revision of her groundbreaking study *The Myth of Marginality – Urban Poverty and Politics in Rio de Janeiro* (1976). Perlman visited her

[8] As a reference to Marc Augé's concept of non-lieux / non-places, developed in *Pour une anthropologie des mondes contemporains* (1994) and *Introduction à une anthropologie de la surmodernité* (1992).

[9] Again, the distinction doesn't necessarily mean that the houses or settlements (i.e., physical infrastructure of the informal settlement) is built illegally – informally. Hannerz and Clark, and later Philippe Bourgois (1994), refer to the informal economy, not to informal settlements – which would be the case with Oscar Lewis. The distinction, however, remains the same.

field-site thirty years after her original research, and located many of her previous respondents to confront her findings with the reality three decades later. She recounts the changes in the environment of the city and notes that the traditional distinctions between favelas and the rest of the city "have become useless as denoters of how and where to draw the boundaries." The division in the urban space was still there, but it could not be marked in the standard ways anymore – by the "illegality" of favelas that have gained tenure in most cases or by the lack of urban services, since these have been provided to the favelas over the years. The shacks of shabby materials were replaced with concrete houses two or more stories high. In other words, favelas were, she noticed upon her return, no longer places distinguishable by extreme poverty visible at every step. "The only remaining distinction between favelas (often called *morros* or hills) and the rest of the city (commonly referred to as the *asfalto* or pavement) is the deeply rooted stigma that still adheres to them," Perlman notes (2005: 9).

Perlman's story of favelas in Rio is not significantly different from the story of the colonias in San Cristóbal or any other similar settlement in Latin America and elsewhere in the world. The first colonias and their growth are described by Betancourt (1997), who defines their character as "semi-urban" (*semiurbano*). As previously discussed in the first section, the first colonias resembled the original villages of their inhabitants much more than they resembled urban settlement. There was enough space around the houses for cows, sheep, and chickens, and small cornfields were nestled in between the small wooden buildings. Some of the original colonias still partly keep this "rural" character, but the typical colonias like La Hormiga or Progreso, where María lives, are densely built up, they have concrete or gravel streets (in the street where María lives in Progreso, the concrete was built in 2010, though the colonia was established in the early 1990s). The semi-urban character is most visible in the newest colonias on the outskirts of Zona Norte, which I visited with María on the day we took her nephew José to school. The longer the colonia exists, the more infrastructure it usually has, and the less it resembles a village.

Just as in Perlman's case of Rio's favelas, the only way to distinguish between a well-developed middle-class settlement in Zona Sur – which is considered a good place to live for people who do not want to stay in the centre because of the tourist traffic, and that which is a typical colonia – is by the reaction of locals. Perlman notes that according to the data she collected, "among the multiple dimensions of social exclusion faced by the urban poor in Rio, the stigma of living in a favela is the most powerful, with 84 percent of respondents

claiming it as the most important factor" (2005: 12). Wacquant (2007, 2008) writes about the phenomenon of "territorial stigmatization," which explains the causality of the process of stigmatisation – it is not because you are a criminal that you go to live in a ghetto; it is because you are in a ghetto that you become a criminal. And as Wacquant points out, it does not really matter if you show any signs of a criminal behaviour according to the law, you will nevertheless *feel* and *be perceived* as a criminal, and "in these matters perception contributes powerfully to fabricating reality" (Wacquant 2008: 1).

The territorial stigmatisation attached to colonias can be observed in many everyday situations. When I decided to rent a room in Zona Norte, it turned out to be a task nearly as impossible as obtaining a map of the place – everyone I asked almost instantly became horrified and concerned about my safety. I did not really know where to start – the rooms there were not advertised online like the rooms in the city centre or anywhere else, and I did not know anyone who lived there. I had just begun to form a few relationships with some of the vendedoras whom I met everyday at the zócalo, but when I tried to ask them about a room for rent in their neighbourhood, they usually just started to laugh as if I had told them the best joke they had ever heard. I also asked my room-mates from the house in the city centre, because some of them had been in San Cristóbal for longer than I; Rudy, the jewellery artist from Ecuador, who sold his necklaces and bracelets from gemstones and amber at the market of Santo Domingo, had been living in San Cristóbal for almost a year already. He turned out to be the only one of my room-mates who even knew about the existence of the colonías in Zona Norte. When I asked Rudy about the colonías, I heard the story of La Hormiga for the first time – I was told the same story about dangerous drug addicts many times throughout the next few years, from friends, taxi drivers, bartenders, and once even a local activist. "La Hormiga is the most famous of all colonías," Rudy told me. "It's also the most dangerous one. I heard that there was a drug mafia – you see, the people there are not poor. They have money, but they have money from drugs – at least that's what they say. I wouldn't go there; you cannot go there alone. They don't like outsiders. They would rob you, at the very least. It's just not safe. We don't go into the colonías." Needless to say, he strongly disapproved of my plan to move into Zona Norte, told me that I was insane, and that he would not be responsible for someone possibly murdering me, because he had warned me.

The common discourse about the colonías thus only copied the official one and maintained the status quo – keeping the colonías and their inhabitants in

the strictly limited place, as invisible as possible. At the same time, the inhabitants of the colonías are very constantly and on a daily basis using and inventing various strategies how to remain visible.

Conclusion

As was already mentioned above, the story of the inhabitants of the Zona Norte is not rare in the context of Latin America, nor in the context of informal urban settlements all around the world. The aim of this text is to provide three concrete ethnographic examples of how urban marginality works on the everyday level, and what strategies are used by the people in the marginalised areas in order to find their space in the urban infrastructure. The final analysis of the metaphor of the "invisible city" then attempts the deconstruct the mechanisms behind these processes. There are three important points in the arguments above that can be applied in broader context.

First, the discourse about the urban poor tends to follow the direction of thinking about "the Other" and thus creates a strict dualism between what is a city – the home of "us," "the white people," or "the majority" – and what is the "slum," "favela," or "colonia" in my case, the home of "the Other." The colonia is thus depicted as a non-city, in a reference to Augé's non-places, a sort of negative image of the city itself that turns all the characteristics of the city upside-down. The division between the city and the non-city remains in place even after most of the physical denoters of such division are long gone, as for example Perlman's revision of her own research in Rio's favelas shows, or as it is also the case in San Cristóbal, where some of the colonias now in many ways resemble wealthier parts of the older colonial city centre. But even if parts of Zona Norte now look the same as parts of Zona Sur – they remain in the "non-city" zone. The strategies used by the denizens of the "non-cities" thus in many cases aim to overcome this dualism, as both Juana María's and María's story illustrate.

Secondly, the denizens of the non-city internalise the concept of the non-city, which is invisible to the people in the city. They feel and they are perceived to be invisible in the urban space of the city – Juana María's story about the negotiations with city hall is a most eloquent example of the perceived invisibility. The border between the city and non-city is strongly felt by inhabitants on both sides – in the case of San Cristóbal, it could easily be geographically located on the edge of the public market. It is both a physical and symbolic border that people who do not live in the Zona Norte seldom cross. The internalisation

manifests on the everyday level – in the practice of not visiting certain places or shops (as Cristina does), or in the subversive practice of renaming the places. Even though Raymundo's and Paolo's practice of "going back to the roots" aims at reclaiming the urban space, it nevertheless also starts from the perception of the divided city – what is ours and what is theirs.

Thirdly, as it follows from the two previous points, the internalised stigma of "invisibility" becomes the main denoter of what is a city and what is not a proper city anymore. The territorial stigmatisation that *a priori* ascribes certain characteristics of it (disorder, chaos, lawlessness, danger, and criminal behaviour) to Zona Norte and its inhabitants lays at the core of division of the urban space and forms a basis for the creation of urban marginality. Even though the visible marks are, in many cases, long-gone, the stigma stays, and the way it is internalised influences the strategies of coping with it.

The situation in San Cristóbal's colonias is not unique, and there are many other "invisible" cities, that are – at least in the Latin American context – very similar to Zona Norte. A significant body of literature thus exists exploring the inner organisation of the urban informal settlements, the family life and gender aspects, economy and crime, violence and health (Perlman 1976, 2005, Shepher-Hughes 1992, Goldstein 2003, Caldeira 2001). The focus on the specific duality of the "city" and the "non-city", illustrated here by three stories of three different generations, could, however, provide another perspective – one that focuses more on the relationship of informal settlements to the world outside of their streets, shacks, and households, and less on their inner workings. In San Cristóbal, the border of the urban space of the city centre and the semi-urban, informal non-place of the periphery is even more visible due to the intensive tourist gaze that the denizens of Zona Norte are subjected to. Their ways of dealing with it, making themselves visible and re-constructing and re-purposing the stigmas and the exoticising narratives ascribed to them could thus provide a rich ethnographic example of the agency of a marginalised people navigating their actions in a world of deeply embedded structural inequalities.

Marie Heřmanová holds a degree in social anthropology from the Faculty of Humanities at Charles University in Prague. Her areas of interest are migration, urban anthropology, media anthropology, digital ethnography, and social networks. She works in the field of media and migration also outside academia, as a consultant in the NGO sector and as a journalist. She is a member of the Studio of Applied Anthropological Research Anthropictures.

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OUR NATIONAL HEROES. MUSIC AND COLLECTIVE REMEMBERING[1]

Zuzana Jurková

Abstract: ***The following text is focused on the rise of a new, post-revolutionary (after the 1989 "Velvet Revolution") pantheon on the Prague music scene. Two distinct modalities are discussed: a "state-supported" one, represented by the opera*** Toufar ***(the title hero of which is a priest-martyr of the Communist regime), and a subversive one, represented by the musical*** Velvet Havel!

The ethnographic descriptions show both similarities in the music forms and languages, and a distinctiveness regarding the stakeholders.

Through interviews with the authors of the presented works, the driving forces behind the rise of music representations are revealed, and the basic premises of contemporary collective memory studies about its constructed nature and about its collective-identity-forming character are confirmed.

Keywords: ***Prague; collective remembering; music.***

August 2018: *Summer House for Sale,* a brand-new Czech film. A married couple, perhaps in their early sixties, are selling an old wooden cottage in the woods. They don't say much, but it is clear that they really don't want to. At a certain point, inside the cottage, they almost unwittingly put on a record: Czech pop music of the '70s. Now it is clear: the house is full of memories from their youth. Not only do I understand what they are remembering, but I start to remember, too. The sound reminds me of our kitchen, our light-wood radio which was often turned on, the scratched linoleum, the folding bench my grandfather made that I usually sat on at lunch... Music triggers my memories. And I am not alone in

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this.[2] Remembering is becoming a ubiquitous phenomenon. In the past decades, we have been witnessing a "boom of remembering."[3]

The basic idea of what goes on in our brain when we remember (or when we are reminded of) a piece of music we heard long ago – the activation of specific neural circuits, which are the same at first hearing and in remembering – is described by Daniel Levitin in his book *This Is Your Brain on Music* (2007: 133–168). For anthropologists, the approach of ethnomusicologist Thomas Turino is certainly easily understandable. In the book *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation* (2008) he attempts to answer the key question of what music is actually for.[4] First, he connects biologist and anthropologist Gregory Bateson's findings of the integrative function of art with the research of psychologist Mihály Csikszentmihalyi (1990), whose concept of *flow*, the optimal experience attained, inter alia, by performing music, confirms and deepens Bateson's conclusions. According to Turino, it is thus obvious that music integrates an individual with him/herself: his/her perceptions, ideas, longings, and experiences, all of which are unconnected from a rational point of view. With the help of instruments from the field of semiotics, then, Turino (2008: 12) demonstrates how a simple musical stimulus lowers the rich "semiotic chain" of various psychological and corporal reactions.[5] By the way, the introductory paragraph of this text testifies to a similar process.

If we were to glance at Turino's concept from the perspective of memory – in semiosis,[6] elements of the past, the present, and also hopes and longings projected into the future are connected – it corresponds well to the idea of English philosopher John Locke, according to whom memory is a condition of individual identity and responsibility. By means of remembering, individuals experience the continuity of life (Erll 2011: 85).

Turino emphasises that, along with the self-integrative potential of music (among other things, by remembering), music also integrates individuals with

2 Quotation from Jurková 2017: 3–4.

3 Huyssen (1995) speaks of a "memory boom." To distinguish between the terms memory and remembrance see, e.g., Erll 2011: 8–9.

4 One of Turino's basic theories is that the expression "music" is an umbrella term for *fundamentally distinct types of activities that fulfill different needs and ways of being human*. (2008:1) I basically agree with this assumption. Nevertheless, for this text, I do not consider it essential to distinguish these types.

5 Turino demonstrates how various types of semiotic signs involved in semiosis mediate various kinds of experiences. He thus indirectly supports his thesis about the universal integrative contribution of art and, concretely, music and, thus, its necessity.

6 The process of interpretation of signs.

various types of collectivities. And this assertion is the threshold over which we enter our main topic: **music and collective remembering**.

Premises

Still standing on the threshold, let us recall the three basic premises from which we will proceed in this text:

1) Individual and collective remembering are inseparably interwoven; nevertheless, they are guided by different rules. The collective is certainly composed of individuals – the bearers of memories. At the same time, however, we are convinced, along with the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1952), that individual remembering is formed in collective frames. They provide him/her with expressions, determine the relevance of individual events, etc. Individual remembering is thus governed by different – psychological – rules from the remembering of the collective. The application of psychological principles to collectives (which is what some authors concerned with collective memories do) leads to erroneous conclusions regarding social reality (Kansteiner 2002).
2) For the function of collective remembering, historian Jan Assmann's concept of "connective structure" is useful. According to him, it "binds the individual to someone close to him/her so that, like the symbolic world of meaning... *it shapes the shared space of experience... and thus contributes to the development of confidence and knowledge*." (2001: 20) Assmann's connective structure also contains an aspect that leads to our main topic, that is, collective remembering. One component of connective structure is also – besides the cultural dimension – the time dimension that "*connects yesterday with today because it shapes formative remembering and keeps it in the present*." (ibid) In Assmann's formulation, Halbwach's social frames of memory (connective structure "shapes formative remembering"), as well as the relevance of the remembered, resonate. Thus: what and how we remember shapes that *shared space of experience ... and thereby contribute[s] to the development of confidence*.

