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Emigration of Czech Inhabitants  
and Language Barrier Problem

Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně a uvedla v ní předepsaným způsobem všechnu použitou literaturu.

V Olomouci dne.....

Podpis.....

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## **Abstract**

Although Canadians were welcoming and helpful when the interview participants immigrated in the early 1970s, both participants recalled significant difficulties while settling down in a foreign country and assimilating to the new culture. The analysis of the interviews with both participants showed that such complications occurred mainly because of the language barrier and limited job opportunities. Neither of them spoke English at that time. Both participants stated that they do not regret immigrating to Canada and leaving Czechoslovakia, their homeland, while being proud Canadians after nearly 50 years.

## **Keywords**

emigration, immigration, Canada, culture, assimilation, community, language barrier, identity, interview

## Introduction

The twentieth century was undoubtedly overflowing with various political regimes, especially within the borders of the Czech Republic (former Czechoslovakia). Considering the fact that Czech inhabitants were constantly stolen the chance for a purposeful beginning, there can be no surprise that some of them decided to leave the country. There are different opinions on why those people abandoned their homelands. However, a commonly held belief is that it was for the vision of religious or personal freedom, better living conditions including social stability, and higher income.

As the author has family relatives who undergone the process of emigration during early 1970s, her interest in this topic is personal. Therefore, the thesis is focused mainly on Czech inhabitants who migrated to Canada.

According to Canadian immigration statistics, the number of immigrants was continuously increasing during the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>1</sup> Since then, Canadian policy governing immigration has gone through significant modification. Reasons for the migration varied depending on the particular nation's political or economic situation.

The theoretical part defines important terms such as migration, emigration, and immigration. It outlines the reasons for the emigration of Czech inhabitants to the west – to English-speaking countries in particular. Historical context concerning mainly the political situation in the Czech Republic is included, focusing on World War II and the occupation period. On the other hand, the theoretical part describes Canadian national and cultural identity as well as Canadian acts and laws concerning immigration. Last but not least, the information presented as Czech cultural imprints in Canada is contained within the theoretical part.

The research part of this bachelor thesis is dedicated to the interviews, thus consisting of the research aims together with the research questions. The analysis of participants' answers to the questions is included in the research part too.

The main aim of this work is to examine and describe the personal reasons of the interview participants and events leading to their emigration. This primary goal is followed by two

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada, *150 years of immigration in Canada*, 2018

secondary research aims regarding language barrier problem and immigrant status. The exact wording of them is included in the chapter 7.3 within the research part of the bachelor thesis.

This work could be beneficial for people seeking information about personal experience with the emigration process of Czechs from a historical point of view. Such material could be included in English lessons when learning about Czech inhabitants' migration or Canadian policy regarding immigration in particular.

The main goal of the thesis is closely connected to the practical part that is built on solid theoretical evidence at the same time. The purpose is to write down the author's relatives' memories as authentically as possible, therefore feeding the author's curiosity and hopefully other people's too.

## **THEORETICAL PART**

# 1 Basic Terminology

Firstly, it is essential to define the terminology in order to understand the topic of the thesis better. Emigration, as stated earlier, is the main focus of the thesis. However, the first term below being defined is migration, which is commonly understood as an expression for moving or travelling while, at the same time, referring to animals as well as people. Nevertheless, the following points rather follow the migration path of humankind within their lines.

## **Migration**

In general, it is hard to argue whether migration is somehow beneficial or has a negative impact. Although, the author does dare to suggest that without people migrating worldwide in the course of many hundreds of years, the majority of countries would be in decline in terms of the population statistics.

This key term can be defined as the shift of stable place of one's habitation. There are two types of migration: national and international. The first one occurs within the same state border. Understandably, the latter occurs across the territory of a particular state.<sup>2</sup>

## **Emigration**

To follow the information from the previous paragraph, emigration is the first possible approach to 'across national border' migration.

The word 'emigration' expresses the act of moving from the current country (possibly one's homeland) to another.<sup>3</sup>

## **Immigration**

Then, still following the information from the 'migration' paragraph, there is the word 'immigration' on the other end of the stream. This term describes the act of coming into the new country from a foreign one.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Nové universum. *Všeobecná encyklopédie A-Ž.*, s. 663, heslo migrace

<sup>3</sup> Pathways to Prosperity. *Migration and Development in the Czech Republic*, 2019. p. 10

<sup>4</sup> ibid

The number of inhabitants increases as an outcome in both possible ways of the international migration as well as unique culture and customs carried by those people who migrate.<sup>5</sup>

### **Exile**

This particular term is connected to ‘emigration’. The cause of exile can be either religious or political (or both). In other words, it means one has to migrate involuntarily.<sup>6</sup>

### **Refugee**

According to the definition in 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol, both of which all the then member states of the European Union approved, the definition of a refugee is as follows.<sup>7</sup>

The Status of Refugee is: *“someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion”*.<sup>8</sup>

Based on the definition stated above, the term ‘refugee’ is closely related to ‘migration’ (emigration/immigration).

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<sup>5</sup> Nové universum. *Všeobecná encyklopedie A-Ž.*, s. 663, heslo migrace

<sup>6</sup> ibid

<sup>7</sup> Pathways to Prosperity. *Migration and Development in the Czech Republic*, 2019. p. 12

<sup>8</sup> ibid

## 2 History of Czech emigrants

The Czech Republic and its inhabitants are no exception when speaking of migration compared to the rest of today's globalized world. The research part of this bachelor thesis provides the personal experience of two Czech emigrants and its analysis; therefore, this portion of the theoretical part deals with Czechs.

Since Czech emigrants remained in a state other than one being born in longer than one year, they are considered to be so-called 'international migrants'. Nearly 300 million people are carrying the status previously mentioned in countries all over the world.<sup>9</sup>

### 2.1 Czech historical and political situation leading to migration

The Czech Republic (Czechoslovakia since October 1918) has had an emotional and powerful history of mostly forced emigration since the 1920s. Fortunately, the majority of migrants received a positive response to their arrival to new countries all over the world.<sup>10</sup>

But as we go back another hundred years to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it is known for the number of Czech migrants to not be as significant. Those who migrated to Canada were mainly farmers. They were supposed to settle vast prairies there. By 1911, around three thousand Czechs lived in Canada.<sup>11</sup>

The period between the two world wars does not provide any firm evidence of mass migration either. Czechs and Slovaks formed an independent nation with relatively good living standards. Thus, the interest in leaving the country somewhat declined.<sup>12</sup>

The estimated number of people with Czech background living abroad was roughly 2.5 million if the period of emigration between the years 1948 and 1989 is considered. Such a high number is widely the outcome of a massive migration of Czechs during the communist regime. However, the main event that initiated the migration was the one that took place in 1968 – the invasion of Czechoslovakia led by the Soviet Union.<sup>13</sup> On top of that, roughly another 200,000 Czech inhabitants emigrated after the Iron Curtain dividing the Soviet territory from the western influence fell in 1989.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Pathways to Prosperity. *Migration and Development in the Czech Republic*, 2019. p. 10

<sup>10</sup> Nové universum. *Všeobecná encyklopédie A-Ž.*, s. 663, heslo migrace

<sup>11</sup> Gellner. *The Czechs and Slovaks in Canada*, 1968, p. 67-68

<sup>12</sup> Magocsi. *Encyclopaedia of Canada's Peoples*, 1999, p. 399-400

<sup>13</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *Počet českých krajanů v zahraničí*

<sup>14</sup> Nové universum. *Všeobecná encyklopédie A-Ž.*, s. 663, heslo migrace

### 2.1.1 The invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968

The political situation gradually released its tight leash during the '60s. The government proposed many reforms, such as freedom of speech and movement. It also suggested that other political parties should be allowed to participate in the government election. The last piece added to the list of Czechoslovak freedoms was the abolishment of censorship in summer 1968.<sup>15</sup>

Countries ruled by Communists were strongly disturbed by the situation in Czechoslovakia and the freedom it provided to its inhabitants during the first half of 1968. Their attitude escalated in August 1968. Warsaw Pact under the rule of the Soviet Union, including Bulgarian, German, Polish, and Hungarian armies invaded Czechoslovakia.<sup>16</sup> Czech and Slovak Association of Canada asked the Canadian government for support afterward.<sup>17</sup> For over a year, borders of the country were open for people to cross them. During that period of time, approximately eight thousand people emigrated, with Austria being a transfer station.<sup>18</sup>

Almost twelve thousand people entered Canada from the point its government actively stepped into the manner of emigration of Czechs and Slovaks up until the end of 1969. The majority of them were highly skilled and professionally educated in particular fields. With that fact being stated, it was undoubtedly convenient for Canada.<sup>19</sup>

Czech and Slovak immigrants preferred to settle in the urban areas rather than in the countryside. Since most of them were skilled professionals, they were fortunate to not have much trouble finding a job within a short amount of time after settling down in the cities.<sup>20</sup>

## 2.2 Push and pull factors

The information included in this chapter is closely related to the main aim of this bachelor thesis, thus defining both terms 'push factor' and 'pull factor' in detail. The main aim of this work is to examine and describe the personal reasons of the interview participants and events leading to their emigration. Therefore, the author believes that it is essential to state common so-called push and pull factors. The historical and political situation caused a

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<sup>15</sup> Kolportáž.cz. *Právní úpravy kolportáže v českých zemích – Zákon č. 84/1968 Sb. Zákon, kterým se mění zákon č. 81/1966 Sb. o periodickém tisku a o ostatních hromadných informačních prostředcích*, 1968

<sup>16</sup> Pathways to Prosperity. *Migration and Development in the Czech Republic*, 2019. p. 12

<sup>17</sup> Čermák, *It all started with Prince Rupert*, 2003, p. 189

<sup>18</sup> Silke Stern, *Československá emigrace v letech 1968 - 1969 – Rakousko jako první azylová země emigrantů*, 2009, s. 128-131

<sup>19</sup> The Czech/Slovak Community, *The Czech/Slovak Community by Eva Marha*

<sup>20</sup> Pathways to Prosperity. *Migration and Development in the Czech Republic*, 2019. p. 12

mass migration of Czech inhabitants to the west, especially to Canada. The migration waves had been thoroughly covered in previous subchapters of the thesis. Nonetheless, push and pull factors are fundamental for the idea of leaving the country of origin to be born in people's minds in the first place.

Push factors can be explained as mainly economic factors that "push" people to migrate. Consequently, beneficial economic opportunities in a particular foreign country such as low unemployment, higher salaries, and more qualified work setting are considered significant push factors. Altogether, a vision for better living standard compared to the situation in the country of origin is perceived.<sup>21</sup>

Pull factors could be described as attractive forces originating from one's desire to migrate. In other words, pull factors stem from already rooted ideas and "pull" the right strings.<sup>22</sup> People begin to speculate about leaving their country the moment they are fully aware of and educated about the opportunity to be financially more secure in the country they could emigrate to.<sup>23</sup> With that being stated, the unstable or poor financial situation together with potential low employment in the country of origin is considered to be also one of the pull factors.

Essentially, no language barrier, ethnic dissimilarity, nor excessive distance between the country of origin and the foreign one can occur in order to make the process of migration happen indeed.<sup>24</sup>

On the other hand, to contradict the previous statement, which is undoubtedly in stark contrast to the whole topic of this bachelor thesis, evidence of Czechs moving to Canada exists and cannot be denied. Czech people naturally did not speak the same language as Canadians unless they learned it beforehand. Moreover, the distance between the Czech Republic and America (from the continental point of view) is significant and not negligible.

Nevertheless, Czech inhabitants were not discouraged and decided to emigrate and settle in Canada. So, it is arguable for the statement above to be completely accurate without deeper and detailed references and explanations. Therefore, it would be suitable to consider

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<sup>21</sup> Strielkowski, *Migration in the Czech Republic and Slovakia: An Economic Analysis*, 2012, p. 28

<sup>22</sup> Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life*, 1990, p. 27

<sup>23</sup> Pathways to Prosperity. *Migration and Development in the Czech Republic*, 2019. p. 10

<sup>24</sup> Pathways to Prosperity. *Migration and Development in the Czech Republic*, 2019. p. 12

reformulating the statement together with the addition of particular criteria, as the evidence of migration towards foreign countries kilometres faraway stands against it.

### **3 New community and cultural changes**

Undoubtedly, coming to the new community has a significant impact on every immigrant's mental health and assimilation to the new cultural environment and habits. Usually, immigrants have to learn a new language after their arrival. At the same time, they face up to new cultural standards they have to embrace to some extent to be accepted as valuable members of the community.

On the other hand, immigrants want to preserve some cultural habits of the country they came from, meaning their national traditions or religion. Understandably, the conflict between two different environments may have a strong psychological impact on immigrants as they are trying to find a balance between two culturally diverse worlds.

#### **3.1 Foreign language**

The language barrier causes immigrants do not feel at home or even feel unwelcomed in Canada (as in any other country), especially when they lost their home in Czechoslovakia and have no safe place where they could return. More information about language barrier problem obtained during the interview is included in the research part of this bachelor thesis.

In general, immigrants' basic ability to speak a particular foreign language gives them a better position while searching for job opportunities. Nevertheless, basic knowledge of the language does not suffice. Not knowing the language properly in terms of grammar and vocabulary makes the process of integration more difficult. Another natural factor for foreign speakers of the language is the foreign accent. Unfortunately, accent can have a negative impact on the native people's willingness to get in any contact with immigrants.