   The other basic feature of remembering – besides the basic identity-forming character – is constructivity. This quality significantly characterises the formulation of Astrid Erll: *Individual and collective remembering are never a reflective depiction of the past, but an expressive statement of*

the needs and interests of an individual or a group who are remembering in the present (Erll 2011: 8).

3) The third basic premise of this text rests directly in the fundaments of ethnomusicology of the last half-century. It is a conviction that music, primarily a collective matter,[7] reflects collective (i.e. social) reality (viz. Shelemay 2012). And this collective character of music is so strong that sometimes it alone generates a collectivity.[8]

In sum: detailed research of musical events which capture collective remembering allows us to gain much important information about a given collectivity (that "shared space of experience"), its current "needs and interests," and also the mechanisms which fulfil them.

Heroes?

When, in 2013, people became aware of *Hořící keř* (*Burning Bush*), the film by young Czech scriptwriter Štěpán Hulík and the famous Polish director Agneszka Holland about one of the symbols of anti-Soviet resistance, Jan Palach (in a few months the film was granted twelve Czech Lion awards, the most important film awards in the Czech Republic), and, almost at the same time, the National Theatre premiered Aleš Březina's opera about Josef Toufar, a priest who was brutally tortured by the Communist police, this concurrence of events evoked the question of actually why these personalities were presented in this way and appeared on the national scene. (And, a couple of months later, *Velvet Havel!,* another work in the cycle of original musicals about important personalities in Czech history by Miloš Orson Štědron, later the recipient of numerous nationwide prizes, was in preparation; it would have its premiere in the popular Divadlo Na zábradlí (Theatre on the Balustrade)).

For answers, let us try to go beyond the vague term *Zeitgeist*, the spirit of the time. We are convinced of the correctness of the assertion of Astrid Erll

[7] Not only that music is mainly performed collectively and almost always listened to collectively, but primarily its meanings are created and passed on collectively.

[8] Kay Kaufman Shelemay formulates the role of music during collectivity creation thus: "*...musical processes (*are*) instrumental in shaping musical communities through music's role in establishing the ethnic places that unite a collectivity from within and represent it to the outside world.*" (Shelemay, 2012: 207–8.) Thomas Turino summarises the findings of generations of ethnomusicologists: [*Ethnomusicologists have emphasized the importance of music for expressing and creating social identities in many societies around the world* (Turino 2008: 94).]

that it is about an expression of *needs and interests* of those remembering in the present. Nancy Wood expresses herself even more precisely: the expression of *public memory testifies to a will or desire on the part of some social group or disposition of power to select and organize representations of the past so that these will be embraced by individuals as their own. If particular representations of the past have permeated the public domain, it is because they embody an intentionality – social, political, institutional, and so on…* (Wood 1999: 2)

What, actually, does the Czech pantheon appear to be in this still young third of a century? That is, who are the main saints of the public music space? And who are those who *select and organise representations of the past?* What influences their selection? How does it work from the musical point of view? And which *agency* brought the work to the public space?

Apart from Březina's *Toufar,* we can undoubtedly also include his earlier opera *Zítra se bude (Tomorrow There Will Be)*… about Member of Parliament Milada Horáková, who was executed by the Communist regime,[9] and, in 2017, on the New Scene of the National Theatre, the opera *Žádný člověk* (*No Person*) by Jiří Kadeřábek (music) and Katharina Smitt and Lukáš Jiřička (text).[10]

From the numerous musical theatrical works of Miloš Orson Štědroň, undoubtedly *Velvet Havel!*, which premiered in 2014 in the Theatre on the Balustrade, and perhaps *Hus(que) ad finem*, a musical about Jan Hus, which had its premiere a year later on the occasion of the 2015 Hus celebrations in Old Town Square[11], belong in this pantheon. The play based on songs by Karel Hašler, *Hašler* (prem. 2013 on the stage of the conventional Vinohrady Theatre) can be added to the list of presentations of today's national heroes and

9 It premiered in 2008 in the same place, the chamber Kolowrat Theatre

10 The subject of the opera is the monstrous Stalin monument built on Prague's Letná Plain, 1949–1955. The main tragic (non)heroes are the sculptor Otakar Švec, who created the monument, and his wife.

11 Štědroň is the author of a number of works about important figures in Czech history. Although his heroes are no doubt figures every school child should know by the 7th grade, we do not feel that the format in which some of them are depicted – that is, chamber theatre performances – guarantees them a place in the "national pantheon."

The auditorium with a couple of dozen seats, representing the public space in which they are remembered, is too small for it. In addition, we can assume that, to a certain extent, a "specialised" audience, representing what Turino calls cultural cohorts get together here. Cohorts are defined as *social groupings that form along the lines of specific constellations of shared habits*… (2008: 111). For the needs of the national pantheon, the concept of cultural formation, defined by Turino as a *group of people who have in common a majority of habits that constitute most parts of each individual member's self* (Turino 2008: 112), is much more appropriate.

non-heroes. In it, the almost national writer Pavel Kohout heroises this popular songwriter who was murdered in 1941 in the Mauthausen concentration camp.

This is no especially broad Pléiade. As expressed in the title of the newspaper discussion, it could seem "As if we were ashamed of our heroes."[12] In addition, those who appear on the musical stage are sometimes not presented as real heroes by the authors. Why, actually? Part of the explanation undoubtedly rests in the Czech tradition of resistance to pathos, resistance substantially nourished in totalitarian Czechoslovakia. But writer and historian Miloš Doležal, the author of the excellent book about Josef Toufar, *As if We Were to Die Today*, sees the reason elsewhere: that we lack the courage and the will to reflect on heroic acts of the past.[13]

The second part of the explanation, however, perhaps lies in the understanding of art. As journalist Petr Zídek says: "If art is to have a reason for being, then it, in its nature, must be subversive. Artists have to cut down the idols rather than create them."[14]

And indeed, the contemporary national pantheon, performed on the musical scene, offers the two basic genres of ancient drama – tragedy and comedy; or, in other words, it captures personalities of the past in two ways: heroically or subversively.[15] The first of these can be understood as a distinct instrument of strengthening national identity; the second fills the reflexive function of art regarding society. In the following text, I describe representatives of both modalities and attempt to answer the questions posed earlier.

The Tragic Hero Josef Toufar

Aleš Březina: *Toufar*
Kolowrat Theatre, chamber stage of the National Theatre of Prague
Tuesday, January 28, 2014. 7 p.m.

The Baroque Kolowrat Palace is in the very centre of Prague on Ovocný trh (Fruit Market Square), just a few steps from the Estates Theatre. If you step in along the red plush carpet and on each floor admire the painted-wood ceilings,

12 Lidové noviny, Oct. 5, 2013.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 The term subversively refers to an alternative way of capturing the main character, usually presented in an idealised way. Here, it does not contain any political connotations.

you are then taken by surprise in the garret: you find yourself in a cramped space with ordinary wooden chairs set on steep steps. Only a few dozen spectators can fit in the auditorium, and the simple stage is very close to the first row. The auditorium is full, as it was a couple of years ago when Březina's opera about Milada Horáková, *Zítra se bude (Tomorrow There Will Be)...,* was performed. This time, too, the spectators are all adults, though in a broad age span between twenty years old and seventy years old. Most are formally dressed, but no one is wearing the elegant evening wear certainly worn by at least part of the audience in the neighbouring Estates Theatre.

Neither the name Toufar nor the subject of the opera, the Číhošť miracle,[16] is unfamiliar. I first read about this subject, completely absent from the official cultural sphere in the Communist era, in a typed copy of Josef Škvorecký's book *The Miracle* (published in Toronto 1972). After November '89, a television film about this same man was created with the popular Viktor Preiss in the main role and, a couple of months before the premiere of the opera, an in-depth historical monograph by Miloš Doležal, *As if We Were to Die Today: A Drama of the Life, the Priesthood, and the Martyr's Death of the Číhošť Priest, Father Josef Toufar,* came out.

A short overture prepares the scene: a keyboard, playing in an organ register (by which it unerringly brings us to a church environment), repeats some sort of unfinished motif. As a violin and a bass clarinet are gradually added to them in close harmony, tension is created... On a barely lit stage, meanwhile, a man in a white suit rolls in a table with something covered by a white cloth; he places it in front of a large wall engraving of Christ on the cross, which dominates the stage. In the darkness, we can only guess at the presence of other figures in black. When a bright light falls on them towards the end of the overture, it is clear that they have the inscription Torture on their black hooded coats.

Down the aisle between the chairs, in a plain blue coat and grey pants, walks the main protagonist, the nearly 90-year-old theatre legend, Soňa Červená. With her usual deep voice (as an opera singer, she sang alto roles) and perfectly comprehensibly, yet perhaps too theatrically for some, she tells the fate of Jan Sarkander, who, in the 17th century, was tortured to death in

[16] On December 11, 1949, according to 20 witnesses at the Sunday mass in Číhošť, the wooden altar cross moved while the local priest, Josef Toufar, was preaching. The church attempt to explain it was *wrecked by the Communist State Security. Father Toufar was arrested, taken away, and through torture, members of the State Security Corps forced him to confess to a lie that he had fraudulently installed a mechanical device*. (Doležal 2012: book jacket) As a consequence of the torture, Toufar died.

Fig. 1: Soňa Červená in the opera *Toufar* (photo Zuzana Jurková).

Moravia. Her partners on stage are six girls in black coats who, according to the information in the programme, are members of the Kühn Children's Choir. Červená and the singers, in some kind of counterpoint (the still quite childlike voices of the girls create a strange tension with the declamation of Červená) describe the details of the torture.

Now we understand what the opera is about.

The second scene takes place "338 years later": Cardinal Beran, portrayed today by the popular actor Vladimír Javorský in a bishop's vestment, celebrates the solemn *Te Deum* in St. Vitus cathedral for the newly elected first Communist President, Klement Gottwald. He is now portrayed by Červená in a man's dark suit and red tie; (Fig. 1) her tall, bony build in no way reminds us of the pudgy Gottwald, but, by her striking facial expressions throughout the performance of his texts, she reveals his inner demonic nature. Only now am I properly aware of why Březina calls his opera a "documentary": the libretto is assembled exclusively from materials of that time; references to them are in the printed programme. At the moment we are hearing some excerpts from Beran's pastoral letter and Gottwald's speech at a meeting of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party describing a strategy for *neutralising the Church so that it is subservient to the regime, as is the case of the Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union*. (Červená alternately sings and recites; Javorský as

Beran speaks untheatrically.) The children's voices sing the Latin *Te Deum* as a background of this duet. The sound of the keyboard organ alternates figurative passages with chords and with the accompaniment of the chorus and singers.

In the following scene, the conflict of the Church, represented by Javorský, and the Communist regime (this time Soňa Červená plays not only Gottwald, but also low Communist apparatchiks) escalates. This is clear from the texts of both protagonists and from the nervous passages of the keyboard. At the moment of the conflict's climax, a man in a white vestment walking down the aisle between the spectators enters the scene. In a high, predominantly female-sounding voice he sings *We are sinners and yet we were created for heaven. A place is ready for all of us there.* The countertenor Jan Mikušek in the role of Toufar. His singing, in slow tempo, without dynamic changes, soberly accompanied by a celesta, sounds angelic.

The angelic atmosphere continues when Toufar writes to the boys he supported in their studies. Again the celesta is heard; the melody again flows in broad intervals and without dynamic changes; in a while, echoes of folk carolling again sound. When out of an old radio the historical recording of the well-known (and later often parodied) Christmas address of Antonín Zápotocký[17] about how *Baby Jesus grew old, his beard grew out, and he turned into Old Man Frost,* is played, it seems to come from some other world.

The idyll in a village parsonage, however, is approaching its end. The witnesses – the choristers describe the moving of the cross during mass, which Toufar writes about to his friend. While the girls are almost carefree – their song recalls a children's nursery rhyme – Toufar switches to speech; it is clear that he is aware that *I am only one, so it'll be easier for them*. (Fig. 2) The neurotic figures of the keyboard also return. Right afterwards, we are in the middle of the torture. The choristers – the witnesses of the miracle – have now become members of the torture apparatus. They now sing the interrogator Macha's text about the details of Toufar's torment, and, with drills in their hands, they also demonstrate it. Their totally unemotional, almost robotic singing contrasts with Mikušek, who alternates expressive passages in the head (female-sounding) register with lower tones. The way the confession was acquired is more than obvious... *that the authorities interrogated me decently... and that I made my statement without any pressure.* Soňa Červená reads in a demonic manner

[17] Antonín Zápotocký (1884–1957) was the second Communist President (1953–1957) and, thus, his speech was made more recently than when the opera takes place.

Fig. 2: Jan Mikušek in the opera *Toufar* (photo Zuzana Jurková).

Toufar's confession (forced by torture) of how he feigned the motion of the altar cross. This is interlocked with the liturgical prayers of Javorský supported by the singing of the choristers – anonymous worshippers.

We then see footage from a 1950 propaganda film in which Toufar figures shortly before his death. Červená accompanies it with the text of a Ministry of the Interior announcement for a press conference. In it, the "Číhošť miracle" is part of *the hand of Imperialism, which is not ashamed of anything, of Wall Street and of its supporter – the Vatican*. In Soňa Červená's interpretation, the announcement sounds almost cabaret-like. Then the priest's body appears for the last time. Javorský comments on its condition based on the protocol of the police and the doctors; the choristers repeat "*multiple bruises*" in ostinato patterns. In the short next-to-the-last scene, recorded brass music sounds like the background of the victorious speech of the general secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Rudolf Slánský (also interpreted by Červená), given about the abolishment of the Church (*We closed church schools, we're locking priests up*...). The conclusion itself is a quiet scene in which Toufar's niece (sung by one of the choristers) asks President Gottwald in a letter about her uncle's fate. The music of this scene – a melody, inexpressive interpretation, and even a celesta accompaniment – brings us back to idyllic Číhošť before Toufar's arrest.

Aleš Březina on Collective Remembering, Non-heroes of Our Past, and Music, which Helps Us to Remember

Aleš Březina (born 1965) studied violin at the Pilsen Conservatory and musicology in Prague, Basel, and Berlin.
Aside from chamber and orchestral, vocal and instrumental concert compositions, he is the author of music for the theatre (apart from the above-mentioned operas, also *Muchova epopej* [*Mucha's Epic*], 2010, scenic music for numerous theatre productions, e.g., of Robert Wilson, Jiří Menzel, and others, and for films [over 20 films]).
Březina is the director of the Bohuslav Martinů Institute and the Chairman of the Editorial Board of the Bohuslav Martinů Collected Critical Edition.

On August 15, 2016, I conducted a semi-structured interview with the composer Aleš Březina about his two operas.

AB: First to the question of why I decided to remember Milada Horáková. It seemed significant to me that, in my own memory – I was 24 at the time of the Velvet Revolution – Milada Horáková played no role. I was interested in how it was possible that I was so brainwashed. I grew up in Sušice, which was a military town. Then I attended the conservatory in Pilsen from 1979 to 1985. It was a bastion of peace and socialism... so nobody spoke of it there. Actually I started to discover it here in Prague, when I studied musicology from '85 to '89.

ZJ: And what about your parents? Did you speak about it with your parents?
AB: My father was in the Communist Party... so he blocked it out. And my mother was a soldier in Sušice. She kept the archives there, so she didn't want to open the topic either. When I began to be concerned with it I asked people what they recalled when someone said Horáková. Their initial reaction interested me. And I also asked my mother. And she told me for years that she didn't remember anything. And then I once I played her a (documentary) extract from the interrogation and she suddenly remembered how, as a little girl, she heard on the radio – my mother was born in 1938 – the broadcast of the trial... She recalled the voice of the commentator who commented on it at the time. And she said she hadn't understood it, but that it frightened her at the time, that she was afraid of it. And I realised how brilliantly the Bolsheviks had intimidated my parents' generation without their realising what was going on. I believe my

mother had had no idea what it was about – they probably didn't talk about it at home. And in that case, she blocked it out so perfectly that, for years, she was completely honest in saying she didn't know... So I realised that what I was dealing with was a question of collective memory...

And another comment relating to the term "heroes." I chose Horáková precisely because she is such an anti-hero. I love the fact that she said before the jury: *I'm falling. I've lost*. And she really took it as a fight for an idea and her idea lost. And I was very touched that someone could, right before dying, when she knew it was completely unjust and that she was going to die – she had a daughter, she had a husband – that she could just accept it in that way. The final letter she wrote seems entirely Zen Buddhist to me.

What was important was order, not that a life would end. And I like that about her. And that's why I also chose Toufar. He is not someone who sees injustice somewhere and deals with it and, by doing so, loses his life; he is someone who falls into it completely involuntarily. If it had been even slightly up to him, he wouldn't have chosen it. He didn't even know about it. Others did... and, on the basis of that, he was pulverised. I'm most interested in people who didn't want something but, at a certain moment, decided that, if they did fall into it, they would take action themselves and end it. So I did not take either of them as a priori heroes, but rather as litmus papers of what happened when two systems, two paradigms, clashed. The paradigm in which perhaps Horáková was brought up in the pre-war period and the paradigm when truth was what one party suddenly decided – and how these characters were shaped.

ZJ: And actually how did it happen that, on the stage of the National Theatre, this was remembered through operas?

AB: Originally, this is how it was: The National Theatre asked Soňa Červená to perform in this opera. She turned it down. And that opera? She turned it down. And then they told her to choose one, and she asked if it could be something new. They said yes. After she suggested me, they were even happier, because the head of the opera at that time was Jiří Nekvasil, a friend of mine for many years... And the original idea was that we would do something about some strong Czech woman so that Soňa Červená could give a credible performance. And then we chose Horáková, because that seemed to us to be the strongest subject and because this subject is (or was) cast out somewhere on the periphery... I wanted it to be more than what people only knew, that she was a woman

who represented the democratic tradition of the '30s and, therefore, they killed her. I wanted people to experience the brutality that it somehow came to, the systematics of it. That's why I included that telegram about how they started to follow her in March '48, that there was no escape from it. This is an opera about someone whose scenario was already written from the beginning. That's why I've said everywhere that I didn't create the libretto, that I pieced it together. Because that libretto was issued by that power. And then it did its final deed by ordering that trial... With *Toufar*, it originally came from an external stimulus, because I was approached by the Nitra Theatre festival ... with the idea that they wanted to have some kind of parallels of lives under Communism. At first I turned them down because I had some other big job, and, besides, I didn't want to sort of step into the same river twice. But then I asked myself, why not? Since this was a different enough thing. Then I prepared it directly with the historian Stáňa Vodičková, who works at the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes. She prepared the groundwork for me... But I put the libretto together myself because I didn't want her to be blamed afterwards... After all, with this choice, I myself stand for a very selective and subjective position, which she as a historian would certainly not do.

ZJ: It seems to me that, in both of these operas, the composition style is similar: polystylistics with occasional quotations. Is that right?
AB: I am of the opinion that the theatre is eclectic, so it seems to me that very often, in musical theatre, people who write excellent instrumental music and base it on a clean style fail. Theatre is exactly the opposite. Theatre cannot have a pure style, because you need to express many characters and many situations – and they can't be expressed through one style. So I compose in what the French call an eclectic music style, because it seems to me that this style is always justified by the musical situation. And quotations – I love quotations because I feel that the appropriately chosen quotation points out various intertextual connections... for example, that quotation of the sacrificed girl (from *The Rites of Spring* in *Tomorrow There Will Be*) – it seemed to me that it suddenly shone. And people will see it in the context of some roundelay, some ritual, because Milada Horáková was only one of many... I wanted to show that it was simply a part of some historical process.

ZJ: In Toufar *even more, right?*
AB: Of course.

ZJ: A question about the girls who sang in it: Did you provide them with some kind of context? Or did you think that they were big enough?
AB: No, no. They were 10, 11 years old. We didn't provide them with it for the reason that they wouldn't have understood it one bit... And it suited me that they actually didn't know what they were singing. I've always been fascinated by people who, in the '70s, confessed that at the end of the '40s they didn't know what they had done. And I wanted this from those girls: I wanted them to be the only bearers of something that was injected into them... I remember how one sang, *I am prosecutor Antonín Havelka, a member of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, until now working only in smaller trials, where only two death penalties were carried out*. And she went away. Because she didn't know what the death penalty was, so she sang it like a robot. That was perfect! Soňa goes at it fully. She plays all the emotions, but those girls sang just the notes and the words and, if I wrote them something in Latin, they would sing Latin and wouldn't think about it, either.

ZJ: The location also contributed to that effect, didn't it?
AB: I wanted the Kolowrat. After half an hour there, you can't breathe, and it's hard to last another half-hour. It's dark there, so, after a while, you start to feel uncomfortable, which is appropriate for it... About *Tomorrow There Will Be*... people told me afterwards that they felt drawn in, as if they were part of it. I was really glad of that because that's what we wanted. Kristián Suda, the television dramaturge, came to me and said, *We sat up there, watched, and felt ashamed of our passivity. We had the feeling, even if it's ridiculous, that we should stand up and that we should act, otherwise we're the silent mass. At the same time, we didn't dare to step in*. That was probably the greatest praise we got for it, that drawing in, because I really wanted people to experience it, to have the feeling that it's up to them if it works out or if it ends up that way or if it doesn't.

Havel in Shorts

Miloš Orson Štědroň: *Velvet Havel!*
Theatre on the Balustrade
April 6, 2016, at 7 p.m.

Even though Anenské náměstí (St. Anne's Square) is located just around two corners from Karlova ulice (Charles' Street), through which tourists, guidebook in hand, continuously stream day and night, and just a block from the embankment, where the scene is similar, here, it is surprisingly calm. Actually, cars with the logos of near-by hotels are parked all around the square, and one side of the square is comprised of a "fancy" residence, the Charles Bridge Palace, and so it is easy to get the impression that this is the domain of rich foreigners. But appearances are deceptive. St. Anne's Square and its closest surroundings are extraordinarily connected to the personality of Václav Havel. From a corner of the square, you can walk through the narrow Zlatá ulička (Golden Lane) to the Pražská křižovatka (Prague Crossroads – Fig. 3), the deconsecrated church of St. Anne, which the Dagmar and Václav Havel Foundation VIZE 97 transformed into a "spiritual cultural centre". Here, after Havel's death in December 2011, his body lay in state; an unending line of people came here for a last look at "their" President, and, from there, a procession of ten thousand started out for the official farewell in the cathedral at the castle.

And on this square itself is the Divadlo Na zábradlí (Theatre on the Balustrade). (fig. 4) This very theatre was connected with Václav Havel from the beginning. From 1960 to 1968, he held various positions – *from stagehand to lighting engineer to secretary to dramaturge* (Havel 1990: 43). It was here that *Zahradní slavnost* (*Garden Party*), which made Havel famous abroad, had its premiere in 1963. Three years later, they presented *Vyrozumění* (*The Memorandum*), and, in 1968, another play, *Ztíženou možnost soustředění (The Increased Difficulty of Concentration*). Václav Havel spoke of this theatre as of the place that *formed (him) as a playwright* (Havel 1990).

This show has been treading the boards for nearly two years (the premiere was on May 2, 2014), which may be why it is not completely sold out. The production, however, won numerous 2014 Theatre Critics' Awards (among others, for best production of the year and for the best new Czech play; in addition, for music and for best male and female actors). And so, right before the performance, almost all of the 120 auditorium seats are filled; a few people are also

Fig. 3: Prague Crossroads (photo Zuzana Jurková).

Fig. 4: Theater on the Balustrade (photo Zuzana Jurková).

sitting in the additional seats attached to the walls. There is a preponderance of women covering a broad age span. Most people have come in pairs or groups of three. Most of the audience is informally dressed (the men in t-shirts rather than jackets, occasionally in shirts), some women moderately extravagantly, others, on the contrary, in the skirts and sweaters they were possibly wearing in school or at work. The dress code definitely does not imply a homogeneous group of spectators; nevertheless, the reactions during the performance confirm that they are linked with a connective structure.

While the programme of the newly staged *Krásné psací stroje* (*Beautiful Typewriters*) contains just a few words by the author and a few photos, the *Velvet Havel* programme contains the complete text of the play; at the box office, they sell CDs with songs of the show, and, in addition, supertitles in German appear above the stage.

At seven, the curtains open. A great part of the stage is taken up by a horizontal grid and, on it, there are a few mattresses. During the whole performance (which lasts, without an intermission, for an hour and 20 minutes) they will be variously rearranged to create a stage on the stage; that is where most of the action will take place. From the left, back corner of the stage we hear, and, when the scenes are brighter, we see a trio of musicians: a pianist, a percussionist, and a saxophone player. From time to time, they play some scenic music motif, but mainly, they will accompany songs.

Now the grid and mattresses are a sort of catafalque. On it lies a male figure, its face covered with a rubber mask of Václav Havel like those sold on the Prague streets when Havel was President. The scene represents a crematorium, evidently soon after Václav's funeral (Fig. 5).

My deav little Václav, this funeval was a gveat success. His uncle Miloš has a worse problem pronouncing the Czech "r" and "ř" than Václav Havel himself did. (When I later asked the author if he used the uncle's speech impediment for greater theatrical effect or if he had it tried and tested, he protested, a bit offended, and said that the uncle's "r" and "ř" sounded like a "v.") *Well, that was something! In the kathedval at the castle… Thvough all of Pvague! Gveat! What a film it would be! Just to make it!* And today's performance is about such a "film" – the story of Václav Havel.

During the prologue, Uncle Miloš (in a white suit, with a First Republic haircut and with somewhat affected gestures and diction), reminds us of his enormous film undertakings and their bohemian atmosphere, the millionaire environment of the whole Havel family, Václav's wife, Olga, whom we meet

Fig. 5: *Velvet Havel!* Václav and the uncle Miloš (photo Zuzana Jurková).

again in some of the following scenes (... *I still pvefevved Olga…. Millionaives always need someone they can absolutely tvust. Hev pvoletaviam ovigin was also beneficial because we Havels ave vathev impvactical. And, in addition, she had chavisma, veal chavm*...), and also his postwar attempts to emigrate, prison, relationships in the family (...*when they let me out of pvison in '51, ouv whole family abandoned me. And I understood that: what to do with a 50-yeav-old penniless homosexual... when theve is no money, movality takes ovev*...), and the last years abroad.

The prologue ends with Miloš's duet with Havel, who rose from the catafalque and took off the rubber mask of the "late" Havel. Now he is a young man, with a hairdo, gestures and movement reminiscent of Elvis Presley. His uncle and he sing a lively duet in which the musical style intermingles reverberations of an orchestrion accompanying silent grotesque and cabaret films. A certain retro atmosphere of the musical style of the duet corresponds with its vocabulary. It is hard to guess how many listeners register, in the lively tempo of the song, the reference: *The story seems to be as if from Mann's pen, the Buddenbrooks are waving to us*. In any case, this allusion is important. And it

is also evident that the entire performance leads to what delights both Havels: *Let's wash away the accretion of myths*.