The most effective way to learn any new language is to speak it regularly and actively. Immigrants mostly learned English while listening to the radio, songs, or media. They also learned through daily conversations with their friends, neighbours, or with their colleagues at work as well as from reading books or newspapers.<sup>25</sup>

According to Canadian immigration policy strictly defined in the Points System approved in 1967, Canada publicly shared the preference to immigrants who speak English or French, no matter how great the Canadian openness towards European immigrants is.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Kalervo Oberg, *Culture Shock & the Problem of Adjustment to New Cultural Environments*

<sup>26</sup> Canada in the Making, *Immigration Acts*

Majority of the early Canadian immigrants came from the United States of America, who spoke English a little. Though, they still took the opportunity of having a mediator. Mediator communicated the essential things for immigrants with the Canadian government as well as arranged their jobs.<sup>27</sup>

### **3.1.1 Czech/Slovak language in Canada**

From the very beginning, early immigrant communities focused not only on learning the new language properly but also on preserving the native language for their children and future generations to learn. Therefore, weekend schools were created (with the first weekend school established in 1902).<sup>28</sup>

Czechoslovaks were (and still are) proud of their origin, as they experienced having a democratic and independent state. Despite the ongoing assimilation process to Canadian culture, Czechs and Slovaks aimed for their languages to not be forgotten. Finally, in the 1930s, the goal happened to be successfully achieved when the Czech and Slovak language was taught in the Building of All Nations in Toronto. In addition to that, Czech and Slovak literature course was opened at the University of Toronto.<sup>29</sup>

## **3.2 Job opportunities**

One of the first things Canadian immigrants had to do, as any immigrant in other countries, was to find a way to earn a living. We can divide the migration to Canada into several waves:

- 1) The late 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century,
- 2) The 1930s,
- 3) World War II,
- 4) The period between 1948-1968, and
- 5) After 1968.<sup>30</sup>

Cities such as Manitoba and Alberta provided job opportunities during the first wave of immigrants at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Newcomers were able to ensure their financial situation primarily as workers in coal mines or as farmers. Canadian government

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<sup>27</sup> Multicultural Canada, *Education and Culture*

<sup>28</sup> *ibid*

<sup>29</sup> Čermák, *Fragmenty ze života Čechů a Slováků v Kanadě*, 2000, s. 48.

<sup>30</sup> The Applied History Research Group, University of Calgary, *Calgary & Southern Alberta: Immigration and Settlement*

highly supported immigration and attracted new settlers to fertile land or by building Canadian Pacific Railway.<sup>31</sup>

The farming industry prospered until the 1930s when the Great Depression hit Canada. Many Czech and Slovak immigrants had to search for new job opportunities elsewhere. They preferred to settle down in bigger cities rather than the countryside as cities provided them a wider range of job possibilities.<sup>32</sup>

Regarding the short period after World War II, Canadian immigration policy changed significantly. Canadian government realized the fact that Canada lacks educated immigrants. This notification supported the necessary adjustment of the law covering immigration so the newcomers could contribute to the intellectual as well as the technical development of Canada.<sup>33</sup>

Czechs and Slovaks who immigrated to Canada between the years 1948 - 1968 had a more challenging experience settling down initially, as the Canadian government was not prepared for them. Some Czech and Slovak immigrants had to have several jobs to earn enough money to settle down properly. However, they managed to get a job in their particular field later on (mainly science, politics, social work, film, and arts) and became successful.<sup>34</sup>

As for the final wave of immigrants from Czechoslovakia after 1968, people found a job with no significant trouble if they spoke English or were educated. Canada was well-prepared for this period and provided language classes and other courses fully funded by the Canadian government.<sup>35</sup>

Canada's attitude towards immigrants was positive from the very beginning, despite the fact that finding a stable job in a foreign country is never an easy task. Czechs and Slovaks formed communities and organizations with other newcomers of the same nationality. Later, such communities and organizations helped immigrants not only to find a job but also to feel socially welcomed.

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<sup>31</sup> The Applied History Research Group, *Calgary & Southern Alberta: Immigration and Settlement*

<sup>32</sup> Jerry V. Marek, *Český Dialog 9, Czech Immigrants of the Swan Valley*, 2002

<sup>33</sup> *ibid*

<sup>34</sup> Čermák J., *It all started with Prince Rupert*, chapter 5 – Profiles, 2003

<sup>35</sup> Magocsi P. R., *Encyclopaedia of Canada's Peoples*, p. 400.

### 3.3 Religion

Apart from political or financial factors, the immigration from Czechoslovakia to Canada was also motivated by religious freedom. Slovaks were generally more religious than Czechs during the initial immigration waves. Nevertheless, people of both nationalities mentioned previously decided to move to Canada to establish their denomination without being persecuted for their beliefs. Even though freedom of religion was not the main reason for Czech people to immigrate to Canada, the communities were still created in several Canadian cities based on particular religious beliefs. It helped to preserve one's national identity, at least partially, as religion has a substantial impact on one's social and mental welfare.<sup>36</sup>

As Gellner claims, approximately 80% of Czech and Slovak immigrants were Catholic (again, meaning the initial immigration waves).<sup>37</sup> Remaining 20 % of them were protestant – predominantly Lutheran and Baptist.<sup>38</sup>

The very first church of Czech and Slovak people was Roman Catholic. It was established in 1907 in Fort William, Ontario.<sup>39</sup> One of the most significant Roman Catholic churches is the church of Saint Cyril and Method.<sup>40</sup> Then, in 1932, the Bethlehem Chapel of the Czechoslovak Baptist Church in Winnipeg was founded.<sup>41</sup>

Baptist religion was widespread among Czech and Slovak communities. Therefore many congregations were established, one of the first being in Windsor, Ontario that was followed by many other communities (for example, in Minitonas, Chatham, Glenside, Blenheim, Winnipeg, etc.).<sup>42</sup> The last Baptist church, the Church of Saint Wenceslas, was built in Toronto in 1963.<sup>43</sup>

As for the Lutheran denomination, the churches were founded mainly in the inter-war period or even later in Manitoba and Ontario. Unfortunately, in many cases, priests originally from the United States served in these Lutheran churches, which did not allow the Czech and (especially) Slovak language to be spoken as frequently as needed.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Gellner J., *The Czechs and Slovaks in Canada*, p. 87

<sup>37</sup> Gellner J., *The Czechs and Slovaks in Canada*, p. 88

<sup>38</sup> Multicultural Canada, *Religion*

<sup>39</sup> Gellner J., *The Czechs and Slovaks in Canada*, p. 87

<sup>40</sup> Čermák, *Fragmenty ze života Čechů a Slováků v Kanadě*, 2000, str. 38

<sup>41</sup> Multicultural Canada, *Religion*

<sup>42</sup> *ibid*

<sup>43</sup> Čermák, *Fragmenty ze života Čechů a Slováků v Kanadě*, 2000, str. 36

<sup>44</sup> Magocsi P. R., *Encyclopaedia of Canada's Peoples*, p. 1175

In general, religious communities helped immigrants to settle down in their new homes and get a job. The church as an institution helped with immigrants' finances in particular and also acted as sponsor.<sup>45</sup>

Apart from social and spiritual function, the church communities also served as a place where immigrants could hear their mother language. Although later, as the number of church members who were not born in Czechoslovakia increased significantly, some churches fully accepted the English language. The churches played an essential role in the lives of immigrants as they often turned to religious certainty and safety in difficult times.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Čermák, *Fragmentsy ze života Čechů a Slováků v Kanadě*, 2000, str. 36

<sup>46</sup> Multicultural Canada, *Religion*

## 4 Canadian national and cultural identity

National identity is the biggest and the most central element of a particular society and a cultural identity. Both topics are discussed within the following chapter from the general perspective and from the Canadian point of view.

In order to understand the topic properly, it is important for the term ‘identity’ to be explained first. In regards to ‘national identity’, it can be described as how people perceive themselves. They are naturally aware of the fact that they belong to a community sharing many similar features. When ‘cultural identity’ is concerned, its main principle is for people to differentiate themselves from neighbouring nations by creating original traditions, morals, habits, etc.<sup>47</sup>

### 4.1 National identity

A British Professor Emeritus Anthony D. Smith is considered one of the most significant figures in terms of nationalism studies. He formulated five ‘fundamental features of national identity’ which are:

- 1) A historic territory, or homeland,
- 2) Common myths and historical memories,
- 3) A standard mass public culture,
- 4) Typical legal rights and duties for all members, and
- 5) A shared economy with territorial mobility for members.<sup>48</sup>

Additionally, Smith claims that national identity is related to a political community as well, though it is not significant.<sup>49</sup>

Regarding Canadian national identity, Canada is the second largest country on earth, together with its population of approximately 34 million people. Canada concludes of three territories and ten provinces, each having its own capital. Three oceans in total frame Canadian national borders (Pacific, Atlantic, and the Arctic). Canada peacefully neighbors with the United States of America in the south, while both countries are being promised to a safeguarded and effective border crossing.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Mackenzie, J. M. *Peoples, Nations and Cultures: an A-Z of the Peoples of the World, Past and Present*, 2006, p. 10

<sup>48</sup> SMITH, A. D. *National Identity*, 1991, p. 14

<sup>49</sup> SMITH, A. D. *National Identity*, 1991, p. 9

<sup>50</sup> *Discover Canada*, 2021, p. 44

Many symbols that carry particular significance help express Canadian national identity. Though the author focuses only on the most important ones, they all are worth mentioning and having honourable attention. The first one is the Canadian Crown, as Canada has been a constitutional monarchy since the rule of Queen Victoria. The Crown symbolizes the Canadian government and system of justice. The second main symbol of Canada is the equality of French and English as the two official languages since it is also supported by the *Official Languages Act* from 1969.<sup>51</sup> The third and last symbol mentioned in this bachelor thesis is Canadian National and Royal Anthem. Canada officially declared its own National Anthem *O Canada* a century after first being sung in 1880. The Royal Anthem *God Save the Queen* can be heard in order to honour Canada's sovereign (currently Elizabeth II).<sup>52</sup>

## 4.2 Cultural identity

To some extent, cultural identity coincides with national identity. In other words, cultural identity concludes specific features of a particular nation, meaning its language, history, and race.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, it is essential to realize that cultural identity is a never-ending process of 'becoming' and 'being' that involves all generations from the very beginning of humanity.<sup>54</sup>

An American Professor Emeritus of Anthropology, Dennis O'Neil, is thanks to his publications an important figure regarding studies of culture and its components. He presents three parts of which culture consists of in general:

- 1) Cultural traditions,
- 2) A subculture and
- 3) Learned behaviour pattern.<sup>55</sup>

The first point dealing with traditions contains language, religion, and folk customs. Altogether, these aspects distinguish one group of people from others.<sup>56</sup>

The second point concerning subculture could be explained as a culture within the culture. In other words, the original culture of new settlers is influenced by the local one, thus

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<sup>51</sup> *Discover Canada*, 2021, p. 39

<sup>52</sup> *Discover Canada*, 2021, p. 40

<sup>53</sup> Friedman J. *Cultural Identity and Global Process*, 1994, p. 238

<sup>54</sup> Hall S., *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, 1990, p. 222

<sup>55</sup> O'Neil D., *Human Culture: What is Culture?*, 2006

<sup>56</sup> *ibid*

creating a subculture (for example, Vietnamese American, Mexican American, or even Czech American subculture).<sup>57</sup>

The third point comprises of behavior patterns not only passed down from generation to generation but also shared with other nations.<sup>58</sup>

On the subject of specifically Canadian cultural identity, it is wise to start with ethnical diversity. The following paragraphs concern the matter of race, language, and religion among Canadians in particular.

Since the year 1800, most Canadians have been born in Canada. With that fact aside, millions of people from all over the world are evidenced in the course of the last two hundred years to settle down permanently in Canada. With that being stated, Canada frequently carries the nickname 'land of immigrants'. No matter how many different religious or ethnic communities exist on Canadian land, they all contribute to the way of daily life as proud Canadians, and most importantly, they do so in peace and with respect to other groups. Major nationalities that hold the highest numbers in the Canadian population are the English, Chinese, Aboriginal, French, South Asian, Ukrainian, Scottish, Irish, Italian, German, and Scandinavian. To provide additional information, most people migrated to Canada from Asian countries since the 1970s.<sup>59</sup>

Regarding languages that are actively used in Canadian households, Chinese languages hold the first place among those that are non-official (meaning English and French). Chinese languages are most spoken non-official languages in Vancouver and Toronto (the two biggest cities in Canada).<sup>60</sup>

A widely held denomination among Canadians is Christianity, especially Catholicism. The vast majority of Canada's population identifies as Catholic. Nevertheless, many Protestant churches are active too. Jews, Muslims, and Hindus are among popular and still growing religious communities. In general, Canada's primary focus is to provide religious, social, and political autonomy to newcomers no matter their race, denomination, or social status.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> O'Neil D., *Human Culture: What is Culture?*, 2006

<sup>58</sup> *ibid*

<sup>59</sup> *Discover Canada*, 2021, p. 12

<sup>60</sup> *Discover Canada*, 2021, p. 13

<sup>61</sup> *ibid*

## 5 Canadian immigration

It is suitable to include information regarding worldwide immigration waves to Canada, as migration from the Czech Republic to Canada has already been covered in previous chapters.

Following subchapters concern the Canadian immigration policy as well as its alterations throughout the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Canada generally encouraged immigration. However, it also has a dark history connected to discrimination and the prohibition of immigrants. Nevertheless, the Canadian government made several public statements in recent years expressing its apology towards targeted groups of people who had to experience such acts of discrimination described closely in the following subchapter.

### 5.1 Immigration policy

Depending on the global political situation, Canadian immigration policy changed too in previous centuries. Legal documents regulating immigration to Canada were issued by the government in the following order:

- 1869 Immigration Act,
- 1914 War Measures Act,
- 1919 Immigration Act,
- 1952 Immigration Act,
- 1966 White Paper and
- 1967 Immigration Act (also known under the name ‘Points System’).