In the following twelve scenes Štědroň presents his version of Havel's story "without the accretion of myths" – a version in which often-described "characters" revealing personality traits of Václav Havel are inserted into the scenes. In the very next scene, his wife, Olga, and a Muse appear, the Muse loosely representing various lovers of Havel. She, apparently trying to confide her relationship to Václav, is prevented by Olga from saying a word. She speaks in a monologue about practical things related to the running of a household (*The gooseberries should be treated with something so they don't spoil*), which sometimes intersperses more general thoughts, evidently reflecting Olga's experience (*I wonder what would have happened if I hadn't met him… Would this life be so different? Probably not. I probably would always have been myself. Even if it were somewhere else and with someone else*.), and ends with blues. The text corresponds to the bitterly melancholic music style. (*Living with Václav is no bed of roses. Anyone who sees the world in Žižkov has a patent on life*). Nevertheless, in the refrain, Olga intersperses her harsh way of singing (I am sorry that the actress doesn't have a more resonant, more bluesy voice) with a thin, girlish voice, with which she sings… *You know very well that I hide my feelings*… The relationship of Václav and Olga is again lit up by the 4th scene. Václav, changing from speech to Presley-like singing, goes around in circles trying to tell Olga about his previous meeting with the Muse (during which, however, we see that he does not stop spouting a philosophical and political monologue, not even while unhooking the Muse's brassiere); Olga sarcastically answers. Nevertheless, she then repeats to herself: *Václav, I know one thing. I'll always stand by you no matter what happens*.

In order for him to reach his goal of making an epic film about the life of his nephew and in order to be able to *pvocess politics and VIPs, simply stovies fvom high society,* in the next scene, Uncle Miloš brings on the stage a character who will play politicians and *famous people of the VIP world* (it is clear that such an environment excites him) – Universal, who looks like a large log with a slender branch. (Fig. 6) At an audition, Universal first portrays Salman Rushdie, whom Havel headstrongly invites to Prague on a state visit. Right afterwards, Universal plays Prime Minister Václav Klaus, who reacts furiously to Rushdie's invitation. Klaus switches from time to time to singing in a high head voice, as Karel Gott sometimes does. (From the audience laughter is heard, confirming their familiarity with Klaus and Gott's singing.) It is clear that Havel is beginning to enjoy the power play – including the irritation of the anti-actors.

Fig. 6: *Velvet Havel!* Universal, the uncle Miloš, Václav, and the Muse (photo Zuzana Jurková).

After the scene in which everyone under Miloš's tutelage learns Havel's ideas, and after Václav's prison monologue, which is interrupted by Universal as Havel's conscience, it is time for another musical number. Miloš, now in a glittering jacket with a top hat and walking stick, sings a cabaret song and dances. The international character of this style underlines the bilingual German-English refrain (*Ich liebe das Bühnenlicht… / I love this society… a glass of spirits does the trick*), with which the piano accompaniment corresponds to the style of a (slow) boogie-woogie, a favourite between the wars. Miloš ends the number with a tap dance, which earns him applause and a few enthusiastic shouts from the audience.

Next, the prison scene continues. The Muse, initially in a costume reminiscent of the Dalai Lama's, and later taking off parts down to her underwear, repeats in a monotonous melody a few formulas, some kind of "mantras": *You must be yourself* or *I am your Muse*. Meanwhile, Václav, with expressive falsetto singing (according to the programme, his singing is supposed to evoke a muezzin, but to me, it sounds more like a parody), recapitulates his life: *If*

February '48 hadn't come, I would have belonged to the golden youth… I would have had an English suit that was made to measure. I wouldn't have become a playwright or a writer.

After an entertaining scene of a meeting with Polish dissidents in the Krkonoše mountains, where Havel's vanity is subtly remembered, Universal now appears in the role of Hans Kasper, Olga's lover, and he introduces himself to Václav. The latter, obviously affected, reacts with the rap of philosophical statements we've already heard during Miloš's lesson, and Universal sings Olga an Italian Baroque aria accompanied by the cembalo. On his branch, pink flowers burst into bloom and Olga softens: *Nobody has ever paid me such compliments. This is so beautiful, dear little Hans.*

In the next-to-last scene the Muse, now sitting in a glittering red dress in front of a ventilator that blows her long hair, sings the musical song *I want to be your personal Muse,* and Václav runs in – with a moustache, shorts, a shirt and tie, and with a large bouquet of roses – already *everything arranged. We're going to live together and Olga will help us with everything. Do you know how much she is looking forward to a child? Almost as much as I am… I'm going to make the child the subject of my new play.* But the Muse reports that *she had an abortion* because *she can't live this way anymore.* The scene ends with Václav's big song, the two parts of which are, again, in two different styles. The refrain, again, in the boogie-woogie style reminiscent of the atmosphere of cabarets (*Barrandov, the embankment, Lucerna, Bárová, Gollová, Mandlová…*). The verses are lyrical (in the programme, the author referred to them as "country"), but here on the stage, standing with a guitar, is an introvert who is aware that *my brother and I are the last, the empire is ending, there is no successor… our golden age has come to an end.*

The last scene is a quick-fire summary of the events of November – and, without the hundred-times-repeated pictures known by everyone from the media, they would not be understandable: the rhythmic chanting of *Truth and love, only when you're hitting the bottle* while rattling keys turns into *Truth and love must prevail over lies and hatred*. Václav: *I won't allow this child to be taken away. The revolution is my child.* Bill Clinton plays a solo on the saxophone, Uncle Miloš repeats that this was *the quickest film I've evev seen,* an instrumental accompanies the shining sign with Václav Havel Airport – and the Czech variation on the story of the Buddenbrooks ends.

Interview with Miloš Orson Štědroň about Strong Stories and Music, Opposing Forgetting

Miloš Orson Štědroň (born 1973) studied piano and composition in Brno and Prague. Štědroň is the author of a number of musical theatre works about important figures in Czech history. Along with the aforementioned Václav Havel and Jan Hus are a few connected to Štědroň's native Brno: poet Ivan Blatný (*Ivan Blatný Cabaret*, 2007) and geneticist Gregor Mendel (*Mendel*, 2015); others are Czech pre-war architects Gočár, Janák, and Plečnik (*Gočar Theatre*, 2012), writers Jaroslav Hašek (*Hašek Cabaret*, 2010) and Škvorecký, Zábrana, Hrabal, and Kolář (*Beautiful Typewriters*, 2016). Aside from theatrical works, Štědroň is the author of numerous orchestral and chamber compositions, e.g. *Rock* for strings and electro-acoustic guitar (2014), *Roxymoron* for strings, trombone, double bass, marimba, and percussions (2007), Piano Trio Mystery of Symmetry, etc.
Štědroň teaches composition and music theory at the Prague Conservatory.

March 7, 2016

ZJ: First of all: Could you say something about how you choose subjects?
MOŠ: They are all my favourite figures from my love of reading since my childhood; I've always read a lot. For example, I saw Blatný's photo in the library; I remembered it from the age of 12, and then his poems captivated me. Hašek, I've also been reading him since my childhood. And, besides, this: I love a novel, maybe the way Umberto Eco always writes about the novel, and Kundera, so I simply love storytelling. I think everyone loves it – to tell some kind of story on a background of strong facts or strong characters. And then strong patriotism is connected to that because actually all of these characters were somewhat forgotten; I think that Czechs don't value their great figures. That's surely connected to it.

ZJ: But, after all, some of these figures, such as Mendel, already require a certain competence, not merely that you have read their poems. That is: does it all comes from, let's say, your interest in Mendel's cross-breeding pea plants?
MOS: Actually yes, because I found out that this was also a story, a colossal story, and a terribly exciting one that Simon Mawer described much better in the novel *Mendel's Midget*. I knew that story indirectly because we walked around it

in Brno. It was a shrouded figure that was making some kind of experiment with peas. But then, when I found out what kind of story was behind it, that, although Darwin was the initiator of the elucidation of various biological processes, to me, that was a story of the 19th century, whereas Mendel lived in the 21st century – with his analytic, utterly rational, tenacious, relentless approach, he was the opposite of Darwin, who was actually a romantic. When 2009 rolled around, all of England was obsessed with Darwin, and here, Mendel – and nothing happened. About 20 biographies of Mendel exist in English, but not one in Czech.

ZJ: And that same interest compelled you to write about those architects?
MOS: Yes, because that's also a story. I came across it quite by accident when I was playing at Gočár's book launching, 2010, for which he was awarded the prize for Best Czech Architect of the 20th Century. And I got that monograph, which is enormous. Of course I knew the buildings, and so I dove into it and, at the end, I determined that it'd be possible to make a story about him, too, because his two friends – Janák and Plečnik – were also great architects, and coincidentally were all constructing churches in the same year. And so I made a story about that.

ZJ: To continue: it seemed to me that you often work with the same people. That, for example, Mikušek (he sang, e.g., John Wycliffe in Husque ad finem*, note, ZJ) is your favourite singer; director Frič or Nebeský, if I understand correctly, do many things… Could you say something about that? If, at the beginning, you stand alone, you say to yourself: This is my idea of Czech history and this is how I'm going to do it, or if, from the beginning, it's a bit of teamwork.*
MOS: The impulse usually came from me because, for example, with Jan Nebeský, our first collaboration, *Kabaret Blatný*, began this way, that I didn't know him at all and I came to him with the text and with the music. I don't know if he listened, but he said that he would do it, so then we began to meet, and suddenly, I realised that he is a person who sees things exactly the way I do… It was in the Divadlo Komedie (Comedy Theatre), still under Dušan Pařízek, and then, with Nebeský, I also did a performance of *Jana z Arku* (Joan of Arc) that we played in Czech churches… Afterwards, Nebeský and I did *Don Juan* – that was a classic piece in the Stavovské divadlo (Estates Theatre)… and then we did Gočár – and something else I can't remember.

ZJ: And now is the Theatre on the Balustrade your main home scene? Your brother is the manager there, isn't he? He was in Brno recently, wasn't he?
MOS: That's right. He and Dora Viceníková were the managers of the Reduta Theatre and then they won the competition for the Theatre on the Balustrade. Both are dramaturges or theatrologists.

ZJ: So that's partly why you moved to the Balustrade?
MOS: No, not entirely. They included a play about Havel that I was supposed to write in their application for the position. I said to myself that writing a play about Havel would scare me... and then I told myself that it would somehow turn out differently. And it turned out that they won and, in that case, I had to do it. So that's actually how it started.

ZJ: And did you also choose Hus yourself, or was that a commission?
MOS: It was something of a commission because we met the Hussite priest David Friedl... and he came to some performance, I think it was *Matka Tereza (Mother Teresa)*, and then he came to *Gočár*, ... and then he invited us to some event of his...

ZJ: So David Friedl invited you so that you would compose something for the Hus Jubilee?
MOS: It was more or less like that – with the plan that it would culminate in Old Town Square... And when I began to work on it, I learned that everyone dealt with this subject in a memorial-statue-like way or as a martyr, and so I tried to go at it somewhat differently. Hus interested me as a rebel; that's his position. Not that martyr, but the rebel who knew what was before him. Then he vacillated right before that gigantic pressure, but he coped with it.

But otherwise I think that after a while I always move somewhere farther.

ZJ: What do you mean by "farther"? To a bigger stage?
MOS: Yes, now I have two big projects, but I'd rather not talk about that.
(In December 2017 the National Theatre of Prague will premiere Štědroň's opera *Don Hrabal*, the title character of which is the original Prague writer Bohumil Hrabal [1914–1997], note of ZJ)

ZJ: Fine. That brings me to the next subject, that is, the audience. How do they relate to your music? How do you decide or what's the negotiation like in your head, with the cast and with the public in spe, what will it sound like?

MOS: Recently I read in a review about me that I have moved to the mainstream. But that's somewhat simplifying. Actually, there are some people who are revolutionaries their whole lives and they suffer badly in their ghettos. For example, Schoenberg was like that. But I think it's a bit of a pose. In my opinion a composer always needs an audience, and that audience gives him feedback, and the more the better, of course.

ZJ: This is what I want to hear: Is it the more the better?
MOS: By that I think the more in the framework of the fact that you somehow maintain your style. And I think it's possible to write music that seems the same, that the style can be so universal so that the music could be mainstream (in parentheses), wide-ranging, and, at the same time, the composer could always remain himself or herself. But that is the very hardest.

ZJ: Of course, that's dreadfully interesting to me. Nevertheless, when, for example, I recently heard your Hus, he seemed sort of multi-styled. For example, Hus is much more rock than what Mikušek (Wycliffe) sings. Is that so?
MOS: That's certainly right because I founded the theatre on multi-style.

Conclusion: How is the Music Pantheon Arising?

Both sets of data – the ethnographic and the one gained from interviews – offer answers to a whole list of questions relating to what we call the music pantheon, that is, the depiction of heroes of the beginning of the third millennium on the Prague music scene.

Who actually are these heroes? Primarily, they are almost all new: neither Toufar, Horáková, Havel, nor the songwriter Hašler, and, ultimately, not even the "lesser heroes" of Štědroň's plays, Blatný, Hrabal, and Škvorecký, had places in textbooks of pre-revolution history; Mendel and Gočár did, but were just fleetingly mentioned. Actually, only medieval Church reformer Jan Hus appeared in them repeatedly (appropriated by various interpretations). His re-introduction is, of course, easily understandable in the frame of the great Hus celebrations of 2015.