The number of acts issued by the Canadian government increased in the 20<sup>th</sup> century mainly because of World War I and II. The following paragraphs uncover previously stated acts on a deeper level.

The 1869 Immigration Act presented the so-called ‘open door’ policy. At that time, Canada developed in general but also grew economically. Therefore, the Canadian government needed new people to come and settle uninhabited areas of Canada. Unfortunately, this policy included restrictions that did not allow people who had not only a criminal record but also who were ill, poor, or disabled to immigrate to Canada.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Mapleleafweb, *Immigration Policy in Canada: History, Administration and Debates*

Canadian immigration policy changed significantly after nearly fifty years as the world stepped into a war zone. War Measures Act issued in 1914 heavily restricted people of German and Slavic origin. Such restrictions commanded a compulsory registration with the government, including immigrants' property. On top of that, forced deportation followed when any problem occurred.<sup>63</sup> The Immigration Act of 1919 was the continuation of the previous one. Canadian government's main focus was to decrease immigration waves to Canada after World War I. The act did not allow people from the countries fighting against Canada to enter, in order to achieve that goal.<sup>64</sup>

The tendency to discriminate certain groups of people still remained within lines of the following document concerning the immigration policy issued in 1952.<sup>65</sup> Among many other statements were those specifying social classes that were meant to be either favorably let in without any deeper examination or, on the other side, prohibited and deeply inspected before entering Canada.<sup>66</sup>

Eventually, the Canadian government was thinking effectively during the 1960s. Firstly, the White Paper was introduced in 1966. The main focus of this immigration policy reform was on the need of immigrants that were qualified in particular fields in which Canada lacked workers.<sup>67</sup>

Secondly, limitations based on discrimination were replaced by the Immigration Act of 1967, also known as the Points System. If the potential immigrant managed to pass the test that examined their level of language knowledge as well as of their education/training, they were allowed to enter Canada.<sup>68</sup> This act also includes no list of unwanted social classes, as it rather suggests that certain groups of people could represent a potential danger to Canada's welfare. Therefore, some restrictions are set on such groups of people.<sup>69</sup>

The primary motivation for people to immigrate (mostly) from communist Czechoslovakia to Canada was a multicultural society that Canada supported, including already existing Czech or Slovak communities. People were also attracted by the vision of religious and

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<sup>63</sup> The Canadian Encyclopaedia, *War Measures Act*

<sup>64</sup> Mapleleafweb, *Immigration Policy in Canada: History, Administration and Debates*

<sup>65</sup> *ibid*

<sup>66</sup> HAWKINS F., *Canada and Immigration: Public Policy and Public Concern*, p. 101-102

<sup>67</sup> HAWKINS F., *Canada and Immigration: Public Policy and Public Concern*, p. 160

<sup>68</sup> Canada in the Making, *Immigration Acts*

<sup>69</sup> HAWKINS F., *Canada and Immigration: Public Policy and Public Concern*, p. 377-378

political freedom. Such a peaceful atmosphere allows them to preserve the traditions and habits they inherently did bring with them while leaving their country of origin.

## **5.2 Immigration waves**

Regarding Canadian immigration waves, it would be appropriate to start with the aboriginal people of Canada since this subchapter deals with the topic related to the Canadian population in general. Ancestors of the Aboriginals are claimed to have migrated from Asia long before the first European explorers of North America reached the shore about 400 years ago. Nowadays, aboriginal people conclude of three leading nations: Indian, Inuit, and Métis.<sup>70</sup>

Moving several centuries further into industrialized Canada during the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, one of the most distinct projects was the Canadian Pacific Railway. Its main purpose was to connect western areas (the most inhabited cities such as Vancouver and Calgary) to eastern Canada (mainly Toronto, Montreal, and Québec). Understandably, the project required a considerable number of workers. Predominantly, European and Chinese people moved to Canada as the work on the railway attracted them. After some time, workers of Chinese origin were discriminated against by taxes and fees. In addition to Europeans and Chinese people, two million American people immigrated to Canada. The Canadian government strongly supported moving westward and settling the land there. Many thousands of Ukrainians, Poles, Germans, French, Norse, and Swedish people immigrated to Canada before World War I began.<sup>71</sup>

Regarding the period between 20<sup>th</sup> century world wars, two opposite economic extremes occurred in Canada. The first one carries wealth and a high living standard, and is known as 'Roaring Twenties'. The second one, on the other hand, is not so joyful. The Great Depression hit Canada's market, business, and agriculture in the 1930s. The government had to take care of Canadian people and their welfare, as the percentage of unemployment was rapidly increasing. As a result, immigration decreased, and the majority of people who were trying to enter Canada were sent back to their homeland. Canada had the same attitude even towards Jewish people who wanted to escape Germany ruled by Nazis in 1939.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> *Discover Canada*, 2021, p. 10-11

<sup>71</sup> *Discover Canada*, 2021, p. 20

<sup>72</sup> *Discover Canada*, 2021, p. 22

## 6 Czech cultural imprints in Canada

It is important to clarify what the term ‘cultural imprint’ means before any specific examples of cultural imprints of Czech people in Canada are stated.

According to Pearson’s Canadian History textbook, ‘cultural imprint’ can be described as “*ways in which culture has shaped the land*”.<sup>73</sup> It represents the effect that culture of one’s origin has on earth in general. Nowadays, nations from all over the world pressed their cultural elements onto Canadian land to some extent.<sup>74</sup>

From the historical point of view, Czech people have formed an ethnical community in Canada approximately since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Regarding the number of Czechs who left their country of origin, Canada holds third place after the United States and Germany.<sup>75</sup>

### 6.1 War period

The war period was the most active in Czech cultural participation in Canada - meaning the years leading to World War I, years between wars, World War II, and after.

Sokol movement, established during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Austrian Empire, was voluntarily organized firstly in British Columbia in 1911. Then, Sokol extended its influence to nearly all Czech communities across Canada. Members of this movement acquired knowledge of military defense, democratic government, and nation principles. After World War II, members of Canadian Sokol significantly contributed to the settling of Czech immigrants, as the movement was forbidden in Czechoslovakia for its anti-communist attitude.

Going back to the interwar period, over 180,000 people from Czechoslovakia left their country due to the German invasion. Among those people was one prominent group, including the employees of Bata Shoe Company from Zlín, Moravia. Tomáš J. Baťa, the Czech industrial magnate, re-established his company with several workers near Ontario. At that time, Bata Shoe Company provided equipment for armies of the allied countries. There is also Bata Shoe Museum in Toronto that is worth a visit.

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<sup>73</sup> BAIN C. M., *Pearson Canadian History 8: Pearson Human Geography 8*, 2008, chapter 9, p. 179

<sup>74</sup> *ibid*

<sup>75</sup> *Czech Canadians*, 2010, by Jan Raska

Closing the war period and cultural imprints of Czechoslovak Canadians, Masaryk Hall was established in Toronto in 1944. It was meant to serve Czechs and Slovaks as a center of culture and education. A few years later, it was socially and financially helpful to people of Czech or Slovak origin all over Canada.<sup>76</sup>

## 6.2 Art and press

Undoubtedly, art was, and still is up to this day, a significant part of the Czechoslovakian culture in Canada. In April and May of 2016, Mendel Museum in Brno opened an exhibition of Canadian artists of Czech origin. It included artistic photographs, paintings, films, lectures, and smaller displays. The central figure of the show was academic painter Alena Foustková, who lived in Toronto for over a decade. Her work was heavily influenced by the topic dealing with exile and human identity formed by mass media. She exhibited several paper objects with Czech folklore patterns together with geometric patterns that are characteristic for Canadian urban cultures.<sup>77</sup>

Among other Canadian artists of Czech origin is documentary filmmaker Kateřina Čížek and writer-publisher Josef Škvorecký and his wife, also writer-publisher, Zdena Salivarová.<sup>78</sup>

It is important to mention the press that actively produced newspapers among Czech Canadian communities throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1934, one of the first printed newspapers in Montreal, *Nová vlast'*, was regularly published for nearly 15 years. Other papers published mainly to preserve Czech customs and inform Czech Canadians about the political or economic situation in their homeland were *Naše hlasy*, *Kanadské listy* or *Nový domov*.<sup>79</sup>

## 6.3 South-Moravian culture

To end this chapter, and, at the same time, the theoretical part of this bachelor thesis, the author dares to include some information concerning a folklore heritage of the South Moravian region, as she is personally attached to it.

The traditional event typical for Moravia, Moravsko-Slovacke Hody, is annually held in the Czech-Slovak community in Toronto. There are people of all ages dancing and singing,

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<sup>76</sup> *Czech Canadians*, 2010, by Jan Raska

<sup>77</sup> *Kde domov můj: čechokanadští umělci vystavují v Brně*, 2016, by Věra Sychrová

<sup>78</sup> *Czech Canadians*, 2010, by Jan Raska

<sup>79</sup> *ibid*

and folk groups play traditional musical instruments at the festival for several days in a row. People who organize or participate in such events are descendants of Czechs and Slovaks who immigrated to Canada during the last century. On the other hand, organizers encourage native Canadians to attend the event too, as the experience of different cultural customs and traditions is provided.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> *Czech culture alive and well in Canada*, 2003, by Martin Hrobský

## **RESEARCH PART**

## **7 Research methods**

This introductory chapter of the research part describes the research methods and approach to its analysis. In addition to that, the main aim and secondary aims of this bachelor thesis are stated, while the research questions correspond with them. Furthermore, the selection of the research sample is vindicated. Ethical aspects of the research are mentioned as well as the process of data capture.

### **7.1 The qualitative research**

The research design of this bachelor thesis is qualitative. The research tool to obtain data is a semi-structured interview. The method chosen for the interview analysis is a thematic analysis. The term is commonly understood to allow examination of a particular occurrence on a deeper level, thus obtaining a detailed description of one's experience and possible problems. With that being defined, the main purpose of the method is not to generalize the data obtained during the interview.

The author's motive behind choosing this method is the selection of the targeted group of people itself since this bachelor thesis deals with unique individuals who emigrated from Czechoslovakia during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Therefore, it would be challenging to acquire the needed number of respondents for a different research method.

### **7.2 Author's comprehension**

It is crucial for the author not to be influenced by her own hypotheses and theories concerning the results. However, the author is aware of the significance of investigating her premises and assumptions about the research subject. Therefore, this subchapter describes how the author understands the research subject. Moreover, the following paragraphs include the author's presumptions regarding the research results prior to the realization of the interview.

The topic regarding the emigration of Czech inhabitants is entirely new for the author. For that reason, the author's knowledge about this matter is purely theoretical. It is based on the literary and online sources used while processing the theoretical part of this bachelor thesis.

The author expects that the reasons for the emigration of the interview participants were mainly personal, including freedom, living standards, and financial stability. The author supposes that the language barrier impacted the interview participants' mental health,

causing difficulties while settling down in a new country. The author assumes that immigrants were not welcomed in the foreign country they arrived to, especially when they left the land devastated by the war in large numbers with little to possess and even fewer to offer.

### **7.3 Research aims and questions**

The main research aim is to understand the personal reasons of the interview participants and the events leading to their emigration. Therefore, the following primary research question has been established: *In what conditions did the interview participants begin to consider the possibility of emigration?*

Two secondary aims of the research are each supported by the research question.

The first secondary aim is to describe the language barrier problem the interview participants have had managed. It is essential to find an answer to the following research question for this aim to be successfully fulfilled: *Did the language barrier significantly influence the interview participants' ability to integrate into the new community?*

The second secondary aim is to determine the impact of the immigrant status on the interview participants' mental health. It is supported by the last research question: *Did Canadians embrace the interview participants as valuable members of their community/society?*

### **7.4 Ethical aspects**

The participants of the interview were firstly thoroughly informed about the topic and purpose of the research. They were sent the structure of the interview<sup>81</sup>, including the set of questions that will be asked by the interviewer (that is, the author). Participants had an adequate amount of time for reading through the interview questions. They had a right not to answer any question that appeared to be personal or sensitive to them.

As the interview was realized via an online platform, there is no formal agreement between the interviewer and participants regarding anonymity, recording of the interview, or participants' willingness to be interviewed. However, all matters stated previously were discussed and recorded before the interview officially began.

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<sup>81</sup> Appendix 1: The Interview Questions

Therefore, the author presents that both participants wished to remain partially anonymous. In other words, they requested to be referred to by their real names (Vojta and Jana), but they insisted on their surnames being omitted. Both participants agreed that they partake in the interview willingly. They approved the interview being recorded, then processed purely as study material and later included in the author's bachelor thesis as a transcript.

Interview participants were informed about their right to make a note anytime during the interview as they might want to delete any particular information (that would include sensitive or personal data) retroactively.

## **7.5 The interview scenario**

The layout of the interview<sup>82</sup> consists of several parts. Each part includes from 3 minimum to 14 maximum questions. The author put the list of research questions together partially on her own and with the help of an online source.<sup>83</sup>

The first set of questions concerns participants' primary impulse for migrating abroad. The following collection includes questions about the journey, ups and downs while settling down in the new country, and obstacles participants overcame. The next set comprises three questions examining participants' expectations about leaving their homeland compared to reality. The last group of questions is related to participants' reflections regarding their past and present. Also, questions referring to particular situations are included.

## **7.6 The data capture process**

The semi-structured design of the interview was chosen as it allows to hold onto the structure arranged beforehand and, at the same time, ask additional questions whenever needed to fulfil the research aims.

Data was captured in March 2022. It would be challenging to meet the participants in person due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and travel restrictions as they both live in Canada. Therefore, the interview was realized via an online platform (Facebook call).<sup>84</sup> The time of the discussion was scheduled according to the participants' needs. For that reason, interviews took place at the weekend (one on Saturday and the other on Sunday). The author decided to interview each participant separately on purpose, as for an easier

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<sup>82</sup> Appendix 1: The Interview Questions

<sup>83</sup> Re-imagining Migration: *Moving Stories*; Question Set One

<sup>84</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/>

transcript afterwards. However, both participants were present both days during the interviews and could make notes while the other one was interviewed.

The author and participants partook in the interview within the comfort and safety of their homes. On Saturday, the author interviewed the first participant, Vojta. The interview lasted 1 hour and 25 minutes. On Sunday, the second participant, Jana, was interviewed too. The interview with Jana lasted 53 minutes. It was significantly shorter because Jana's answers to *The Journey to Canada* set of questions would be the same as Vojta's answers as they emigrated together. For that reason, the author decided to skip the majority of questions from that set. Each interview was followed by free conversation off the record about participants' reflections and feelings.

The next step of processing the data obtained during the interviews was the transcript of soundtracks into the *MS Word* text document that would be later analyzed. The author used an online program called *oTranscribe*<sup>85</sup> that allowed her to upload the soundtrack and transcribe it at the same time. Both interviews were transcribed in the original form. Then, the author focused on the analysis of the data itself.

## **7.7 Data analysis method**

As mentioned in the introductory paragraph of this chapter, the thematic analysis method was chosen for the research of this bachelor thesis.

Braun and Clarke refer to such a method as "*the method of identification, analysis, and referring particular patterns that occur in the data repeatedly*".<sup>86</sup>

According to Braun and Clarke, the process of analysis itself concludes with the six primary stages. The author shifted them to fit her own research as follows:

- 1) Transcribing the data obtained during the interview in an appropriate form, then reading through it repetitively.
- 2) The author identifies reoccurring patterns and assigns them particular code that represents the base for creating a theme.
- 3) The researcher reviews all the codes and then categorizes them into potential themes for analysis.

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<sup>85</sup> oTranscribe

<sup>86</sup> BRAUN, V., CLARKE, V., *Using thematic analysis in psychology: Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 2006, p. 79

- 4) The author examines her work concerned in the previous stage of analysis as well as its quality.
- 5) In this analysis stage, the researcher defines and names themes according to their content.
- 6) To conclude the process, the final stage comprises composing the report of the research themes and their analysis.<sup>87</sup> The author devotes the following chapter to this final stage of study.

The author finds the most significant advantage in this method – its flexibility. The author of the research decides to approach the thematic analysis theoretically as she determined research questions beforehand.

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<sup>87</sup> BRAUN, V., CLARKE, V., *Using thematic analysis in psychology: Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 2006

## **8 Research results**

This chapter presents the research results acquired with the help of the thematic analysis. Firstly, the author introduces both participants of the interview. Secondly, the reader of this bachelor thesis get acquainted with the common themes that occurred during the analysis.

### **8.1 Interview participants**

Vojta is 78 years old. He has a brother who also lives in Canada with his family.

Jana is 72 years old. She has 3 sisters and 1 brother. Jana is the only member of her family who immigrated to Canada.

Both Jana and Vojta studied at 3-year trade school. Both of them were born near the border with Slovakia, in the Region Zlín. Jana and Vojta dated each other for 3 years before they got married. They do not have children. Firstly, they immigrated to Germany in 1969 and lived there for about 5 years. Then, they decided to migrate to Canada. Up to this date, Vojta and Jana live together in Canada for almost 50 years. Since then, they travelled several countries: understandably, Canada and Germany, Austria, Australia, Hawaii, USA, Mexico, Singapore, Bali, Panama, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, France, Canary Islands, Bahamas, Cuba, Dominican Republic, South Korea, and Honk Kong. Every time they had returned to Czechoslovakia (later the Czech Republic and Slovakia), they travelled their homeland too. In spite of the fact that they might be getting old, they are looking forward to travel South Africa or India as they are healthy and vigorous.

### **8.2 Common themes description**

It is clear, that both participants went through the process of migration together as a couple. With that being stated, the author primarily looks for the significant differences in Vojta's and Jana's experiences while analysing the interviews with them. At the same time, the author also identifies the similarities that occur in participants' answers since she asked them mostly same questions.

The following subchapters are devoted to the analysis of all the differences and similarities the author recognized. The main goal of the analysis is to fulfil the research aim and provide sufficient information for the primary and secondary research questions to be answered.

The author decided for the systematic division of the analysed themes. Therefore, the subchapters carry the same title as the particular set of questions of the interview.<sup>88</sup>

### 8.2.1 The Impulse for Migrating

The main aim of this bachelor thesis is to examine and describe the personal reasons of the interview participants and events leading to their emigration. Therefore, it is appropriate to begin the analysis with the data obtained when asking participants how they got the idea of migrating abroad.

The firstly urge to emigrate occurs the same year armies of Soviet Union invade Czechoslovakia.<sup>89</sup>

At this point, Vojta and Jana are dating each other. However, the first destination to migrate to is not Canada. Vojta is leaving Czechoslovakia as he receives the invitation from his brother and his German friends after some time. Jana stays in Czechoslovakia.

*“Well, I guess, it was in 1968. It was kind of group in Germany, was folklore group. [...] my brother and another fellow get talk to them, okay, [...] and get invited to Germany, okay. [...] They went to Germany and they actually stayed in there, started working and then I got invitation to visit to Germany where I came and stayed too actually.”* (Vojta, line 2-6)

Couple of months later, Jana is travelling to Germany to visit Vojta. She stays there much longer than she originally intends to. In 1969, her relationship with Vojta results in marriage in Germany.

*“[...] I came 3 months after him* (Jana, line 387)

*“And for how long did you intend to stay in Germany?”* (Interviewer, line 329)

*“Only 2 weeks, 14 days.”* (Jana, line 330) *“I got a job in between those days when I was there. [...] and I liked that so I stayed.”* (Jana, line 328)

As the author progresses towards questioning participants’ personal reasons for emigration, Vojta resorts mainly to political discrimination with any hesitation.

*“Of course, because of political reasons because I seen I couldn't do anything in Czech unless you a communist which I wasn't. [...] going to engineer school or whatever wouldn't have me unless I would be communist [...] So I leave Czechoslovakia.”* (Vojta, line 6-10)

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<sup>88</sup> Appendix 1: Questions of the interview

<sup>89</sup> Appendix 3: Vojta, line 15

Jana follows her heart and she immigrates to Germany mainly out of fear for her life, well-being and loss of her freedom.

*“When Russian came to occupy our country, I was very scared. So that’s why I wanted to go. I didn’t want the government to limit my freedom.”* (Jana, line 348-349)

They both claim that the idea and the decision to migrate was their own at that time and no one pushed them to such an act. Vojta and Jana found the job in Germany in a relative short amount of time after their arrival and started to learn German language. Nevertheless, they considered to immigrate to a different country after couple of years. Vojta describes the reason and sets an approximate timeline and Jana largely agrees with him.

*“It was about 4 years later. [...] Even though we liked [...] we thought Germany was too overregulated - too many rules. So we thought [...] this would be more free, kind of, leaving in Canada. We thought let’s try some other country. So we applied, went to Canadian consulate. We applied for emigration.”* (Vojta, line 28-32)

*“Why did you choose to come to Canada instead of any other country in the world?”* (Interviewer, line 27)

*“[...] I think was the easiest [...]. States was difficult to get into, was more problematic I think so Canada was easier, you know, because that time we knew that Canada was taking about 300,000 emigrants ever year, EVERY YEAR! [...] And it was no problem to find jobs in Canada. So it was the biggest motivation for us.”* (Vojta, line 28-32)

Although Jana wanted to immigrate rather to Australia, she admits that she does not regret they chose Canada.<sup>90</sup>

### **8.2.2 The Journey to Canada**

As this part of the interview is the longest, the author analyses it as accurately as possible, based on Vojta’s answers mainly. The references to the particular answers occur not as frequently as in the previous subchapter. However, the author includes excerpts where it is necessary in order to preserve the authenticity. For the detailed information, read the interview with Vojta – lines 37-211 and the interview with Jana – lines 350-405.

At the end of 1974, Jana and Vojta go to the Canadian embassy in Stuttgart, Germany and apply for immigration to Canada. They fill in the forms that, among other information, include their education, health condition, and current finances they possess. First, Jana and Vojta intend to go to Toronto but later change it as they decide to go to Vancouver.

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<sup>90</sup> Appendix 4: Jana, line 344-345

Vojta provides the reasons behind both decisions. According to his statement, Toronto was favourable at first because of the “*employment possibilities*”<sup>91</sup> it offered since it was the biggest city at that time. Then, Vojta says, they chose to rather go to Vancouver because of “*not so cold*”<sup>92</sup> weather as in Toronto, especially in winter.

Vojta and Jana were “*legal emigrees*”<sup>93</sup> as the valid papers from the Canadian embassy proved them to be.

The first day of the last month of 1974, Vojta and Jana land in Toronto. There, at the airport, the Canadian authorities check their visa and interview them before they are officially let into the country and can take off to Vancouver.

Both Jana and Vojta say that the hardest decision of all at that time is to leave their families behind in Czechoslovakia as they travel to Canada together. Vojta used to play in a band and had many friends. Moreover, Jana confesses about the circumstances under which she left her family in Czechoslovakia. The author tries to get a detailed information and asks additional questions.

*“Nobody knew that I want to migrate. Nobody knew.”* (Jana, line 359)

*“How did they find out that you migrated?”* (Interviewer, line 360)

*“When we were in Germany then I wrote them a letter that I won't come back.”* (Jana, line 361)

*“And how did they react?”* (Interviewer, line 362)

*“My father was hurt and my mum too.”* (Jana, line 363)

*“Did their attitude change after some time?”* (Interviewer, line 364)

*“My mum after a while she was okay but my father he couldn't bite it that I left.”* (Jana, line 365)

At this point, the interview with Jana gets significantly emotional as she remembers her friends' attitude towards her decision to migrate.

*“[...] you know, friends. I had lots of friends but when I migrated everybody went against me. (sobbing)”* (Jana, line 369-370)

Vojta's brother and his family immigrate to Canada too. Unfortunately, his brother's second son cannot come with them at that time. Vojta's brother does not manage to get a

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<sup>91</sup> Appendix 3: Vojta, line 47-50

<sup>92</sup> *ibid*

<sup>93</sup> Appendix 3: Vojta, line 56

visa for his second son. “[...] he was held by communists in Czechoslovakia,” Vojta comments it later during the interview.<sup>94</sup>

According to Jana’s statement, nobody from her family immigrated to Canada after she did with her husband, ever.

On the other hand, regarding Vojta’s and Jana’s arrival to Canada, they both agree on things that were the most challenging for them to handle afterwards. Among those things is the need for a place to live in, English language which none of them spoke, and finding a job.

At the beginning, Vojta struggles with finding a decent accommodation for him, his wife, and his brother’s family that would not cost a fortune. While looking for such place to live in, he meets a Slovak girl who arranges English lessons for him and his family. She works for the government and helps immigrants, especially Czechs and Slovaks. She also manages to find them a job and a place to live in. She basically helps them to settle down in Vancouver with no major difficulties.

Vojta and Jana move to an apartment and attend English lessons at the local school from January 1975. Then, they get a job, and buy a car. Jana works in a restaurant and Vojta travels around Canadian bushes as a lumberman. Vojta briefly describes the language barrier problem in the following excerpt.

*“[...] we were looking for jobs in Vancouver, there was strong union, **odbory, odbory jo** [...] And they didn't accept nobody unless you had English experience which we didn't have. It was tough to find a job in there. No matter how good you were, first ‘You have trade?’ – ‘Yes, we have trade.’ ‘Do you have English experience?’ – ‘No.’ ‘Thank you, goodbye.’ So this was kind of not very nice in the beginning. So we looked for ways around it and find job where there is no union. We were doing wood, cutting wood in the bush, in the forest. Forest is bush. Privately. We were like contractors.” (Vojta, line 141-147)*

Vojta buys a large tractor with his brother and together, they work as wood contractors as he claims in the previous excerpt. Unfortunately, they travel a lot for their job as it depends on the constantly changing demand for wood.

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<sup>94</sup> Appendix 3: Vojta, line 78-79

Nowadays, Jana and Vojta live approximately 120 kilometres east from Vancouver. They moved there when they both went to pension, in 2014.

The author asks participants if they ever considered a possibility of moving back to the Czech Republic (respectively Czechoslovakia). Both Vojta and Jana deny such an idea crossing their minds. Vojta additionally comments that leaving the country would be absolutely senseless if they would want to come back.

*“Oh no, we could return but it would be the same stuff we left from. So it had no sense to go back to Czech. [...] So it was totally stupid idea to go back home that time you know.”* (Vojta, line 200-202)

According to Vojta’s and Jana’s answers to *the Journey to Canada* set of questions, the author claims that Vojta is adventurous, bold, and ‘all-in’ player.

*“When you decide to go somewhere, you don't go halfway, you go there full speed, full strength. You're still young and partly stupid (laughing) so you have to take advantage of that.”* (Vojta, line 209-211)

On the other hand, Jana is empathetic, sensitive and good-hearted woman, thanking her husband for the support all the time.

*“My husband. He kept me strong and he was my everything, yeah. I don't think I would do it on my own. I was too shy and not sure [...]”* (Jana, line 404-405)

### **8.2.3 Expectations versus Reality**

Majority of this subchapter deals with the language barrier that made particularly the process of getting a decent job difficult for both participants of the interview. The author analyses their statements and includes equivalent interview excerpts to support them.

As stated earlier, either Jana or Vojta did not speak English at all when they arrive to Vancouver, Canada. They both managed to learn German since they lived and worked in Germany for at least 5 years before migrating to Canada. Jana and Vojta emphasise the problem of finding stable job many times during this part of the interview since the solution is closely connected to the knowledge of English and the ‘union’.