A second, perhaps more interesting question is related to who or what put those heroes on stage. Surprisingly, Astrid Erll's words about the *needs and interests* of those who remember in the present apply at the same time as the statement of Nancy Wood about *institutional intentionality.* From the

interviews with Březina and Štědroň, it is clear that their heroes were close to them, corresponded to their interests and concrete needs of expression: Březina speaks about his need to understand the mechanisms of collective memory (and collective forgetfulness), Štědroň about patriotism and the attempt to recall figures who personally attracted him with their stories and some of them were or are unjustly forgotten.

That's on one hand. But, at the same time – primarily in the case of Havel and Toufar (and, to a certain extent, Horáková, as well) – putting them on stage is the intention of an institution: The National Theatre, the Nitra Theatre festival, or the Theatre on the Balustrade. Thirdly, it is important to add that both composers are renowned authors and their reputations surely simplified their collaborations with prestigious institutions.

In connection with Březina's operas, it is useful to recall once more the name of the singer Soňa Červená, repeatedly mentioned in the interview. According to the composer, her role in the creation and realisation of the operas about Milada Horáková and Toufar in the National Theatre is indisputable. However, one should also be aware of her position/function in the public's perception of both operas. Thanks to her long-term artistic activities and life in exile and her return to the Czech stage only after 1989, as well as her family history,[18] she can easily be perceived as a representative of that new art, critical of the past regime. Through her interpretation, the artistic work (thus) becomes highly credible.

The third area of questions relates how the authors understand their heroes, and how they depict them. In this context, one thing is especially striking: although the resulting dramatic products differ from each other, their starting points actually do not differ much. Both see their characters as non-heroes: Štědroň appeals for the deconstructivist washing off of the "accretions of myths"; Březina speaks of the anti-heroes and litmus tests of his time. And, from the point of view of music, Březina and Štědroň proceed similarly: they use their extensive music education for the creation of a multi-style music language. As with intertextuality in literature, it enables reference to settings or times apparently outside of the scope of the subject he is dealing with, which causes a rich semiotic chain and strong emotional reactions. The musical language

[18] Czech audiences could have learned about all of this: Červená published two autobiographical volumes (1999, 2017) and often gave interviews, e.g. about the death of her mother at the very beginning of the Communist régime, see https://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/1186000189-13-komnata/211562210800018-13-komnata-soni-cervene (July 14, 2018).

thus is just one way of expressing what Březina speaks about in connection to Toufar's theme, that is, the universality of depicted stories and heroes:

Toufar's fate is extremely inspiring for the present, and for me, as well. It shows the period of a great historical turning point, when one paradigm was changing and being replaced by another, one that over a mere forty years totally disrupted our country and led it to an absolute economic and moral miasma. Toufar's story manifests the gradual assertion of totalitarian power, which back in 1949 was far from being certain of its victory, as it would later on present. Each and every step by each and every individual could have played a role... It is precisely the hundreds and thousands of concessions that gave rise to the power of Communist totalitarian regime. In this respect, Toufar's story speaks to the present, to every one of us (Programme 2013: 97).

Zuzana Jurková is the chair of the Department of Anthropological Studies and the head of the Ethnomusicology Programme at the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University, Prague. The programme focuses mainly on research on the music of minorities and on urban ethnomusicology. Her specialisation is the music of Roma and music as a medium of memory. The following titles are also topics of publications she has written and edited: *Voices of the Weak* 2009; *Sounds from the Margins* 2013; *To Touch the World* 2013; *Prague Soundscapes* 2014; *Crossing Bridges* 2015; *Hledání modalit hudebního vzpomínání* [The Quest for Modalities of Musical Remembrance] 2017, *Romani Musicians in the 21st Century* 2018…

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A BRIDGE THAT TURNED INTO A PIER. Late Epilogue to Karel Prager's Vision of Prague's Košíře District (1975)[1]

Ondřej Váša

Abstract: ***Karel Prager's project of the experimental housing development in Košíře (1975) was doomed to be an ultimate failure from the beginning. As a specific variation of Yona Friedman's vision of the "city above the city", it was supposed to hover above the town, exploiting inaccessible or built-up terrain, as well as avoiding a costly and painful redevelopment. It promised to be just a small sample of a universal solution for overpopulated cities, as well as a universal construction set for any unforeseen requirements of the future populations. For these purposes, the simple frame utilised the bridge-system, and also relied on the logic of the labyrinth. Yet in doing so, however unintentionally, it both turned the existing city into a second-rate underworld and imposed on its inhabitants a most determinative system of limited variations, trading the burden of architectural responsibility for the apparent freedom of combinatorics. The essay analyses both the key structural elements of the superstructure – the bridge, the labyrinth, the environmental aspect – and the logic of the megastructural movement which presents a proper context for Prager's vision.***

Keywords: ***architecture; urbanism; bridge; megastructure; superstructure; Situationist International; Prager; Friedman; Maki***

Karel Prager's unrealised design of the monumental superstructure for Prague's district Košíře (1975) oscillates between the architecture of the bridge and the architecture of the pier. Prager's vision is born as a bridge: its longest axis spans the valley between the streets Vrchlického and U Šalamounky, it hovers above

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the garden colony Na Popelce and effectively polarises the continuous hillsides into the opposite banks of a traversed canyon. Yet it matures as a coastal pier, for it never reaches those banks. These only serve as a meta-physical embedment of the building's magnificent spacing, whose devil ingeniously hides in the details. In the name of reconciliation – of an unforeseen future with an irredeemable past, of children's wishes with the sins of their fathers – it turns its inhabitants into detached daydreamers, ensuring that they would never have to face any of the obstacles of the city's mortality.

The Bridge

It is true that Prager did not design the edifice as a bridge per se, but utilised its handy form to exploit any sort of wild, built-up, or otherwise inaccessible terrain, whether natural or urban.[2] Once applied, however, this elementary and highly performative architectural solution could not but take over the project's best intentions and unwittingly yet adamantly implement its own insidious logic: the one of a bypass and space-time alienation.

Let us bring to mind two essays that draw on the bridge as a structural metaphor of human dividing and ruling thought: Georg Simmel's *Die Brücke und das Tor* (1909, 1957) and Martin Heidegger's *Bauen, Wohnen, Denken* (1951, 2000). These texts, of course, differ in many respects; nevertheless, they both conceive a bridge as a quasi-natural structure that essentially corresponds to a formative experience of space. To put it with utmost brevity, the idea of a bridge (as well as that of a threshold, laid by an anxious savage yet stepped over by a Promethean architect), stems from the initial need to articulate and pacify an originally chaotic environment. The bridge stands against the resistance of nature and her unleashed elements, but as a result it does much more than just traverse obstacles. The bridge cultivates the land without regard to momentary human necessities, it transforms earlier needs – to travel, to trade, to conquer, to flee – into passive and timeless options, and informs the landscape with an analytical framework of a higher unity, charging otherwise indifferent slopes, ravines, or abysses (whether of the sky or of the land) as discontinuous but bridgeable sides that belong together. That is the major trick a bridge plays on nature; it subordinates the landscape to the analytical

[2] As did the building of the Federal Assembly (1973). The very same design was applied by Giorgi Chakhava for the building of the Ministry of Highway Construction in Tbilisi, Georgia (1975).

interface and simultaneously fits itself into the newly born quasi-natural unity, creating a neutral conjunction within the established landscape grammar. But the bridge not only effectively prescribes all the possible compound or complex performatives; it embraces the landscape's innocent arrangement and turns it into only seemingly natural, but in fact already utilitarian architecture.

Not without consequences. A bridge knows neither direction nor destination, and except for suicidal or romantic souls, no one really dwells there, not even Heidegger, who just contemplates the form of a bridge from the nearby holistic shores. Without the ground under our feet and with the sky still too high, one finds themselves almost out of place; a bridge bonds only for a price of itself being a no-man's land. And it is precisely at this point where both of the aforementioned essays – without notice – encounter a problem that undermines Prager's project as well: a bridge can well synthesise the sides, reconcile the human space, and stabilise its entropy. But what is going on under the bridge?

The Megastructures

It is by no accident that the tendency that directly inspired Prager's project, the so-called megastructural movement of the 1960s, significantly utilised the bridge form. Megastructures take the shape of intercontinental bridges in the work of Yona Friedman, they develop into the habitable bridges found in the designs of Arato Isozaki, bridges constitute a key component in the iconic (albeit never built, nothing truly exceptional in the case of megastructures) Tokyo Bay (1960) of Kenzo Tange. New York's George Washington Bridge, together with the adjacent Nervi's terminal (1927, 1965–6), meets the criteria of a megastructure as well. In Czechoslovakia, with some understandable delay, the "bridge-type skeletal structure" (Kozák 1958, 1991: 378–379; Rojík – Nováčková – Šimek – Voves – Krchov 1980: 344–347) presented a key feature of the plan for multi-purpose constructions, leading directly to Prager's design for Košíře or to his vision for a similar extension of Prague's Main Station. Even the attempts to put this immensely influential movement into the historical context referred to bridges: to Ponte Vecchio in Florence, to the old London Bridge, or to Le Corbusier's plans for Algier (1931), whose monumental longitudinal highway served both as a barrier and as a habitable bridge above the city (not to mention the central bridge connecting the town and the harbour).

These structures fascinated architects with their spontaneous yet highly functional versatility, with their multilayered character that enabled a symbiotic

coexistence of diverse activities and, last but not least, with the possibility to extend or rearrange the existing order whenever the future called for a revision. The inhabited bridges seemed to casually possess something that the megastructuralists had to laboriously invent for themselves: as *megastructures*, they were independent enough to be applicable as organised units that could be easily plugged in or out. Being able to cross rivers as well as cities, they could leave all the historical mess behind without the painful and costly destruction phase of redevelopment. As *metastructures*, they erased the difference between paths, buildings, and blocks, being themselves the infrastructure of the complex city life. And as *superstructures*, they promised to solve the pressing housing problem, providing the affordable skeletons for thousands of replaceable and adjustable units that could flexibly and cheaply react to the unpredictable needs of the inhabitants. Seen in this light, the megastructuralists wanted to reform cities once and for all, not far from the utopian spirit of the times. No longer did a building have to face the future. Megastructuralists made it a problem of the architectural combinatorics.

Of course that the bridge was not the only point of departure for megastructuralists or Metabolists; Moshe Safdie's Habitat (1967) took inspiration in Italian terrace towns, Guy Desberats' Man The Producer (1967) applied a crystal principle, Archigram's Plug-In City (1961–64) grew like a coral, to name just a few distinct examples. Yet all of these projects integrated the bridge-system as an inevitable nervous system of their sophisticated organisms.

The analytico-synthetic, even dialectic logic of the bridge proved necessary if only to connect the megastructure to the existing network. Again, it is not by accident that one of the other acknowledged predecessors of the megastructural movement was the concept of Milan Central Station (1912) by Antonio Sant'Elia. Megastructures could and did serve as specific urban transformers, converting the manifold of a city's currents, the multilayered traffic junctions or intersections, and changing the different speeds of airplanes, cars, or trains to a common user's denominator. The ability to filter and process a city's activity without standing in its way was a key feature of the whole series of projects from the late 1950s to the early 1970s; one of the most illustrative and illustrious examples is the unique physical manifesto of the megastructural movement, the 1967 International and Universal Exposition (EXPO 67) in Montreal, which demonstrated how the megastructural city could possibly look like. To put it simply: as a highly functional motherboard. And it is a most telling fact that should we look for an actual megastructure that would resemble the still rather

utopian Montreal exhibition, we would find one in the Dallas/Fort Worth Airport complex in Texas (George F. Hellmuth, Gyo Obata, George E. Kassabaum, 1966).

More importantly, the administration and organisation of the manifold of energies, signals, and motions constituted an integral dynamics of the megastructures themselves. Let us not forget that one of the founding ideas for developing megastructures was the suggestion that a single structure, at least its interior dispositions, should be variable enough to meet the diverse requirements of the users, as well as flexible enough to be able to embrace unexpected "things to come". For these purposes, the integrated bridge-system enabled one to implement a simple, yet most effective bypass system that could synchronise a whole array of motions and motivations under one roof.

Not without consequences. Such an idea of a supporting, internally diversified frame that could carry and bear the whims of the times seems simple enough, even generous. But in the end, it turns a megastructure into a peculiar restrictive environment, much closer to an enclosed and claustrophobic landscape than to a traditional building, whose rigid microcosm is always part of the bigger world.

The Landscape

To clarify this analogy, so powerful in Prager's project, we have to take a small step back and shed some light on the conceptual beginnings of the megastructural movement. In 1964, Fukimiho Maki defined a megastructure as "a large frame in which all the functions of a city or part of a city are housed. It has been made possible by present-day technology. In a sense, it is a human-made feature of the landscape. It is like the great hill on which Italian towns were built. Inherent in the megastructure concept, along with a certain static nature, is the suggestion that many and diverse functions may be beneficially concentrated in one place. A large frame implies some utility in combination and concentration of functions" (Maki 2008: 47).

According to Ralph Wilcoxen, a megastructure was "1) constructed of modular units; 2) capable of great or even 'unlimited' extension; 3) a structural framework onto which smaller structural units (for example, rooms, houses, or small buildings of other sorts) can be built – or even 'plugged-in' or 'clipped-on' after having been prefabricated elsewhere; 4) a structural framework expected to have a useful life much longer than that of the smaller units which it might support" (Wilcoxen 1968: 2).

Nicolaas John Habraken, another influential theorist of the concept, formulated a simple but very important condition. The support structures, quite congeneric with the megastructures, are all constructions "which contain individual dwellings as a bookcase contains books, which can be removed and replaced separately; constructions which take over the task of the ground, which provide building ground up in the air, and are permanent like streets. (...) Every construction, enabling us to build independent dwellings which do not stand on the ground, is a support structure" (Habraken 1962, 1972: 59).

Just to say in advance, Prager's project of the experimental housing development in Košíře explicitly meets all of these conditions, from the attempt to come up with a double architectonic and urban solution, to the emphasis on multi-generational and social interconnectedness, to the suggestion of the personal and creative engagement of the individual users, who were supposed to administer the finalisation of the unspecified interior dispositions in the pre-set skeleton.[3]

Let us keep Prager aside for a little longer. It seems that Maki's definition of a megastructure establishes an ambiguous claim to the union of architecture with the landscape, a relation that far exceeds the usual requirement of architecture being merely in harmony with the environment. Maki himself does not clarify this relation, and his reference to Italian terraced towns or Tango's *Tokio Bay* does not help much, either. We can, however, reconstruct his dualistic argument of urban landscape from the context of his later considerations (Maki 2008: 68–79, 92–94, 118–139). On the one hand, the landscape represents a simple metaphor of the megastructure, into which smaller units are placed and mounted as the houses in(to) the Italian highlands are. Using such a metaphor, Maki still treats megastructures as a human intervention, which, despite all compatibility, is anti-thetic to nature. On the other hand, however, a megastructure does not merely follow and rationalise nature with architectural grammar; it even represents the landscape itself, an architectural a priori of a sort, a substitute for pristine nature.

This quasi-natural quality is reflected not only in Maki's, but in Habraken's or Friedman's thoughts as well, including Prager's project as the (relatively) modest implementation of Friedman's bold vision of the "city above the city", which, by the way, carries a hint of architectural alienation already in its name

[3] See the Karel Prager's project documentation *Experimentální bytová výstavby v Praze* (June 1973) or *Experimentální bytová výstavba v Praze-Košířích* (September 1975). We also refer to the text *Polyfunkční urbanistické struktury,* which we, however, possessed only as a typescript. For additional references, see the bibliography at the end of the essay.

(Friedman 1960, 1970, 2001). In fact, the quasi-natural aspect is absolutely crucial for understanding the megastructures and their ultimate despotism. A megastructure, at least in the context of the aforementioned authors, is not so much a completed building as it is an ideal platform for the restricted human territorialisation of Euclidean space, an urban framework that works as a quasi-natural given fact, as a departure point for the individual creativity or as a perspective that also pretends not to be our invention. It is an environment for building and rebuilding rather than just *a* building.

In this regard, a megastructure as a hybrid of a house and a city block is literally earthbound, and looks up at the "city above the city" as at the proper fulfilment of its own potential. Only the frame that creates its own space in the conquered air is truly unlimited by the obstacles and their variables that have no logical place in the algorithm of a megastructure. A megastructure and its perspective skeleton is not only able to expand in all directions after the founding architectural big bang; it actually has to expand until it metabolises the last remains of the inefficient cities that are simply incompatible with its performance. Such a transformative expansion no longer decreases (as the chaotic growth of the traditional cities), but increases entropy, establishing the most rational environment there could be: one coordinated cosmos of all possible things within the universal physical laws.

Yet despite such a potential for infinite expansion and its apparent openness towards the unanticipated, the generic megastructural cosmos remains somewhat claustrophobic. For the whole system to work, the replicating frame and its algorithm have to protect the order from anything that would be truly other; in the name of the sustainable compatible future, it does not enable, but prevents the attacks of the unexpected. The celebrated degree of freedom masked a high level of determinism, way more despotic than the hated ad hoc architectural development that supposedly burdened future generations with unjust obligations. The megastructural landscape finally lacks the endangering and enriching transcendence of the horizon – it cannot have any real suburbs, for example – and remains enclosed in itself. Its physical boundaries are always its absolute discursive limits. The megastructures can either contract into fortified isolated islands, or merge into one omnipresent megastructure, as the city above the city which, in the end, is nothing else than one large, complex, four-dimensional metabridge linking heterogeneous places as well as times. But the fundamental unit of such a system is neither a metre nor an hour, not even a man. It is a situation.

The Labyrinth

To elucidate such a strange assertion, we have to make one last detour, to one of the manifestos of the Situationist International, Guy Debord's *Report on the Situation of the Situation and on the Terms of Organization and Action of the International Situationist Tendency* (1957). Its connection with the megastructural movement is not so anachronic as it may seem at first glance. Not only did situationist ideas directly influence one of the most genuine and radical megastructural project, Constant Nieuwenhuys' New Babylon (1959–74); the manifesto formulated suggestions that most of the designs may not have dared to embody, but that nevertheless help to understand megastructures in a way they themselves do not allow.

Consider the following passages: "We must try to construct situations, i.e., collective environments, ensembles of impressions determining the quality of a moment. [...] The situation is thus made to be lived by its constructors. The role of the 'public', if not passive at least a walk-on, must ever diminish, while the share of those who cannot be called actors but, in a new meaning of the term, 'livers', will increase. [...] There is our entire program, which is essentially ephemeral. Our situations will be without a future; they will be places where people are constantly coming and going. [...] Situationist theory resolutely asserts a noncontinuous conception of life. The idea of consistency must be transferred from the perspective of the whole of a life – where it is a reactionary mystification founded on the belief in an immortal soul and, in the last analysis, on the division of labor – to the viewpoint of moments isolated from life, and of the construction of each moment by a unitary use of situationist means. [...] The situationist attitude consists in counting on time's swift passing, unlike aesthetic processes which aim at the fixing of emotion. The situationist challenge to the passage of emotions and of time will be its wager on always gaining ground on change, on always going further in play and in the multiplication of moving periods. [...] In each of its experimental cities, unitary urbanism will work through a certain number of force fields, which we can temporarily designate by the standard expression district. Each district will be able to lead to a precise harmony, broken off from neighbouring harmonies; or rather will be able to play on a maximum breaking up of internal harmony. Secondly, unitary urbanism is dynamic, i.e., in close touch with styles of behaviour. The most reduced element of unitary urbanism is not the house but the architectural complex, which is the union of all the factors conditioning an environment, or

a sequence of environments colliding at the scale of the constructed situation. Spatial development must take the affective realities that the experimental city will determine into account" (McDonough 2002: 44–49).

The active role of the public, temporary settings of life, ephemeral situations, games, dynamic urbanism... However lunatic an impression this manifesto may give, as far as the much sober tone of the megastructural theorists is concerned, it almost suspiciously well reflects the highest ambitions and, at the same time, limits of the megastructures, which we can on this occasion designate without any exaggeration as the architecture of tomorrow or even as the architecture of the wish.[4]

Let us focus first on tomorrow. Both Habraken and Friedman are deliberately vague in their visions. If both of them think in terms of supporting skeletons, they have no other choice than to be somewhat reluctant to deliver specific solutions, for if one of the key ambitions of a megastructure is to incorporate the wishes of the future inhabitants, which are always supposed to be other than ours, then even our imagination would be violating their individuality. The expected tomorrow is an absolute measure.

And one of a complicated nature. While a classical building or a city block can undergo reconstruction, redesign, or redevelopment while still remembering all of these changes without losing the sight of its origin, megastructure can, as a rule, regroup without leaving a trace of the past. While the today of a megastructure is always just a provisional leasehold on time, the anticipated tomorrow as the proper fulfilment of its purpose resets any previous arrangement, as a new beginning, which, nevertheless, is itself just another temporary setting. Such a tomorrow imprints the megastructure's chronicles as the permanent return of presence, and expropriates any today for the benefit of the future oblivion. Taking into account that the quasi-natural skeleton itself remains unchanged while the habitat is permanently reorganised and its time is overwritten, a megastructure presents a very hollow environment that does not have a past. Or rather: no past or historicity can be attributed to it, because it cannot hold memories and keep secrets.[5]

[4] Not an unusual term in the 1960s, considering the influential magazine *Architecture d'aujourd'hui* or Michel Ragon's *Où vivrons-nous demain?* (1963).

[5] By the way, although we do not want to psychologise Maki's earlier quoted reflections, it is worth noting that his personal memories of Tokyo portray a city where its own inhabitants were used to waking up as strangers, simply because it developed and changed so fast, no longer able to read their own memories off the streets and walls (Maki 2008: 82–89).

Unlike obsolete cities or outdated buildings, against which the megastructurists rebelled, a megastructure does not age, not because of its ability to adapt, but because time cannot survive in it. If the Japanese Metabolists, Friedman, or Prager considered the lifespan of a megastructure in terms of centuries, then all of them came to no surprising conclusion that one of the many advantages of a megastructure is that it can be easily removed. The city above the city can disappear without a trace, as the quasi-natural skeleton of a future whose tomorrow ceased to be relevant.

What about the wish? So far we have reflected on only the common or communal qualities of the megastructures. However, if tomorrow could be still imagined to be readily welcomed jointly by all, the situation is much more complicated on the level of individual will. For what is exactly meant by the omnipresent "unexpected future" that the megastructures were charged to encompass? At the most radical level that interests us here (because it exposes megastructures better than more or less compromised solutions), the future does not wait in the distance in the form of some general ideas of housing, but happens whenever somebody has a wish that the architecture is bound to fulfil. A megastructure – not far from the situationist fantasies – should be in fact not so much a machine for the living as a machine for situations, reflecting the caprices and fancies of every single occupant. Should a megastructure fail to accomplish this impossible task, as it naturally did by virtually assuming a hypothetical collective will, then it is fair to ask what is the difference between obeying the dominant will of the living and adapting to the heritage of the dead.

It is truly telling that one of the most visionary and radical megastructures was a huge playground. The Fun Palace (Cedric Price – Joan Littlewood, 1964) was supposed to be as interactive as possible, and, in a very situationist way, invited the visitors to "choose what you want to do – or watch someone else doing it. Learn how to handle tools, paint, babies, machinery, or just listen to your favourite tune. Dance, talk or be lifted up to where you can see how other people make things work. Sit out over space with a drink and tune in to what's happening elsewhere in the city. Try starting a riot or beginning a painting – or just lie back and stare at the sky". With a quite significant postscript: "We are building a short-term plaything in which all of us can realise the possibilities and delights that a 20th Century city environment owes us. It must last no longer than we need it" (Cedric – Littlewood 1964).

As a true megastructure, The Fun Palace represented a city that could simply disappear once it started to be outdated or boring. Its anticipated short

lifespan – around a decade – only concisely mirrored and exposed the true character of the duration of megastructures; the megastructures could well stand for centuries, but their own oblivious time would constantly disintegrate into singular fleeting situations, into a succession of total disappearance.

Similarly symptomatic is the inconspicuous but very instructive suggestion: "...or watch someone else doing it." Plaything or not, most of the participants could not and would not be creators, but passive spectators, enjoying the building as an imposed scenography that substitutes the will for the emotional abundance. No wonder that the intention to construct a liberating space with "no doors, foyers, queues or commissionaires", which promised that it would be "up to you how to use it", whether you "take a lift, a ramp, [or] an escalator to wherever or whatever looks interesting" (Cedric – Littlewood 1964) finally found its true followers in the contemporary shopping malls.[6]

Such a radical megastructure does not offer a playground, but differentiates itself into a distributive labyrinth; it generates a system of vicinity that makes everything to be within imaginary reach, while it separates events or people into mutually heterogeneous spaces, preventing unfortunate collisions but excluding any disturbing encounters as well. In other words, a labyrinth creates a conglomerate of places that have nothing in common despite the nominal closeness, since every place, every joint and every layer unfolds its own perspective.[7] It is nevertheless important to understand that a space becomes a labyrinth not because it has a complicated structure, but because despite its evident simplicity, typical for the megastructural principle, it is not possible to contemplate such a structure as a whole, at least from the inside. Getting lost in a labyrinth means that every place is both familiar and alienated and every way out always begins anew at the actual coordinates. A labyrinth is infinite, because the algorithm of the escape is myopic (Damisch, 2001: 31–35).

Moreover, as we have seen, the megastructural logic results not only in the atopy of places, but relies on the analogical asynchronicity of times, as well as guaranteeing that the singular situations would not interfere with each other and the expectations would never collide with the memories.

It should not be surprising that in the case of the already mentioned pavilion Man The Producer at Montreal's EXPO 67, "the tetrahedral planning was often

6 MyZeil Shopping Mall (Studio Fuksas, 2009) is a very good example.

7 A striking similarity with Piranesi's Carceri is most illustrative; these prisons are unbreakable not because of their thick Roman walls, but because any possible way out is encrypted into mutually excluding layers and perspectives. There is no way out, because there is no coherent path through.

confusing, so that minor constructed situations would arise as visitors found themselves on an unexpected exhibit, confronted by the silhouettes of thousands of other visitors in superimposed layers on bridges against the sky, or at the top of an escalator they were sure they had just descended" (Banham 1976: 116).

However anecdotal such en experience may seem, the implication of these constructed situations, superimposed layers, bridges or labyrinthine confusion far exceeds an everyday inconvenience, for what was happening in the pavilion in Montreal was supposed to happen in a megastructure on a daily, annual, or centennial basis. As a matter of fact, Friedman's elaboration of La Ville Spatiale (1958–62), obvious inspiration for Prager's project, was accompanied precisely by such an idea: by the vision of an "interwoven city – a labyrinth".

The Underworld

Now, if a four-dimensional maze is the true pattern of megastructures, the bridge is its main executor. Which also finally brings us back to Prager's project and to the question: what is going on under the bridge?

Prager's vision was naturally much more restrained and realistic than most of the aforementioned radical examples and ideas, yet standing above the city and consisting of the mutually crossed (cut) bridges, it absorbed and utilised all of the discussed characteristics, including the environmental character of a superstructure that would eclipse the original terrain it occupies. It is noteworthy that none of the advocates of the "city above the city", whether Habraken, Friedman, or Prager, bothers much with the serious problem that their dreamy structures would usurp the sky and create a second-rate land of shades. Like Simmel and Heidegger, they simply never posed the question, as if the darkened zone between the pillars and under the arcs was a displaced territory of the analytical thinking itself.