Vojta confesses that he was kindly taught by a stranger man to lie about his language skills when applying for a job in order to get it.

*“First advice I heard: ‘If you look for job, you know everything! Understand? You know everything!’ Otherwise you don't get the job.”* (Vojta, line 215-217)

As he is advised to, Vojta sort of ‘goes with the flow’ and learns English on the run.

Jana, on the other hand, remarks the hardships of learning another language.

*“It was very hard. Because you speak differently and you write differently. German for me was much easier. But English, when we went to school our teacher was really patient. So I learned a lot. And when you speak the language then the life is much easier.”* (Jana, line 412-414) *“When I learned a little bit English I went to look for the job. So it was the biggest challenge for me, to find a job [...]”* (Jana, line 416-417)

The author recognizes German accent in both Vojta’s and Jana’s English utterances (see the example in the line 136 or 281). Moreover, they subconsciously speak Czech time to time. For such examples, read the following lines: 57, 141-142, 278-279. Undoubtedly, the influence of Czech and German language is not so easily overlooked, even though it is less distinct.

In spite of all the difficulties Vojta and Jana had to overcome, they had each other’s endless support in the first place. They made new friends or contacted their old ones from Europe again as Jana says.

*“[...] most of our friends are from Slovakia. We have some friends from Czech Republic too. And we still have friends in Germany. We talk on the phone. And when we go visit you in the Czech Republic, we go visit them too.”* (Jana, line 425-427)

Foremost, Vojta and Jana found a community where people hold onto each other during tough times.

To conclude *Expectations versus Reality* set of questions, the author asks about things that brought participants joy or made them happy when nothing seemed right. The following testimonies also show their personal values and humbleness.

*“My husband of course, that’s number one. And I had a job, good money. I did make lots of friends.”* (Jana, line 422-423)

*“FREEDOM!!! (laughing) We’re alive, we’re healthy, [...] have fun, and, no, no worries. Just live it as it comes. You can travel around Canada. Not to America, unless, you know, you become Canadian after about 5 years.”* (Vojta, line 229-231)

#### **8.2.4 Looking Back**

The analysis of the last set of questions includes Vojta’s and Jana’s statements that are based on the retrospective remembering of particular situations. The first and the second questions concern Canadians as a community of native people.

In general, the author investigates if participants were either welcomed or rejected as immigrants in the new community. The author also questions participants' cultural roots and if they were not forgotten. Finally, Vojta and Jana briefly summarize their recollections of immigrating to Canada.

Jana and Vojta answer similarly, regarding the questions regarding Canadian society embracing them as immigrants. Overall, they felt welcomed and did not experience any act of discrimination from the side of Canadian people at the time they immigrated. However, Vojta recalls a situation when they have been viewed as somehow different or strange.

*"[...] you know, there are some people pointing at you because you're an emigrant. This is stupidity you know. You don't answer. We were called a DP - displayed person. AAAAHH! IS IT A CRIME? We work. I didn't feel separated in Canada. No, no, no. Because Canada is based on emigrants. Yeah, we [...] are mosaic society. Czechs looking for the Czechs, we came from Germany, we were looking for Czech and German restaurant, German dance halls, whatever. Czechs didn't enter the town that much because all the Czechs was around Toronto more. [...] Around Vancouver, no."* (Vojta, line 238-246)

Jana expresses her feelings she processed after all those years too.

*"[...] maybe they were against me but I didn't feel. I don't know. You can find everywhere in the whole world. Good people and bad people. Keep away from the bad people. That's my meaning. You know and I can sometimes scent if he's good or not. But so far so good. We have good friends. [...]"* (Jana, line 429-432)

After all, Jana and Vojta led a normal social life even with the status of immigrant. They went shopping, they went to the theatre, cinema, and shows. They had their own business and were accepted as valuable members of Canadian society.

*"Canadians are good hearted people. I just cannot complain about them."* (Jana, line 437-438)

*"I am proud Canadian."* (Vojta, line 297)

No doubt Vojta and Jana are proud of what they have achieved during nearly 50 years living in Canada. However, they did it with a little help at the beginning. But it was crucial for them to settle down. Eventually, they worked themselves up in order to have a decent pension. Vojta shares a very interesting note during the interview with Jana that catches the author's attention.

*"[...] you don't achieve it by just working. You have to have some investments. Otherwise, you'll be living from day to day. You know what I mean. If you have no investments and some not just savings, must be investments. You have to make money, jo."* (Vojta, line 446-449)

*"So you invested in something before you retired."* (Interviewer, line 450)

*"Yeah, before we retired, yeah. Used to have a lot of mortgages but all are paid out. At that time we had 6 mortgages. But you know, at that time we were both working and pay was good. So we achieved, paid it and now obviously we have money for travelling."* (Vojta, line 451-453)

A small portion of questions is devoted to Czech traditions and cultural habits. The author asks participants if they, up to date, cook Czech traditional meals, listen to Czech music, or celebrate any national holidays that are typical in the Czech Republic.

*"Not much celebration around [...]. After 50 years you feel like Canadian too. Celebrations connected with Easter, Christmas is not in here. It is in Toronto, bigger cities. They might be around churches in here, [...] but we don't go to the church that much, used to go only Christmas Eve. [...]"* (Vojta, line 271-275)

*"1<sup>st</sup> of May we don't celebrate. Easter, then what...? Christmas, New Year's, Thanksgiving."* (Jana, line 461-462)

*"**To je jako díkuvzdání. To je něco jako dožínky, hody.**"* (Vojta, line 463)

The author is very pleased to hear that both Vojta and Jana still enjoy and cook traditional Czech meals.

*"Czech food still, Czech food is the rule that cannot be forgotten, no."* (Vojta, line 271-272)

*"[...] I cook like at home. My mum like she taught us how to cook. And I still cook like I was at home. And I still cook Czech traditional food. Today we are going to have vepřo-knedlo-zelo. (laughing) When I cook I cook for army, not just for two. And lunch is still a big meal for us like in Czech."* (Jana, line 458-461)

Vojta and Jana certainly brought Czech culture to Canada with them as well as German culture, since they frequently play songs from Czech and German popular bands or singers.

*"**Moravanka, Veselá trojka, samozřejmě Gott taky samozřejmě, to pořád běží. Moravanka, Mistříňanka.**"* (Vojta, line 278-279)

*"So mainly folklore music."* (Interviewer, line 280)

*"**Ja, ja, ja.**"* (Vojta, line 281)

*“Oh, popular music. We have lots of LPs. I love Karel Gott and Elvis Presley.”* (Jana, line 468)

Then, the author asks more sentimental questions. For example, what participants still do miss the most about the Czech Republic or if they think migration has changed them in any way (for the better or worse). In general, Vojta and Jana both mostly miss the rest of their families.

*“There is still some family in there. Friends. [...] it’s different you know if you come after 20 years. The friendships kind of fades away.”* (Vojta, line 283-284)

*“My family. It’s growing and growing. When I left, you were not born. But now I miss everybody from my family. [...]”* (Jana, line 470-471)

The author truly appreciates moments of participants’ humbleness, as she asks about possible change of their characters or attitude caused by the immigration to Canada.

*“Never thought about this. No, you come in there, you adapt.”* (Vojta, line 290)

*“Did it change you for better?”* (Interviewer, line 292)

*“I don’t think it changed me at all.”* (Vojta, line 293)

*“Are you grateful for such experience?”* (Interviewer, line 294)

*“It changed our lives 180 degrees you know, because when you come somewhere you strive, you trying to get better, not just for you, but also of course for the country that took us actually, you know. [...]”* (Vojta, line 295-297)

*“Make me a stronger person. When I was back home I was shy, wasn’t sure what to do. [...]”* (Jana, line 474)

The author gradually progresses toward the question regarding things that Canadians did not know about immigrants at that time. Both agreed on the fact that the Canadian government was well-prepared for their arrival and was very helpful.

However, Vojta adds a few interesting points that rather twists the original question<sup>95</sup> to: ‘What do you wish YOU knew about IMMIGRATION at that time?’

*“[...] they expect you to live to your promises you know. You come to Canada and you work and pay taxes, you have to contribute to the society somehow yes. They cannot know what country you came from, what regime is there, so they were nice to us, the government too of course.”* (Vojta, line 306-309) *“The difference is, people coming now are fluent in English. So they easy to find jobs, they’re prepared.”* (Vojta, line 480-481)

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<sup>95</sup> Appendix 1: Looking back, question 8

*“Wish we could educate ourselves more about situation where you are coming to what country and what is in there going on. We were unprepared, we were practically stupid. [...]”* (Vojta, line 483-484)

At the end of the interview, Vojta and Jana have the opportunity to add anything that has not been spoken about throughout the interview. Here is their final wisdom and message to whoever is reading this bachelor thesis.

*“[...] all I’m about to say is try to live to the full potential. If you want to travel, travel, but with so many regulations you don’t want to go through it obviously, you are rather at home.”* (Vojta, line 321-322) *“[...] there were bad times and good times. You just try to cast out the bad stuff. You know, life is change and change is life. But you have to adapt to those changes.”* (Vojta, line 495-497)

*“[...] you know, each country is different. Different manners and you have to adjust to them. If you want to be live here.”* (Jana, line 498-499)

## 9 Discussion

To create a logical structure, the author determined the analysis layout that corresponds with the titles of the four interview sets of questions: *The Impulse for Migrating*, *The Journey to Canada*, *Expectations versus Reality*, and *Looking Back*. Then, the author examined the participants' answers to all interview questions. The author pointed out the most important information while including an excerpt or quotation. The length of the individual analysed theme depended on the total number of questions in a particular set.

The main aim of the research was to understand the personal reasons of the interview participants and the events leading to their emigration. The author obtained the information during the first set of questions, *The Impulse for Migrating*. Therefore, the same-named subchapter in the analysis covers what initiated participants' migrating thoughts.

The first secondary aim of the research was to describe the language barrier problem the interview participants have had to handle. The third subchapter of the analysis, titled *Expectations versus Reality*, is devoted to the language barrier problem.

The second secondary aim of the research was to determine the impact of the immigrant status on the interview participants' mental health. The last subchapter, *Looking Back*, especially its first half, is dedicated to participants' answers covering the process of becoming a valuable member of Canadian society.

The second subchapter of the analysis, *The Journey to Canada*, partially relates to both secondary aims as it contains information regarding:

- The language barrier and its impact on specific aspects of participants' living standards,
- The initial effect the immigrant status had on participants' emotional state as they were leaving their family and close friends in Czechoslovakia,
- And participants' coping mechanisms used while overcoming previously stated difficulties.

In the subchapter 7.2, the author premises participants' probable personal reasons for emigration. Her presumption was later confirmed since the research shows that Vojta and Jana migrated from Czechoslovakia immediately after the 1968 Soviet invasion mainly because of political and personal freedom.

The author's second belief regarding the language barrier and its impact on the process of settling down later also happened to be true.

Prior to the interview realization, the author assumed that participants were not welcomed in Canada as immigrants at that time. According to the data obtained during the interview, this assumption was not correct.

The author claims the biggest limit of the research dwells in the impossibility of interviewing participants personally, in other words, face-to-face. The author believes that participants' gestures and facial expressions would divulge more than words can describe, which could be another exciting theme for the analysis.

Nevertheless, Jana and Vojta's story about the journey to Canada is adventurous, unique, and courageous at the same time. It represents a remarkable insight into the life of an immigrant pursuing a new start in a new country they deserve. At least, Vojta and Jana's testimonies remind whoever is reading this bachelor thesis to be grateful for every little thing that awaits along the path through life.

## 10 Author's self-reflection

Firstly, it is essential to mention that this chapter is based purely on the author's subjective opinions. She decided to include this chapter in the bachelor thesis on purpose so the reader could understand her point of view on the research and the whole theme this bachelor thesis concerns.

The moment the author found out that participants firstly immigrated to Germany is the only situation representing an obstacle that the author had to overcome immediately, as it was during the interview. The author admits she could educate herself beforehand and quickly interview participants off-record about their immigration to Canada. With that being stated, the fact of firstly migrating to Germany would be acknowledged and the author could work with it while defining the research questions and questions in the interview.

Although the author tried to act as an academic researcher as much as possible, some situations could cause a deflection from the interview scenario. Mostly, it happened when interviewing Vojta, especially when he got in his chatty mood. He is a great storyteller, so the author was drawn by all the details he described and did not tell him to stop when necessary. On the other hand, as she claimed about herself, Jana was not as talkative as Vojta and provided brief answers with the most important information only. Therefore, the author finds herself often asking additional questions, possibly fuelled by her personal curiosity.

Eventually, both Vojta and Jana are the author's relatives. She has a family bond with them even though they are thousands of kilometres away and do not see each other as frequently. And so, it is reasonable for the author not to be completely capable of suppressing her personal relation to both participants.

## Conclusion

The main aim of this bachelor thesis was to examine and describe the personal reasons of the interview participants and events leading to their emigration. The author wanted to deepen the knowledge about the specific group of people who find themselves leaving their homeland with unsure vision about their future.

The first chapter of the theoretical part defines keywords such as migration or an exile.

The second chapter focuses on the history of Czech emigrants, regarding the political situation during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and common reasons for the emigration of Czech inhabitants.

The third chapter includes the information about the cultural changes, meaning the culture, community or language, emigrants have had to undergo.

Canadian national and cultural identity is defined in the fourth chapter, as the targeted group of people in the research part are Canadian immigrants.

The fifth chapter of the theoretical part concerns Canadian immigration policy and immigration waves to Canada since the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The sixth and, at the same time, the last chapter of the theoretical part presents Czech cultural imprints in Canada as it mentions the function of Sokol movement, Czech art, and press.