Such a situation can be briefly but aptly summarised as follows: "Finally, there is the space beneath the bridge (the place of secrets, of trolls and tramps, a refuge for wanderers and homeless, a site of crimes, graffiti, the damp smell of water, earth, stone and concrete, of urine, faeces and of hasty sex). Bridges gather to themselves an underside. To construct a bridge is always to construct an underworld. This is a place of stillness and exile, a world of alternative aesthetic possibilities as well as devalued real-estate. It is outside the rush and flow taking place above, over the bridge. There is something about bridges as a whole that is uncanny, but this uncanniness is at its maximum in the spaces

beneath the span. The underside of bridges is both a literal and metaphorical underworld" (Bishop 2008: 35–36).

We could add with Virilio that we all are now living under the air-bridges of air traffic, but the point is that however (relatively) gentle, Prager's vision was meant to be a universal solution for the city, a replacement rather than a considerate extension. The difference is well illustrated by a contrast of a superstructure and a skyscraper: both work with a symbolic shift to the heights, yet while the skyscraper belongs to a tower, rising from the ground and reigning the area, a superstructure of Friedman's or Prager's type simply ignores the land.[8]

Such a megastructure floats in the air like an island, like an enclosed more or less self-sufficient little world whose branches stretch into (potential) infinity, just like the seaside piers, which reach into the ocean only to confirm its boundlessness. Yet it also stands above the land as a bridge that obscures and alienates the transcended territory, leaving behind not only the lesser kinds of buildings, urban blocks, or – inevitably – people, but also all of the inconvenient, burdensome, and mummified historical heritage.

This is the ultimate sin of a megastructure: it simply denies the debts of the past, shakes off the responsibility for history, and forces out all of the too-traumatic necessities of redevelopment, always on the verge with a sacrifice, always pressing on the citizens to choose. A megastructure removes the burden of irretrievable and painful decisions, only to impose a carefree but false freedom of the decisions already made for us.

[8] That would also be a difference between Prager's project and El Lissitzky's Wolkenbügel (1923–25).

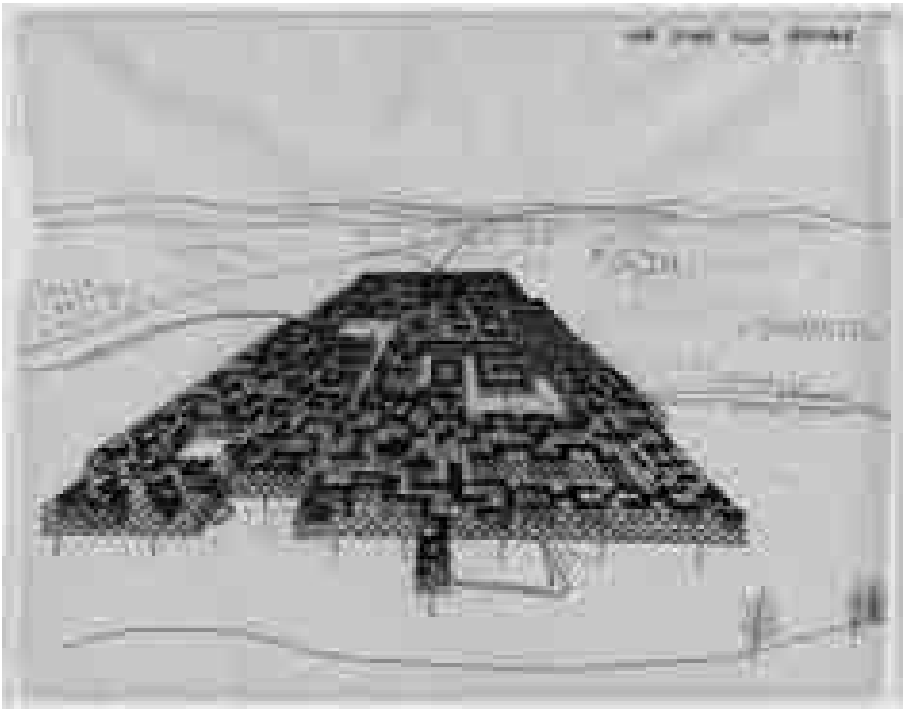
◀ Karel Prager, design for the megastructure of Košíře in Prague (1975) (Earch).

▶ Giorgi Chakhava, The Ministry of Highway Construction in Tbilisi, Georgia (1975) (Decorative Art of the CCCP).

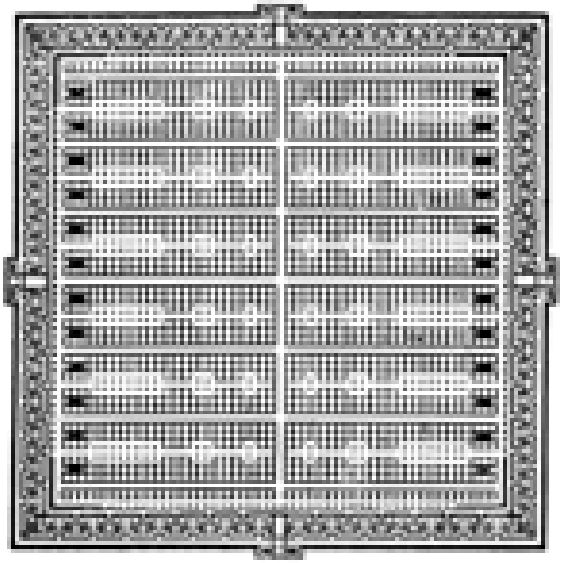
▼ Karel Prager, design for the megastructure of Košíře in Prague (1975) (National Museum).

Yona Friedman, La Ville Spatiale, (1958–1962) (Pinterest).

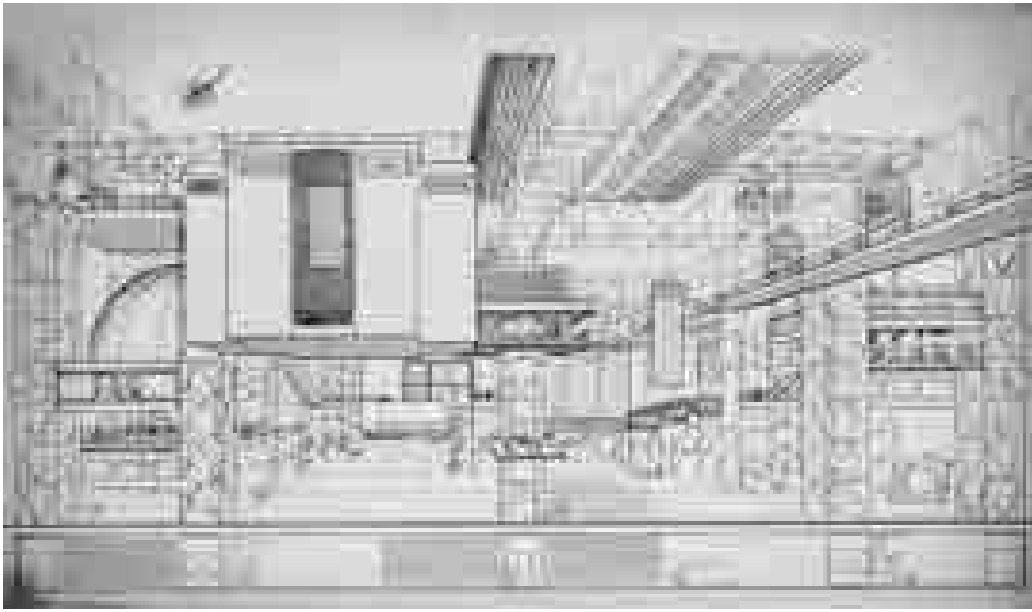
Yona Friedman, La Ville Spatiale, (1958–1962) (openarchitectures.com).



▲ Yona Friedman, La Ville Spatiale, (1958–1962) (urbangamestrategies.blogspot.com).

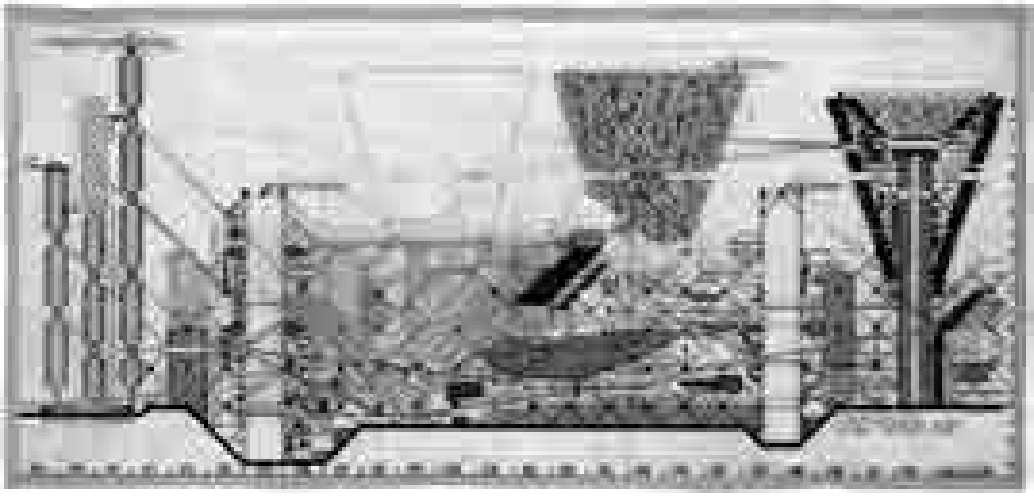


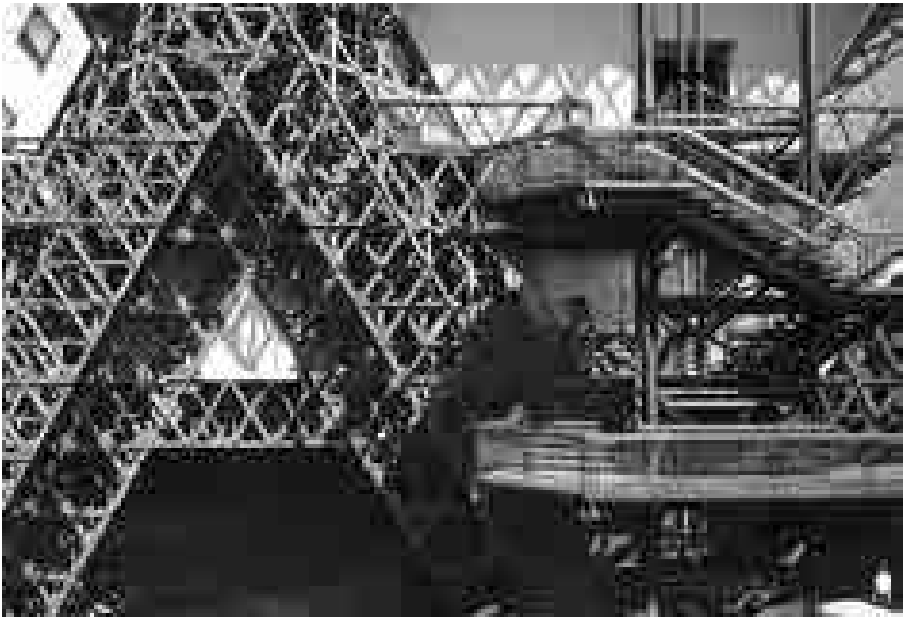
▶ Hawara (archive.is).



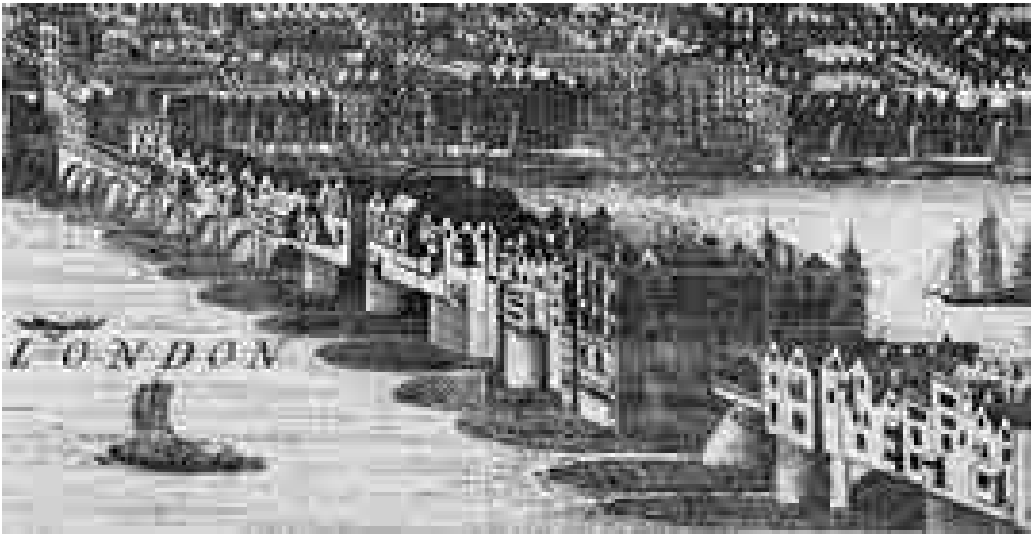
Fun Palace (1964) (AdSpazio).

Plug-in City (1964) (ArchDaily.com).





Man The Producer (1967) (World's Fair Community).