The second half of the bachelor thesis is devoted to the analysis of the research sample that consists of two participants – Canadian immigrants. The research design of this bachelor thesis is qualitative. The research tool to obtain data is a semi-structured interview. The method chosen for the interview analysis is thematic. The analysed themes correspond with the titles of question sets in the interview.<sup>96</sup> The results of the interview showed participants' personal reasons for emigration, how they dealt with the language barrier, and how the immigrant status impacted their mental health.

This bachelor thesis enabled the author to explore the historical field that she was not acquainted with before. In spite of the fact that the interview participants are the author's relatives, she never studied their journey to Canada on the detailed level. With that being stated, the author took and developed the opportunity to its fullest potential as it became the main subject of the bachelor thesis.

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<sup>96</sup> Appendix 1: Interview questions

The research provides an insight into the life of Canadian immigrant that is based on a strong evidence presented throughout the theoretical part. As the whole, the bachelor thesis could serve as a study material of Canadian emigration policy or history. It could be also beneficial for the broad society when searching for an authentic story of Czech inhabitants immigrating to the English speaking country, especially, when related to the language barrier problem.

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## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: The Interview Questions

Appendix 2: Explanatory Notes

Appendix 3: The Interview with Vojta

Appendix 4: The Interview with Jana

# **Appendix 1**

## **The Interview Questions**

### **THE IMPULSE FOR MIGRATING**

- 1 In what circumstances did you begin to consider a possibility to migrate?
- 2 What is your story behind the decision to migrate?
- 3 When was the first time the idea of leaving the country crossed your mind?
- 4 Was the idea to migrate your own or someone else suggested it or even decided for you?
- 5 Why did you choose to come to Canada instead of any other country in the world?
- 6 What did you hope for to change or to be different in your new life in Canada?

### **THE JOURNEY TO CANADA**

- 1 What did you have to do for the plan to be successful at that time?
- 2 Did you have to contact the authorities immediately after you arrived to Canada or somebody contacted you?
- 3 Who did you leave behind in the Czech Republic? (family members, good friends)
- 4 Did anyone close to you emigrated after you did, as well?
- 5 What was the most difficult part about leaving the country you can think of, at that time?
- 6 On the other hand, what was the most difficult part of coming to Canada?
- 7 How was the day you emigrated? Do you remember anything from that day? (the date, feelings, first impressions of the new environment, culture etc.) In general, what was it like when you first arrived?
- 8 What surprised you the most those first couple of days while settling down in Canada?
- 9 Where did you first settle and what was the reason to settle right there?
- 10 Did you stay in one place or have you moved around?
- 11 How did you come to live where you are now?
- 12 Who or what was most helpful with getting you settled?
- 13 Did you at first intend to settle down in Canada or did you want to come back to the Czech Republic after some time?
- 14 Where did you find strength in difficult times? What did you do, what/who helped you?

### **EXPECTATIONS VERSUS REALITY**

- 1 I believe it was really hard to get used to the foreign environment, especially with the language barrier – did you speak English at that time? If not, how did you learn English? What/who helped you?

- 2 What have been your biggest challenges those first let's say couple of years living in Canada?
- 3 On the other hand, what made you happy or joyful while living in Canada?

### **LOOKING BACK**

- 1 Can you think of any situation you have felt unwelcomed in as an immigrant?
- 2 On the other hand, can you think of times when you have felt welcomed?
- 3 What is (are) the thing(s) you are the proudest of nowadays and why?
- 4 Nowadays, how does your experience compare to what you expected before leaving the Czech Republic?
- 5 What Czech traditions, meaning celebrations, foods or songs, do you still enjoy up to date?
- 6 What did you or you still do miss the most about the Czech Republic?
- 7 Do you think migration has changed you or made you a stronger person? If yes, how/in what ways?
- 8 What do you wish more people knew about immigrants that are new to the community?
- 9 At the time you migrated, what things were unpleasant and made the process of settling in the new country worse?
- 10 Is there anything you would like to add? Something that has not been asked or spoken about yet?

## Appendix 2

### Explanatory Notes

CAPITAL LETTERS

**words in bold**

(words in brackets)

*I*

*V*

*J*

[...]

emphasis

the word pronunciation is either German or Czech

expressing an emotion

the interviewer (the author)

Vojta

Jana

deleted passage

## Appendix 3

### The Interview with Vojta

1 *I: In what circumstances did you begin to consider a possibility to migrate?*

2 V: Well, I guess, it was in 1968. It was kind of group in Germany, was folklore group. And they  
3 were dancing in there and my brother and another fellow get talk to them, okay, and actually  
4 and they, yeah, talked about it and get invited to Germany, okay. And so this was it. They went  
5 to Germany and they actually stayed in there, started working and then I got invitation to visit  
6 to Germany where I came and stayed too actually. This was the beginning **jo**. I never thought  
7 why or what you know, political reasons - nooo, yeah. Of course, because of political reasons  
8 because I seen I couldn't do anything in Czech unless you a communist which I wasn't. Even  
9 though, going to engineer school or whatever wouldn't have me unless I would be communist  
10 so it's not my style. So I leave Czechoslovakia.

11 *I: What is your story behind the decision to migrate? - I think we have that covered with your*  
12 *answer to the previous question.*

13 V: Kind of political reasons but economical too.

14 *I: When was the first time the idea of leaving the country crossed your mind?*

15 V: 1968, yeah, late 68.

16 *I: Was the idea to migrate your own or someone else suggested it or even decided for you?*

17 V: It was my own idea actually. When my brother and our friend went to Germany I thought  
18 okay. My brother is married, he'll stay home although. Instead, he was "No, I wanna go" even  
19 though he was married, okay. So of course it was my idea.

20 *I: And how did you get an idea to migrate to Canada?*

21 V: It was about 4 years later. We were still in Germany, worked and we opened business,  
22 tracking business in Germany. And that time, they introduced cameras, you know. Even though  
23 we liked Germany and we were kind of welcomed in there, we thought Germany was too  
24 overregulated - too many rules. So we thought this was-this would be more free, kind of, leaving  
25 in Canada. We thought *let's try some other country*. So we applied, went to Canadian consulate.  
26 We applied for emigration.

27 *I: Why did you choose to come to Canada instead of any other country in the world?*

28 V: Ah, why Canada? I think was the easiest because sure you could gone to the South Africa  
29 (we liked the idea). States was difficult to get into, was more problematic I think so Canada was  
30 easier, you know, because that time we knew that Canada was taking about 300,000 emigrants  
31 ever year, EVERY YEAR! So and since we had traits because I went with my brother too, okay.  
32 And it was no problem to find jobs in Canada. So it was the biggest motivation for us.

33 *I: What did you hope for to change or to be different in your new life in Canada?*

34 V: Ah, more freedom, I guess. Freedom, of course, yeah. We had freedom in Germany but even  
35 though, as I said, too many regulation for us anyway. And in Canada - freedom, economical of  
36 course. Even though, it was more difficult to learn another language.

37 *I: What did you have to do for the plan to migrate to Canada to be successful at that time?*

38 V: Okay, ah. Canadian embassy in Germany, in Stuttgart actually yeah. I can't remember what  
39 really happened anyway. We decided to go to Canada. So we - I, my brother and neighbour  
40 friend, we decided to go to the Canadian embassy and applied. It was sometimes I think  
41 September 69. Ah, sorry, we lived in Germany for 5 years before we went to Canada. So  
42 September 74 we went to an embassy and applied alright. We have to prove your education,  
43 whatever jobs you're looking for, whatever category you fit into it. Which was we were  
44 tradesmen okay. And all, you have to be healthy of course and they didn't care about that much  
45 about the English because none of us spoke English - some broken few words you know. But  
46 that was enough. But there was actually Czech and English translator on the embassy and they're  
47 asking the question, we're answering and since we were healthy - no problem, go. And that time  
48 we decided to go to Toronto, because it is big city and lots of employment possibilities. Then,

49 somehow we decided to - you know, Toronto is cold in winter. Sometimes, there could be -40,  
50 so let's go to Vancouver, there's better weather in there, okay, not so cold. So we changed before  
51 we left actually Germany, we went to embassy, said no, no we want to go to Vancouver. Okay,  
52 no problem, they just changed the name on that papers because we were already admitted. Also  
53 they needed see if we come in there, when we come to Canada how can we support ourselves.  
54 There was money in the world there and since we have money - no problem. We refused offer  
55 to give us day tickets because then you would have return it anyway so we paid our on fair. We  
56 were legal *emigrees*, not refugees or anything, okay. Anyway, it was it. And then we, December  
57 1<sup>st</sup> 1974, two of us, two members of our families, **jako** me and my brother left Germany to  
58 Canada. We came to Toronto, did the emigration stuff, you know.

59 *I: Did you have to contact the authorities immediately after you arrived to Canada or somebody*  
60 *contacted you?*

61 *V:* No, it was right at the airport. They arrived at the airport, when you arrived from foreign  
62 country, they arrived to first airport. And in Canada you have to show the paper and since you  
63 are emigrant, you have to show your visa - this is emigrant visa, so they ask you a question  
64 okay. They say "You have so much money, where is your money?" So I pulled all my money  
65 from my shirt you know and they thought we are making fun of them. (laughing) "You took  
66 the money and left, you took the money and left!" I don't know, it was 10.000 dollars so they  
67 were obviously looking for answers. (laughing) Anyway also and from there, in couple hours  
68 we flew to Vancouver.

69 *I: Who did you leave behind in the Czech Republic? (family members, good friends)*

70 *V:* Oh, yeah. Just a family. Oh, and my girlfriend. Family, obviously father, mother, another  
71 brother, sister and my girlfriend, yes.

72 *I: Did anyone close to you emigrated after you did, as well?*

73 *V:* Yeah, this was my brother and his family. By then we were married - and my wife obviously  
74 - two families, we emigrated.

75 *I: After how many months or years did they immigrate to Canada?*

76 V: No, no, we went together actually, yeah. Me and my wife and my brother, his wife and one  
77 son. The other son of my brother stay in Czech because then when we were leaving  
78 Czechoslovakia, my brother didn't get visa for his second son - he was held by communists in  
79 Czechoslovakia.

80 *I: What was the most difficult part about leaving the country (meaning the Czech Republic) you*  
81 *can think of, at that time?*

82 V: Mmmm, well I miss my, ah. Actually when we left to Germany I missed most obviously  
83 family and my girlfriend and my music. I used to play in the band. Never mind. When we were  
84 leaving from Germany to Canada I didn't miss anything. Even though we were living in  
85 Germany, everything was nice, no problem, okay. Friends, we have quite in Germany but  
86 nothing else.

87 *I: On the other hand, what was the most difficult part of coming to Canada?*

88 V: We had to settle down somewhere, actually when we went to Vancouver we had to settle  
89 down somewhere because when we came just and, um, first hotel there was at the airport and  
90 then we have to think to get some place to live in. And obviously, the first thing live in. Then,  
91 the language, because we didn't speak English alright. Didn't speak English at all. I knew maybe  
92 3 words but it is tough to connect to you to make a sentence. The beginning of course are all  
93 tough. Especially, if you don't know the country, don't know the language. We have no  
94 connection, NO CONNECTION ABSOLUTELY when we came to Canada okay.

95 *I: How was the day you emigrated? Do you remember anything from that day? (the date,*  
96 *feelings, first impressions of the new environment, culture etc.) In general, what was it like*  
97 *when you first arrived?*

98 V: Of course we were alighted coming to Canada. Alighted obviously worrisome because don't  
99 know where you coming what was happening in there you know. When we came there was  
100 raining like hell you know. Like water was falling, it wasn't raining, water was pouring and  
101 were at the airport waiting for the taxi and wondering *what the hell are we doing here?* It was  
102 terrible and it was funny, or problem because the taxi wouldn't take us. Asking to go to

103 downtown. Didn't understand. I heard just “**tamtan**”. *I'm not stupid I know what “tamtan” is*  
104 *but I didn't know. (laughing) The taxi wouldn't take us unless you were going downtown. They*  
105 *changed it later on. So anyway we met a German at the airport, sorry, at the airplane - German*  
106 *guy - it was the only contact we knew from the airplane. And he seen us, he see the taxi wouldn't*  
107 *take us he told them “You stop here, take them!” And we go to the first hotel and come back*  
108 *and take the other family to the same hotel.*

109 *I: What surprised you the most those first couple of days while settling down in Canada?*

110 *V: The closest hotel obviously was really expensive. So we left the girls there and went to look*  
111 *for the accommodation, somewhere to live okay. So actually we went to the downtown*  
112 *(laughing) and were looking for hotels. Obviously there were cheap hotels but there were*  
113 *garbage hotels too, some of them okay. So we were in the wrong part of town. (laughing) But*  
114 *in that part of town we go and looking in the windows and stores and there was written*  
115 *“mluvíme česky“. And we were like *really?! That was happen! (laughing) Walk in, there was**  
116 *a girl and she was working for the government like helping people like us. By chance, we didn't*  
117 *know, it was just by chance. We didn't know when we were coming to Canada that those things*  
118 *exist. Okay, the only thing what's promised for us - English lessons, school. But then we found*  
119 *a girl and you know start talking, talking. She was actually Slovak. I don't know if she was born*  
120 *in here or not, maybe not. But she was perfect Slovak.*

121 *I: So she helped you to get some English lessons?*

122 *V: No, first somewhere to live okay.*

123 *I: Where did you first settle and what was the reason to settle right there?*

124 *V: So we find another motel which was much cheaper and it was place for 2 families actually.*  
125 *There were 2 bedrooms and big living room and everything around it you know. Okay so one*  
126 *family at the bigger room and two of us at the smaller room. Anyway so we had accommodation*  
127 *alright. And then went to some kind of office I don't know - asking about the school. Yes, we*  
128 *found and we were accepted to the school from 1<sup>st</sup> of January. We came to Canada 1<sup>st</sup> of*  
129 *December. And before we bought a big car obviously. And then we drove to the school, we*  
130 *were obviously accepted and started to go to school. The school was payed for by government.*

131 *I: Have you moved from that motel anywhere else?*

132 *V: No, we stayed there for about, at least half a year. Anyway because we were going to school*  
133 *and then we were looking for the job. So the same thing happened at the same time, two things*  
134 *were happening. The accommodation was temporary obviously.*

135 *I: And was it easy to find some kind of job?*

136 *V: **Joo no, ja.** My brother he was mechanical engineer, he found a job first and then I found*  
137 *job in Manitoba which is about 2 or 3 thousand kilometres away from Vancouver right in the*  
138 *middle of Canada.*

139 *I: So you moved there for the job you got.*

140 *V: Yeah, we found a job in there yeah because we wanted to go to logging countries, stuff like*  
141 *this. Because when we were looking for jobs in Vancouver, there was strong union, **odbory,***  
142 ***odbory jo,** strong union. And they didn't accept nobody unless you had English experience*  
143 *which we didn't have. It was tough to find a job in there. No matter how good you were, first*  
144 *“You have trade?” - *Yes, we have trade,* “Do you have English experience?” - *No,* “Thank you,*  
145 *goodbye”. So this was kind of not very nice in the beginning. So we looked for ways around it*  
146 *and find job where there is no union. We were doing wood, cutting wood in the bush, in the*  
147 *forest. Forest is bush. Privately. We were like contractors.*

148 *I: Did you enjoy that job – being in nature more than in the big city?*

149 *V: Enjoy? Job is a job. You know when you're emigrant you don't look what job it is obviously.*  
150 *We wanted to go to the bush and make money in the bush you know. We were still young,*  
151 *healthy, why not.*

152 *I: How did you come to live where you are now?*

153 *V: That job in Manitoba didn't work out so actually wasn't so good. Was not much money in*  
154 *there. It was the first time I went to the bush, I have never been to the bush in Czech, in*

155 Germany, nowhere okay. So the income wasn't so good. Obviously we were disappointed so  
156 we were going back to where the - actually Manitoba yes there are three - Northern Manitoba,  
157 we were kind of in middle Manitoba so there was not much logging in there by that time. That  
158 year actually, logging was kind of suppressed okay. Not much work so we went where the bush  
159 was, actually which it was British Columbia - back to British Columbia, northern British  
160 Columbia. And that was again 1975, not sorry 76. We drove from Manitoba to northern British  
161 Columbia.

162 *I: How long did it take? Do you remember?*

163 *V:* That time we were 3 guys already, because there was another Czech friend we met in there.  
164 And we were 3 guys, we drove to British Columbia. We went 2 days because it was winter and  
165 it was -40. Anyway so we stayed I think in Alberta overnight. Yeah. Then we went to Prince  
166 George, is kind of centre of the logging that time we thought. Look for the mills in there. It was  
167 not much work. Then we went all the way to the west to Prince Rupert. And there was actually  
168 somebody who knew somebody in there. Actually our new friend knew somebody in there so  
169 we drove in there. And stayed all night in the hotel talked to the people in there, talked to our  
170 friend's connection. Was not much in there because that time logging was not much, not much.  
171 Anyway. So we went back Prince George. And we went also more up north. Place called Fort  
172 Nelson. Because we found from folklores, you know we talked to the mills and they said "Why  
173 don't you go up to Fort Nelson you know." There is a lot of actually winter only logging and  
174 you know you can make money in there. So we drove to Fort Nelson, found a job okay. Drove  
175 back to Manitoba. We had all machinery and actually we bought like a motor home where we  
176 lived when we worked in Manitoba. I got tractor, my brother had a motor home and our new  
177 friend had a skidder in Manitoba. We grabbed all the stuff in Manitoba, hired a transport back  
178 to British Columbia and drove back to Fort Nelson. Actually we stayed that time about 150  
179 miles away from Fort Nelson. This time we didn't come to Fort Nelson that time we went. Jesus  
180 Christ what was the name. We stayed there for the rest of the winter, it was in winter. And next  
181 summer we didn't like it, that town, what was, Jesus Christ. Oh, Fort St. John, about 50/80 miles  
182 from Alberta border, going west. Anyway, we didn't like it. Our contractor was not very  
183 organized. So we said we have to find something else. And it was heavy raining that time and  
184 the bush was near the river so we got stuck there. So then we drove to the centre of the British  
185 Columbia which was Prince George again. Looking for work in there and couldn't find a work  
186 in there so we said let's go back to Vancouver and see what happens in there. But then I said

187 let's try once more. We found a guy and he said "What do you have?" I said *we have 3 skidders*.  
188 And he said "Okay, come to the Fort Nelson." which is another 400 miles up north. (laughing)  
189 He was in need, so he send a truck for us to take the skidders up north for free. So we went  
190 there and start making money. We worked hard from early morning to late night.

191 *I: To kind of conclude the journey, where do you live right now?*

192 V: Right now we live about 120 kilometres east from Vancouver. We moved here around 2014.  
193 It is like a cottage. I stopped working in about 70 and Jana stopped working in 65. So we moved  
194 from Vancouver here.

195 *I: Who or what was most helpful with getting you settled?*

196 V: Yeah, it was actually that girl there, she was working for the government.

197 *I: Did you at first intend to settle down in Canada or did you want to come back to the Czech*  
198 *Republic after some time?*

199 V: Oh, like when we lived in Germany there would be chance to go back to Czech. But the  
200 system didn't allow it obviously. Oh no, we could return but it would be the same stuff we left  
201 from. So it had no sense to go back to Czech. Even though we knew few Czechs that decided  
202 to go back to Czech. So it was totally stupid idea to go back home that time you know.

203 *I: And when you migrated to Canada from Germany, did you want to come back to the Czech*  
204 *Republic after some time? Or did you want to just stay in Canada?*

205 V: No, you start working, you place yourself somewhere obviously. You buy a house, you can  
206 provide for food and everything and payments. Live, find friends, go around a country. I didn't  
207 want to come back. Not me.

208 *I: Where did you find strength in difficult times? What did you do, what/who helped you?*

209 V: We're all different people all of us you know. When you decide to go somewhere, you don't  
210 go halfway, you go there full speed, full strength. You're still young and partly stupid (laughing)  
211 so you have to take advantage of that.

212 *I: So probably most helpful thing for you to learn English was that school.*

213 V: School, absolutely. You got some connections. And advice of course. English school were  
214 actually good at being teaching only if you have I don't know 12<sup>th</sup> grade education. And be  
215 excellent - you have to be good in English. You got advice. First advice I heard "If you look  
216 for job, you know everything! Understand? You know everything!" Otherwise you don't get  
217 the job. Actually, nice guy, young guy, he taught us to lie. Anyway, so, yeah that was...and you  
218 have connection, you see what other people are doing while they're looking for the jobs because  
219 there was people from all around the world actually. There were some German girls in there.  
220 Which didn't help much the English. (laughing) Chinese, I don't know... South American, all  
221 variety. Variety of peoples from different countries. And you talk, you get yourself acquainted  
222 with Canada, how things work in here, okay. Because we didn't study anything there you know.  
223 How I was meant to know what happens.

224 *I: What have been your biggest challenges those first let's say couple of years living in Canada?*

225 V: Ah, yeah. No problem with that people. But English and decent job okay. Couldn't find jobs  
226 in our professions okay because of the union. We have to go around it, **jo**, that was all yeah.  
227 And then you know you work that's simply.

228 *I: On the other hand, what made you happy or joyful while living in Canada?*

229 V: FREEDOM!!! (laughing) We're alive, we're healthy, we live out in our home, you have  
230 fun, and, no, no worries. Just live it as it comes. You can travel around Canada. Not to America,  
231 unless you know you become Canadian after about 5 years. Then we come to Canada was first  
232 actually that time prime minister said "No, people don't have to wait 10 years. Let's do it.  
233 Because we're country for the emigrants, all emigrants in there. One way or the other, through  
234 parents, grandparents or. New emigrants, so let's just make it 4 years that time." And we came  
235 into the time where it was 4 years. I think you could have applied after 3 years or something.  
236 Yeah, for citizenship.

237 *I: Can you think of any situation you have felt unwelcomed in as an immigrant?*

238 V: Not really, not really. Actually, absolutely not. And you know, there are some people  
239 pointing at you because you're an emigrant. This is stupidity you know. You don't answer. We  
240 were called a DP - displayed person. AAAAHH! IS IT A CRIME? We work. I didn't feel  
241 separated in Canada. No, no, no. Because Canada is based on emigrants. Yeah, we have -  
242 Canada is melting pot. No, no, no. Melting pot society? No, no, sorry, America is melting pot  
243 society. We are mosaic society. Czechs looking for the Czechs, we came from Germany, we  
244 were looking for Czech and German restaurant, German dance halls, whatever. Czechs didn't  
245 enter the town that much because all the Czechs was around Toronto more. Because there was  
246 all timers in there, you know, lots of clubs in there. Around Vancouver, no. Because we spent  
247 more so our time in the bush we didn't know anything what's happening in Vancouver that much  
248 you know. If there was some star from Czech singing or something we found out later you  
249 know. All the times in all those years I think only once there was Karel Gott, Gott that one. And  
250 there was some Slovak group, you know, fun stuff, you know, funny stuff. But because we were  
251 always away we didn't know how much-what is happening in here. When you come home after  
252 3 months of hard work so you want to have rest okay and you come home.

253 *I: On the other hand, can you think of times when you have felt welcomed?*

254 V: We went to cinema, theatre, shops, shows with no problem. It was totally normal that  
255 emigrants came, started working, have businesses.

256 *I: What is (are) the thing(s) you are the proudest of nowadays and why?*

257 V: All those years, we were not bad. We had the company, we had work and machinery. We  
258 employed people. We also, at one time, we had apartment buildings, 13 suits. Me and my wife  
259 okay, not bad. Few cars, at the same time. Everything changed again, you know. We really have  
260 productive life in here. Since pension, we are travelling, yes a lot. We moved in here from  
261 Vancouver because for recreation. There's a river right behind a place we kayak a lot, we bike  
262 a lot. Use the ski a lot. We were really active, it's slowing down actually.

263 *I: Nowadays, how does your experience compare to what you expected before leaving the Czech*  
264 *Republic?*

265 V: Things change, you know. Government change, people change. Yeah, people change a lot.  
266 Younger people get elected not older people. No experience and they make mistakes you know.  
267 And if look, younger generation looks like they I don't know they were all born with the golden  
268 spoon in the mouth you know what I mean? Everything was provided for them. Our generation  
269 provided for them and they blame us for messing up their work with carbon you know like.

270 *I: What Czech traditions, meaning celebrations, foods or songs, do you still enjoy up to date?*

271 V: Not much celebration around, not much even friends actually. Czech food still, Czech food  
272 is the rule that cannot be forgotten, no. After 50 years you feel like Canadian too. Celebrations  
273 connected with Easter, Christmas is not in here. It is in Toronto, bigger cities. They might be  
274 around churches in here, they are organizing stuff but we don't go to the church that much, used  
275 to go only Christmas Eve. And not much more. I have my own talk with God you know,  
276 sometimes not so pretty. (laughing)

277 *I: What Czech music bands do you still listen to?*

278 V: **Moravanka, Veselá trojka, samozřejmě Gott taky samozřejmě, to pořád běží.**  
279 **Moravanka, Mistrůňanka.**

280 *I: So mainly folklore music.*

281 V: **Ja, ja, ja.**

282 *I: What did you or you still do miss the most about the Czech Republic?*

283 V: There is still some family in there. Friends. No you forget, it's different you know if you  
284 come after 20 years. The friendships kind of fades away. If you com once awhile, you come in  
285 May, everything is nice and beautiful, everything is flourishing. There's flowers and everything  
286 is nice. But when we used to come in 80s when communists were still there we were crossing  
287 the border out from Czechoslovakia it was a stone falling off your chest yeah.

288 *I: Do you think migration has changed you or made you a stronger person? If yes, how/in what*  
289 *ways?*

290 V: Never thought about this. No, you come in there, you adapt. You try to live your life, have  
291 some fun obviously.

292 *I: did it changed you for better?*

293 V: I don't think it changed me at all.

294 *I: Are you grateful for such experience?*

295 V: It changed our lives 180 degrees you know, because when you come somewhere you strive,  
296 you trying to get better, not just for you, but also of course for the country that took us actually,  
297 you know. I am proud Canadian.

298 *I: What do you wish more people knew about immigrants that are new to the community?*

299 V: Ah, mmmm. Nothing, you live here for 50 years. It is normal procedures. People die, new  
300 people come in there, not all of them nice you know. There's always exception. But generally  
301 it's just a regime which goes all on and all over. Even people, later emigrants you can see it  
302 come from Syria, thanks to Obama. (laughing) Syria opening businesses, new blood, different  
303 worlds, different food, different everything, you know.

304 *I: But I meant it from the point of view of Canadians. What they could new about you as*  
305 *immigrants when you arrived?*

306 V: Okay, well, they expect you to live to your promises you know. You come to Canada and  
307 you work and pay taxes, you have to contribute to the society somehow yes. They cannot know  
308 what country you came from, what regime is there, so they were nice to us, the government too  
309 of course.

310 *I: At the time you migrated, what things were unpleasant and made the process of settling in*  
311 *the new country worse?*

312 V: No, I think it was only our stupidity. (laughing) That we came unprepared you know. I mean  
313 this is the truth. You come in there, okay come and start living and whatever. But you know it's

314 not that simple. You have to adapt to Canadian society otherwise you'll end up on the street you  
315 know. There's also lots of people living in the streets you know, by their doing though, they  
316 like it. Some of them don't want to go to their homes even. They like it on the street. So the  
317 biggest struggle is not being informed about what you're coming into.