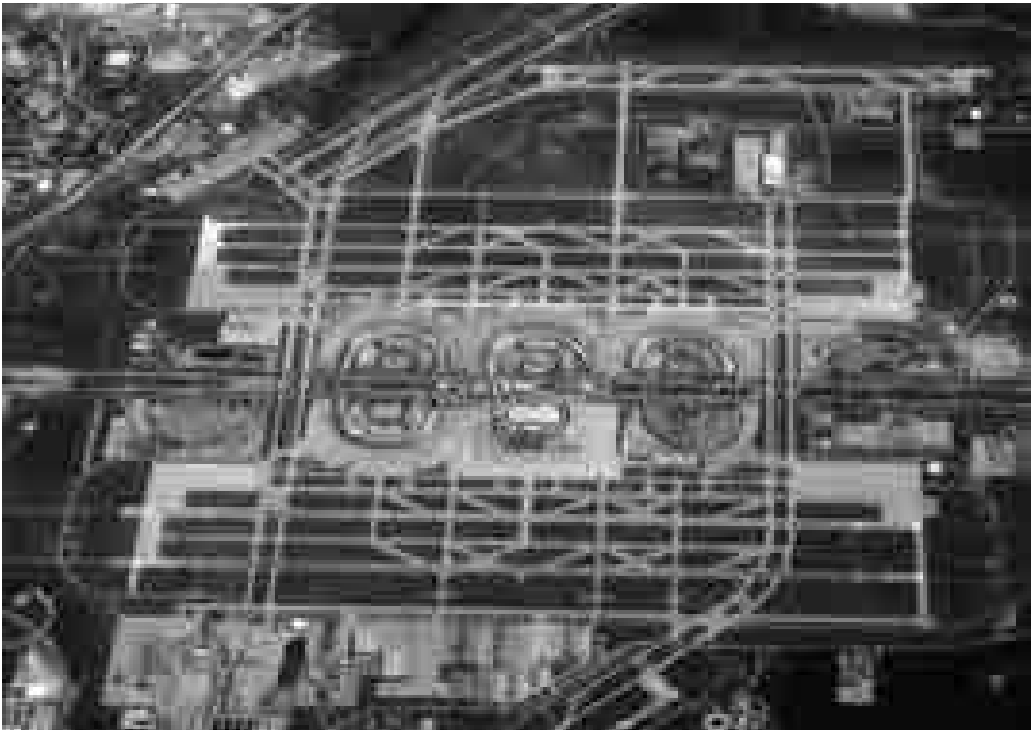
Václav Hollar, Old London Bridge (1647) (Historic UK).

Le Corbusier, Algier (detail of the highway bridge) (Pinterest).

Le Corbusier, plan for Algier (1931) (Bildoun).

Dallas – Fort Worth Airport (Airports Worldwide).

Dallas – Fort Worth Airport (Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport).



Kenzo Tange, Tokyo Bay (1960) (Pinterest).

Moshe Safdie, Habitat (1967) (Twitter).

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Ondřej Váša works for the Faculty of Humanities, Charles University, and the National Gallery in Prague. He has co-authored several books on art history, and lectures and publishes both scientific and popularising papers on the philosophy of culture and astronomy.

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Rubin, Eli. 2016. *Amnesiopolis: Modernity, Space, and Memory in East Germany*

Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Amnesiopolis, the multidisciplinary book by historian Eli Rubin, describes the genesis of the large, prefabricated socialist housing estate in East Berlin called Marzahn. This neighbourhood was built in 1977–1990 as the largest housing project of the German Democratic Republic. It was a showpiece of the "great" socialist regime. Rubin takes Marzahn as a case to prove his provocative point that physical environment and materiality shape the experiential everyday lives of people. Such influence on everyday life creates a socialist personality. Or, let us say, a concrete environment creates concrete people.

Rubin considers everyday life as the bottommost layer of socialism, invisible but influential. Therefore, he focuses on childhood, family life, community and consumption in East Germany and specifically in Marzahn to describe what was altered and shaped by the ruling socialist ideology and how. The main argument of *Amnesiopolis* – the city without memory – is that moving to the newly built Marzahn estate meant a radical sensory, material, and spatial rupture in the everyday life of its new dwellers. New inhabitants moved to Marzahn often from Berlin's centre, which was steeped in traumatic history – economic crisis, fascism, war. For the first inhabitants, moving to modern Marzahn detached them from old ties and memories and contributed to creating new ones. Rubin stresses material sites of rupture in which the past is physically erased from space and therefore from time. The book reveals a link between memory and space using the concept of the socio-spatial dialectic, introduced originally by Edward Soja. The socio-spatial dialectic rendered by Rubin implies that everyday life produces space and conversely, space shapes everyday life. Space is understood as a radically material category which transmits ideology and reproduces power, diffusing the power of the state into everyday life (p. 114). In the case of the construction of Marzahn, Rubin shows the state's attempt to erase history, accommodate workers, manifest the power of the Party, and create socialist propaganda. Above all, Rubin uses rich empirical evidence to describe how the state controlled and disciplined inhabitants – through the secret police, as well as through 'normal' institutions such as the *Hausmeister* (literally, house master), community meetings and festivals, activities for children, or local newspapers. Furthermore, Rubin demonstrates through his data that the physical layout of the neighbourhood provided virtually no space for hiding, thus creating a panopticon effect with little room for non-conformity.

Amnesiopolis is an ambitious and extremely well-written book with a clear argument supported by exhaustive evidence. Rubin floods readers with accurate historical and technical details from the development and construction of Marzahn, and leaves no space for doubt that he is a real expert on the neighbourhood. The book also provides a rich theoretical framework that connects knowledge and concepts from different disciplines, which makes the book interesting for historians, geographers, sociologists, and architects. Rubin works with the classic theories of Michel Foucault, Henri Lefebvre, and Le Corbusier, but also calls upon very recent

publications by Kimberly Zarecor and Florian Urban. Therefore, Rubin places the Marzahn story within the relevant theoretical contexts and contributes to the body of knowledge on the socialist city, large housing estates, and interdisciplinary urban studies in general. The exceptional quality of the book lies also in Rubin's ability to track down evidence, so when he talks about the 'Party', the 'state', and the 'Stasi', he always supports his claims with exact dates, places, names or numbers, reflecting the author's thorough work in archives. The first half of the book provides a dense historical and theoretical background, and Rubin carefully describes his thinking process, so readers can easily follow his thought process and understand his logic. An enormous number of references to literature and statistical data, reminiscent of socialist propaganda itself, luckily does not shatter the text, as the author uses footnotes for citations. In addition, Rubin shows an extraordinary talent for creating metaphors. For example, he refers to the nostalgia of the new dwellers of Marzahn for a former old neighbourhood in the inner city: '[T]he new environment was so sterile, so empty, and such a blank slate, it did not entirely break the connections held in the memories of the new arrivals... but those memories continued to live on like an echo in a racquetball chamber, dying away only slowly, or like the ghost pains of amputated limbs' (p. 101). The remainder of the book elaborates the everyday lives of Marzahn's inhabitants. Rubin illustrates through many personal stories the act of moving to a prefabricated panel house, childhood in the housing estate, and surveillance by the secret police. The text flows smoothly also thanks to the personal memories and nostalgic narratives of the dwellers. The life story of one particular family, which flows through the chapters, helps readers to vividly imagine life in Marzahn and not lose the thread of the narrative. This part of the book is compelling not just for academic audiences, but for the public as well, especially for people who have some experience with panel housing.

Apart from its many positive aspects, the book has also some minor weaknesses. The author uses many sources of data, among them local censored periodicals, published memoirs, and interviews with Marzahn's inhabitants. Unfortunately, it is not quite clear how the interviewees were contacted, how the interviews were conducted, or if they were anonymised. Moreover, it is not always easy to differentiate the testimonies of the inhabitants from the words of the author. A more precise delineation of the testimonies would allow the readers to engage with the text more critically and to question the credibility of these memories. The book contains many detailed facts and figures about Marzahn; however, in some cases, it would have been better to include illustrations instead of mere enumeration. For instance, it is difficult to imagine 38,000 planted trees without a photograph.

Amnesiopolis represents an enjoyable and inspirational read, especially for academics dealing with (post)socialist cities. This housing development in the former Eastern Bloc is a topic of contemporary relevance, and Eli Rubin contributes to the debate with the often-overlooked aspects of everyday life. The book is a comprehensive study of one specific neighbourhood, but the findings are applicable to the entire socialist world in which concrete, conformed, and disciplined people lived their everyday lives in their prefabricated homes.

Jana Kočková

New Challenges for the Ethics of Anthropological Practice

Workshop of the Czech Association for Social Anthropology (*Česká asociace pro sociální antropologii*)

19 March 2018, Scouts' Institute in Prague

Entering the location of a researched field always carries with it a whole range of issues pertaining to the responsible approach to the question at hand and to its conveyors – the informants, or the participants of the research. The anthropologist, i.e. the individual carrying out the research, attempts to understand a phenomenon, as well as to find answers to both questions posed in advance and to those discovered during the research itself. They enter a space where concrete people live, and the anthropologist's movements in this terrain may have a significant impact on the lives of these individuals or of these communities. In any case, they inform, or in the very least should inform, not just their colleagues, but also the general public of their findings. They are thus the medium that presents certain discoveries and interpretations, that creates theories, or that supports or, on the contrary, dismisses already existing theories. The anthropological research report can influence how its readers, but also authorities and various opinion-makers will think about certain phenomena, communities, events, etc. At the same time, in their research, the anthropologist does not work with inanimate materials, but with living entities, and thus they must approach them in a manner that would not encroach their rights. Anthropologists thus have a responsibility towards three given areas throughout the entire research process (i.e. during the research itself, while working with data, in interviews, during fieldwork, and while writing the final report): towards science as such (adhering to the principles of responsible research), towards the public and the research commissioner (attempting to achieve objectivity and quality of transferred data), and towards the informants and participants of the research (attempting to understand their behaviour, making an *objective* interpretation of what is said, and ensuring the *protection* of the informants). The entire research thus must be led in accordance with an ethical codex; however, what is understood to be responsible research and what is/is not possible to do while researching remains to be the subject of debate. The workshop "New Challenges for the Ethics of Anthropological Practice" aimed to contribute to this discussion. With their discussion themes, the authors of contributions touched upon all of the aforementioned levels of research. Aside from this, the discussion also dealt with the rigours of auto-ethnography, especially taking into consideration the limits of objectivity during such research.

Researchers of various ages and fields took part in the workshop, which was held on the pleasant premises of the Scouts' Institute in Prague. The workshop was practically international, since participants from Slovakia also attended. This variegated composition of participants was reflected by the variety of contributions, not only in terms of the subject researched, but primarily by the methods used and ethical issues dealt with by the

participants – the researchers – in practice. The debate itself was also rather lively, held in separate blocks at the end of each contribution, and which also showed, just as the contributions themselves, that the research of man, of society, and of various social phenomena is difficult due to the rather ambiguous determination of what is still ethical and defensible in terms of its merits. In other words – where is the line between the right of society to knowledge and the right of an individual to remain anonymous, closeted, and thus rightfully and responsibly say that they do not wish to disclose anything to the general public? The long-lasting debate was then led primarily about whether it is ethically acceptable to carry out *secret* research, i.e. situations where the informant does not know that the researcher is not one of the *members* being considered, and thus has a different ambition than to be a true member, an "*insider*", or situations in which they even assume the role of someone else just so that they can infiltrate the group. This is disputable primarily because the researcher should have some form of agreement – an informed consent of the informant – research participant, communicating that they consent with their inclusion. In the case of secret research, however, this is not possible, although the option of the so-called double role was mentioned – some informants know of the research, while others do not, or eventually that the informants are told the true role of the researcher after the research is concluded. This debate did not come to a unilateral conclusion. Or, respectively, we could say that a certain conclusion was made as to the "rule of defensibility". It is thus desirable that research remain open, and in this sense, fair to all participants. On the other hand, some situations may exist whereby it is desirable to carry out secret research. It is necessary, however, to truly thoroughly consider which cases require this approach and why it is so.

The relationship between the informant and the researcher was also discussed on other levels. For instance, some contributions considered to what extent is the objectivity of research affected by a relationship with the informants – research participants that is too close or friendly. The question also arises of how *power* is divided between the actors of the research. The question of how the representatives of the target group perceive the researcher is absolutely fundamental especially in situations where the research subject is a group of people living on the fringe of society, people in difficult life situations, or people otherwise marginalised. Also, their expectations may differ in accordance with this fact – what do they expect from their participation in the research, and to what extent can such expectations be fulfilled (and should the researcher take them into consideration)? Can the researcher in actuality help, and where is the line between activism and research, is such a delineation necessary, or should we also aim to make a certain (social) change, provoked in part by the data from our research? Here, we approach another issue, namely the protection of informants – participants, but also of the researchers themselves in the case that during their research, they come upon information that should not be disclosed to the public.

As mentioned above, the workshop was attended by researchers with different levels of research experience. Thus,

participants included not only students or researchers who are dedicated only to studying *their* subjects, but also those who do commissioned research. Thus, the issue of carrying out research for a specific commissioner (e.g. the government administration) was also discussed, especially in terms of finding a balance between the expectations of the institutions (expected responses, unclear methodology and scientific terminology, financially underfunded research) and the actual capabilities of the researcher, also considering ethical standards. Within this discussion, the participants also touched upon *language* as the tool for communicating the gleaned data, or, what is the difference between an academic text aimed primarily at the scientific community and a final research report that must be readable for individuals *not in the field*, respectively.

The workshop touched upon a whole range of themes, and opened many other themes for discussion. It also showed that mutual meetings and discussions of the various aspects of research is beneficial, if not necessary. As for myself, I must say that I had the opportunity of seeing the issue of research ethics from a new perspective, to consider the influence of anthropologists entering the field, as well as to consider what are the (ethical) limits of anthropological research. Regular meetings of this type are thus definitely positive, and it would be worth it to make them a habitual activity.

Blanka Kissová

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