318 *I: Is there anything you would like to add? Something that has not been asked or spoken about*  
319 *yet?*

320 *V: Not really, just. I'm just here talking really old school and you are coming to your best years.*  
321 *All I'm about to say is *try to live to the full potential*. If you want to travel, travel, but with so*  
322 *many regulations you don't want to go through it obviously, you are rather at home.*

## Appendix 4

### The Interview with Jana

323 *I: In what circumstances did you begin to consider a possibility to migrate?*

324 *J: Well, I went for vacation to Germany. And then I decided to stay there. Because my now*  
325 *husband, he was there and my heart was kind of saying *go and stay there with him*. So and I*  
326 *stayed there.*

327 *I: What is your story behind the decision to migrate?*

328 *J: I got a job in between those days when I was there. I found a job and I liked that so I stayed.*

329 *I: And for how long did you intend to stay in Germany?*

330 *J: Only 2 weeks, 14 days.*

331 *I: And you found a job after those 14 days.*

332 *J: Yes, yes, it was very easy. And I like that. I didn't speak very much German but I kind of*  
333 *communicated. So I liked that and people were nice in there so I stayed. And because of my*  
334 *now husband too.*

335 *I: When was the first time the idea of leaving the country crossed your mind?*

336 *J: We decided together, me and my husband. So it is the same as he said.*

337 *I: Was the idea to migrate your own or someone else suggested it or even decided for you?*

338 *J: The same answer as my husband's.*

339 *I: And how did you get an idea to migrate to Canada?*

340 *J: The same answer as my husband's.*

341 *I: Why did you choose to come to Canada instead of any other country in the world?*

342 *J: The same answer as my husband's.*

343 *I: What did you hope for to change or to be different in your new life in Canada?*

344 *J: Freedom first yeah. Freedom and I don't know I wanted to go to Australia but follow your*  
345 *heart and I don't regret that we came to Canada, not one bit. Canada is good country.*

346 *I: You said you hoped for the change in terms of the freedom. In what ways you were limited?*  
347 *How was your freedom tied down when in Czechoslovakia?*

348 *J: When Russian came to occupy our country, I was very scared. So that's why I wanted to go.*  
349 *I didn't want the government to limit my freedom.*

350 *I: What did you have to do for the plan to migrate to Canada to be successful at that time?*

351 *J: It's the same because we did it together. My husband and I.*

352 *I: Did you have to contact the authorities immediately after you arrived to Canada or somebody*  
353 *contacted you?*

354 *J: It was right at the airport in Toronto, yeah.*

355 *I: Who did you leave behind in the Czech Republic? (family members, good friends)*

356 *J: Family members, that was... That was hardest decision to leave behind. My sisters and*  
357 *brothers and nephews and cousins. That was the hardest.*

358 *I: And did they support you to migrate with your now-husband?*

359 *J: Nobody knew that I want to migrate. Nobody knew.*

360 *I: How did they find out that you migrated?*

361 *J: When we were in Germany then I wrote them a letter that I won't come back.*

362 *I: And how did they react?*

363 *J: My father was hurt and my mum too.*

364 *I: Did their attitude change after some time?*

365 *J: My mum after a while she was okay but my father he couldn't bite it that I left.*

366 *I: Did anyone close to you emigrated after you did, as well?*

367 *J: No, I don't know anybody.*

368 *I: What was the most difficult part about leaving the country you can think of, at that time?*

369 *J: Ah, leaving the family was number one. You know, friends. I had lots of friends but when I*  
370 *migrated everybody went against me. (sobbing) So only family that I regret otherwise. But now*  
371 *everybody from my family I think is happy.*

372 *I: On the other hand, what was the most difficult part of coming to Canada?*

373 *J: I think there are same things that were hard when we came to Canada. Vojta talked about*  
374 *them yesterday. Place to live in and language yeah.*

375 *I: How was the day you emigrated? Do you remember anything from that day? (the date,*  
376 *feelings, first impressions of the new environment, culture etc.) In general, what was it like*  
377 *when you first arrived?*

378 *J: I don't know. We emigrated in September, I don't know the date. I wasn't even, I don't know.*  
379 *It was raining when we came to Canada. And that time I wanted to turn around and go to*  
380 *Germany back. It was pouring, pouring. I said "Give me my luggage and I go back to Germany,"*

381 yeah but you know, I knew that Vancouver was popular on rain so. But I didn't know that that  
382 hard. December 1<sup>st</sup>? I thought it's going to be snow in here but not. It was raining water, water  
383 not snow.

384 *I: So to just clarify it, you came together with Vojta to Canada.*

385 *J: Yes, we came together.*

386 *I: But to Germany, you came several months after Vojta.*

387 *J: Yeah, he went in June and I came 3 months after him in 1969 and then we married in*  
388 *Germany.*

389 *I: What surprised you the most those first couple of days while settling down in Canada?*

390 *J: What surprised me the most? People. People were much you know helpful you know because*  
391 *we, I couldn't speak English one word. I could count till ten. And I knew money, that was it and*  
392 *hungry. (laughing) That was what I knew. But people were very helpful because they knew we*  
393 *are coming from other country. They were very helpful and they helped us.*

394 *I: Where did you first settle and what was the reason to settle right there?*

395 *J: same as Vojta's answer*

396 *I: How did you come to live where you are now?*

397 *J: same as Vojta's answer*

398 *I: Who or what was most helpful with getting you settled?*

399 *J: same as Vojta's answer*

400 *I: Did you at first intend to settle down in Canada or did you want to come back to the Czech*  
401 *Republic after some time?*

402 *J: same as Vojta's answer*

403 *I: Where did you find strength in difficult times? What did you do, what/who helped you?*

404 *J: My husband. He kept me strong and he was my everything, yeah. I don't think I would do it*  
405 *on my own. I was too shy and not sure, kind of unsure. My husband, he was my everything.*

406 *I: I believe it was really hard to get used to the foreign environment, especially with the*  
407 *language barrier – did you speak English at that time? If not, how did you learn English?*  
408 *What/who helped you?*

409 *J: Yeah, the language was really hard. We went to school, as my husband said. With his brother*  
410 *and he met a girl so she helped us to you know make, going to school.*

411 *I: Was it hard for you to learn English?*

412 *J: It was very hard. Because you speak differently and you write differently. German for me*  
413 *was much easier. But English, when we went to school our teacher was really patient. So I*  
414 *learned a lot. And when you speak the language then the life is much easier.*

415 *I: What have been your biggest challenges those first let's say couple of years living in Canada?*

416 *J: When I learned a little bit English I went to look for the job. So it was the biggest challenge*  
417 *for me, to find a job because we needed money.*

418 *I: And did the job changed so frequently too as Vojta said?*

419 *J: First, I was working as a dishwasher in restaurant and then in the same restaurant I was*  
420 *waitress and then I was waitressing for at least 7 years.*

421 *I: On the other hand, what made you happy or joyful while living in Canada?*

422 *J: My husband of course, that's number one. And I had a job, good money. I did make lots of*  
423 *friends.*

424 *I: And nowadays, are you still in contact with some friends you made at the beginning?*

425 *J: Yeah. Most of our friends are from Slovakia. We have some friends from Czech Republic*  
426 *too. And we still have friends in Germany. We talk on the phone. And when we go visit you in*  
427 *the Czech Republic, we go visit them too.*

428 *I: Can you think of any situation you have felt unwelcomed in as an immigrant?*

429 *J: No. People were very nice and I got... Maybe they were against me but I didn't feel. I don't*  
430 *know. You can find everywhere in the whole world. Good people and bad people. Keep away*  
431 *from the bad people. That's my meaning. You know and I can sometimes scent if he's good or*  
432 *not. But so far so good. We have good friends. Before I retired, I was working for busy housing*  
433 *government. And I was working there 23 years. And I could feel you know, they had tenants in*  
434 *that building. So I could feel if he's good like a tenant or not. And my property manager she*  
435 *always ask me.*

436 *I: On the other hand, can you think of times when you have felt welcomed?*

437 *J: No, I had no problem with anybody. Canadians are good hearted people. I just cannot*  
438 *complain about them. In this place it's like a community and we have good neighbours, good*  
439 *people, no problems. You can find one person in this area from 209 properties. But I keep away*  
440 *from that person. I don't want to get upset or anything.*

441 *I: What is (are) the thing(s) you are the proudest of nowadays and why?*

442 *J: Well, I am very proud that we got what we have now. Cause we did it ourselves. Nobody*  
443 *helped.*

444 *V: May I add something?*

445 *I: Of course.*

446 *V: Jana said, she is proud of what we had achieved. In order to have a decent pension. You don't*  
447 *achieve it by just working. You have to have some investments. Otherwise, you'll be living*

448 from day to day. You know what I mean. If you have no investments and some not just savings,  
449 must be investments. You have to make money, **jo**.

450 *I: So you invested in something before you retired?*

451 *V: Yeah, before we retired, yeah. Used to have a lot of mortgages but all are paid out. At that*  
452 *time we had 6 mortgages. But you know, at that time we were both working and pay was good.*  
453 *So we achieved, paid it and now obviously we have money for travelling.*

454 *I: Nowadays, how does your experience compare to what you expected before leaving the Czech*  
455 *Republic?*

456 *J: Totally different world. I expected little bit better but it was not the worse.*

457 *I: What Czech traditions, meaning celebrations, foods or songs, do you still enjoy up to date?*

458 *J: Okay, food I cook like at home. My mum like she taught us how to cook. And I still cook*  
459 *like I was at home. And I still cook Czech traditional food. Today we are going to have vepřo-*  
460 *knedlo-zelo. (laughing) When I cook I cook for army, not just for two. And lunch is still a big*  
461 *meal for us like in Czech. 1st of May we don't celebrate. Easter, then what...? Christmas, New*  
462 *Year's, Thanksgiving.*

463 *V: **To je jako díkuvzdání. To je něco jako dožínky, hody.***

464 *I: And what music do you enjoy?*

465 *J: Humpapa! Humpapa! (laughing) Folk German music. Yeah we got lots of CDs from your*  
466 *father and your uncle.*

467 *I: And do you listen to some Czech bands?*

468 *J: Oh, popular music. We have lots of LPs. I love Karel Gott and Elvis Presley.*

469 *I: What did you or you still do miss the most about the Czech Republic?*

470 J: My family. It's growing and growing. When I left, you were not born. But now I miss  
471 everybody from my family. That's the most thing that I miss.

472 I: *Do you think migration has changed you or made you a stronger person? If yes, how/in what*  
473 *ways?*

474 J: Make me a stronger person. When I was back home I was shy, wasn't sure what to do. But it  
475 makes me stronger. And especially I was most of the time by myself. When Vojta left in the  
476 bush to work. I am introvert and Vojta is extrovert. And now I am stronger and you know.  
477 When we have visitors I just listen. Sometimes I say, most of the time I listen.

478 I: *What do you wish more people knew about immigrants that are new to the community?*

479 J: I don't know any situation that caused some problem because they were prepared for us.

480 V: The difference is, people coming now are fluent in English. So they easy to find jobs, they're  
481 prepared.

482 J: They had their opportunity to learn English but we didn't.

483 V: Wish we could educate ourselves more about situation where you are coming to what  
484 country and what is in there going on. We were unprepared, we were practically stupid. We  
485 were just like learn on the go. It takes long to adapt and we are now member of society you  
486 know.

487 I: *At the time you migrated, what things were unpleasant and made the process of settling in*  
488 *the new country worse?*

489 J: Yeah, language was number one.

490 V: She has a job in the office in Germany. But when we came here, that job almost didn't exist.  
491 So we obviously had to find a different source of employment.

492 J: But I did it.

493 *I: Is there anything you would like to add? Something that has not been asked or spoken about*  
494 *yet?*

495 V: It's over 50 years ago. Of course there were bad times and good times. You just try to cast  
496 out the bad stuff. You know, life is change and change is life. But you have to adapt to those  
497 changes.

498 J: Yeah. You know, each country is different. Different manners and you have to adjust to them.  
499 If you want to be live here.

## **Resumé**

Tématem bakalářské práce je emigrace obyvatel české národnosti. Konkrétně se pak zaměřuje na Čechy, kteří se usadili v Kanadě. Teoretická část pojednává taktéž o imigračních vlnách do Kanady v celosvětovém měřítku a o kanadské imigrační politice, jež prošla od konce 20. století významnou změnou. Analýzou rozhovoru se dvěma participanty, kteří emigrovali po roce 1968, byl zjištěn značný dopad jazykové bariéry a statusu imigranta na jejich duševní zdraví a proces přizpůsobení se nové komunitě. Stejně tak výzkum odhalil skutečnosti, které motivovaly participanty k odchodu z jejich rodné země.

## **Annotation**

This bachelor thesis focuses on potential emigration causes of Czechs, as it is more specified within the theoretical part. Moreover, the work describes living standards and job opportunities from a historical point of view. The targeted research group is Czech inhabitants who immigrated to English-speaking countries, particularly to Canada, since the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The research design of this bachelor thesis is qualitative. The research tool to obtain data is a semi-structured interview. The method chosen for the interview examination is thematic analysis.

## **Anotace**

Bakalářská práce se zabývá možnými důvody emigrace Čechů, které blíže specifikuje v rámci teoretické části. Jedná se zejména o příčiny týkající se životní či pracovní úrovně, na které je pohlíženo z historického hlediska. Tato bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na emigraci obyvatel české národnosti do anglicky mluvících zemí, především do Kanady, od 20. století po současnost.

Nástrojem pro sběr dat v rámci praktické části bakalářské práce je polostrukturovaný rozhovor, později analyzován pomocí tematického rozboru.